



The Power of Bookrooms

by CLARE LANDRIGAN

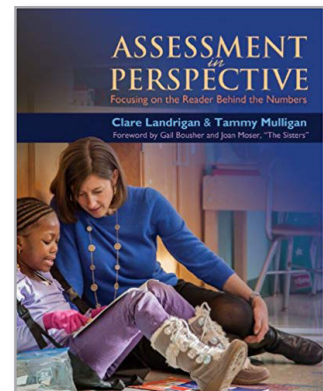
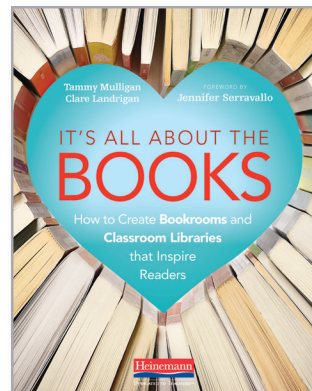
Bookrooms are an annex to every classroom library. When a school pools resources to source a bookroom, every teacher can continually refresh and rotate their classroom library inventory. When books are purchased and organized with all readers across the school in mind, each teacher's book supply seems endless in the eyes of a reader.



LITERACY CHAMPION: CLARE LANDRIGAN

Clare Landrigan is a staff developer who is still a teacher at heart. After years serving as an educator and administrator in elementary public schools, she is a staff developer, spending her days partnering with school systems to implement best practices in the

field of literacy. She believes that effective professional development includes side-by-side teaching, analysis of student work, mutual trust, respect, and a good dose of laughter. Clare is the coauthor of, [*It's All About the Books: How to Create Bookrooms and Classroom Libraries That Inspire Readers*](#) and [*Assessment in Perspective*](#). She is on the board of [The Book Love Foundation](#).



One to Know: Book Access Matters!

Research demonstrates that access to books directly impacts a child's opportunities for personal, professional, and academic success. According to Neuman and Celano (2012), "access to books is an issue of social justice." Budgets are tight and schools must prioritize the funding of books. Bookrooms are the most economical way to source classroom libraries and ensure every child has equal access to choose books that they want to read and that support them as a reader. Every child deserves the opportunity to be a lifelong reader, and every teacher deserves to have the tools they need in order to make that happen.

What to Do: Working Together to Get More Books for Your Bucks!

Research supports that teachers need anywhere between 1,200 and 2,000 books per classroom library. This number does not take into account the changing developmental needs and interests of students year to year. Bookrooms are an annex to every classroom library so teachers can readily and easily find books to engage and instructionally scaffold all students in the school community. Bookrooms allow teachers to share and rotate inventory; they not only remove the burden on teachers of buying books, they provide more volume and a broader range of texts for readers. Schools ultimately have to buy fewer books because teachers are sharing many of them.

Ideally, bookrooms supply the depth, breadth, and the volume of books at each level of complexity for students to read independently, multiple copies of texts to support small-group and partner instruction, mentor texts for whole-class lessons, whole-class texts for interactive read-aloud, and extra copies of those “hot off the press” titles. All of this is organized in grab-and-go baskets for a teacher to take, incorporate into their classroom library for a period of time, and then swap out for new baskets. Classroom libraries need to stay fresh and attract readers with a flow of new books. Bookrooms allow this to happen.

More to Know and Do: Designing Bookrooms to Maximize Student Choice, Identity, and Agency

Access is more than volume. Access is about connecting students with books. How the bookroom is designed makes all the difference! First, schools need to re-envision how to organize the books that they have to meet the evolving needs of students. Often, schools find boxes of books in rubber bands and zip-lock bags stored in closets and that haven't been used in years. If the design of how books are organized is not making it easy for teachers to get books into students' hands, then change it! You can make a big impact on volume simply by sharing and reorganizing the books you already own into baskets organized by theme, genre, series, topic, or mood. These can be for independent, partner, or club reading. Teachers also need more books to support content area curriculum. When there are books that cover science and social studies standards, students have time to build the content knowledge they need to apply to the experiments and experiences happening in science and social studies time. The books provide options so students can investigate individualized inquiries within content area studies. Make sure you are making the most of what you already have before you decide what you will purchase.

When it comes time to purchase, researching, planning, and coordinating makes all the difference! Survey your students to find out what they want to read, check out resources that highlight new books, audit your inventory to determine your gaps. Be certain to prioritize texts that center characters that represent the population of our world, and are inclusive of #OwnVoices authors. BIPOC, AAPI, and LGBTQIA+ characters and authors are underrepresented in the children's literature publishing industry, so it is important to consciously work to provide our students with texts that provide “mirrors, windows, and sliding glass doors” (Bishop, 1990).

Classroom libraries are the heart and soul of literacy instruction. The right book at the right time can make all the difference ... but only if we have it! Most of my conversations with teachers and literacy coaches center on books and creating an inviting space for readers—a space where readers connect with one another and we connect them to books; a space where we design, organize, and reorganize baskets of books to reflect our students and our curriculum. This space is where students have agency to discover their reading identity and author their reading life. Bookrooms, when designed with classroom libraries and a balanced literacy model in mind, provide the texts we need to bring this space to life.

Free Professional Resources to Support Maximizing Student Access to Texts

- [Study Guide from *It's All About the Books* by Clare Landrigan and Tammy Mulligan](#)
- [Tricia Ebarvia's Classroom Library Inventory Process](#)
- [Lee and Low Books—How to Build a More Diverse Classroom Library](#)
- [#DisruptTexts Core Principles](#)
- [Learning for Justice's model to promote a multi-dimensional approach to text selection that prioritizes critical literacy, cultural responsiveness and complexity.](#)
- [Free Digital Bookroom curated by Clare Landrigan](#)

How to Reach Clare Landrigan

[Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and her [website](#), where she blogs about books and the art of teaching. If you want advice and step by step guidance on how to create bookrooms and classroom libraries that inspire readers, contact Clare through her [website](#).

To learn more about bookrooms, check out [It's All About the Books: How to Create Bookrooms and Classroom Libraries That Inspire Readers](#) by Clare Landrigan and Tammy Mulligan. Clare and Tammy want this book to impact the lives of teachers and students directly so they are donating all author royalties it generates to the [Book Love Foundation](#).