Reviews
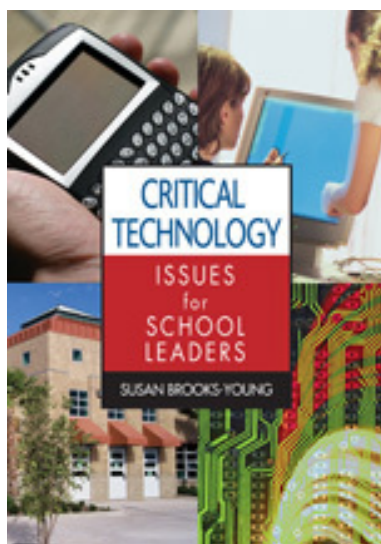
Critical Technology: Issues for School Leaders
Brooks-Young, Susan (2008)
Heatherton, Vic.: Hawker Brownlow Education
173 pages
ISBN: 174170 570 3
$45.95

In this book, author Dr. Susan Brooks-Young offers practical technology strategies on critical issues for school leaders intent on implementing ICT as a tool for learning and teaching. In her introduction, Brooks-Young contends that twenty first century educators must accept the fact that in order to prepare students to be successful in a technology-infused global economy, students need effective regular use of information and communications technology (ICT) incorporated into their learning programs.

The ever-changing technology landscape and a generation of 'digital-native' students challenge educators to keep pace, especially in preparing students for a successful future in an increasingly technologically advanced world.

Brooks-Young points out in her introduction that education is the only business still debating the usefulness of technology and for the most part schools remain unchanged despite numerous reforms and investments in computers and networks. Brooks-Young quotes from the research which indicates that it is administrative leadership that has a direct impact on all successful school reform including the quantity and quality of technology use in schools.

These studies indicated that in those instances where administrators take steps to support technology integration programs, teachers and students are far more likely to

engage in regular appropriate use of technology than in schools where administrative leadership is lacking in this area.

The book is divided into four main parts. These are:

Part 1: New Literacies;
Part 2: Engaging Teachers and Students;
Part 3: Providing a Reliable Infrastructure and
Part 4: Legal and Social Concerns.

Part I: New Literacies focuses on the latest technology advances and opportunities for integration in schools with chapters on the importance of the key skills of information literacy and visual literacy and the significance of the role of school libraries in improving student performance.

Part II: Engaging Teachers and Students details a host of tools and strategies for incorporating ICT as an interdisciplinary tool with chapters on professional development, establishing a Web presence, the instructional value of WebQuests, the use of Web 2.0 tools including classroom blogs and video streaming and the place of distance learning.

Part III: Providing a Reliable Infrastructure addresses tech-ready facilities, cost management, software and networks and the role of ICT coordinators.

Part IV: Legal and Social Concerns discusses Internet safety and security, precautions, copyright and plagiarism concerns and home-school communications.

The author of the book, Dr Susan Brooks-Young, is a well-known technology specialist and consultant in the U.S. Brooks-Young emphasises that incorporating effective, regular use of technology as a tool for teaching and learning is imperative if we want to "stay in the game." In this new book, Brooks-Young gathers her most popular and insightful work into a collection of practical technology strategies for issues most critical to busy school leaders.

School leaders will find detailed and concise information, extensive resources, and reflective questions for personal use or group discussion. This comprehensive, straightforward guide is an excellent resource for ICT leaders, especially teacher-librarians, to have in their professional library as it provides all the tools needed for effective technology leadership.

Reviewed by Dianne Ruffles
Director of Information Services, Melbourne High School
Member of the Synergy *Board*

What Teachers Need to Know About Teaching Methods
Westwood, Peter (2008)
Camberwell, Vic.: ACER Press
105 pages
ISBN: 978-086431-912-8
$24.95

Written in a very concise manner, this text provides the reader with an easy reference to a variety of teaching methodologies. The text begins with a chapter outlining conceptualisations of learning and teaching. Westwood then explores the methodology related to direct teaching and student centred approaches. With chapters ranging from methods suitable for different ability students, effective teaching and assessment of learning the text provides a handy easy reference for teachers when a quick outline will suffice.

Each chapter identifies the key issues related to a specific methodology providing a very effective insight for less experienced teachers or those adopting a methodology for the first time or in fact for those in positions of leadership with responsibilities for leading learning. This is followed by a concise and clearly written summary of a variety of methods or applications within the approach. The advantages and disadvantages are outlined as well as when the method is most appropriate and to what type of learner the method is best suited. Each chapter is enhanced by a variety of internet links making further investigation possible. This makes the text an excellent resource for teachers regardless of their level of experience.

