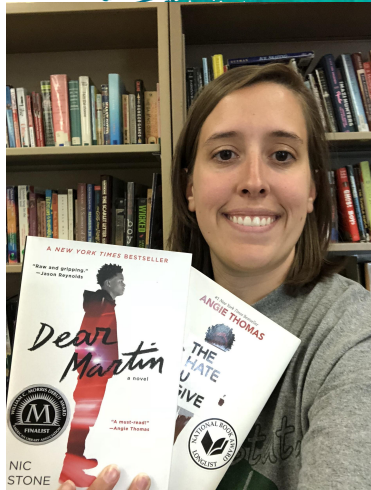


(Re)Shaping the High School Curriculum: Using Young Adult Literature to Teach Social Issues and Communication

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Background

Village of Oakfield:

- Population 1,075
- 9 miles from Fond du Lac
- 70 miles north of Milwaukee
- Most notable historical event was the F5 tornado that demolished much of the village in 1996 - many homes, two churches, the middle school, and the canning factory were destroyed

School District of Oakfield:

- 541 students K-12
- 150 students in grades 9-12
 - 19% Open Enrollment
 - 11.3% Special Education
 - 23.9% Economically Disadvantaged
 - 0.7% English Learner
 - 90.8% White
- Rural, farming area



Goals for this session:

1. Share titles to get your own groups started
2. Provide discussion questions and write more to share
3. Share formative assessment ideas
4. Discuss summative assessment “final project”



How this unit came to be:

- Changes in course structure
- Desire to find relevant reading options for seniors
- Attempt to combine novels with research and communication skills

Students were split into groups of 3 or 4 based on each social issue topic.

Students chose books from the list I provided but were encouraged to find and suggest others.

The biggest key to “buy-in” for my students:

CHOICE!

Book Options - Mental Illness

Wintergirls by Laurie Halse Anderson

Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher

Will Grayson, Will Grayson by John Green

Turtles All the Way Down by John Green

Challenger Deep by Neal Shusterman

Cut by Patricia McCormick

Burn Journals by Brent Runyon

Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

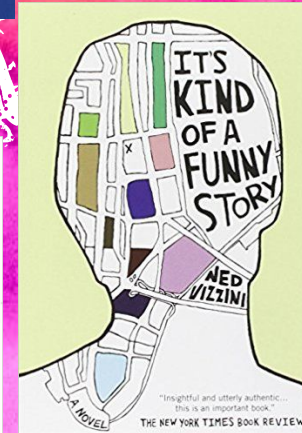
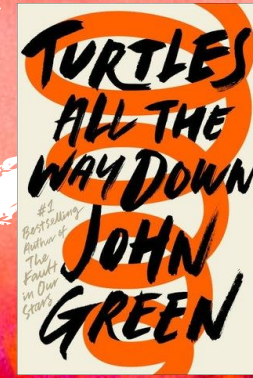
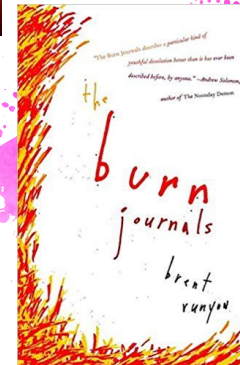
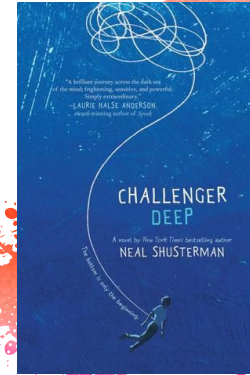
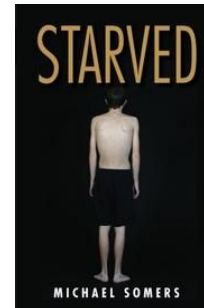
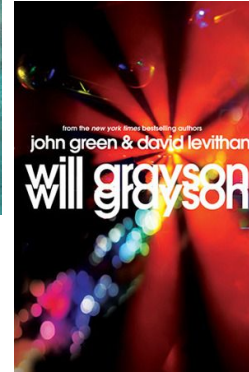
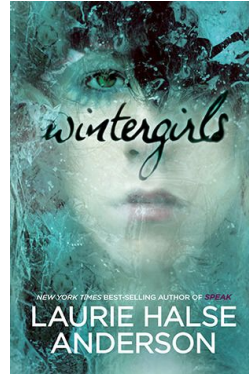
Lisa, Bright and Dark by John Neufeld

