

Writing the Unwritten Rules of High School Sports

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- Participation in sports builds character.
 - Participation in sports reveals character.
 - Winning is what sports are all about.
 - Winning is what life is really about.
 - Sports play a *major* role in the social culture of secondary schools.
 - Sports are overemphasized in the social culture of secondary schools.
 - Athletics prevent students from prioritizing academics.
 - Sports keep students in school.
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A Walk Down Memory Lane



Connecting
Academics &
Athletics



How language is constructed...

- In print
 - In schools
 - In society
-

Four Dimensions of Critical Literacy

(Lewison, Flint, & Sluys, 2002)

1. Disrupting the commonplace
 2. Interrogating multiple viewpoints
 3. Focusing on sociopolitical issues
 4. Taking action and promoting social justice
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Critical sports literacy allows students to...

- examine the pros and cons of our societal emphasis on sports.
 - deconstruct and redesign the meanings, values, and purposes of sports and sports culture.
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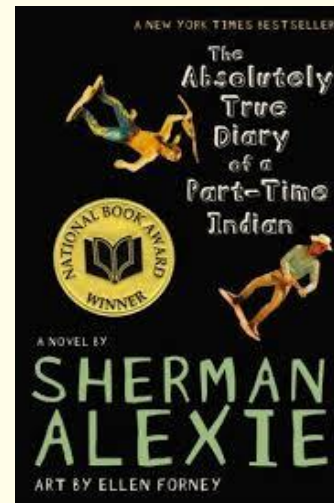
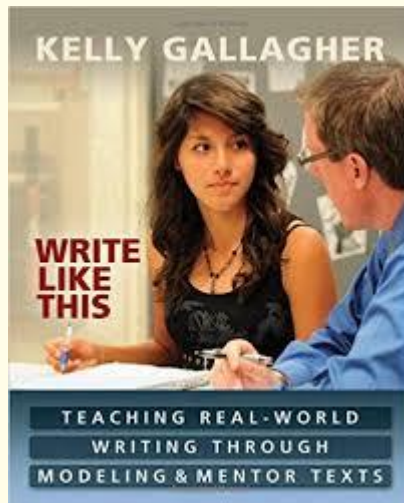
“The amount of attention devoted to athletics would be most striking to an innocent visitor to a high school. A visitor entering a school would likely be confronted, first of all, with a trophy case. His examination of the trophies would reveal a curious fact: The gold and silver cups, with rare exception, symbolize victory in athletic contests, not scholastic ones....Altogether, the trophy case would suggest to the innocent visitor that he was entering an athletic club, not an educational institution” (Coleman, 1961, p. 34).

“As an impressionable stranger, this visitor might well suppose that more attention is paid to athletics by teen-agers, both as athletes and as spectators, than to scholastic matters. He might even conclude, with good reason, that the school was essentially organized around athletic contests and that scholastic matters were of lesser importance to all involved” (Coleman, 1961, p. 34).

Robert Lipsyte's (2011) view of "jock culture" is not about the essence of sports but instead the distortion of sports, which he believes is often...

- overwhelmed by masculinity and power
 - fueled by greed and desperate competition
 - pressurized by ambitious parents and coaches with a commitment to enforcing a win-at-all costs attitude.
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Gallagher (2011) provides an activity called “Unwritten Rules” that begins with an excerpt from Sherman Alexie’s (2007) *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, in which “the narrator, Junior, a native American relocated to an all-white school, shares the following unofficial and unwritten rules of fighting” (p. 75).



The Unofficial and Unwritten (but you better follow them or you're going to get beaten twice as hard) Spokane Indian Rules of Fisticuffs

Rule 1: "If somebody insults you, then you have to fight him."

Rule 2: "If you think someone is going to insult you, then you have to fight him."

Rule 3: "If you think someone is thinking about insulting you, then you have to fight him...." (p. 61)

EDU 101: Issues & Trends in Education

The Intersection of Sport, Education, and Society

This course examines educational issues and trends with a focus on K-12 schools and teachers. This particular section highlights the intersection of sport, education, and society, and analyzes the impact of sports culture on K-12 schools.

Assignment:

Imagine you met a stranger from another country who knows nothing about American high school sports. That person is interested in the emphasis schools place on sports and the culture it creates. This stranger is not interested in written, formal rules about sports but, instead, unwritten rules related to sports culture.

To help this stranger, create a list of unwritten rules that describes the social culture of school sports based on your own experiences and/or previous readings.

“Dating a star athlete boosts social status.”

“Regular students are supposed to do an athlete’s school work.”

“Women’s sports aren’t as valued as men's sports.”

“On game day, school doesn’t matter.”

“Parents are your biggest fans but also put the most pressure on you.”



Writing the Unwritten Rules of High School Sports

Now you try...

