STAGE IMPROVED NARRATIVES:
A STUDY OF WAYS TO HAVE DISCOURSE ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES
USING MULTI-DISCIPLINARY COURSE CONTENT TO IMPROVE ACADEMIC
ENGAGEMENT

A Project

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by

Shani J. Ellington

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Graduate and Professional Studies in Education
Abstract

of

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Statement of the Problem

In K-12 educational institutions, educators are dedicated to teaching students how
to be active citizens in this democracy. However, while educators do their best to teach
to the standards and prepare students for the rigors of academia, they sometimes shy
away from parts of curricular materials and subsequent instruction, or generally exclude
them in teaching. Rather than merely lecturing to students in a banking model approach,
this project suggests unconventional teaching styles focusing on lesson plans with
problematized, generative, and unconventional themes. Teaching controversial subject
matter can be made into teachable moments that will expand the teachers’ and students’
knowledge, perspectives, and skill sets. The project begins with an example of
controversial subject matter introduced in a classroom improperly in that it was not used
to maximize students’ educational experience. A discussion continues bridging the idea
of constructive uses of teachable moments and instructional methodology. The project
ends with a presentation on ImprovEd with quotes and feedback from graduate students about the inclusion of different approaches and ImprovEd in classroom instruction.

Sources of Information

The project was created using the book *Teachers Act Up!* by M. Cahnmann-Taylor and M. Souto-Manning (2010), which highlighted theories from Augusto Boal’s *Theatre of the Oppressed* and Paulo Friere’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Also, the American Library Association (ALA) and *Banned books: Challenging our freedom to read* by Doyle (2007) were referenced in the development of the project. The author created lesson plans and developed a matrix with detailed information about a selection of banned and challenged books as well as controversial material. Conversations about banned books and challenged materials are integrated into the text to connect the readers with techniques for increased problem solving, critical analysis, and impactful democratic citizenship.

Conclusion Reached

The author came across many articles supporting direct confrontation of controversial subject matter in the classroom with students. Disposable crutches such as using music as an instructional tool are discussed in relationship to student learning in the classroom. The suggestions in ImprovEd will assist teachers to better facilitate discussions and transform their classrooms into a safe space for controversial issues to be explored further. The project advocates for educators to become compelled to integrate controversial materials and banned books into the classroom. Underneath the facilitation
of an informed and responsible adult with purposeful lesson planning, the author believes ImprovEd or modifications of the material found within the project will be impactful for teachers and students alike.

........................................, Committee Chair
Lita Lambating, Ph.D.

........................................
Date
DEDICATION

It truly takes a village. I realized my efforts are not in vain and come out better when I do them with others. This is dedicated to my family who supported me verbally as well as financially when I needed their assistance. To the faculty and staff: in big and small ways you helped me across the finish line to obtain my Master’s degree. Additionally, I would like to thank my advisor who was able to evaluate my circumstances and guide me through this process. I realized as I neared completion of this project that finishing my thesis was a process that required the input of experts and professionals who would help mold my work into a finished product and culminating experience that I would be proud of. I thank you all for your assistance. Finishing means the world to me.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

It was in 1995 before the familiar sound of the late bell had rung. In an urgent manner, the economics teacher walked into the class as the other students and I prepared for our early afternoon instruction. He routinely settled into the teacher’s space, flipping through his attendance book and rifling through papers. Shortly after, he quickly announced to the class there would be a deviation in our regular activities. The teacher, who I call W., informed us that later in the class, he would turn on the television to see the verdict of a case he had been following. It was a murder trial; I assume all of us in the class had heard about it previously from the news coverage about it. In the years following, we would all know the impact stemming from the verdict handed down that day. In what is presently infamous for its dramatic and controversial underpinnings as much as the felonious acts committed, the ripple effect that ensued would be remembered as one of the most controversial outcomes in recent U.S. history.

The time seemed to pass quickly before W. headed over to the television. Although I remember the moment he turned the television on, as I reflect back on it, I do not remember much else being discussed beforehand. I remember looking at the television scanning the faces gathered inside the courtroom to see the defendant O.J. Simpson, his lawyer Johnny Cochran, and prosecutors Chris Darden and Marsha Clark among the other participants involved in the historically sensational media-celebrated, legal event. O.J. “The Juice” Simpson sat as still as a boulder, awaiting the impending
verdict. He was being tried for the double murder of his estranged wife Nicole Brown and Ronald Goldman, in what was evidently considered a crime of “passion.”

Finally, the time came when the verdict was read for the court, the viewers, and our class. He was found not guilty. Before we could see the relief of being exonerated spread over Simpson’s face, W. smacked the power button to off, visually incensed with frustration over the outcome. I felt an overwhelming discomfort grip me. We had witnessed an outburst which in my eyes could only be compared to a toddler having a temper tantrum. Here, this usually poised, slightly disconnected instructor had thrown caution to the wind, almost as if he were not aware we were present. Red-faced, he begrudgingly went through the motions of the day. But, I do not remember much about the details following the outburst.

What I do remember is the awkwardness of the moment. The teacher had come out of character by becoming too agitated to focus on the other activities that should have been scheduled for us. I was young and inexperienced in the ways of the “real” world. I did not understand the ramifications of the largely anticipated verdict or why he was so invested in the trial that his emotions could not be contained. Why had he not considered ways to integrate that event into our class instead of choosing to inadvertently leave this impression of him and his beliefs on our minds, an empty vacuum in an otherwise safe subject area and space. For those of us ethnic minorities of the same persuasion of O.J. Simpson, that moment left an indelible mark of the status of race relations, which snuck into our safe classroom haven in the most unexpected of ways.
The classroom should be a safe place where kids can mold and project their visions of how they see themselves in the world. Ethnic minorities, historically disenfranchised, or disengaged students’ lack of academic success are often displaying symptoms of a wider issue. Even within compulsory standards-driven curricula, efforts can be made that can strategically steer students in directions that will lead them down the path to become above par critical thinkers ushering ground-breaking realizations or develop them into becoming lifelong learners. On a stage, set with academically credentialed professionals and informative curriculum, it is all the more important to reinforce and engage students to use their diverse backgrounds to develop an array of detailed positive images and roles they can play.

The censorship of ideas found in controversial yet relevant resources in many ways represents new worlds to which underrepresented students can connect (Doyle, 2007). This imagery has the potential to connect minority communities to avenues that will increase academic performance as well as enhance integrated curriculum but has not yet reached its full potential. In a study looking at curriculum integration, Nathalie Gehrke (1998) wrote about integrating and publishing affirming content. Students’ interests often evolve around things to which they can relate, they find exciting, or with which they can engage (Carpenter & Weathers, 2012). Systematic objections to the inclusion of interesting and engaging material further widens the gulf between students and affirming content. Affirming content can involve materials with which students can
connect based on some point of reference with which they themselves identify (Gehrke, 1998).

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project was to suggest ways in which teachers can dialogue with their students about sensitive and sometimes sensational or controversial subject matter within the classroom. This project offers materials that have been censored, banned, or challenged to use as curricula to encourage teachable moments for deeper student engagement with information relevant to their experiences.

Statement of Problem

The problem is teachers do not feel comfortable teaching challenged, banned, or targeted for censorship (Fine, 1987), or they do not have such materials readily accessible. It is for a variety of reasons such materials may be deemed inappropriate for K-12 school-aged students; hence, this project seeks to take a closer look at the reasons these materials have been excluded (Fine, 1987). The guide formulated by this project can be used to address primary school-aged curriculum but particularly middle and high school students.

Due to the censorship of controversial materials, teachers often do not take the initiative to address certain issues students encounter in their development into young adults. The lack of initiative may be due to educators having to create lesson plans that will prepare students for standardized tests and mandated curricula. The Fair Education Act, to take effect in 2014, seeks to address this problem by fostering a more accurate
account of disabled individuals, ethnic, and sexual minorities in textbooks and related materials. Therefore, this project sought to offer a way to better prepare students for functioning in society by having more accurate representations of the people who live among them and have preceded them. An example of these types of materials is curricula including the Trayvon Martin incident and case that occurred in 2012. Students who discuss the case and trial in classrooms can draw parallels between their own lives and that of Trayvon's as well as issues of race, justice, law enforcement, and the media (Carpenter & Weathers, 2012). Talking about current events of a controversial nature can reinforce materials and topics that have already been covered and allow opportunities for student engagement through affirming content.

**Definition of Terms**

*Cultural capital*

Referring to Pierre Bourdieu’s concept that different forms of cultural knowledge, such as language, modes of social interaction, and meaning are hierarchically valued in society (Bourdieu, 1993).

*Cultural nationalism*

Citizens of the world may have the same ethnic backgrounds but subscribe to a cultural identity specific to a national affiliation. The national component may superordinate their national identity or vice versa (Bourdieu, 1993).
Cultural reproductions

Critical social theorists argue that dominant ideologies and knowledge are built into social institutions that both privilege and exclude particular perspectives, voices, authorities, and representations. Within theories of cultural reproduction, schools, teachers, and curricula are viewed as mechanisms of ideological control that work to reproduce and maintain dominant beliefs, values, norms, and oppressive practices (Bourdieu, 1993).

Disposable Crutch

Something that can be thrown away or set aside after its use has been fulfilled (i.e., Math Acronym: SOHCAHTOA) (Birtel, Chilcot, & Guggenheim, 2010).

Epic Environment

A scenario in which the teacher has all the resources and accommodations necessary for a thriving learning experience and in which each student is able to achieve at an elevated level (Khan, 2012).

Integrated Curriculum

Forms of curriculum in which student learning activities are built, less with concern for delineating disciplinary boundaries around kinds of learning and more with the notion of helping students recognize or create their own learning (Gehrke, 1998).
Intersectionality

A feminist sociological theory to analyze how social and cultural categories intertwine.

Santa Clausification

Cornel West coined the phrase meaning that act of softening and co-opting (corporatizing) of an important figure, political movement or significant event, e.g., MLK, Jr.

Telecratic

A telecratic society is one, such as the U.S. society, in which the electronic media have an enormous influence on the construction of meaning, identity, and social relations (that is, a media-oriented society).

Underground Railroad

Coined America’s first Civil Rights Movement and thought by the status quo to be radical abolitionist activity, the Underground Railroad navigated many blacks in America to freed states (Bordewich, 2012).

Methodology

The challenges and frustrations of working in an educational institution can be great not only for the educator but for the students as well. This multi-dimensional problem is both simplified and complicated through the project. The project uses the protagonist and antagonist application, which was introduced by founders of the Theater of the Oppressed, and the strategies can be applied for problem-solving scenarios found
within banned books and controversial materials. The *Theater of the Oppressed* was started by Augusto Boal (as cited in Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010) as a means to simplify the roles of the oppressive scenarios and complicate them through the documenting of what occurs during the rehearsals (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010). This approach is suggested by the researcher and detailed in the guide. With respect to this project, the students are interchangeably the spectators, i.e., spectators and actors, and they and the banned book are selected for universally applied scene reenactment generalizable to specific experiences in their lives. The goal of this scene reenactment application is for the students and educators to begin to take power over their own lives and circumstances to enrich and improve them; thus, the project’s supplementary guide is called ImprovED.

The researcher suggests student participation and engagement will increase while problem solving discussions occur during the portrayal of characters using the protagonist and antagonist techniques as described in *Teachers Act Up! Creating Multicultural Learning Communities through Theater* during Forum Theatre's scene reenactment (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 30). Forum Theatre is a “three-part narrative structure detailing dramatic tensions between protagonists and antagonists,” “embody[ing] scripts to bring about change in the dramatic outcome to advantage the protagonist” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 30). ImprovED uses language arts tools found in *Teachers Act Up! Creating Multicultural Learning Communities through Theater* and banned books for the scene improvisation to
stage rehearsals for the student participants. As a transformative process for program participants and merging two ideas into one succinct application, the ImprovED portion should be used at the discretion of the educator facilitating the process.

The project ImprovED is a supplemental guide utilizing materials written about and created with controversial subject matter and content. For the purposes of this study, the focus mostly falls upon middle and secondary school students, their interests, experiences, and the challenges they encounter by referencing the content in the selected banned books. It is my position that teachers must acknowledge and realize students do not live inside a bubble, and core curriculum and standards must be more than rote memorization and regurgitation whereby the approach modeled after the *Theater of the Oppressed* will be encouraged as a means to give educators options in the classroom. To educators’ dismay and delight, student observations are more far reaching than some educators at times care to consider and the banned books suggested in the guide should serve as a reference point for educators to depersonalize sensitive issues and have fun while portraying characters in the scenes (Hess, 2011). Hence, educators will be given alternative ways of connecting with students through engaging and thought provoking materials found in censored materials, which students may feel, via scene reenactment, mirror their feelings or experiences.

**Limitations**

One of the limitations of the project is the selection of materials representing the broader themes that are of controversial nature is small. Also, since the supplemental
portion of the project is to be used in conjunction with core course subject matter, it will not be utilized until 2014 at the discretion of educators in compliance with the Fair Education Act. Another limitation is that most of the material reviewed is for junior high and high school level students. Since there will not be a requirement to adhere to the guidelines of the Fair Education Act, implementation will be at the discretion of the educator and may not be widely replicated.

Summary

If we follow our intuitive responses to students when planning lesson plans or integrating curriculum, the areas we often believe will most impact the students will sometimes lead us to explore areas that are inconvenient for us (Gehreke, 1998). In short, teachers may at times be uncomfortable with discussing ideas with their students, but that may be less to do with imbedded controversy and more to do with our insufficient preparedness. Underneath the Fair Education Act there will be a concerted effort to prepare students through having a holistic approach to social sciences and social justice by intentionally looking at controversial materials as detailed in the project as well as adhering to the inclusions of social movements, events, and the history of minority populations such as the LGBT and disabled communities. Since banned books have documentation justifying their exclusion, it will serve as a starting point to discuss the controversial nature of the materials.

In California, AB 2348 was recently signed to allow flexibility with regard to the family planning options and the receipt of contraceptives from medical professionals.
Interestingly enough, during the Republican-led congressional administration, efforts to educate young people on masturbation to prevent teen pregnancy were often stifled or regarded hostilely to the extent of people having forced resignations from their appointments (Cannon, 1994). Change and growth is part of what makes the democratic process in the U.S. admired and revered by people domestically and abroad (Hess, 2011). There will be further discussion on what makes SB 48 so necessary to historical accuracy in schools as well as the influences of popular cultural on changing our operating paradigms, pushing boundaries, and breaking barriers.