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey

Starved by Michael Somers

It's Kind of a Funny Story by Ned Vizzini

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter by Erika L Sanchez



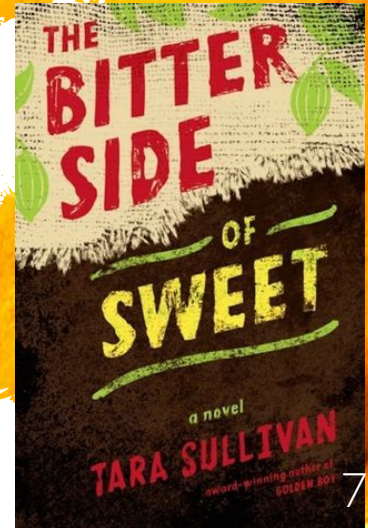
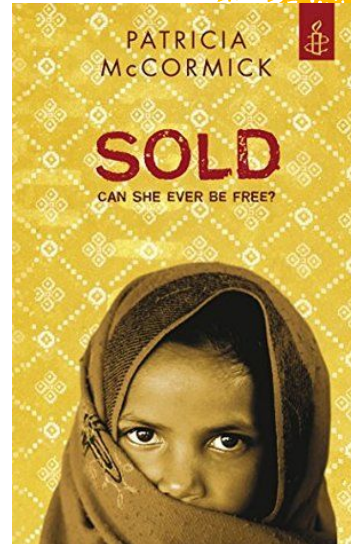
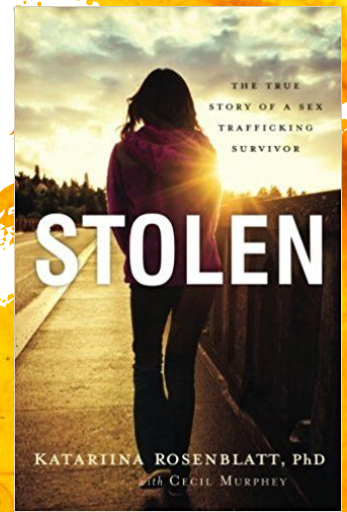
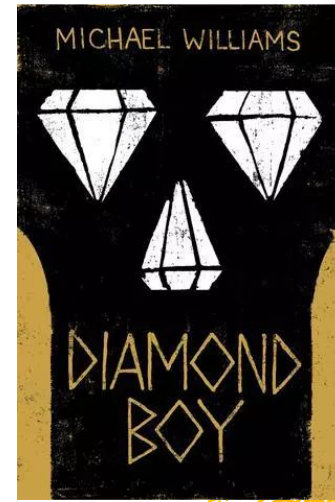
Book Options - Modern Slavery

Sold by Patricia McCormick

Diamond Boy by Michael Williams

Stolen by Katariina Rosenblatt

Bitter Side of Sweet by Tara Sullivan



Book Options - Justice, Punishment, Race

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Dear Martin by Nic Stone

How It Went Down by Kekla Magoon

When I was the Greatest by Jason Reynolds

Always Running by Luis Rodriguez

All American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely

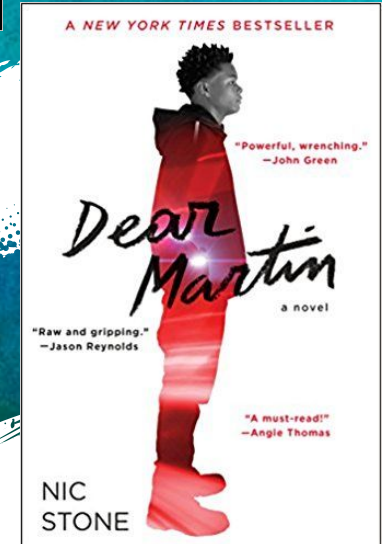
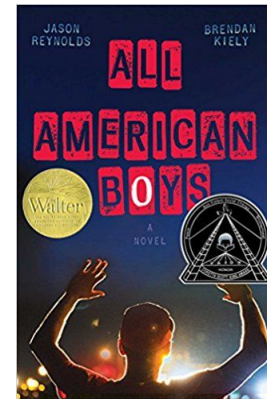
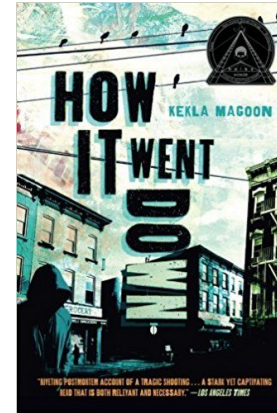
Monster by Walter Dean Myers

