



# Modernizing Library Reading Programs for Adult Patrons

Saskatchewan Library Association Webinar,  
February 6th 2025 - Devon Stolz

Welcome!

Thank you Saskatchewan Library Association for having me. Thank you for spending your lunch hour with me!

# Access Check



**Access is a shared responsibility.**

**I aim to create an online space where you don't need to disclose a disability to get accommodations. Together, we can welcome disability and its changes here and beyond.**

Is there anything about the space (display, sound, speaking speed, etc.) that I should address now?

Are there any other access needs that might affect your participation in the conversations that we could also address?

I understand access to be a shared responsibility between everyone in this space. I strive to create an accessible online space that reduces the need for you to disclose a disability or impairment for the purposes of gaining an accommodation.

In doing this together, I hope to welcome disability and the changes it brings into this space and spaces beyond.

So, where possible I've tried to make design decisions in this webinar to benefit everyone.. But if there is anything you need to fully engage or participate in this webinar - please let me know either now, or at any time during the webinar.

I want to know! Thank you!

I wish to acknowledge this Land of which I am an uninvited occupant.  
I come to you today from Toronto Ontario, for thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit.

I also want to acknowledge Treaty 4 Land, the homelands of the Cree (nehiyawak), Ojibwe, Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

Devon -

I want to highlight the fact that we do we Land Acknowledgments not to check a box off of a presentation list but for us to truly consider how the work of student engagement and library services connects to our voiced commitments. I always like to reflect on land acknowledgements and think about ways that I could be a better neighbour, colleague and friend to those around me and encourage you to take that forward today and into this week.

—

# What I'll be talking about today:

01

## Welcome!

Learning objectives & Hopes for this webinar

02

## Background & Motivation

Challenges faced, why change is necessary, conceptualizing change

03

## The Process

Research & Planning, Implementation, Results & Impact

04

## Key Takeaways & Q&A

Lessons learned, Advice for other scaling, Q&A



So, to give you a quick overview of how we'll spend our time together. I'm going to talk about the process I underwent when reimagined the Regina Public Library reading program for adults and teens. This presentation is going to be a bit of a case study into why I did what I did, what I learnt along the way and hopefully some tips for folks who may be interested in undergoing a similar process.

# This Webinar: Learning Objectives

**Understand the Revamp Journey:** Discover the steps and key lessons from redesigning the RPL adult reading program.

**Enhance Engagement:** Explore research-driven strategies to boost program engagement and effectiveness.

**Apply Practical Insights:** Get actionable tips to innovate and elevate your own library programs.



# Who am I?

Devon Stolz

- Bachelor of Education
- Bachelor of Arts
- Masters of Library & Information Studies
- PhD in Education Studies (in progress)

- English Teacher
- Learning Resource Teacher
- Information Management/Archives (Government)
- Community Librarian (RPL)
- Adult & Teen Programming Lead (RPL)
- Student Engagement (Academic, U of T)



If you don't know me, you might be wondering - "who is this guy? Why should I care what he says" why does any of this matter?"

So, to tell you a little bit about me... I am from Saskatchewan born and raised, I grew up in Wynyard Saskatchewan.. My career has been focused on teaching and libraries. I always say that I work in schools and libraries because I could not imagine working anywhere else and I really position myself as someone who advocates for accessible, inclusive education - I think that my teaching background has really informed my practice as a librarian.

I am really passionate about accessibility and inclusion - I obviously work for the university of Toronto now, which has been a big adjustment for me scale my work to such a huge institution - but the end goal is always the same - providing high quality library services and making connections with our patrons that matter.



02

# Background & Motivation

Challenges faced, why change is necessary,  
conceptualizing change

Okay, so I am going to talk about how I found myself leading the revamp of the RPL reading program and creating a pilot program that ran for a year and saw some pretty compelling numbers and success... this section is going to delve into my decision making process and then later on we'll talk about the key takeaways.

One thing I want to start off and say is that I did leave the role before the project wrapped up... so I wasn't there to follow along the project fully to completion. But I did receive feedback from my successor and from my collaborators.

### Adult Summer Reading Book Bingo Card

Read one book from your To Be Read pile	Read one book that is a part of a series	Read a book that was published in 2016	Read a self-help book	Read one book with terrible reviews
Read a book translated from another language	Read two books that are part of a series	Read a book on a best-seller list	Read a play	Read a book published over a century ago
Read a book written by someone under 30	Read a book that will scare you	Read a book chosen by someone else	Read a self-help book	Read a book from the year you were born
Read a banned book	Read a book about a place you've visited	Read a book because you like the cover	Read a novel, to any genre	Read a book that was turned into a movie
Read a book you started but never finished	Read a book by an author with your same initials	Read a graphic novel or comic book	Read a book of poetry	Read a book you own but have never read

### CALLING ALL ADULTS & TEENS!

Summer Reading Library Program!  
May 24 through August 13

- ★ Register & Set a Reading Goal @ the Library!
- ★ Check Out Library Books!
- ★ Return Your Books!
- ★ Tracking ends each Friday!