In the preface Peter Westwood comments that 'this text is a small step towards bringing the current evidence and the debates into the hands of all teachers' (p. vi). Westwood has very much achieved this in an easy to read reference.

Reviewed by Michelle Rangelov
Head of Teaching and Learning
Genazzano FCJ College

Teen Spaces: The Step-by-Step Library Makeover
Bolan, Kimberly (2009)
Second Edition
Chicago, USA: ALA
225 pages
ISBN 978-0-8389-0969-0
Available from: **www.alastore.ala.org**

This text has a focus on teen spaces in public libraries and while there are many similarities between what is created in a pubic library for teenagers and school libraries there are also many differences and factors that set school libraries apart. Despite this Bolan raises many questions relevant to the school context and also invites exploration of some interesting concepts and ideas about creating teen spaces that will be applicable to the school situation.

Bolan concerns herself firstly with knowing the nature and needs of her client base and asking them what they want, something we don't always do well in schools. She then proceeds through the planning to the design stages coming back around to discuss policy and how to promote the space to its targeted users. Her examples are practical and well referenced with a basis in her own experience that lends her words credence.

Over one third of the book is taken up with templates, worksheets, resource and vendor lists with the addition of a detailed reference list that supports the whole text. Whilst some of this is useful, the reference list includes many items worth following up, the resources, vendors and examples Lof libraries are USA centred. In fact there are very few international examples of note. While this does not immediately discount the text it does limit its usefulness to the Australian context.

Bolan also shares with readers her own illustration collection of teen spaces at the flickr page **www.flickr.com/photos/kimbolan/collections/**. A link can be found to this page on the section created on the ALA website **www.ala.org/editions/extras/Bolan09690** that contains electronic versions of the templates, worksheets, resource and vendor lists that are in the book. A very useful addition to the hard copy text, particularly as it allows the modification of templates and worksheets to our own varied situations.

Reviewed by Dr Susan La Marca
Head of Library and Information Services
Genazzano FCJ College
Editor of Synergy

Knowing Our Place: Children Talking about Power, Identity and Citizenship
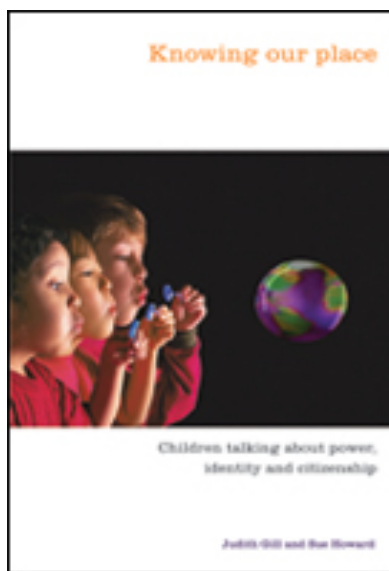
Judith Gill and Sue Howard (2009)
Camberwell, Vic.: ACER Press
186 pages
ISBN: 978 0 86431 872 5
$49.95
Available from ACER Press: **http://shop.acer.edu.au**

The dedication to co-author Sue Howard (1946-2006) on the opening pages, sums up the feeling one gets when reading this book: 'A great teacher whose respect for children's thinking shone through all her work'. The purpose of the book is to examine the way children view their world, their development as Australian citizens and sense of belonging in their community of nation, family, classroom and school.

Based on analysis of the responses of more than 400 South Australian primary school children (including Year 7) and relating to ideas about belonging, identity and social and political power, the authors have used a variety of methods to capture authentic responses. Data gathering focused, for example, not so much on whether or not students spoke about 'feeling Australian' but rather the way they talked about it. Their

responses to symbols and stereotypes, everyday life and significant events such as the Olympic Games opening ceremony, Sorry Day and the Tampa incident were explored.

In recognising the importance of geographical influences, the mix of students interviewed is a balance of urban and suburban children from a variety of traditional Anglo-Saxon, indigenous and immigrant backgrounds. The authors found evidence of the effect of the diminution of our rural towns and the folklore notions of Australia on the children's view their national identity. They discuss the definition of nationality as 'the story people tell about themselves' and about the concept of identity as a 'fluid construction' that differs according to the context.

Gill and Howard also touch on the implications of the emerging discussion about dispensing with the concept of national identity in favour of global citizenry.

Knowing our place has been published at a time when Australians are being increasingly called upon to justify their reactions and attitudes to the multitude of races that constitute our society. Individuals within immigrant families are struggling with the change associated with relocation. On the one hand identifying as Australians but maintaining the cultural roots of their origins.

