



Setting Up a Classroom Library

Setting up a classroom library is fun, but also daunting. Below are some suggestions that you should keep in mind.

Layout

First, consider layout. Put bookcases in different spots in your classroom. By doing so, you will probably have better traffic flow. Choose bookcases that will put books within arm's reach. There's a reason why kids don't reach for books on the highest shelves... they can't reach them! Incorporating book baskets are a lot more kid-friendly than spines lined up on a shelf. Kids can pull the baskets out easily without messing up the organization of the rest of the books on the shelf.

Organization

There are several options to consider when organizing your books.

Reading Levels

If you organize your books by reading level, are the levels explicit to your students or discreet? For instance, you can group books using the A-Z continuum, which would be more explicit, or discreetly group books within color categories like 'red books'. I recommend to not group books using grade-level equivalent. See chapter 1 of *Reading Without Limits* for my reasons why. When directing students to the library, you can say,



Try books in the M basket or See if you can find a fun book in the red basket.

Author Sets

Reserve one bookcase for author sets. Collect different books by the same author, and group them together.

Genre

You can also dedicate part of your library to genre sets. Genres can include manga, mystery, classics, realistic fiction, nonfiction, poetry, horror, action-adventure, historical fiction, humor, fantasy, reference, science fiction, biography, and

Think like a bookstore owner when you set up your library. Be intentional.

autobiography. I like to mix and match my library by including all of the above. Some of the sections are leveled, some have author sets, and some are genre based.

Recommendation Shelves

Tap students to create a shelf dedicated to books they enjoyed. Teachers from other classrooms can set up a shelf of their favorite picks. Or, see if parents want to join in on the fun! Wouldn't that be cool? Recommendation shelves are also a great way to engage reluctant readers. Check out Chapter Three for more tips on how to set up recommendation shelves.

No matter how you set-up your library (in levels, by genre, alphabetized) be mindful of your audience- can they see the books? Reach the books? Drool over the books? When designing a library remember that your two main goals are to pull your audience in, and make the experience worthwhile.