Genrefication: Making Children's Collections Accessible

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Genrefication:
Making Children's Collections Accessible

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(Qiangxuer, 2020)
Introduction

Most people who have home libraries have no need to classify their collections. They have one or maybe several bookcases, perhaps separating fiction from nonfiction, grouping fiction by genre or format, nonfiction by subject. They may even keep their Outlander books together and not mix them up with their Alex Cross books. But only a rare bird would alphabetize their fiction by author or organize their nonfiction by the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress (LC) classification systems. Likewise, if their small child has a bookcase in his or her bedroom, it is probably an unsorted mass of picture books. That all changes, however, when they go to a public or school library, the reason being, naturally, a matter of scale.

From the Library of Alexandria to modern times, organization within and consistency between libraries has been a concern. That was the reason Melvil Dewey published his Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system in 1876. Since 1876, however, libraries have modified that system, most notably by taking fiction out of the 800s and moving it to F or FIC for fiction due to the vast numbers of novels being published. Today, some public libraries genrefy their adult fiction collections (e.g., separating mysteries from fantasies) because, again, there are many books being published annually in each genre and some adults prefer mysteries while others prefer fantasies. For some reason, though, many librarians, both public and school, resist the movement toward genrefying their children’s fiction collections, so their picture books, easy readers, chapter books, and middle grade fiction remain in sections with shelf after shelf of books alphabetized by authors’ last names.

Other librarians, however, have come around, arguing, for example, that “Kindergarteners don’t know how to find books by author” (Witteveen, 2019), while still others acknowledge that even upper elementary students struggle with such an arrangement. But every
school and children's librarian has fielded questions and even demands like these: “Where are the scary books?” “Do you have any mysteries?” “I want a book about princesses!”

**Definition**

So what, exactly, is genrefication and, more importantly, why is it such a big deal for younger readers? Megan Mabee, writing for *Book Riot*, defines genrefication as “the process of assigning genres to books with the intent of helping patrons find books of interest” (Mabee, 2020). Just as it is for the adults mentioned above, children come to the library looking for books about *something* much more than they come looking for books by *someone*, so it just makes sense to divide that large picture book section into genres. In that way, searching can morph into browsing, and “a classification and shelving system that promotes browsing is more developmentally natural for young users” (Kimmel & Lancaster, 2020, p. 24). Alyssa Sultanik points out that genrefication employs a system of “reader interest classification organized by “subject rather than discipline,” as it is in DDC. The subjects, or genres, can be generated by the librarian, gathered through an examination of the collection, or adopted / adapted from an authority source (Sultanik, 2020, p. 1). It should be pointed out here that “genre” is not necessarily the same as “subject,” at least not in the sense of Sears or LC subject headings. If, for example, you look up *The Case of the Missing Marquess*, *The London Eye Mystery*, or *The -Year-Old Secret*, you will not see “mystery” or “children’s mystery” in the list of subject headings. Genres in the catalog are more likely to appear as a sublocations (see below), which may or may not be searchable.

Some think of genrefication as organizing a library like a bookstore (Cornwall, 2018; Follett, 2019, p. 4; Gracey, 2018). However, when it comes to children’s books, at least children’s picture books and fiction, where most of the genrefication is going on, I fail to see the
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connection. If, for example, you go to the children’s section of your local Barnes & Noble, you will find alphabetization, not genrefication; it is mostly in their teen and adult sections where you will find sections divided by genre. Likewise, I find it confusing when I find talk in the literature conflating fiction with DDC, which as noted was pulled out of DDC, with the only vestiges being the continued use of subject headings. When I mention DDC, I am only referring to those books still classified using whole numbers and decimals.

**Reasons to Genrefy**

School librarians should be able to justify the move to genrefying their picture book and fiction sections on the grounds that it aligns with their mission in the school. If you as a school librarian have not formulated a mission statement, you can begin by asking, “What ought the core mission of a modern school library be?” (Cornwall, 2018). In addition to supporting the school’s curricular goals, it would be safe to say that “encouraging a lifelong love of books … is an essential part of every librarian’s role” (Junior Library Guild, 2021). Moreover, research has long shown that there is a direct correlation between time spent reading and reading ability (Taylor et al., 2019). Indeed, if you run Scholastic book fairs, you have undoubtedly received their “Reading Matters!” poster, which runs lines from minutes spent reading through number of words encountered to success on standardized tests, which could explain why children are expected to spend at least 20 minutes reading each night for homework and have a parent or guardian sign to indicate that they have (Scholastic, 2019).

