00:00.79
Gary Gray
Welcome to Corridor Conversations, a podcast segment of NCTE's Classroom Corridor, sharing expertise and inspiration from elementary teachers and authors. I'm your host, Gary R. Gray Jr., and today we're talking with Jackie Moore from North Elementary School. I am so excited to talk to you for a number of different reasons. Number one, you are a librarian.

00:23.86
Gary Gray
and librarians are my people so it's so good to see you how are things going

00:30.12
jacqui
Things are going great. It's great to meet you too, Gary. I'm excited to speak with you too because you're an author and those are my people. And I'm so excited. It's been a great day. it's It's a great season. The world is beautiful right now.

00:46.41
jacqui
Yeah.

00:47.00
Gary Gray
i'm so glad I'm so glad to be in space and time with you.

00:49.87
jacqui
I mean most of the world is beautiful right now

00:51.69
Gary Gray
Of course. of I totally understand. I totally understand.

00:54.02
jacqui
Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

00:57.08
Gary Gray
Yeah, there's a lot going on. There's a lot going on. But I do think some of the work that we do as educators is one of the... you know most inspirational the most powerful work in the field of like humanity i really genuinely believe that so i want to thank you for the work that you do and everything you do for children and families etc and i'm excited to talk to you about innovation today The first question, we've talked about this earlier on, is just like,

01:24.88
Gary Gray
How do you set up? your classroom to make students feel safe. taking creative risks and sharing out of the box ideas i think risk taking is a skill that we often don't talk about but we expect kids to just like you know take a risk Talk to me a little bit about that process for you.

01:42.58
jacqui
Right.

01:45.62
jacqui
I think in the library, taking risks is different. Taking risks is about choosing books that maybe be your best friend isn't choosing, but looking at a book and thinking that this might suit you quite well.

02:00.99
jacqui
So there's that kind of risk taking. So in that way. I set it up so that we discuss how we choose books and we talk about the covers and the back covers and the summaries and we talk about the authors and and then we talk about reading parts of the book and we talk about...

02:19.37
jacqui
who they are as people and what they might be interested in. And I try really hard to make sure that each child knows that they're unique and individual.

02:32.45
jacqui
and we'll have uh different thoughts and different ideas as we go through our lessons and our activities. One of the things that I do to...

02:44.62
jacqui
to try to get them to think independently. when it comes to choosing books is we... We have a piece of paper and we fold it different ways so we get a little bit of following instructions in the in the day too. and You know, for the life of me, I can't really remember what this...

03:05.69
jacqui
best practice this practices but when you take it maybe you remember

the actual name of it i know that there's a name for it i know somebody developed this but it's when you take the paper and you fold it in half twice.

03:20.79
jacqui
this is gonna probably take up too much time but you fold in half twice and then you do the corner Right? and you open it And then in the middle you have a diamond. Right. We trace around the diamond and I say, you know, diamonds are so rare there. That's why people love them so much. And that's why they're so meaningful. and What you need to do right now is put your name in the middle of the diamond because you are.

03:44.28
jacqui
rare. You are individual. There's no one else like you. And then I And then we. Then we create the diamond and the the extra squares. and talk about who they are, where they come from, who their family is. And we talk about what their favorite places are, but not just where they've been, but where they might want to go, where they want to be. And we talk about.

04:10.06
jacqui
famous people who they know the names of or music they listen to. And then we talk about something that makes them unique, right? and And then I'll say,

04:22.61
jacqui
you know Again, this goes to the library. If you are a person who really wants to investigate the where, where you want to be in the world, then maybe you need to visit this section of the library.

04:32.91
jacqui
where you can find the states and the capital and at the capitals, the states and the countries. and the planets. And you can find that those area that area interesting. Maybe you're really interested in some of the people, the musician.

04:48.53
jacqui
or the artist or the the athlete and in that case well you need to spend time in the biography section of the library right and we kind of go through that so that they learn the space in the library but they also learn a little bit about themselves And...

05:05.33

jacqui
without really diving into somebody else's paper, they also understand they're different from somebody else. So then that... drives them into taking I want to use, I guess, taking risks a little bit in that for when they're choosing books, right? So something that's not.

05:24.20
jacqui
Where? the most popular books are but somewhere that they might find their favorite book. So that is one way of thinking about risk-taking library. But then another way of taking risks in the library is...

05:38.75
jacqui
in our creation part during maybe during our media lessons, right? I. I do. Because I don't have to.

