New Elementary Library Teachers

Collaborating with teachers

* I always ask teachers what they’d like the topic to be for research class. This way they can coordinate with what’s going on in class. Sometimes they want me to hit a topic they won’t have time to teach. Sometimes they want me to teach what they’re doing at that time in class so that research class will be a reinforcement or enhancement of what they’re teaching.
* I collaborate with teachers and try to get ideas on what behavior management skills work for their class/their grade. Teachers will often support me in “feeding into” their classroom behavior management. For example, if the class behaves in library, they can earn a class point toward a party.
* We talk informally about individual kids (IEP needs, SEP goals that I can help with, kids who aren’t choosing good books for themselves when they come to the library, etc.)
* Collaborate with other library teachers for good ideas (lesson ideas, behavior management, how they run their library, etc.)
* Hopefully you have a mentor that you will be collaborating with heavily.

Reading Programs

* I’m a bad one to ask about this. We sort of have Accelerated Reader at our school. A few teachers use it, most don’t.
* Some libraries have the kids vote on the Beehive Book Awards.

Volunteers

* If you don’t have a paid, adult library aid, you HAVE to have volunteers.
* Adult volunteers help me re-shelve the Dewey decimal section.
* Sixth graders help me re-shelve all other sections.
* Volunteers help with Book Fair. It would be impossible for just one person to run the whole thing.
* Volunteers help with the tasks that “any old person” could do so that I can focus on things that only I can do. Things for volunteers include things such as cataloging magazines, attaching barcodes and call numbers to books, book repairs, assembling prize bags, counting notes, etc.

Behavior Management

* Classroom management skills don’t always transfer over smoothly to the library
  + A MUCH larger space
    - Places for kids to hide
    - They duck down between the shelves and play tag
    - They have sword fights with the shelf markers
    - You are far away from them because you have to be at the checkout counter. You lose the advantage of proximity to help with control.
    - One thing that has helped me with these kinds of proximity problems is that I set up a laptop on top of the shelves where most kids are finding books so I can be much closer to where the action is and nip it in the bud.
    - Train 5th and 6th graders to do the checking out for their classes so you can be mobile.
  + You don’t always know every kid’s name
    - Try your hardest to learn every kid’s name
    - Learn the naughty kids’ names QUICKLY
  + You don’t have that day-in/day-out relationship with the kids that usually takes care of half of your misbehaviors
    - Be very consistent with rewards and consequences
    - Be firm and fair (like you’ve never heard these suggestions before!)
  + Many of your former “go to” rewards don’t work in library (class parties, extra recess, free time, table points so just that table earns a reward, this table gets to choose what we do at PE, individual points on dojo.com)
    - Find new things: class points on dojo.com, physical rewards (small toys)
    - I don’t use candy because kids can’t have food in the library
  + “Active” lessons will prevent lots of behavior problems
    - Every time you design a lesson, ask yourself “What will the kids be doing during this lesson?” If the answer is sitting and listening to you, change your lesson!

Adapt! Adapt! Adapt!

* An example:
  + Using popsicle sticks to randomly choose kids to respond
    - it took me a LONG time to figure out that I could write a letter on the popsicle sticks and if a kid’s name started with that letter they were chosen
    - if there are multiple kids with that letter I do eenie-meenie-minie-mo
    - after being observed by my asst. principal, she suggested I use both of kids’ initials to speed the process
  + dojo.com can be used to track kids’ positive and negative choices
    - I assign a teacher’s name to each imoto instead of a student’s name and we keep track of good behavior of each class, best class wins and everyone in the class gets a prize (chips from Costco)