

My Turn

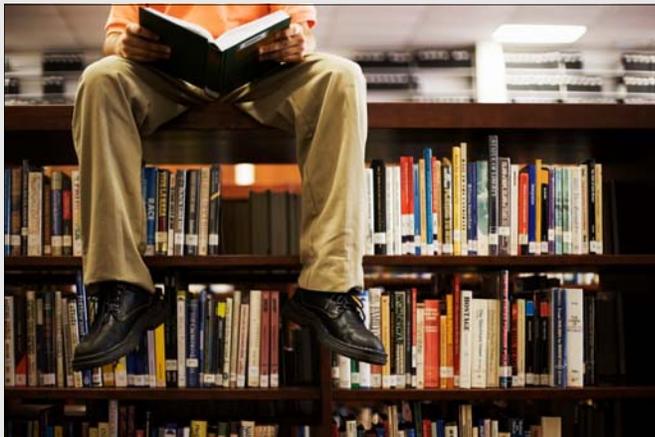
By Dennis Franks

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If you don't pay your bill the electric company shuts off your power, and you must pay the bill before the power is turned back on. This is the analogy math teacher Verdie Williams says she likes to use to describe the guiding philosophy of Catch Up Café.



Catch Up Café was launched this year to let students "catch up" on class assignments. Here is how it works; students who are chronically tardy completing assignments are assigned to the Café. Cafés are held during lunch periods on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Students assigned to the Café pick up a boxed lunch, go to the classroom and work on completing missing assignments.



Verdie said the Café concept of a teacher-monitored, in-school study hall was created by lead teachers and administrators after they toured several other career centers, in particular Collins Career Center in Chesapeake, Ohio. Collins was selected because its student demographic is similar to ours, she said.

Students assigned to the Café have not paid their electric bill, so to speak. So the responsibility of paying that bill – or getting their assignments completed – is on their shoulders. "Getting a zero (on an assignment) is the easy way out," Verdie says. "We make these students responsible for completing their work because that's what it will be like after they graduate."

Between 15 and 20 students attend the Café sessions each week. The number of students in each Café classroom is kept to between six or seven, so teachers monitoring the Café can work with them individually. Verdie said that teachers and administrators continue working out some kinks in the system, which thus far is considered a success.

Whether the students appreciate it or not, it is extra efforts like this that make us special and give our students the tools they need to be successful. Congratulations to everyone involved in making Catch Up Café a success.