05:52.52
jacqui
give grades for things. I can assess things, but I don't necessarily, it's not as evaluative in the way of grading for students. So that leads leaves a lot of our things open-ended, right? They don't...

06:10.10
jacqui
have to finish today which means they can add to it because there's not it's It's not associated with a grade. It doesn't have to be completed in a specific way. And that leaves them opportunity to.

06:27.51
jacqui
to... Depending on the project, some of them will dig really deep in and then some of them will be like, this is not the project for me. And because I'm in the library, I can do that, right? I can leave it more open ended for students.

06:44.24
jacqui
In a classroom, it's obviously different because you really need to have more. on Data Driven. information moving through your lessons. in In library, it's a little bit different that way. I will use what I learned from them to drive.

07:00.01
jacqui
some of our lessons and move it forward so that we're not stagnant. But it's not in and necessarily a very evaluative way. So that I think just.

07:11.60

jacqui
reminding that allows them. a little bit more freedom to Be creative.

07:17.68
Gary Gray
I love that. you I can tell so much about you as a teacher and as an educator just by like listening to you explain how students use their identities really to understand like their interests and to build connections with other people.

07:33.81
Gary Gray
I think that is like such a powerful way. to connect with like literature and like words you know i wish i had someone like you growing up as a teacher or librarian to help me understand the books or find the books that I was interested in because you're essentially giving them the world.

07:55.12
Gary Gray
you know

07:56.08
jacqui
Right.

07:56.22
Gary Gray
and allowing them to like access it in a variety of ways, whether it's through, you know. that. Identity piece or the friend who may have some sort of difference on their their card as well. I think that is such a cool way and very innovative as well as a librarian to to do and not easy.

08:07.66
jacqui
Hey.

08:13.16
Gary Gray
right Because you're also having kids dig deeper into who they are.

08:17.42
jacqui
Right.

08:17.56
Gary Gray
dislikes you know, likes all the different things.

08:19.76
jacqui
Right.

08:20.87
Gary Gray
I think that's so cool. so cool i have another question the other question i'm thinking about is when a student's innovation goes off script or like during a lesson or a thought how do you balance following their creative Detour?

08:37.49
Gary Gray
and then also meeting curriculum goals and this is something I As a teacher would always. struggle a little bit with. expressing when we're like inquiring about something and a student will you know ask a question and it's not necessarily, you know, a question that like, will be exactly.

08:52.08
jacqui
on topic.

08:54.30
Gary Gray
How do you, yeah, what do we do with those types of kids in those moments?

08:59.43
jacqui
that so That's such a fun question because in the library, it feels like we're rarely on topic, right? We are...

09:09.56
jacqui
Currently. focusing on the fat bears. I don't know if you know about the fat bears. The fat bears are in Katmai National Forest. And we have been watching them and learning about them. and And so... But it seems kind of a silly little story, but we were talking, do you know about the fat bears though?

09:31.74
jacqui
No, if you don't know about the fat bears, I highly...

09:33.94
Gary Gray
I don't.

09:34.91

jacqui
And you searching fat bear week on your.

09:37.33
Gary Gray
Okay.

09:38.31
jacqui
in Google sometime today because you can... feed a bear salmon and he gets all big and then it starts to snow and you know it's I don't.

09:45.88
Gary Gray
That's amazing

09:46.02
jacqui
want That's not my intent. Anyhow, it's, a but what Katmai National Forest works with explore .org. And they do this one week called Fat Bear Week where they create a March Madness style bracket.

10:01.07
jacqui
for the bears that are getting ready to go on hibernation. that live in Katmai National Forest. I mean, it's it's enormous. it's I don't remember how many thousands of miles, but it's it's enormous. and So they start out with 16 bears. and One of the Bears last year.

10:18.10
jacqui
Got into a. but altercation that's what i call it with the kids like do you know what an altercation is you know and then we talk about altercation And I... He got into an altercation with another bear. But we don't really know exactly the specifics, which is good. Nobody really wants to know these specifics, except for that when he came out of the forest that year to the river where the salmon are plentiful. More salmon you can imagine. The river looks pink.

10:44.87
jacqui
And. He has a broken jaw. Like he has a broken jaw where one of his canine tooth is loose. Like hanging, right? It's hanging.

10:55.59
jacqui
And his name is Chunk. they they kept my the, you know. the scientists, the for strangers they've named him chunk and for all sorts of reasons but so he has this but he He worked.

