***What’s New in Young Adult Literature: 2018 Edition***

A Signature Series Presentation

The Colorado Association for the Gifted and Talented Annual Conference

***Putting the Pieces Together: Understanding Giftedness.***

### ***October 23, 2018***

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***We are back again for The Colorado Exclusive Preview of the 2018* What’s New List**!It’s simply not possible to ***Put the Pieces Together* *for the Gifted*** without a serious consideration of reading***.***  Most gifted students are avid readers, but they receive little or no guidance in their reading and in reading instruction. As a result, the opportunity to create highly creative and critical readers is lost. A major problem cited, by teachers, parents, and students is knowing where to go to find appropriate and challenging literature. Over the years the ***What’s New List*** has attempted to fill this need. In addition, each year a current issue in reading is addressed. This year our concern is ***Creating a Culture of Reading***. The over-emphasis on testing has drastically cut into reading time and reading instruction. The joy of reading and the emphasis on recreational reading is threatened. One major way that we can counteract this situation is to work ***deliberately*** to ensure that a ***Culture of Reading*** permeates the entire school. Elements of a ***Culture of Reading*** will be identified. But as always, the focus of this session is to review new and current literature that is appropriate, challenging, and meets the interests of gifted readers. **A Preview of** ***The 2018 Book List*** **will be shared**.

**Talking Points:**

1. Review the elements of appropriate literature for gifted readers.
2. Provide Guidelines for creating a **Culture of Reading**;
3. Review current young adult novels: The ***Focus***of this Presentation.

***First A Word from Our Sponsor***:

Over the years you have heard me talk of the importance of the concept:

***Know the Reader! Know the Literature!***

***Make the Match!***

***And more recently I have stressed the importance of students selecting their own reading material.***

***This still holds true!***

**Talking Point 1:** **What are the elements of literature that is most appropriate for gifted readers?**

1. High level of language and vocabulary.

2. Have pronunciation guides.

3. Utilize the full array of literary devices.

4. Use of descriptive works that stimulate strong visual images.

5. Authors who delight in the use of language and the expression of nuances.

6. Language patterns and vocabularies from other times and places.

7. The structure of the book puts the mind to work.

8. Setting evokes an experience of other lifestyles.

9. Unresolved problems are presented and the reader must make some conclusions.

Judith Halsted (2009)

**Talking Point 2:** ***How do we create a Culture of Reading in our schools?***

* What do we mean by a ***Culture of Reading***?
  + **Defining Culture:**
    - **A commonly accepted definition**: ***Culture*** *is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and arts.*
    - **The Center for Advanced Research of Language Acquisition (CARLA)** offers this definition: ***Culture*** *is defined as the shared patterns of behavior and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of another group.*
  + Using these concepts, we can define a **Culture of Reading** as:

***A culture of reading exists when reading is valued, embraced, and celebrated in a specific setting****.*

* First there must be a buy-in by the administration and all the teachers.
  + Is reading discussed in your school?
  + What does your school mean when it says it “values reading?”
  + Does that mean raising reading scores or involving students in becoming active, creative readers?
* How do we go about creating a **Culture of Reading**?
  + Reading Aloud to students;
  + Having books ever present; Having multiple copies of the same title available so that “reading partnerships” might develop;
  + Regular exposure to books by:
    - Book Talks (Chats)
    - Featured books.
* Creating classroom libraries;
* Regular trips to the School/Public Library;
* Teachers regularly sharing what they are reading;
* Students are allowed to select their own reading materials;
* Opportunities for students to share what they are reading both formally and informally;
* Provide reading time in class.
* Nancy Atwell’s (2007) extensive research and work with readers have produced this list of conditions to help them move into their “reading zones”;
  + Book talks and mini-lessons;
  + A large diverse classroom library;
  + Quiet, daily in-class time to read;
  + Readers’ free choice of books, authors, and genres;
  + Recommendations of books from friends and teachers;
  + Comfort during-in-class reading time;
  + Student letters to the teacher and friends in lieu of book reports, essays, etc.;
  + Individual’s conversations/conferences with the teacher about his/her reading;
  + Individual’s list of books s/he wants to read someday;
  + Homework reading of at least 30 minutes every night.
* Suggestions from Steven Layne (2009):
  + Know your students
  + Do Book Talks (Chats)
  + Commit to regular Read Alouds [RAL]
  + Read with your students
  + Encourage Book Discussions
  + Create a Reading Lounge
  + Celebrate Books, Celebrate Authors and Work for Author Visits*.*
  + In Chapter 10, Layne provides a *Quarterly Plan* to guide teachers in incorporating these strategies into the classroom and instructional time. *A Valuable Resource!*

**See Appendix A**

* If we had time to visit Kelly Gallagher (2009) *[Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It]* and Donalyn Miller (2009) [*The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child*] we would find almost identical lists.

