

Dare to Open This Book: Engaging with Critical Literacy in

Elementary Book Clubs

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Text Choice

- *Intentional* text choices when engaging with critical literacy
- Engagement and motivation linked with text choices leading to cognitive engagement and learning (Lapp & Fisher, 2009)
- Pre-service teachers and pre-service librarians can be hesitant to introduce "controversial" texts with students. Kimmel & Hartsfield (2019) present four practical tenets of how to utilize critical literacy texts
 1. Integrate texts based on literary quality and curricula connections to prepare PST and PSL for potential challenges
 2. Developing relationships with students can highlight the disservice being done by not exposing them to varied texts
 3. Advising students how to respond to text and content presented in such books

Resources for Text Choice Support

- Online Resources
 - <http://socialjusticebooks.org/sources/>
 - <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/reading-diversity>
 - <http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp>
 - <https://www.diversefutures.net/resources.html>
- Project LIT Program
 - "Project LIT Community — a grassroots network of book groups that aims to get students excited about reading by highlighting diverse, high-interest, culturally relevant books"

<https://sites.google.com/view/critical-literacy-book-clubs/home>

What is critical literacy?

*Why do we need this?

- ✧ Redistributive justice
- ✧ Recognitive justice (Luke & Woods, 2009)

Research Question

How to support engagement with critical literacy in elementary school book clubs?

Research



- ✧ Holland et. al. (1998)-book clubs as a figured world with books functioning as the pivot
- ✧ Kimmel & Hartsfield (2019)-pre-service teacher/librarian hesitation in utilizing critical literacy due to talking about racial, SES, gender or additional injustices
- ✧ Critical literacy practices (Gatto, 2013)
 - ✧ Attentive
 - ✧ Connective
 - ✧ Disruptive
- ✧ Text choice linked to motivation (Lapp & Fisher, 2009)

Problem of Practice

- ✧ Facilitation versus student agency when using discussion frameworks in small group discussions
- ✧ Text choice (how to choose the *right* book?), how to choose texts in a practical sense to address student interest and highlight social issues
- ✧ Context of the book club, understanding the context of Waverly-Belmont in terms of student demographics and age (3rd/4th grade)
- ✧ Sustainability, continuing the book club throughout the year, across a variety of texts



Observations

Context

- Waverly-Belmont Elementary School-*Bulldog Book Club*
- ✧ Who is the learner? Book Club Facilitator (*Librarian*)
 - ✧ Small group discussions, with one adult (educator or parent) per group
 - ✧ Texts chosen over the summer for the entire year
 - ✧ Weekly discussion framework used