**Organization of Remaining Chapters**

The literature review in Chapter 2 contains a discussion of the challenged, banned, and censored materials as well as advantageous teaching strategies for educators to apply, and the reasons for utilizing the chosen content for the project. Chapter 3 describes the methods used to create the project, beginning with an overview and followed by the methods, procedures, and law applicable to the project. Chapter 4 is a discussion of the findings of the project and the results of how California standards will be applied in the project, culminating with conclusions detailing whether the aims were reached and recommendations. ImprovED, the project, is located in the appendix.
Chapter 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The reviewed literature demonstrated a need for curricular materials dealing with controversial matters for the sake of decreasing students’ feelings of marginalization. It offered a history of common themes denied in classrooms in the U.S. for decades, even centuries, and the detriments on individuals. The first section of this chapter further explains the situation in W.’s class and the ramifications to adolescents. The second section, Controversy in Education, describes how controversy has, in the past, limitedly existed in education through the practices of three feminist educators and includes research on dominant cultural teaching practices. The third section describes specific banned or censored materials along with why some materials are banned or censored because if one is to teach the controversial materials fully to students, it is crucial to understand why they are controversial. Different reasons for and methods of integrating controversial subject matter into current curriculum are provided next and are broken down into subsections of Art, Marginalized Beliefs, and Music. A New Pedagogy provides the State Standards followed in the utilization of the controversial materials, as well as educating beyond the standards. Finally, Taking Action and the Purging Process illustrates occurrences when people have gone too far in being controversial and illustrates ways to keep the curriculum reigned in so it will not be tossed out as extremist.
Introduction

Recall, the experience regarding W.’s reaction in Chapter 1. As one of several African American students in a class with a predominately white enrollment, seeing the dramas unfold that day still stands out as an example of the intense and unresolved race relations characterized in this nation. It led to several questions, such as whether the outcome of one trial compares to historical abuses that are overlooked and if the festering outrage of a people or a community should be portrayed in a professional environment. What he believed to be an unfavorable or unjust decision overshadowed the everyday, lived experiences of students within and outside that classroom. It is advised teachers keep potentially inflammatory topics under close adherence to classroom behavioral expectations guided by pre-established rules and regulations (see “Taking Action and the Purging Process” later in this chapter). Through this depiction of what happened in the classroom with W., teachers should have a clearer idea of what behavior should be avoided.

Therein lies the controversy. On one hand, the media frenzy surrounding the case concluded with a verdict many people believe to this day was unjust. Adding to that controversy, a teacher demonstrated bad judgment by creating a scenario that could shun, cause fear, or leave unanswered questions in the class. In this instance, it was not enough that the media in many ways had already condemned the accused; this was obvious from the shock of the not guilty verdict that reverberated well beyond the room and continues to resonate. It is the shock value in the unexpected outcome that added to the
unpreparedness by W. As students, we had learned about slavery, emancipation, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights movement, and the landmark Federal decision of Brown v. Board of Education, each with talking points containing levels of controversy. Through peer and social interaction, ethnic and sexual minorities have encountered discrimination, stereotypes, bigotry, and derogatory words that we at times have internalized as well as redirected toward others. But white angst was new and rare to my teenage radar, and I still find it to be not so easily identifiable sometimes. It was a necessary justification for practicing good classroom management and showing respect for the students as well as the controversial topic being covered.

At that age, generally, there was little experience or awareness of intimate partner violence or cautionary signs of cyclical abuse and victimization in relationships. A book like The Color Purple would have served as a good example of relationship abuses, often silenced in classrooms. Brown v. Board of Education ended segregation in schools, challenging the notion of “Separate but Equal” in 1954 and occurred just 39 years before this trial and the subsequent outburst by W. Since it was a class in Economics, the amount of money spent prosecuting O.J. Simpson could have been raised as a side commentary to deflect the bias W. felt. To subdue students’ potentially questionable or negative feelings, including those of African descent, a discussion on free market and capitalistic privilege could have been planned as a presentation. But an attempt was seemingly not even made. At the dismay of this researcher, events similar to what was described above are not uncommon in classrooms throughout the U.S.
One aim of this study is to persuade educators to be deliberate and responsible about the issues presented to young and impressionable students. A part of this reasoning is that through presenting controversial issues, teachers present themselves as interpreters who could potentially impact student perception or reinforce misinformation on a matter and skew the student’s impressionable, limited knowledge of the world around him or her. It is not to imply by this statement that teachers do not already have enough to do in preparing for the activities and necessities that maintain a cohesive learning environment. Inaction is an action. Often, in attempting to be politically correct, educators lose opportunities to connect (Reid, 2009). Unfortunately, through all the distractions young minds encounter, despite how teachers might feel about a situation or the resistance students might have to discussing ideas, educators must act (Gehrke, 1998). Short of being culturally insensitive, legally compromised, or otherwise inappropriate, educators have to find innovative ways to move beyond this often self-imposed enclosure in which people often find themselves (Gehrke, 1998).

In December 2010, SB 48, also called the FAIR Education Act, was introduced and was subsequently signed by Governor Jerry Brown in 2012 to address the disparity of factual information about social and historical movements. The law looks to improve diversity in curricular selections as well as to note the contributions made by LGBT people and communities with disabilities in the U.S.; it is critical legislation. It is important that relevant and inclusive materials representing poignant moments in history and reflecting identity affirming messages for young and impressionable populations are
addressed to ensure students have received an equal opportunity to achieve success. This nation’s history was built upon conflict and riddled with controversy. In a look at the development of our educational infrastructure and social movements, it is also important to fearlessly confront hot-button issues to gain a more holistic interpretation of how we can come to grapple with contemporary issues.

Due to their belonging intersectionally to one or multiple marginalized groups, individuals may have limited or unequal access to information at K-12 academic institutions. Therefore, this project explores distinct, low-cost, widely accessible, and culturally relevant media to engage and educate large portions of the target demographic. This project sought banned and challenged books that also have been adapted to movies and topics receiving a substantial amount of media coverage. Since popular culture transmits information to the masses through entertainment outlets of different varieties and more equitable capacities, it is an important mechanism for transmitting ideology and pedagogy to re-educate historically disenfranchised and disenchanted groups (Whittle, 1997). Young learners can gain self-awareness through identity affirming messages as well as within other diverse peripheral groups of an under-represented nature. It is one of the aims that, through this project, students will learn to respect and learn from each other as well as develop tools they will retain in their adulthood. It is through entertaining new ideas to construct new pedagogy and integrating a variety of resources for classroom utilization that students might better learn concepts to elevate their engagement with the material.
Controversy and Education

Within the institutions established by white colonial patriarchy there exist freedom fighters who long for the end of mental bondage. Highlighting contemporary feminists bell hooks, Mabel McKay, and Ana Roque de Duprey, this section explores the cultural, nationalistic, ideological, and philosophical aspects to gaining a greater understanding of the alternatives to the traditional European American separatist pedagogy within modern U.S. institutions. Those who have toiled within these walls and have learned to identify the contradictions and dualities that pose a stumbling block to young learners can serve as a beacon to those who look for educational freedom and upward mobility (Henry, 1995).

The aforementioned freedom writers also serve as educators and symbols of a movement for equity through transmitting tradition and values from one generation to the next that comprise the counter-hegemonic ideology. This collective of individuals who have impacted the education system with respect to their national, tribal, gendered, and cultural identities used methodologies and strategies not test-driven, but nonetheless favoring a more integrationist stance. The trailblazers have devoted their lives to exposing and combating the strategies of the colonists. bell hooks (1994), who herself is a shining example of black feminist pedagogy akin to a reincarnation of Sojourner Truth, recalled her struggles as an African-born American in *Teaching to Transgress*. Her early segregated childhood education, entrenched in inequity, is one she espoused as being filled with passionate zeal for learning (hooks, 1994). This was encouraged and nurtured
by educators who lived and reflected values in her community and understood the necessity for the tools of critical thinking for creating opportunity (hooks, 1994).

hooks

The educators, hooks, McKay, and Roque de Duprey, serve as a model for educators who entertain alternative teaching practices. hooks (1994) began learning as a young woman with the hopes and dreams inspired by the political commitment and efforts of her black teachers. Similar to many passionate educators, she entered the world idealistically full of vigor believing she would share the inalienable rights constitutionally due all people. When she entered a desegregated educational arena, hooks’s dream was rudely interrupted (1994). Her confrontation with the status quo and their beliefs of race, gender, and economically based intellectual superiority ensued. hooks, liked a caged bird, was ensnared by the hunter to be imprisoned and controlled. It was through legislation like Brown v. Board of Education that systematic inequities were beginning to be addressed (hooks, 1994).

In institutions of higher learning, creativity was a transgression; such breaches continue in some places. In Texas, for example, there has been a concerted conservative push for the State Board of Education to reduce the number of perspectives taught in K-12 classrooms. In March 2010, there was a headline reading U.S. History Textbooks Could Soon be Flavored Heavily with Texas Conservatism (Dykes, 2010). The article discussed the Texas-sized overhaul the socially conservative governmental block had on their agenda. This push was also to approve recommended changes to economics, social
studies, and history textbooks to exclude pivotal movements and events, thereby skewing the foundational information critical for students, particularly disenfranchised populations (Dykes, 2010).

With hooks, as with the push in Texas law in 2010 (Dykes, 2010), the frowned upon discussions of inequity turned into disapproval and antagonistic actions. The pressure to conform to systematic and ritualistic, mental domination and to disengage from oneself and become assimilated to the educational culture of obedience to the authority of hegemonic agents was oppressive (hooks, 1994). Many others like her who were held captive forgot their song and forgot what it felt like to stretch their wings to be free (Angelou, 1983). Their stifled minds forgot how to soar to new heights, to dare to be uniquely independent, or to live outside the cold bars of mental entrapment. Living upon mounds of recycled paper, rote methodical and regurgitated information, wings clipped, it is the song that keeps the spirit alive (Angelou, 1983). It is akin to an old Negro spiritual that yearns and prays for better days and warns the neo-education abolitionists of where the oppressors are and directs them to where the path for the Underground Railroad lies.

Other caged birds who have not forgotten what it is like to fly still sing. They sing their songs, not necessarily due to the belief that they someday would be freed from their cages, but because someday, maybe decades or even centuries away, the collective will be able to soar once again. They hoped for the rising of suns that would warm their backs and the cooling wind that would caress their feathered wings (Angelou, 1983). Encouragement comes from freed birds who hear the song of their caged comrades. It
comes from authors like Brazilian author Paulo Freire who became an inspiration to those, like hooks, who heard the call to be free (hooks, 1994).

The philosophical basis for teaching pedagogy is deeply rooted within the cultural standpoint of the educator (Reid, 2009). Marginalized groups, understanding the necessity for a communal educational setting, are commonly seen as interlopers or insurgents within the contemporary institutionalized educational systems (Reid, 2009). In classrooms that are a reflection of this country’s makeup, with demographics that include 23.5% of the population under 18 years of age, 63.0% White American and 8.7% Latinos identified as White for a combined 77.9% White identified, it is not a surprise the curriculum widely reflects the status quo (U.S. Census, 2012). Although, 13.1% of the U.S. population is African American or Black, 2.4% is Non Hispanic (of which 0.2% is some other race and 2.2% is two or more races), 1.2% is Native or Alaska Native, 5.1% is Asian, and 16.9% is Hispanic or Latino identified to comprise 38.7% of the population all with unique experiences in this country, it often seems as though more radically contentious narratives in lessons are systematically stifled or conversations are curtailed by conservative pedagogy (Hudson, 2013). It is diverse learning techniques, coinciding with policies working in conjunction with unconventional styles and materials that serve as a liberating and inclusive mechanism to students (Hess, 2011).

In the evolution of educators, roles, and the cultural reproduction that is the educational arena, historical information is key to the amalgamation of an informed highly competent citizen to keep the democratic system progressing (Collins, 2009).
traditional, conservative, classroom community is a standardized, high-stakes, competitive, (rote) assembly line where students are mere components within the system that comprise a predetermined product (hooks, 1994). This “banking system” (Freire, 1970) runs off the expectation that students are virtually empty receptacles to receive what is found prudent for them to learn. They are instructed to hold information to capacity, regurgitate what they are taught on command, and then dump out unnecessary remnants when encountering material from a different subject. Any loose cog inside the system that does not fit, disrupts, or impedes the process of the industrial complex is deemed hostile or perceived as an anomaly without an acceptable place within the social hierarchy (hooks, 1994). The deft process becomes a disservice to students and teachers, or altogether defunct for others when this becomes the norm instead of engaging with material in other subjects considered elective in nature.

**McKay and Roque de Duprey**

Mabel McKay’s tribe’s arts tell more than a history of a culture; they teach secrets of the spirit realm, mother earth, animals, human beings and the interconnections between us all (Bredin, 1996). Herein lies the diametric system of individualistic education, interdisciplinary, communalistic paradigms that overlap, folding upon one another to create a fluid, inclusive, pedagogical practice. In this practice, education is institutionalized within a culture both political and interpersonal in nature, dwelling in a closed unchanged form. This is institutionalized by the Native people within the art of basket weaving, storytelling, and song, buttressed by the history of a nearly extinguished,
yet surviving nation. Encapsulated within a system that values unquestioned, passive, spoon-fed interactions between teacher and student exists a holistic, engaging, reciprocity that quietly mocks the contradictory dominant structure. This is the feminine energy amidst the patriarchal overseer (Bredin, 1996).

Throughout the history of this patriarchal system that buttressed enslavement, there has always existed the spirit of the woman, nurturer, and mother figure who nourishes her children (Bredin, 1996). The enslaved searched for her, for protection learning from her, clinging to her breast. The slave owners keep a watchful eye out for her. Awareness of her influence upon her children, the mother knows she must teach her children how to survive (Padilla, 1999). Because she must instinctually provide for their needs, educate and socialize, the mother becomes her children's first teacher, their cultural and political model. She holds the tie that binds, for she is the hand that rocks the cradle. Ana Roque de Duprey staunchly believed civilization and nationalism were directly related to the belief structure of the mother, almost compulsory in nature. In many ways this ideology still prevails today. In her homeland of Puerto Rico, Roque de Duprey conveyed the necessity for women to be educated within a political system in transition from the autonomy she once knew, into an annexed territory of the U.S. government (Vázquez, 2009). This is a macrocosm of what occurs when a student is placed in the K-12 institutions and mothers begin to share influence on the child with instructors. Inside the imperialistic onslaught, Roque de Duprey conveyed a nationalistic ideal that was secured within the bosom of the “mother’s domain” (Padilla, 1999).
The home, Roque de Duprey believed, was the first and most important schoolhouse. The home is where students are first exposed to some of the ideas we see as most controversial. Inside the classroom, there should be formal instruction to complement what students may have already encountered or been exposed. In the case of Roque de Duprey, she believed the spirit of the nation was being crushed underneath the imperialistic rule undermining society’s communal thread. Industrialized capitalism silently transmitted the notion of cultural and racial superiority to the oppressed communities (Vázquez, 2009).

