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University of Notre
Dame's English
Education Faculty



SOCIAL JUSTICE BOOK CLUB FOR TEACHERS

4 VIRTUAL
PD SESSIONS

A FREE CLASS SET
OF BOOKS

3 FREE BOOKS

NETWORK WITH
OTHER TEACHERS

Registration open until
Monday, November 1.

Limited to the first 20 registrants.

- November 10: Overview
- January 26: When Stars Are Scattered
- February 23: Dry
- March 16: Front Desk

All sessions run 3:30-4:30pm via Zoom.

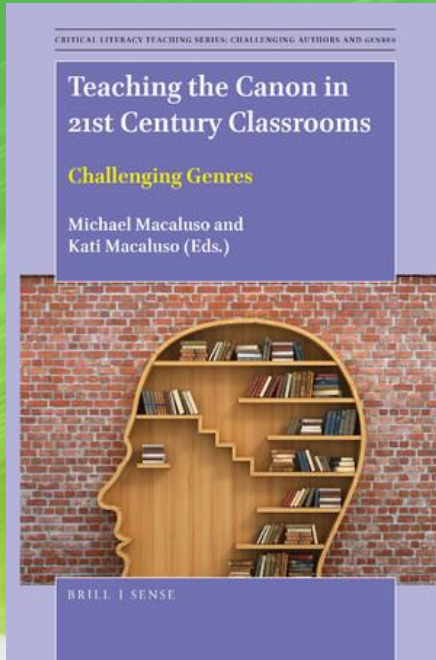
Find out more and
register here!

CONTACT US:
mmacaluso@nd.edu

A Professional Development
Learning Series
for ELA Teachers
November 2021

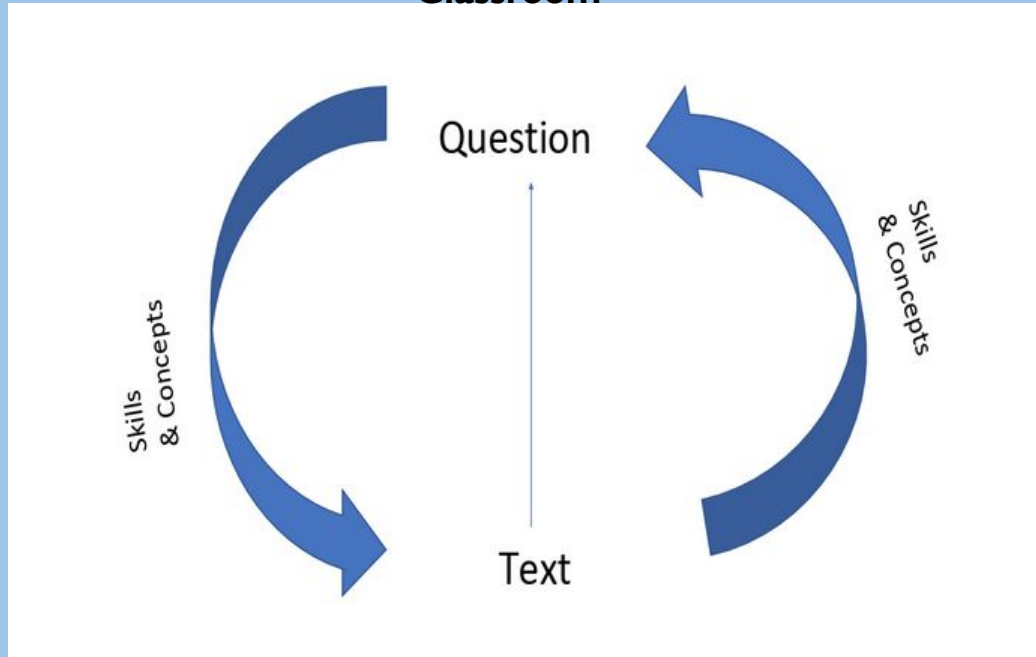
While we wait for everyone to join, please [read this poem](#) and be prepared to discuss: “What would you latch onto in this poem if you were to bring it into a classroom lesson?”