For their study, Taylor et al. (2019, p. 861) surveyed teachers to gauge their views on the genrefication project being carried out in the school library and found “overwhelming support,” as the project aligned with what they were doing in their classrooms in accordance with the teaching of genre as part of their state’s standards. Here in Virginia, genre is part of the language
arts Standards of Learning in the fourth (4.5.d), fifth (5.5.f), and eighth (8.5.f) grades. Some teachers go to the trouble of genrefying their classroom libraries and would prefer or even request that the librarian do the same. In addition, some teachers in upper elementary and middle school challenge their students to read some number of books during the school year and structure the challenge around genres. Students – and adults – are exposed to the concept of genre in their everyday lives, particularly through streaming services like Netflix and Spotify. As one librarian quoted by Moeller & Becnel (2019, p. 203) put it, “everything else in these kids’ lives is genrefied. Why on earth would we not genrefy the books?”

Librarians know how hard it is to get kids interested in reading, and to keep them reading. They also know that if searching / browsing becomes too burdensome, students will wind up being less satisfied with their selections, maybe even walking out with a book they don’t really want to read (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 202). Even teens can be daunted by a large fiction section arranged solely by alphabet. As a result, some “avoid the library entirely” (Minton, 2014). One might also add that having all those books spine-out on the shelves makes browsing seem like looking for a needle in a haystack. In the literature, this quandary is known as “choice overload” (Sultanik, 2020, p. 4). In a non-genrefied school library, reluctant readers tend to grab-n-go at the last minute due to the overwhelming array of choices – all displaying only their spines (Arenz, n.d.). As struggling readers become more familiar with reading books in a favorite genre, on the other hand, they begin developing the ability to make predictions. This in turn builds confidence and increases enjoyment (Minton, 2014). And this may be especially true for those reading series, which reinforces their sense of accomplishment.

For young children, online retrieval and discovery systems are of no use; and for those just slightly older, they are of little use. As Kimmel & Lancaster point out, “children should be
able to discover books that excite and interest them” on their own, without the use of such “boundary objects” as online catalogs, which they can’t navigate, and alphabetical order, which they should be able to manage but struggle to do so. Overcoming such boundaries “presents an opportunity for new discoveries,” but without that access discoveries are left at the level of happenstance, which can be frustrating and turn off budding scholars. What is needed is an in-your-face discovery system like genrefication (Kimmel & Lancaster, 2020, pp. 20-21). In a genrefied library, children from kindergarten through their formative years should be able to find the kinds of books they’re looking for without adult supervision (Sultanik, 2020, p. 4). Thus, children who know what they like know where to go in a genrefied collection, so they can focus their attention on one or two areas, and it is safe to assume that this “increased ease of use [will boost their] interest in books” (Arenz, n.d., Benefits section).

Librarians who have “flipped their collections” have consequently noticed that they are no longer being inundated with questions. The students are instead going to their chosen genres and looking for themselves. In other words, the students are browsing and finding books that fit their criteria (Witteveen, 2019). Having the fiction section separated into genres enables students to better appreciate the treasure house the collection represents. Not only will they become more independent within certain genres but they might also become interested in sampling others – especially when friends make recommendations (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 206). In her seminal book, In the Middle: New Understandings About Writing, Reading, and Learning, Nancie Atwell wrote that “it is not a luxury for students to select their own books, that choice is the wellspring of literacy and literary appreciation … student choice is synonymous with student engagement” (italics in original, as cited in Taylor et al., 2019, p. 854). In The Book Whisperer, educator Donalyn Miller also argues persuasively in favor of self-selected, or “free-
choice reading,” which she believes to be the cornerstone of reading instruction (Miller, 2009, p. 2).

Genrefying one’s fiction collection represents “a way to provide students with the opportunity to do more focused browsing in a short amount of time” (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 205). Students with limited time can focus on a particular part of the collection and are less likely to need help finding something they will enjoy. On the flip side, this will save time for the librarian who won’t be pulled in multiple directions for readers’ advisory. As is well known, students in elementary through high school are not given ample time to browse in the library. Elementary students get 10-15 minutes at most during library classes and older students may get less and are not taken to the library on a weekly basis. This also puts pressure on the librarian, who gets just snippets of time to advise students (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 202). No part of this scenario comports with Ranganathan’s fourth law: “Save the time of the reader” (Sultanik, 2020, p. 5).

