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Banned Books Buffet

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Banned Books Buffet

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PURPOSE

Use an interactive event to educate students on the importance of libraries to intellectual freedom by sharing your library's banned, challenged, or controversial books.

TARGET AUDIENCE

All library users, but specifically undergraduate students with an emphasis on diverse student populations

INGREDIENTS

- Event space with tables and chairs
- Whiteboards or easel pads
- Banned Books Buffet Menu
- Reaction cards
- Handout explaining Banned Books Week and the role libraries play in protecting intellectual freedom
- Banned, challenged, or controversial books from your library's collection
- Volunteers
- Raffle prizes
- Camera and tripod
- Buttons (optional)
- Refreshments (optional)
- Campus partners (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Banned Book Tasting

1. Set up. Library staff sets up "buffet tables"

with banned, challenged, or controversial books from their collections.

- a. Items can be displayed randomly or divided into "courses" such as by format, topics, age groups, etc. "Dining tables" are set up around the room.
 - b. Banned Books Buffet Menus are available at the buffet tables.
2. Participants select at least three books from the "buffet" along with a menu.
 3. Participants "taste" their titles by reading each book for five to ten minutes.
 4. Participants use their menus to write a reflection about each of their books.
 - a. How do they feel about it being a banned/challenged book?
 - b. How would they feel if this book was not available to read in their community?
 - c. Include the title of each book and their campus identification number.
 5. Participants turn in their completed menus for a chance to win a raffle prize.
- b. general reasons why the book was challenged;
 - c. one to three examples of specific challenges; and
 - d. the results of each challenge.
2. Place each title near a white/glass board or flipchart. Include copies of the challenged books with place markers of the challenged content next to each display.
 3. Participants review the posters/displays and write their reactions on either the white/glass board or flip chart.
 4. Library staff should be available to start discussions with individuals or groups of students about each title and about the impact of intellectual freedom/censorship in general.
 5. Reaction cards can also be submitted for additional chances to win the raffle:
 - a. How do they feel about it being a banned/challenged book?
 - b. How would they feel if this book was not available to read in their community?
 - c. Include the title of each book and their campus identification number.

Wall of Recent Challenges

1. Set up. Staff select three to four books that have been challenged in recent years and display this information either through posters or digital displays. Each display includes
 - a. bibliographic information about the book;

Mug Shot Wall

1. Set up. A camera and tripod are set up in a corner of the room.
 - a. Optional: Mugshot background that says, "I Read Banned Books" and includes the library's logo.

2. Participants select their favorite banned/challenged book(s) from the buffet.
3. Either as individuals or in a group, students get their pictures taken in front of the mugshot background while holding up their chosen title(s).
4. Images are uploaded to social media.
5. Reaction cards, as previously mentioned, can be submitted for additional chances to win the raffle.

CAUTIONS/ADVICE

This event requires substantial prep work. Allow plenty of time to develop materials prior to the event.

Meet with volunteers before the event to assign roles and responsibilities. Include library student employees as volunteers to start peer discussions.

Encourage respectful conversations.

Remind volunteers and participants that those who challenge materials often are doing so with good intentions. Don't promote an "us versus them" mindset, but rather show the complexity of challenges and the importance of individual choice.

Include a section on the menu and reaction card to ask for feedback on the event.

ASSESSMENT

Record attendance numbers. Use completed menus and reaction cards to assess student understanding and personal reactions to individual titles and the concepts of intellectual freedom and censorship. Record white/glass boards and/or flipcharts reactions. Use them to assess informal dialogue among multiple participants.

REFLECTION

The Wall of Recent Challenges and the Menus both ask students to think about the information they've encountered and to reflect on the importance of intellectual freedom in a variety of environments.