***Get the picture!***

**Talking Point 3:** ***Reviewing current young adult novels:***

* The Book List is found in Appendix B. Copies have been provided during the Session.
* Remember that this is only a preliminary list. The ***Final List*** will be completed about November 1 and the Top Read for2018 will be selected. Email me for the ***Final List***.

**Books I Recommend and Referenced in this Session**

Atwell, Nancie. (2007). *The Reading Zone: How to Help Kids Become Skilled, Passionate, Habitual, Critical Readers*. New York: Scholastic.

Donnelson, Kenneth. & Alleen Pace Nilsen. (2008). *Literature for Today’s Young Adults, 8th Ed*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc. [Note: 9th edition 2012]

Gallagher, Kelly (2009). *Readicide: How Schools Are Killing Reading and What You Can Do About It.* Portland, MA: Stenhouse Pub.

Halsted, Judith. (2009). *Some of My Best Friends Are Books: Guiding Gifted Readers From Pre-School to High School*, *3rd Ed*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

Johnsen, Susan & James Kendrick, eds. (2005). *Language Arts for Gifted Students*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, Inc.

Layne, Stephan. L. (2009). *Igniting a Passion for Reading*: *Successful strategies for Building Lifetime Readers*. Portland Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Layne, Stephan. L. (2015). *In Defense of Read-Aloud*: *Sustaining Best Practice*. Portland Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Lesesne, Teri. (2003). *Making the Match*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Miller, Donalyn (2009). *The Book Whisperer: Awakening the Inner Reader in Every Child*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Monseau, Virginia & Salvner, Gary. (2000). *Reading Their World: The Young Adult Novel in the Classroom, 2nd ed.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Monseau, Virginia. (1996). *Responding to Young Adult Literature*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Probst, Robert. (2004). *Response and Analysis: Teaching Literature in the Secondary School, 2nd ed*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Trelease, J. (2013). *The Read-Aloud Handbook,* 7th ed. New York: Penguin.

