

2013-2014
Library Curriculum Report
Specialist: Amy Vaccarella

Mission and Goals

It is the **mission** of the library program to support students in their growth by developing an appreciation of literature and the skills to seek information.

The **goals** that support the mission are as follows:

To promote and encourage students to be critical thinkers and effective users of information

To support students as they become lifelong readers and learners

To provide a supportive environment that is rich with learning materials - print, digital, and visual/tactile

To collaborate across disciplines in efforts to build connections and to enrich the student's learning experience

To reflect the mission of the Miquon School

To connect with the physical environment and the community

The First Year

With the guidance of mentors, I decided to focus my attention this first year on observation. First and foremost I observed the students, getting to know them personally, and noticing how they engage with their surroundings: in the library stacks, the outside space, with each other. I paid attention to the types of books they wanted to borrow and stories they like to hear read aloud. I observed their information-seeking skills, identifying where support is needed in the future:

- locating books in the library
- locating and evaluating appropriate information via the internet
- communicating their ideas through technology (using Google Docs, for example)
- knowing when to ask for help, and when to be self-sufficient

I also observed the staff, beginning a long relationship with them and understanding how each member views progressive education and carries this into his/her work. The community of parents has also informed me of the values that are important to Miquon and to the library.

I also focused on supporting the classroom teachers, and providing a bridge between the classroom and the library. This was accomplished by read alouds and small projects that supported the subjects studied in the classroom. For example, in support of the book publishing happening in Rossana and Marie's 1st and 2nd grade classroom, we engaged in a study of non-fiction books that related to animals and natural disasters. We read factual accounts of animals stranded in natural disasters, paying close attention to the features in a non-fiction text that organize and help convey information (captions, glossaries, table of contents, maps etc). The students were studying how illustration can support text, and time was given for them to study and draw images that support their non-fiction topic.

Collection Development

Much of my time this year, when not teaching, was continuing a project that Diane started - making the library's collection available on the library's online catalog. Electronic records and barcodes still need to be created for about 1/3 of the collection. In addition to this, I have been assessing the collection using standard collection development criteria, and weeding as necessary. Part of the assessment is determining whether the collection truly reflects the diversity in our school and community and wider culture, and making it a priority to improve on this in the years to come.

Making Connections

An overarching theme of this year in library class has been on making connections: forming deeper understanding through stories, connecting to and supporting the students and their reading interests and expanding their awareness of the library collection.

In **Nursery** and **Kindergarten**, stories read aloud often supported the work that is happening in the classroom; building community, friendships, the study of trees and growing gardens, the changing seasons, and the work of studied authors such as Ezra Jack Keats and Leo Lionni. We have also enjoyed books that have songs woven into them, like versions of Old MacDonald and There was an Old Lady who Swallowed a Fly, We're Going on a Bear Hunt, as well as pattern/cumulative stories like The Seven Silly Eaters. We read stories that anchored us to the rich culture of traditional stories passed from generation to generation, including trickster tales from around the world.

In **First** and **Second** grades, we built on the important foundations established in Nursery and Kindergarten; the love of story being the most essential. During read alouds, the students are practicing many important skills - among them are making connections and inferences, communicating their ideas to each other, and learning to listen to one another respectfully. The literature connects them to the outside world; the past, present and future. The students encountered the research cycle (inquiry, information collection, presentation and review) with a study of the honey bees. Much of our project work involved the creation of books and other artwork to support the literature we read.

The students are also developing library skills by articulating what they would like to read and independently locating it. I recommend and set out books for students as a way to introduce new materials to them and also support their reading at their just-right level.

in **Third** and **Fourth** grades, the students are increasing their independence and self-sufficiency when it comes to selecting books to borrow and read. The bulk of library class is still literature-based; I read stories aloud that support classroom work or a subject or genre that we are studying, and then the student's either have writing or research projects and/or time for individual reading and browsing.

Book illustration became a theme for this year, as **First, Second, Third** and **Fourth** graders studied the Caldecott Award and voted on our favorite illustrated books of 2013. We also we did an author/illustrator study on Oliver Jeffers, a prolific artist and children's picture book creator. We paid close attention to his artistic process, watching videos of him painting and illustrating, then comparing his different approaches to the dozen or so picture books we read together. His illustration style is simple in many ways, and the students practiced creating their own characters in his style.

In **Fifth** and **Sixth** grades, while we discussed literature and explored different genres and formats, our work was mostly project-based. Students were given the support and the space to be creative with their assignments. For instance, we studied the five stuffed birds of prey on display in the Clisby Library. Some students, after doing research in books and online, decided to take their findings and create a fictional story about the raptor. Some created videos, and slide presentations. Much of our project work was student-led, in the sense that the work they did reflected their interests and made the work and experience more authentic.

The monthly Book Club for Fifth and Sixth graders was a success. It was usually comprised of a group of 8 - 15 students, along with myself, Tammy and Ted. We read a variety great books: a mix of titles that the students suggested and titles that the teachers chose. We came together once a month for an hour to have lively and often deeply intellectual conversations about books.

The Library is a Buzzing Hive of Activity

The library was open during the mornings before the buzzer rang, and during lunch choice. During this time, students use the library to read quietly, browse the library shelves, play card games or board games, make crafts and art work, write, observe the bees, and enjoy the space. The library is often buzzing with energy and productivity, much like the beehive! But it can also be a quiet retreat for students. The students show great respect for the library space.

Many students also support the library by offering their time to help with small chores and errands. The 6th grade class incorporates service to the library into their work schedule, so twice weekly two 6th graders offer their time to help at lunch choice. Due date card stamping, sorting books, watering plants, light cleaning and dusting, and barcode labelling are typical jobs for students. I am grateful for this and I know it is hard to give up valuable choice time.

It has been a great first year, and I truly look forward to building more meaningful connections and supporting the students in their growth in the years to come.