

Attitude Adjustment: Using YAL to Encourage Social Justice

Sat, Jul 18, 2015: 4:45 PM - 5:45 PM

01109

Panel

America's Center St. Louis

Room: 152

Capacity: 75

Clock hours: 1

The presenters suggest a series of texts that have the potential to spark discussion in areas of social equity, along with an action research methodology for analyzing the interplay between readers and text. Data will be presented that offers the power of these texts to change student perceptions about social justice issues. Participants will be encouraged to contribute their own options and experiences with including social justice and YAL with teen readers. A bibliography will be provided.

Methods

This session will focus on using young adult literature to facilitate change in beliefs or perceptions related to varied social issues confronting society. Yet, in this age of accountability, the opportunities to engage readers with texts that can change lives has perhaps become ever more difficult. Berman (1997) defines social responsibility: "A personal investment in the well-being of people and the planet" (p. 15). Using YAL offers a meaningful and enjoyable method for engaging students to understand and assume a sense of social responsibility. A myriad of possibilities exists in YAL texts where there are moral and ethical questions that can be discussed and debated.

The presenters will suggest texts that have the potential to spark discussion in areas of social equity, along with methods of analyzing the interplay between readers and text. Pre-service teachers read *Mexican White Boy* (de la Peña, 2008), *It's Our Prom (So Deal with It)* (Peters, 2012), *In the Name of God* (Jolin, 2007), and *Moon at Nine* (Ellis, 2014); pre-service teachers in either a course in adolescent literature or English methods read the book chosen for that semester. Their perceptions about the social issue faced in each were analyzed pre- and post-reading. The methodology for analyzing changed attitudes through reading YAL will be demonstrated so that it can be replicated in classrooms at any level. Themes addressed include building empathy and caring, living a socially responsible life, envisioning a better world, understanding the implications of power, exploring issues of culture and prejudice, and investigating violence. Participants will be invited to share to their experiences with combining social justice, YAL, and teen readers.

As educators, we need to help students understand that young adult literature books offers insights that can help us better understand ourselves, who we are, and what we might become.

Panelist

Judith Hayn, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Co-Presenter(s)

Dr. Karina R. Clemmons, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Heather Olvey, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Age Levels

Ages 15-18