While getting kids to read more is the ultimate aim of genrefication, partial proof would lie in increased circulation. Indeed, Christy Minton (2014) cited this as one of the reasons she chose to genrefy her high school library. She wrote at the time that she hoped circulation would rise “significantly” over the coming year. One possible reason for high expectations is the simple fact that if students come in looking not for a specific title but rather with a type of book in mind, they would be more likely to leave with more than one item. In addition, students who feel confident in their ability to find books of interest to them are also only too happy to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with peers (Sultanik, 2020, p. 12).
What to Genrefy

Some school and public librarians focus their genrefication efforts on their picture book collections since children in PreK-2 are the most in need of sections arranged for browsability. One county public library in western Virginia has only its picture book collection genrefied (in 13 genres), and the librarian there has indicated that the reason is children at that age come in looking for books on a given topic, like animals or trucks, and need the pictorial cues above the sections to help guide them (see photo below; Axt, 2023a). Generally speaking, these children are looking for story books. If a parent wishes to see nonfiction books on animals or cars, the librarians on hand are happy to assist them (R. Ventola, personal communication, March 27, 2023). Others, like Krystal Lancaster, who has genrefied the picture books in two libraries, prefer to include simple nonfiction picture books placed beside their respective genres. So, for example, nonfiction books with limited text and photographs of trucks would be included (K. Lancaster, personal communication, March 28, 2023). This makes sense, since such books have little value being kept in the nonfiction collection. Most librarians who take on genrefication, however, begin with the fiction section, presumably as this part of the collection is easier to manage (Arenz, n.d.). One city public library in western Virginia, on the other hand, has taken on both picture books and fiction. The picture book collection has been subdivided into 25 genres, the fiction collection into 12 genres (for examples, see photos below; Axt, 2023b and
When it comes to possibly genrefying nonfiction, there is less agreement. Of the librarians Greg Arenz (n.d.) surveyed, only half of those who elected to take on genrefication also genrefied their nonfiction collection. Most librarians, though, in an effort to keep their
nonfiction collections essentially in Dewey order, are experimenting with slight modifications that may fit in with what Elisabeth Marrocolla calls “Dewey-Light” (Witteveen, 2019). Of course, librarians have been nibbling at the edges of Dewey for years. That is how fiction came to eventually occupy its own half of the library. Likewise, biographies are sometimes found in the 920s, other times in a separate section under B or BIO. It is also common to find pull-outs for fairy tales, graphic novels, and even poetry (Holladay, 2017, p. 15). One school librarian in western Virginia uses bins to subdivide shelves housing popular nonfiction topics (T. Vangelos, personal communication, March 27, 2023; photo, Axt, 2023d). Krystal Lancaster has also pulled out select nonfiction titles and placed them in bins. She reasons that “bins are a little more browsable” and she adds that since then, circulation for nonfiction has risen (K. Lancaster, personal communication, March 28, 2023).

One reason for not genrefying the nonfiction collection has to do with the widespread use of the Dewey and LC classification systems in public and college libraries. High school librarians surveyed by Arenz (n.d.) preferred to prepare their students for the rigors of locating materials in an academic library. That reasoning is understandable but doesn’t speak to the needs of elementary-aged students. As students age between preschool and 2nd grade, genrefied picture book sections don’t exactly age with them. For example, the Go Go Go genre in each of the two western Virginia public libraries is fine for PreK-K students, but by 1st or 2nd grade story books and simple nonfiction may not be enough. Unfortunately, the train books they would really like to see are still in the 385s and the 685s, and somewhere along the line, pull-outs may become more trouble than they are worth.
One possible solution is to switch to the BISAC system of classification. The Book Industry Standards and Communication system is used by the non-library side of the book industry (e.g., book stores). A close cousin to genrefication, BISAC may make sense for nonfiction collections in elementary school. One library that has switched to BISAC is the Lewiston City Library in Lewiston, ID. Their short YouTube video (Lewiston City Library, 2022) does a good job of explaining how it works. Basically, books are classified first by topic, then subtopic, and finally author’s last name. That’s it. Whether BISAC is the answer for Dewey, though, is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Choosing Genre Headings

