RA for All: Flip the Script and Think Like a Reader

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Why RA for All?

Books are our brand. But books are not our business. READING is our business. 

#librarylife #duncansmith #readadv

2020 could be my year of I told you so to all the library ppl who told me 5 years ago that no one wants #ReadAdv training, that libraries were repositioning as a "third space," focusing on our buildings, that we were "more than books," that no one would want or need my training.

I could do that, but I am too busy trying to fill all the requests for #ReadAdv training you all need right now.
Flip Your Focus and Think Like a Reader

- Recapture your love of books as a reader
- Focus on the appeal of books and booktalking in general NOT on matching books with readers
- Working together to lighten the load for all
- RA as team building
- Help more readers
- Focus On Conversations NOT Transactions
Becky’s 10 Rules for Basic RA Service

- All rules with links are always [here](#)
- Also at that link-- the 5 resources you cannot live without
- The focus here is on RA Service by **ALL**
- ....with lessons learned from 2020
Betty Rosenberg: “Never apologize for your reading tastes.”

- A non-judgmental list of what you “should read”
- Set a better example of the first rule of RA
Rule #2

Suggest don’t Recommend

- Library anxiety is real
- This means you can talk about anything!
Rule #3

Everyone reads a different version of the same book

- Poll
- Example
- Readalike
Rule #4

Write down **adjectives** about what you read; plot you can find

- **Why you like the book NOT what happens**
- Appeal categories: pacing, characterization, story line, frame, tone/mood, style
Virtual Exercise: Analyze the Appeal of Your Book

- Appeal areas on the handout [quickly on screen]
- Write down the ADJECTIVES that describe your book
- Star the areas where you are the most active
  - Becky’s 3 words for *Severance* by Ling Ma
    - Satire, shifting time frame, character centered
- Practice sharing the appeal of your book
Pacing

breakneck, compelling, deliberate, densely written, easy, engrossing, fast paced, leisurely paced, measured, relaxed, stately, unhurried
Characterization

detailed, distant, dramatic, eccentric, evocative, faithful, familiar, intriguing secondary (characters), introspective, lifelike, multiple points of view, quirky, realistic, recognizable, series (characters), vivid, well developed, well drawn
Story Line

action oriented, character centered, complex, domestic, episodic, explicit violence, family centered, folksy, gentle, inspirational, issue oriented, layered, literary references, multiple plotlines, mystical, mythic, open-ended, plot centered, plot twists, racy, resolved ending, rich and famous, romp, sexually explicit, steamy, strong language, thought-provoking, tragic
Frame and Tone

bittersweet, bleak, contemporary, darker (tone), detailed setting, details of [insert an area of specialized knowledge or skill], edgy, evocative, exotic, foreboding, gritty, hard edged, heartwarming, historical details, humorous, lush, magical, melodramatic, menacing, mystical, nightmare (tone), nostalgic, philosophical, political, psychological, romantic, rural, sensual, small town, stark, suspenseful, timeless, upbeat, urban
austere, candid, classic, colorful, complex, concise, conversational, direct, dramatic, elaborate, elegant, extravagant, flamboyant, frank, graceful, homespun, jargon, metaphorical, natural, ornate, poetic, polished, prosaic, restrained, seemly, showy, simple, sophisticated, stark, thoughtful, unaffected, unembellished, unpretentious, unusual
Rule #5

Read widely (at least speed read widely)

- reading ABOUT books is just as important as reading the book
- At work exercise: speed reading for appeal handout plus example on next 2 slides
- make sure you are reading with an equity, diversity, and inclusion lens as well as a diversity of genres
Severance (Aug 2018)

Author: Ma, Ling, 1983-

Description: An apocalyptic plague maintains a blog about a decimated Manhattan before joining a motley group of survivors to search for a place to rebuild, a goal that is complicated by an unscrupulous group leader.

Book Appeal Terms: Definition of Appeal Terms

Genre: Apocalyptic fiction; Satirical fiction

Themes: Pandemic; apocalypse

Character: Complex; Culturally diverse

Storyline: Character-driven; Own voices

Tone: Reflective; Sardonic

Writing Style: Stylistically complex; Witty

Persistent link to this record (Permalink):

Check availability at Berwyn Public Library

Booklist:

"Stared Review "With an apocalyptic fiction having become so popular a genre, how does one approach it with originality, avoiding the too familiar reference points? Embracing the genre but somehow transcending it, Ma creates a truly engrossing and believable anti-utopian world. Ma's cause for civilization's collapse is a pandemic. Shen Fever spreads through fungal spores, causing its victims to lethargically repeat mental tasks, ignoring all external stimuli, including the need for sustenance. Prognosis is terminal. Candace Chen, a rare survivor of the outbreak, blogs anonymously as NY Ghost on a slowly disintegrating internet, capturing the horror of what has happened in her photographs of an empty New York City where she lived when the "heaved" started dying. The narrative flashes back to Candace's life before the end, working for a book-manufacturing company in the Libraries department; spending free time watching movies with her on-and-off boyfriend, Jonathan; and longing for the seemingly fulfilled lives of other millennials her age. Candace's story also crosses that of a group led by a former IT specialist named Bob, who seems to be suffering from a messiah complex. Ma's extraordinary debut marks a notable creative jump by playing on the apocalyptic fears many people share today, as we live in these very interesting times. Pair Severance with Adam Sternbergh's similarly disturbing Shovel Ready (2014)." -- Ruickis, Michael (Reviewed 9/1/2018) [Booklist, vol 114, number 19, p36]