In the U.S., a majority of whites comprise the status quo. The pressure to conform to U.S. ideology by abandoning the pride for nation, or in other cases, culture is overwhelmingly strong (Padilla, 1999). Acculturation of the status quo-led patriarchy occurs in the home as well as in the classroom. As a staunch advocate for nationhood and cultural pride, Roque de Duprey advocated for more access to institutionalized education for women in addition to the nostalgia of motherhood, patriarchal tradition denied; this strategy can be utilized as well for parents who may feel powerless when observing the philosophical or ideological direction in which schools are teaching their children, in what may be an oppressive environment. This project advocates for the informed parent whether conservative in values or liberal to embrace a dialogue in the classroom intermingled with enlightened debates. This observation by Roque de Duprey, serves as an example of what often occurs inside classrooms in the U.S., as Puerto Rico serves as a microcosm for democratic states such as California or Arizona. It is important
intellectual torchbearers take into account the potential effects of the hegemonic ruling class upon hapless constituents rather than allow them to be unprepared to advance in society. Whereas teaching without resisting hegemonic system of values buttresses the status quo, it is important for counter-hegemonic systems be put into place to bring marginalized groups to the center of discussions (Padilla, 1999).

Formal education expanded within Puerto Rico was the idealization of the United States’ economic influence and power on the native people (Padilla, 1999). Roque de Duprey’s approach was calculated, intermediary, and sought to utilize U.S. establishments to enrich Puerto Ricans with a deepened sense of cultural-nationalism. Women, the primary teachers in the home as well as those currently within the structured, formal, school settings are the key to freeing the subjugated masses from their assimilation as dictated by the colonists’ expectations. It is the duty for parents, particularly informed citizens, to challenge the curriculum, including books their children are exposed to, not solely due to their controversial nature but also because of curricular selections that lack controversial topics and cultural inclusiveness. A call for women to be the educational leaders for their future generations, for patriotic allegiance, self-governance, and autonomy is simultaneously a feminist and revolutionary stance (Padilla, 1999).

There are many single-parent households in the U.S. in which women are the head of the household. Within these households, there may be a legacy of an authentic matriarchal structure that survived in spite of the overwhelming dominance of the
patriarchal system in place; this too should be actively included to guarantee a comprehensive stylized approach. To encourage this active participation by women, the exploration of controversial ideas is the foundation for a movement that counteracts the passive pedagogical practices of the European patriarchal institution (Padilla, 1999). Often, women and minorities have the intersectionality of multiple oppressions within and outside work (Turner, 2002). By the teacher seeking out solutions to create increased participation in the socialization and proper adjustment of students into society, assimilating into the status quo is not necessarily the expected outcome for the students (Schneider, 2001). Arguments for progressive educational movements are as relevant today as they were in previous eras.

Whether we teach about Margret Sanger and the controversy still surrounding her legacy, sex education, and birth control options or support educators incorporating other ways to empower their students through knowledge about these issues, we must struggle and grapple with these concepts for progress. In contemporary society, the same oppression exists that marginalizes nations throughout the world. The answer has not been found in patriarchal, capitalistic, assimilationist ideology as much as has the root of the problem. The solution is commonly espoused by various ethnic, cultural, and educational philosophers. The inclusion of women to be leaders and become comprehensive educational mentors, teachers of morality and justice for all children, both male and female, and to equip these leader citizens to prepare students for new challenges and adversities in as necessary and vital a task as other pivotal moments in history dictate
(Vázquez, 2009). To become freed and more enlightened individuals, we need to take heed of the bright lights reminiscent of the North Star. These neo-abolitionists of education serve as a guide, to aid in navigation across the bumpy and oftentimes dangerous terrain of institutionalized peonage, where race, gender, and class intersect.

**Banned and Censored Materials**

Many banned and censored resources have been controversial in nature. Banned books such as *The Color Purple*, *Blubber*, and *The Hunger Games* have crossed over from books to film and have thus become iconic, etched into our cultural fabric and traversing generations for their sentimental portrayals, sensationalized nature or confrontation of hot-button issues as well as the diverse subject matter they introduce. Many of the above mentioned book titles have been challenged or censored for instructional purposes or against general pedagogical implementation. Had it not been for this inquiry about the lack of representation in the curriculum’s resources, which led me to discover books that would translate some of my deepest feelings or frustrations into words, I might never had been inspired to take courses fueling the driving force behind my academic and professional goals. Such an exploration I might have never been motivated to begin, or even consider, if not for the hunger to find books such as *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison and *The Blacker the Berry* by Wallace Thurman, which made such a critical contribution for me at an impressionable stage early in my development. The depictions in the novels laid a foundation for my interest in selecting classes in the education and social science fields before I even knew a career path was
remotely possible. In evaluating how this may contribute to my primary areas of focus, the concentration on curriculum and instruction coupled with my academic program has led me to create a guide that might lead other impressionable learners into considering teaching or other professional pursuits involving education.

In standard texts and resources, some examples of contributions represent diverse but often limited perspectives and role models. Some of these anomalies bear roots outside the system, their foundation is strong and nurtured with enriched soil, gaining strength through generations of cultural heritage existing before the colonialists and their individualistic ideology permeated this ground (Bredin, 1996). Mabel McKay is an example of such an anomaly. Her tribe’s history had been passed down inter-generationally through the sacred arts of storytelling, dreamer, and basket weaving traditions (Sarris, 1994).

Storytelling is an important agglutinate uniting Native Americans with their culture and traditions such as being a dreamer, or learning the art of basket weaving. Books, art, documentaries, and other media for capturing historical, cultural, and current information can be utilized in the U.S. as a means to educate students about issues relevant to being a political participant and citizen of this democracy (Bredin, 1996). In the article *Teaching controversial issues... where controversial issues really matter*, the authors Keith Barton and Alan McCully (2007) detailed some benefits to students learning how to be active learners and debaters in the classroom. Barton and McCully
claimed that controversial discussion introduced and facilitated in the classroom enhances the students’ likelihood to do the following (Barton & McCully, 2007):

- vote in later life
- support basic democratic values
- take part in political news in the media
- be interested in the political process
- have confidence in their ability to influence policy (p. 14)

Reflecting back on the discussion about Mabel McKay and the Native Americans’ way of life, it is this cultural connection and participation that determines the survival of a people. Accurately depicting changes in this modern democracy comprised of a past riddled with many controversial underpinnings is an adherence to the ideals rooted in the foundational principles upon which this country and its institutions rely (Hess, 2011). To have a more detailed orientation with where this nation is going people must have a broader picture of experiences that have been traversed. This multi-ethnic and multi-cultural fabric represents, for better or worse, the makeup of modern day classrooms, which in many cases are also accurate depictions found in challenged books and controversial materials (Collins, 2009).
Table 1

U.S. Ethnicity (Nine States)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of State</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Native American or Indian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout the history of banning and censoring books there have been extreme actions taken to prevent morally undesirable content from being widely consumed. Such public book burnings would serve to squelch the dissemination of information and maintain the status quo. Leaders of these extremist movements would organize to burn and destroy books. This form of censorship is in stark contrast to the native culture and practices that revered storytelling as an art form and historical recording method. Art forms used by storytellers or griots to keep knowledge of cultural cornerstones alive are important to the holistic development of the student. Modern-day techniques of suppression reveal a less shocking and more systematic means of controlling information.
Therefore, the researcher explores contemporary and relevant forms of storytelling to incorporate into classroom activities.

**Affecting Student Belief with Controversial Subject Matter**

As monuments to power that support the hegemonic value structure are explored, research reveals a background for the discussion of what controversial subject matter means with regard to buttressing or deconstructing these socio-cultural institutions. Consider the proficiency each educator should have in his or her respective curricular or administrative area presented to students. A teacher can ascribe to an array of curricular pedagogy that would enhance the educational experiences of students. After the foundational requirement is satisfied, higher order thinking must be applied to any assessments made about the demographic toward which the instruction is directed. During the selection of unconventional resources or sensitive matter for integration into K-12 curriculum, there is a need for discretion with regard to graphic and potentially inappropriate supplements that have been repeatedly challenged or censored. Well thought-out compositions combined with memorable executions of characters and thematic plots create impactful opportunities and engaging experiences for consumption (Hess, 2011). Such experiences, if properly harnessed and filtered can become teachable moments, thus becoming a supplementary to traditional curriculum’s compulsory standards, enhancing multidisciplinary subject matter.

A helpful and complementary asset to obtaining a working knowledge of the subject matter focus or multiple disciplines while preparing for instruction is a familiarity
of the various backgrounds and potential interests students bring with them from their own environments (Hess, 2011). Taking a formal survey is encouraged to better understand the perspectives and experiences students may bring into the classroom. It is through awareness of socioeconomic and cultural products that teachers can engage the learners and work to enhance facilitation of cultural capital, resulting in retention and better academic performance (Foster, 1999). When discussing the best choice for integrating curriculum for K-12 students, several factors must be considered. There are conditions outside a teacher’s direct realm of influence to which students may be pre exposed. It is a key factor for educators to start the conversations that will get the students talking and asking questions. One of this project’s aims is to explore controversial topics to be used as disposable crutches in some cases or a more permanent fixture in others to engage student critical thinking and progressive skills building. Three primary subject areas stand out as offering opportunities to explore controversial subject matter: Art, Marginalized Beliefs, and Music.

**Art**

Museums and other major institutions have become symbols of American’s power and fortitude being seated among the leaders and Superpowers of the World. Synonymous with America’s position are buildings erected to show the virility and strength of the economy and government. Institutions of higher learning, particularly those of prestige, are equated with mobility and the quintessential American Dream; whereas it is thought that liberty and the pursuit of happiness might be more readily
attained with preparation and the refinement of skills that increase accessibility into other social strata (Hess, 2011). For the above reasons, the researcher investigated museology, accompanying telecratic innovations and other cultural reproductions integrated into curriculum. The integration will inevitably address the burgeoning social media tools including television, networking applications, and subsequent devices being used to educate the public more about social issues and aesthetics.

Investigating the history of museum education as a cultural reproduction and bastion of power precedes a justification for its inclusion in curriculum enrichment of K-12 education. In the last 200 years, there has been an explosion of museums in modern-day civilization. The evolution of museum education has greatly impacted communities in that each have specific concepts that can be used as points of informational entry to the elation of enthusiasts and the public at large. Evaluating both indoor and outdoor facilities, including zoos, leads to the conclusion that museum exhibits and artwork use a variety of material that serve the purpose of engaging, entertaining, challenging, and educating viewing audiences.

In the article “Breaking Historical Silence through Cross-Cultural Collaboration: Latvian Curriculum Writers and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum” (Hamot, 2007), a coupling of curriculum writers and museum fellows underscored the importance of integrating learning materials for students and the attendees. Museums often have education departments that lead school groups and work with teachers to enhance the experience of the students after visiting the facilities. Private donations, contributions,
and artifacts from excavations put on display provide the public with the opportunities to view many of the new and permanent exhibits available in a region. Such displays can draw audiences from all corners of the community or specialty art form and exhibition seekers. It is a suggestion that educators stay abreast of community events and public shows to integrate into the course curriculum.

The Washington, DC Corcoran Gallery of Art’s scheduled exhibition by artist Robert Mapplethorpe was an example of politically and religiously motivated censorship to deter expanding on provocative and sensitive subject matters. Mapplethorpe’s exhibition, called *The Perfect Moment*, was criticized by a senator and other government officials when they learned of the sexually explicit homoerotic photographs up for public viewing. Immediately, the then director of the museum Dr. Christina Orr-Cahall received pressure in the form of a loss of Corcoran’s federal funding if the show went forward, placing the Corcoran board and staff in the middle of the crossfire. The aftermath resulted in the resignation of Dr. Orr-Cahall within six months.

Although an alternative space, the Washington Project for the Arts (WPA), exhibited *The Perfect Moment* and generated much publicity from outrage and protests associated with the showing, it was still considered a success. “The exhibition was a big, if temporary, success for the WPA, garnering large crowds, big admissions fees, and national attention for the small not-for profit” (Economics of Censorship, 2008, p. 16). Dr. Orr-Cahall’s professional recovery as well as future advancement was solidified in the coming months since she had the “good sense” to cancel the Mapplethorpe show.
The publicity was the only factor that may have worked for the notoriety of WPA soon after the controversy. Although the political climate and timing seemed to leave a lackluster, disdainful taste in the mouth of some supporting (advocating, benefactors) the arts community in the months after the events, Dr. Orr-Cahall ironically ended up overseeing an important source of federal funding for museums by the appointment of President George W. Bush.

Meanwhile, the Washington Project for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) were sent reeling in financial and political uncertainty. “The support of Washington’s largely conservative philanthropic community, due in large part to Mapplethorpe’s *The Perfect Moment*, at the very least” (Economics of Censorship, 2008, p. 16) reduced the potential donors due to the episode, and “was forced to close its doors for lack of funds in 1995” (p. 16). The cautionary tale is that if you “[take] a principled stand against censorship and for freedom of expression, you may resolve yourself to years of financial battles or other hardships in which it may be difficult, if at all possible to fully recover” (Economics of Censorship, 2008, p. 16). Some teachers may be fearful of work place reprisals such as the previous example and may shy away from controversial subject matter in order to avoid scandals. This may lead to self-policing rather than embracing alternative strategies to enhance mandated curricular selections.

Author Jack Rasmussen contended, years after the Corcoran debacle, “the practice of self-censorship by arts institutions” occurs but often times the decisions ultimately made are played out in board rooms in meetings staged out of the “public spotlight”
(Economics of Censorship, 2008, p. 16). Instead, shows with controversial images are vetted by the staff and filtered by administrators and supervisors. The message vetting sends to employees of the community is that creative and innovative pieces are necessary and even coveted, but it is critical to tread lightly when considering the consequences of including sensational exhibits for public consumption. Similarly, when curricular selections are being made, there may be some classics coveted but overlooked due to venial consequences associated with them. The association results in constraints being put on the selections as well as self-moderation to not overstep the sensibilities of their donors or, in the case of schools, students’ parents. Fear of funding loss is especially true in an industry heavily reliant on educational techniques and pedagogy in conjunction with the visual media to get the artist’s message across to the patron. In the case of a teacher, losing control of a classroom discussion, or having other than benign consequences for transgressions that stem from a lesson’s content value, is a concerted threat to the exploration of controversial topics. The unspoken guideline is, “Ignore these consequences at [your] own peril” (Economics of Censorship, 2008, p. 17).