It can be challenging to decide what words to use for genre headings and which genre to place any given book in. The genre headings can come directly from established lists, like those from BISAC. Follett also has lists for fiction and nonfiction in their “Genrefication Best Practices” guide (2019). Another possible system for schools is Metis. Many librarians go it alone, though, looking up the assigned subject headings for each title (typically found on the back of the title page) and sorting the books into their shared genres. If going that route, other resources include Goodreads and Amazon (Arenz, n.d.; Mabee, 2020). The genre headings can also be community directed, depending on the terminology the students themselves use, like “scary” and “funny” (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 200). While uniform lists like those established by Follett “may or may not assist librarians in reaching the needs of their students,” they represent a good starting point, one that can be tweaked and built upon while also serving to bring continuity between libraries (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 207).

Labels and Signage
In addition to deciding upon genres, labels and signage also need to be decided upon and ordered. Key considerations include efficiency and ease of use for your patrons. Learning disabled students and English language learners, like all who struggle with verbal cues, find visual cues, whether color coding or icons, beneficial when searching for books (Junior Library Guild, 2021). Most elementary and middle school librarians opt to use genre labels with icons, like those from Demco (Arenz, n.d.). The two public libraries in western Virginia use genre labels, placing them either above or below the spine labels (see photo at right; Axt, 2023e). On the other hand, Tiffany Whitehead (2016) notes that color-tinted label protectors are “great for visual students.” Clear Creek Independent School District in Texas underwent a district-wide genrefication project. They employed both color-coded label protectors and typed genre stickers, the latter to aid color blind students (Witteveen, 2019). As an intern at a middle school library, Megan Mabee (2020) worked with a team that used color-coded label protectors, but later working as a high school librarian she and her team also revamped the codes on the spine labels adding, for example, FTSY for fantasy. When Krystal Lancaster genrefied her picture book collection, she created 26 genres and used color-coded alphabet stickers with colors of the rainbow repeating (K. Lancaster, personal communication, March 28, 2023). Of all these options, it seems the Demco stickers would be the best option, at least for elementary students, because they employ both colors and icons; and since at least a percentage of the population (8% of males) are color blind according to the National Eye Institute, it seems it would be a mistake to use color-coding alone. As for signage, Moeller and Becnel (2019) write that “physical organization and signage are imperative to the success of genrefication” (p. 207). Like labels, signs run the gamut from self-made or student-made signs to professional products (Arenz, n.d.).
Sarah Jefferson (2022) even added descriptive verbiage to her genre signs. For an example of
the signs employed by the city library in western Virginia, see the photo at left (Axt, 2023f).

**Process**

Flipping a library from alphabetization to genrefication is admittedly a big job. So, before even
dreaming about which genres use and which books go into those genres, it is advisable to talk with school and (if applicable)
district administration about the project (Gracey, 2018; Holladay, 2017, p. 18). It would also be a good idea to run the idea past the teaching staff to get their buy-in. The next question involves time: when and how long. Both of those depend on the situation on
the ground. Sarah Jefferson (2022) has an extended contract, which means her year starts and ends with an extra two weeks attached at each end, so she did her project over the summer, which is preferable. Over the summer or during the school year, the time it takes for each component of the project varies, but it is only the actual shifting of books that may be disruptive. To learn more about Sarah Jefferson's genrefication process, check out the video from the Nebraska Library Commission here: [Big Talk From Small Libraries 2022: Genrefying the Small School Library](#)

Tiffany Whitehead (2016) writes that libraries planning to genrefy should precede the process with a heavy weeding, especially if that hasn’t been done recently. Genrefication is an “opportunity” to cull books that are obscuring others that students would find more attractive. Once the weeding is done, the next step is to label
all the books. Jennifer LaGarde (2018) recommends doing this “one shelf at a time” until every book in the collection has been labeled. In Jennifer’s Tips for Genrefying, she also offers step-by-step instructions on how to set up genres and sublocations in Titlewave. Follett’s guide (2019), as well, would be a great resource to guide you through the process. The only part of the project that might involve a disruption to the day-to-day running of the library is the shifting of books into their assigned genres. Some librarians recommend beginning with the largest genre (Holladay, 2017, p. 22), while others, like Krystal Lancaster prefer “to put similar themes together” (e.g., mysteries beside scary) because they have “similar audiences.” Shelving is also a consideration, if you are trying to keep genres together (K. Lancaster, personal communication, March 28, 2023).