ABOUT US



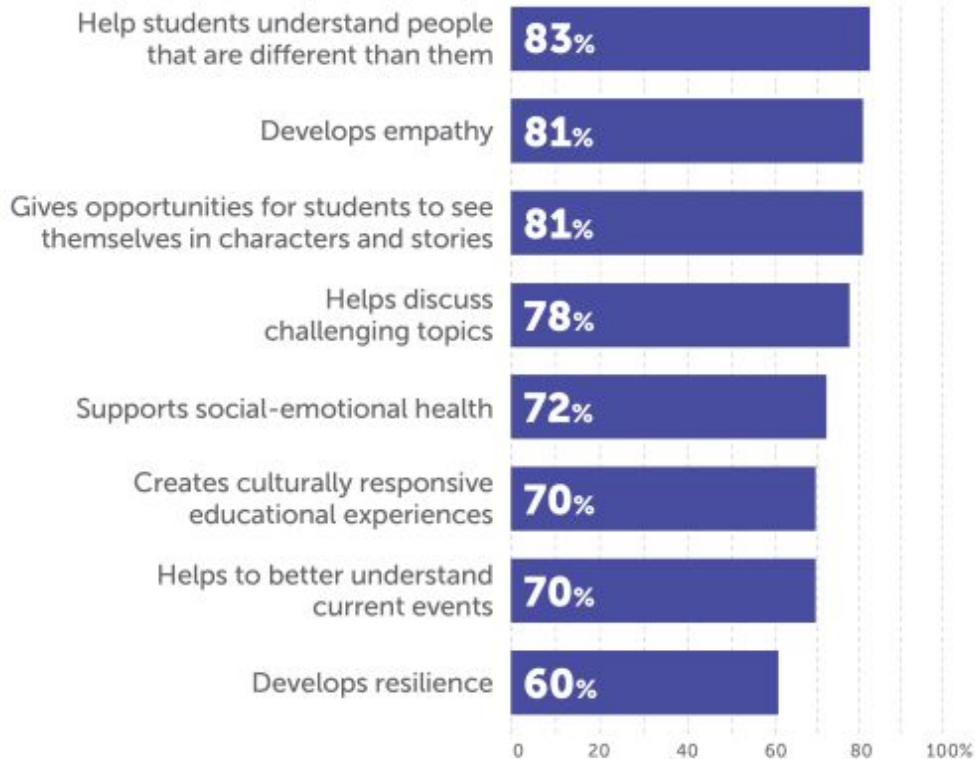
- **Kati Macaluso, Mike Macaluso**
 - Professors
 - University of Notre Dame
 - Institute for Educational Initiatives
 - Alliance for Catholic Education
 - Education, Schooling, & Society

A Critical Inquiry Framework to Guide Reading Instruction in the Middle/Secondary ELA Classroom



Social Justice and the ELA curriculum

Top social-emotional benefits of reading fiction and nonfiction books, according to educators:



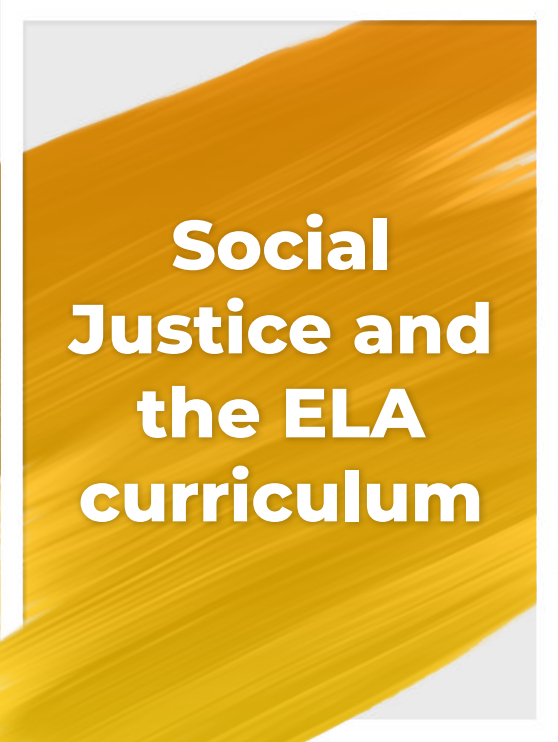
Base: Total Teachers and Principals Combined



WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE?

Social justice is moral rectitude at the institutional (social, political, economic) and existential level. In short, it is a commitment to standing in the margins to bring about greater equality of opportunity and to uphold the dignity of all.

~Bishop Robert Barron on
What is Social Justice?



Social Justice and the ELA curriculum

We take seriously the role that the language arts curriculum--through the medium of literature -- can play in promoting **respect and dignity** for peoples across cultures.

We believe that language arts instruction participates in important ways in knitting together, **across difference**, languages, perspectives, peoples, and cultures.

BUT...

English language arts education, at both the middle and secondary level **has not always** taken up this more equity-oriented goal.



