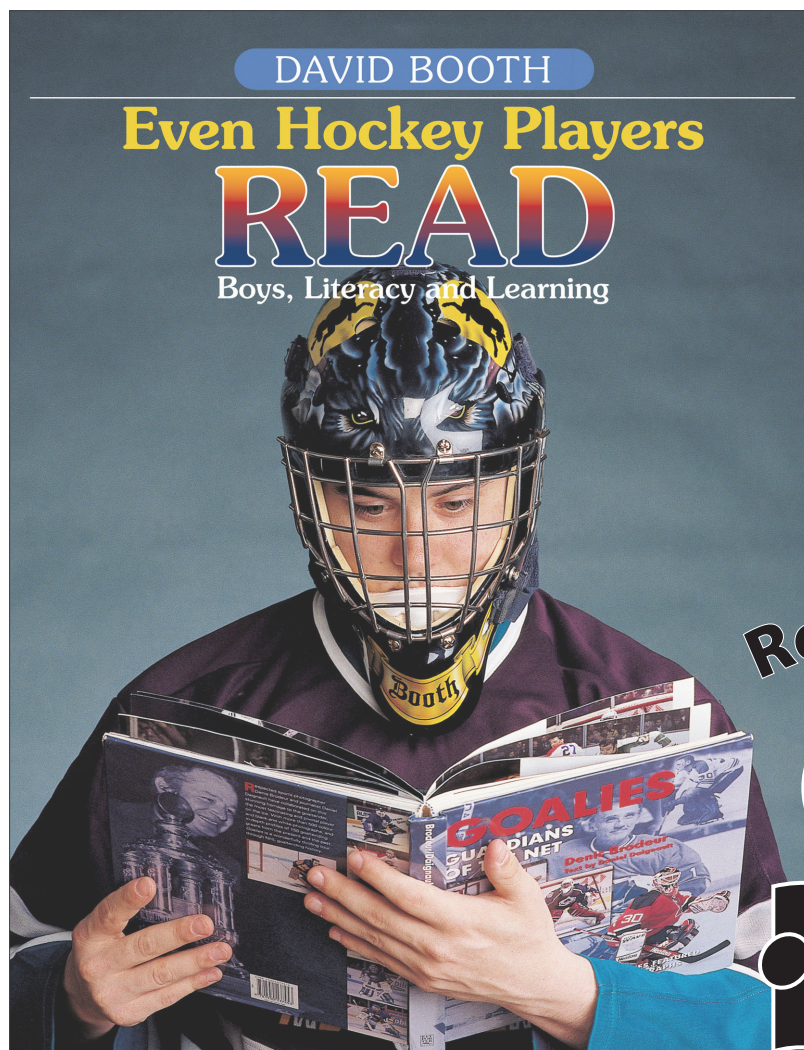


**Bringing Boys into Literacy**

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### Bringing Boys into Literacy

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We mustn't discourage or disparage boys' choices of reading resources. How are you welcoming what boys are reading and opening up options and alternatives for what they might read? Be an enabling adult who helps children to see different, more varied paths in literature than they would find on their own, but respect their small journeys, as well.



Keep a bulletin board of news articles that connect literacy and men: from interviews with authors, to book reviews, to features that highlight the content or issues that are relevant to the books boys are reading. It is vital that we constantly connect print events to boys' lives outside school.



How do you stock books in your school? If there is a school library, do teachers support the librarian by making the collection central to their classroom culture? If you have a bookroom, can you structure a way for accommodating and updating new and reissued titles?



Have you listed the Web sites of authors who talk about boys and reading and who offer suggestions for book choices? Have you organized an author visit to your school or classroom? Do you have a "new book" shelf, where boys can readily see and borrow books? Do you take the time for book talks, exposing boys to new titles and excerpts to promote interest?



In *To Be a Boy, to Be a Reader*, William Brozo summarizes from several research surveys the chief reading interests of boys: humor, horror, adventure/thrillers, information, science fiction, crime/mysteries, monsters/ghosts, sports, war, biography, fantasy, and history. Interest inventories can help us find out what individuals prefer to read, watch and listen to, but they also reveal shared interests of a group, or even of the class. We can use these surveys to develop literacy/literature units and to build resources for group and independent reading. (See "Interview Questions" on pages 115–116. It will help you create your own survey for the boys you are working with.)



In my literacy classes at university, the graduate teachers working with older boys chose two books as their favorites: *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys*, and *I Read It, But I Don't Get It*. Both books talk about real-life boys in trouble with the traditional school literacy programs. They open up options and alternatives for how our classrooms could function if we recognize students' needs and interests and create a curriculum based on our shared findings. The authors talk so honestly and compellingly about literacy in the lives of young men (and women) that I want to begin working immediately using the same honest and forthright approach that these excellent teachers model for us.