11:10.29
jacqui
He still gained enough weight last year, even with the broken jaw. He survived is my point, right? He survived so well that he went into hibernation last year and he came back again in this year. But now his jaw is healed better.

11:24.85
jacqui
In this course of conversation about chunk. I know I'm getting back to when they derail, like when they go off the rails, right? So we had to talk about the teeth and we talked about canines and I talked about how animals who are omnivores.

11:39.36
jacqui
are And, you know, kids raise their hands, like, what are omnni what are omnivores? We have to do this. animals who eat meat and plants and because they're omnivores they need the teeth like this one i'm showing Chunk's tooth.

11:53.40
jacqui
to eat the meat but also you need the flat ones the ones in the back of your mouth and right at that moment all of the kids you can see them opening their mouth and feeling all the back of their teeth like The flat ones are called the molars and those are going to grind.

12:08.69
jacqui
the Right?

12:08.64
Gary Gray
e

12:11.29
jacqui
They're going to grind the berries and all of the other other food. And yeah that's when. You worked with second and third graders. That's when they're like, I am. a canine wait i have to go to the dentist wait i have to write a we're a little off topic and so that This is a a very simplified way of getting off topic, right?

12:27.07
Gary Gray
if

12:33.30
jacqui

Big, long talk about the Bears. but on And so I try really hard to. accept their conversations and their questions, but I only have an hour with them every week. So because I only have an hour with them, it makes it a little challenging sometimes to just dive into it. Just like if you were a classroom teacher, staying on topic is super important, but you also want them to be heard.

13:01.96
jacqui
I think in a classroom, I might have something different because I'd have. There are writer's notebooks available. I might have a parking lot posted where they could write ideas of the day.

13:13.16
jacqui
Maybe that's a good idea for the library later. but Usually what I'm able to say is like, we'll do a couple more. We'll talk about the canines. And and they'll tell their stories and, you know, we want to embrace it again. It goes to like, we want.

13:29.07
jacqui
Them to know they're unique and different, but we also want them to know that they're the same too. There's sameness that goes on, right? The humanity we're, we're saying. And so, so there's some of that, that I want to, and. Hmm.

13:46.21
jacqui
And then there will be time where I'll say. You know what? I know you have more stories and I want to hear them. And you can tell me them during checkout or if you want to come back in the morning. And I kind of it like I said, it's easier for librarian. Because I can say like.

14:01.48
jacqui
Come back and see me later and tell me more. is I hope that's not, you know. That's not a cop out to the answer because it's still. keeping them Their voice is important.

14:13.58
Gary Gray
Absolutely.

14:15.07
jacqui
And I want them to know their voice is important.

14:14.74
Gary Gray

Absolutely.

14:17.08
jacqui
And so I want them to know they can come back.

14:17.54
Gary Gray
Yeah.

14:20.04
jacqui
They don't all come back. but several of them do show up at other times in the library.

14:25.37
Gary Gray
Yeah.

14:25.98
jacqui
Yeah.

14:26.32
Gary Gray
I love that. And I think it's so interesting. hearing it from like a librarian's perspective because you're right like you even if you are trying to have a lesson it's like they're not you have so many groups of kids versus like your core group of kids so You can't just have a...

14:43.16
Gary Gray
you know inquiry board for here and then you have to have you would have to have another one over here and you'd have to have another one here like it's just it would be too much for like the library in general right but if you were to have like you said in a classroom where you could have like a notebook or something. That's.

15:01.51
Gary Gray
almost a little bit more like static in a sense where it doesn't move and and the the kids know where it is etc it would be a lot easier but i love that the kids have the opportunity to always come back and i think that's why the library is so important because like it is a place of just

15:09.01
jacqui
me

15:16.21
Gary Gray
wonder. And.

15:17.58
jacqui
so I'm interrupting you. I'm sorry.

15:19.71
Gary Gray
No, you're okay.

15:20.00
jacqui
i was gonna say that i mean of course The other obvious thing is that the teeth don't work for this because if we don't have that many books about teeth and dental care. We should add more.

15:29.00
Gary Gray
Yeah.

15:30.51
jacqui
but uh another Example actually just happened today, which is that we were talking about Constitution Day, United States Constitution Day is September 17th. And it's one of our commemorative dates in the state of Illinois. So we have to teach it to.

