Reaching the Teachers:
Leading a K-12 Faculty Outreach Initiative
(Mostly) on Your Own

a presentation by
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What’s a K-12 Faculty Outreach Initiative?

• Building relationships with administrators & teachers at local K-12 schools

• Educating faculty about library resources & programming they may not know about

• Encouraging faculty to contact us for help/support

• Asking faculty to promote the library to their students
Where I started...

• Full-time Youth Services Librarian: 6-8 storytimes/week, managed 20-30 teen volunteers, and worked 296 reference desk hours between January and May

• NO “Outreach Librarian”

• Had my managers’ blessings (most important!)
“Partnership for Literacy & Education”

- Document that was being negotiated as I undertook this initiative

- Simple, loose partnership agreement between School Board & Library System

- Had not been finalized as I undertook my outreach initiative, so an existing partnership agreement is not necessary!
“Partnership for Literacy & Education”

• Non-resident faculty eligibility for library cards

• Library card applications distributed to all new students during registration, upon request, & online

• Children’s librarians listed in school district’s “Speakers Bureau” list, available for visits

• Establishment of faculty/library liaisons
Make a Plan:

Pick Your Targets

• I targeted 20 schools in 6 months (13 elementary, 4 middle, 3 high)

• WAY too many, but wanted to account for less-responsive schools

• Asked to appear at a faculty meeting, took other options when offered to me as alternatives
Make a Plan: Different Ways to Initiate Partnership

Faculty Meeting Outreach

- E-mailed/called principals & assistant principals to inquire about speaking
- Prepared brief Powerpoint & half-sheet handouts for all faculty, highlighting the Partnership for Literacy & Education
- Included my contact information; encouraged faculty to contact me with questions, collection development requests, & requests for visits
Make a Plan:

Presentation

But wait! Even if it’s just a loose agreement, you have plenty more to talk about, right?
Make a Plan:
Different Ways to Initiate Partnership

Media Specialist/Reading Coach or “Library Liaison” Meetings

Other times, I met with a “liaison” (media specialist, para, reading coach, etc) willing to distribute my handouts and maybe even share my Powerpoint with faculty!
Make a Plan:
Different Ways to Initiate Partnership

• The Promised “Forwarded E-mail”

• Pre-Summer Reading Classroom Outreach direct to specific grade(s)

• Other classroom visits, once teachers knew who I was and what I do
Make a Plan:
Keeping Track of Everyone

- Kept track of contacts in a cloud-based spreadsheet
- Logged all my interactions with them – this was valuable data later!
Data Collection:

“School Assignment Help” Reference Desk Log

Logged 11 library referrals from teachers at schools I visited
Data Collection:

Faculty Surveys – 4 Questions

1. During the current school year, have you mentioned the Seminole County Public Library to any of your students? (Y/N)

2. Have you personally used the Seminole County Public Library during the current school year? (Y/N)

3. How relevant are the Seminole County Public Library's resources to your students' needs? (4 “relevance” choices)

4. Did you do any of the following as a result of Sara White's visit to your school's faculty meeting?
   - Visited the library   - Registered for (or reactivated) a card
   - Checked out books   - Used online/electronic library resources
   - Contacted Sara White  - Encouraged students to use the library
Data Collection:
Faculty Surveys – 4 Questions

• 220 teachers said they mentioned the library to their students this year (79 said they didn’t).

• 136 teachers personally visited the library this year (163 said they didn’t).

• 264 teachers rated the library’s resources as “relevant” or “extremely relevant” (34 rated as “irrelevant” or “extremely irrelevant” – mostly middle and high school teachers).

• 135 teachers said that as a result of my visits/communication, they encouraged their students to visit the library.

• 43 K-12 teachers said they visited the library, and 25 said they registered or re-registered for a library card as a result of my visits/communication
Data Collection:
Summer Reading Signup “Mini Survey”

Logged **99** library referrals from teachers at schools I visited
Data Collection:
“Stories” Resulting from Outreach

“Maybe stories are just data with a soul.”
– Brené Brown (http://brenébrown.com/)
Data Collection:
“Stories” Resulting from Outreach

When asked in a survey (later, by their teacher) what their favorite part of the Winn-Dixie party was, 15 out of 18 responding students mentioned “the librarian.”
Data Collection:

“Stories” Resulting from Outreach

“My favorite part is when Otis (Librarian) sang ‘I Lay My Burden Down.’ Another favorite part is when Otis sings the song with the stuffed animals...” – Jeannie

“My favorite part of the part was when I got to pull the T REX and the other animals, like the dog and the ostrich. I think it was really funny!” – Jeremy
Data Collection:
“Stories” Resulting from Outreach

“Well my favorite part was when the librarian played the happy song. I liked it because it made me happy and laugh.”
– Lucia

“My favorite part of the Winn-Dixie party was when the librarian sang and read the book.”
– Raina
SCPL Results:
Overall School Administration Response

School Responses to Outreach Attempt

- 9 School Faculty Meetings
- 6 Library Liaison Meetings
- 2 Forwarded E-mails
- 2 “Postponed” (I never had time to follow up)
- 1 Unresponsive
SCPL Results:

Back to that Spreadsheet!

• Developed 47 different named contacts at different schools as a result of this initiative

• Also made notes about the different questions I received from teachers at faculty meetings (even when there wasn’t enough time to ask their names) – 8 additional

• Made 6 “follow up” visits to schools at the request of teachers (class visits, parent nights, and a faculty database training)
SCPL Results:

As the initiative is considered successful so far, Youth Services Librarians at our other 4 branches are now continuing to initiate faculty outreach & partnership with more schools!
Questions?

Please feel free to contact me.

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