What’s New in Young Adult Literature? - 2016 Edition

A Conference Presentation

The Indiana Association for Gifted
Indianapolis, Indiana
December 11 – 13, 2016

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One of Our Major Tasks is to Make it Happen through Reading! But what to read? What books do we recommend to gifted middle school readers? How do we guide them into positive reading experiences? Since we are finding that more and more gifted readers are not reading, how do we hook our readers back into more active reading? These are the questions that we will address in this session. Young Adult literature is a rich literary resource for gifted learners, since it speaks to who they are and to their world. We will build a rationale for using YA Lit with gifted learners and review new YA novels. The 2016 Book List will be provided. This presentation with new books each year has been presented at NAGC, Middle Level Network for several years and has been adapted for IGA.

Goals/Objectives:

1. To define the concept of “readicide”;
2. To provide a rational for using Young Adult Literature with gifted middle grades learners;
3. To review current young adult novels: The Focus of this Presentation

It seems that I always attempt to provide too much information in what I call my “instructional time” and I don’t leave enough time to review the latest books on The List. In this presentation, I am limiting this “instructional time” and moving to the reviews as quickly as possible. Additional notes that are referenced in the presentation have been added as Part 2 of this Handout or they are available by emailing me.

My focus is on three basic concepts:

1. Know your reader!
2. Know your literature!
3. Make the Match!

The primary intent of this presentation is to review current young adult novels that meet the criteria for the most appropriate literature for gifted readers. I stand by my basic precept, which one of my graduate students once called: Seney’s Stand:
My basic premise is that when you compare the characteristics of the gifted adolescent, especially the verbal characteristics, the characteristics of books most suited for gifted learners, and the characteristics of young adult literature, you have an almost perfect match. This leads me to the conclusion that young adult literature is highly appropriate for gifted learners.

These three sets of characteristics are included in this Handout as Part 2: The Classic Handout and they provide the background information for the rationale for using young adult literature in the classroom.

**Background Concepts**

- Most gifted readers are still highly motivated readers;
- There is a growing competition that is pulling them away from reading;
- We must equip ourselves to keep our readers motivated and engaged;
- Our goal is to encourage our readers to new heights and depths.
- Stephan Layne’s emphasis on the affective component of reading is an important and effective strategy. Email me for these notes.

**First Some Observations**

I. In conversations with gifted readers, I am hearing:

- The books that we are assigned to read do not match my interests;
- The books that we read do not relate to me or my life;
- The books that we read are not challenging;
- I have read the books before, sometimes several years ago;
- Nobody seems to know what are the new and good books to read;
- I don’t know where to go to find out about new books.

**I see this as a call to action!**

II. Why aren’t our capable, competent gifted readers (and others) reading?

*You don’t have to burn books to destroy culture. Just get people to stop reading them.*

Ray Bradbury

- Rounding up the “Usual Suspects”:
  i. We live in the “era” of the busy, over-scheduled child;
  ii. There are other (easier and more engaging) entertainment options;
  iii. There is the reality of print-poor environments at home and sometimes at school!
  iv. Economic levels are always a problem;
  v. Unfortunately, there is often a lack of parental education, involvement and support.
The problem of “readicide”

i. Sometimes we are the problem by using practices with the good intent to make students better readers. Intensions are not the problem; our practices are the problem.

ii. Readicide is defined as:

**Read-i-cide:** noun, the systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools.

Kelly Gallagher (2009)

iii. Causes of readicide:

1. Schools value the development of test-takers more than they value the development of readers;
2. Schools are limiting authentic reading experiences;
3. Teachers are over-teaching books;
4. Teachers are under-teaching books.

(Gallagher, 2009, p. 5)

iv. Well-meaning but mind-numbing practices:

**Readicide Factor:** Many schools have removed novels and other longer challenging works to provide teachers and students with more test preparation time.

Kelly Gallagher (p.39)

1. Curriculum is being narrowed to make room for test preparation.
2. Work sheets are taking the place of reading.
3. Short stories are being used instead of novels.
4. Time for reading in school is not being scheduled.
5. There is a dearth of reading materials in schools (and homes).
6. A culture for reading does not exist in schools.
7. Over-teaching the novel:
The Kill-a-Reader Casserole

Take one large novel. Dice into as many pieces as possible.
Douse with sticky notes.
Remove book from oven every five minutes and insert worksheets.
Add more sticky notes.
Baste until novel is unrecognizable, far beyond well done.
Serve in choppy, bite-size chunks.

