

# Sports and Literature: How Do We Make the Connections?

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# “Problem of Content” (Gee, 2007)

Sports are...

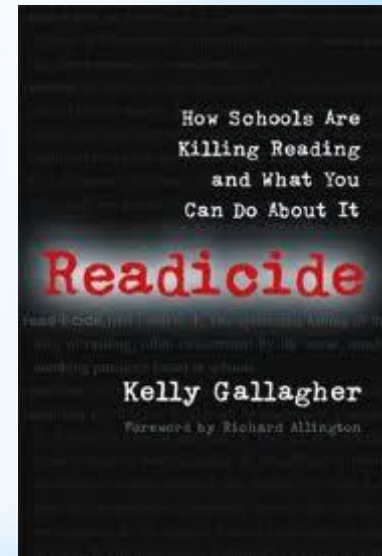
- among the most popular extra-curricular activities in secondary schools
  - among the most likely school-based extra-curricular activities to keep at-risk students in good academic standing
  - an entry point into various forms of literacy
- 
- less often a topic of meaningful academic conversation in elementary and secondary classrooms
  - one of many extra-curricular interests that offer a “tension with the schoolishness of school” (Whitney, 2011, p. 55).

In a recent CNN article about fantasy baseball, sport administration researcher Brendan Dwyer suggests:

“Sports in general has been a space for men to communicate...and now **fantasy sports** is an enhanced version of that....I like to equate it to the **male version of a book club**” (as cited in Kounang, 2016, para. 8).



- “Reading, I hate it because of the lack of fun it brings me.”
- “Hate runs through me when I spend hours of time I could be spending doing something enjoyable.”
- “I read books only because my teachers make me.”
- “I would rather watch TV, play sports, and hang out with my friends.”

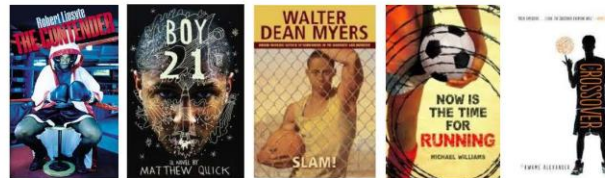


# Paisley Sports Literacy Program

*Sports Talk*

*Free Snacks*

*Good Books*



**Audience:** 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys with an interest in sports

**Details:** Snacks and books provided

**Day:** Every Thursday afternoon

**Time:** 3:00 – 4:00 pm

**Location:** Ms. Allman's room (111)

**Program Leaders:** Mr. Wendell Dunn and Dr. Alan Brown,  
Wake Forest University

From Chris Crowe's (2004)  
*More than a Game: Sports Literature for Young Adults*

Game Novels:  
Formula stories about sports/athletes

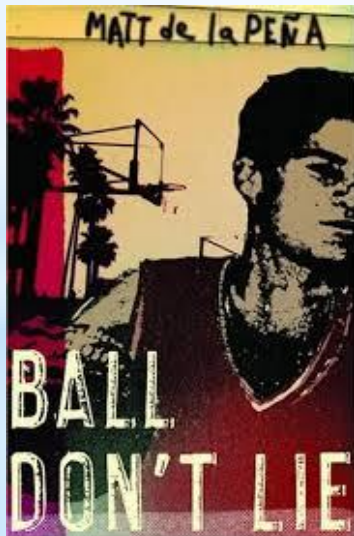
More-Than-A-Game Novels:  
Stories with more character development & subplots

Sportlerroman:  
“Although sport may be the hook for many readers, writers of sportlerroman recognize that, for many teenagers, sport is only one part of life, and that the real social and family issues of adolescence are always more important than athletics are” (Crowe, 2004, p. 39).





Sticky: “Sometimes I think if I don’t make it to the NBA I’ll kill myself. I know it don’t sound so good, Annie, but that’s how I feel. There ain’t nothin else I wanna do. Just play ball...” (p. 67).



The eleventh and twelfth NCTE/IRA standards:

Students should become active members of a variety of literacy communities while using language to accomplish their own purposes.





# **Paisley Sports Literacy Program**

This literacy program is grounded in sociocultural theory in that students develop literacy skills while engaging in activities related to their personal, everyday interests.