15:45.35
jacqui
all grade levels. And the way that we do it in our district is that i that I teach it, which is very fun. I get to teach history, not just science and bears, but history. in In a simplified manner, depending on the grade level. But today we were talking about United States Constitution and a little girl raised her hand.

16:03.15
jacqui
oh one of the girls asked What about changes? Can they make changes to this constitution? And I explained, yes, those are called amendments. And I have a video to show you about some of the amendments. So we watched a PBS.

16:16.92
jacqui
video about three of the amendment changes, and one of them was the women's right to vote. And so I stop it and I say, this is the first amendment, freedom of speech, second amendment, or the next amendment

that they talked about was.

16:31.46
jacqui
Slaves are free. And the third one is women's right to vote. And afterwards, a girl asked me, Ms. Merck, do you know that the women's the women's right to vote is about the suffragettes? This is second grade. And I said, yes, you're right. The suffragettes did that. You know, that was they worked really hard so that women would have the right to vote. And we still women still have the right to vote because of the what they did.

16:56.16
jacqui
then And she she followed up with, well, you know, you've seen Mary Poppins. And I said, I have seen Mary Poppins. And Mrs. Darling was a suffragette. And I said, you are 100 % right, Mrs. Darling.

17:10.55
jacqui
I think that's right.

17:10.62
Gary Gray
whoa

17:11.52
jacqui
Mrs. Darling was a suffragette.

17:12.20
Gary Gray
Yeah.

17:14.14
jacqui
And so then we talked briefly because she took us a teeny bit off topic. Everyone in the class. Got to learn about suffragettes.

17:25.57
Gary Gray
That's amazing.

17:26.66
jacqui
What an amazing thing!

17:26.91
Gary Gray
That's amazing.

17:28.04
jacqui
So...

17:27.93
Gary Gray
Yeah.

17:29.22
jacqui
Of course, because we talked about it. Then I said, In case you're interested, we have several books about the suffragettes. And, of course, I already had the the ones for the Constitution ready on the board.

17:42.21
jacqui
If you want to know more about the Constitution, it's here too. Three girls. Three girls asked for suffragette books today. Second grade. Isn't that wonderful?

17:50.68
Gary Gray
Wow. It's amazing.

17:52.34
jacqui
Sue!

17:52.55
Gary Gray
That's amazing.

17:53.66
jacqui
That is how I try to direct them when we get off topic. I try to direct them. I try to give their voice a voice, right? Their voice heard being heard. And then I try to get them into the shelves of the books so that they can find more of what they're looking for without formal. like inquiry work shopping.

18:15.20
Gary Gray
mm-hmm love that so much and i think it ties so much into

18:15.94
jacqui
Yeah.

18:19.55
Gary Gray
the next question that kind of talks a little bit more about you know wondering and thinking in connection to like screens and digital platforms etc and i think I mean, I don't have to tell you this, but like the library is such an important part of like.

18:37.68
Gary Gray
life in general.

18:39.89
jacqui
Right.

18:40.70
Gary Gray
Right?

18:41.35
jacqui
Yeah.

18:41.44
jacqui
elephantison

18:42.36
Gary Gray
in like

18:42.54
jacqui
right

18:43.49
Gary Gray
Yeah. So I guess the the question is like, how do you foster deep imagination? and problem solving without solely so like relying on like screens and digital things What are some ways you do that in the library? I like.

18:58.61
Gary Gray
Yeah.

18:59.28
jacqui
Yeah. Stories

19:00.87
Gary Gray
Yes.

19:01.20
jacqui
Right. So. I probably tell a ridiculous amount of stories. to try to remind them about i i always When people talk about fiction and nonfiction book, I always refer to the fiction as from the imagination of an author.

19:16.99
jacqui
So I've had many students come in and they'll say, is it real or is it fake? And I always answer, well, it's a real story. But.

19:27.30
jacqui
do you mean if did it come from the imagination of an author or did it actually happen And so I try to use that vocabulary with them so they understand imagination, what imagination and everyone has it. right so so that's we do fiction and non-fiction in that with that language which I think can they connect to the imagination piece. Also I tell.

19:51.29
jacqui
ridiculous stories sometimes. on I had a hurt ankle a couple years ago and I, you know, made up all sorts of stories. There was a dragon chasing me down the street. and I tripped right before I fell into the free library, you know, and so.

20:03.58
Gary Gray
It was awesome. So good.