Sponsor-driven funding helped commission many of the artists who have mastered their trade and are revered for being critical observers, translating issues within the society in which they live. At the University of California Berkeley’s Doe Library, and the American University Museum’s Marlborough Gallery, the Botero: Abu Ghraib collection travelled and caused quite a stir in the wake of the detainment and human rights issues painstakingly displayed in full view of the public (Economics of Censorship,
2008). Although in some cases there is no precedent for formal or informal approval for curatorial decisions, it was prudent for Mr. Rasmussen (208) to notify the proper administrators and supervisors of the institution for which he worked. He said:

As [he] shared images from the show with the appropriate administrators, [he] could understand the second and third thoughts [he] knew they must be having.

There was first the implied criticism of the Bush Administration and its complicity in the acts depicted. There was the potential for the show to be viewed as anti-American, or at least anti-Republican. American University is no stranger to political controversy, but the appearance of partisanship is not the look that most academic institutions are after… [Also,] there was clearly the potential for these incendiary images to be interpreted as advocacy rather than condemnation.

(p. 19)

Like most attempts at self-censorship, however, members of the staff could not really predict what members of the public would find truly disturbing or offensive. The public reception of Botero: Abu Ghraib was overwhelmingly positive, and the thousands of visitors who came were prepared to take it seriously. Such response must also be true of classroom discourse centering on controversial subject matter; the students and teacher(s) must be prepared to take the issues seriously.

The added component of visitors coming prepared to take matters of critical thought and ethical urgency seriously is imperative to the researcher’s hypothesis and methodological argument. Contrasting this notion, on a different floor of the American
University Museum, there was an exhibition of Feminist Art from the 1970s titled *Claiming Space: Some American Feminist Originators* (Economics of Censorship, 2008). Response to the other exhibition running simultaneously with *Botero’s: Abu Ghraib* included complaints about some artworks labeled sacrilegious because they were portraying multi-generational images of various members within a family of women as the Virgin of Guadalupe (Economics of Censorship, 2008). Although they were prepared to handle political discourse about *Botero: Abu Ghraib*, they were “totally unprepared to defend [them]selves against accusations that [they] were exhibiting sacrilegious art” (Economics of Censorship, 2008, p. 19). Dialogue was opened with the Catholic community incensed over the Feminist pieces; however, the museum’s representatives felt they were able to make some gains during the discourse that followed by addressing criticism to the symbolism and challenging paternalistic institutions. They felt none of the naysayer’s perspectives changed on the matter and the controversy inevitably blew over with the institution’s reputation and economic underpinnings intact. Just as discussed regarding the censorship of contemporary art forms and forms of expression such as the *Abu Ghraib* exhibition, we look at other ways cultural reproductions influence and perpetuate beliefs.

**Marginalized Beliefs**

In the article “Heteronormativity in the University Classroom: Novelty Attachment and Content Substitution among Gay-Friendly Students,” Ripley, Anderson, McCormack, and Rockett (2012) discussed the research findings as they related to the
concepts of Novelty Attachment and Content Substitution in lieu of the recurring misconceptions to which students were frequently introduced in lectures with regard to homosexual content. Similarly, the crux of this project is based on theories focusing on a systematic identification of inconsistencies in pedagogy and suggested resolutions, which may be modified according to the needs of the educator. Ripley et al. (2012) described their research methodology as using a mixed method and described the conclusions of the study. The research utilized the highlighted theories and concepts of the generalizability of stereotyping and social identity theory as they apply to marginalized groups. The article discussed institutional pressures for faculty to remain closed and/or act heterosexual, which ultimately act as a mechanism of disservice to both student and teacher (Ripley et al., 2012). In the cycle of proving and reproving their sexuality to gain acceptance into the dominant social groups, the educators allow for perpetuation of sexual and cultural inequalities, which inevitably limit the ability of the educator through this permissiveness. This may also reflect in the curricular choices of educators that share some of the same characteristics associated with gaining acceptance into the status quo.

It was reported that oftentimes, students considered themselves supportive of gay rights but overlooked erroneous and disproportionate frequencies alluding to biases translated into a form of homophobia (Ripley et al., 2012). A trend that seemed prevalent was the student’s need to defend his or her inaccurate perceptions of a “secret gay agenda” discovered by the lecturers participating in the study in order to activate the
student’s transparency. Such transparency would then move the students, for example, to refer to their gay friends as proof of the legitimacy of their LGBT acceptance. This is akin to the privileged white person who, when confronted with the possibility of their prejudicial actions or mindset, says he or she has a black friend [substitute in the minority], so he or she cannot be racist. However, the discussion is about the implicit or explicit transmission of oppressive, biased, and marginalizing attitudes and beliefs existent within institutions without systematic methods of dismantling or deconstruction by activists or allies. Hence, educators using controversial materials to dispel erroneous information about a topic can be effective if the utilization of controversial topics accompanies proper preparation and not just novelty attachment, which commonly involves superficially based justifications.

**Music**

Music can be associated with any culture, religion, lifestyle, or belief system. Addressing hip-hop culture in particular, present issues some would find contradictive of educational and academic enrichment have been noted. This, in part, is due to hyper-masculine portrayals and an overwhelmingly large proportion of objectified images of women and homophobic and disparaging language found in mainstream outlets. However, outliers to the more prominent examples demonstrate an alternative resource. In contrast to the aforementioned issues, positive imagery and listener friendly lyrics can be found more specifically in foundational and underground movements that spawned what is now widely consumed and in the forefront on display for broader audiences.
The article “Experimental Comparison of the Psychological Benefits of Exercise, Humor, and Music” (Szabo, Ainsworth, & Danks, 2005) articulates their research participants’ well-being derived from music. The findings were consistent with what most individuals already intrinsically prescribe to: music and humor reproduce mental benefits similar to exercise. The more a person exercises the more oxygen one’s brain receives, which is accompanied by feelings of euphoria from certain meta-cognitive processes. The inclusion of this non-traditional instructional method serves an essential function in cognition. Because different genres of music produce different effects on the psyche, the preferred types of stress-relieving music can be chosen to reinforce specific objectives.

In the special documentary, *Waiting for Superman* (Birtel et al., 2010), one of the instructors observed named Harriet Ball introduced an instructional tool she called a disposable crutch. To assist her predominately ethnic minority, young student population with math concepts and terms, she created a rap song with imbedded math concepts. This disposable crutch was implemented as a rap song she taught the students, which was intended to help the students memorize the rules for math, in this instance memorizing multiplication tables. Hands started clapping together making a loud noise, creating a rhythm until the count of about the eighth clap, and then the words began. Veteran teacher Ms. Ball took the lead and the students followed behind in what sounded similar to a Sugar Hill Gang-type of rap flow. Some students knew the words, others mumbled or hummed in sync with the class. The directed experiment spearheaded by Ms. Ball was
replicated and modeled for two developing KIPP schools (Birtel et al., 2010). It showed the implementation to be beneficial for several reasons; it served as a revelation to beginning teachers and connected the students to a more general area of knowledge perspective.

Initially, Ms. Ball observed her students had trouble learning math terms from her class, but had no problem memorizing rap songs (Birtel et al., 2010). She thought once the students had the basics in an enjoyable way, alluding to the fact that the kids would even sing these learned songs on the playground then she could move to the next step. Studying her methods and drawing from other methods, other instructors rethought their pedagogy and applied the findings of their research to their own instruction. The researcher would also like to suggest that educators rethink instructional methods similar to the preceding example and apply it in the classroom. The results have been staggering in charter schools. Experts refused to accept it was more than a few charismatic leaders and believed it could never be repeated or brought to scale, as demonstrated in these low-performing neighborhoods. Data from the first 1,000 students who went through the first four years in KIPP reported that those students went from the 32nd to the 60th percentile in reading and the 40th to the 82nd percentile in math (Birtel et al., 2010).

A New Pedagogy

State Standards

California standards for seventh graders in the Visual and Performing Arts state that “through processing, analyzing and responding to sensory information,” “students
[should] perceive and respond to works of art, objects and nature, events, and the environment” (State Board of Education, 2013, Std. 1.0). Educators can integrate controversial materials in the classroom that would align with the standards outlined in a broad sense above, particularly by focusing on getting their students responding to works of art and events. The standards also say that while “creating, performing, and participating in the visual arts,” “students apply artistic processes and skills, using a variety of media to communicate meaning and intent in original works of art” (State Board of Education, 2013, Std. 1.1). Applying the protagonist and antagonist techniques or giving students an activity in which they use drama and creative narratives to express themselves through performance will satisfy the above standards.

The standards also require students to have a historical and cultural understanding of art. Depending on the controversial books selected by a teacher to use inside the classroom, different cultural understandings can be discussed for the broader understanding of concepts relating to the compliance of these standards. Interpretations about works of art and books can be much more poignant with controversial underpinnings. Teachers can ask probing questions like, what mood do you believe the artist/author was trying to convey in creating this piece of work? Or, what is the artist attempting to say about society or culture during this era? Drawing parallels between compositions and students' personal works of art or knowledge set can be supported by diversification of curricular selections into controversial areas. Working with
controversial materials can complement the state standards and aid in the satisfaction of them.

**Above and Beyond the Standards**

The comedian Mel Brooks said, “that if you're alive you've got to flap your arms and legs, you've got to jump around a lot, for life is the very opposite of death, and therefore you must at the very least think noisy and colorfully, or you're not alive” (BrainyQuote, 2012, para. 3). While creating a framework for discourse about controversial issues in multi-disciplinary course content is a complex proposal for teachers to dissect on an individual case-by-case basis, the research looks at popular methods useful for curriculum integration in contemporary U.S. schools. The researcher distinctly wanted to investigate the richness of music in the African American and U.S. popular culture. Not only is it an outlet and platform in academia, often including most U.S. educational institutions, but the methodological approaches used can be controversial in evaluating the efficacy for student populations.

What Ms. Ball did in *Waiting for Superman* is a controversial practice in theory because the teacher not only must identify bridges between compulsory materials but must also focus on students’ preferred learning styles and interests for tailored subject matter presentations (Birtel et al., 2010). Then teachers must reformat the curriculum for instructional integration, which also implies the teachers must draw from extra-curricular talents and resources not necessarily with reasonable accommodation or previous training from the administration (Birtel et al., 2010). So the debate no longer centers around
whether disadvantaged students can or cannot learn, it becomes about the institution of schooling, the respective administrations, and teachers hired to give every student an equal opportunity to achieve. Teachers helping other motivated teachers out and inspiring each other is just the beginning.

Initially, the teacher must establish predefined rules and parameters the participating students must follow that align with the standards at their institution of employment. Their responsibility for the facilitation of age-appropriate subject matter introduced with a class should be consistent with the standards for their area of instruction in conjunction with the applications of SB 48’s educational precedent in California schools.

*Teachers Act Up! Creating Multicultural Learning Communities through Theater* (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010) discussed ways in which educators can use verbal and non-verbal communication via drama techniques and sociopolitical theories to create change in the workplace. In this section, the researcher illustrates ways in which such methods can be explored inside the classroom to aid in student engagement and recall of materials through scene reenactment. Scene reenactment is the primary method of curricular delivery in the ImprovED project (see Appendix A). Strategic subordination is used in scene reenactment as the protagonist complies with exactly what the antagonist suggests as an alternative to succumbing to frustrating events and interactions (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010). The protagonist over exaggerates the issue to bring a comical take on the frustrating circumstance. Sometimes just acting out the
scene finds a solution to the problem; other times, there is an actual transformation that occurs with the protagonist's perception to nullify the problem when the participant is confronted with the scenario again.

In Cahnmann-Taylor and Souto-Manning’s (2010) book, they used a qualitative approach and methodology to discuss oppressive experiences in critical multicultural teacher education. Performative techniques applied to traditional verbal approaches use multiple intelligences and have been shown to increase the sociocultural awareness of individual performers as well as within the collective group. In the K-12 school structure, cultural reproductions need to be identified by the educator so issues can be addressed as they arise with regard to race, class, and patriarchal conflicts in classroom discussions (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010).

Relevant and impactful issues should be woven into subject matter content, particularly those controversial in nature so it may leave a lasting imprint on the mind of students. Issues that arise should be utilized more readily as opportunities present themselves and are made available to students in ways they may be addressed by staff as teachable moments instead of topics to be systematically excluded, or worse, a grenade that shatters the fragile perceptions of students already struggling with representational identity conflicts. After all, it is often the educators who have been given charge and duty to take part in the students’ preparation for the future (Reid, 2009).
Technological Compatibility

Technology offers a means to make education more universally applied to the needs of students. In a discussion about his new book, *The One World Schoolhouse: Education Reimagined*, author Salman Khan (2012) discussed revelations about applied technology and education. Khan asserted students learn most when they are actually doing the problem set (Khan, 2012). Complementing and expanding this notion, Khan found it is beneficial for teachers to utilize ways to not have to repeat the material covered in class by offering online services such as the Khan academy and other resources. Controversial ideas often elicit active participation from students due to their interest in the subject matter or personal investment, so it is imperative to use other means to support critical thinking from students.

If a teacher does not have to invest his or her time repeating information over again, more time may be distributed to other activities, thus allotting the necessary time for more classroom activity, creativity, or innovation. Having a word bank of pertinent vocabulary is also a helpful addition that will aid students in navigating the controversial subject matter more effectively (Shiner, 1999). Words give birth to ideas. Through adherence to employing methods of peer assistance, group discussions as well as instructor-facilitated activities, the students can remediate if necessary with online and technological supplements for the precise intent of applying the models or newly acquired facts to their individual learning pace.
Aids are necessary for reducing interpreting deficits between teacher and students that may hinder idea development and the subsequent information processing by their students (Khan, 2012). If directed properly, teaching aids that will familiarize students with challenged or banned materials and controversial subject matter, such as video documentaries, adapted movies from books, or web research, can serve as an added benefit to students. Similarly, to diminish the gap between students’ initial thresholds of knowledge, teachers need to facilitate learning with tools and aids that extend beyond a preliminary stage so a more advanced comprehension can develop (Khan, 2012). This allows more traction for learning conversions to occur in the academic setting, thereby enabling the student to understand their emerging sense of logical intuition, in turn fueling the desire for higher achievement. An example of this would be watching a movie on the book being reviewed to build a solid foundation of the protagonist and antagonist narratives. This intuitiveness on behalf of the instructor allows students to connect from a level closer in proximity to a place of general understanding to a new acquisition of mastery. Therefore, previously disengaged and unmotivated students will begin to assist other students although they may have differing opinions, and teachers can begin to leverage tools so students can develop and reaffirm other areas beyond general knowledge (Barton & McCully, 2007). The teacher will gain tools to assist the young learner as scene reenactment occurs through the project called ImpovED.