MAY 24

Each time you meet your goal twice you'll receive a certificate to use at either *Bean Grinders* for drink or *Bloomers* for ice cream!

Courtesy of the  
Niobrara County Library Foundation, Inc.

Niobrara County Library  
425 S. Main St. – Lusk, WY – 307-334-3490

PSJ Public Library Service presents...

### Book-opoly:

A virtual summer reading program for teens & adults

Read your way around our game board & enter our weekly prize draws.

### ADULT WINTER READING CHALLENGE

JAN 1ST - MAR 31ST

**THE CHALLENGE:**  
READ OR LISTEN TO AT LEAST 5 BOOKS BETWEEN JANUARY 1ST AND MARCH 31ST!

**SIGN UP ONLINE:**  
UMFPL.BEANSTACK.ORG  
OR DOWNLOAD THE BEANSTACK APP

**HOW TO PLAY:**  
TRACK PROGRESS, EARN BADGES & PRIZES BY LOGGING YOUR READS IN BEANSTACK.

UPPER MORELAND FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

beanstack

2016 WINTER READING PROGRAM FOR ADULTS & TEENS

JANUARY 4 - FEBRUARY 14

WE'RE BREWING UP A GREAT WINTER READING PROGRAM WITH A LATTE OF HOT READS AND EXCITING PRIZES THIS YEAR!

STOP BY THE LIBRARY AND PICK UP YOUR BOOKMARK AT THE INFO DESK TODAY!

When I came into the role of lead of adult & teen programs for RPL the position had been vacant for a while. There had also been some leadership shakeups and so there really was no expectation put upon me to run adult reading program- it was just sitting there and nobody was doing anything with it.. Our marketing team might have poked me and said “hey, do you want to do something with this?” and so that’s what got me thinking about working on something different. Children’s reading programs at RPL run in the summer and are highly successful and very well established.

What I learned about adult reading programs was that they had middling success - as might be expected and experienced by many public library adult reading challenges. It can be really hard to get people to participate in things - everyone is busy, nobody has time for reading, nobody will return cards or participate in programs and it makes the time and money we invest into them feel like it’s for nothing. This is very familiar for many people who work in adult and teen programming.

These images on the slide are not from RPL but they are maybe familiar to you - these are the kinds of things that have been done at RPL in the past - bingo cards, beanstack community time goals, gamified reading contests - or the same format that’s just been repurposed and rethemed for a different year.

I want to be clear, I don’t think that these are bad approaches - and in some circumstances they are familiar and expected and people really like them. The status quo is not necessarily bad... but it is worth examining if we continue with it for the sake of continuing with it. I really wanted to imagine how we could modernize what we



had been doing

I was very fortunate that I had some institutional support and colleagues who were open to trying something new.

# Conceptual Priorities



## Flexible

- No hard deadlines
- Participants can engage as little or as much as they want



## Simple

- Easy to explain quickly
- Avoids complexity



## Rewarding

- Participation and larger rewards
- Rewards existing habits



## Non-prescriptive

- Suitable for all literacy levels
- Inclusive for all readers

When I started to conceptualize my reading program I really wanted to step back and think about what did I like about existing reading programs - I decided I wanted to think about different types of library users / leisure readers and think how I could create something that would meet their needs.

This work was really collaborative. I workshopped the program primarily with a colleague in Marketing and Communications, Katie Balkwill Murphy who would support me with the printing, graphic design and promotion - but we really worked collaboratively in creating a program that we felt was new.

So - what did I want? And how did I come up with these priorities:

**Flexible** - no hard deadlines. I wanted there to be so much flexibility around the program that people could participate as little or as much as they wanted and submit their card on a timeline that would work for them. We know that people don't return gamecards - everyone is so busy... I take something with the best intentions and then it sits on my coffee table until two months after the deadline has passed.... How could that be avoided here.

I also wanted people to participate even if they didn't use our card... so I created a system that would allow people to adapt their existing goals that maybe they kept on Goodreads or in their own process.

**Non-prescriptive** - I wanted to create something that would be scalable for someone

with low literacy levels and for someone who reads a book day. I think both of these people are library users who deserve to be able to participate in a reading program. Often when I look at reading program goals they are written for someone who already has established reading habits. I didn't want us to be giving out goals that wouldn't resonate with readers.

**Rewarding** - I wanted there to be rewards for participation as well as a larger incentive to bring back your cards and continue to read and track your reading. I also thought of this program as a way to reward people who have existing reading habits... often when we create a reading program it might be geared towards developing habits, or reading broadly etc etc... I wanted something that could be rewarding in many different ways.

**Simple** - I told myself that if someone on the desk can't pitch it in 2 sentences or less than 30 seconds - it's too complicated and will alienate people. I also wanted this to be easily approachable for people with low literacy levels and who were English language learners.

# Overall Goals



Promote lifelong reading



Building reading habits & goal setting



Celebrate our community of readers

The main objectives were:

- A) Promote literacy.
- B) Celebrate our community of readers who already have reading habits.
- C) Provide opportunities for new and returning readers to learn about the benefits of goal setting and creating healthy reading habits.

