**Reading - Foothill Knolls 7th grade Style** 40-Book Challenge Donalyn Miller (author of The Book Whisper )

*\*Everybody reads here. Let’s get started.* Our direct influence on students’ reading lives lasts 40 weeks—36 weeks of school and 4 weeks of school vacation. Setting high expectations (roughly a book a week) communicates that reading is ongoing and continues from the first day of school to the last—hopefully longer. Students should spend more time reading than they spend completing reading-related activities like worksheets, reading responses, and projects. Students who read the most will always outperform the students who don’t read much (Krashen, 2004).

*\*Strong readers have lots of reading experiences. You need to be a good all-around reader.*Encouraging students to

read widely—sampling books from every genre—improves their reading ability by expanding their reading experiences. If you spend every day working on your jump shot, you’ll improve your jump shot. To be a strong all-around player, you must practice passing, guarding, and dribbling, too. To be a strong reader, you must practice reading poetry, fiction, nonfiction, wordless books, graphic novels, blog posts—a little bit of everything.

*\*There’s the right book for you out there somewhere. Let’s find it*. For many students, trying a lot of books helps them find the *one* type of text that excites them and invites them into reading. True preferences come from years of wide reading—trying books, having some false starts, discovering authors, genres, and writing styles that we enjoy. Students who haven’t read much may not have found the books that speak to them. Reading buffet-style—tasting all types of books—students can discover what the world of reading has to offer.

*\*Whether you read or not isn’t a choice, but what you read is YOUR choice.* I don’t waste a lot of time at the beginning of the school year talking about why students might not like to read. Everybody reads here. Everybody is a reader. Whether you read or not is off the table, but what you read is your choice. Whatever you want. You pick. Providing students with choice in what they read increases their reading motivation and engagement (Gambrell, Coding, & Palmer, 1996; Worthy & McKool, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

*\*Your reading life matters.*Students’ personal reading goals have as much value as our academic goals. Classrooms exert tremendous influence on the development of students’ reading identities—whether it’s positive or negative. While students learn the skills of reading, they must develop a positive reading identity to remain readers (Serafini, 2013).

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Welcome - - Foothill Knolls has long been a community of readers. We have sooooooo many books to choose from, in the school library and in our classrooms, it can be hard to decide what to read next. Seventh graders will have class time allotted for reading and at-home learning will focus on reading. Students will be reading for research, as well as narrative reading in different genres.

Students will be sharing their reading experiences with others in a variety of ways. To prepare students for that, Parents, please have daily conversations with your 7th grader, so that he/she can practice focusing on the most important components of what he/she is reading, whether it be preparing for history lessons or reading a novel. I encourage you to read along with your student. I guarantee you will love it; we have great books - and since humans learn best from teaching others, this will help your student learn and will provide an avenue for you to keep in touch with what and how your student is progressing.

Students and Parents: I am thrilled to be embarking on this ground-breaking opportunity with you. If you have any questions, or concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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