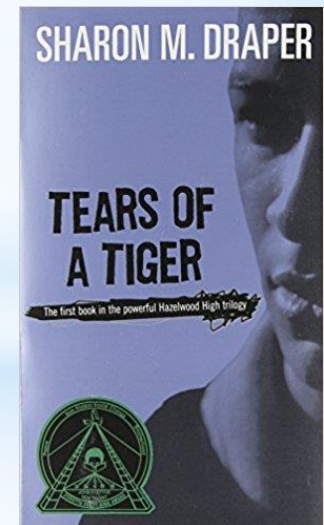
# **Paisley Sports Literacy Program**

## **Goals:**

- to support youth through academic, social, and community engagement,
- to empower students who are interested in sports to read and write for enjoyment,
- to explore social issues that affect the lives of adolescents and young adults through culturally-relevant literature,
- to improve literacy skills and practices that support learning across content areas and promote college and career readiness.



What gets them in the door?

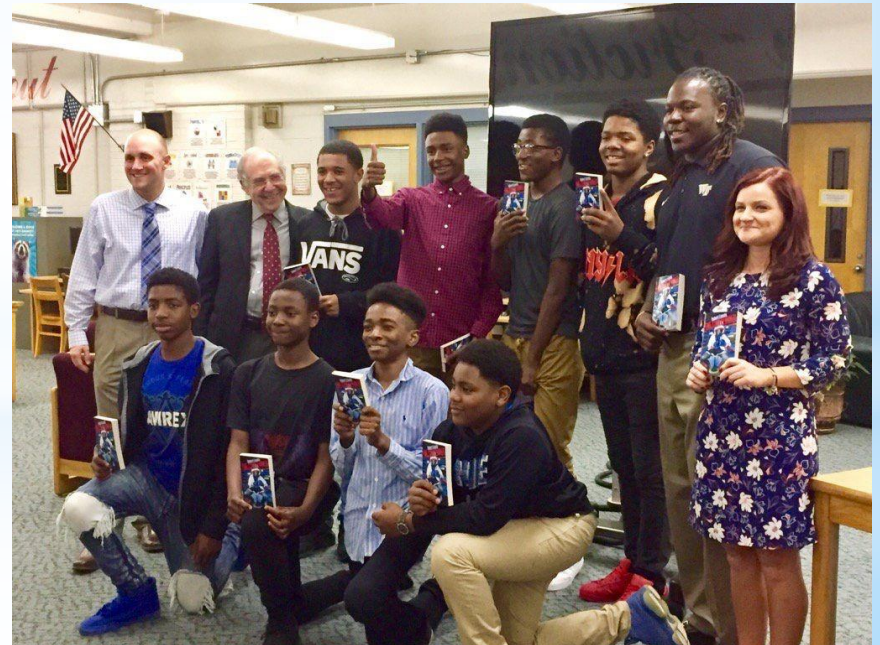


# Paisley Sports Literacy Program

## *Daily Schedule*

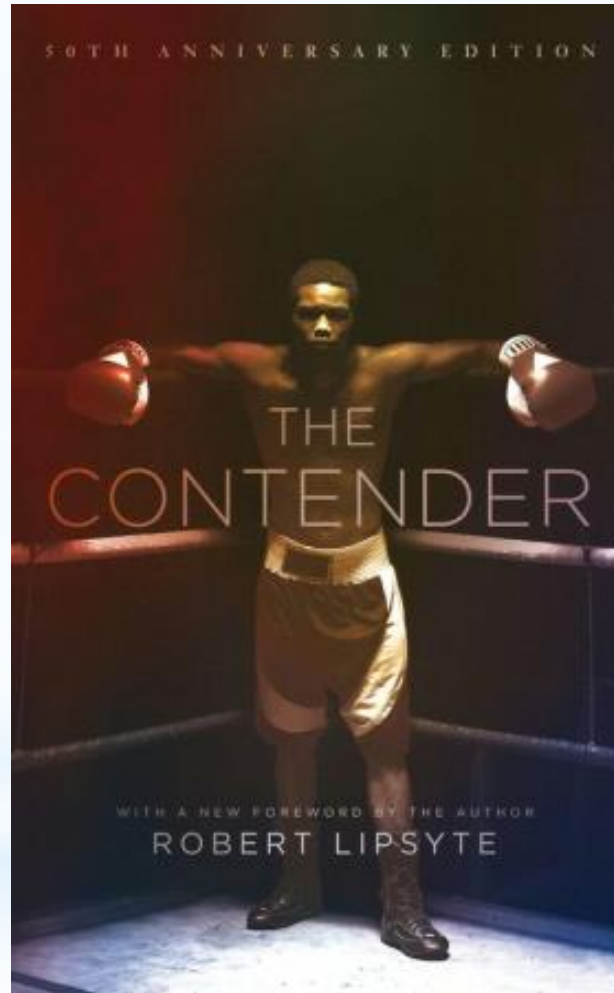
- Snack & Questions of the Day
- Accountable Talk (Social Skills)
- Essential Question and Word Study (Academic Skills)
- Think-Write-Pair-Share
  - Think about essential question
  - Write a short reflection
  - Pair and share reflection with a partner
  - Share reflections aloud with the group
- Reading
  - Text-to-Self Connections
  - Text-to-Text Connections
  - Text-to-World Connections







