

## ILD P NARRATIVE – Boy Books

### Books with Boy Appeal for Grades K-6

15. In the fall of 2006, our school district had an excellent training with Denise Brown from Smoky Hill Service Center on the topic of the male brain and how boys' learning styles differ from that of girls'. The research she presented showed that many boys in elementary school view reading as female activity, largely because a vast majority of elementary teachers and librarians, as well as their reading role models at home, are women. The training really opened our eyes and helped us see how we may be unintentionally driving our boys away from reading through the reading materials that we choose. Most female elementary teachers and librarians promote fiction literature, while boys prefer nonfiction. During our session, Ms. Brown shared an article featuring Jon Scieszka, a children's book author, former elementary teacher, and advocate for raising awareness of boys' reading needs (Walstrom, Andrea Grazzini. "Of Books and Boys." Connect for Kids. 24 Feb. 2003. <http://www.connectforkids.org/node/443>). I did further research and found a number of resources encouraging educators to find and promote books with "boy appeal" to our elementary boys before we turn them off to reading forever. In the January 2007 issue of School Library Journal, Marc Aronson sounds off on the topic in his article "Boys -- defective girls: in many schools, boys' interests are ignored or dismissed." The article title itself succinctly sums up Aronson's beliefs. In Jon Scieszka's article "Guys and Reading" (Teacher Librarian, Feb. 2003), he states: "Providing book choice and finding the books boys like to read are two areas where teachers and teacher-librarians can do something right away."

One of Sterling Grade School library's program goals is to: Provide books and media to support academic and **recreational** learning needs. In the current times of tight budgets, the recreational reading needs often take a backseat to academic needs. An ILDP grant would allow our library to make purchases vital to providing for the recreational reading needs of our male students as well as ILL borrowers throughout the state.

Through the information presented during professional development and my own research, I saw the need to focus my collection development on "boy books." Before school ended in May, I observed what kinds of books the boys chose to check out once they had met their teachers' reading requirements and they could choose anything they wanted. I also casually asked several groups of elementary boys what kinds of books they would like me to purchase for the library. After also getting input from the teachers, I came up with my list of focus topics for "books with boy appeal:" nonfiction books on vehicles/machines, military, animals, jokes and riddles, drawing, cartoon books, superhero comics for young readers, sports, and the outdoors. Older elementary students expressed an interest in fiction titles that were mysteries or adventures. This ILDP grant will meet a real need in providing a variety of materials that will be of high interest to boys. Our hope is that, by providing boys with reading materials they enjoy, they will

see reading as a pleasurable activity and become dedicated readers at an early age and carry that habit with them as they go into middle school, high school and beyond.

#### CURRENT COLLECTION STATISTICS --

Our K-6 elementary library has around 350-450 books on the nonfiction topics listed above as “focus topics.” Specifically, we own over 100 books on vehicles, transportation, branches of the military and military vehicles. However, many of these titles are outdated (from the 60s, 70s and 80s), and our boys would benefit from updated titles and more choices. Our boys have been requesting “more books like this one!” We particularly need more vehicles/machines titles at the K-3 reading level. Our library has 15 joke/riddle books, 18 cartoon books that have been heavily read and are worn out (Garfield, Peanuts, etc.), 17 books on how to draw different things (people, animals, trucks, etc.), 8 nonfiction books on the outdoors (fishing, hunting, etc.), and 4 elementary-level superhero comics.

16. I found that the one new series we own on vehicles and machines for lower elementary kids is heavily checked out and that more materials are needed on that topic at that reading level. I found a great series for K-3 called Mighty Machines that would be an excellent potential purchase with grant funding. I looked on the KLC at five titles in that series. All 5 of the titles were available from Blue Valley and Topeka, and 2-3 of the titles were available from smaller libraries (Seneca, Lakin, Syracuse, and Russell), but none of them were available in South Central Kansas. Purchasing these titles and making them available for loan from Sterling, KS, would allow us to serve the south-central region of Kansas through ILL. A search on military vehicles for upper elementary students found a series called Blazers: Military Vehicles located in Kansas City, Kansas, Lawrence, and Russell. The KLC showed ownership of an Enslow series called Mighty Military Machines, a series of six books including titles on humvees, tanks, and submarines, focused in Junction City and Overland Park. Building our own core collection would allow us to save on postage, for both us and the lending library, and provide books to students in a more timely manner.

A search for joke books yielded 582 results on the KLC. I randomly selected 25 titles that had more than one library listed as owning the title. Only four titles were located in South Central Kansas: Hesston, Wichita, and Haysville. All the other books were from libraries in the northern and eastern parts of the state: Kansas City, Overland Park, Great Bend, Topeka, Russell, and Lawrence. Awarding an ILDP grant to Sterling would allow us to effectively serve South Central Kansas.

I also looked at the “How to Draw” series from Rourke Publishing on the KLC. Out of the set of 32 books, I looked at 12 titles, and only 3 were in South Central Kansas (Hutchinson, Wichita, Winfield), and the rest were in the northern and eastern part of the

state. If Sterling was awarded an ILDP grant, it would allow the southern and western regions to borrow from Sterling rather than relying so heavily on the northeastern Kansas libraries.

The recurring theme from these statistics shows that South Central Kansas has a need for books with boy appeal for grades K-6, and Sterling would be honored to develop an excellent core collection in that area to be shared statewide through Interlibrary Loan.

17. Our regional library system (South Central Kansas Library System) has agreed to provide cataloging records for our books to be entered on the KLC. We have worked with SCKLScataloging librarian Dianne Bogle in the past, so we are familiar with the process required to have the materials cataloged.

18. Our library will commit to spending \$750 on “books with boy appeal” within 12 months and \$400 per year for the next five years to further expand our collection. We will begin by adding new nonfiction titles focusing on vehicles & machines, animals, military, and jokes and riddles. We would also add titles on drawing, sports, the outdoors (hunting, fishing, etc.), cartoon books (such as Garfield), and superhero comics for primary students (like Spider-Man). We also plan to add some fiction titles for grades 4-6 in the areas of outdoor adventure and mystery.

20. Book prices were computed using data from Bowker’s *Books in Print* as printed in the March 2007 issue of *School Library Journal*.

Average price of children’s books = \$21 x 100 items = \$2100

Total = \$2100 (plus \$210.00 shipping, which will be paid by our library)

**SAMPLE TITLES:**

Black Widow Spiders by Julie Murray

Harley-Davidson Motorcycles by Sarah L. Schuette

Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four: the Chameleon Strikes! by Todd Dezago

Hunting for Fun! by Jef Wilson

The Mystery of Blackbeard the Pirate by Carole Marsh

South Central Kansas Library System will provide MARC records for these items and add them to the KLC. Our library staff will process the books and prepare them for checkout.

Virtual titles = \$500

I would like to use OverDrive to purchase audio books and e-books on topics with boy appeal, such as nonfiction, as well as mystery and adventure fiction.

**SAMPLE VIRTUAL TITLES:**

Animal Quack-Ups (joke books) e-book

The Cay (adventure fiction) audio book

A Dog's Life (adventure fiction) audio book  
Last Shot (sports fiction mystery) audio book  
The Dung Beetle Bandits (mystery) e-book