RA in a Day 2015

Reading Experience Discussion

The most interesting/surprising ideas or best examples that emerged from the table discussions

QUESTION #1

If you were to have some leisure time for reading in the next week, how would you go about choosing a book (or several books) to read next? Describe specific steps or strategies or considerations.

- Look through the catalogue
- Twitter
- NetGalley
- Edelweiss- publisher catalogues and Catalist
- 49th Shelf website
- Goodreads
- NoveList
- To be read lists
- On order records
- Visuals
  - Staff picks
  - Displays
- Websites, social media, and personal recommendations
- Displays
  - Staff picks
  - Book stores
- Reviews and publication catalogues online
  - Magazine lists for mainstream titles: Oprah, Vogue, Men’s Health and Harper’s Bazaar
QUESTION #2

What particular elements do you look for in a satisfying, enjoyable book? Could you describe the Perfect Book that you would love to read?

- Character you care about or relate to in some way
- Plot or situation that you can relate to based on your own experiences
- Various types of people that helps to expand your world view
- “Perfect book” is everchanging based on where you are in your life situation

QUESTION #3

What particular elements do you not like and would try to avoid in a book chosen for pleasure?

- All can be affected by situational factors
  - Negative/bleak (soul-sucking)- abuse
  - Overly complex and descriptive
  - Too unpredictable and emotionally challenging
  - Generalities- entire genre
  - Dislike the feeling we might get from reading a title- perception of disdain/judgement from others resulting in shame

QUESTION #4

Which statement comes closest to describing you as a pleasure reader:

“I am an omnivore and I read everything.”

“I am a selective reader who tries to read high quality, important books”

Selective

- Conscious of where recommendations come from
- Time, enjoyment, and learning experience
- Bad experience with a specific genre or author
- Read books related to job in the library
- Stimulate positive emotions

Omnivores

- Opens up possibilities to something new
• Mix up light reading with non-fiction or heavy reading

**QUESTION #5**

Have you ever had a Bad Reading experience, where you picked up a book expecting it to be wonderful, but then you hated it and felt that you had been betrayed by the book? What happened? What made the experience so bad/ upsetting/ disappointing?

• Do not expect so much from a book- if you remove the expectation than you will not be disappointed

• Invest so much time in books only to be disappointed by a sudden turn but you continue reading because you have invested that much time
  
  o You can’t know if you didn’t like the book if you haven’t read the entire book

• Bad endings but the rest of the book is good

• Feeling of betrayal if the plot and character are not what you expected

• Only give the book a 100 page chance

• Becomes worse when a favourite author becomes bad

• Not enjoying a book because of the stage of life you are in- perhaps you can identify with a different character when you re-read a book

• Stubborn readers will continue reading/skimming just to find out what happens instead of giving up completely

• Readers remember a bad reading experience far more than the book

• Cautious when reading similar author afterwards

• Too much hype about the book and a feeling of betrayal

• Books that “everyone” loves or we are supposed

• Reminds us of what we look for in a book and how we define good

• A number of things can put you off- character or voice

• A book can be a “bad read” when you have read an amazing book and find that nothing measures up to it

• Will stop reading if it is badly written or not interested in the material
Examples of Bad Books

- Not Wanted on the Voyage - Timothy Findlay
  - poorly written, deliberately obtuse

- The Goldfinch - Donna Tartt
  - there could have been sections omitted

- Fifty Shades - E.L. James
  - refusal to read or stopped reading it

- The Wind Up Bird Chronicles - Haruki Murakami
  - Very masculine - could not relate
  - Setting was hard to visualize

- Uncommon Ground - Justin Trudeau
  - Read like an academic paper/political campaign - not personal

- As She Grows - Lesley Cowan
  - Not well written, lacked authenticity and bad ending

**QUESTION #6**

How do you feel about the **format** of the books you read for pleasure - for example, hardcovers, paperbacks, ebooks, audiobooks? How important to you is the book as a physical object? Have your preferences changed at all over time?

- People have diverse tastes and either love or hate the format of a book
- Narrator can make or break a book
- E-books and audiobooks are convenient
- Retention of book is dependent of format - not the same in an e-book
- Advantage of reading the book in all the formats at the same time
- Different formats are advantageous for Book Clubs as they can have more access

**Hardcover and Paperbacks**

- The tactility and senses experienced - feeling of a book in your hands, the smell of an old book
• Greater connection with this format
• More time to enjoy a physical book
• Sometimes the smaller print in mass market is harder to read

**E-Books**
• Ease of use- you can always have your book with you on your phone
• Anonymity
• Adjust font size of print for differences in eyesight
• Convenience of e-books

**Audiobooks**
• People enjoy listening while they are in the car
• Details are sometimes hard to follow
• Hard to listen to when you are driving when you need to stop and are at the midpoint of a sentence
• You can get more engaged when listening to a book by listening – get caught up in the emotion of the narrator

**What are the implications for Readers’ Advisory work?**
• Keeping your own bias out
• Be aware of situational factors/needs
  - Age
  - Personal circumstances
• Purpose or environment of the reading experience
• Preferred format
• Ask customer about previous reading experience or have them name a book or author they enjoy
• Be open-minded at what you recommend- you do not need to like a book to recommend it
• Do not judge a customer’s reading preference
• Find out what the individual defines as a good book

• What are you looking for form reading experience
  o Tap into what the person wants at the time- perfect book for this minute

• Judging a book by its cover varies depending on the reader’s perception

• Helping a reader understand the why they didn’t like a book

• Knowledgeable about different authors and series

• Beware of bestsellers- they may not be everyone’s cup of tea

• Discussing multiple types of formats when recommending books