# The Contender by Robert Lipsyte



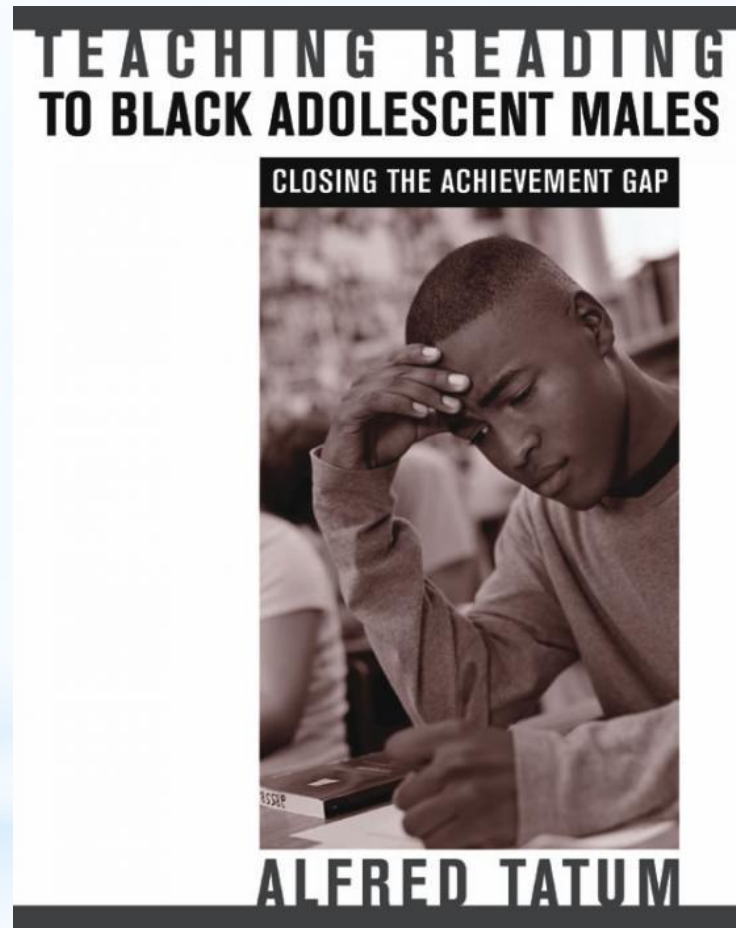
<https://www.harpercollins.com/9780064470391/the-contender/>

# Paisley Sports Literacy Program

“I want to be somebody....Somebody special. A champion” said Alfred. “Donatelli’s thin lips tightened. ‘Everybody wants to be a champion. That’s not enough. You have to start by wanting to be a contender.’”