Kelly Gallagher, Page 73

8. Under-teaching the novel:
   a. Students are given little or no help in understanding what good readers do when the reading gets hard.
   b. Discussions are always based on what the text says, little attention is paid to how understanding is reached.

   Note: I am finding Kelly Gallagher’s Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It (2009: Stenhouse Pub.) very helpful!

All of this underlies and supports my approach that we must understand our readers; understand a wide range of literature; be familiar with appropriate literature; and Make the Match!

References


Now let’s look at Books!
The **Underlined Books** are my personal *Top Ten Reads of 2016*. Books marked with a ++ are my candidates for my *Top Ten*. [This year 24 novels were candidates. Five Candidates for The Top Read. ] All books listed meet Halsted’s (and my) criteria for books most appropriate for gifted readers. **The list on the NAGC Conference Web Site is not complete. It was submitted in early October to meet the deadline for conference inclusion. This is my final list. If you wish an electronic copy email me.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applegate, Katherine</td>
<td>Crenshaw (e)</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auxier, Jonathan</td>
<td><em>Peter Nimble and His Fantastic Eyes: A Story (e/ms) SR &amp; ST</em></td>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beasley, Cassie</td>
<td><em>Circus Mirandus (e)</em></td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>Benjamin, Ali</td>
<td><em>the thing about jelly fish (ms/e)</em></td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>++Bertman, Jennifer C.</td>
<td>Book Scavenger (e) TR</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>Bradley, Kimberley B.</td>
<td><em>The War that Saved my Life (e/ms)</em></td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>++Creech, Sharon</td>
<td><em>Moo: A Novel (e)</em></td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>Dayton, Arwen Elys</td>
<td><em>Seeker (ms/hs)</em></td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>Dhariwal, Radhika R.</td>
<td><em>The Tale of a No-Name Squirrel (e)</em></td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>++Flanagan, John</td>
<td><em>Brotherband: The Ghostfaces – Book 6 (ms/e)</em></td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>Frost, Helen</td>
<td><em>Applesauce Weather (e/ms)</em></td>
<td>2016</td>
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Wow! Homeless theme and the importance of imaginary friends.

Very fun and very different: the adventures of a blind thief in pre-Victorian England – and elsewhere!

A story of love and magic! Micah looks for a way to save his grandfather.

2015 National Book Award Finalist. Oh wow! Dealing with the loss of a friend and guilt. A science bent. Rules of research are great!

Fun. If you liked *Escape from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library*, you will love this one!

2016 Newbery Honor. Set in England WWII. Ada is a true heroine. Wow!

A really delightful novel. Creech does it again! Formatting adds to mood and story.

A contemporary setting with an unusual fantasy bent.

A first novel. Reminiscent of the Redwall Series but more dark and with a touch of *Peter Nimble*. A quest, intrigue, betrayal, a puzzle to solve – Fun!

Another great story – so well written and a great adventure. The end is very poignant and the theme of the book AND the series comes through loud and strong.
A beautiful love story, told in verse. Faith, Peter & Uncle Arthur
++Keesha’s House (hs/ms)
A Safe House for teens who have no place to go in poetical form.
Endnotes on poetry are very good. Frost is fast becoming a favorite
author. More of her books are on order.

2004 Printz Honor: A True Whoops Book!

Hawker, L. S.  
*The Drowning Game* (hs)*#  
A real thriller – confusing identities and mysterious motives. Denver
Author

++Kennedy, Katie  
*Learning to Swear in America* *moderate* (hs/ms)  
Fun, humorous. Seventeen year old Russian astrophysicist genius saves
the world from a threatening asteroid. A First Novel.

Larson, M. A.  
*Pennyroyal Academy* TR (e)  
An interesting re-take on Fairy Tale Characters
*The Shadow Cadets of Pennyroyal Academy* (e)  
Fairy Tale Princesses redefined. Great fun and great adventure.
Book 2 moved more quickly.

Lasky, Kathryn  
*Wild Blood: Horses of the Dawn Book 3* (e)  
Last book in series – more intense

Lerangis, Peter  
*The Promise: Seven Wonders Journals*. (ms/hs)  
The prequel to the Seven Wonders Journal series.

++Levy, Aaron  
*Blood Don’t Lie* (ms) TR  
Middle school can be tough: bullying, searing or self-identity, your
family in crisis, the loss of a close friend, and …I’m going to stop there.
The last few chapters are dynamite! Several layered themes. A middle
school in Mississippi has chosen this as the book all eight graders will
read.

