



Engaging Readers with Engaging Book Talks



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GOAL:

to help students choose a book, to encourage more reading

SOLUTION:

give Book Talks to silent reading classes, offering some quick suggestions



RESULT:

Students find it easier to select a book, are excited about reading and READ MORE!

AGENDA

Background

Opening – video of Book Talks

Content – what to say and what not to say

Logistics – how to manage the room, the students, etc.

Practise



SCHOOL BACKGROUND :

- Westlake Girls High School is a decile 10 secondary school on the North Shore of Auckland with a population of 2250 Y9-Y13 girls.
- Our Y9 and Y10 English classes (30) are timetabled into the library for silent reading periods fortnightly
- Our 11, 12, and 13 classes (43 more) will be having silent reading periods next year as well
- some ESOL classes also have Book Talks and reading periods

MEGAN'S BACKGROUND:

1998 - Bachelor's degree in Education (Seattle, Washington)

1998 - began teaching English & History

2004 - Master's degree in Library (Portland, Oregon)

2005 - moved to NZ

2006 - became a librarian at Diocesan School for Girls (Auckland)

2008 - began teaching English & Social Studies at Diocesan

2010 - became Teacher Librarian at Westlake Girls High School

2013 – presenter at SLANZA conference in Wellington “3 Minute PD”

PAULA'S BACKGROUND:

2012 - Bachelor's degree in English (Auckland University)

2008-2013 – worked at bookshops

2013 – began working as assistant librarian at Westlake Girls High School

2014 – enrolled in PGDip programme at Victoria University

VIDEO:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrT99Ing3A4>

21 books in 9 minutes

average 25 seconds per book

shortest :06

longest :51

CONTENT:

ask a rhetorical question	“Did you ever have to sit next to your sister for a long car ride?” <i>Sisters</i>
author	“Sarah Dessen is our most popular author because her books are girly but not in a cheesy way”
based on true story	There really was a gorilla named Ivan who lived in a shopping mall ...” <i>The One and Only Ivan</i>
	“This book is based on 3 plane crashes that really happened over 3 months in a small town in New Jersey in the 1950s.” <i>In the Unlikely Event</i>
character name	(rarely necessary unless it’s part of the plot)
classic	<i>To Kill A Mockingbird</i>
cliffhanger	“She sees her own photo in an advertisement for kidnapped children. But she hasn’t been kidnapped ... has she?” <i>The Face on the Milk Carton</i>
cover	“Does the person on the cover look like a female or a male? In this world, there are no genders.” <i>Otherwise</i>
genre	“If you like scary horror books ...”
	“This is a dystopian which means the world has gone crazy and there are evil people in charge.” <i>When She Woke</i>
historical time period	“This takes place back when there were queens and castles and knights.”
if you liked..	“If you like <i>Hunger Games</i> , you should try <i>Divergent</i> next”
movie	“If you saw the move <i>Maze Runner</i> , here is the book which is even better.”

personal experience	<p>“This book is about 3 plane crashes in the same town over 3 months. It was a great book but not a good idea to read it on a 15-hour plane ride, trust me.” <i>In the Unlikely Event</i></p>
	<p>“Some of you have that stereotypical Asian mum who is very demanding. I can tell by the smiles that you know what I’m talking about. Well, this girl’s mum is so bad, it’ll make your mum look good.” <i>Bitter Melon</i></p>
read excerpt	<p>“#1 My name is Sam. #2 I like to make lists. #3 I have leukaemia. #4 By the time you read this, I will probably be dead.” <i>Ways to Live Forever</i></p>
relate to other school subjects	<p>“if you’re into science, you’ll like this one ...” <i>The Age of Miracles</i></p>
	<p>“You could write a personal response (English 1.10) to this book about bullying” <i>Speak</i></p>
series	<p>“Here’s another <i>Diary of a Wimpy Kid</i>”</p>
structure of book	<p>“This book is written in verse form so there aren’t very many words on each page. It’s perfect for anyone who hates to read” <i>Exposed</i></p>
summary	<p>maybe just tell the plot setup in first chapter - “This is about a girl who didn’t know she was pregnant, gave birth all by herself on the floor of the bathroom, put the baby in a plastic bag and threw it in the dumpster behind her apartment building. Someone heard the baby crying (it was still alive) and called the cops who searched the building and found the bleeding teenage girl. This happens in the first 5 pages. The book is about what happens <u>after</u>. How do you live with yourself after that?” <i>After</i></p>
	<p>OK to give away the ending – “These two have made a suicide pact with each other. It’s OK, they don’t go through with it! But imagine what they must have been going through to get to this point. Then imagine finally finding the one person who understands what it’s like.” <i>My Heart and Other Black Holes</i></p>
title	<p>(sometimes that’s all you need to say) “<i>Dead Teachers Don’t Talk</i>”</p>

LOGISTICS:

- ✓ Room Set-Up
 - A table or large podium is best
 - Students in semi-circle rows around you
 - Kids will fight over the front row so they can be first to grab their favourite book ... which means they will want to arrive early and get a good seat

- ✓ Supply of Books
 - Know **a little** about **a lot** of books
 - Keep a stash of books ready for the next period
 - Grab your favourites as soon as they're returned
 - Scan the shelves when your pile is getting low
 - Allow students to browse and issue from your stash? (they know that's where the best books are)

- ✓ Delivery
 - Confidence – you know more than they do!
 - Use big 'teacher' voice
 - Need energy (remember what it's like when a group of book lovers get together, excitedly talking about books?)
 - Enthusiasm
 - Gestures can help explain the plot
 - Vary your voice – speed, volume, tone, silly voices, pauses. It wakes up the kids and they pay attention better
 - 'Punch' the punch line; don't let it trail off
 - Avoid filler words such as 'um' 'so' 'like'

- ✓ Choosing Books
 - Variety of formats
 - novels in verse (for those who hate to read)
 - non-fiction (*Into Thin Air, A Lion Called Christian*)
 - short stories
 - graphic novels
 - easy readers (for ESOL students)
 - poetry?
 - Variety of genres, reading levels, interests, nationalities

Some fluff, some deep

Encourage re-reading classics like *Charlotte's Web* or *A Bridge to Terabithia*

Piggyback with ant-bullying week, Maori Language week, etc.

Pay attention to which books are taken and which ones are left behind. Adjust your book talks accordingly.

Constantly add more books to your repertoire, especially the 2nd year

✓ Managing the students

Establish rules such as no devices or no phones. Not allowed to do homework during reading period

Demand their attention "All right people. I'm ready to start as soon as you're ready to listen"

Don't let them shout out. (ignore) Don't answer questions.

Enlist the teacher if there is trouble "Miss Milburn, can you please separate those two for me?"

Explain at the beginning of the year "I've read *some* of these. But no, I have not read *all* these books. Still, I've read enough *about* the book to decide I wanted to buy it."

Explain that you will repeat books. "Yes, I may show some of the same books as before, but maybe you didn't get the one you wanted that time ... so it's here again."

✓ Managing the teacher

Teacher brings class, but you are in charge of them for the first 10 minutes. So make her monitor the rest of the library for you while you talk.

Ideally, teachers should read too while their students are reading! (not marking or emails) Therefore, provide a special cushy chair for teachers, not a table.

title					
CONTENT					
ask a question					
author					
based on true story					
character name					
classic					
cliffhanger					
cover					
genre					
historical time period					
if you liked ...					
movie					
personal experience					
read excerpt					
relate to other school subjects					
series					
structure of book					
summary					
title					
DELIVERY					
length					
enunciate main point					
gestures					
voice varies					