Publishers Weekly:

In this shrewd postapocalyptic debut, Ma imagines the end times in the world of late capitalism, marked by comforting, debilitating effects of nostalgia on its characters. The world has succumbed to Shen Fever, a "disease of remembering" that renders its victims zombie-like, doomed to "old routines and gestures they must have inhabited for years." The affected aren't dangerous, just disturbingly similar to the living in their stilted devotion to habit. The narrator, Candace Chen, works at a specialty Manhattan bookstore, overseeing the printing of specialty Bibles, "the purest form of product packaging, the same content repackaged a million times over." Most of the production takes place in China, the source of the fever and Candace's birthplace. She narrates the swift spread of the fungal infection, which begins to ravage the city as she struggles, like many young New Yorkers, with whether she should pursue her artistic passion (photography) or commit to her corporate job. The novel alternates between Candace's vivid descriptions of increasingly plague-ridden, deserted New York and her eventual pilgrimage to an Illinois shopping mall with a band of survivors, whose leader is a menacing former IT specialist. There are some suspense elements, but the novel's strength lies in Ma's accomplished handling of the walking dead concert to reflect on what constitutes the good life. This is a clever and droll debut. (Aug.) --Staff (Reviewed 06/04/2018) [Publishers Weekly, vol 265, issue 23, p]
Speed Reading: Reader POV
Time-Out Taken: Post Covid Realities

● 1-5 are guiding principles; 6-10 are delivering the service
  ○ 6-10 are where change is most noticeable
  ○ The good, the bad, the here to stay

● Biggest cultural shift-- no more “stop with the books, we are important as a space.”

● RA in HUGE demand, but are you ready to step up.
  ○ **Stock your RA Pantry**
Rule #6

Share what you read- with staff and patrons.

- RA Service is about CONVERSATIONS not transactions
  - RA is 60% Listening
- Curbside and Discovery [Passive RA]
- Use the words of others
- Step-by-step guide to improve staff booktalking skills
Rule #7

Use resources

- Think of your job as “leisure reading reference.”
- **Ask your patrons how they find book suggestions**
- **Using awards lists as a RA tool**
- Becky’s favorite **genre specific resources**
Rule #8

Working together is your MOST valuable resource

- **Goodreads is easiest**
- **“Stock Your RA Pantry”**
  - Working together while socially distant
Rule #9

Bridge the **physical-virtual divide**

- Opposite sides of the same coin
- [Unboxing Videos](#)
- [Interactive displays](#)
- **Use props**
  - Grab an item in person or post it online and share why you picked it
- We were forced to & it is working
Rule #10

PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

- Get Booked podcast as a practice tool
- Participate in #AskaLibrarian
- Reader profile exercise
  - double sided pdf also available to download
**Staff Reader Profile**

This is a short survey about your own personal leisure reading habits. There are no correct answers. Have fun!

Tell me about 3 of your favorite books and why you like them. These can be current favorites, all time favorites, or just books you remember really liking:
Ex: *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee: I love how it is a family saga, sweeping novel of the 20th century with tons of well drawn characters, and a frame I knew nothing about [Korean immigrants to Japan]

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Tell me about 3 of your LEAST favorite books and why you did NOT enjoy them. These can include books you stopped reading before finishing:
Ex: *Outlander* by Diana Gabaldon: Although I normally like historical fiction and time travel stories, there was way too much romance here for my taste
Please circle your top 5 favorite reading areas:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Nonfiction</th>
<th>Young Adult</th>
<th>Fantasy</th>
<th>Historical Fiction</th>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Literary Fiction</td>
<td>Mystery</td>
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<td>Suspense</td>
<td>Thriller</td>
<td>Adventure</td>
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<td>Romantic Suspense</td>
<td>Relationship Fiction</td>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>Horror</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bestsellers</td>
<td>Other:</td>
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Please mark all of the formats you enjoy reading:

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<thead>
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<th>Hardcover</th>
<th>Large Type</th>
<th>Paperback</th>
<th>Audiobooks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eBooks</td>
<td>Graphic Novels</td>
<td>Paperback</td>
<td>Audiobooks</td>
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Please let me know the types of books you enjoy the LEAST:

What are your favorite resources to use when looking for a good read for yourself:
Covid Success Case Study:
Des Moines Public Library [Goodreads]
Questions: Now or Later

- Don’t forget to check out my **5 Resources You Cannot Live Without**
- Read, Reflect, Record, Share, Repeat...