**Appendix A: Notes from Steven Layne’s *Igniting a Passion for Reading***

**Layne (2009) suggests the following strategies to ignite a passion for reading in our students:**

* **Know your students:** *Chapter 2: Coaches Who Know Their Players Win More Games: Igniting a Passion by Knowing Your Students.*
  + Use interest inventories;
  + Use self-assessments: Initial and Final;
  + Have students set their own reading goals;
  + Have students explore how they have become a “change” reader;
  + See *Chapter 2* for some great example of forms for all of these strategies.
* Do Book Talks (Chats): *Chapter 3: I Didn’t Know They Still Wrote Books for Adults*.
  + Read books written for the age group you teach and then tell the kids about the books.
  + Keep a Book Chat Binder of the books you have shared.
  + Use hooks to get their attention:
    - Questions
    - Props, costumes
    - Character identifiers such as accents or drawls - make sure students know that you are not making fun of that characteristic or group of people.
  + Reading excerpts may not be for every book.
    - Make sure the excerpt has the background for understanding.
    - The opening of a chapter is often good.
    - You have to decide if an excerpt is appropriate or not.
  + Narrative Voice:
    - Third person is most common and is good.
    - First person may be more effective.
    - Example of the Three Persons:
      * *My name is…*
      * *Your name is…*
      * *His name is…*
* Commit to regular **Read Alouds [RAL]**: *Chapter 4: Don’t Bother Me, I’m Busy Changing Lives: Igniting a Passion Through Effective Reading Aloud.*
  + ***This is my favorite chapter****.* More Notes on this Chapter are available by emailing me.
  + Please buy, steal, readSteven Layne’s *In Defense of Read-Aloud: Sustaining Best Practice (2015).*
  + Important: **Reading Aloud** is instructional time!
    - Provide reaction and interaction after reading aloud, especially when you finish a piece.
    - Layne’s *Genre Chart* is great: Pages 56 &57. Students select and discuss what genre is the piece that has just been read to them.
    - Defining **RAL** as instructional time is one of the best arguments to support regular read aloud
  + Layne provides great support, rationale, and research for the Importance and benefits of **Reading Aloud**.
  + A major emphasis: **Reading Aloud** promotes love of reading and may be the most effective way to hook reluctant readers into becoming “engaged” or even “insatiable” readers.
* **Read with your students**: *Chapter 5: My Modeling Career: Igniting a Passion by Reading With Students.*
  + Do your students know that you love reading?
  + Do your students see you as a reader?
  + If they were being interviewed about you, would they use the words: reader and/or books quickly?
  + Strategies
    - Tell stories of your own reading as a younger student;
    - Display your latest “Hot Read” – a book that is appropriate for the age that you are teaching;
    - Plan a regular time in which all read – this means you too!
    - Post a list of books that you have read (with author listed) and give a one to five-star rating.
    - Post a ***Someday Book List*** that you hope to read.
* **Encourage Book Discussions:** *Chapter 6: Can We Talk? Igniting a Passion Through Book Discussions***.**
  + This is not about books for literature circle discussions or novels for whole class instruction and discussion.
  + This is a focus on students’ self-selected, independent reading selections.
  + Layne calls this: **Buzz About Books.**
    - At the first of year assign groups of four.
    - Meeting time is three times a week for 15 minutes.
    - A focus item for discussion is provided, but discussions may spiral off in other directions. Pages **88 & 89** proves a list of possible focus items.
    - Each student begins by showing the book cover; stating the title and author; providing the page number on which s/he is currently reading; and giving it a one-to-five-star rating so far. Then the student addresses the focus item.
    - At the first of the year the teacher circulates to monitor, then later s/he joins a group as a participant, usually beginning the group discuss (modelling the “what and how”). S/he moves to the next group the next time they meet.
    - On the other two days of the week. Layne has ***Status of the Class*** in which each student shows the book; gives title and author; and the page currently on and a one-to-five-star rating so far (the same). Classmates see what each student is reading which often prompts them to read the same book.
* What about student delivered books chats?
  + - Only if they have taught how to do them effectively.
    - A rubric is provided on Pages 95 & 96.
* **Creating a Reading Lounge:** *Chapter 7: Nothing’s More Dangerous Than a Teacher With a Good Idea: Igniting a Passion by Opening a Reading Lounge***.**
  + The important thing is to get students out of desks “to have a comfortable space to be with text.”
  + A reading lounge is more than your “reading corner” and it is not in the library.
  + We have technology labs, science labs – why not reading lounges?
  + A comfortable, attractive, and appropriately furnished room for reading connected to or near the library is ideal.
  + Layne provides a list of “Roadblocks” that you will probably encounter in establishing a reading lounge and helpful hints around those roadblocks.
  + He also provides suggestions for monitoring, use, and decorating the reading lounge.
* **Celebrate Books**: *Chapter 8: There’s a Party Goin’ On Right Here: Igniting a Passion by Celebrating Books.*
  + Remember there is not much about school that is enjoyable for kids who aren’t into the “reading thing.”
  + The goal is to engage students with text that generates excitement about reading.
  + These strategies are short, fast-moving, set in a party atmosphere, and are not graded.
    - **Golden Recommendation Shelf**: Place nine (or so) of your favorite books for your grade level on the shelf with a personal note of why it is one of your favorites. If there is a personal connection with author, be sure and note that.
    - **First Read Club**: With the librarian, invite a few students to select and read the new books that come into the library. After students have read their books, they report in to you or the librarian: how they liked it: other students who might like it as well, etc. **THEN** place a sticker in/or the book that states: *This book was first read by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*
    - **Read Arounds:** Hardback books with book covers are placed on the students’ desks before they arrive. Students preview the book for 1 ½ minutes, then at your command [**Pass**] they pass it on to the next student. This allows students to find books that they might want to add to their *Books I Want to Read* list. More details for strategy are on Pages 119-120.
    - **Poetry, Comic, and Magazine Breaks:** A break as described here is for the purpose of allowing kids to explore a specific genre for a short amount of time. [Page 124].
      * A break in routine announced at unexpected times, usually lasting about 15 minutes.
      * Teacher suddenly announces: **Poetry Break!** (Or whatever genre). Students may go anywhere to read – individually, in pairs, or triads.
      * Must have a good supply of the genre called out, placed in a specific location for quick retrieval.
      * The teacher reads too!
  + **Newspaper Day**: Use copies of *The Elementary School Writer*, *The Junior High School Writer*, and *The High School Writer* from *Writer Publications*. Features kids’ writing in a newspaper format.
    - * Six times a year for about 45 minutes (a class period).
      * PTA and/or mothers provide refreshments.
      * Refreshments, a break from routine, reading other kids’ writing – can be very motivational.
  + **Club Read** [Bags from ALA]
    - * Bags are filled with the same assortment of books related to the content being taught.
      * Names of students are drawn to see who would take a bag home for a week or so.
      * No pressure to read anything in the bag, but most do.
  + **Picture Book of the Month**:
    - * ***For all grade levels!***
      * Selected picture book is displayed with a sign: **Picture Book of the Month.**
      * On the last school day of the month, teacher reads it aloud and explains why it was selected.
      * In Layne’s use for elementary students, students who have chosen to the read the book meet with him to discuss it at lunch. They bring their lunches – he provides brownies.
* **Celebrate Authors and Work for Author Visits***. Chapter 9: Oh, Author, Where art Thou? Igniting a Passion Through Author Visits.*
  + Visits from authors expose students to the wonders of reading and writing in a unique way.
  + *“…an author visit, brings the voice behind the print to life, is the way you connect kids with authors – not through a letter-writing assignment that is likely to disappoint everyone involved.”* [Page 131]
  + Chapter 9 provides helpful and detailed guidelines for planning and hosting an author visit. **Check it out!**
  + A selection of Layne’s “Rules”
    - Know the author!
    - Do your research on the author. Is s/he a good speaker? How does s/he relate to kids? Check references.
    - *Visiting authors agree that the most important way to ensure a successful author visit is to make sure the students have read the author’s books.* [Page 137]
* **In Chapter 10, Layne provides a *Quarterly Plan* to guide teachers in incorporating these strategies into the classroom and instructional time. *A Valuable Resource!***