Lincoln, Jenna  
*The Protector Project* (ms)  
**Colorado Author, First Novel.** The mix of sci-fi and fantasy that I love.
A bit of the *Hunger Game* genre but less violence and more subtle in
political comment. Exciting Adventure. *Author’s Note* lists influences and
inspirations for the book.

Maas, Sarah J.  
*A Court of Thorns and Roses* # (hs)  
A very interesting twist to the *Beauty and the Beast* story. Sexual
content is unfortunate and thus the high school (hs) ranking. Deals with
the danger and consequences of lack of knowledge and illiteracy.

++Peck, Richard  
*The Best Man* (e/ms)  
Peck at his best but for a bit younger reader but still lots of messages
here. Teachers should read for Archer’s take on school. Lots of humor.
Loved it. Good take on gay marriage.

Pennypacker, Sara  
*Pax* (e/ms)  
Wow! Poignant and yet very subtle anti-war story: the relationship
between Peter and his pet fox, Pax.
*This is my Top Read for 2016: The “Tom Hebert Memorial Novel”*

Riggs, Ransom  
*Hollow City: The Second Novel of Miss Peregrine’s Peculiar Children*
(ms/e)  
Misplaced in my move. I forgot how much I like this series. One fifth
grade girl told me: “You do know, Dr. Seney, this is an allegory about
gifted children!
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<tr>
<th>Author</th>
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<tr>
<td>Riordan, Rick</td>
<td><em>Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard: The Sword of Summer</em> (ms/e)</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Riordan at his best with more humor! – Norse Mythology on this go-around.</td>
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<td>++The <em>Trials of Apollo: The Hidden Oracle-Book I</em> (e/ms)</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td>Riordan your humor is showing, again! Great fun! Apollo must meet his punishment as the mortal, Lester Papadopoulos, who by the way has a bad case of acne.</td>
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<td>Rossi, Veronica</td>
<td><em>Riders</em> (ms/hs)</td>
<td>2016</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A great take on the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse moves quickly, high adventure. Contemporary setting. Guide at end is good.</td>
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<td>Albus Potter and Scorpius Malfoy (Sons of Harry and Drako) are best friends! Albus is inHouse Slytherin! Oh, my! Oh, my! Both boys are estranged from their fathers, will time travel by using an illegal Time-Turner make things right? Looking for a script to move your students into reading this genre? Will be highly motivating and perhaps a bit of a difficult read since so much of the action is visual. Story line is there but lacks the sparkle of the Potter Series.</td>
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<td>Ruby, Laura</td>
<td><em>Bone Gap</em> (hs/ms)</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Is it reality or is it fantasy – maybe both! Kidnapping to another dimension set in a Midwestern rural setting. Finn discovers his strengths. A bit of a more difficult read.</td>
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<td><strong>2016 Printz Award</strong> and a <strong>2015 National Book Award Finalist</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ryan Pam M.</td>
<td><em>Echo: A Novel</em> (Level: I’m not sure – Everyone and their Mother'!)</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>2016 Newbery Honor</strong>. The novel reinvented. Tragedy but there is always hope.</td>
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<td>Sedgwick, Marcus</td>
<td><em>The Ghosts of Heaven</em> (ms/hs)</td>
<td>2014</td>
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<td>Four separate stories connected only with the symbol of a spiral – or are they separate? Really interesting and something of a modern horror story. Readers keep at it!</td>
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<td><strong>2016 Printz Honor</strong></td>
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<td>Selznick, Brian</td>
<td><em>The Marvels</em> (ms)</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td>Wow! Selznick has recreated the graphic and the textless novel. Two stories: One in Selznick’s amazing style of intricate drawings by pencil and one in Narrative. What is the connection? I could not put this one down until finished!!! You might think it is for elementary but I rather think it is for the sophisticated reader.</td>
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<tr>
<td>++Schusterman, Neal</td>
<td><em>Challenger Deep</em> (hs)</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td><strong>2015 National Book Award Winner</strong>. Oh wow! A beautifully conceived story of a young man’s (Caden) descent into mental illness peopled with caricatures of the real people in his life. A difficult read in several ways. Question: Is it a mark of good novel that you can’t keep at it and have to put it down, but you must come back to it? Author’s Note and Resources at the end are very important.</td>
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<td>Tahir, Sabaa</td>
<td><em>An Ember in the Ashes</em> * (hs/ms)</td>
<td>2015</td>
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<td><strong>A First Novel</strong>: Hunger Game Genre with a twist. It is Fantasy rather</td>
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than Dystopia. Intrigue, betrayal, honor, trust, and the importance of relationships. Wow! Some violence but suspense and excitement to the galore!