**Is this what's
happening in
our own
classrooms?**

WHICH TEXTS ARE CURRENTLY TAUGHT?

Make a list of what you think might be the top 5 most commonly assigned and taught texts in Indiana grades 6-12 today and rank them in order.

Study of Indiana High School ELA Teachers, 2020

What major, full-length texts (novels, plays, and/or nonfiction texts) comprise your curriculum?

9th

10th

11th

12th

<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Romeo & Juliet</i>- <i>The Odyssey</i>- <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>- <i>Lord of the Flies</i>- <i>Animal Farm</i>- <i>Of Mice and Men</i>- <i>Night</i>- <i>Macbeth/</i>- <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>- <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Julius Caesar</i>- <i>Lord of the Flies</i>- <i>Night</i>- <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>- <i>Of Mice and Men</i>- <i>Antigone</i>- <i>Animal Farm/</i>- <i>Macbeth</i>- <i>Fahrenheit 451</i>- <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>The Great Gatsby</i>- <i>The Crucible</i>- <i>Of Mice and Men</i>- <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>- <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>- <i>Huck Finn</i>- <i>Into the Wild</i>- <i>Hamlet</i>- <i>The Things They Carried</i>- <i>Catcher in the Rye/</i>- <i>Death of a Salesman</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- <i>Macbeth</i>- <i>Hamlet</i>- <i>Beowulf</i>- <i>Frankenstein</i>- <i>1984</i>- <i>The Kite Runner</i>- <i>Othello</i>- <i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i>- <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>- <i>Oedipus Rex/</i>- <i>A Raisin in the Sun/</i>- <i>The Things They Carried</i>
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9th

10th

11th

12th

- *Romeo & Juliet*
- *The Odyssey*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *Lord of the Flies*
- *Animal Farm*
- *Of Mice and Men*
- *Night*
- *Macbeth*/
- *Fahrenheit 451*/
- *A Raisin in the Sun*

- *Julius Caesar*
- *Lord of the Flies*
- *Night*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *Of Mice and Men*
- *Antigone*
- *Animal Farm*/
- *Macbeth*
- *Fahrenheit 451*
- *A Raisin in the Sun*

- *The Great Gatsby*
- *The Crucible*
- *Of Mice and Men*
- *A Raisin in the Sun*
- *The Scarlet Letter*
- *Huck Finn*
- *Into the Wild*
- *Hamlet*
- *The Things They Carried*
- *Catcher in the Rye*/
- *Death of a Salesman*

- *Macbeth*
- *Hamlet*
- *Beowulf*
- *Frankenstein*
- *1984*
- *The Kite Runner*
- *Othello*
- *Tuesdays with Morrie*
- *The Canterbury Tales*
- *Oedipus Rex*/
- *A Raisin in the Sun*/
- *The Things They Carried*

Applebee, 1993

- *Romeo and Juliet*
- *Macbeth*
- *Huckleberry Finn*
- *Julius Caesar*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *The Scarlet Letter*
- *Of Mice and Men*
- *Hamlet*
- *The Great Gatsby*
- *Lord of the Flies*

Stotsky, 2010

- *Romeo and Juliet*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *The Crucible*
- *Julius Caesar*
- *Of Mice and Men*
- *Night*
- *The Great Gatsby*
- *Lord of the Flies*
- *Huckleberry Finn*
- *The Scarlet Letter*

Stallworth, 2012

- *The Great Gatsby*
- *Romeo and Juliet*
- *The Crucible*
- *The Odyssey*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *Night*

Study of Indiana Middle School ELA Teachers, 2020

What major, full-length texts (novels, plays, and/or nonfiction texts) comprise your curriculum?

6th

7th

8th

- *Hatchet*
- *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*
- *The Giver*
- *The Lightning Thief* /
 The Westing Game
- *Freak The Mighty* /
 Holes /
 Tuck Everlasting /
 A Wrinkle in Time

- *The Outsiders*
- *A Christmas Carol*
- *The Giver*
- *A Long Walk to Water*
- *Freak the Mighty*
- *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*
- *The Call of the Wild* /
 The Cay
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* /
 And Then There Were None /
 The Watsons Go to Birmingham

- *The Diary of Anne Frank*
- *The Outsiders*
- *The Giver*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *Night*
- *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*
- *The Book Thief* /
 Fahrenheit 451
- *A Christmas Carol* /
 Flowers for Algernon

6th

- Hatchet
- *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*
- *The Giver*
- *The Lightning Thief* /
The Westing Game
- *Freak The Mighty* /
Holes /
Tuck Everlasting /
A Wrinkle in Time

7th

- *The Outsiders*
- *A Christmas Carol*
- *The Giver*
- *A Long Walk to Water*
- *Freak the Mighty*
- *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*
- *The Call of the Wild* /
The Cay
- *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* /
And Then There Were None /
The Watsons Go to Birmingham

8th

- *The Diary of Anne Frank*
- *The Outsiders*
- *The Giver*
- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *Night*
- *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*
- *The Book Thief* /
Fahrenheit 451
- *A Christmas Carol* /
Flowers for Algernon

Obstacle to Social Justice?