These notes are based on Steven Layne’s *Igniting a Passion for Reading* (2009)

I **highly** recommend this book!

**Appendix B: The Colorado Only Preview List of *What’s New in Young Adult Literature: 2018 Edition***

What’s New in Young Adult Literature: 2018 Edition

Dr. Bob Seney

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This list represents the books read and selected for the List before NAGC and as such is an incomplete List. It has been prepared for this *Special Colorado Preview*. The **Underlined Books** are the candidates for my personal *Top Ten Reads of 2018.* [This year 20 (!) novels were candidates. Plus, three from the Special List.] Five Candidates for **The** *Top Read*. [High Lighted]All books listed meet Halsted’s (and my) criteria for books most appropriate for gifted readers. **The complete List will be available after the NAGC Conference, the “traditional” closing for my List. Email me for final list after mid-November.**

Happy 20th Anniversary, Harry Potter! On September 1, 1998, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* arrived in American Book Stores. It had been published a year earlier as *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* in England by Bloomsbury Publishers.

I hope you followed *The Great American Read* on Public Television. Great show – hope you voted for your favorite from the list of 100 titles. Finale is October 23!

**Note: You will notice a few “older” titles on the List. This year I had more opportunities to meet with gifted readers and I always listen carefully to their recommendations. They gave me some great reads. Novels older than 2014 are in a Special List at the end.**

*Adegboyega-Edun, Joseph Trazer: Kids of Stolen Tomorrow* (ms/hs) 2017

A Debut Novel: Wow! In this dystopian novel, the author has created

a complex future world in which the population, separated into classes,

are pitted against each other. At the center of the plot is a group of

teens who possess unique gifts which are expressed – at first – through

their graffiti tagging. It is amazing how this young author creates a

civilization (and a vocabulary) through separate stories that he eventually

braids together. Very sophisticated vocabulary and complex construction.

Not an easy read, but captivating.

*Trazer World Glossary: Brizzes, Bisas and Babalawos* 2017

A valuable glossary of terms used and created by the author for this

unique novel set in the future. Comes free on Kindle.

