



Booked Up Working in South Tyneside

South Tyneside Libraries used Booked Up to engage with students and staff at one of their local secondary schools to promote reading for pleasure by making them aware of their inspiring teenage book collections.

'We think it is a wonderful scheme that encourages young people to read for pleasure. Booked Up gave us the opportunity to go into schools and talk to students and their teachers about books, reading and the diverse range of books that are available from our libraries. We no longer have a schools library service so Booked Up gave us the chance to forge a positive, working partnership with South Tyneside Community School which we are planning to sustain.' Catrin Galt Booked Up coordinator for South Tyneside

The Effects

Booked Up promotes reading for pleasure by offering free books to students starting their first year of secondary school in England. Students select a book from a list of 13 books.

Secondary schools are invited by Book Trust to sign up to the Booked Up scheme, which is funded by DCSF (Department for Children, Schools and Families). The Reading Agency works in partnership with Book Trust to promote the Booked Up programme to public and school library services in England.

Public Libraries can help students make their choice by displaying and loaning out the 13 titles on the Booked Up book list, and by linking up with schools to help them promote the books to young people. In this case Catrin Galt, young people's services librarian at South Tyneside, successfully used Booked Up to work in partnership with one of their local secondary school to promote libraries, books and reading to young people. This included visiting the school to meet pupils and lead book discussions, aiming to attract a wider range of young people into reading and library use. Year 7 pupil Rachel Barry enjoyed taking part in the project finding out what libraries can offer saying 'The Central Library in South Shields is a library with a great variety of books for children and adults of all ages. Reading has never been so much fun.'

The Experience

Catrin Galt co-ordinates the Booked Up Project for South Tyneside libraries. She contacted two secondary schools in deprived areas, in order to engage with disadvantaged young people. South Tyneside Community School were keen to work in partnership on the project and together the partners drew up a plan of action. Catrin held Booked Up workshops with each of the seven Year 7 classes at the school. Catrin facilitated lively book discussions about the books on the Booked Up book list that students use to make their choices. Following these debates students voted for their favourite books. Students were also made aware of the diverse reading collections available at their local libraries and given information about what libraries offer teenagers. Catrin returned to the school later to hold follow up workshops to find out what students thought about the books they had chosen. Students produced reviews, which were displayed in the library.

Resources

- Booked Up books and resources as supplied by Book Trust
- Time from both library and school staff, to plan the sessions and to run them

The Booktrust resources were excellent. The list of schools participating in the project saved the library service valuable staff time. Information from the Booked Up website helped in planning the workshops. The online survey of Booked Up book choices was particularly appealing to students and staff. Everybody was interested in seeing the trends of book choices nationally.

Partners

These included

- South Tyneside Libraries
- South Tyneside Community Schools
- Booktrust
- The Reading Agency

Outcomes

- Young people in the schools knew more about the library service available to them
- Young people enjoyed talking about books and reading, and were able to think more about their choice of free book

- Young people were able to feed back their views on libraries
- The school and library have developed a strong partnership for future working
- The community could see students' creative material on display at the library

Challenges/ Lessons Learnt

- Schools welcomed the library involvement and were keen to work together however it was difficult to fit sessions into busy timetables.
- Students were happy to join in the discussions and give their opinion but many students were not interested in books or reading. Two girls refused to make any book choices.
- Young people are using libraries in South Tyneside but not necessarily to read or borrow books. Some are coming in to use the PCs and just to 'hang out' with their friends
- Students would have preferred more non-fiction choices.
- Students made their choices based on the books their friends were choosing.

The Future

South Tyneside enjoyed the challenge of working with hard to reach young people and have signed up to Booked Up 2008 to use the project in deprived areas once again. They planned to build on the success of the first year's project and increase the number of schools they involved. All their service points will have attractive displays of the Booked Up books for young people to borrow and get a feel on what's on offer.