Arbitrary testing, wherein the practice of placing a stronger emphasis on grades, turns education into degrees of value judgment can often be perceived as being
misleading. Active participation in the classroom, among other key factors that increase engagement with the material and increase critical thinking, should also be included in rubrics to establish a guideline for lectures and coursework (Gewertz, 2011). It is argued in Khan’s book *The One World Schoolhouse* that compulsory education is a series of overlapping ideas. Furthermore, Khan believes it imperative to integrate subject matters in the real world applications, thus breaking people free of the assembly line protocols still predominantly being used (Khan, 2012). The mastery of concepts become fundamental when new methods are embraced to absorb dense material, which can be cumbersome when attempting to hold the attention of students for more than 15 minutes (Khan, 2012). It is common knowledge that entertaining resources can suspend higher level thinking and processing. But, this project assumes the position that a medium can be accessed and, if harnessed correctly, can be a formidable tool for disrupting passivity.

Educators need to think outside the box with their lesson plans to spark interest in their students and independence when researching their ideas. Breaking free from stifling pedagogical conditioning is the first step toward a truly liberating experience for both the educator and students alike. The researcher suggests bringing in aids such as props for an interactive activity, or bringing in guest speakers who are experts on a subject and integrating the different experience with subjects of a sensitive nature. However, the researcher advocates standards be adhered to when formulating the curriculum to make it more accessible to students and to support them in becoming independent learners.
Structured feedback, mentoring, and self-pacing allow breathing room for students to be directed until eventual self-direction occurs (Khan, 2012). When students become self-directed, it is the beginning of a lifelong love of learning (Foster & Padgett, 1999). It is not uncommon for students in other countries to, at times, go to school sites to show off what they already know rather than what is being learned; an example in the U.S would be the main character depicted in Good Will Hunting (Khan, 2012). In the movie Good Will Hunting, a math prodigy takes a position as a janitor in a prestigious institution and secretly solves complex proofs sparking intrigue in the faculty and staff at the university. Another example is the movie based on a true story called The Great Debaters. In this movie, a group of young students chosen for a debate team compete with elite schools across the nation, which culminates in them rivaling Harvard, in a Cinderella-like climactic ending (Black & Winfrey, 2007). In imagining the development of several students modeling a version of this high performance anomaly, it would be ideal for multiple teachers to teach different subjects in “epic environments” to manifest unique characteristics eliciting circumstances in which most educators would like to teach (Khan, 2012, p. 97). The term epic environments refers to as a scenario in which the teacher has all the resources and accommodations necessary for a thriving learning experience to exist and in which each student is able to achieve at his or her optimal level. Unfortunately for students and educators alike, if the necessary money is not at one’s disposal, there must be a discovery of ways that determine alternative ways to implement models that wisely spend the money allocated for each pupil per academic
calendar (Foster & Padgett, 1999). In the absence of epic environments, open avenues for bridging gaps in students’ knowledge sets may be addressed with technological aids. Ways to and reason for creating a buffer (emergency reservoir) should be rethought for planning how to get curriculum, individual participants, or programs to yield fruitful results ahead of expectations (Khan, 2012). If the learner is brought to greater understanding via methods of early and frequent academic engagement before there is stress compounded upon the experience, it is a benefit to the student.

It was the researcher’s hope to put the guide into a software application where educators could look up book titles to see whether they have been challenged, censored, or banned. It was during the focus on a database that the researcher began to look at technological innovations as a critical component to completing this project. Although time constraints changed the direction of the project, the researcher discussed the benefits and impediments of over reliance on technology to support teachers’ curriculum.

**Novelty Attachment**

Cultural icons come in many different forms, stemming from a variety of genres but become such a force that a time period, pivotal shift, or an ideological foundation can be dissected when a specific name or image is invoked (Robelen, 2011). When thinking about recent wars, one’s mind might revert to recent memories of the Iraq War, Gulf War, the War in Afghanistan, the Vietnam War, World Wars I and II, the Civil War, the Revolutionary War; and those are just direct conflicts involving the U.S. military. The business and marketing strategies connecting us to these key players and events in media
at complex moments is a part of the monumental effects etched upon the psyche that make each unique event contribute to our view about society (Robelen, 2011).

When materials lacking a foundation in educational principles are celebrated, important concepts take the backseat in the classroom. With the onset of YouTube, MySpace, Twitter, and other technological upgrades, now with the prestigious educational institution of higher learning following suit, classes are being taught about pop culture’s “A” list celebrities rather than about genocide in the Sudan. One might argue such courses being taught as a mere point of entry or an alternate gateway to studying more substantial and prominent figures in their respective disciplines, but it leads educators and investors to become skeptical of the true value of their students’ education and the institutions underlying motivation. The practice of loosely including controversial materials without solid justification can be dangerous for the integrity of classroom instruction.

**Taking Action and the Purging Process**

This is not necessarily a call to Anti-American sentiment. After all, to be an educator in the very institution you may seek to erode may not be a very fulfilling enterprise. History dictates that victories are won through struggle under which the hegemony will release a few concessions at a time without abdicating their power seat (Cannon, 1994). But a struggle must continue for future generations of students to make a way and ensure that injustices and abuses of power are addressed by engaging with exercises of liberties, thus revealing paths of roads less often taken. Such a struggle will
not be fought and won by technocratic educators (or technocrats) but by individuals who challenge the domestication of the Revolutionary Spirit that dwelled in the Nation’s torchbearers. Some things should never be commoditized.

It is imperative controversial issues, especially those found in banned and censored books, are treated with care. To rely too heavily on aids that may assist educators with teaching concepts or specified topics can detract from the cohesion of the class and promote passivity amongst the students. In some instances, it is best educators take an objective stance to controversial topics, particularly if there may be a hidden agenda to persuade young learners with a biased standpoint. It is important educators are aware of possible dissenting views to their own that should be respected, especially when the topics involve controversy. Teachers must know what arguments are worthwhile to include in discussion and what topics should be left out. To be controversial for the sake of being controversial runs the risk of being inflammatory and can quickly lose the critical thinking aspects that accompany related discourse (Hess, 2011). Being inflammatory may unnecessarily detract from one of the crucial arguments to introduce ideas for the engagement of students (Hess, 2011).

In the midst of the Occupy Wall Street movement, Leslie Grimard (2011) wrote, "[V]illains don't always wear designer suits; sometimes, they wear tweed jackets… Maybe it's time to occupy the universities" (p. 1). Leslie Grimard works for the Heritage Foundation, a conservative policy analyst group. Grimard’s post was about how many universities required students to study western civilization, history, U.S. government, or
economics. What was thought provoking about her commentary was the co-opting of the language of the protest movement to suit right-winged political agendas. This use of language is a form of Santa-Clausification, by deemphasizing the urgency behind the Occupy Movement and applying a watered down version of the real purpose behind the protests. Grimard said, "[S]tudying the foundations of our society no longer seems to be a priority for American universities” (p. 1). Co-opting terminology and imagery within a movement is one of the ways misappropriations of power can infiltrate progress or reveal the true intentions of the opposition’s agents of power. The erosion of liberties is a poignant reality for those struggling toward progress and those downtrodden, stagnated in destitution.

Although the arguments may not be as disparaging as the one above for the continued exclusion of controversial subject matter, someone protesting the inclusion of liberal course curriculum to the extent of occupying the institution can be viewed as extreme. Using materials that will better connect with minority student populations can be beneficial even if the rewards might not be initially obvious to the instructor.

Leslie Grimard was commenting on an English class focusing on Lady GaGa and the relevancy of her pushing social boundaries during her rise to fame. As an educator, it would behoove practitioners to acknowledge the trust and power placed in the palm of their hands so it is wielded with integrity, while simultaneously being true to their own beliefs. This diversification of course curriculum has not only occurred at the University of Virginia, Rutgers, or a few well known institutions on the East Coast and Northeast.
At UC Berkeley, controversial subject matter has been integrated into their academics and environment by innovators pushing the social and political envelopes, challenging boundaries, and breaking down barriers. Abu Ghraib and Tupac were among conceptual additions to the academic program and enrichment centers on Berkeley’s campus throughout the last decade. The criticism and opposition might not have been so overwhelming because Berkeley is a region associated with liberal trends and liberal associations dominating philosophy and political movements.

Anti-establishment pedagogy and Anarchist feminists are subgroups and characteristic affiliations identified within feminist ideology. With the correct training and research on a topic, a teacher can become competent enough in a controversial area to teach a course to a mature enough audience. Although the right warns against socialist, feminist, and Marxist rebels by labeling them terrorist, in turn exalting themselves as defenders of the American Democracy, this is not necessarily the case.

**Summary**

Democratic practices include discussing controversial ideas to improve the learning of diverse perspectives within the classroom (Hess, 2011). For students to get a holistic educational experience the educators must begin to entertain alternative teaching strategies and allow influences that deviate from test-driven curricular selections. If the teachers invest more time in lessons plans that diversify perspectives taught in the text books and challenge students’ pre-conceived notions, then the task of engaging students with enriching learning materials should more adequately be met. It is a goal of this
project for banned, censored, and challenged materials to be seen as a part of the democratic process rather than a subversion of it.

The holistic approach mentioned above is key to a separation from strict lecture format. It is a goal of the project to encourage a technique that will allow students to act and use multiple intelligences when considering a problem. By that, the researcher intends to suggest innovative methods to mediating and facilitating narratives, modeled after techniques found in Teachers Act Up! Instead of relying on examples of charismatic teachers or trailblazers in the field of education, teachers must make the choice to do the work of seeking out sources for introducing transformative pedagogy, leaving their own imprint in the minds and experiences of our youth.

Popular culture and current events, if harnessed correctly, can prove to be a beneficial addition to the classroom for the teachers as well as the students. Addressing controversy directly and giving students tools to handle opposing views is a skill this project proposes to develop and encourage in teachers. Music, language, and cultural arts such as drama or storytelling are viable alternatives to traditional pedagogical selections. Utilizing controversial discussions about which subjects the students are already familiar is not and should not be viewed as a negative. In having these discussions teachers will begin to nurture communities that will have a lasting imprint on students throughout their educational careers and well into their adulthood.
Chapter 3

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to engage students through narratives either based in language arts, cultural arts, theater arts, or visual or scripted portrayals of characters who have encountered struggle, controversy, or multidisciplinary subject-oriented themes through (predetermined, purposeful) interactions. The expected product is presented in the form of a guide teachers may photocopy or adapt for their own lesson plans. The researcher took into consideration different factors that may influence the curricular selections educators encounter when wanting to discuss controversial topics in conjunction with the standards outlined for the subjects they teach. Classroom management is a concern many educators have even if they are only trying to reengage students who are off task or to allow more opportunities for student participation. The researcher reviewed articles that supported an efficacious approach before exposing young audiences to dialogue that can be highly inflammatory.

One such article, “Talk With Your Students About Trayvon Martin” by Jeffrey P. Carpenter and Scott Weathers (2012) advocated for a formulized plan by the educator, which includes “comparing and contrasting the case with the events of To Kill a Mockingbird,” a book that has been challenged. The questioned still lingered about how to get students talking about classic books or important concepts that will broaden their understanding of historical facts and strengthen their reasoning abilities short of saying,
“Look you all need to know this stuff.” The clear reality that students should know about the murder of Emmett Till for allegedly committing the “crime” of whistling at a white woman was pressing for the researcher because there is often injustice where there is controversy. The teachable moments that have been discussed in previous sections (see “A New Pedagogy” in Chapter 2) exist when a student “describ[ing] To Kill a Mockingbird as ‘lame,’ might have felt differently if a classroom discussion had helped him to see the similarities between the Martin case and [the protagonist] Harper Lee's story” (Carpenter & Weathers, 2012, para. 8). Thus, the researcher came up with the idea to bridge tested concepts to which students respond with standards-driven instruction and advocate for the deliberate and consistent inclusion of controversial topics in classrooms by the educators.

To use historical facts to further a discussion or other dialogues such as a debate can influence young learners to have a more accurate worldview; hence, the researcher was interested in complying with the Fair Education Act. The researcher purchased a copy of the movie Milk, which details the life of a gay man who ascended on the political scene in San Francisco as the first openly gay politician. Because the researcher came from a different city and a different era, she was not informed of who Harvey Milk was prior to hearing about the two-time Academy Award winning movie. Beyond discourse about the first openly gay politician, the researcher advocates for lesson planning that includes the controversial sentencing of his murderer, another politician who only received five years for his crime.
The conversations outlined in the project ImprovED are intended to stir students into action. What became known as the Twinkie defense (Pogash, 2003) is a debate worthy of discussion in tandem with the events that occurred with the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the more recent Trayvon Martin case. Hypothetically, the script titled the Execution of Justice written by Michael Butler (1999) could have also been analyzed in a classroom setting, which would satisfy the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) standards. Students learning about the judicial system and procedures in the court as well as defining what criminal behavior can result in are all means of preparing them to be active participants and positive contributors in society, part of the social studies standards.

There is a lack of diverse curricular selections to integrate into primarily middle and secondary schools filled with often “too-facile application of policies and ideas that are well suited for other contexts” (Barton & McCully, 2007, p. 127). Educators’ superficial approaches derive from privileges too often normalized in K-12 settings (Lawrence, 2010). Students need to develop critical thinking skills and learn how to articulate their perspectives during debates in a way to allow for the utilization of controversial subject matter through resources such as challenged materials and banned books. If educators too quickly take a non-participatory stance with topics that should be further explored, the students may not raise issues themselves for fear of reprise or being judged unconstructively by others. Thus, students who want to have such conversations with adults lose opportunities to explore these concepts in traditional K-12 settings.
In a 2012 ranking of 40 worldwide education programs in developed countries (Huffington Post, 2012), the US ranked 17. This project seeks to impact this moderate performance by offering controversial yet legitimate sources for supplemental materials to be included in the classroom. These sensational materials are presented for teachers to assess and evaluate. After teacher assessments, the materials are distributed to students to garner increased engagement in the subject matter. These teachable moments are created and nurtured so the classrooms are considered safe spaces for discourse about controversial topics. By looking further into the areas of research and pedagogy, this project seeks to influence K-12 schools through diversifying curricular selections that build on what students are exposed to and influenced by in their lives.