Applegate, Katherine *Wishtree* (.e/ms) 2017

Red is the neighborhood “wishtree.” For many years, folks have

come to tie their wishes onto his branches. He knows many stories.

Poignant and meaningful, this amazing novel deals with several issues,

among then the acceptance of others from different cultures.

Book Jacket: “Funny, deep, warm, and nuanced, this is Applegate at her very best – writing from the heart, and from a completely unexpected point-of-view.”

Crane, Rebecca *The Upside of Falling Down* (hs/ms) 2018

Colorado author that I now intend to follow. Clementine wakes up

in Irish Hospital, the lone survivor of a place crash with total amnesia.

Not being able to face her Father, of whom she has no memory, and

not willing to hurt him more, she runs from the hospital with a mysterious young man who becomes her protector. What a web is woven here!

Set in one of my favorite areas of Ireland, we have a touch of the Irish here.

Flanagan, John *Brotherband: The Caldera [Book 7]* 2017

The Brotherband travels to the Mid-East to rescue the young

Emperor of Byzantium kidnapped by pirates. Flanagan is a master

story teller and this one is chock full of adventure and suspense.

This is a companion series to *The Ranger’s Apprentice Series*, my

favorite series.

Flanagan, John *The Red Fox Clan: Ranger’s Apprentice – The Royal Ranger* (ms/e) 2018

*Book 2*. Princes Madelyn aka Maddie is back and has just completed her

third year of training with the Rangers. Her royal identity is still kept

secret with very good reasons in this go-round. We find Flanagan at his best

with his beautiful descriptive language, fast paced story-telling, and great

characters. Reading this installment was like coming home to a great

party with old friends: Will, Halt, Cassandra, & Gilan. The Brotherband

also makes an appearance. This is my favorite series by a favorite author.

Ganendran, M. *Summer of Witches* (ms/e) 2017

Three different stories, but are they? Legend of an 18th Century

Smuggler; two children relocated to the country in WWII England;

and two teens looking for something to keep them occupied in the

late 1990s. An intricate plot with many twists and turns that keeps

you reading! One of the best plot novels that I have recently read,

but theme is there as well. Great craftsmanship.

Gratz, Alan *Refugee* (ms) (T) 2017

Three escape stories separated by time and geography: Josef, 1938

from Nazi Germany; Isabel, 1994 from Cuba; and Mahmoud, 2915

from Syria but is there a connection? Very Intense? Fictional characters,

but based on real people and real incidents.

Henke, Sheila D. *IDEA33: A Resolution* (ms) 2018

Zenith, the daughter of Heli and Terra who are lost in The Strata, is

the one named by the Prophecy to bring balance back to the environment

and to end the rule of the oppressive Regulation. But she is not aware of

the role she is to play. She has grown up overly protected in IDEA by the

ones she loves and who love her. Struggling to find her identity, which is complicated by being blind, she finds the answers in this exciting and thrilling “resolution” to the Trilogy. **A Colorado Author**.

James, Lauren *The Loneliest Girl in the Universe* # (m/hs) 2017

**A First Novel**: Watch for this author. Very strong female protagonist

and strong on math and physics. Very unusual situation and very well

handled. Romy is born on the Spaceship, *The Infinity*, traveling to

Earth II to colonize the first colony off planet. Her parents are killed

when she is 11 years old and NASA guides her in piloting and maintaining

the ship. Then she receives word that another spaceship, *The Eternity*, is

on its way to join her mission. A relationship develops through on-line communication with the other pilot, J. then…

King, Emily R. *The Hundredth Queen* (ms/hs) 2017

Hunger Games Genre – sort of. Set in a fictional ancient mid-eastern

society based upon Sumerian deities, Kalinda is selected to be the

100th Queen and must fight the challengers who would take her place.

Political intrigue in a very unusual setting. Hard to put down.

*The Fire Queen: Book 2* (ms/hs) 2017

After deception by Hastin, Kalinda and Deven are in exile searching

for the Prince in order to regain the throne. Kalinda is again forced

into another tournament and the odds are higher. This one is stronger,

more richly and tightly written. Reading five books at once, I kept

coming back to this one.