# A Poem by Alfred Tatum

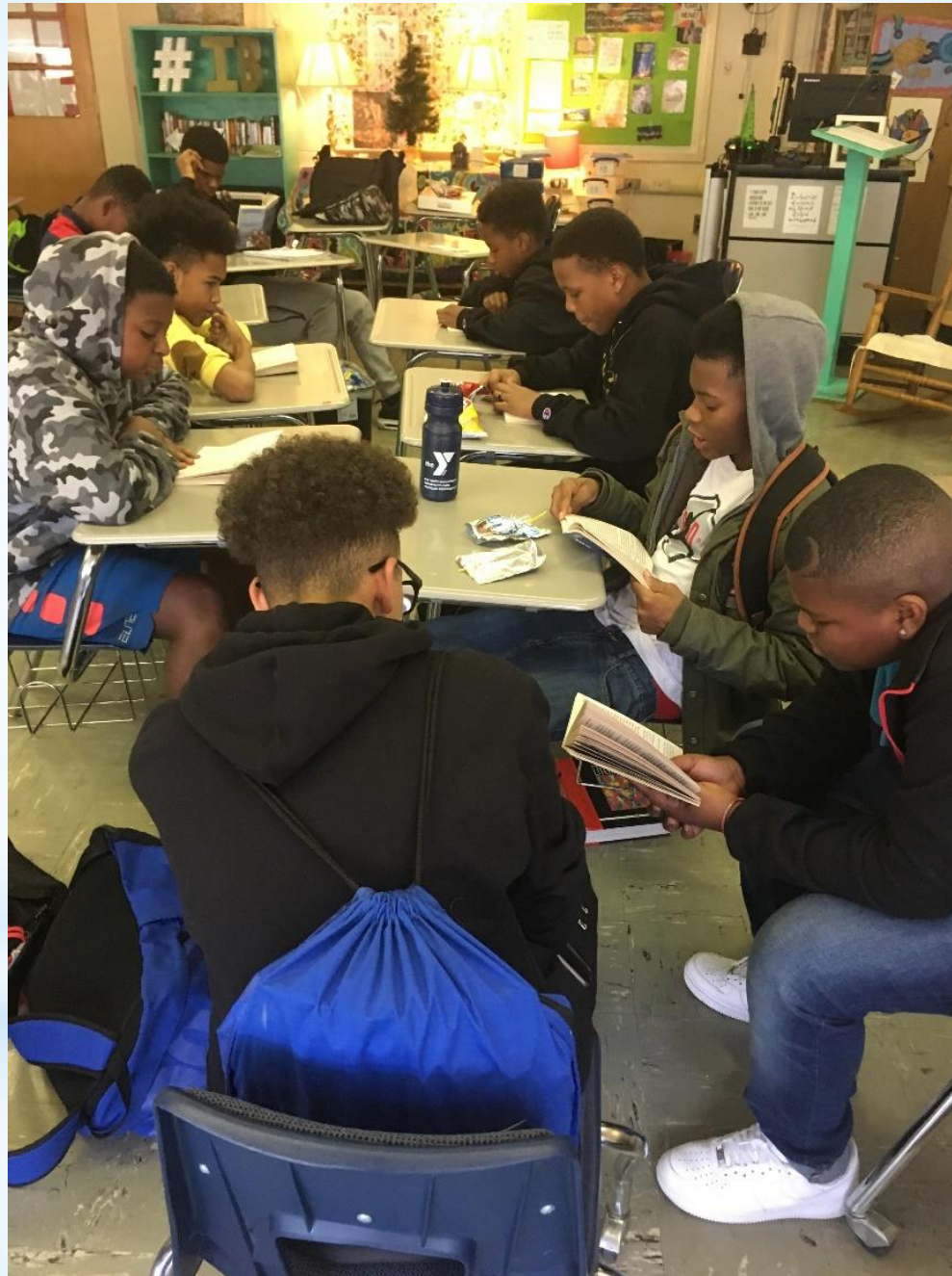


<https://www.stenhouse.com/content/teaching-reading-black-adolescent-males>

## Alternative Point-of-View

“This feels a little like an effort to bring [sports] into the curriculum and talk about it because the teacher cares about it. I’m all for teachers caring about what they teach and personalizing their curriculum but the reality of teaching and learning throughout most of our country today looks less like that than ever.”







# Paisley Sports Literacy Program

## Outcomes:

- Interest in Reading
- Willingness to Read Aloud in Class
- Engagement in Writing
- Higher Rates of Attendance
- Fewer Office Referrals
- Growth in Benchmark Scores
- Positive Reviews from Teachers
  - Work ethic
  - Maturity

# Ideas for Connecting Books and Ball

- Classroom book talks (from librarians...and athletic coaches)
- Sports literature courses (offered as electives in English Depts.)
- Collaboration with librarians (library scavenger hunt via student interest surveys)
- Collaboration with coaches (football summer reading)
- Fantasy sports leagues (in the media center)
- School newspaper book reviews (in the sports section)
- Creative writing publication (about sports)
- Read-a-thon fundraisers (for athletic teams)
- Sports movie marathons (for students who read ## books or ## minutes)