The strength of this book is the constant reference to the perspective of the students interviewed. Examples of interviews are presented to the reader as evidence of questioning techniques and responses thereby provide a key to understanding the thinking of young people.

Using the data, this book unfolds through the chapters to firstly attempt to identify the concept of national identity, changes to attitudes through time, traditional and social knowledge and concludes with a discussion of the challenges for education. It establishes that children come with an imprint of their society that is moulded by the school environment. School structures are recognised as being micro systems that reflect society and have a significant influence on developing a student's social understandings beyond school.

Gill and Howard are mindful of the need to base education for citizenship on learning rather than an instructional model. Through applying learning theory to an examination of past approaches to citizenship education, they question the value of the government investment in the Discovering Democracy curriculum resources. Concluding remarks regarding future resources recommend that 'curriculum should be developed in terms of current adolescent thinking rather than once again comprising what an expert group might deem to be appropriate and necessary knowledge'.

While education for citizenship was not the point of their research, the outcomes of traditional curriculum approaches have been evident in the authors' findings. As a result they conclude that a one-size-fits-all model, focusing on the rote learning of facts provided by a group of experts has not worked. Instead they recommend that, 21st century social education principles be applied with the goal of producing a 'participatory

and well informed citizenry'. While refraining from formulating a new approach, they have presented guidelines that could be applied to a similar research project focusing on adolescent children.

This book approaches the teaching of citizenship and the concept of identity through the lens of the student. It is written with understanding in an exceptionally readable form that lends itself to the reader entering the text from a variety of points. While based on research data from primary school students, the analysis is of a complexity that would make it applicable to any level of education. I recommend this text as a valuable reference to administrators, curriculum leaders, teachers, welfare staff and immigrant family counselors.

Reviewed by Camilla Elliott

Head of Library and Information Services, Mount Lilydale Mercy College
Member of the Synergy *Board*

Cool, Calm and Collected: Managing Behaviour in the Secondary School Library
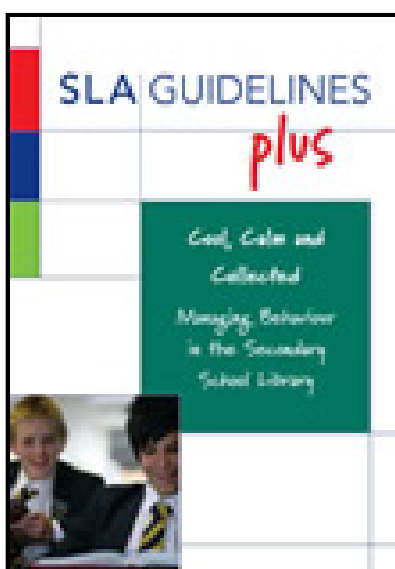Larson, Claire and Dubber, Geoff (2009)
Wanborough, Swindon UK: School Library Association (SLA)
SLA Guidelines Plus series
77 pages
ISBN978 1 903446 49 2
Available from: **www.sla.org.uk**

The UK based School Library Association exists to support and encourage all those working in school libraries, raising awareness and promoting sound practice through an effective training and publications programme. *Cool, Calm and Collected: Managing*

Behaviour in the Secondary School Library is one such publication. It begins with the premise that appropriate behaviour is not something that just happens but must be managed and taught. A skilled teacher, for example, manages the behaviour of a large group of students so that they are focused, motivated and are learning effectively. For library staff it may not be so straightforward in a large open area, where staff do not have complete, direct responsibility for either a particular subject or the progressive learning of students over an entire semester. Accordingly, this book adopts a range of positive strategies or practical approaches to discipline that can work in schools.

Since the library is an integral part of the working of all effective schools, the five principles outlined in Alan Steer's 2005 report of the *Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline* commissioned in the UK and applied to school libraries are:

- The environment in which we study, learn, relax and work influences our behaviour
- Clear rewards and sanctions, which are in line with school policy and which are applied fairly and consistently, help to promote good behaviour in the learning resource centre (LRC)/library
- Good behaviour is learned. We all have a responsibility to teach it and model it
- Specific strategies can be adopted in various circumstances, such as managing student behaviour during a lesson in the LRC, during free time in the LRC and when individuals or small groups use the LRC.
- The LRC staff should be involved in all aspects of training and coaching regarding behaviour management.

