

Successful Strategies for Building Lifetime Readers: Great Ideas to Put in Place Tomorrow

Steven L. Layne, Ed.D.
National Literacy Consultant/Keynote Speaker
Children's/Young Adult Author

Associate Professor of Education and Literature
Judson University, Elgin, IL

**- We do not need to burn books to kill our
civilization; we need only to leave them
unread for a generation.**

- R. M Hutchins



www.stevelayne.com

The Golden Recommendation Shelf

The Golden Recommendation Shelf (GRS) can be *any* shelf in a classroom bookcase – or yours could be the **GRB** (an entire Golden Recommendation Bookcase)! If you can buy a cheap unfinished shelf or bookcase and spray paint it gold, all the better for visual and dramatic effect.

What goes on the GRS? All *your* content-appropriate favorite books! Also, your *autographed* books—the ones you stood in line for ____ minutes/hours to have signed “To Mrs. Baxter’s Kids!”

Suggestions for added excitement!

- 1) record the amount of *time* you waited to have each book signed.
- 2) take a photo of yourself with the author - tape inside the book.
- 3) buy hardcover books for this shelf when possible.
- 4) have a special sign-out log for these titles.
- 5) stock multiple titles by favorite authors to give kids the idea that if you like one book by an author—you might like more!
- 6) keep some of your favorite books from childhood on this shelf.
- 7) if a friend gives you a book that is meaningful—have it inscribed and place it on the shelf so kids see that books make great gifts!

BOOKS/READING MATERIAL TO CONSIDER

FROM SHOPPING TRIPS:

FROM BOOK CHATS:

FROM RECOMMENDATIONS:

READ AROUND

If you're looking for a way to generate GREAT excitement about text – try a Read Around. This activity will expose every reader to a wide range of text quickly as well as allow readers the chance to spend a few extra minutes with books and other materials that may hold appeal.

TO BEGIN: Place a book, newspaper, magazine, etc. on every student's desk.

NEXT: Remind students that we learn about text by “previewing it.” Good readers *always* preview before reading text. Previewing includes studying the cover, the title, the graphics, the inside flap, charts & graphs, subheadings, the chapter titles, the back of a book, and, of course reading some of the text!

THEN: Tell students that they will be given approximately one minute and 30 seconds to “preview” the material on their desks. When you say “pass” everyone who *wants* to – passes their material to the next person. Students may elect to keep the text at their desk and pass the next time . . . OR hold onto their text again! They may choose to “hold” up to three times before they *must* pass it on. (No more than one title/piece at each desk at any give time).

YOUR JOB: Is to call “time” (varying how long you give them makes it really fun!) – and to facilitate the “passing” of books/materials at end of rows, when a “traffic jam” occurs, etc.

*Sometimes because of kids holding certain pieces of text, some students may get a piece back that they've already seen. In such cases, have a few in your hand to trade out – putting new text in the mix that only a few kids will probably get to see before time is over for the activity!

A GREAT IDEA: Is to have students walk the room at the conclusion of the Read Around and record any titles/pieces they were interested in on their BOOKS/READING MATERIAL TO CONSIDER sheet (see the copy inside this resource book).

Elementary/YA Café!

How about a café in your elementary, middle or high school? What a great way to get reluctant readers plugged into books!

There are a variety of ways it can be infused as well as times of the day that it can be offered. The three keys: teachers who want to promote reading, great books, and food!

Line up your teacher readers for the year, one per month in advance or bi-weekly if you can get the volunteers. They are to promote a new book (written for an appropriate age group within your school) that they have read and think kids would love! A committee promotes the teacher's appearance, the book title and cover, and the date/time all over the school building with attractive posters, announcements, etc. in advance.

When the day arrives, the teacher explains why he/she chose the book and gives enough background about the book (without telling too much) to get readers interested. Then, the teacher reads aloud for 30 minutes from the book. When the period is over, kids will be heading to the library so PLEASE be sure the librarian is in on this! He/She will want to have a few copies available for immediate check out!

Donuts, juice, hot cocoa, bagels, etc. are provided during the Café time. Monies obtained from: PTA, Administration (yes, they do, *too*, have money in some account *somewhere*), and/or local businesses.

Reported crowds range from 10 to 180 kids. The Café can run before school, at lunch, or after school. Morning, though, tends to draw larger crowds. Suggestion is to run it for one hour. This allows 15 minutes of teacher explanation, 30 minutes of reading, and time to check out books following the read aloud and/or time for questions.

Letting latecomers in MAY prove distracting once the read aloud begins. Think it through!

First Read Club

Finally – something special for the true blue book lovers in the building!

WHAT IT IS: The First Read Club (FRC) is, simply put, a group of kids who are the first ones with the chance to read all of the *new* books arriving in the school library or in the classroom teacher’s library (if she/he regularly buys new titles for the classroom throughout the year).

HOW IT WORKS: A label is designed (use art teacher, library staff, kids, anyone!) with a neat graphic and the saying “This Book Was First Read By _____.” Running off a good supply of labels at the start of the year makes life easier later on.

Advertise the club around school through posters, announcements, etc. Meet with interested kids to explain how it will work and show them the label that will be put in the book and how they will be highlighted as the first reader of that book!

The club is convened each time new books arrive. Teachers/Librarians may or may not wish to tell a little about the books before kids make selections. Sometimes, it’s best if they look over the new titles and select one on their own.

A “bring your own bag lunch” meeting is great with a deadline set for having finished books. It can also be donuts in the morning for a breakfast book discussion. This meeting simply involves BRIEF sharing about the books that were read. It is not an interrogation! This is supposed to be FUN! Labels are awarded and affixed at this meeting, and the books are now put out for the whole school or classroom to enjoy!

There are many ways to put a variation of this club into place, and decisions might change based on grade level. For example: A kindergarten teacher might buy a new picture book each month of the school year for her/his classroom and read each one aloud. Each book could have a label placed inside that read “This Book Was *First Read* By Mrs. Olsen’s Kindergarten Class of 2007!”