

Using Small Book Groups to Increase Reading Motivation among High School Students



Clewiston High School

Clewiston, Florida

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Mary Thomas, Reading Coach

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Session Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Successfully advertise book discussion groups for secondary students
- Choose high interest books for discussion.
- Lead students in taking ownership of their reading and discussion.

Rationale

- In 2006-07 the Clewiston High School Reading Leadership Team identified student motivation for independent reading as a major concern.
- Starting student book discussion groups was seen as one way to give students choice in reading material and the opportunity to learn by talking about their reading with their peers.

How we blazed the trail



**Blazed forward
with courage
and tenacity.**

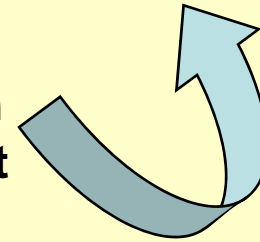
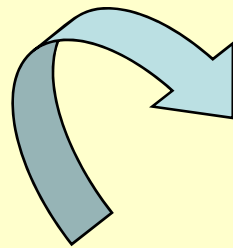
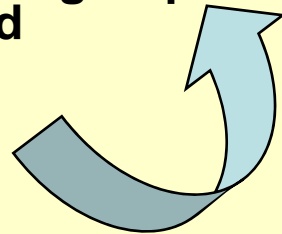


**Attended session
on book groups at
2007 Just Read
Conference**



**Experience
working with
in-class book
groups.**

**Student motivation
for reading identified
as area of concern
by RLT in 2006-07**



“Helping students establish reader identities and develop self-awareness as readers is key to their motivation and development.”

The Book Club Companion:

*Fostering Strategic Readers in the
Secondary Classroom, page 24*

-- Cindy O'Donnell-Allen

“...reading superficial books for fun and studying “good” books in class--- that keeps students from believing that studying literature can also be experienced as reading for pleasure.” pg. 11

“...the book club tries to offer an alternative to thinking of literature as a school subject. I want adolescents to think of reading as a pleasure, a hobby, and a lifelong habit.” pg. 25

Reading for themselves: How to transform Adolescents into Lifelong Readers Through Out-Of-Class Book Clubs

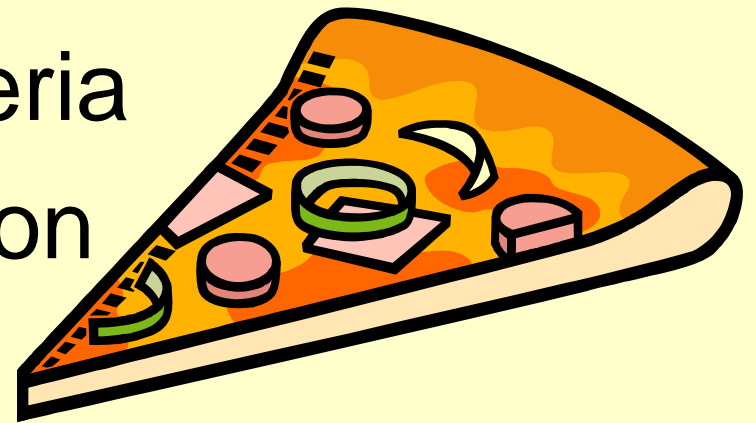
---Deborah Appleman

- Louise Rosenblatt described two types of reading:
 - Aesthetic reading which is completed to explore the work and oneself
 - Efferent reading to enable you to “take away” bits of information. p 17

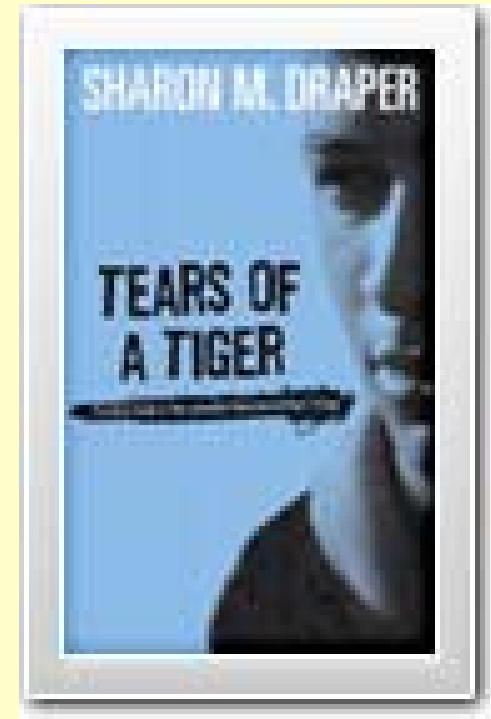
*Reading for themselves: How to
Transform Adolescents into Lifelong Readers
Through Out-Of-Class Book Clubs*
-- Deborah Appleman

How we did it...