++A Torch Against the Night: Ember in the Ashes – Book 2* (hs/ms)
More engaging that the first – hard to put down. Tahir creates a fantasy society somewhat based on Ancient Rome with intrigue, evil, and treachery. Complicated plot told from the points-of-view of the three protagonists.

Tucholke, April

Wink, Poppy, Midnight* (hs/ms) 2016
“A hero, A villain, A liar, but who is who?” Told from the points-of-view of the three protagonists, this is a tale of mystery, love and revenge. Light sexual situations. A good read, but I must admit that it did not always hold my attention. Reader keep on: Be ready for a real surprise. This is a new author for me. I intend to read more of her works.

Wolk , Lauren

Wolf Hollow (ms/e) 2016
A debut novel for young readers: Take To Kill a Mocking Bird, add a bit of Ruby Holler (Creech, 2003 List) and a bit of Moon Over Manifest (Vanderpool, 2011 List) and mix with Wolk’s own creativity and craftsmanship and you have Wolf Hollow, a bit dark but an amazing read of a remarkable and courageous young girl, Annabelle. Hard to put down!

A Book That Almost Didn’t Make the List”

Maas, Sarah J.

A Court of Mist and Fury #* (hs) 2016
On the list, then off and now back on. I think Maas has crossed the sometimes subtle line between engaging ya lit and engaging adult fiction because of the sexual content. I know why it is here (for story line and particular character development) but too explicit – better to suggest than describe – a mark of better craftsmanship. But since she freed herself from an interesting take on the Beauty and the Beast theme in Book 1 (see Maas above), she has unbound her creativity to create interesting and complex characters, the fantasy Faerie world of Prythian, and a complex plot. While not a Robin McKinley, Maas is a step above Stephanie Meyer (Twilight Saga) in craftsmanship.

Her Throne of Glass series is very popular. Again: Explicit sexual content warning. But will I read Book 3, you bet. Will it go on the list? We will see.

Great Nonfiction: That should be in Every Gifted Resource Room!

Strauss, E. L.

Chaos Theory Uncovered: How Chaos and Fractals Shape our World (ms/hs) 2015
Complex Systems in Our World: A Creative Exploration of Systems and Complexity Theory (ms/hs)
Global Explorer: The Southern Hemisphere (ms/hs)
Our Universe Revealed: A Cosmic Exploration (ms/hs)
All are published by Thinyxgen [www.thinyxgen.com]

Special List: Books I found interesting that don’t necessarily fit the List:

Isaacson, Rupert

The Horse Boy: A Memoir of Healing (hs/ms) 2009
A well written and very moving account of Isaacson’s search for the healing of his autistic son through both traditional and non-traditional means including a trip to Mongolia to visit shamans. A National Bestseller. Reviewed for 2e Newsletter.
The following notes are provided by Dr. Seney and are referred to in his 2016 NAGC presentation: What’s New in young Adult Literature: 2016 Edition.

Part 2: The “Classic” Handout
What’s New in Young Adult Literature? - 2015 Edition

What better way to enjoy *Everything Under the Sun* than to involve and guide gifted readers into *Young Adult Literature*! YA Lit is a rich, literary resource for gifted learners. This genre of literature readily “hooks” students into positive reading experiences, since it speaks to who they are and to their situations. It is important for us to engage and guide gifted students into creative reading. This session addresses the gifted reader and builds a rationale for using YA Lit with gifted learners. The focus, however, is to review new YA novels. *The 2015 Book List* will be provided. *What’s New*, a Middle Grades tradition, is one road to reading achievement and reading involvement. Let’s talk and share new books.

This Session Addresses Three Concepts:

1. Know your reader!
2. Know your literature!
3. Make the Match!

However: The Focus of this Presentation is to review current young adult novels:

First Some Observations

In conversations with gifted readers, I am hearing:

- The books that we are assigned to read do not match my interests;
- The books that we read do not relate to me or my life;
- The books that we read are not challenging;
- I have often read the books before, sometimes several years ago;
- Nobody seems to know what are the new and good books to read;
- I don’t know where to go to find out about new books.

*I see this as a call to action!*

The Concepts

Know Your Reader!
What are the Characteristics of the Gifted Most Related to Reading?