Scorpions by Walter Dean Myers

The Juvie Three by Gordon Korman

Lockdown by Walter Dean Myers

Snitch by Allison Van Diepen



Book Options - Drug Use/Addiction

Dope Sick by Walter Dean Myers

A Piece of Cake: A Memoir by Cupcake Brown

Far From You by Tess Sharpe

Lifeline by Abbey Lee Nash

Crank by Ellen Hopkins

Go Ask Alice by Beatrice Sparks

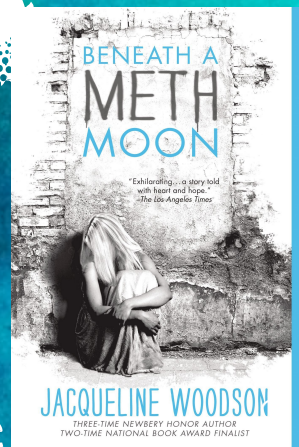
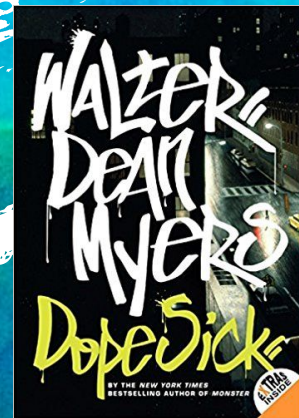
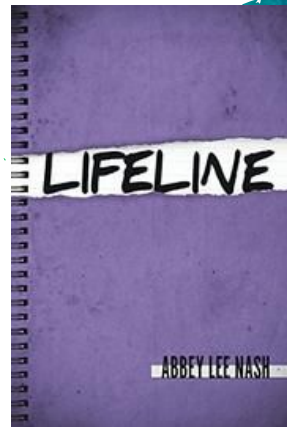
Smack by Melvin Burgess

Tweak: Growing Up on Methamphetamines by Nic Sheff

Beneath a Meth Moon by Jacqueline Woodson

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter by Erika L Sanchez

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas



Discussion Questions

How do the characters in your novel treat the social issue topic?

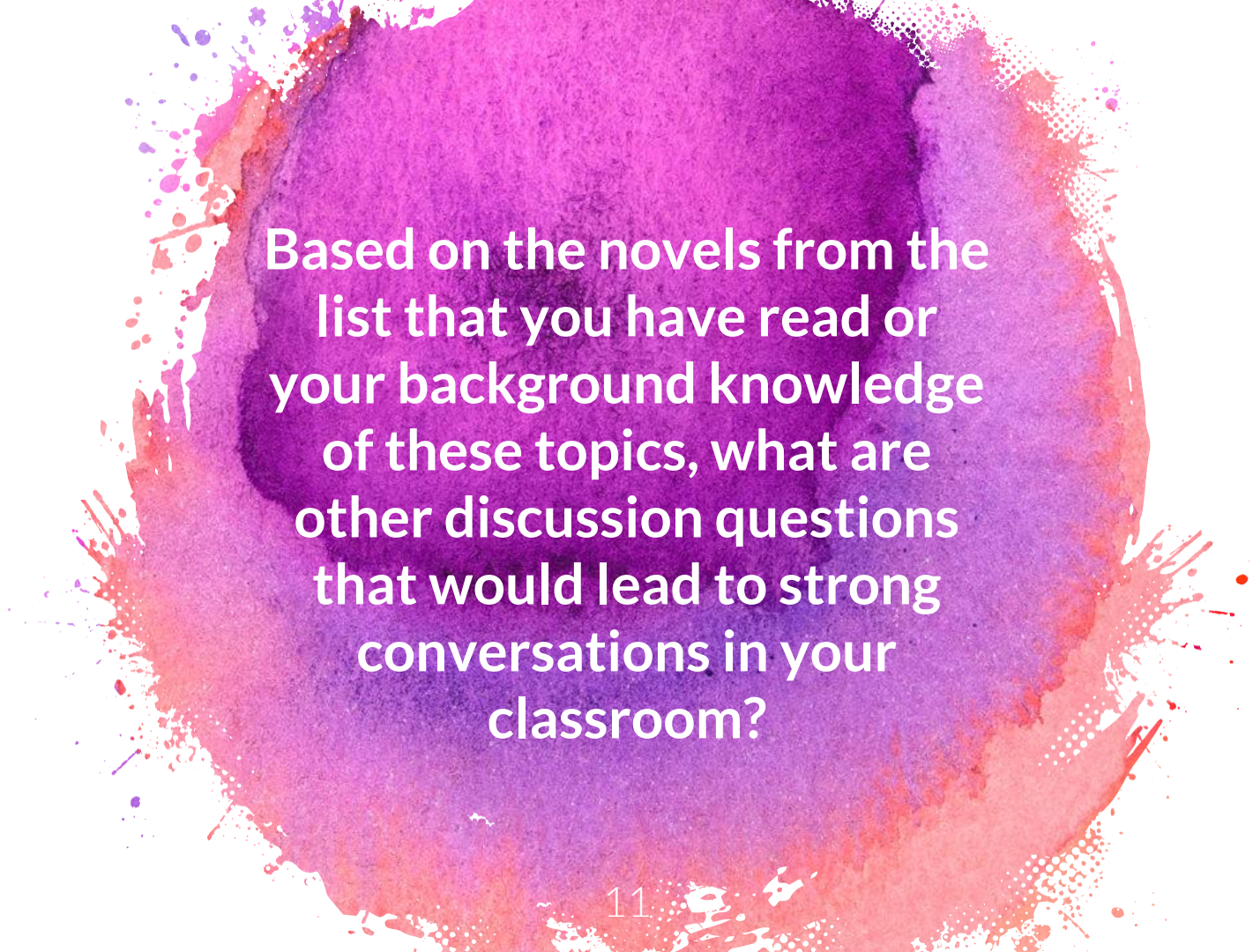
Is there a stigma in our society in regards to the topic of your novel? What is that stigma?