- Received two \$200 gift cards from district office that were used for first sets of books
- Emailed district Food Service Director to ask for free pizza
- Found site near cafeteria and obtained permission to eat in room



- Chose book on recommendation of FLaRE Coordinator
- Ordered 15 books
- Made commercial for morning TV show
- Invited students to come by my office to sign up and get a book



**The lines to
get a copy of
our first book.**

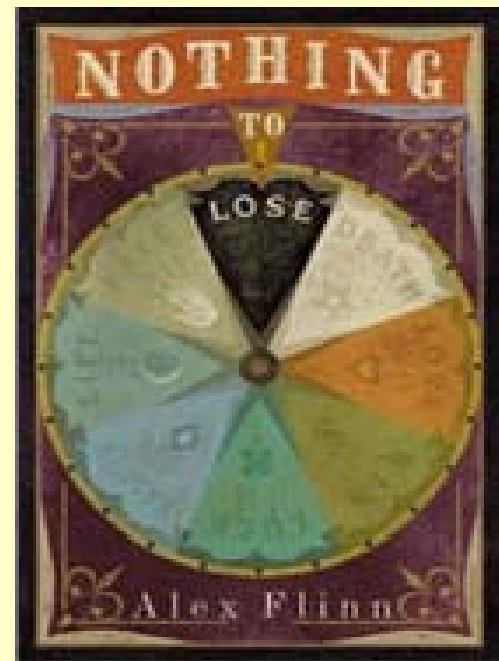


All 15 books were gone the first day!!!

- One girl was in tears because she didn't get a book, so I gave her mine and drove an hour to buy 4 more on the weekend.



- I was still stopped in the hall by many students, so I decided to order copies of a second book.
- After the second commercial, all 15 books were gone by 10:30 a.m.



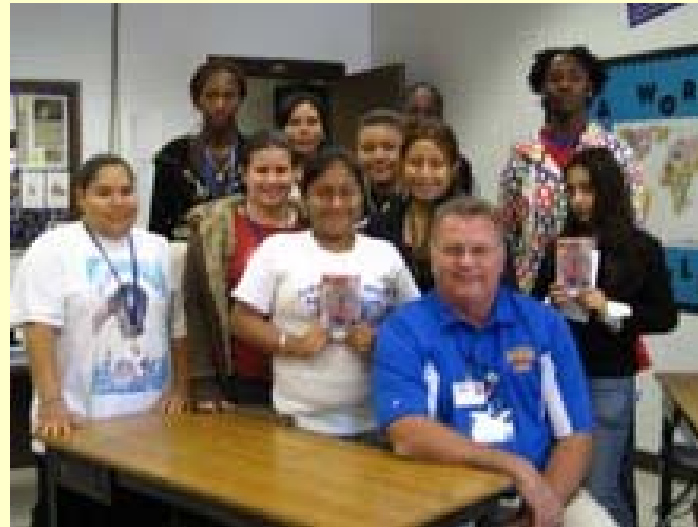
What does our student book group look like??

- Students were allowed to keep books
- They were expected to read and attend the meeting



- All students were encouraged to take part in the discussion
- Must be respectful of others and not dominate the conversation

2007-2008
Some of our
CHS BOOK
DISCUSSION
GROUPS



**Each had a
different # of
members and
a unique mix
of students.**



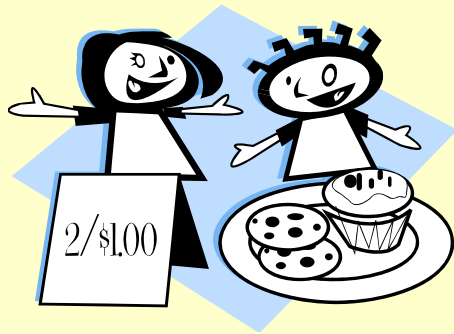


* Length of time 50-60 minutes
for discussion

- * Moved desks to face each other
- * Encouraged students to use questions provided with books to stimulate discussion
- * Teacher asked questions when needed keep the discussion going