As a whole, these staples of the ELA classroom often reflect and/or perpetuate:

- **MONOCULTURAL** (often privileged) **PERSPECTIVES**

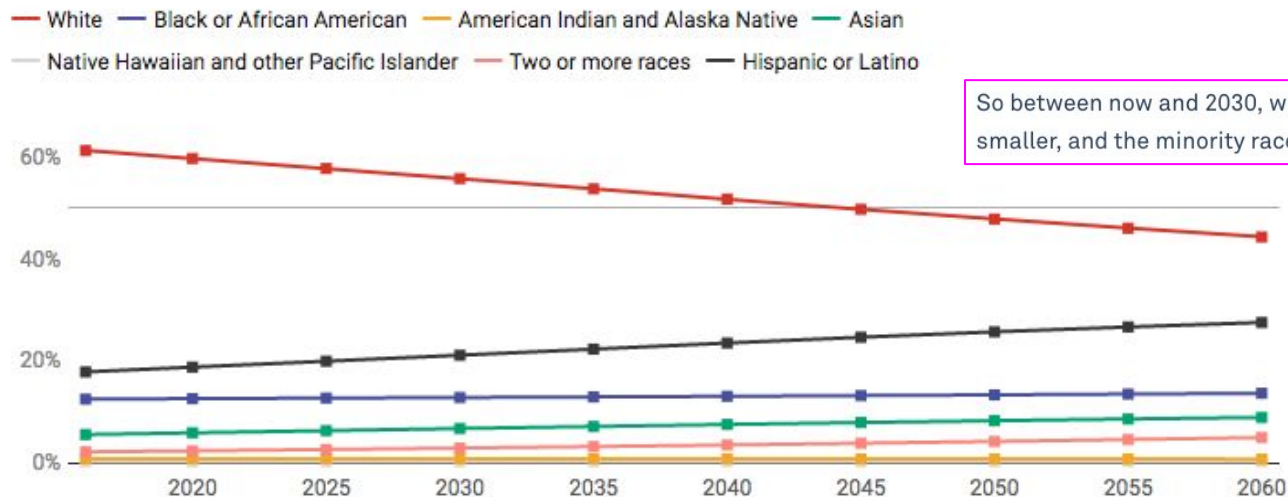
- **DATED (?) WORLDS**, even with the universality of literature (distant past, not as relevant now)

Why does this matter?
Should we do anything about it?
What can/should we do about it?

Why does this matter? -- U.S. Data

Projected race/ethnicity breakdown

After 2045, non-Hispanic whites will likely make up less than half of all Americans.



So between now and 2030, whites as a proportion of the population will get smaller, and the minority race groups will all keep getting bigger.

All groups not Hispanic or Latino unless specified otherwise.

Chart: The Conversation, CC-BY-ND • Source: [U.S. Census Bureau](#) • [Get the data](#)

However, on the first day of 2020, whites under age 18 were already in the minority. Among all the young people now in the U.S., there are more minority young people than there are white young people.

Why does this matter? -- contemporary topics

Schools Should Be Talking To Students About Black Lives Matter, Police Violence, and Racism. The Problem? Teachers Have Not Been Prepared to Meet This Moment

 Shayla R. Griffin, PhD, MSW · 3 days ago · 8 min read



California is under a statewide drought emergency as it sees its driest year in nearly a century

By Aya Elamroussi, CNN

Updated 12:48 PM ET, Wed October 20, 2021



See the dried up reservoir that's shutting down this power plant 00:58

Resolution on Literacy Teaching on Climate Change

Date: March 1, 2019

Category: Interdisciplinary

[Print Statement](#)

Approved by NCTE Members Voting at the Annual Business Meeting for the Board of Directors and Other Members of the Council, November 2018

Background: Climate change is not simply a scientific or technological issue, but one with enormous ethical, social, political, and cultural dimensions. Understanding climate change challenges the imagination; addressing climate change demands all the tools of language and communication, including the ability to tell compelling stories about the people and conflicts at the heart of this global discussion.

