

Creating A Bookroom for All Reading Levels

1. Why Establish a School-Wide Bookroom?

A school-based bookroom has many advantages over individual or grade-based bookrooms.

A school-based vision

There is ownership by all at the school because everyone is working together and pooling resources. You can have school-based objectives, school-based continuum, and school-based responsibility for continuous improvement for all students.

To support teachers' instructional practices

Financially

A school-wide bookroom is far more economical than classroom teachers having their own books to use for instruction in the classroom.

Professional development

Teachers can “see” the continuum of reading achievement; they see the full-range of books used in K-3. Therefore, they are more aware of expectations of other grades.

Larger and more comprehensive collection

There is greater variety and quantity of titles at each level giving a better selection across the reading levels.

Management

The continual process of replacing ‘gently-used’ books and adding new ones is a long process for any one person. The responsibility becomes shared in a school-wide bookroom.

Time

Time is more efficiently spent gathering resources to ensure children are reading at their assessed instructional reading levels.

2. Now What Do We Do?

An organizational plan needs to be developed- one that will work for the school.

All aboard! “Buy-in” is a must for success.

Be sure to involve all colleagues in the planning stage. This will help with the buy-in that is ABSOLUTELY necessary in order to have an effective book room.

Analyze space and needs

Where can you put a bookroom that can be easily accessible by the teachers who use it? Based on your curriculum and what you already may have, what kinds of books will best meet your needs?

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System for storing

What system will make it fast and seamless for people to get the books?

System for inventory

How will you know what you have and what you need?

System for checking-out

How will you be able to keep track of the inventory?

System for returning

How will the books get back to where they belong in the bookroom?

System for maintaining and adding resources

Who will be responsible for the orderliness of the bookroom, for purchasing new titles, and for adding lesson plans to book sets?

Bookrooms are works-in-progress and, as long as you have an organizational plan, you can start or revive a bookroom.

Let's look a bit more at each one of these ideas.

3. Location

Determine a location in the school where the bookroom can be housed. The more convenient for teachers, the greater likelihood it will be well used.

4. Needs

There is a multitude of ways to organize books in a bookroom. The inventory in the current bookroom and the instructional needs of the teachers will inform the organization of the bookroom.

Some of the different areas to consider:

Text sets: Organized by reading levels for small group instruction. This would include expository sets, as well as narrative sets.

Read-alouds: Single copies of books that work with the text sets and are useful in content instruction.

Phonics Features: Books that highlight specific phonics features

Fluency: This section could include poetry and reader's theater selections.

5. Storing System

Book sets can be stored in:

Baggies—Generic plastic baggies with or without a hanging attachment (some book companies ship their book sets in reusable plastic bags)

Bankers boxes that hold books upright

Manila envelopes can be used to hold lesson plans or activities for a book title

Tubs or baskets that hold multiple sets of books

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THINK. . . easy and efficient for the space you have. Naturally, the easier the bookroom is for teachers to use, the more they will use it.

6. Inventory

Once you have a list of your inventory, there are multiple ways to print it in order to give teachers options when looking for books.

Of course, a computer database is a most efficient and flexible system for knowing what is in the bookroom.

This may be something that you put off until after the books are organized and teachers are using them. Though you ultimately want an inventory system in place, don't let the time involved get in the way of creating a bookroom.

7. *Checking-Out: Ideas that Work*

Again there are several different options when developing a checkout system.

Teachers can just *jot down in a notebook* their name, title of the book, and the number of copies checked out.

Each grade can have a *clipboard* with each teacher within each grade having a different color sign-out sheet.

If the books are inventoried with *bar codes* they can be checked out like any other book.

Clothespins with the teachers name on it to place on the box or basket where the book set is taken from (may need a lot of clothespins for each teacher!).

Book sets can have an index card with them to identify the set; these cards can be put into a *pocket chart* that has the teacher's name on it as the set is checked out.

8. *Label on Index card and Pocket*

One method of checkout: the card is pulled from the pocket and placed behind the teacher's name in a pocket chart. The teacher would check out the entire bag of books whether or not all books were needed. Bags provide an easy storage system for unused books in the classroom.

These labels can have the title of the book, the reading level, the author, and the SOL correlation. Each book in the set has a reading level on it and a small label that identifies that it belongs in the bookroom.

Again, bookrooms are always a work in progress!!

9. Returning

Return systems need to be as easy as possible for teachers. If you have parent volunteers, this is a nice way to use their assistance.

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10. Maintaining and Adding Resources

Always consider the needs of the children in the school. Look at data from the past year to see the range of reading levels in any one grade to help guide decisions of what new titles to add to the bookroom to support literacy in the content area.

For each SOL try to build a bookroom with books across the reading levels. For example, if a group in the Map unit needed a book at a mid-late first grade level, you want to be sure that you are able to meet those children's needs.

Solicit everyone's input in order to maintain the bookroom.

Create a wish list as teachers make suggestions of useful topics or titles.

Create a list of quick simple jobs that can be handed to someone quickly when help is offered.

11. Yancey Elementary Bookroom

The books in Yancey's bookroom are organized using the Fountas and Pinnell guided reading levels, but any leveling system can work as long as everyone in the school understands how it correlates to children's instructional needs.

Within each level the books are further divided by narrative and expository and then alphabetized by title.

The color code system is a system that was already in place when the current literacy specialist initiated reorganizing the book room. This system was incorporated into the new re-organization because it worked well and the teachers were familiar with it.

- Yellow- Levels A-C
- Red Level D-E
- Blue Levels F-G
- Green Levels H-I
- White Levels J-M
- Orange Levels N-P
- Neon Green Levels Q-Z

12. Supplies for Organizing

You will have different supply needs based on your planned organization.

Gallon size baggies: one bag per set of 6 to 8 books

Library pockets: taped on the front of the bags to hold checkout cards

Wide clear tape

Index cards (on each book set, on basket)

1/4 inch colored dots

Colored Dots in the Yancey Bookroom correlate to:

Narrative-red; expository-blue; phonics-green; fluency-yellow

Baskets or something to put books in

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Baskets-to keep books contained and organized. Gives easier access to books by being able to take a basket off the shelf to look through its contents.

Labels to print out (2 each book set)

Labels to identify title, author, SOL focus, and reading level.

Labels on each book

Labels on each book to help with efficiency of use and return to the correct location.

Reading Level

'Property of'- school name stamp

13. Getting books into children's hands

So your bookroom is set up--Now what?

Know your instructional goal when choosing books

Be sure you are basing your book selection on lesson goals and objectives:

SOL/Content support

Word Study-Phonics features

High-frequency word reading

Text structures

Comprehension strategy

Fluency

Use data to determine the instructional reading level for all children- and keep the assessment data current

Match books to children (Instructional reading level, interests, subject matter, text structures)

Create a system where books that are read for instruction can go home for continued reading