What would you do if you were in the character's situation - the same thing or something different?

How does the character's background or environment affect the way that they treat the conflict in the novel?

Why do you think the author chose to present the topic in this fashion?

Discuss your novel in comparison to the other novels being read in your group. How are the answers to these questions the same or different in each novel?



Based on the novels from the list that you have read or your background knowledge of these topics, what are other discussion questions that would lead to strong conversations in your classroom?

Formative Assessments

“Journal Entries” - Students take part in a quick write, journal-style entry about what they have read since their last writing session and/or posted discussion question (post on board, online/Canvas, etc)

News Articles - Provide groups with news articles about their topic or have students search for a recent and relevant article about the topic; students can write about the connections between the article and their novel or annotate the article with connections

Exit Slips - Students can quickly jot down information on their way out of the room: summarize what they read, offer a solution to the issue, make a connection, share their emotional response based on their reading

Small Group Discussions - Students discuss their novels and the issues in their own established groups. Students can also rearrange and discuss their novel and topic with students from other groups.

Final Project - Culminating Activities

Project Assignment Sheet

1. Research a specific social justice issue to understand the history, progress, and future of the issue
 - a. Students completed their own research about the social issue
 - b. Students make connections between their novel and the information they find (considering aspects like time period, changes in society over time, region, etc)
2. Write a properly cited research outline
 - a. This replaced a full research paper due to time constraints; could easily be adapted into a research paper
 - b. Still included research skills and use of MLA format
3. Give a presentation to inform and inspire others to take action
 - a. Uses public speaking skills
 - b. **Future goal:** turn this into more of an academic service learning opportunity where students could volunteer, host a fundraiser, find local groups that focus on these issues, team up with groups in the area, **TAKE ACTION**

Standards Met in Final Project:

