Reading BeTWEEN the Lines:
HOW TO REACH AND SERVE TWEENS IN YOUR LIBRARY
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OUTLINE OF TOPICS

- SLIME. So much slime.
- Science!
- Engineering!
- Coding
- Book to Movie Club
  - Yes, book clubs CAN work
- Artful Afternoons
- FUN!!!
- Do’s and Don’ts
- Any Questions?
SLIME

- Glow in the Dark
  - [https://sciencenotes.org/easy-glow-dark-slime-recipes/](https://sciencenotes.org/easy-glow-dark-slime-recipes/)
  - Add in glow in the dark paint
  - Didn't work very well, but SCIENCE!

- Glitter
  - Extra fine glitter works best

- Confetti
  - Use multicolor styrofoam beads to mix in

- Gold
  - Use gold watercolor
  - [https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004DEMY2G/ref=oh_aui_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B004DEMY2G/ref=oh_aui_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&psc=1)

- Magnetic
  - Use magnet powder, SLIME WILL BE BLACK
  - Provide VERY STRONG magnets to make the slime actually work

- Regular
  - Offer different colors, I use food coloring
MORE Slime! Tips and Tricks

- **PRE-MEASURE EVERYTHING**
- Cover tables in plastic tablecloths for easy cleanup! (just fold it up and toss)
- **PRACTICE PRACTICE PRACTICE**
  - You’ll want to know how to troubleshoot, if necessary……it will be necessary
- Be prepared for a giant mess! If you have carpet in your room, BEWARE
- Have the kids help each other, I have quite a few slime experts who attend

- **Materials I use**
  - Elmer's white or clear glue (I have found that the name brand works best, but any school glue will do)
  - StaFlo Liquid Starch, or activator of your choice. Can also use borax, contact solution, etc.
  - Plastic Bowls
  - Spoons or craft sticks
  - Ziplock bags to take home
  - Medicine or condiment cups to measure out add-ins like glitter, foam beads, liquid gold, etc.
Slime Resources

- Google is your friend!
  - I often think of something I’d like to try with slime, google it, and odds are someone has done it
  - Can give inspiration for new types
- Recipe I use:
  - ½ cup glue
  - 3-4 Tablespoons liquid starch
  - CAN add in ¼ cup foaming hand soap (I exclude this)
  - OR CAN also add in ¼ cup water (I also exclude this)
- Ultimate Slime by Alyssa Jagan book
  - Provides basic recipes
  - Sections on beginner, intermediate, and advanced slimes
  - Section on troubleshooting
  - Provides inspiration
Science!

- Make science FUN
- Ice Cream in a Bag
  - MESSY
  - Buy the nice ziplock bags—YOU WILL WANT THEM
  - Will be salty, due to leaks, just trying to transfer to bowls
  - I pre-measured most ingredients to prevent major spills and messes
- Mad Scientist Mayhem
  - Elephant toothpaste
  - Film Canister rockets
  - Simple baking soda/vinegar experiments
Engineering!

- Rube Goldberg/Crazy Contraptions
  - Look up videos on YouTube
  - Similar to Mousetrap
  - VERY LOW BUDGET
  - Bring in recycling
  - Tape, scissors
  - Can show videos for inspiration
  - IMAGINATION!!
  - Open Building/Working Together

Image from boyslife.org
Coding, yes you can do it!

- **Ozobots/Spheros/Robots**
  - If you can afford them, use them!
  - Very simple and easy to learn if you don’t know how
  - Pros: kids love them and learn basic coding principles while having fun
  - Cons: many schools now have these items so kids might think it’s “boring,” combat this by making competitions or specific goals—provide prizes!

- **Code.org**
  - If you have a lab, laptops, etc. Use this website!
  - I’ve just shown it on a projector and had us work through some of the games as a group

- **Crafty Coding**
  - Can’t afford expensive tech? This is much more budget friendly!
  - Kids that love crafts will still learn coding—a new way to think about it
  - Coding is lots of patterns!
  - Graph paper coding, binary bracelets, DIY spy decoders, etc.
Crafty Coding!
Yes, it's a thing!

- **Graph Paper Coding**
  - Emoji pictures! I made these in word, can create new ones if you'd like
  - Wrote out instructions by hand and copied, it was easier
  - Materials: paper, colored pencils. That's it!

- **Binary Bracelets**
  - Provide sheet with binary in black and white squares, have them decide what to put on their bracelet—initials, name, etc.
  - Materials: beads, string, clasps (if you want them). I got everything from Michael's or Amazon

- **DIY Spy Decoders**
  - It's a basic cypher wheel
  - Find a template online, or create your own (find mine attached)
  - I provided blank ones and ones with the alphabet written in by me
  - Materials: cypher wheels printed on cardstock, metal brads, colored pencils, scissors
  - Make the wheels, explain how they work, then let them send secret codes to each other!
Book to Movie Club!

- Summer worked best for me
- Would only attempt if you have a following, know you have an interest

Setup:

- First date (early June): selected books—gave options and allowed suggestions
  - Pulled book discussion kits/copies of books I thought might be selected in advance
  - Distributed books for first selection—wrote down book number, took child's name and phone number
- Second date (end of June): Watch film based on book, then discuss differences, which they liked better, etc. If child didn't read or finish the book, I'd still let them attend.
  - Collected first book, handed out copies of the next book
- Third date (end of July): Showed film for second book selection, same as first time
  - Any books not collected, told to bring back soon. After a few weeks I had only one book not returned, gave them a call and got it back
- Kids told me they'd keep coming, tried in October and December, to low/no attendance
- Books THEY selected: *Wonder* for June and *Holes* for July. I selected *James and the Giant Peach* for October and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* for December
- Provide snacks!!!
- **THIS IS NOT SCHOOL. IT SHOULD BE FUN!**
Artful Afternoons

