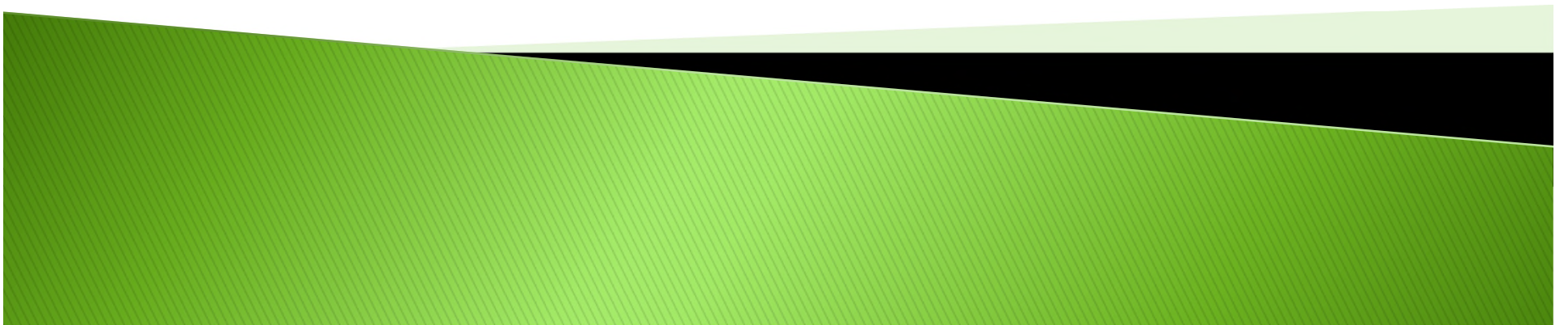Chapter Two

Bringing Young Adults and Literature Together

Focus Questions

- What criteria should teachers and librarians use in selecting appropriate literature for young adults?

- What professional resources and techniques can they use to select appropriate literature?

- How can they support the development of young adults' appreciation for literature?

- How can teachers organize instruction so that diverse groups of students can engage successfully with a wide range of literature?

Your Perspective

- What are your memories of the books you were assigned to read in school?

- Did you have any choice in what you read?

- How did those experiences influence your interest in reading?

- How will those experiences shape your reading assignments with your own students?

When Selecting Literature for Young Adults . . .

▸ It should have developmental, social, and literary significance.

Developmental Significance

Social Significance

Literary Significance

Developmental Significance

- Developmentally significant literature allows readers to:
    - Explore their own identities
    - Reflect on their feelings and values
    - Consider their relationship with others
- Examples: Contemporary "problem" novels, and literature such as *The Diary of a Young Girl.*

Reading Lists—to Help with Choosing Books with Developmental Significance

- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) Teens' Top Ten and the IRA's Young Adults' Choices

- YALSA's Alex Award

- YALSA's Quick Picks for Reluctant Young Adult Readers

Social Significance

▶ Literature may offer perspectives that contrast and conflict with readers' own experiences.

▶ A socially significant work can:

- Draw attention to issues of power and powerlessness
- Help readers to identify ways of promoting justice and equity
- Engage readers emotionally in ways that can help them take action

Book Awards—to Help with Choosing Books with Social Significance

- The Coretta Scott King Book Award
- The Schneider Family Book Award
- Notable Books for a Global Society
- The Stonewall Children's and Young Adult Literature Award

Literary Significance

- Literature can be part of a society's cultural heritage—its literary canon—with artistry, characters, and themes that transcend a particular era.
- A work with literary significance can:
  - Demonstrate the literary devices/language of exemplary writing
  - Facilitate the study of authors
  - Exemplify trends and influences

Book Awards—to Help with Choosing Books with Literary Significance

- The Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature

- The Newbery Medal

- The National Book Award for Young People's Literature

Stages of Literary Appreciation

- Unconscious delight
- Self-conscious development
- Conscious delight

Influences on Literary Appreciation

- Time spent reading
- Attitudes toward reading:
  - Both one's own and family's attitudes
- Knowledge of the world
- Teachers

Bringing Students and Literature Together

- The skill and desire to read and to develop as readers:
  - Acquire vocabulary
  - Learn strategies for deriving meaning
  - Gain experience with a range of literary genres and styles

- Literacy routine:
  - A pattern of materials, procedures, and activities that fit together
  - Promotes a particular kind of classroom interaction with literature