## But Not All Kids Like Sports...

True, you should also consider these interests & activities (and many others):

- \* Art
- \* Dance
- \* Music
- \* Fashion
- \* Theatre
- \* Dance
- \* Photography
- \* Computers
- \* Video Games






# http://sportsliteracy.org/



[Blog Overview](#)[Alan's Bio](#)[Alan's Featured Texts](#)[Alan's Perspective](#)[Alan's Publications and Presentations](#)

[Sports Literacy Announcements](#)[Sports-Related YAL: Award Winners](#)

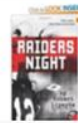






## ALAN BROWN'S SPORTS LITERACY BLOG

A site for connecting sports and young adult literature and promoting literacy through sports-related content  
stay updated via rss




 **Blog Overview** 

Welcome to my sports literacy blog. Here you will find resources for educators as well as sports-related texts for middle and high school students. While many of these texts come from recommended lists from public libraries across the country, NCTE's Assembly on Literature for Adolescents (ALAN), and respected educators, librarians, and authors, I cannot personally vouch for every text/resource on this list. Instead, my goal has been to provide relevant options for individuals interested in various aspects of sports literacy. My hope is that teachers and students alike will make informed decisions on the texts they read and the resources they utilize.

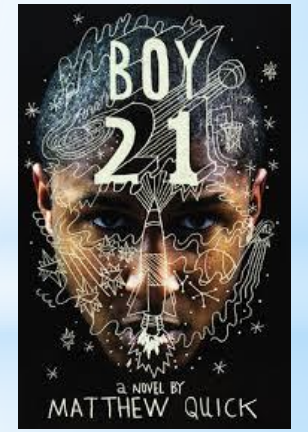
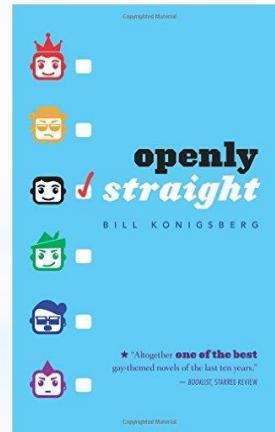
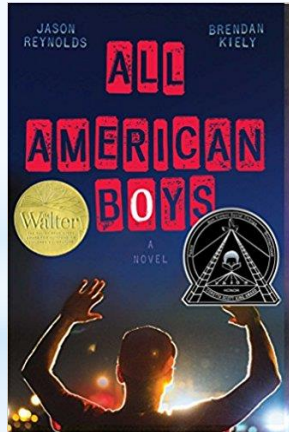
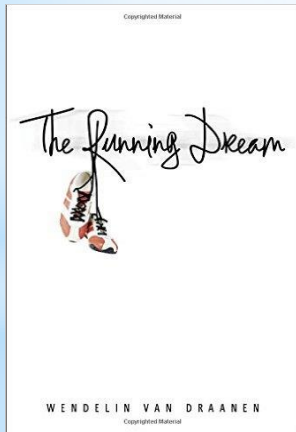
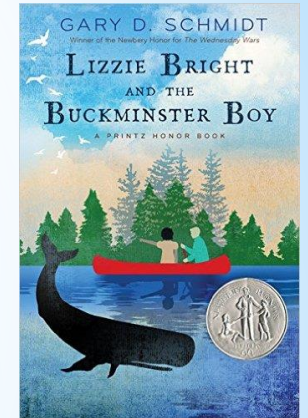
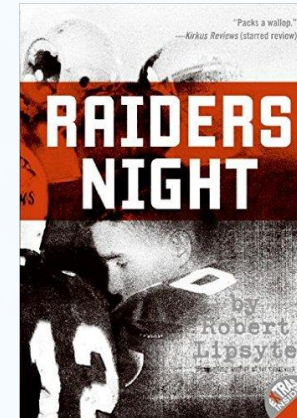
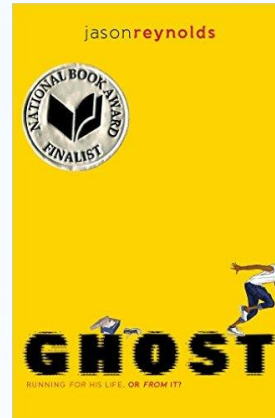
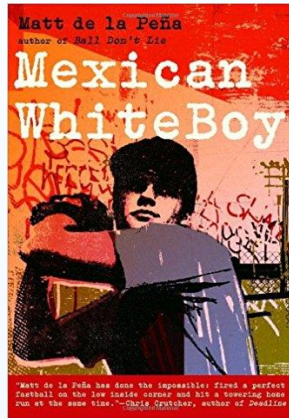
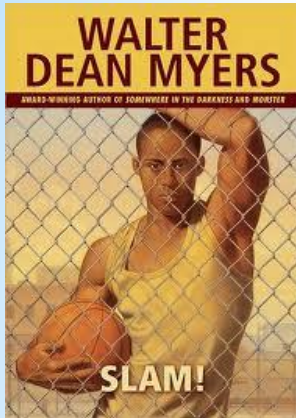