Importantly, the whole issue of behaviour is related to how the library is perceived and regarded in the school as a whole. It is essential that the LRC staff have the support and backing from senior teaching staff. LRC staff should be familiar with the school's behaviour policy and the systems for putting the policy into action, that is, the set procedures for reporting and following up behaviour problems. Wherever possible, sanctions alongside duty of care towards all students should operate as they do elsewhere in the school. Ensure that students understand what will happen if they do not follow the expected code of behaviour.

Managing student behaviour is by no means an easy, straightforward task. It takes practice, perseverance and an understanding that it is impossible to get it right every time. *Cool, Calm and Collected: Managing Behaviour in the Secondary School Library* outlines assertive rather than aggressive techniques, the importance of positive influences, respect but not absolute control, as it is usually impossible to control other people's behaviour. Reasons are outlined for students' misbehaviour: environmental factors, social factors, attention seeking and the huge changes physically, mentally and emotionally which occur during adolescence. The authors recommend that LRC staff practise new strategies to find what methods work for them and to be mindful of body language, tone of voice and choice of words when managing students. These types of contribution are helping to reinforce and develop the school ethos by equipping students with effective social skills as well as achieving the vision and goals of the LRC.

The four case studies at the end of the book contain useful behaviour management strategies, codes of student conduct and behaviour expectations in the library. Finally, the four appendices comprise various checklists of LRC staff status and working conditions, user perceptions of the LRC, a list of rewards and sanctions followed by a further reading list. The text is accessible with practical advice for managing difficult behaviour situations in any school library.

Reviewed by Dr. Robin Zeidler
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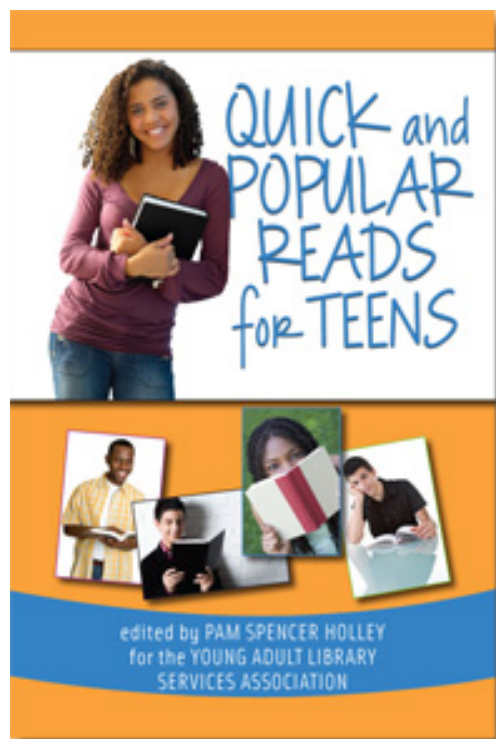**Quick and Popular Reads for Teens**
Holley, Pam Spencer (Editor) (2009)
Chicago: ALA
228 pages
ISBN 978 0 8389 3577 4
Available from: **www.alastore.ala.org**

Pam Spencer Holley, as past president of the Young Adult Services Association, has prepared an annotated list of recommended books appropriate for reluctant young adult readers (ages 12-18). *Quick and Popular Reads for Teens* highlights a decade's compilation of lists recommending books for secondary students who are not avid readers. Although the lists are not new, teacher-librarians and English teachers may not

remember the titles and themes as first options. The two reading lists, the focus of this book, are *Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers* (QP) inaugurated in 1982 which identifies titles for recreational reading and *Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults* (PPYA). The aim of the latter is to encourage young adults to read for pleasure from lists of popular or topical titles which are readily available in paperback. The selected titles represent a broad range of accessible themes and genres.

The first five chapters or 50 pages of *Quick and Popular Reads for Teens* have an introductory chapter about teen readers followed by two chapters which review the origin, history and selection processes of the QP and PPYA committees. A chapter on programming, displays and readers' advisory services offers suggestions for using the lists in libraries as well as further readings. The next two chapters cover fiction and non-fiction, the annotated listings of the titles selected by the QP and PPYA committees from 1999 to 2008. The annotations have all been rewritten to provide more descriptive assistance to teacher-librarians as they provide recommendations to teenagers and develop their collections.

Theme based booklists in the final chapter will help with providing displays, producing bookmarks and selecting titles. A useful index has every fiction title listed with authors, titles and subjects interfiled in one alphabet. The subjects are in boldface to distinguish them from the authors and titles. Annotations are indicated by bold page numbers. Clearly, this organisation makes it easy to trace any reference quickly and effectively.