Reading Literature

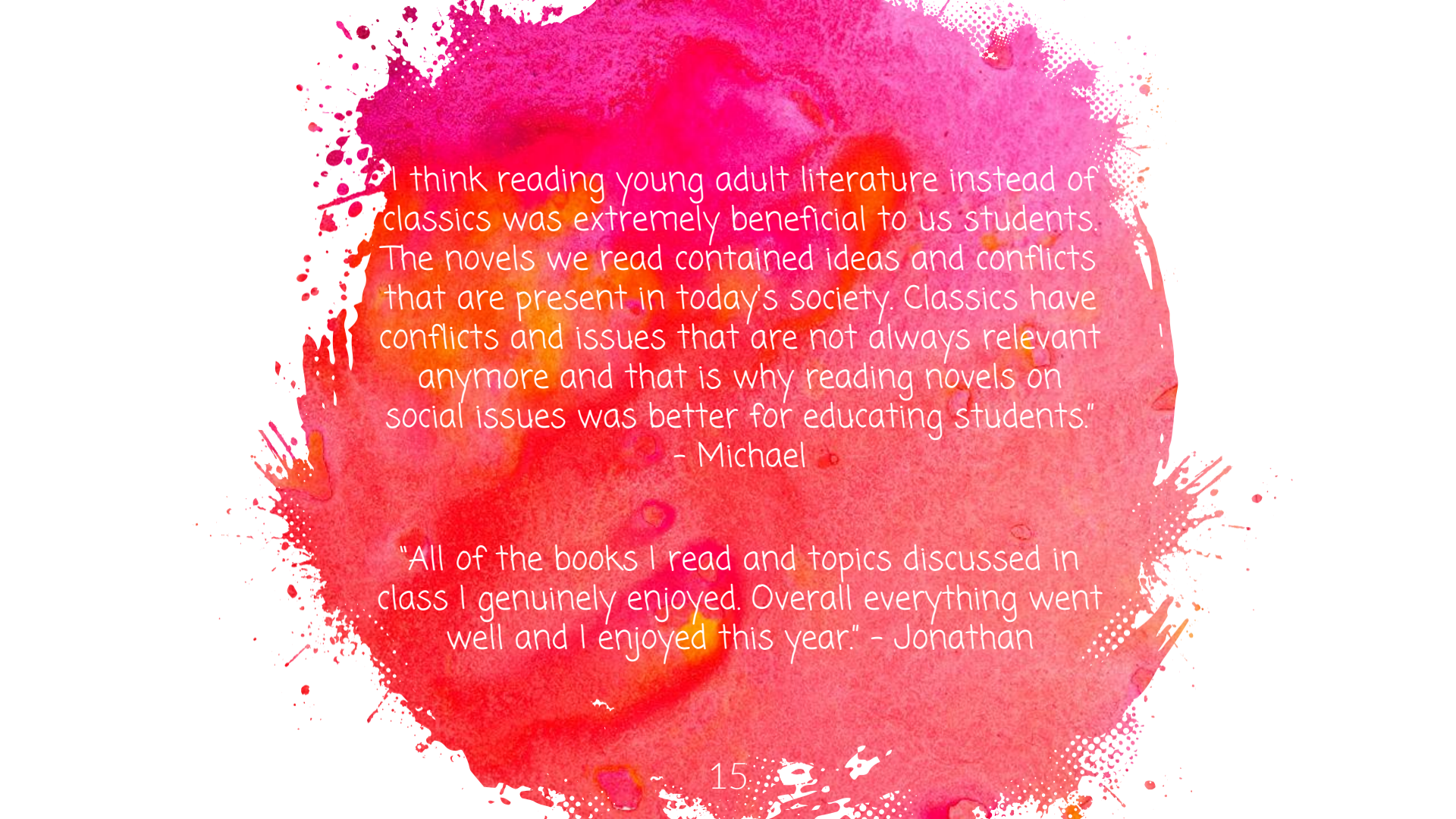
RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

Speaking and Listening

SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

A large, vibrant pink watercolor splash serves as the background for the text. The splash is irregular and textured, with various shades of pink and magenta. It has a soft, painterly quality with visible brushstrokes and some darker, more saturated areas. The splash is centered on the page and extends towards the edges, creating a dynamic and artistic feel.

"I think reading young adult literature instead of classics was extremely beneficial to us students. The novels we read contained ideas and conflicts that are present in today's society. Classics have conflicts and issues that are not always relevant anymore and that is why reading novels on social issues was better for educating students."

- Michael

"All of the books I read and topics discussed in class I genuinely enjoyed. Overall everything went well and I enjoyed this year." - Jonathan

How can you make this work?

Books are expensive! I use local resources to help me get copies of books for my students (especially since there are rarely more than 1-2 reading the same novel at the same time):

- Area public libraries
 - Interlibrary loan systems
- School library
- Overdrive/library ebooks
- My personal collection
- Colleagues with large classroom libraries

My other advice for getting started:

- Use novels from other classes
- Take it slowly and introduce a new topic each year rather than all at once
- Don't offer a ton of options at first and build your personal library as you read the choices
- Ask for help and suggestions! Twitter has become my favorite PD!



Discuss with your neighbor or group:

- What pieces of this unit would fit well into your curriculum?
- What other ideas do you have for formative assessments with this unit?
- What obstacles stand in the way of implementing all or some of these YA options in your classroom?
- How could you take what is created here and expand it to better meet the needs in your own classroom and curriculum?



Thanks! Any questions?

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