20:09.41
jacqui
I try to do that. Kids have come to me with their own books. And they'll say, Ms. Moore, can we put it in the library? And I'll say, it's really hard to put it into the library because I don't want it to get ruined, but how about we read it to the classes? And so so we'll take their time to read it to the classes. When we read silly stories, that helps with imagination.

20:34.62
jacqui
I think also we talk about. I talk about the imagination of the illustrator too. I think that that's sometimes... a piece that I don't want to say is forgotten, but it's so important in picture books especially.

20:51.33
jacqui
i guess that maybe that's obvious but Making sure to talk about how the the illustrator's imagination not only did the jacket, but if you look under the jacket.

21:02.59
jacqui
Sometimes the cover is different and it's like magic finding it.

21:05.23
Gary Gray
It's so fun. It's so fun.

21:06.81
jacqui
You know, and then the end papers, we talk about the end papers, too, and how the illustrator got to choose those. And then sometimes I'll ask them if you were going to. create a cover what would your cover be or I like this one actually better. What would your undercover be?

21:24.19
jacqui
But my favorite is, what would your end papers have on it?

21:26.81
Gary Gray
I love that

21:27.87
jacqui
So I try that way to try and incorporate imagination. i don't The thing that I don't get very often is actual...

21:39.08
jacqui
Like work. right We do more discussion. And. And. and looking at things and finding things and recording things, but we don't necessarily I don't necessarily have pieces that show their work.

21:57.93
jacqui
because I'm in the library and I only see them for one hour.

22:01.01
Gary Gray
Yeah.

22:01.20

jacqui
each week.

22:02.02
Gary Gray
But honestly, I think that... in itself is... you don't need a thing. you don't need a physical thing to imagine and I love that they are imagining and using those same skills.

22:07.75
jacqui
Great.

22:14.98
Gary Gray
to think about like a book because i think a book is like the best way to dream and imagine when you can look at all those different parts of the book and like wonder and be surprised like i think that is such a like sacred time in a child's life to understand how to like

22:29.04
jacqui
Right.

22:31.33
Gary Gray
I always like to say it's like you're almost like you're unwrapping a book. right you're you're constantly unwrapping the book and you read it over again you read it over again you find new things and i think that is the gift of imagination in itself oh

22:43.67
jacqui
Right.

22:44.58
Gary Gray
I wanna thank you so much.

22:45.63
jacqui
and Wait. I w-we don't Can I say one more thing, Gary?

22:46.31
Gary Gray
yeah i Go, go, go. Yes, of course.

22:48.64
jacqui
Okay, also, i I would be negligent.

22:48.22
Gary Gray
Please. go

22:51.40
jacqui
Absolutely negligent if I didn't tell you that if I was a classroom teacher. I would use your book as a mentor text because

22:58.98
Gary Gray
Oh.

23:00.95
jacqui
I was just, I sat there as I'm reading it and I was thinking to myself, like, wow. I, these there's so much that could be done where, you know, from, there's so many things that I would love to have. really dive deep into with third graders, with fourth, I mean all the grades.

23:19.86
jacqui
for them, again, to find who they are, to recognize their identity, and to be able to share that in such a positive way. and So I just wanted to mention that mentor text idea. And again, that's something I don't get to do very often in the library.

23:36.10
jacqui
but it would be definitely negligent speaking with you. did not saying that so

23:40.44
Gary Gray
Here I do. way too kind and I appreciate that so much.

23:42.66
jacqui
It was beautiful.

23:43.64
Gary Gray
No thank you.

23:43.80
jacqui
And the illustrations. The illustrations.

23:45.40
Gary Gray
Oh.

23:46.08
jacqui
Oh my gosh.

23:46.21
Gary Gray
Stunning.

23:47.19
jacqui
Yes!

23:47.22
Gary Gray
Absolutely stunning.

23:48.55
jacqui
Yes. oh my gosh there was so much there's so much i kept going Oh my gosh, look at this! right?

23:53.63
Gary Gray
Thank you. Thank you.

23:54.52
jacqui
Yeah. of course.

23:55.10
Gary Gray
it It was definitely a labor of love, I think. I've been lucky to have. so so many amazing illustrators just like that have already produced books for me.

24:17.86
Gary Gray
I appreciate you so much. This conversation was amazing. I can't wait to talk to you again.

24:22.38
jacqui
Oh thank you.

24:25.69
jacqui

I would love that. Thank you, Gary, so much.

24:28.14
Gary Gray
Yay.