# The Process

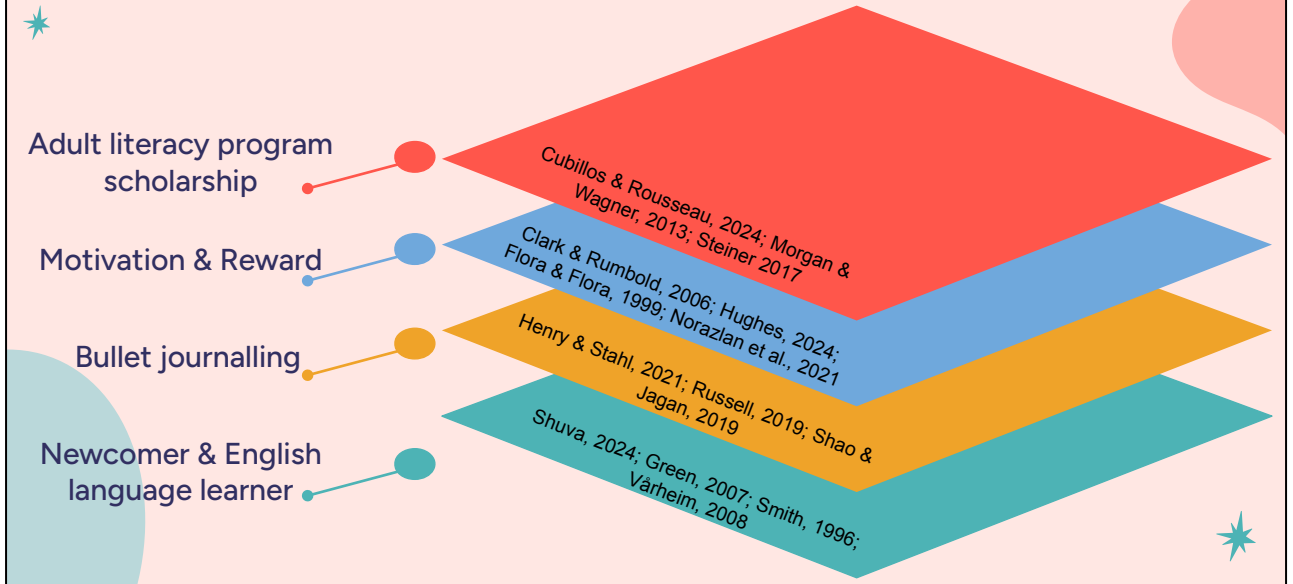
03

Research & Planning, Implementation, Results & Impact



Okay so let's talk a bit more about what I did in this little case study.

# What does the literature say?



There is a lot of academic research on the connection between literacy and readership and how people develop healthy reading habits. There are studies about adult literacy in libraries but I found that there were surprisingly few research studies on the most effective adult reading programs as facilitated by libraries.

I am lucky because I am a phd student and so I had access to academic databases to review articles as I was researching and preparing for this project/revamp but there was no “silver-bullet”, no “this is the best way to do this”

Forgive me, now that I am an ACADEMIC librarian I am prone to getting excited about research and I am cognizant that not everyone loves that. But I want to share a little bit about the research I did and how it informed my end program. This slide is meant to give a little bit of organization to my references list at the end of the presentation - if you're interested in any of these topics I've provided references at the end of the slide deck and picked out some readings that might be helpful.

—

I did read a little on what motivates people to participate in literacy programs, what is an effective literacy program etc.. but a lot of what we decided was workshopped amongst myself and Katie, my colleagues and my friends.

I looked at articles that explored CHOICE in reading motivation and adult / teen literacy. Most of this scholarship is from education studies and primarily focused on

reading choice in the school setting, so it's not necessarily 100% relevant to passive library reading programs. (Steiner, 2017) / Cubillos & Rousseau (2024) / Cubillos & Rousseau, (2024) - *this one is new, but it seemed relevant!*

However, the research very clearly shows that choice in reading benefits readers confidence and improves reading enjoyment.

**Around motivation and reward** - I was curious what makes someone participate in an optional program like library reading programs. Again, most of the literature here is focused on school age children but there is some published studies on extrinsic motivation, reward and participation. I even found a study that explores STICKERS as a motivator for learning since there was doubt about adults being motivated by stickers (adults are motivated by stickers). I wanted everyone who participated to walk away with something - even if it was very small like a sticker.

**Bullet journals:** I knew that bullet journals were quite popular, Paper Umbrella, a stationary store in Regina had good turnout for their bullet journaling workshops and I think the library had done bullet journaling programs as well that were well received.

So, I chose to provide participants with a bullet journal. There are lots of articles about how bullet journaling can help people achieve goals, stay focused on tasks and encourages reflection - I've included some articles on that in my references slide and encourage people to look at those.