Overview of Literacy Routines

LITERACY ROUTINE	PURPOSES	TEACHER ROLES	STAGES OF APPRECIATION	KEY SELECTION CRITERIA
Teacher read-aloud	• Explore new genres and authors • Model fluency • Guide comprehension • Introduce vocabulary • Build interest in reading	• Model fluency and comprehension • Lead text discussions • Introduce vocabulary	• Unconscious delight • Self-conscious development	• Developmental significance • Literary/social significance
Guided literature study	• Read aesthetically from classic and contemporary literary texts • Learn terms and tools of literary analysis • Acquire new vocabulary	• Guide discussions about meanings within texts and between texts • Introduce concepts of literary analysis • Give background knowledge • Teach vocabulary	• Self-conscious development • Conscious delight	• Literary significance • Social or developmental significance
Literature circles	• Gain independence and experience • Acquire new vocabulary • Develop literary tastes	• Establish groups and procedures • Monitor text discussions	• Unconscious delight • Self-conscious development • Conscious delight	• Developmental, literary significance
Reading workshop	• Gain independence and experience • Acquire new vocabulary and "book language" • Develop favorable attitudes	• Establish procedures • Monitor text discussions	• Unconscious delight • Self-conscious development	• Developmental significance • Social significance
Unit-centered reading	• Read literature to explore a topic or theme • Learn new vocabulary • Develop concepts and attitudes	• Identify topics and themes for study • Make curriculum connections	• Unconscious delight • Self-conscious development • Conscious delight	• Social significance • Literary significance

Teacher Read-Alouds

- Can be effective for:
  - Modeling fluent reading
  - Providing a satisfying communal experience with literature
- Should not be passive
- Mediated listening–thinking activity (ML–TA)
  - Students make predictions and connections

Guided Literature Study

- High degree of teacher oversight and control

- Direct instruction and well-developed scaffolding or support

- Literary significance and conscious appreciation of literature

Unit-Centered Literacy Routines

- Connections among texts
  - Genre units
  - Author studies
  - Explorations of literary themes
- Could include a wide range of material
  - Fiction, nonfiction, movies, and informational texts
- Could be an interdisciplinary (integrated or thematic) unit

Literature Circles

- Students carry on discussions about books that they have chosen

- Analysis grows out of students' reflections and discussions rather than following a formal pattern.

- Students prepare ahead of time so they can participate.
  - Entries in a reading log or journal

Reading Workshop

- Involves student choice and significant time in class to read silently
- Promotes an environment for developing or sustaining unconscious delight
- May include a book talk

Book Talk

- A brief introduction to a work that aims to entice readers
- A way for the talker to share personal interpretations and evaluations with potential readers
- Three key elements:
  1. Hook
  2. Content
  3. Cliffhanger

Tools/Resources to Bring Students and Literature Together

- Interest surveys
- Readability
- Book sampling:
  - Book pass
  - Book sort

- Outside recommendations:
  - Accelerated Reader
    www.arbookfind.com
  - Scholastic Book Wizard
    www.scholastic.com/bookwizard/
  - Young Adult Book Reviews
    http://youngadultbookreviews.com
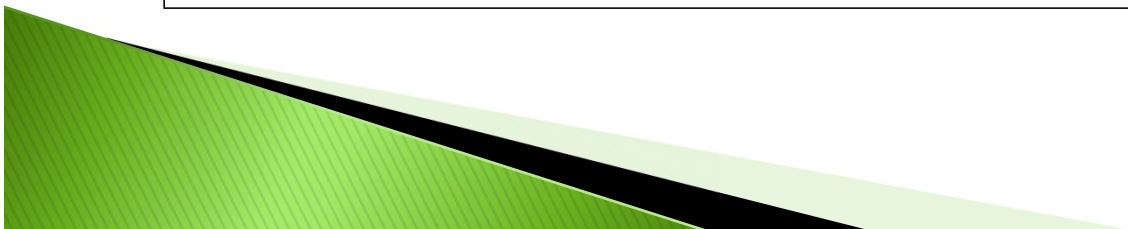 - Young Adult Books Central
    www.yabookscentral.com

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

- Challenge: An attempt to remove or restrict materials

- Censorship: Removing a work or restricting access to it

Questions:
- Should individuals have the basic right to read anything they want to?
- Should society shield young readers from violent or hateful materials?

Recommendations for Helping Teachers Select Literature

▸ Talk with others (teachers, librarians, etc.)

▸ Consider how the work will be incorporated into the curriculum

▸ Use professional resources and read reviews

▸ Be respectful of parents and community members

▸ Discuss the motives and consequences of censorship with students

▸ Establish a policy for any inquiry or challenge