**Choosing the Materials for ImprovED**

Since this project concerns challenged and banned books, the researcher reviewed the Library Bill of Rights of the American Library Association (ALA) stating (Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1967):

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries that make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

(American library Association, 1996, paras. 1-6)

Since libraries are public institutions for furthering literary awareness, the researcher followed the guidelines for curricular supplemental suggestions found on the American Library Association’s website to evaluate how books are challenged or banned. Looking at the ALA’s website and their results after compiling the total number of challenges for books, the researcher took into consideration the reasons for challenges and listed them underneath the controversial topics/complaints section of the matrix provided in Appendix A. “One thousand six hundred thirty-nine challenges were in school libraries, 1,811 were in classrooms, and 1,217 took place in public libraries. There were 114 challenges to materials used in college classes and 30 to academic libraries” (ALA, 1996, para. 6). Since a portion of the complaints about the resources were directly related to the utilization of these books as supplemental instructional
materials and correlating student assignments, the researcher believed the challenges reported to the ALA were relevant and should be included in the project. To include the complaints sent to the ALA stemming from controversial curricular selections seemed reasonable since this connection already existed between these materials being used in the classroom and the controversial topics raised by the authors. It was important to give teachers options to confront these sensational issues and have an awareness of past complaints when considering what they might need to omit from their lesson plans. The researcher chose the following 10 controversial topics to include in the project: racism, the judicial system, drug and alcohol abuse, intimate partner violence, sexuality, class, incest, bullying, human rights and terrorism. Many educators might see the necessity for a filtering system that allows a platform for parental concerns to be voiced about what materials are made available to student populations. The misconception that some teachers may have is the controversial books or materials are given to the student with little to no restriction or without being previously reviewed. When a book is challenged or banned, procedures are in place to determine what course of action should be taken. Such procedures are part of the intellectually based freedoms that allow this country to be held in such high esteem, i.e., the book is not automatically tossed (or burned) but each incident is scrutinized for the best possible solution. An example of procedures that welcome the exercise of guaranteed liberties is the American Library Department’s (ALD) online Challenge Reporting Form (CRF). To remain consistent with the information found in the project, the researcher used the Challenge Reporting Form
(CRF) to categorize 100 plus selected books containing controversial topics stemming from voiced complaints; they are located within the matrix in Appendix A. The researcher suggests educators use the materials found in the matrix as a focal point for use in classroom instruction and curricula as well as that they be thorough with their justifications for further exploration of the topics of potential benefit to the students. A copy of the CRF can be found in Appendix B.

This project also argues the necessity for more scrutiny and consideration of materials paramount for introducing relevant concepts and representing minority groups. Hence, the researcher highlighted the commonality in the banned, censored, or challenged materials but emphasized materials simultaneously educational and focused primarily on narratives highlighting ethnic or sexual minorities, their struggles, conflicts, and experiences. Because ethnic, cultural, and sexual minorities have experiences that frame individual and group perceptions of standpoints alternative to their hegemonic counterparts, it is important for educators who attempt to engage and motivate diverse student populations to confront oppressive and marginalizing subject matter with boldness.

**Technique Selection**

The project uses techniques found in the book *Teacher's Act Up!* such as Forum Theatre, Legislative Theatre, and Image Theatre. The researcher adapted the applications to use in the classroom for curriculum as detailed below (Cahnnmann-Taylor & Souto Manning, 2010, p. 30).
Games for Actors and Non-Actors – To develop body awareness and solidarity through creative, physical activity within a group. Theatre games are meant to work on both literal and metaphoric levels.

Image Theater – To undo the body's habits and expand one's possibilities for physical expression. Through the use of bodies as sculptural “clay,” participants create images that reflect their perception of a situation or perspective on the world.

Forum Theater – To elicit three-part narrative structures detailing dramatic tensions between protagonists and antagonists. Participants are simultaneously spectators and actors, or spect-actors, stopping scenes and offering their own embodied scripts to bring about change in the dramatic outcome to advantage the protagonist.

Cop in the Head – To explore internal voices, fears, oppressions that prevent participants from living fully.

Rainbow of Desire – To move from one protagonist and one antagonist to explore the multivocality of a single individual with various motivations behind one's spoken words and actions. Rainbow explores how one can simultaneously occupy the positions of the oppressor and the oppressed, challenging spect-actors to perform the range of character hues that inform any interactional moment.

Invisible Theatre – To stimulate a dialogue involving the public without their knowing it has been staged.

Legislative Theatre – To draw out public opinion and create policy based on collective support.
“Writing” Theater – To encourage free writes and journaling on a subject by developing storylines or retelling stories in a descriptive manner.

The researcher analyzed the different techniques in the book Teachers Act Up!, Cahnmann-Taylor & Mariana Souto-Manning, 2010) to evaluate the best methodology that might be used in conjunction with the banned or censored materials discussed in Robert P. Doyles’s Banned Books. Due to Augusto Boal’s Theater of the Oppressed and Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed, the researcher selected books with clear protagonists and antagonists with whose narratives students can identify. The challenged and banned books are listed by the last name of the author and feature available summaries of the respective stories via the Sparknotes website so instructors can review the materials for generative themes. Since the researcher was able to select materials that were controversial, dramatic, or had generative themes, it was an aim for the narratives and themes to be augmented with course curriculum to coincide with the techniques listed above when used in instruction. An example is Image Theatre in which body language is used as the main communicative tool or “visual dialogue” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Mariana Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 65). The requirements are outlined by the facilitator who is called the Joker, because of the wild card nature of his/her role. As portrayals of living art sculptures, the Joker asks the participants to take a position and freeze so the other spect-actors can give their interpretations of what may be happening in a lived or fictional experience. Vocalizing their different perspectives translates how ideas or narratives are often seen differently by students, teachers, parents, and administrators.
(Barton & McCully, 2007). This is an example of the criteria used in selecting the appropriate techniques to use. The researcher selected controversial narratives and events to pair with the techniques listed above. In doing so, it would allow diverse interpretations of character types found within banned and challenged books to invite and expand dialogue of spect-actors and positively impact the student by drawing them into active participation and communication.

The criterion for selecting techniques using unconventional means was the selection of problematized and controversial topics, then the researcher explored techniques that would allow the dramatized narratives to be retold and examined by students. The unconventional means include the various theater stances provided by Teachers Act UP! and Theater of the Oppressed. The materials discussed in the project have intriguing and relevant common themes that can be theatrically presented to increase student engagement, participation, and academic productivity. The exercises were another tool to break teachers out of the monotony and monologues that often occur when teaching test-driven lessons. Looking further into the pre-selection of useful exercises utilized in the project, the researcher chose the previously mentioned techniques because of the ability to use the following:

1. Empirical methods, utilizing repetition of samples and scenarios enabling students to apply their various responses and allowing them an outlet to work through sensitive circumstances to give students tools to navigate their own lives or lived experiences.
2. Confrontation of difficult or uncomfortable experiences through unconventional or indirect means can move expressed action into power. Participants will acquire avenues for expression (such as found in the selected censored materials, etc.) through peer interaction. Such interaction gives students, by default, permissive acceptance through imagining solutions to problems and vicariously deconstructing problems through these experiences portrayed in underutilized resources.

3. Critical thinking learned through debating or acting techniques, is necessary for any level of mastery of subject matter. Regarding compulsory disciplines or any elective courses meant for the execution of the particular goals predetermined as necessary for the overall comprehension of the participants, applications can be altered/modified that will exhibit the development/attainment of some level of basic critical thinking skills.

4. Problem solving as a demonstrated or performance driven learning activity. Education is not as productive if it is thought of as a system of silos rather than an interconnected, organic, malleable and formative enterprise (Khan, 2012). The idea of an assembly line factory, one-size-fits-all traditional curricular pedagogy and applied instructional concepts are outdated, thereby in need of rethinking (Khan, 2012).

The researcher realized that through the use of diverse and successful techniques, such as that in Teacher's Act Up!, students can benefit. Out of the many methods applied
in the workshops and transcribed from the book, the researcher selected those well received by the workshop participants in the book. Also, the selections had to have the capability to adapt to a lesson-plan format and educational standards. The 6-12 English Language Arts (ELA) standards for literature (which includes fictional books and plays) and informational texts lists different categories from which an educator might select curriculum; the researcher adhered to the different categories, including adventure stories, realistic fiction, as well as lyrical and narrative poems when offering teachers a supplemental guide to curriculum.

**Creation of the Curriculum**

While creating the curriculum, the researcher took into consideration the concerns many educators may have with the lack of class time allotted for additional lectures and activities, classroom management, exposing students to controversy, and the responses from parents of students and administrators about the use of controversial materials. I wanted the curriculum to inspire creativity and thinking outside the box to deliver relevant and educational materials in exciting and engaging ways. For the above reasons, the curriculum needed to have a solid foundation using appropriate Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) standards while applying the *Theatre of the Oppressed* techniques found in *Teacher’s Act Up!*. Since the techniques found in *Teacher’s Act Up!* were not intended for classroom use but as a way to create learning communities in which teachers vented and problem solved on the job frustrations, techniques are unconventionally applied to lessons by using problematized scripts, narratives, and
materials to address controversy as well as to give students tools to further develop life skills. After reviewing some controversial materials, it was important to use unconventional methodologies in conjunction with the resource list on which teachers could reflect. The researcher also read the overviews for particular selections that were not reviewed in their entirety.

During the Fall 2012 semester, I took a theater class to enhance my knowledge about how the orchestration of impactful and engaging learning environments might be commuted (or translated) into a classroom of middle school and secondary school classrooms. One recurring word during the talkback/feedback sessions after the production was “organic;” how crucial character development and analysis occurred before the show was performed before an audience. Each member of the cast had to audition during the casting call before being selected to act out a character. Ironically, the casting call can be translated into an educator’s classroom in myriad ways depending on the liberties (freedoms) and constraints of the classrooms, administration, and institution involved. The researcher looked at plot overviews, character analysis, and themes of some banned books listed on Sparknotes and made comparisons to the reported reasons they were banned from Robert P. Doyle’s (2007) Banned Books. It is recommended teachers take a background survey of the students in their class to see whether there are any identifiable similarities or characteristics that can be utilized to better act out role assignments or encourage more involvement in classroom discussions.
Several variables must be accounted for during the pre-selection phases. For example, after evaluating the justifications for the challenges as noted in *Banned Books* (Doyle, 2007), *It's Perfectly Normal: A Book about Changing Bodies, Growing Up, Sex, and Sexual Health* by Robie H. Harris (2009) is something the researcher recommends as a supplement to science curriculum. The lead instructor must know with what type of demographics they are working as well as be confident in the relationships that have been cultivated and developed with the students (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010). In conversing with individuals about books that have impacted them and their lives, the *Bible* was repeatedly brought up. The *Bible* was also burned in Germany in 1624 and challenged in schools in the U.S. as recently as the 20th and 21st centuries for “lewd, indecent, and violent contents” among other reasons (Doyle, 2007, p. 25). It was important the researcher be aware of materials on all parts of the morality spectrum. The last thing educators want to do is ostracize, alienate, or marginalize a student body consisting primarily of students at-risk for early attrition or chronic (persistent) under performance.
## Selection of Controversial Materials

Table 2

*Selected Materials and Related Controversy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material Name</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Associated Controversy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Abu Graib</em> by Fernando Botero</td>
<td>Art exhibition</td>
<td>Human Rights Violations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</em> by Mark Twain</td>
<td>Book &amp; Movie</td>
<td>Racism, Class Issues, Alcoholism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Blubber</em> by Judy Blume</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Bluest Eye</em> by Toni Morrison</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Internalized Racism, Mental Illness, &amp; Rape Incest &amp; Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Bible</em></td>
<td>Book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Color Purple</em> by Alice Walker</td>
<td>Book &amp; Movie</td>
<td>Sexual Explicitness, Homosexuality, D.V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Hunger Games</em> by Suzanne Collins</td>
<td>Book &amp; Movie</td>
<td>Violence, Class Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</em> by Maya Angelou</td>
<td>Book</td>
<td>Sexual Explicitness, Rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>James and the Giant Peach</em> by Roald Dahl</td>
<td>Book &amp; Movie</td>
<td>Language, Alcohol &amp; Drug References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Push</em> by Sapphire</td>
<td>Book &amp; Movie</td>
<td>Sexual Explicitness, Homosexuality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Protagonist and Antagonist Technique

Since conflict can take many different forms, the Protagonist and Antagonist Technique was selected because it is broad enough to apply to a variety of scenarios. When feeling oppressed or powerless to change a situation to one’s favor, one may better understand the Antagonist by applying a modified version of the Rainbow of Desire Technique. The Rainbow of Desire Technique helps “to reveal to us the various hues of humanity that are always visible but seldom present on the surface” (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010, p. 113). Recalling the murder cases of Trayvon Martin or Harvey Milk, the researcher sought to gain an understanding of surprising outcomes of legal proceedings by staging different aspects of the principal issue from the standpoint of the antagonist. This technique uses real experiences to discover the motivating factors behind the antagonist's actions and explore whether the resulting outcome can be understood in order to develop new strategies to deal with the antagonist or defended as a complex dimension where the protagonist should reposition him or herself.

Summary

The art form of including theatrical activities into classroom curriculum can be an arduous task. Curricular manipulation to include censored, challenged, and banned books with the intent of talking about controversial ideas can prove to be a rewarding undertaking. It is through the overlapping of multi-disciplinary concepts that course standards can be satisfied while teachers address engaging topics for students. More detailed suggestions for teachers to supplement course curriculum are in Appendix A.
Chapter 4
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This project argues the necessity for more scrutiny and consideration of materials paramount for introducing relevant concepts and representing minority groups. Because ethnic, cultural, and sexual minorities have experiences that frame individual and group perceptions of standpoints alternative to their hegemonic counterparts, it is important for educators who attempt to engage and motivate diverse student populations to confront oppressive and marginalizing subject matter with boldness.

Since this project highlights a multi-disciplinary approach to include a wider and potentially more receptive audience, a supplementary resource and reference guide was made available. One of the Social Science Standards is to create a biographical narrative then “relate a sequence of events and communicate the sequence of events to the audience, [and] locate scenes and incidents in specific places” (Hill, 2003, para. 4). To align with the Social Science, Language arts, Visual and Performing Arts or other standards, the subjects covered may include related stories that are somewhat obscure, such as in math history it was revealed that a woman rode nude on horseback in protest because her husband had placed a heavy tax on the townspeople over which he presided. In science, Albert Einstein was able to harness the energy from the process of splitting an atom, but during his youth he had difficulty communicating with others. In fact, some researchers believed that Einstein may have had a mild form of Autism or Asperger
 Syndrome, a disability affecting the ability to empathize with others. A short discussion of some individuals with disabilities who made notable contributions with the expression of ideas or were distinguished for their remarkable contributions to society in general is also discussed in further detail in the appendices. In art, there are artists who have used their particular mastery of visual expression to influence onlookers to pay attention to their work, archive events, and make social commentary during a marked period in time (such as Mapplethorpe). Many examples of pieces and projects are used as conversational pieces or for persuading people to attend a gallery to look at their exhibition by offending or attracting sensibilities. Beyond the techniques applied in the project, students can also be prompted to use these controversial examples to write persuasive or expository compositions; the latter includes analytical essays and research reports that also adhere to the standards. The project allows educators to evaluate the perceived importance of such material to academic subject matter as well as to society on a national and global scale.