Benefits of Genrefication

In their study, Taylor et al. (2019, p. 860) compared circulation statistics for a given month before genrefication (October 2012) and after (October 1015). Overall, circulation across all 12 genres rose 14%, with the largest increases coming in humor and graphic novels. One Texas librarian, Mrs. Reader Pants, recorded an increase of 36 percent (Cornwall, 2018). Julia Torres (2021) “noticed an increase in circulation” and noted that some students were even checking out books for siblings. And one school librarian in League City, TX, said circulation rose following the shift and “has remained steadily higher” (Witteveen, 2019). More importantly, a common observation concerning genrefied collections is that enthusiasm among “reluctant readers” accounts for the increase in circulation (Arenz, n.d.).

According to Alyssa Sultanik (2020, p. 4), “research has shown that a genrefied fiction collection is simpler for students to use and locate books.” (It should be noted that even though books within genres are still arranged alphabetically by author, the limited number of books and
space the section takes up do not trigger “choice overload.”) One study noted that before genrefication, it took students an average of 8½ minutes to find a book, afterwards the time dropped to 5½ minutes (Sultanik, 2020, p. 9). Some students who might have before felt unsure of their abilities as readers grew in confidence, acquiring a sense of “ownership authority,” to the point where they were recommending, indeed “selling,” books to classmates (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 206). Graphic novels, like Dav Pilkey’s Dog Man books, are ideally suited to sharing. In addition, researcher Sharon Baker (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 200) points out that bringing fiction titles together under a genre heading is considerably more effective than simply labeling them and leaving them scattered throughout the alphabet.

Genrefication also saves time in reshelving. Books with genre labels or a color-coding scheme are easier to shelve, so much so that some librarians, who would not have done so before, feel comfortable turning the job over to an adult or even a student volunteer (Arenz, n.d.; Junior Library Guild, 2021). When kids know where to find the kinds of books they prefer reading, it also frees up the librarian to focus her energies on advising reluctant readers – those who struggle with or simply avoid reading (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 204). Christy Minton (2014) likewise found it easier and much less time consuming to pull together titles from a few genres in preparation for an English class that was coming to work on a project.

Another benefit of genrefication is that librarians get a better idea of what they have in their collection and where it is to be found. This familiarity can have the added benefit of knowing what is circulating and what may be getting overlooked (Kimmel & Lancaster, 2020, p. 28; Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 201). Krystal Lancaster, for example, noticed that the religion titles in her collection needed to be both expanded and diversified (Kimmel & Lancaster, 2020, p. 29).
Drawbacks and Challenges

While the benefits of genrefication are undeniable, there are some drawbacks. Some school librarians, for example, have schedules so full they don’t have time during the school year to genrefy their collections (Cornwall, 2018; T. Vangelos, personal communication, March 27, 2023). Most of the librarians surveyed by Greg Arenz (n.d.), however, were able to complete the project and keep their libraries open during the school year. (Perhaps for those who don’t have time during the school year, some arrangement could be worked out to pay them for their time during the summer, like during the summer school session.) Another drawback involves the separation of authors across genres. This, however, is a false drawback, since it simply requires a trip to the catalog, trips that would have been more frequent prior to genrefication. Yet another drawback involves inconsistency between libraries. Devona Pendergrass argued that where there is inconsistency in genre headings and content between libraries there is bound to be confusion. She also argued that genre headings can lose their informational value as student cohorts cycle through the school and as new library staff reinterprets them (Moeller & Becnell, 2019, p. 201).

One can also have too much of a good thing. Just as a non-genrefied collection can be daunting for browsers, so too can a genrefied collection with too many headings. Somewhere along the line, the project could reach a point of diminishing returns, when books that might have been better off in mixed company get lost in the shuffle: Superheroes in Action Adventure, for example (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 204).

The overarching goals of genrefying the fiction collection are to increase independence, encourage enthusiasm for books, and build a school-wide community of readers. Still, the concerns of Dewey loyalists are valid. Getting them reading may be job one, but in the interests of life-long learning, students in grades 3-12 still need to develop an understanding of how
public libraries across the country classify materials. They need to learn not just Internet, but also catalog, search skills, and they need to know how to navigate DDC to locate materials. So, librarians should continue to teach these skills (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, p. 207). Unfortunately, it is a truism that “in any scheme, some points of view are privileged over others (Kimmel & Lancaster, 2020, p. 30).

