

Intellectual Freedom Challenge/Response Question

Would I have both, *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* and *ttyl*, in a young adult collection?

Both, *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (Green 2010) and *ttyl* (Myracle 2004), are considered to be among controversial young adult novels for their content. However, based on the definition of intellectual freedom – even intellectual freedom for minors - this should not be the deciding factor for a young adult collection's inclusion or exclusion. Several things must be taken into consideration before these books, as well as any book, is selected. These things include the overall collection, the resources available for book purchase, the community, the needs and/or interests of the users, and the books themselves. Once a librarian has analyzed her collection and come to the conclusion that there is a need or interest in young adult fiction, the consideration of the book themselves becomes next in the selection process. What are the merits of each? How will this book enhance or balance the current collection?

ttyl (Myracle 2004) is innovative in its writing style. The story of three girls' friendship during their tenth grade year takes place through complete instant message dialog. *ttyl* (Myracle 2004) was given a starred review and was named 'Book of the Week' by *School Library Journal*. Additionally, ALA named *ttyl* as a 'Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers.' Myracle went on to turn *ttyl* into a series known as the *Internet Girls* series. *Booklist* recommended this book for grades 6-10.

Will Grayson, Will Grayson (Green 2010) is written in a unique style by two boys both named Will Grayson alternating chapters between the two points of view. It tells a story about friendship and life. In 2011, *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (Green 2010) was listed as a Stonewall Children's and YA Literature Award Honor Book and among the 2011 Top 10 Audio Books by ALA. *Booklist* recommended this book for grades 9-12.

The question of intellectual freedom affords both books be considered for a young adult collection. ALA defines intellectual freedom as "the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored." ((ALA) 1997-2012). After reading both books, there is significant sexual content and language usage contained in both that could result in challenges by parents and/or teachers. However, I feel based on my collection analysis and intellectual freedom guide lines, I would make the following decision for including the two books: Although *ttyl* (Myracle 2004) is touted by ALA as a reluctant reader novel, I would probably not include it in my collection because boys are more at risk as reluctant readers (Krashen). This is not a book boys would read with its hot pink cover, and its innovative writing style is not enough of a reason to include it in a collection. All the reviews cite its unique writing style as one of its main selling points. *Will Grayson, Will Grayson* (Green 2010), on the other hand, has received recognition for its literary merit as well as its status as an audio book. The audio book format is also an alternative for the reluctant reader. I would not include (Green 2010) in a young adult collection of middle school users based on the *Booklist* recommendation, I would, however, include it in a high school collection.

Bibliography

(ALA), American Library Association. *Intellectual Freedom and Censorship* . 1997-2012.

<http://www.ala.org/offices/oif/basics/ifcensorshipqanda> (accessed February 20, 2012).

Green, John and David Levithan. *Will Grayson, Will Grayson*. New York: Penguin, 2010.

Krashen, Stephen. *Reading Matters*. West Port, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2004.

Myracle, lauren. *ttyl*. New York: Abrams, 2004.