

ARRT Book Club Study
April 6, 2022
Virtual Meeting
Leadership Topic
Led by Jessica Stalker
Notes taken by Elizabeth Hopkins
16 participants

Ramping Up Diversity: Best Practices for Getting Inclusive Books into Patrons' Hands.

What are you doing at your library to make sure your collection is diverse?

- I started ordering more diversely. I try to pick diverse titles for our book club discussions.
- We try to pick titles that feature diverse characters written by diverse authors. We are also doing a diversity audit, but that's a very big project. So the direction now is to buy diversely moving forward.
- I audited myself ordering the fiction collection. It was a beast.
- This comes up in our weeding reports. A lot of our diverse titles end up on the dead list. So we do try to put those display and keep them on shelf longer.

What sort of programming are you doing to promote diversity in your library?

- We did a lot of diverse programs. We did a talking about race program and a CRT program. We went there and now we're laying low a bit because not everyone was very happy with those topics. Now we're focusing on the "safe" topics like Black History Month and Women's History Month. There's not a lot of presenters of color in this area, so I'm always looking for new speakers with new perspectives.
- We started a program series called "Let's Talk" where we talk about what's going on in the moment.
- We did a lot of these programs but attendance wasn't very high.
- Local community college speaker bureau is a great resource. Usually free of charge!
- We're trying to bring in more diverse authors.

How can we lean towards diversity in RA?

- We throw inclusive titles into our Binge Boxes
- Anything on our staff picks gets put on hold. So we are really diligent about our lists being diverse.
- There are so many Romance books with diverse characters...or SFF! It's easy to put together diverse lists with genre fiction now.

Displays?

- We do have specific displays focused on inclusivity. But we do make a point that diverse authors are featured on every display.
- Does anyone else have the 30% rule? Keep 30% of your display diverse.
- Read Outside Your Comfort Zone...and those types of challenges are helpful.

What about for Summer Reading?

- Reading a book from different countries as part of a challenge.

Social media marketing?

- We share short book rec videos. 60 seconds or less. By default, most of our videos focus on diverse reads.
- I think it's important to give staff the flexibility in sharing how they're comfortable. I have a staff member who's hilarious and has so many reviews, but she only wants her first name and no photo shared.
- Get ALL staff on board. It doesn't have to just be librarians.

Do you translate your materials into other languages? Do you find that your community is receptive to anything you've been doing in terms of communication?

- Some of our staff who speak Spanish are advocating that ALL signage needs to be translated and we need two signs everywhere. And that's the discussion, do we have enough Spanish speaking patrons who need this?
- We have some things translated. Like our "how to print" handout.
- The power of book groups! It goes beyond your group. Diversify the ballot. Put those titles out there for them.
- One book, one community is a GREAT opportunity to include diverse books
- Don't forget to include a personal invitation (to book club) to the patrons you see regularly.