



Lisa Hascal

Do We Really Need to Read?

Earlier this month, I finished reading *Everyday* by David Levithan and updated my Goodreads.com site to let my followers know. I immediately received a comment from a friend, whose son is in Grade 5. She wanted to know my thoughts about the book, as a Teacher-Librarian, since it was given to her son by his teacher. My friend chose to read the book while her son was reading it, so she would be able to discuss it with him. While this is common practice for her, she was particularly happy she had read this one, because apparently the teacher had not!

I chose to read the book, because I was planning on adding it to my school library in the YA section. I was a little surprised that the book was given to a Grade 5 student with no caveat about the content. His mom was not overly impressed with this selection and when she mentioned this to the teacher, he went beet red and admitted that he had not read the book himself. He said, “I got it at a book fair and thought it sounded like an interesting read.” Of course, it was an interesting read, but the underlying messages around

gender and sexuality were new to this boy and he found much of it confusing. Fortunately, he was able to discuss the book with his mom, who felt a little unprepared having to answer some of his questions.

This example, of course, illustrates the importance of reading the books in our school libraries, but there are many other reasons why it’s important for Teacher-Librarians to read.

After I’ve read a particularly good book, I cannot help but share my passion with others. I find after I’ve given an informal “book talk”, the students immediately want to sign out the same book. In this way, I feel I’m building a community in my library where we not only discuss books, but the bigger issues within the books. It becomes “in fashion” to read the same books to be able to join the discussion. As Cassandra Clare says, “People who know and love the same books as you have the road map to your soul.” In my role, I have the opportunity to spark these discussions and build an understanding amongst the students in our community.

“
People who know and love the same books as you have the road map to your soul.

— *Cassandra Clare*