As tempting as it might be to create headings for certain categories of literature – in particular, books written by and about minority constituencies – it might be better not to do so. Separating them out may reduce their appeal for some and make them targets for others. It would be better to place them within their broader genres (e.g., realistic fiction). That way they become structural features – mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors – in those genres (Moeller & Becnel, 2019, pp. 204-206). Some may consider books like Alex Gino’s Melissa and Rick ticking time bombs in realistic fiction. But does it make more sense to have a heading devoted to LGBTQ, if one could even fill such a section? Surely it would be easier to defend their place in realistic fiction than to single them out. And the same could be said for books dealing with race and ethnicity.

**Retraining and Promotion**

In their concluding remarks, Taylor et al. (2019, p. 862) make two recommendations: (1) the success of genrefication depends, at least in part, on the continuing “collaborative conversations of librarians and classroom teachers” who together must reinforce the concept with students, and (2) “the social interaction of students around book selection” should be both allowed and encouraged. Still, much can be done by the librarian to retrain students and promote the newly genrefied collection. One librarian at an elementary school in Naperville, IL, for example, posted a WeVideo to inform students about the new arrangement (Witteveen, 2019).
Megan Mabee (2020) also mentioned posting signage employing a genre key, which could include codes and/or icons. Another possibility would be to create a map that could either be posted or printed as a hand-out. And several librarians suggested creating lessons to teach students how best to approach the new genrefied collection. Josh Benjamin, librarian at a K-8 school in Albuquerque, NM, employed a Breakout challenge to teach his students (Witteveen, 2019). Another recommended running a scavenger hunt or a “QR Code adventure” (Gracey, 2018). Yet another suggested having students fill in a blank map (Holladay, 2017, P. 37). In addition, this same librarian wrote that if any genres were to show poor performance (e.g., realistic or historical fiction), she would consider establishing book clubs and setting up displays to breathe life into them (Holladay, 2017, p. 10).

**Building a Community of Readers**

It is certainly worth stating clearly, if it hasn’t been made clear to this point, that the primary reason for switching to a genrefied collection, at least in your picture book and fiction sections, is to inspire, encourage, and support individual students to read, or as Rafe Esquith might say, read like your hair’s on fire. At the same time, it has to be borne in mind that none of us live or read in a vacuum: Reading is as much a communal activity as it is a solo activity. Taylor et al. (2019, p. 854) tell of “widespread talk about books … between students.” These students also “enthusiastically discussed” books in their classes and at home with their parents. All of this talk has the effect of building a community around reading, reinforcing the place of books in their lives and the lives of their peers. Indeed, the authors go further when they write “that conversation with peers is critical to the discovery of relevant books,” just as this surely is a
phenomenon common in other areas of our cultural lives – music, games, movies, etc. They even cite a Pew Research Center study, noting that “66% of readers rely on family and friends to find books” (Taylor et al., 2019, p. 854).

In addition to talking about books, kids need to have books present in their lives. Jennifer LaGarde quotes Richard Allington and Anne McGill-Franzen, who insist that “Children must have easy – literally, fingertip – access to books that provide engaging, successful reading experiences throughout the calendar year if we want them to read in volume” (as cited in LaGarde, 2018). LaGarde also has advice for those who worry about kids getting confused going from one library to another (a problem we should all be happy to have): “You are not responsible for other libraries. You are responsible for helping the kids in front of you become readers and library users. If you do that they’ll WANT to figure out how other libraries are organized” (LaGarde, 2018). Besides, they can always ask for help. Those other libraries have librarians too.

Speaking of other libraries, it would be good, in fact ideal, for school libraries and public libraries serving the same communities to work together, and not just during September for back-to-school nights and Library Card Sign-up Month. They should work together to get kids reading, to give them that year-round fingertip access, to support lifelong learning and community engagement. And one of the ways they can do all these things is to work together on genrefication. Although he remained impartial at the time of the “genrefication debate,” Steven Yates, then president of the American Association of School Librarians admitted, “I’ve not seen people that’ve gone to genrefication then go back” (as cited in Cornwall, 2018). Perhaps it’s time we all stopped looking back and started moving forward.
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