Verbal Characteristics and Needs of Gifted Students

- They possess a large vocabulary and use advanced terminology correctly.
- They often read early; may be self-taught; read enthusiastically and widely, often above grade level.
- They select their reading materials purposefully.
- They understand language subtleties and they use language for humor.
- They write words and sentences early and produce superior creative writing.
- They display verbal ability in self-expression, choice of colorful and descriptive phrasing, and easily learn a second language.

To challenge verbal abilities gifted students need to:

- Use their full vocabulary and develop it further with intellectual peers.
- Read books at an appropriate intellectual and emotional level.
- Be introduced to books that present a variety of literary conventions and styles that use language gracefully.
- Express ideas verbally and in-depth by writing or speaking with others who challenge their ideas.

Adapted from Halsted (2009)

What are the Characteristics of the Gifted Reader?

- They have a passion for reading;
- They learn to read earlier often spontaneously in preschool;
- They learn to read independently soon after classroom instruction begins;
- They read better (advanced reading abilities) and at a faster rate;
- They read materials beyond the norm for their age;
- They have an advanced and large vocabulary;
- They require less drill – if any – to master techniques of the reading process;
- They read longer;
- They read a greater variety of literature;
- Their reading interests differ considerably from their age group;
- They are more likely to branch out from realistic fiction to fantasy, historical, fiction, and biography.
- They continue to be voracious readers into senior high and adulthood;


Know Your Literature!

What are the Characteristics of Young Adult Literature?

A Recently Located List of Characteristics of Young Adult Literature:

Young adult and adult fiction often overlap boundaries. Part of the difficulty, historically, with getting publishers and literary critics to acknowledge this literary genre lay in actually defining the genre. In fact, even today, well after young adult fiction has been recognized by many critics, there are many works of fiction which continue to vacillate between the two categories. However, there are certain characteristics that continue to appear and define the young adult genre; the following are some of the most significant.

1. Stories are told from the viewpoint of young people.
2. Young adult stories often get rid of all adult figures.
3. Young adult literature is fast-paced.

4. Young adult literature includes a variety of genres and subjects.
5. Young adult books are optimistic and characters make worthy accomplishments.
6. Young Adult novels deal with real emotions.

Lonica Rowley (2009)

Rowley acknowledges her dependence upon Donnelson and Nilsen in creating this list.

Donnelson and Nilsen’s Characteristics of the Best YA Literature
1. Authors write from the view point of young people.
2. Adults often don’t play an important role in the development of the plot.
3. Young adult literature is fast-paced.
4. Young adult literature includes a variety of genres and subjects.
5. The body of work includes stories about characters from different ethnic and cultural groups.
6. Young adult books are basically optimistic with characters making worthy accomplishments.
7. Successful young adult novels deal with emotions that are important to young adults.

Chapter 1: Donnelson and Nilsen (2005)

However, I still favor Monseau and Salver’s List:

Characteristics of Young Adult Literature

Young adult novels have come of age because they have demonstrated the same skillful craftsmanship employed in all good literature and because they have translated to the world of the young adult the same conflicts and issues with which all humans struggle.

Elements Displayed by YA Lit Today:
1. Complex characters that seek to resolve conflicts of tremendous consequence to themselves and the world;
2. Vividly drawn minor characters that not only create texture but also advance the actions of the stories and serve as meaningful foils and allies for protagonists;
3. Vivid settings - both real and imaginary;
4. Plots that hold the reader through deft pacing, skillful use of suspense, and the use of flashbacks and other manipulations of time sequence;
5. Experimentation with various points of view from which the stories are told;
6. Treatment of thematic issues that matter not only to teens but to all of us: the quest for justice, the savagery of war and hatred and the struggles for love acceptance, and understanding.

“The same elements of all masterfully crafted works of fiction.”

Monseau & Salvner, 1992

Recently, I found this interesting take on Young Adult Literature:

Young Adult Literature Defined by Margo Lanagan
2009 Printz Honor for Tender Morsels

I’m not sure what defines young adult literature. It’s usually about young adults; it often deals with issues associated with coming of age and establishing one’s place in the world. It can usually be relied on to have an interesting plot, which is not always the case with adult literature, which is allowed to be just internal musings. Beyond that, I wouldn’t want to confine it any further; young adult literature is the literature that parents, librarians, and schools offer to young adults,
thinking they might find it rewarding – whether it is graphic novels, literary classics, or targeted stores about teens.

From A Conversation with Margo Lanagan found in the Feb. 2010 paperback edition of Tender Morsels

Making the Match!

