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Question 1. As a school librarian, what is your role in teaching and learning?

Even though my job title says “librarian” I definitely see myself as a teacher. I teach library and research skills, of course, but I also reinforce grade level objectives, introduce new concepts, and provide opportunities to learn about material and concepts that extend beyond the prescribed curriculum.

Question 2. As a school librarian, what is your role in promoting literacy and reading?

I view this as the most important part of my job. I always work to pair kids and books by creating lessons that encourage students to try new authors and titles. I try to learn about my kids so I can make recommendations that will be good fits. I also find ways that students can recommend books to each other. It means so much when a peer tells you that a book is good. I think enthusiasm for reading is contagious and I promote great books every chance I get, but I’m also willing to acknowledge when a book isn’t so great. I want readers to trust my advice and to become discriminating in their choices.

Question 3. How do you help your students to build life long-learning skills?

We talk about books and school and life all the time. I want to spark their curiosity and to encourage kids to use the library as a source of pleasure and for a purpose.

Question 4. What tips do you have for school library program management?

I think a successful library program aligns itself with the needs of a school and its community. The librarian should also work consistently to bring in new lessons and materials by using all available resources.

Question 5. What is your main piece of advice for a new, school librarian?

Find a group of other librarians and create an informal cadre. Moving from working as a part of a grade level team to becoming a team of one isn't easy. In my opinion, it's vital to find other librarians, veterans and rookies, that you can turn to for advice, inspiration, or just to vent.

Summary:

From this interview, three important themes that stood out were the importance of providing high-interest materials that go beyond classroom curriculum, the necessity to promote reading starting at the individual level, and the advice of aligning oneself with the community.

Including high interest materials in the library collection and incorporating them into lessons, is a major theme covered throughout this interview. Jeneen works towards knowing her readers and providing titles and authors that would be of high interest to them. Additionally, she aligns her lessons to the state curriculum in order to assist in covering relevant topics, as well as provide additional resources that allow learners to go beyond the concepts covered in class.

Jeneen strives to develop life-long learning and reading in students by targeting reading promotion at the individual level. This was another major topic discussed. She matches students to texts, provides materials based off of student interests, and continuously engages in book talks that model discerning which books are good resources and fundamentally enjoyable. Through these approaches, Jeneen promotes her students' love for reading at the individual level.

Throughout the interview, Jeneen references a third key point, librarians should continuously be aligning themselves with their learning community. This includes the school community in providing resources tailored to the campus's specific wants and needs, but also an extended learning community of fellow teacher-librarians. It is Jeneen's main advice for aspiring future school librarians to build connections with individuals in similar roles as they will become a sounding board of advice and inspiration.