Why sports literacy? As Chris Crowe (2001) once noted, "Americans love sports, and we're predisposed to like movies, stories, and books that deal with sports in interesting or creative ways. Sports culture permeates almost every aspect of contemporary society" (p. 129). Thus, as a sports lover myself, I can think of no better way to engage students in reading than by connecting literature to one of the most popular extracurricular interests of middle and high school students across the country.

 **RESOURCES AND TEXTS**

- Recommended Resources
  - Recommended Literacy Resources for Teachers
  - Recommended Resources for Teachers/Coaches
  - Recommended Resources: Boys and Literacy
  - Recommended Resources: Bullying in Sports
  - Recommended Resources: Girls and Sports
  - Recommended Resources: LGBTQ and Sports
  - Recommended Resources: Social Issues in Sports-related YAL
  - Recommended Resources: Sports and Documentary Film
  - Recommended Resources: Utilizing Sports in the Classroom

<http://sportsliteracy.org/>





## Themed Issue of *English Journal*

### **A Whole New Ballgame: Sports and Culture in the English Classroom**

Guest Editors:

Alan Brown (Wake Forest University)

Chris Crowe (Brigham Young University)



September 2014

The background of the cover is a dark chalkboard. At the top, there is a series of 'X' marks connected by a dashed line, resembling a football (soccer) field's defensive half. Below this, there are several 'O' marks arranged in a pattern, with arrows indicating movement, resembling a basketball or volleyball play. The title text is centered over these diagrams.

# Developing Contemporary **Literacies** through **Sports**

**A Guide for the English Classroom**

Edited by Alan Brown and Luke Rodesiler

Forewords by Peter Smagorinsky and Robert Lipsyte



# Companion Website



## Part 6: Promoting Social Justice

### Chapter 21. Exploring Racial Stereotypes through Sports-Related Film

- 21.1 [Resources to Support Conversations about Racial Stereotypes](#)
- 21.2 [PowerPoint: Exploring Racial Stereotypes through Sports-Related Film](#)
- 21.3 [Analyzing Humor, Parody, and Caricature](#)
- 21.4 [Holistic Rubric for Digital Presentation](#)

### Chapter 22. Disability and Athletics: (Re)Defining “Typical”

- 22.1 [Anticipation Guide](#)
- 22.2 [Defining Challenges for Students with Disabilities](#)
- 22.3 [Taking the Perspective of Another: A Written Conversation](#)

### Chapter 23. Using YAL to Interrogate the Heteronormative, Transphobic Culture of School Sports

- 23.1 [Taking an Initial Stance, Data Collection, and Data Sharing](#)
- 23.2 [Disrupting the Commonplace and Exploring Multiple Viewpoints](#)
- 23.3 [Focusing on Sociopolitical Issues and Taking Action and Promoting Social Justice](#)
- 23.4 [Taking Local Action to Improve the Culture of School Sports](#)

### Chapter 24. Rewriting for Justice: Breaking Down Bullying in *Openly Straight*

- 24.1 [Samples of Critical Questions for “Around the World” Activity](#)
- 24.2 [“Be Aware, Prevent, and Prepare!” Scavenger Hunt](#)
- 24.3 [Sample Excerpts from \*Openly Straight\* for the Scavenger Hunt](#)
- 24.4 [“Flip the Script” Culminating Writing Activity](#)
- 24.5 [Scoring Guide for Culminating Writing Activity](#)



## Part 7: Developing Out-of-School Literacies

### Chapter 25. Being the Expert: Recognizing and Developing Students’ Insider Sports Knowledge

- 25.1 [Having Fun with Insider Lingo](#)

# Questions / Comments:

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