Addressing climate change demands the involvement of English language arts teachers: "We believe that a purely science-oriented approach to climate change can miss the social, historical, ethical, and human realities that are critical to the problem" (Beach et al., 2017, p. 7). Students need to explore images, texts, ideas, perspectives, and issues; need to empathize with victims of climate change; need to imagine consequences and possibilities, and take action individually, locally, and nationally. They need our guidance in learning how to read and communicate about these vital and troubling issues. Be it therefore

Resolution

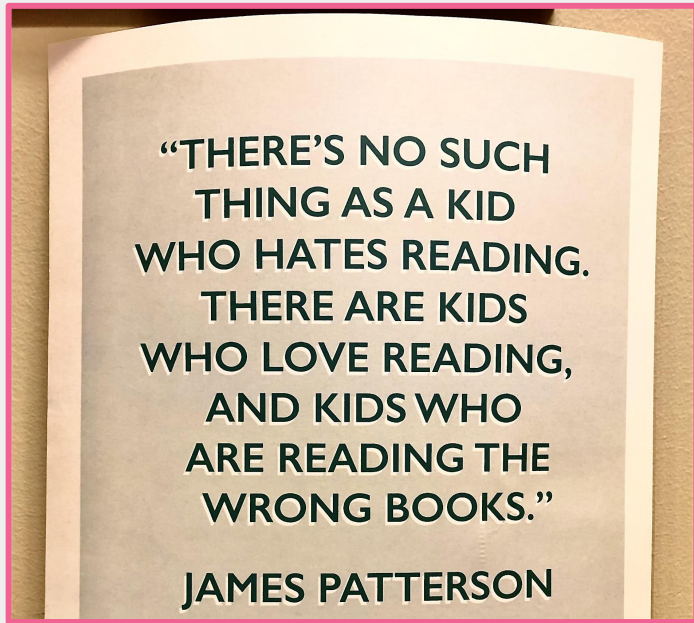
Resolved that the National Council of Teachers of English encourage teachers and teacher educators to

- resist the politicization of climate science by evaluating curricular texts for scientific credibility;
- lead students to engage thoughtfully with texts focusing on social and political debates surrounding climate change; and
- work with teachers in other fields to implement interdisciplinary instruction on climate change and sustainability.

(CNN) — After California saw its driest year on record in nearly 100 years, the entire state is now under a **drought** emergency, officials said Tuesday.

Gov. Gavin Newsom issued a statewide drought emergency proclamation, expanding an existing one to add eight counties that were not previously included.

If we want students to be lifelong, thoughtful readers and doers of justice then they need to...



- make contemporary connections between “word and world” so that they may think and act ethically and promote respect and dignity for all individuals.
- read varied texts grounded in diverse perspectives of mirrors, windows, and sliding doors.
- read to develop empathy and perspective-taking skills in addition to academic achievement.

A Small Sample of the Current Literary Scene





SPACE FOR CONVERSATION

Fostering critical conversations through young adult literature

By **Rachelle S. Savitz**

Our teachers walk into classrooms every day wanting to make their content relevant, interesting, and engaging. They want to ensure all voices are heard and promote student agency.

Our students walk into classrooms every day anticipating learning interesting topics, and they also wonder how instruction will relate to their own lives. In their lives, students are questioning how to deal with the personal or societal issues they face, such as the heartbreaking reality of traumatic events and inequality on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and ability.

*“Our students need to be invited into [critical conversations] not only to have a place to read about themselves and learn about others but to recognize ways of dealing with troubling situations and experiences. Our students need teachers who take responsibility for addressing equity through difficult conversations. Teachers who use YAL to address issues being discussed at home, in the news, or on social media provide a safe place to question... and to investigate other narratives... **Teachers** who create this type of classroom environment not only teach their required content but also provide the means for complex and critical thinking that leads to social-emotional learning and social justice” (Savitz, 2019).*

98% | of educators
AGREE

Using books, stories,
and articles as a starting
point is a powerful way
to engage students in
important conversations



Base: Total Teachers and Principals Combined

Teacher & Principal School Report | [scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport](https://www.scholastic.com/teacherprincipalreport) SCHOLASTIC