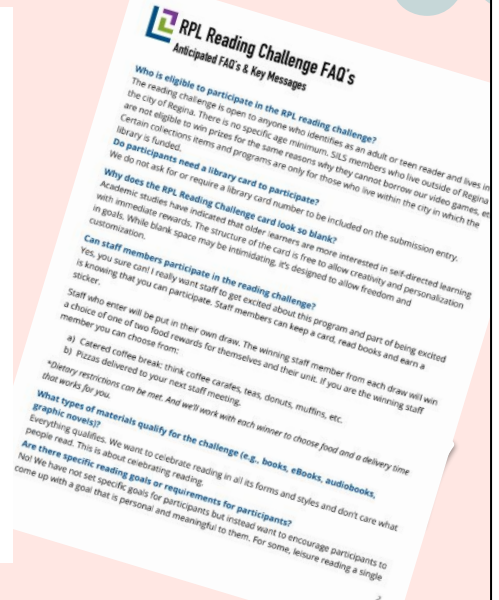
The last point I want to talk about is how we create programs like this that can be scalable for those with low literacy levels, are English language learners or maybe are really not readers but want to support their library.

I also read about how public libraries and these types of literacy programs can help newcomer and english language learner populations

# Planning & Roll out

## RPL Reading Challenge Branch Kit

More information will be provided to branch staff on this kit when they arrive at your branch.



I'll talk a little bit about the actual program that I created and what it looked like - but I want to talk about how I organized a program that would work across a library system. Basically, I really tried to prioritize communication and I created standardized kits that would exist at every branch so the experience would be the same for staff if they were filling in at a branch or working somewhere else...

I did a lot of awareness emails about the program, travelled to branches and did huddle talks, spoke at staff meetings and introduced the program directly to staff to try to get them excited about it.

I sent out a lot of emails, FAQ documents, vision and goal documents. Marketing told me that I was maybe doing too much communication. But RPL has 9 branches and I wanted it to be as easy as possible for library patrons and staff.

You can see in the kit there -it actually gives them step by step instructions on what to do if someone returns their game card to the library!

– the actual program itself is very very simple, but getting everyone onboard was very challenging.



**REGINA PUBLIC LIBRARY**

# READING CHALLENGE

(THE NOT SO CHALLENGING CHALLENGE)

**WIN ME \$250**

READ A LITTLE, OR READ A LOT!

## HOW TO PLAY:

You're busy. Set your own pace!

Get rewards for reading what you want, when you want.

Complete self-directed reading challenges for chances to win a Kobo and \$250 bookstore gift card! Play all through the year.

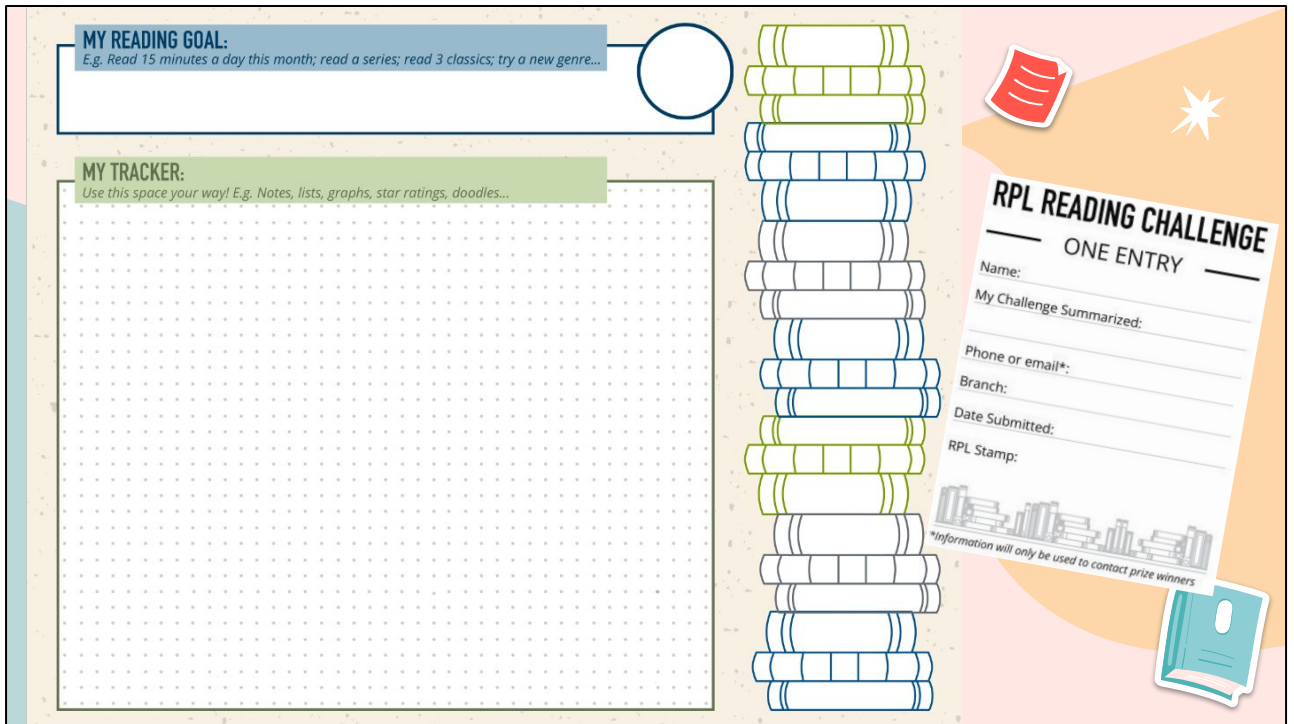
1. Adult and teen readers, set a reading goal and log your progress.
2. When you reach your goal, bring this gamecard to any RPL branch for an official stamp and contest entry. One completed gamecard gets you one entry ballot for the upcoming prize draw.
3. Celebrate! Choose a prize sticker designed by a local artist.
4. Grab another gamecard and start a new challenge. More completed gamecards means more contest entries!