The pursuit of this project allowed me to express individual creativity with cultural, ethnic, and feminist pedagogy within a non-traditional curricular approach. I encourage the reader to evaluate his or her own target demographic while deciding which methods are relevant and effective within his or her respective classroom. With knowledge from essays by authors such as bell hooks and Mabel McKay, this study interprets feminist pedagogy as presenting a medium to which various cultures can relate within the predetermined parameters for counter-hegemonic education philosophy. The
project encourages the engagement of students with songs that accomplish both aims of reducing negative stressors and engaging young learners through modeling relevant cultural-nationalistic identification. As a result, I seek an expected outcome allowing a discourse for change in subjective processes but also in measurable academic performance through a change in pedagogy and procedures within institutions.

By highlighting the most commonly challenged topics suitable for grades 6-12, the researcher's intention was to give educators an advanced look at the topics they may encounter when selecting sensational or controversial books. In so doing, the teachers can more easily navigate controversial subject matter when topics arise or create lesson plans centered on the subjects. Simultaneously, the researcher informs the educator on how to check on the status of the materials where they were challenged to help determine the suitability for the students and the reaction of the parents. Whether the grounds for the challenge are cultural, sexual, social, value-based, or a combination of the aforementioned categories makes a difference on how the subject area is approached by adults and received by students.

While in junior high school, the teacher in my advanced English class copied the script *Les Miserable* and distributed it to each student in the class. We would bring the collated scripts back to our class and I would pull my copy from my backpack every session. This book was also challenged and voted out of a library in Philadelphia, Pa (Doyle, 2007). On some mornings, I recall her telling the class to put our desks into a circle, then she would assign us different roles and we would go through the scenes
aloud. The class culminated by listening to an audiotape of the play, and then all of us watched an early version of the movie production. This acted as an agglutinate, solidifying the content in our minds, which created a lasting impression years after many thorough discussions attempting to interpret the messages the author/playwright was aiming to convey about class struggle. In lieu of the script analysis from a couple decades ago, this project aims to mimic some of the results of this experience and infuse theatrical techniques to further impress critical thinking and problem solving skills upon students. Through this culminating experience, the author looked back to the script-analyzing experience with *Les Miserables* in which class struggle was discussed. The author was formally introduced to ideas relating to social justice during the experience in which circumstances leading to the incarceration of individuals and other similar issues were broached. Within this classroom setting, the author developed a sustaining appreciation of the experience as well as the methodology, which helped me digest pedagogy in an innovative way.

In the project, the reader will also find an example of the lyrics from *Les Miserables* that help convey the perspective of the main characters, protagonists and antagonists. Discussing social issues such as suicide, prostitution, or the exploration of political and class-centered viewpoints are more definitive areas which historical fiction can be applicable during lectures rather than merely edu-acting. “Writing” theater may also be employed by the teacher in combination with the *Theatre of the Oppressed* techniques to tackle difficult issues to act out in the imagination of the student by doing
essays attempting to understand the protagonist or figuring alternative solutions to a problem the antagonist encounters.

The book *The Color Purple* was adapted into a Broadway musical in 2005. It is the researcher’s suggestion teachers use the transcripts of the musical in the classroom to further discuss rape, domestic violence, women's camaraderie, and resilience. It is through the demonstration of protagonist characters gaining empowerment by gaining independence that students might connect with the details in the book and apply the problem-solving techniques found in class discussions to improve their lives. During scene reenactment and discussing alternatives for the characters portrayed challenging and controversial subjects can be confronted and the possibility of multiple solutions can develop.

After transitioning from middle school and moving on to high school, again I encountered a text that sparked a fuse, awaking an ensuing passion in my spirit. The book was titled *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston. It was a book chosen due to another English teacher prompting me to begin an independent pursuit to find a novel for an assigned book report. Unbeknownst to him, this task would lead to the fulfillment of a void I expressed was lacking in the recommended book list provided. This void derived from an interest in finding a depiction, or a voice of fictional and non-fictional characters representing an often invalidated yet important facet of my own identity. This “scavenger hunt” helped me make new connections about my post-secondary academic interests and my evolution in the study of Black women and women
of color. This book also was challenged by a parent for sexual explicitness (Doyle, 2007).

This project seeks to work in tandem with teacher-selected applications and assist in modifications of lesson plans and curricular resources approved by the administration for inclusion with general classroom curricula. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was subsequently turned into a for-TV movie and is also a suggested addition to course curriculum. As previously noted, the book report, which was impactful for me and my subsequent experiences, would have generated more power during active participation through ImprovEd techniques integrated within the course curriculum rather than solely through the process of searching for these self-defining narratives independent of my classmates. The significance of these books and plays moved beyond the realm of my previous adolescent understanding but became the foundation for academic pursuits and specifically this project.

The hypothesis is that if resources and tools are made available that empower students to develop authority in their own educational experiences, it will translate into their lives, independent from school or institutions of formalized instruction. If the resource guide and the associated techniques found within the researched pedagogical methodology are tailored for the individual needs of the educator who keeps in mind the educational needs of their students in a holistic manner, the benefits should be quantifiable with academic performance outcomes. Qualifiable academic responses from the students should accompany the quantifiable academic outcomes, which may be
attained by variables not necessarily measurable by this project. Students might demonstrate more authority over the material as a direct correlation to the normal response by individuals who feel marginalized or believe their voice has been intentionally and systematically suppressed. The ownership of the more accurate portrayals, empowering inclusions in curriculum, and diverse expressions will also enable the participants to begin to envision, imagine, and construct a future for themselves which they had not previous considered as an option.

Because every individual comes from a diverse set of experiences and backgrounds, it may be difficult for the educator to select one book that can be generalizable to the students’ experiences and then be acted out theatrically. In addition to the curriculum already taught to the students, there is engagement in movies not reflected in other aspects of instruction. The students are programmed through entertainment but often lack the understanding or discipline to move toward the associated foundational texts without external motivation. Seeking out solutions to problems generated by the storylines found in challenged and banned texts will serve as a motivating factor during scene reenactment. Likewise, the scene participants rehearsing and reenacting the scenes repeatedly should begin to cue the students to have more informed responses when encountering similar scenarios outside of the classroom. These informal sources of education can be utilized for the purposes of thematic learning as well as character development in the students. This project uses a small selection of banned books as examples of how ImprovED works within the confines of the classroom.
The Project: ImprovED

Design

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this project is to engage students through narratives either based in language arts, cultural arts, theater arts, visual or scripted portrayals of characters who have encountered struggle, controversy, or multidisciplinary subject-oriented themes through (predetermined purposeful) interactions. During the interaction, students will engage in an edu-acted dialogue, which is educational acting (edu-acted) with resolute improvisations and reenactments in front of an audience composed primarily of their peers, similar to when a student volunteers or is selected to come up to the board to perform or explain how to do a problem. After this act is completed, the students will repeat the exercise with interjections, or scheduled improvising, which will change the outcome of the enacted narrative. The teacher-led facilitation of this activity will be followed by the students analyzing the situations in response to the new illustrations. These demonstrations will address several areas, primarily translating the spect-actors (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010) as well as the actors into social scientists, critical thinkers, and change makers by discussing relevant issues specific to their own lives and more generally in society as a whole.

For the facilitator to be an effective coordinator, a body of work selected from the resource guide should be performed in a control group before an initial introduction to the class. In the book Banned Books: Challenging our Freedom to Read by Robert P. Doyle (2010), several of the selected books and the reasons for their subsequent banning are
discussed and utilized as talking points using a non-traditional pedagogy. Because the banned books are often discussing sensitive subject matter that deals with topics ranging from incest to the use of explicit language, it is imperative ImprovED is used as a guideline when amending texts the middle school and high school audiences use so as to not offend or be overtly judgmental with acceptable responses made within the predetermined parameters.

In the book *Teachers Act Up! Creating Multicultural Learning Communities through Theater* (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010), the participating educators discussed difficult and controversial subject matter through theater arts exercises. This project uses a scaffolding approach by building upon prior knowledge while researching methods about dramatics and language arts education as a focal point for enriching K-12 educational experiences. In the book *Teachers ACT UP!*, the workshops and trainings detailed critical discourse analysis and alternative performances that can bring about solutions to common problems in educators’ professional lives. Oppressive circumstances and conflicts while in the classroom may affect enthusiasm and performance of educators in subconscious ways. This directly affects relationships of power in teacher-centered practices, in which the teacher is viewed as the agent who delineates information to students and students being the receptacles waiting for information. Thus, we view the relationship between student and teacher to be unequal with the teacher holding most of the information and the student dependent on the teacher, recreating a banking system (Freire, 1970) within the classroom.
In response to the banking system, one may look at critical pedagogy from Freire with a theatrical approach by Augusto Boal called the *Theatre of the Oppressed* (T.O.) as a basis for the research project. Underneath is the premise that rehearsing possibilities is, in many aspects, a liberating experience for the participants. One way is that it serves as an outlet by allowing the element of play into a stressful arena. Another way this process is an enhancement to normal coping strategies is that it gives the participants the chance to act out possibilities that deal with the problem being discussed. It allows new dialogue and movement in ways not previously seen as an option by allowing a new support system to develop for the participants.

The researcher adapted the *Theater of the Oppressed*, Invisible Theater from the works of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal to explain and utilize the pedagogical reference in the project. In standardized test-driven teaching practices common in K-12 schools in the U.S., the researcher uses a theatrically based teaching practice requiring non-verbal communication including non-constricting body movements as a basis for this project. I deviated from the book's approach by recommending the use of a thematic approach in the classroom with the students.

Using selections from frequently banned or censored text and materials available to K-12 teachers, I propose the selections be broken into scenes to be acted out by the students as a book review or “chi”ology lesson as a reflective exercise to solidify ideas proposed by the book's author(s). The teacher, for the purposes of the study, will be the joker, defined as the wild card or mediator and complicates the exercises of the spect-
actors and at points alternating the student spect-actors. The spect-actors are both spectators and actors in the alternating scenes. In this project, I sought ways to liberate educators and students from oppressive, disengaging curricular choices and give them liberating and interesting approaches to suppressed subject matter.

**Novelty Attachment**

Supplementary texts used in conjunction with lesson plans to frame contexts of core subject matter should be more reflective of the diverse populations comprising this nation (Hess, 2011). Perception is important and critical to credibility. It is important for reading materials such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain to be discussed in the classroom to further the conversation on race relations and develop critical thinking about the use of derogatory terminology in society. Teachers can use excerpts from the book to not only talk about a specific era during the past but to also talk about censorship and the use of the “n”-word in music, movies, and other parts of popular culture. The selection of banned and censored materials used in this project suggests the phenomena of novelty attachment and content substitution are responsible for the lack of diverse selections of curricula to integrate into primarily middle and secondary schools filled with often uninformed educators (Robelen, 2011). The unawareness is too often normalized in K-12 settings.

Novelty attachment, as it applies to this project, is when a subject is discussed briefly or superficially, but the applications regarding how it relates to core content is excluded. This may leave the students with the impression that the information they
previously learned is sufficient although it may be erroneous or biased. The researcher selected materials and topics that were engaging both to the researcher in earlier years as a K-12 student that are also interesting to expound upon as an adult. By specifically engaging students with controversial topics, one will have a more accurate account of what subjects to which they are being introduced and allot adequate time to research in order to inspire more critical discourse. But, the teachers should be aware of where they themselves stand on an issue, be willing to get feedback about what they believe, and develop their own understanding of materials that encourage novelty attachment. After reading several of the books highlighted in the guide, the researcher discourages the use of materials that have not been reviewed thoroughly by the educator presenting them. In personalizing supplementary materials to suit the confines of the classroom, the researcher revisited some of the materials or read a synopsis of the materials offered as examples of acceptable texts to use in the classroom. Since there are previous challenges to the various materials, the use of controversial materials can be defended more succinctly if the sensationalized or sensitive nature of the materials happens to be questioned by parents or administrators.

**SB48**

SB 48, a law passed in California in 2010, also called the Fair Education Act, was passed and signed by Governor Jerry Brown and has an influence on this project. SB 48 was meant to give a more equitable representation in K-12 curriculum to historically marginalized or underrepresented groups. The standards primarily reflecting national
contributions and contributors of heterosexual, white male, patriarchal, hegemonic standards (bell hooks, 1994) was seen as too narrow for our multicultural, multiethnic, non-traditional students’ perspectives as well as their vibrant stories. The fabric of the nation is and has been a conglomerate of individuals from diverse, complex backgrounds and a statement reflecting these contributors was a necessary step to re-engage populations disproportionately matriculating out of the educational system often viewed as the primary indicator of future economic viability (Kozol, 1991). Due to SB 48, which will come into effect in 2014, this project offers a supplementary for texts and curricular and instructional changes supported by a shift in the standards, embracing a more focused panoramic of the ancestors who breathed life into the doctrines that guide the (interpretations of the) U.S. Constitution.

**Conclusion**

Although the researcher had hoped to pool more information from the topics listed on the ALA's Challenge Database Form, ImprovED has a limited number of resources within it. The reason for the limited number of lessons is because the lyrics included were matched with the grounds by which the materials were challenged and needed to be relevant to the topic. A goal of the project was not to retell the storylines but to further explore the sensational subject matter that led to the challenging, restricting or banning of the books. The sensational subject matter was the grounds by which the teacher’s guide was created. The guide was created for teachers to use with the students so students might think more critically about the problems occurring with the
protagonists and antagonist (which in turn may relate to their own lives), rather than trying to persuade spect-actors to recreate realistic performances. Emerging issues can be highlighted with modularized approaches, which, if focused properly, can prove to be an impactful method for students to problem solve (Ezzedeen, 2008).

I have listed several controversial topics the project covers, including a range of issues from domestic violence to racism. The subject of bullying was not discussed in the ImprovED lessons; rather, it is only mentioned peripherally in the guide that was provided for educators to introduce into classrooms. Beyond the antagonist and protagonist techniques that may be applied, the book *Blubber* by Judy Blume portrays a classroom environment in which bullying becomes a prominent issue for one of the students. Because there was not an adaptation into a screenplay, the researcher chose to omit the topic from the guide since the techniques were not as applicable to the focus of the project. Otherwise, the “writer's” theater as previously mentioned might be a better route when considering ways to have discourse about the sensational issue of bullying that also occurs within the book.

When the ideas behind the project’s inception were presented to a graduate level class this semester, the author received much positive feedback from the professor of the course and the students within the class. The audience filled out an evaluation form (see Appendix C). One student expressed anticipation for the publishing of the project by stating, “[they] would like to see specific examples for the books individually.” Overwhelmingly, the students said controversial topics are important to address in the
classroom and the themes discussed in banned and challenged books could assist in conveying generative themes to the students. One teacher currently working with second grade students believed teachers would benefit from learning new teaching strategies for teaching controversial subject matter. The same teacher, however, when asked if any of the new ideas presented could be used in her classroom instruction said the books discussed were primarily “higher level” so she would not find the materials to be as useful to her classroom unless more resources for elementary-aged students were made available. The respondent followed up by saying they had “very diverse options to teach with” at their school.

