

Chicken or Egg?

Saskatchewan School Library Association

THE MEDIUM – WINTER 2011

Karin Wilde
Balfour Collegiate
Regina Public Schools

Chris Arnstead
SSLA Executive



SASKATCHEWAN SCHOOL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Chicken or Egg?

Saskatchewan School Library Association

Which came first, the chicken or the egg?

How does this question apply to collection development?

As a teacher librarian, I am constantly previewing books, reading reviews, scouting websites, browsing publishers' catalogues, visiting bookstores, and shopping at book displays. I consider the needs of the teachers and students and strive to meet the demands of the curriculum. I regularly wrestle with decisions over what to purchase. If I purchase this book, will anyone use it? Which comes first, the assignment or the book? Do I buy this book in the hopes that someone will use it? Alternatively, do I wait until a teacher creates an assignment and then try to purchase materials to support it? Do I only buy books for assignments teachers at my school always give?

In the case of *We want you to know: Kids talk about bullying* by Deborah Ellis, I bought the book first. I respect this award-winning author's work and the book is a fresh treatment of a continuing problem. She interviews students between the ages of nine and nineteen who talk candidly about their personal experiences with bullying. Thought-provoking discussion questions follow each interview. This book encourages an open dialogue about bullying and suggests ways that adults could deal more effectively with bullies, the bullied, and the bystanders.

Bullying is not inevitable. It doesn't have to be a normal part of childhood. The more we talk with each other, share our stories, and listen—particularly to those whose voices aren't often heard—the closer we move toward a just society.

Deborah Ellis

Canadian Review of Materials offers this review on their website:

<http://umanitoba.ca/outreach/cm/vol16/no24/wewantyoutoknow.html>.

I was concerned about the length of time *We want you to know: Kids talk about bullying* sat unused on display in my library. Was it a mistake to have purchased it?

In conjunction with International **STAND UP** to Bullying Day (<http://www.standupday.com>), English teacher, Karin Wilde, approached me for suggestions for an activity for her grade 10 students. I introduced the book *We want you to know* to her.

Within minutes, my “egg” had hatched!

We quickly formulated the idea that groups of students would each read one of the stories from the book and discuss it. Our collection also furnished an excellent video from the Teen Files Flipped series on bullying called *Bullies, Loners and Violence*. Students responded so well to this theme, they also suggested using the MTV program *If you really knew me, Episode 8, Neenah High School* available online.

Students connected well with the interviews collected by Ellis and engaged in meaningful discussions about the issues surrounding the complex topic of bullying. The assignment to write an advice column was a logical extension of class discussions and an excellent way to demonstrate students' newly developed empathy.

Karin's use of this book validated my selection of it.

In this case, the egg (book) came first, the chicken (lesson, activities) followed!

Activities

Video:

The Teen Files Flipped. (n.d.) Bullies, Loners and Violence. Canadian Learning Company

Students watch the video about bullying.

Book:

Ellis, D. (2010). We want you to know: kids talk about bullying. Regina, SK, Canada: Coteau Books.

Divide students into groups of two or three.

Handout a different interview to each group. (Karen used the stories on pages: 13, 14, 21, 33, 42, 57, 62, 68, 80, 85, 91 and 98)

Students read one interview and discuss the questions that follow each part.

Each group then reports their discussion to the whole class.

Video:

MTV Video If You Really Knew Me (Episode 8): Bullying available online at:

http://www.mtv.ca/tvshows/if-you-really-knew-me/video_content.jhtml?id=1648308

Written Assignment:

Advice Column – instructions on page 3.

Advice Column

Bullying is a huge issue in all high schools and often times teenagers do not know where to turn for help!

Part 1:

- You are a high school student who has a question about bullying. You do not feel comfortable talking to your peers, your family or your teachers about the situation, so you decide to submit your question to a teen magazine advice column. You may be the victim, the bully or a bystander in the incident and are looking for an outsiders point of view. You need to describe the situation that is going on, the people involved and close with your question.

Part 2:

- After posing your question, you will now write the response. Take on the role of a high school peer support member to answer the question. The tone should be empathetic and supportive. It should include compliments to the student who was brave enough to write in and positive suggestions as to how to handle the situation.

Your advice column should be approximately a page in length.

Evaluation:

<i>Question</i>	Explanation of the situation	/5
	Description of the people involved	/5
	Insightful Question	/5
<i>Response</i>	Tone: sympathetic and supportive	/5
	Compliments	/5
	Positive suggestions	/5
<i>Total</i>		/30

Resources

Ellis, D. (2010). We want you to know: kids talk about bullying. Regina, SK, Canada: Coteau Books.

MTV Video. If You Really Knew Me: Neenah High: Bullying. (Episode 8). Available online at

http://www.mtv.ca/tvshows/if-you-really-knew-me/video_content.html?id=1648308

The Teen Files Flipped. (n.d.) Bullies, Loners and Violence. Canadian Learning Company.