Discover goal ideas, tracking inspiration, contest details, and prize draw timelines at: [reginalibrary.ca/reading-challenge](http://reginalibrary.ca/reading-challenge)

**REGINA PUBLIC LIBRARY** follow us

This is the game card outside so you can see what the branding looked like - we really pushed the idea that it was self directed, flexible and as challenging as you want it to be.

Oct - Jan, Jan - April - April - July - July- October



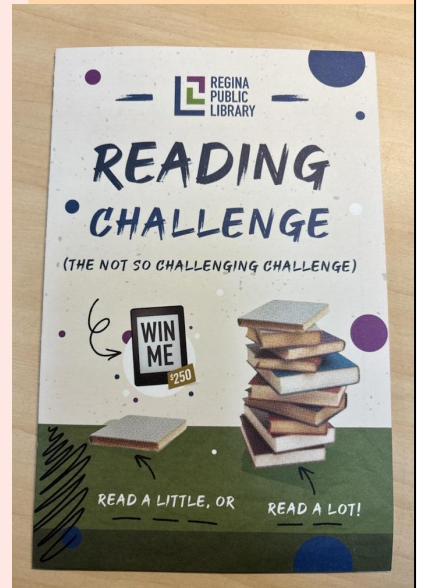
This is the tracker - space for a goal, space for a tracker, a stack of book spines and a circle for the RPL verification stamp. That way they cannot take the same tracker to multiple branches and use the same card at multiple locations.

The ENTRY form is separate from the tracker - they keep their tracker, we complete and keep the entry and use those for the draws.

# Launched program

## The basics

- **Pick up a game card** from any RPL branch, or **download and print a game card** at home.
- **Set a reading goal** that feels fun and achievable. For example, you could read 15 minutes a day this month; read a series; read 3 classics; try a new genre...whatever inspires you.
- **Log your progress** on the game card in the way that works best for you, from just the basics to graphs and star ratings. You can also keep logging in other locations, such as your Goodreads account.
- When you reach your goal, bring this game card to any RPL branch for an **official stamp and contest entry**. One completed game card gets you one entry ballot for the upcoming prize draw.
- You did it! **Choose a prize sticker** designed for us by a local artist.
- Grab another game card and **start a new challenge**. More completed gamecards means more contest entries!



We launched a very simple reading program - it was essentially a bullet tracker... the rise of bullet journals indicated that people would like to be creative and create their own trackers that match their goals.

The big thing was that any goal is acceptable and I had to work a lot with staff to get them to NOT POLICE goals. It's fine if someone's goal is to read 1 book, it's fine if someone's goal is to read 50,000 science fiction books... we aren't judging the goals that people set and we also don't need to verify people's goals beyond quickly looking at the card. What's the downside of this? More entries that may be false or insincere. But, the upside of allowing for choice, flexibility and rewarding someone's own goals outweighs someone who is gaming the system....

The bullet journal allowed for a lot of flexibility and for customization of reading goals and tracking. This met my goal of being non-prescriptive and simple.

We had 4 draws throughout the year so people could submit their card to any branch location throughout the October 2023-October 2024 run of the program. They'd be entered into that quarterly draw. This met my goal of flexibility.

The card is essentially an 8.5x11 folded piece of paper that creates a participation booklet on front and back

# Inspiration

## RPL READING CHALLENGE

Community Engagement and Programming December 8, 2023, 10:55 AM



### The not-so-challenging challenge: Bullet journaling techniques to track your reading

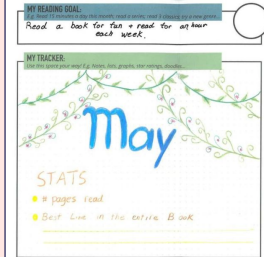
Dot grids, made popular (beyond geometry class) by the bullet journaling trend, are a great tool to track your reading goals because they're so flexible. That's why we've put one on the **RPL Adult Reading Challenge gamecards** so that you can record your reading in the way that makes sense to you! Here are some techniques to get you started.

### The not-so-challenging challenge: Goal tracker inspiration

Let your creativity run wild – or not! Find some inspiration below for how to use bullet journal techniques to keep track of your personal reading goals using the dot grid tracker on your **RPL Adult Reading Challenge gamecard**.

#### The no-brainer:

Keep it simple by tracking your reading progress in one month. Add your own decorations and doodles or keep it minimal. Update your stats as you go to keep yourself accountable.