Current School Scene

THE NEED FOR BOOKS IN CLASSROOMS

254
IS THE AVERAGE
NUMBER OF

BOOKS
IN TEACHERS'
CLASSROOM
LIBRARIES

31%
OF
TEACHERS HAVE

FEWER THAN
50
BOOKS



56%
TEACHERS

USE THEIR OWN MONEY
TO PURCHASE BOOKS



TEACHERS STILL SEE A NEED FOR MORE BOOKS FOR THEIR CLASSROOM LIBRARIES

TOP 5 MOST NEEDED TYPES OF READING MATERIALS



- 1 Culturally relevant titles
- 2 Books published in the last 3–5 years
- 3 Multiple copies of popular titles
- 4 High-interest, low-reading-level books
- 5 Magazines

Scholastic Report



Compared to this time last year, educators say their desire for PD in the following areas has increased:

79% | Incorporating anti-racism practices into the classroom

71% | Embedding social justice into the curriculum

69% | Identifying and understanding the impact of implicit bias

Base: Total Teachers and Principals Combined



Top 3 Types of Reading Materials Teachers Need or Want More of in Classroom Libraries

67% | Books that my students can see themselves in

56% | Books that show lives and experiences different from those of my students

54% | High-interest, low-reading-level books

Base: Total Teachers, Excluding Librarians

What can/should we do about it?

Critical Intervention

Goal: diversify the ELA curriculum through the formation of *teachers*.

“A major task or any effort at reform...is to bring teachers into the debate and into the shaping of change. *For they are the ultimate change agents*” (Bruner, 1996, p.84).

Method: Teacher Book Club: Discuss books that tackle social justice issues.

Access to texts —————> Teachers receive free copies of the book AND a free classroom set of their choosing

Courage —————> Discuss with peers

Confidence —————> Working in groups with teachers who have selected the same class set, teachers will create a basic unit plan that can be used across schools. With class sets of these books, as well as developed units, the expectation is that the books will maintain a place in the curriculum at various local schools in perpetuity.

Critical Intervention

Book title and author	Social Justice Topic(s) and Brief description
<i>Front Desk</i> by Kelly Yang	Just Wage/Immigration Mia and her parents, Chinese immigrants, manage a hotel while trying to make it in America.
<i>Darius the Great is Not Okay</i> by Adib Khorram	Mental Health While visiting Iran for the first time, Darius meets his grandparents and comes to terms with his Persian identity, clinical depression, and relationships with friends and family.
<i>Dry</i> by Neal Shusterman	Environmental Justice A group of teens struggles to survive after water runs out in California.
<i>The Hate U Give</i> by Angie Thomas	Racial Justice Starr Carter witnesses the shooting of her friend by a police officer and struggles to speak up against the injustice and systematic oppression she and her community face.
<i>When Stars Are Scattered</i> By Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed	Immigration/Refugees/Adverse Childhood Experiences Two Somali brothers living in a refugee camp in Kenya await transfer to the United States. *Winner of the Center for Literacy Education's inaugural Alexandria Award.

A **liberatory consciousness** enables humans to maintain and **awareness** of the dynamics of oppression characterizing society without giving in to despair and hopelessness about that condition, to maintain awareness of **the role played by each individual in the maintenance of the system** without blaming them for the roles they play, and at the same time **practice intentionality about changing** the systems of oppression.

(Dr. Barbara Love)

AWARENESS ANALYSIS ACTION ACCOUNTABILITY

Desired Outcomes and Implications

By the conclusion of the grant cycle, then, this project will have impacted the community by

- (a) increasing teachers' comfort levels and dexterity with diverse young adult literature,
- (b) introducing new titles into the English language arts curricula of local schools,
- (c) enhancing students' critical capacities and commitments to social justice via teachers' collaboratively-designed unit and lesson plans, and
- (d) supporting local business through patronage to The Brain Lair Bookstore.

What we've learned so far

- the ELA curriculum, even in light of national conversations around social justice issues (from just wage to climate change to immigration to race and racism), is slow to change.
- teachers DO want new and updated curricular materials for their classrooms, but the impediments have always been: what are those materials, how do I get them, how do we talk about social justice issues in classroom?
- several teachers have already said they plan to adopt the books we are discussing in some way, with several saying that they will use the funds to purchase a class set for whole-class novel study!
- reception has been incredibly positive -- teachers do not have opportunities like this one. One teacher, upon signing up said, "I can't believe this is real!" Another said, "What's the catch here?" No catch!
- we definitely have plans to scale up this initiative, in light of the positive response we have seen from this local effort. We know that if we can effect real change on the local level, we can do the same on a national level.



Thank You!!