In making the match between a gifted reader and an appropriate book, I am convinced that we must match the characteristics of gifted readers, the characteristics of books most suited for gifted learners, and the characteristics of young adult literature, that we are way ahead of the game. This, of course, presupposes that we have knowledge of a broad spectrum of literature. This has been called “Seney’s Stand!”

Seney’s “Stand!”

My basic premise is that when you compare the characteristics of the gifted adolescent, especially the verbal characteristics, the characteristics of books most suited for gifted learners, and the characteristics of young adult literature, you have an almost perfect match. This leads me to the conclusion that young adult literature is highly appropriate for gifted learners.

Halsted’s Characteristics of Books for the Gifted:

- Books that use a high level of language and vocabulary;
- Books that have pronunciation guides, maps, and glossaries (“notes” at the end);
- Books that utilize the full array of literary devices;
- Books that use descriptive words that stimulate strong visual images;
- Books that are written by authors who delight in the use of language and the expression of nuances;
- Books that provide language patterns and vocabularies from other times and places;
- Books whose structure puts the mind to work;
- Books whose settings evoke an experience of other lifestyles;
- Books that present unresolved problems and the reader must make some conclusions.

Halsted (2009)

Halsted’s Characteristics suggest literature of a high standard:

- Our first response might be to turn to the classics;
- But the classics do not deal with contemporary issues and interests of our learners;
- Our readers have not had the life experiences to appreciate and interpret these literary treasures fully;
- Remember when and for whom many of the classics were written: highly educated adults at the turn of the 19th Century (for the most part);
- Remember that children’s classics were often written for moral teaching purposes and that much of so-called children’s classics were originally intended for older audiences;
- Research has shown that too early an introduction to the classics can easily turn off readers and kill their joy of reading.

Why Young Adult Literature?

Young adult literature in the classroom is important because it “...strikes at issues that matter to the students, issues with which they are grappling in their own private lives. It has the power to stimulate the kind of creative involved reading [emphasis added] that transforms text into literature. Because it deals with events, situations, and emotions that they may share or understand. It vests them with authority as reader – authority that they may lack when they confront more complex texts [i.e. classics Seney’s note] – and thus encourages them to assume the responsibility of making sense for themselves, of texts, and therefore of their own conceptions of the world.”

Robert Probst
My Suggestion for Selecting Literature for Gifted Readers: Always remember that we must first read all literature and remember the interests of the students for whom we are selecting books [Basic criteria: appropriateness and challenge] is to look at Young Adult Literature. We must also recognize that some YA Lit will be inappropriate for younger gifted readers and that typically YA Lit ranges from about 8th grade through high school.

Books I Recommend:


References


My Top Ten List of “All Time Favorites”

[This list was last reviewed on November 1, 2013. Past time to review it again]

Caroline Cooney          WHAT CHILD IS THIS
Robert Cormier           FADE
Lois Lowery              GATHERING BLUE*
Gary Paulsen             DOGSONG [Endangered: See note below]
Katherine Patterson      BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
Cynthia Rylant           THE VAN GOGH CAFE
Brian Selznick           THE INVENTIONS OF HUGO CABRET**
William Sleator          INTERSTELLAR PIG
Stephanie Tolan          WELCOME TO THE ARK
Cynthia Voight           A SOLITARY BLUE

*Painfully removed to make room for Gathering Blue: Anne McCaffrey’s DOLPHINS OF PERN in 2002. I love the whole Pern Series. Dropping Dolphins was the first change in several years. There have been no changes since 2010, before that it was 2002, but I admit to some real challenges to novels on this list. At this point (Oct. 1, 2013) I am considering removing Gary Paulsen’s Dogsong and replacing it with John Flanagan’s The Ranger’s Apprentice: Book 7 – Erak’s Ransom (2007) to represent this whole wonderful series.

**2010: I love the Redwall Abbey series, but I had to cut Brian Jacques’ SALAMANDASTRON to make room for Selznick’s CABRET. Most painful!

Another Book Under Consideration [2013]: Selznick, Brian: Wonder Struck: A Novel in Words and Pictures (2011) [Double Wow!]

Original Top Ten: Circa 1986

M. E. Kerr                    GENTLE HANDS
Cynthia Voigt                A SOLITARY BLUE
Anne McCaffrey                THE WHITE DRAGON
Bill Talbert                      DEAD BIRDS SINGING
William Sleator             INTERSTELLAR PIG
Katherine Patterson       BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
Nancy Bond                      A STRING IN THE HARP
Robin McKillip               HARPIST IN THE WIND
Paula Fox                       ONE EYED CAT
Robert Cormier               EIGHT PLUS ONE