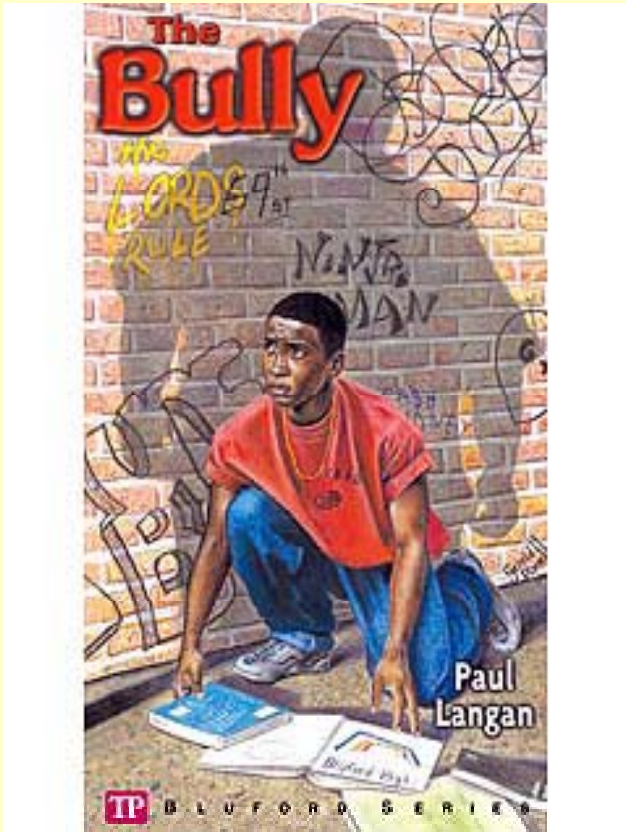


- * At the first meetings we discussed the various genre students enjoyed.
- * Some were willing to give back their books so those in the other “Group” could read it.



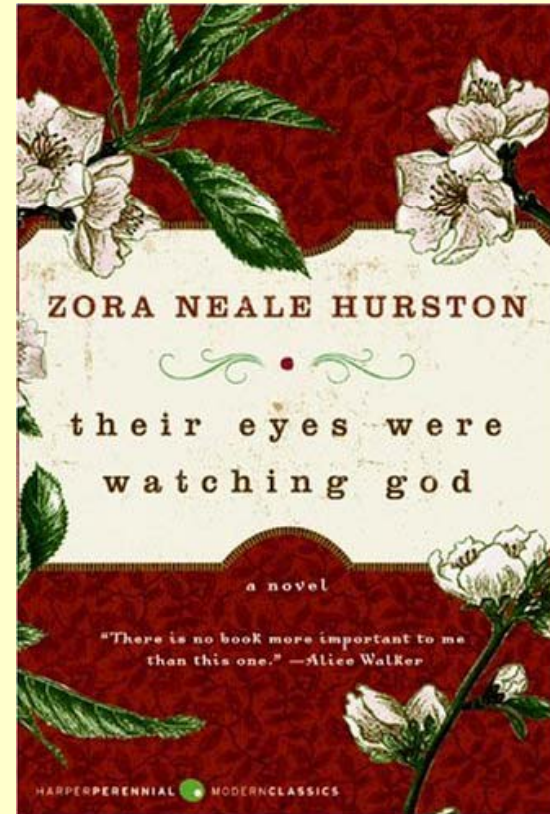
- . * Most were willing to participate in fundraisers to earn money to buy books

Second books chosen for students to read:



Chosen for low cost, ease of reading and high interest level for students.

to read:



Part of Community-wide grant from National Endowment for the Arts, "The Big Read", our public libraries provided us with 60 free books.

Booklists and discussion materials
available from these websites:

<http://www.ala.org/>

<http://www.yabookscentral.com>

<http://www.readinggroupguides.com>

<http://www.bookbrowse.com/bookclubs/>

<http://www.amazon.com>

Check websites of individual authors to
see if they have discussion questions.

Road Blocks to success



- **Not all students hear the morning TV news to know about book groups.**
- **Communication with group members is time consuming and some teachers fail to hand out notices.**
- **Students forget to bring book to discussion.**
- **Some students are reluctant to talk in group.**

References

Appleman, Deborah. (2006) *Reading for themselves: How to transform Adolescents into Lifelong Readers Through Out-Of-Class Book Clubs*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

O'Donnell-Allen, Cindy. (2006). *The Book Club Companion: Fostering Strategic Readers in the Secondary Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Questions????

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