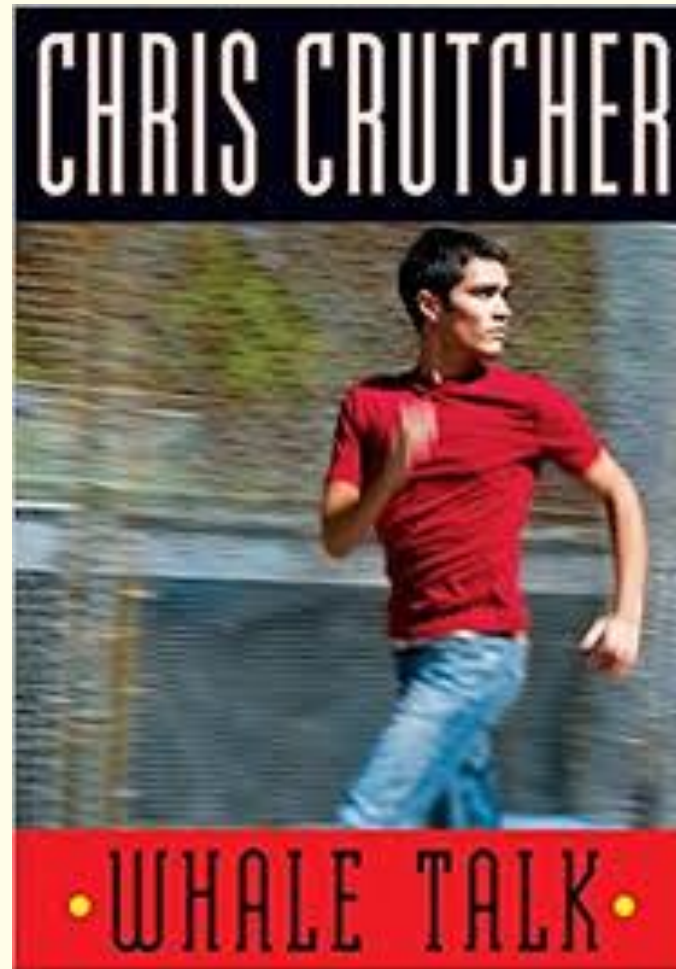
1. Benefits of sports in K-12 schools
 - Positive impact on students, schools, and communities
 2. Social status of student-athletes
 - Popularity, pride, isolation, and relationships
 3. Men's sports emphasized more than women's sports
 - Football and men's basketball, sexism
 4. Prioritizing athletic achievement over academic achievement
 - Representations of athletic achievement
 - Priorities of student-athletes, schools, teacher-coaches, parents, and media
 - Eligibility, not excellence
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Through reading young adult literature, students have an opportunity to consider the pros and cons of the emphasis so many schools place on athletic pursuits and consider how they connect and disconnect with the intersection of academics and athletics in their own K-12 education experience.



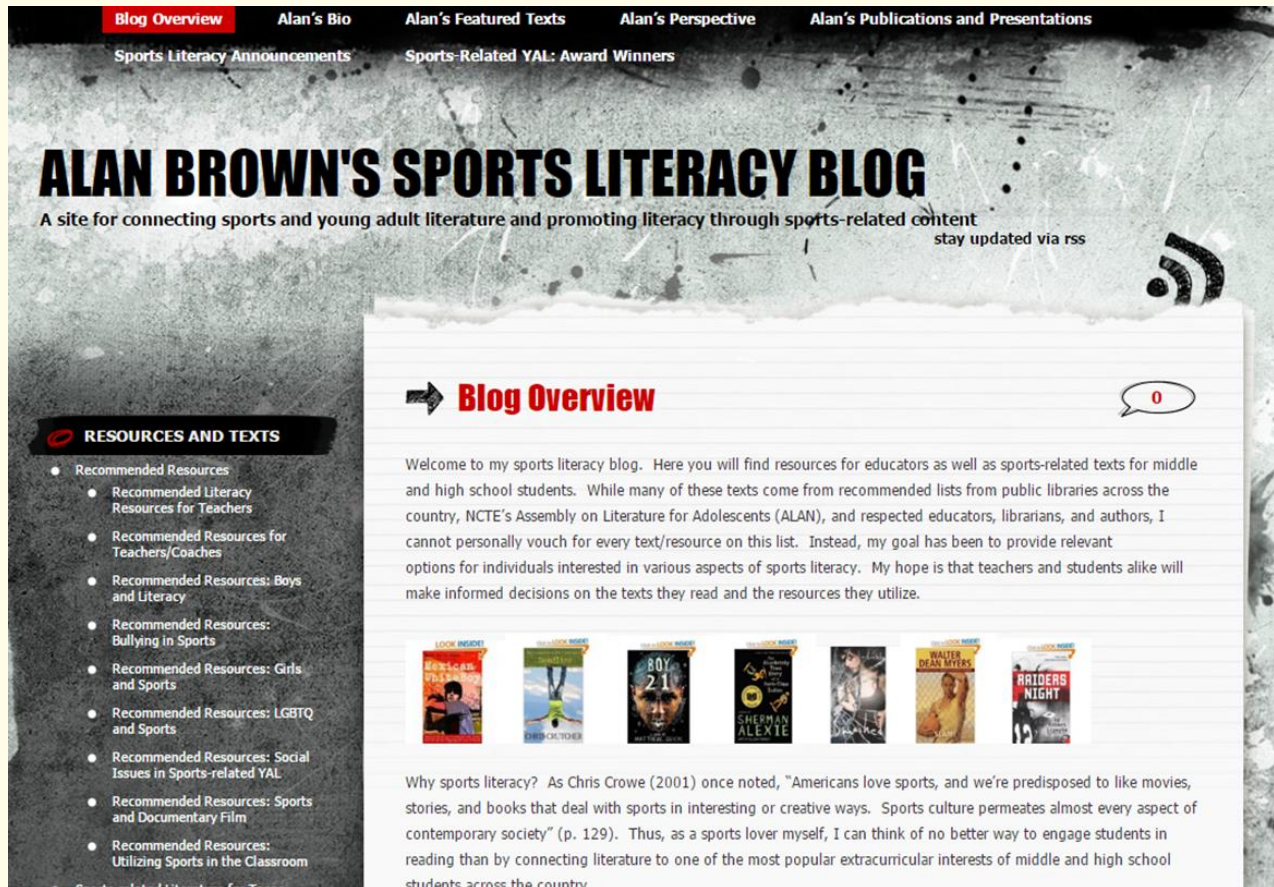
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Whale Talk by Chris Crutcher