*The Rogue Queen: Book 3* (ms/hs) 2018

The end and climax of the trilogy. Exciting, dramatic. A wonderful

fantasy world built on ancient India cultures. The final battle is one

of the best I have read. An unexpected ending. This series is well

written and the created world is interesting and consistent.

Loved this series. Very engaging.

L’Engle, Madeleine *A Wrinkle in Time* (e/ms) 1962

**Newbery Medal. 2012: 50th Anniversary Edition**

I re-read this classic because of the new movie. It is the book “that

defied all categories.” I had forgotten how wonderful it is. “Love

conquers all.” This edition has an *Afterword* by L’Engle’s granddaughter

and the text of L’Engle’s Newbery Acceptance Speech. Both very interesting.

While wonderful, it **will not** be considered for Top Ten because of publishing

Date, but I had to include on the List.

Lincoln, Jenna *Prophecy of the Tree: The Protector Project Book 3* (ms/hs) 2018

The saga of Mara, the Daughter of the Tree, and Dalin, her Santulan,

comes to an exciting and thrilling end. Dalin almost destroys the

unique bonding and relationship with Mara because of his over

protectiveness of the very capable and independent Mara. Using her

current study of thrillers and suspense novels, Lincoln brings the Trilogy

to an end – but not without surprises and conflict. The Author’s Note is

very important. **A Colorado Author.**

McMichael, B. Kristin *The Witchling Apprentice* 2016

*Book 1 - The Skinwalker Witchling Trilogy* (M, SR)

A very creative and different tale of the witching world! Cassie looks

forward to being accepted in the Coven, but there are many other

“things that go bump in the night.” Is this what she really wants?

Spell binding (forgive the pun)! Very well written and the plot folds

out in unexpected ways.

Madow, Michelle *Elementals: The Prophecy of Shadows* (m) 2016

Harry Potter meets Percy Jackson. It was bound to happen and

happen it did in a really great way. The witching world meets heroes,

children of human and Olympian gods. Nicole’s family suddenly moves

to a new town and Nicole finds herself placed in unusual classes and

she begins to discover her powers. According to the Prophecy, five

must meet and work together to fight Typhon and The Titans in the Third Rebellion. Fast moving, really well written and great characters.

Mass, Wendy & Rebecca Stead *Bob* (e) 2018

Livy has not been back to her Gran’s for five years and when she does

return she doesn’t remember a lot of things – including Bob, who has

been waiting in the closet where she had put him, for her to return and

to help him return home - wherever that is. Clues, connections, a chess

pawn and the crippling drought in the area all add up to a fun adventure

that is very well written with humor and the importance of connections,

especially family.

Mitchel Todd *The Last Panther* (e/ms) TR 2017

**A Colorado Author**. Kira lives in a divided world created by dramatic

human-caused climate and environmental changes. She belongs to

neither: her father is a Waller, and her mother was a fugee. Neither

world wanted her, until the panther, though to be extinct, came into

her life. A great adventure story dealing with climate change and the

extinction of animals. Can one person make a change? Really good read.

Nichols, Amy K. *Now That You’re Here: Duplexity – Part 1* (ms/hs) SR 2014

**A First Novel.** Recommended by my new reading partner, Sarah – See

Note on Taylor’s *The Woodlands* below. True sci-fi dealing with parallel

universes, chaos theory, math, and physics galore. Danny finds himself

In Phoenix, but not his Phoenix and his world. This is also a story of first

love. Eevee a math/physics genius, has her world planned out – mathematically, and then a different Danny arrives on her doorstep.

How to get him back to his universe while breaking her heart? I am now reading *While You Were Gone, Part 2 (2015)*: The story of the other Danny. Great concept and exciting science fiction.

Niven, Jennifer *All the Bright Places: The Story of a Boy called Finch, and a Girl*

*Named Violet*\*# (HS) 2015

Wow! Very intense! Deals with the subject of teen suicide.

Amazing literary allusions and beautifully constructed. Author’s

Notes at end are very important. Ending is surprising.

Pierce, Tamora *First Test: Protector of the Small, Book 1* (ms/e) SR 1999

**Whoops!** Strongly recommended by a student. Kel must fight

bullying, prejudice, classmates, and even the Master of Training

to win her place and right to train as a page in the Court of King

Jonathan. Pierce is a master of fantasy fiction and always has strong

female protagonists. Great reading.