### The not-so-challenging challenge: New year, new reading goals

Set your New Year's resolution with some help from the library. We've compiled a list of reading goals that you can use to power your reading in 2024!

- Read a book from every major literary movement (e.g., Romanticism, Modernism, Postcolonialism...)
- Read a book by an Indigenous author
- Read a book written by an author from each Canadian province... or just one from Saskatchewan
- Read a book from each major religion or spiritual tradition
- Read a book that has been adapted into a stage play or musical
- Read a book from each of the major literary prizes (e.g., Pulitzer Prize, Man Booker Prize, National Book Award)
- Read a book from a different subgenre within your favorite genre
- Read a book written by an author of a different race or ethnicity for each month of the year
- Read a book from each of the New York Times Best Seller lists for fiction, non-fiction, and young adult literature
- Read a book by a LGBTQIA+ author
- Read a book by an author who has won multiple literary awards
- Read a book from each of the major publishing houses (e.g., Penguin Random House, Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins Publishers, Simon & Schuster, Macmillan Publishers)
- Read a book from each of the major time periods in literature (e.g., Ancient Greek, Renaissance, Victorian...)
- Read a book that starts with the letter of your name
- Read one book in multiple formats (print, graphic novel, audiobook) and reflect on your experience
- Read a non-fiction book (e.g., autobiographies, self-help, popular science, investigative journalism)
- Read a book from each of the seven continents
- Try reading outside your normal format (link to lists for graphic novels and audiobooks)
- Read a book from a genre you have never tried before (Western, Romance, Mystery, Horror, Historical Fiction, Fantasy, Sci-Fi...)
- Create a reading bingo from some of these prompts, and get a blackout!

## INSPIRATION AND GUIDES

Join the RPL Adult Reading Challenge to embark on a literary journey of your own design! Track your reading progress, set personal goals, and watch your bookshelf come alive.

- Five tips to set inspiring reading goals
- Bullet journaling techniques to track your reading
- Challenge tracker inspiration
- New year. New reading goals.
- Reading is good for you

### The not-so-challenging challenge: 5 tips to set inspiring reading goals

I really wanted to offer support and guidance so we created many blog posts of inspiration, guides, steps, lists - all of this was available by scanning the QR code at the back of the card.

I was fortunate that my summer students wrote a lot of this content. The program is simple but having supplemental supports was important to me.

## Immediate gratification stickers

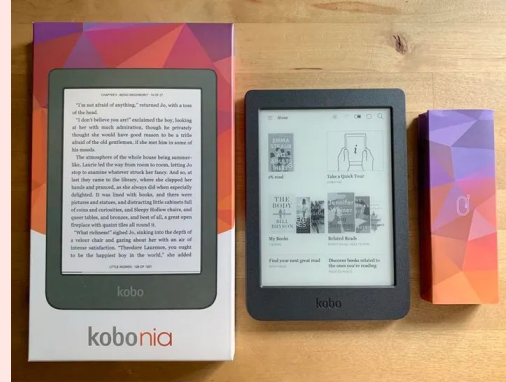


By Brian Neufeld

By Cole Pacunayen

By Nolan Malbeuf

## Grand Prize Draw



\$250

Rewards: I put some money into this program... but actually, it was pretty minimal when you consider wider spending for library programming. But again, I wanted to create something that rewarded our community.

Everyone who submitted a card was given the choice of 6 library themed stickers to choose from as an immediate prize. I commissioned these stickers from 3 local artists and worked with the artists to create something that I thought would appeal to customers. People were really excited about the stickers. I was questioned why stickers- people said they didn't think stickers would motivate people to submit, I know from teaching that people LOVE stickers and it doesn't matter how old you are. I wanted cool, fresh stickers that would speak to our customers. But some of the feedback that I got was that it wasn't necessary. People would have been happy with any book themed stickers.

We also gave away 4 kobo NIA's and 4 \$250 giftcards to Indigo.

Giftcards = \$1000

Kobo's = 129x4 = \$516

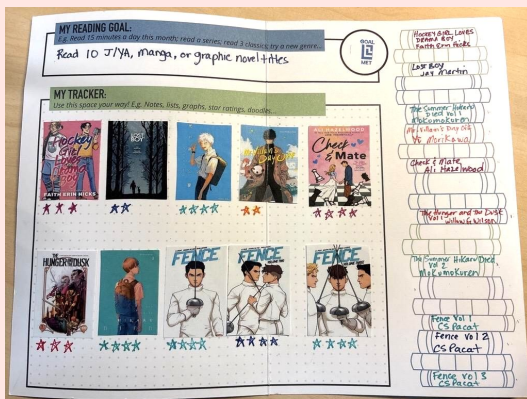
The giftcard was a big discussion point. My leadership wanted me to give away smaller prizes or to give away visa gift cards. I wanted to give away a bookstore giftcard because I really wanted to celebrate READING with this program. I wanted to work with a local bookstore but it was raised that a large retailer like Indigo has online shopping and shipping, is more accessible, and provides more options. I kinda regret

that we went with Indigo.