Which unwritten rules of high school sports lead to “jock culture,” and what are other rules we should add to the list based on our reading of *Whale Talk* by Chris Crutcher?

<http://sportsliteracy.org/>



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Alan Brown's Sports Literacy Blog. The header features a navigation bar with links: Blog Overview, Alan's Bio, Alan's Featured Texts, Alan's Perspective, Alan's Publications and Presentations, Sports Literacy Announcements, and Sports-Related YAL: Award Winners. The main title is "ALAN BROWN'S SPORTS LITERACY BLOG" with a subtitle "A site for connecting sports and young adult literature and promoting literacy through sports-related content" and a note "stay updated via rss" with a RSS icon. A left sidebar titled "RESOURCES AND TEXTS" lists various recommended resources. The main content area has a "Blog Overview" section with a welcome message and a row of book covers including "Lemonade" by Christian B. Brown, "Boy 21" by Chris Crowe, "Sherman Alexie", "Walter Dean Myers", and "Riders Night".

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.



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Themed Issue of *English Journal*

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

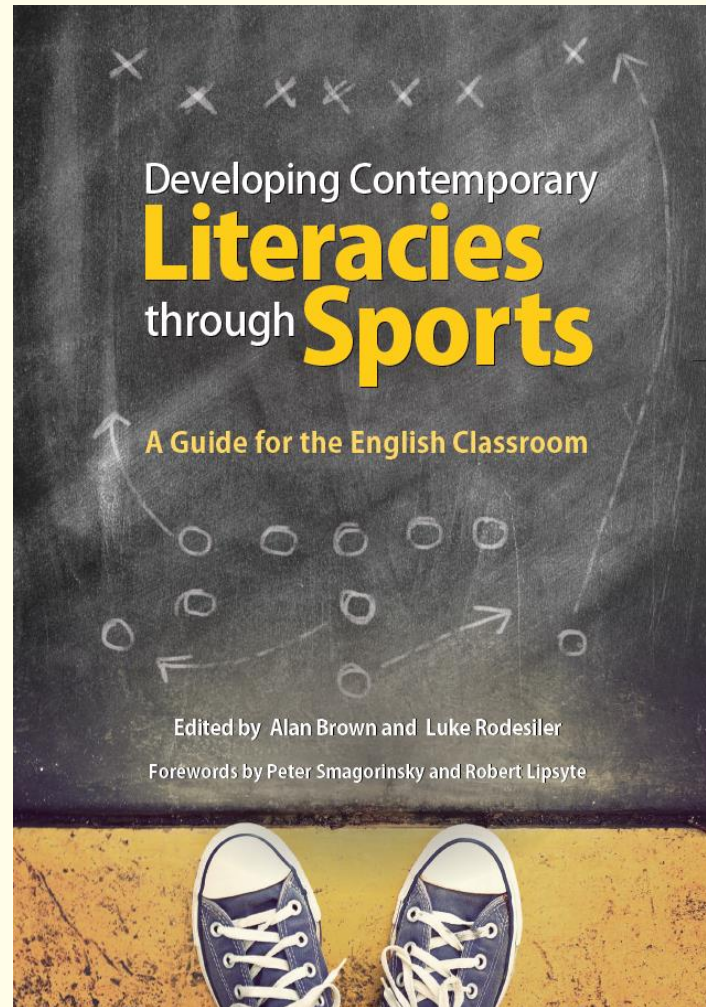


September 2014



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Edited Book





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](#)

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