*Page: Protector of the Small – Book 2* (ms/e) 2000

Kel continues her training as the only female page, but slowly

begins to win over faculty and students but still must battle intrigue

In order to complete her final test. Another great read.

*Squire: Protector of the Small – Book 3* (ms/e) 2001

It appears that no knight is going to step forward to take Kel as a

Squire, then Raul, Commander of the King’s Own arrives back at the

Palace and requests her. So, she is now a squire in an elite corps.

Again, she must show her strength, her abilities, and her courage.

Pierce is a master craftsman as her many awards show. I am truly

enjoying this series!

Reynolds, Jason *Long Way Down* (hs/ms) 2017

**2018 Newbery Honor Book  
2018 Coretta Scott King Honor Book  
2018 Printz Honor Book  
A *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize Winner for Young Adult Literature  
Longlisted for the National Book Award for Young People’s Literature  
Winner of the Walter Dean Myers Award  
An Edgar Award Winner for Best Young Adult Fiction  
Parents’ Choice Gold Award Winner**

Wow! That should be enough! A poignant, terse story told in narrative

verse. Will’s brother, Shawn, has been killed and since he has been raised

by the rules of the street: No crying, no snitching, and get revenge. Will

gets on his apartment’s elevator to kill who he thinks killed Shawn. As

he goes down, at each floor, someone who was connected to Shawn

gets on. **But**, that they are all dead. They challenge the rules and

Will must make an important decision. This is powerful!

Riggs, Ransom *Library of Souls* (ms) 2017 ed.

The third and last of the *Miss Peregrine’s Peculiar Children* trilogy.

The other two also made this list in the past [*Miss Peregrine’s Home for*

*Peculiar Children:2012* and *Hollow City: 2016*]. I found this one much more engaging and harder to put down*.* Jacob and Emma’s relationship grows and they must find and free their friends and Miss Peregrine from the evil Caul, Miss Peregrine’s brother and another brother is introduced. An exciting

adventure with more social comment, both positive and negative.

The same creative use of unusual photos from the past. An extended

metaphor for giftedness.

Riordan, Rick *Magnus Chase and the Gods of Asgard: Book 3*

*The Ship of the Dead* (ms) 2017

Riordan at his most humorous – the real strength and interest of this

one. Magnus and his friends must find and re-capture Loki before he

brings about Ragnarök: The Day of Judgement – The End of Time.

A great adventure with many twists and turns, but I must be honest,

it got a bit tedious. Don’t think Riordan needed the 410 pages to tell

the story, but Riordan Fans will still love it. It was fun.

Roth, Veronica *Carve the Mark* (hs/ms) 2017

Roth (of *Divergent* fame) has created a new universe in a sci-fi work

that sometimes hovers into fantasy fiction – which I like and which

some pure sci-fi fans don’t! Also hovering within *The Hunger Games*

genre, Roth proves again that she is indeed a master craftsperson. She

shows her skill in creating clever and suspenseful plot lines, conflicts,

and developing complex characters. Cyra and Akos (both with “currentgifts”) must find a way to free themselves from Cyra’s evil brother, Ryzek, ruler

of the Shotet, who is set on conquering their known world. Not advertised

as a series, and complete in itself, it is certainly set-up for a sequel.

Tolan Stephanie & *Applewhites – Coast to Coast* (e/ms) 2017

R. J. Tolan Another fun adventure with the Applewhites! This time, they are

traveling to California in a RV and taking part in an “educational”

TV reality show. E.D.is dealing with a new relationship with Jake:

“Can you date an almost brother?” and this is complicated by the

attractive Melody, who is along for the ride. Fun adventures, fun

characters with several sub-themes. **Co-authored with her son!**

Townsend, Jessica *Nevermore: The Trials of Morrigan Crow* (e/ms) 2017

In an escape reminiscent of *Alice in Wonderland*, Morrigan, a

“Cursed Child,” escapes to Nevermore and discovers her true worth

and importance. I expect to see this one in Awards Lists.

Wheeler, Jeff *The Banished of Muirwood: The Covenant of Muirwood Trilogy*

*Book One* (ms) TR, SR 2015

Not just another fantasy series. Very well crafted. The plot details are discovered as you read through dreams and flashbacks. Suspense,

intrigue, and betrayal. Wheeler has created a unique and original fantasy culture. Very hard to put down.