- **DIY Sharpie Mugs**
  - Dollar Tree mugs
  - Paint Pens
  - Draw a design, send home with instructions (let it dry 24 hours, then bake it to set)

- **Mosaics**
  - Mosaic tiles (or jewels, sequins, whatever you have. IMPROVISE!)
    - You'll need more than you think
  - $1 wooden picture frames from Michael's. I painted the base white.
  - Tacky Glue

- **Canvas Art**
  - EXPENSIVE
  - Acrylic paint, 8x10 canvases (I bulk buy at Michael's—40 canvases for $40).
  - I required registration

- **Crafts and a Movie**
  - Leftover crafts from mugs and mosaics, scratch art, sharpie pencil pouches, coloring pages
  - Gave them movies to choose from (ex: The Sandlot, Shrek, Jumanji, etc.) They selected the OG Jumanji
Miscellaneous FUN STUFF!

- **Totally Tween Tie-Dye!**
  - Require registration, ask t-shirt size
  - I buy packs of white tee's in quantities needed from Walmart
  - Dye—I use the tulip one step kits
  - MESSY. Warn kids the dye will stain their clothes (duh, but.....expect them to know nothing)
  - COVER YOUR TABLES (obviously)

- **Pizza Party**
  - Chill, hang out night. Usually bring out games and coloring pages.
  - Occasional surprise popsicles/candy at the end

- **Board Game Night**
  - Self-explanatory
  - Popular games: Jenga, Monopoly, Connect 4, Trouble, Uno
MORE Miscellaneous FUN STUFF!

- Fandom Nights
  - Harry Potter
    - Make wands
    - Get sorted
    - Quiz competition (I do this at the beginning and let them fill it out during downtime between other activities in case not everyone wants to participate)
      - PRIZES!!! I gave out a pop keychain of Harry Potter for the winner
    - Golden snitch craft
      - Ping pong balls, gold foil, white feathers, hot glue
    - Themed snacks
    - Etc.

- Superheroes!
  - Made capes and masks, decorated with their own designed logo OR pre-printed logos from beloved heroes (Batman, Wonder Woman, Spiderman, Captain America, etc.)
  - Trivia
    - PRIZES!!! Again, I gave out a pop keychain of Wonder Woman
  - Super snacks
  - Hulk Smash
  - Etc.
If you build it.....will they come??

- The hardest part

- SHAMELESSLEY SELF-PROMOTE
  - Go to schools? Talk it up, take flyers, etc.
  - Promote it in other programs—even if it's not the targeted audience the parents/adults may have kids that age or know people to tell, etc.
  - Have co-workers promote it in their programs
  - Tell teacher contacts

- FOOD IS KEY. FEED THEM. SNACKS ALWAYS WIN.

- Very fun stuff early on to gain a following. (think pizza party, tie dye, slime, etc.)

- Know your community—is Pokemon super popular? Painted rocks? Harry Potter? Fortnite? Plan a program around your specific kids.
How to keep up once they're coming!

- Keep up to date on current trends
  - TALK TO THEM
  - Look at new books, check out new movie releases targeted to them, video games
  - If you have natural interests in pop culture it will help. My natural interests include big movie releases (Marvel, DC, Disney, Harry Potter, etc.)
    - If you don't have this natural interest, that's ok!!! Find a co-worker who is into it, or just look up new things online about established popular areas of interest

- Survey!
  - If they're coming, have them fill out a survey to see what they liked the best, what they'd like to do again, etc. Ask their opinion—they'll tell you what they want to do
  - Can also do this verbally, esp. with a smaller group
What NOT to do...

- Make it feel like school. WE ARE NOT SCHOOL. You might want them to work in groups, but they don't know anyone else there and want to work alone. I only force it when ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY
  - Ex: Halloween toilet paper mummy wrapping game. It lasts one minute, then they can sit down
- Treat them like little kids
  - They are people, too. Talk to them like people. I don't treat them like little kids unless they do something to warrant it (e.g. throwing slime so high it hits the ceiling)
- Make them be TOO quiet, esp. in a designated program space
  - Once again, WE ARE NOT SCHOOL. They've had to sit and be quiet all day. They don't want to do that now. Set boundaries, but let them be a little crazy.
What to do!

- Joke with them
- Talk to the parents if they come
- Play music (I have a go-to Disney playlist on Spotify I play)
  - I have created custom playlists based off song requests (library-friendly versions of course)
- Let them push your boundaries—to a limit
  - They’re at the age where they’re testing it, let them do it
- Be real with them
- HAVE FUN WITH THEM! They can tell if you’re enjoying your time
Google Drive!

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_gQTtBDyBEiaAA9lVxW1gpf8-qiDRPjs?usp=sharing

- I compiled links, resources, instruction pages, and more into this handy google drive file
- Included: slime recipes and specific materials used for some of them
  - Slime recipes and specific materials used for some of them
  - Ice cream in a Bag instructions
  - Elephant Toothpaste
  - Rube Goldberg Videos and pictures (from my program!)
  - Binary Bracelet Instructions
  - Graph Paper Coding (Emojis!)
  - DIY Spy Decoders
  - DIY Sharpie Mug Instructions
  - Tie-Dye care instructions
Questions??

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Enjoy this awkward bathroom mirror selfie I took at the ALSC Institute in September.
If you see me at a KDLA/ALA/ALSC event (or for you northerners a SWON event), come say hi!

About me:
I'm a children's librarian at the Kenton County Public Library, Erlanger Branch. I serve on the Kentucky Bluegrass Award Committee for 3rd-5th grade books and just began an appointment on the ALSC Notable Children's Recordings Committee. I love pop culture, running, singing, and baking.