



PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID WALTER BANKS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Required and Not

In the last year Lorrie McNeill has shifted to the “reading workshop” approach to teaching literature. Instead of assigning books for her classes to read, she lets them choose the books. Here are some of the titles she used to ask students to read, and their own top choices:

BOOKS ASSIGNED

- “To Kill a Mockingbird” by Harper Lee
- “Lord of the Flies” by William Golding
- “Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl” by Anne Frank
- “The Giver” by Lois Lowry
- “Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry” by Mildred Taylor

STUDENTS’ FAVORITES

- “It’s Kind of a Funny Story” by Ned Vizzini
- “A Lesson Before Dying” by Ernest J. Gaines
- “The Book Thief” by Marcus Zusak
- “Life as We Knew It” by Susan Beth Pfeffer
- “Maximum Ride” series, by James Patterson

Students Get New Reading Assignment: Pick Books You Like

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2006 in 31 of its 483 schools to give students in and 8 more control over what



ized testing and how some had faced resistance from administrators. Ms. McNeill said her students had so little freedom that they even had to be escorted to the bathrooms.
Suddenly, she was overcome with

have some of the same freedom.”
Ms. McNeill returned to Jonesboro determined to apply what she had observed. She knew she was luckier than some of the other teachers in the Edgcomb program, who were saddled with