*The Ciphers of Muirwood: The Covenant of Muirwood Trilogy*

*Book Two* (ms) TR, SR 2015

Finally arriving at Muirwood Abbey, Princess Maia is still not safe from

her father the king. Her only hope and the hope for the Kingdom is for

her to take and pass the Maston Test, her life’s goal and desire. Again

great intrigue and adventure. Author’s End Note is both interesting and

important. Wheeler is a student of medieval history thus adding

authenticity to the story.

*The Void of Muirwood: Book Three* (ms) 2015

The exciting conclusion to the Covenant Trilogy. Maia now Queen,

must save her people and her kingdom from the growing evil of the

Victus and the Naess of the North. Very well crafted. I read this trilogy because of a recommendation by a young middle school reader.

So glad I took her suggestion.

Wolk, Lauren *Beyond the Bright Sea* (e/ms) 2017

Adventure, intrigue, buried treasure and seeking one’s identity: It’s

all here. Author’s notes on historical and geographical setting are

interesting and important.

**Winner of the 2018 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction**

**Special List: This year I had the opportunity to be in more schools than usual. I always ask teachers and students what are the books that I should read. Some of these books are not as current as the books that I place on my list, but I think should be included. I mark them if they are a good read for me, but I did not consider them for my Top Ten Reads of the year.**

Jefferson, Stephanie *Princess Kandake: Warrior by Choice – Appointed to Rule* (ms) TR 2011

In this ancient Nubian setting, Kandake wants to be a warrior, but

she is chosen to be the Queen after her father. In finding and

retrieving her kidnapped brother, she finds the courage, strength

and wisdom to be both. Interesting cultural notes and a great strong

female protagonist. Well written.

*Weight of the Crown* (ms) TR 2012

Kandake must take the throne because of her father’s serious illness.

Is she ready? Can she rule effectively? With her self-doubts, she finds

strengths and wisdom that she had not realized were hers. The Great

Mother had chosen wisely. Her rule is complicated by the arrogant

Prince from a neighboring country who attempts to claim her as his

Wife, ignoring the customs of Nubia. A many layered plot with a great

many intricacies. I normally don’t recommend spending a lot of time on

plot for gifted readers (I think we should emphasize theme and style) but

this is an exception. It will provide a challenge.

Taylor, Lauren Nicolle *The Woodlands* (ms) SR 2013

**2014 Kindle Book Awards Semi-finalist and a USA Best Book Awards Finalist**

A gifted seventh grade girl (Sarah) recommended this book to me:

“This is the best book I’ve ever read.” I can certainly see her enthusiasm.

A dystopian novel that has echoes of *The Maidens’ Tale*. Rosa is thrust

into the complexities of her world with its strict conformity and total

control. Romantic alliances are forbidden, so of course she falls in love

with Joseph while at the same time trying to deny it. The rules of her

world are too strong until circumstances force her to re-evaluate all

that she has known. At times, you are on the edge of your seat reading

this one. I am now reading the full series.

Russel, Craig *Black Bottle Man* (ms/hs) TR 2010

**Winner of 2011 Moonbeam Young Adult Award** (Canadian)

The Dedication says it best: “A fable for my mother and father. A story

of true love for my wife. An adventure for my son and daughter.”

Rembrandt must find a champion to fight the devil to save the souls of

his aunts who have been tricked by the devil. Adventure after adventure;

and a double story that slowly gets wound together makes this an exciting

tale. It held me captivated. Beautifully and intricately written with philosophical undertones. Not an easy read, but a very good one. **This one easily could have** **been a Candidate for Top Ten Reads of the year, except for the publishing date.**

**From the 2016 List Repeated Per Request: Great Nonfiction.**

**This series *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) 2015

*Global Explorer: The Southern Hemisphere* (ms/hs)2015

. *Our Universe Revealed: A Cosmic Exploration* (ms/hs)2015

All are published by Thinyxgen [www.thinyxgen.com] and are now available on Kindle.

**Codes:**

# Language Alert

\* Situation Alert

e = elementary school

ms = middle school/junior high

hs = high school

SR Student Recommended

TR Teacher Recommended

Whoops Books! = Books that got by me that are really great!