

Eileen Fusco, Library Assistant, Dobbs Ferry Public Library

### *Motivational Techniques for Children*

This past December, I finished my course on Motivational Techniques for Children's Literacy. Professor Arlene Laverde conducted open conversations about important and sometimes, uncomfortable topics. The experiences shared by fellow students were enlightening. I learned many new ways to motivate and engage children in reading. Graphic novels, book trailers, book-theater, and read-alouds were just a few. One of the most important lessons I have learned through this course as well as my experience at Dobbs Ferry Library, is that the library community is unequivocally supportive of one another and each of us have valuable information and ideas to share. This commitment to the cause is what distinguishes the library system from Google, the news media, and other information sources. The goals of these institutions should align with the needs of the community. Our future depends on the children of today. Therefore, libraries have the responsibility to provide our young, new readers with the materials and tools necessary to become successful and productive members of society.

First and foremost, the recurring theme for motivational techniques is to let children read what they enjoy. For instance, graphic novels engage many children, and are becoming more acceptable in the literary world. When I began this class, I thought I should experience at least one book in this format. *El Deafo* by Cece Bell was my first foray into the comic world, and it was not easy. It took a while to adjust to sequencing and captions. The story itself was very enjoyable, but it took time to adjust to this format. This particular literature style attracts many children, who become overwhelmed with too many words. The pictures assist in telling the story, and they capture the attention of young readers. Working in the children's room impressed upon me how much boys, in particular, enjoy these types of novels.

Another new experience in this course was a project where each of us created a book trailer. Using Animoto, I designed a set of slides set to music for the purpose of drawing interest to the book, *Fever, 1793* by Laurie Halse Anderson (one of the books I read for BOB). This was my favorite assignment. The creativeness of my classmates was amazing, and I surprised myself with my own ingenuity. This is a tool that I have not yet seen being used to its full potential. My library has a screen that displays the data for our solar panels. Since this device sits conveniently at the circulation desk, it would be a useful resource to advance new books.

Book Talks was my least favorite of the techniques because I had to stand in front of my peers, who seemed extremely skilled with all the programs assigned. I have to say that I learned as much from my classmates as I did from the teacher. Regardless of my anxiety with this task, it is an effective tool for getting children interested in different types of literature. In fact, I have added a few books to read from the recommendations of fellow students.

This course drew my attention to the innovative approaches that librarians have at their fingertips. As a future librarian, it is important for us to explore different materials and innovative approaches to addressing early literacy to assist our young patrons. The children's librarian has the very important responsibility of enticing readers, and encouraging them to pursue the literature that they enjoy. The goal is to find effective ways to engage children, and make sure they acquire the skills necessary to become well educated, responsible citizens of the community.