Book annotations cover more than 150 pages and are written concisely and to the point, generally one or two sentences long. These fiction snapshots are useful for a quick overview, as book recommendations or for display purposes. Most titles are published in the twenty-first century with a few prior to the year 2000. This is the strength of *Quick and Popular Reads for Teens*, that it is a compilation of a decade or more of quick picks and popular paperbacks rather than just very current material.

The original annotations, written with the teenage reader in mind, are available on the YALSA booklists website – see: **www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists/**. The annotations in *Quick and Popular Reads for Teens* have been rewritten to provide librarians with more descriptive information to assist in collection development, readers' advisory services as well as the creation of displays, booklists and pathfinders. Chapter 4 provides excellent ways to reach out to reluctant readers and draw them into libraries and a reading culture. Programs are devised and incentives for attending such programs are outlined, such as, food, prizes, and academic rewards together with other forms of recognition. Regular outreach programs and activities, for example, book discussion groups and book talking, the use of audio books, DVDs, graphic novels and magazines can all be used with reluctant readers.

Importantly, early on in the text the term 'reluctant reader' is defined to reflect new guidelines, which remove any possible indication that the reluctant reader may be unskilled. Rather, he or she belongs to one of three reading categories: *dormant readers* who have other priorities, *uncommitted readers* who do not enjoy reading fiction but

select non-fiction instead, and *unmotivated readers* who dislike reading but can be convinced with music and poetry magazines. *Quick and Popular Reads for Teens* is successful in what it intends to achieve, namely, an outline of programs and fine books to appeal to the reluctant reader.

Reviewed by Dr. Robin Zeidler
Director of Library Services
The Nigel Peck Centre for Learning and Leadership
Melbourne Grammar School

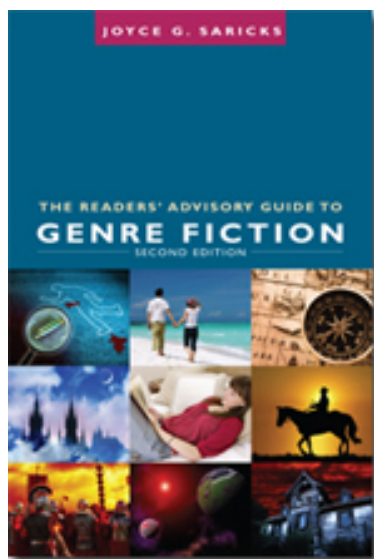**The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction**
Saricks, Joyce C. 2009
Chicago: American Library Association
Second Edition
ISBN 978 0 8389 098 98
387 pages

Don't know much about genre fiction? Think it is not as interesting or valuable as literary fiction? Unclear about why people find pleasure in particular genres and what is the pleasure to be found? Want to broaden your own reading but don't know where to start? Challenged by needing to help your readers find books they enjoy? Answer yes to any or all of these and this book is for you.

The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction is a comprehensive, thoughtfully arranged guide that begins with the reader and the reading experience to frame its exploration of hundreds of books, from horror stories to ones about relationships, from mysteries to gentle reads. This is a book by readers for readers: 'As readers ourselves, we know how important it is to be able to have books to suit our mood'. Its focus is on the reader and how readers approach the reading experience rather than on the more obvious subject

matter and characteristics of genres. While it will be invaluable to librarians, its enlightening, democratic nature makes it informative for anyone interested in reading.

Variations within genres are carefully described and catered for so that if you like your adventure book heroes to be nuanced rather than stereotyped, Saricks has recommendations. She categorises some adventure novels as 'male romance'. Such categorizations are not at all reductive, but rather enriching. The book has multiple paths to follow for each grouping, such as the links between earlier and recent authors, between book and film, between graphic novels and highly illustrated texts and even to spoofs of the genre.

The characteristics and appeal are what give the book its structure: pacing, characterisation, story line, frame and setting, tone and mood, and language and style.

Each genre has an introduction which includes definitions, key authors, what is known about fans, sure bets, and advice about encouraging readers to cross genres and particular trends in the writing across time, such as the rise of medical and scientific thrillers, and the increasingly strong violence, explicit sex and strong language in Romantic suspense. This latter genre is one of the curious hybrid genres that Saricks identifies.

The close and insightful analysis of the appeal of the wide range of genres aids the understanding of devotees and invites us to move out of our comfort zones of reading.

As would be expected it is impeccably referenced and indexed allowing for ready identification and location of specific titles. While Matthew Reilly and Kerry Greenwood are comprehensively dealt with, one longs for the Australian edition. Any takers?

Reviewed by Dr Pam Macintyre

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Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne
Editor - Viewpoint: on books for young adults