Roughly \$1500 in grand prizes because I didn't pay for sticker costs from my budget. That was covered by marketing and communications.

The kits and program supplies were probably around \$500.

# Staff



RPL Reading Challenge for Adults & Teens																				
		AB		CA		CO		GB		GE		PW		RP		SV		SU		Cycle Total Returned
	Public	Staff	Public	Staff	Public	Staff	Public	Staff	Public	Staff	Public	Staff	Public	Staff	Public	Staff	Public	Staff		
Cards Returned Cycle 1 (Oct 2023-Jan 2024)	86	11	66	17	10	4	76	5	4	0	19	2	16	1	59	3	88	2	469	
Cards Returned Cycle 2 (Jan - April 2024)	41	13	56	21	23	5	85	2	44	0	30	1	22	3	165	0	138	5	657	

## Staff incentives / the drama around staff participation

It was really important to me that staff be involved in this program. I think that library staff are the exact folks who would participate in these types of programs and if they are excited about a program then they'll share it with library patrons. Also, recognizing that this program ran for a LONG time and so it would need champions in each branch.

- Very important to have a staff incentive, to ensure good vibes from that demographic flowing to customers in conversational energy. Library staff are very much the demographic for this kind of contest. (Unit food incentive is team building and fun enough to continue).

I fought really hard for staff to be able to enter the draw just the same as members of the public but that was shot down and I was told no. I really thought about how do we keep a staff prize FAIR - so that it's not just the largest branches that win if the staff incentive is based on the number of cards returned, etc.

So, I decided that staff members could enter and they'd be put into a separate draw against only other staff members. They just had to label their entries as STAFF. Then they'd be drawn against all the other staff entries and they could win a catered lunch for their next staff meal or coffee break etc etc.

This was NOT received by my senior leadership who told me no, staff should not be

allowed to win anything. I disregarded that and went forward with my plan for staff to win a food draw. I was subsequently formally disciplined for insubordination.

Why do I share this? Well, it's part of the story of my program. I knew that staff buy-in would be really important to the success of this program and I protected that and I think that decision led to some of it's success. Staff participation wasn't huge but those who were invested were REALLY invested. I did a lot of staff communication, sent out the numbers of each cycle and tried to keep staff as hyped up as possible.

In the top left hand corner slide is actually a card of one of my colleagues who recognized that she had gaps in Y/A Manga & Graphic Novels and so set goals as part of her professional development. This made me happy because this wasn't something that I had expected would happen - that people would use these cards and this program for their work.





# 4,272 website visits via ads

Across 4x two week targeted ad runs



# 13,920 website interactions

13,920 website interactions (link clicks,  
downloads, page scrolls, etc)

# 2,674 entries

2,440 public and 234 staff



Okay, so here are some numbers:

We did run 4 ad campaigns to target social media users... those ads brought in 4,272 website visits.

We had 13,920 website interactions tracked by the ad users - the actual website activity was higher I believe, but I only have the numbers on the follow through from the folks who clicked the ads.

And ultimately, we had 2,674 entries total with 2,440 being public and 234 being from staff. Now that number might be impressive but when you consider that this program ran for a year - it might not be all that impressive.... One missing piece of data here is how many unique entrants there were... because there were some people who would submit 1 card and some that submitted 15 per cycle... But, I think all in all, I would consider this amount of participation a success! These types of programs are notoriously difficult to attract attention and the fact that participation was maintained throughout the year is pretty encouraging.

Overall the feedback we received about the program was very positive. People who liked it, really liked it - people who won the grand prize draws were really happy and appreciative. **Comments** on both paid and organic media were always highly positive, often tagging friends.



# Key Takeaways + Q&A

04

Lessons learned, Advice for other scaling, Q&A



# Key Learnings

#1

## Branding

- Clarify that the program targets both adults and teens, and create targeted cards for teens.

#2

## Participation

- Participation counted by entry, not individuals; consider a checkbox for first-time entries

#3

## Communication & Logistics

- Focus on in-branch displays.
- Digital and social media had low impact.
- Stickers and flexible draws are key.

#4

## Workload

- Long term planning a focused - but the workload was significant.

There is so much learning from this program... but I'll share my key takeaways that might be useful to you:

#1 - Branding - there is something unspoken here today and it's that this is an adult and TEEN program. The folks in marketing really wanted to stress the Adult target demographic, I wanted it to be Adults & Teens and for that to be very clear. There was some tension between having a program for adults and teens that runs year round while the children's reading program runs for a limited time. Could children participate in this program? No... is that exclusionary? Yes... but I didn't really care!

I think that the teen piece was missing and there wasn't a targeted card created for teen readers or really any attention paid towards teens. I think that was a mistake and something I spent a lot of time thinking about.

#2 - Participation - Participation was counted by entry, not by individuals, which makes it difficult to know if the program only is serving a low number of very prolific participants. The children's reading program overcame that with a checkbox to note if it was the first entry of the summer.

#3- Communication & Logistics - Branches are the only point of participation (in the form of card return), which means people who are already in branches are the primary audience, not necessarily those who saw paid advertising online. Overcome by implementing attractive in-branch displays for cards. Note: digital logging options for reading challenges did not increase participation in the past.

Most organic social media posts over the year on this topic received lower than average response/reach at 1000+ views.

Custom stickers weren't necessary, but it is nice to have a participation prize. Any pre-purchased bookish stickers would be just as good.

A piece of feedback that I received was that it should run for a shorter period of time if it was to run again and I really don't think that's true... I mean, it could- and it would work fine. The card is simple and basic and it could just run over a summer as a standard summer reading program. But I do feel like having flexibility in those draws was a big accommodation and something that I think is important for adults to participate.

#4 - Workload - this was so much work. The idea was that it would be a long term thing that would run continually and that we'd freshen it up with new participation stickers and new branding but that it would be a constant program at RPL locations. As I previously mentioned, I left the job in which I developed this program and so I can't be sad that that didn't happen... but part of creating this was that long-term planning aspect. It did take a lot of work but I think the end result was something a bit more modern and different in the adult literacy program space for passive reading programs in public libraries. But it was sooo much work!

# What I'll take forward



Keep it simple



Celebrate your participants



Ensure accessibility



Communicate proactively



Overall. I am thankful that I got to participate in this experiment and I learnt a lot.

I'm in the process of creating a new adult reading program right now across all of UTL central libraries and I am considering my options. I DO NOT have the budget that I have now nor do I have the time or resources to coordinate a program like this... so what lessons will I be taking forward?

Keep it simple - don't create something that is overly complex or that could potentially alienate people. Open goals and bullet journals are fine for something like this. Avoid being too prescriptive.

Celebrate those who deserve to be celebrated and reward them with what we can. Participation prizes like stickers are fine and people are happy to have something to work towards.

Proactive communication is key for a successful roll-out and staff buy-in.

Build in universal design for learning - creating a program with accessibility in mind can benefit everyone.



**Questions?**



# Thank you!

Feel free to reach out to me!

Devon Stolz

[devon.stolz@utoronto.ca](mailto:devon.stolz@utoronto.ca)

[www.linkedin.com/in/devonstolz](http://www.linkedin.com/in/devonstolz)

## References

- Clark, C., & Rumbold, K. (2006). Reading for Pleasure: A Research Overview. In *National Literacy Trust*. National Literacy Trust.
- Cubillos, M., & Rousseau, R. (2024). High-interest books, choice, and independent reading: Piloting a reading program with male adolescents in Chile. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 67(6), 338–349. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1339>
- Flora, S. R., & Flora, D. B. (1999). Effects of extrinsic reinforcement for reading during childhood on reported reading habits of college students. *The Psychological Record*, 49(1), 3–14. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03395303>
- Green, S. (2007). Ten Years of Summer Reading Success: The Eastern and Central Reading Encouragement and Development Network (E. C. Read'n). *Australasian Public Libraries and Information Services*, 20(2), 55–66. <https://doi.org/10.1037/e549072006-002>
- Henry, L. A., & Stahl, N. A. (Eds.). (2021). *Literacy across the community: research, praxis, and trends* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003031550>
- Hughes, A. (2024). She paid her kid \$100 to read a book. Experts say results may vary: Positive encouragement — but not pressure — is key to forming healthy reading habits, experts say. In *CBC News*. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.
- McKool, S. S. (2007). Factors that Influence the Decision to Read: An Investigation of Fifth Grade Students' Out-of-School Reading Habits. *Reading Improvement*, 44(3), 111. <https://doi.org/10.17918/00005945>
- Morgan, D. N., & Wagner, C. W. (2013). "What's the Catch?": Providing Reading Choice in a High School Classroom. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(8), 659–667. <https://doi.org/10.1002/JAAL.193>
- Norazlan, N. A., Hashim, H. U., Yunus, M. M., & Hashim, H. (2021). WhatsApp Stickers: A Reward System to Boost Students' Motivation in Learning Grammar. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(12), 323-332. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v11-i12/11768>
- Russell, A. (2019, September 7). Can bullet journaling save you? *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/can-bullet-journaling-save-you>
- Shao, J., & Jagan, A. (2019). Study with Me: Effective Bullet Journaling Techniques, Habits, and Hacks To Be Successful, Productive, and Organized-With Special Strategies for Mathematics, Science, History, Languages, and More. Quarry Books.
- Shuva, N. Z. (2024). More than a place for social capital creation: Public library as a place for immigrants' social integration. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006241286910>
- Smith, M. C. (1996). Differences in adults' reading practices and literacy proficiencies. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31(2), 196–219. <https://doi.org/10.1598/RRQ.31.2.5>
- Steiner, A. (2017). Using choice to influence reading motivation (Master's thesis). University of Wisconsin-River Falls. <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1793/77283>
- Vårheim, A., Steinmo, S., & Ide, E. (2008). Do libraries matter? Public libraries and the creation of social capital. *Journal of Documentation*, 64(6), 877–892. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00220410810912433>