The surveys were distributed right after the presentation ended, during the question and answer portion of the presentation. The feedback was mostly consistent in that the students believed the ImprovEd course description was easy to understand. The theories by Paulo Friere and Augusto Boal were briefly touched upon as well as justifications for the project, so it was mentioned by some students that the examples from the lessons in the appendix were significant to the project and needed more emphasis in the presentation. Since they were interested more in specific examples, I hoped their interest would translate into them reading the final product. One person who responded to the questionnaire said she would like to “read [my] thesis when [I] am done as it seems interesting and has a lot of value in getting the students interested/actively learning.”
The researcher found that although the students reported to have a background on the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Friere, they did not, however, have prior knowledge of the *Theater of the Oppressed*, coined by Augusto Boal who was inspired by Friere. Although the students were hoping to see more examples of the actual lessons, the researcher had a limited amount of time to present and wanted to impress upon them the impact the book *Teachers Act Up!* had on the project in terms of choosing and adapting strategies. Because the students, also teachers, wanted to utilize the concepts in the project for their own classroom instructions, there were comments reflecting the desire to get more specific ideas introduced during the presentation.
APPENDIX A

ImprovEd
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Introduction

Overview

The purpose of this project is to engage students through narratives either based in language arts, cultural arts, theater arts, or visual or scripted portrayals of characters who have encountered struggle, controversy, or multidisciplinary subject-oriented themes through (predetermined, purposeful) interactions. The researcher took into consideration different factors that may influence the curricular selections educators make when wanting to discuss controversial topics in conjunction with the standards outlined for the subjects they teach. There is a matrix provided that includes 100 banned and challenged books and materials, listed in alphabetical order. In each row contains the corresponding author, the year it was published, the grade level recommendations, the controversy which led to the challenges or censorship, subjects that may be relevant to the discussion of the material, whether summaries and character information can be found on the website Sparknotes, and which techniques from ImprovEd are suggested applications. The techniques are variations from Act Up! and “Writing” theater to make a total of eight options to choose from to use for activities in conjunction with the correlating resources. The matrix is to allow educators easier access to resources and useful ideas that may be incorporated into the classroom.

The suggestions of activities, discussions of controversial subject matter, and variations of scene reenactments are included for 10 controversial topics presented via three different works: The Color Purple, Les Miserables, and Abu Graib by Botero. Questions for teachers to ask their students after the teachers conduct a content analysis are included in the lessons. Different age groups may respond very differently to each controversial material, so please select the materials with care and with purpose. Instructions for the theater reenactments, including the number of students needed, are also incorporated.

There is a diverse array of subject matter and as an educator, you may feel some ideas are more pressing to discuss in light of your class makeup. It is at the discretion of the teacher whether to use the suggestions or not. Please feel free to photocopy any of the lessons as well as the matrix at will and adapt it for your specific needs.

The material from The Color Purple are lyrics from the Broadway musical version. The lyrics were written by Brenda Russell, Allee Willis, and Stephen Bray and premiered December 1, 2005. The lessons utilizing lyrics from the musical Les Miserables are next. They were written by Herbert Kretzmer. The third material used are pictures of Abu Graib painted by Fernando Botero. The paintings are explicit so there is a detailed warning for teachers to use caution when utilizing them for in-class use and to take proper precautions in notifying the students’ parents and guardians.
Rationale

The project uses techniques found in the book *Teacher's Act Up!*, such as Forum Theatre, “Writing” Theatre, and Image Theatre and adapts the applications to use in the classroom for curricula as detailed below (Cahnnmann-Taylor & Souto Manning, 2010, p. 30).

1. Games for Actors and Non-Actors – To develop body awareness and solidarity through creative, physical activity within a group. Theatre games are meant to work on both literal and metaphorical levels.

2. Image Theater – To undo the body's habits and expand one's possibilities for physical expression. Through the use of bodies as sculptural “clay,” participants create images that reflect their perception of a situation or perspective on the world.

3. Forum Theater – To elicit three-part narrative structures detailing dramatic tensions between protagonists and antagonists. Participants are simultaneously spectators and actors, or spect-actors, stopping scenes and offering their own embodied scripts to bring about change in the dramatic outcome to advantage the protagonist.

4. Cop in the Head – To explore internal voices, fears, oppressions that prevent participants from living fully.

5. Rainbow of Desire – To move from one protagonist and one antagonist to explore the multivocality of a single individual with various motivations behind one's spoken words and actions. Rainbow explores how one can simultaneously occupy the positions of the oppressor and the oppressed, challenging spect-actors to perform the range of character hues that inform any interactional moment.

6. Invisible Theatre – To stimulate a dialogue involving the public without their knowing it has been staged.

7. Legislative Theatre – To draw out public opinion and create policy based on collective support.

8. “Writing” Theater – To encourage free writes and journaling on a subject by developing storylines or retelling stories in a descriptive manner.

The lessons are best done with the chairs in a circle or a U-shape. If there is enough room in the front of the classroom, the teacher may stage the scene reenactment in that area.

The matrix provided correlates with the eight techniques listed above. I hope that the resources are found to be helpful as you visit or revisit some of the listed books found within the Guide for Teacher’s to Evaluate Banned and Challenged Books portion of the appendices. Please feel free to fill out the questionnaire and cite the project ImprovEd in your future endeavors. Thank you for your interest and I hope that you gain a better appreciation for these materials and get new ideas to apply in your own classrooms or learning environments.
MUSICAL(S): THE COLOR PURPLE & LES MISERABLES
Introduction to *The Color Purple* Lessons

**Lesson Plan**

The students will receive the analysis of characters from the teacher to familiarize themselves with the perspectives of the characters and the roles they will be using for scene reenactments. The teacher may opt to provide the list of characters to the students during the class and then assign roles so more or less desirable characters will be equally assigned. The goal is to have equal participation that honors the perspectives of the protagonists and antagonists in the scenes being reenacted so gendered preferences will not be an issue for students.

Begin with warm up exercises to create a safe and comfortable environment for the students/spect-actors. These warm up activities should last for about three to five minutes before the actual scene reenactment occurs in order to decrease inhibitions and put the student spect-actors in the proper mindset for serious discussion and active participation. Prior to each scene reenactment, the students will review the provided character analysis so all the students can participate even if the character they have been assigned isn’t in the scene being acted out. Students can rotate as spect-actors when appropriate as prompted by the teacher/facilitator who acts as the joker or wild card during the scene reenactments.

During the scene reenactment, the character’s lines will be read by the student that the character is assigned to. Small groups should be formed that will demonstrate their interpretations of the scene in rotations. As a class, the lyrics will be read aloud and then the appropriate theater application will be employed. For example, in the song below titled *Huckleberry Pie/Mysterious Ways* the scene is being reenacted using “Writing” Theater. This is where different outcomes are entertained as the spect-actors analyze the scene’s lyrics and speculate about the activity occurring during the scene.

**STANDARDS:**

Language Arts Standards:

1. Exchange information and ideas with others through oral collaborative discussions on a range of social and academic topics.
2. Reading closely literary and informational texts and viewing multimedia to determine how meaning is conveyed explicitly and implicitly through language.
3. Selecting and applying varied and precise vocabulary and other language resources to effectively convey ideas.
Social Studies Standards:

4. Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors’ use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.

Visual and Performing Arts Standards:

1. Make acting choices, using script analysis, character research, reflection, and revision through the rehearsal process.
2. Describe the ways in which playwrights reflect and influence their culture in such works as *Raisin in the Sun*.
3. Compare a traditional interpretation of a play with a nontraditional interpretation and defend the merits of the different interpretations.
4. Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills.
5. Describe how skills acquired in theatre may be applied to other content areas and careers.

**Analysis of Characters**

**Celie** – The protagonist and narrator of *The Color Purple*. Celie is a poor, uneducated black woman with a sad personal history. She survives a stepfather who rapes her and steals her babies and also survives an abusive husband. As an adult, Celie befriends and finds intimacy with a blues singer, Shug Avery, who gradually helps Celie find her voice. By the end of the novel, Celie is a happy, independent, and self-confident woman (Sparknotes.com, 2013a, para. 1).

**Nettie** – Celie’s younger sister, whom Mr. ______ initially wanted to marry. Nettie runs from Alphonso to Mr. ______, and later runs away from Mr. ______. She meets a husband-and-wife pair of missionaries, Samuel and Corrine. With them, she moves to Africa to preach. Nettie becomes the caretaker of Samuel and Corrine’s adopted children (who, Nettie later learns, are Celie’s biological children, whom Celie and Nettie’s stepfather stole and subsequently sold) and faithfully writes letters to Celie for decades. Nettie’s experiences in Africa broaden the novel’s scope, introducing issues of imperialism and pan-African struggles (Sparknotes.com, 2013a, para. 2).
Mr. ______ – Celie’s husband, who abuses her for years. Mr. _______, whose first name is Albert, pines away for Shug during his marriage to Celie and hides Nettie’s letters to Celie in his trunk for decades. After Celie finally defies Mr. _______, denouncing him for his abuse, he undergoes a deep personal transformation, reassessing his life and eventually becoming friends with Celie (Sparknotes.com, 2013a, para. 3).

Shug Avery – A sultry blues singer who first appears as Mr. ______’s mistress. Shug becomes Celie’s friend and eventually her lover, all the while remaining a gentle mentor who helps Celie evolve into an independent and assertive woman. Shug does not at first appear to be the mothering kind, yet she nurtures Celie physically, spiritually, and emotionally. Shug gives Celie the idea of sewing pants for a living (Sparknotes.com, 2013a, para. 4).

Harpo – Mr. ______’s eldest son. Many of Harpo’s actions overturn stereotypical gender roles. He confesses to Celie about his love for Sofia, cries in her arms, enjoys cooking and housework, kisses his children, and marries an independent woman, Sofia. However, Mr. ______’s expectations of stereotypical male dominance convince Harpo that he needs to beat Sofia. His efforts at abusing Sofia fail, since she is much stronger than he is. At the end of the novel, Harpo reforms his ways, and he and Sofia reconcile and save their marriage (Sparknotes.com, 2013a, para. 5).

Sofia – A large, fiercely independent woman who befriends Celie and marries Harpo. Sofia refuses to submit to whites, men, or anyone else who tries to dominate her. After defying the town’s mayor, Sophia is sentenced to twelve years in jail, but the sentence is later commuted to twelve years labor as the mayor’s maid. The hardship Sofia endures serves as a reminder of the costs of resistance and the difficulties of combating cultural and institutional racism (Sparknotes.com, 2013a, para. 6).

Procedures:

Analyze the song and assign the characters an appropriate role. Write down what the characters are doing during the song and then reenact the scene through role playing. Consider variations that may improve the scene that the song describes.

Teacher/Facilitator Role: Deconstruct complex subject matter by giving prompts to the students to aid them in exploring the characters’ roles in the script or book selected. The teacher’s role is to push the students into considering other alternative resolutions and to help them decide if the solutions are realistic or not within the circumstances and confines of the narrative.

Controversial Subject Matter: Teen Pregnancy. In the opening scene Protagonist Celie is a pregnant teen.
Discussion: What do you know/think about teen pregnancy? How important do you feel the relationship between Celie (the protagonist) and Nettie (Ciele's sister) is to Celie? What do you think about the way Celie’s sister Nettie sticks up for Celie by letting others know Celie doesn’t feel well? How do you think it will affect Celie's self-esteem being pregnant and knowing her condition is being talked about and questioned in a public place? Nettie seems to have an awareness of things that go on around her, what do you think about her comment about the sisters approaching a marrying age?

Number of People: 5-7 (It would be possible to allow more spect-actors to participate but it could be exhausting and unnecessary to complicate the exercise.)

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Teachers should identify notable points that occur to characters during the narration of the song.

Scene Reenactment: What is the perception Nettie has of women’s treatment and the expectations men had of them as detailed by her comment about how women should act when the men are drinking? Show, not tell, how it might be for Celie entering church. Isolate Celie and Pa’s characters. Next, instruct the student(s) playing Celie to silently act as meek or timid. Then instruct the student playing Pa to be domineering or threatening toward Celie. Demonstrate the unequal distribution of power by having Celie’s character portray a cowering and nervous individual, whereas Pa’s character physically tries to use power and space to build or confidence. Again, there shouldn’t be any speaking from the character’s during this scene analysis. The facilitator should help the student spect-actors identify significant influences in the reactions of the characters.

Are the women in the church looking down on Celie, are they gossiping about Celie’s pregnancy out of sympathy for her or just disappointment? Do you believe that the women in the church are powerless to assist Celie because of the women’s role in their community during that time? What do you think is really happening with the children that Celie is having? Do you believe that the father is really taking the babies into the forest and killing them?

Joker: Ask the student spect-actors how some of the church members might help increase Celie's confidence? For instance should they ask to help her through childbirth? Should the church members do something small such as sit with her during church services and separate from gossiping members of the congregation? Again, instruct the spect-actors to show what this would look like rather than tell.
**Wrap-Up/Cool Down:** The Joker asks the spec-actors what they learned about power dynamics between the protagonist character Celie and antagonist character Pa. What did the body language portray during the scene reenactments? What ideas can the spect-actors extract from the relationship between Celie and Pa? What ideas can the spect-actors extract from the relationship between Celie and Nettie? If there are different interpretations, how can they be discussed among the spect-actors so opposing viewpoints are understood more clearly? Do a quick write about how you can apply either the analysis of characters’ body language in your own life or describe the tools you have learned and are able to apply in a similar scenario.
Song: “Huckleberry Pie/Mysterious Ways”

CELIE
HEY, SISTA, WHATCHA GON' DO …
NETTIE
GOIN' DOWN BY THE RIVER
GONNA PLAY WITH YOU.
CELIE
PAPA DON'T LIKE NO SCREAMIN' 'ROUND HERE,
NETTIE
NO LIP FROM THE WOMAN WHEN THEY CHUG THAT BEER.
NETTIE & CELIE
SHO NUFF SUN GON' SHINE.
GONNA BE GROWN LADIES OF THE MARRYIN' KIND.
NETTIE
SHO NUFF MOON GON' RISE
LIKE A HUCKLEBERRY PIE
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SKY.
CELIE
GON' BE ALRIGHT
GON' BE ALRIGHT…
SOLOIST
IT'S SUNDAY MORNING …
SOLOIST DARLENE DORIS JARENE
… SO MAKE A JOYFUL
DARLENE
NOISE JOYFUL
Hallelujah!
SOLOIST & CHURCH LADIES
TODAY'S THE DAY
GOD HATH MADE.
SOLOIST DORIS JARENE DARLENE
IT'S SUNDAY SUNDAY!
DARLENE
IT'S SUNDAY Sing it, sista!
SOLOIST & CHURCH LADIES
IT'S SUNDAY SUNDAY!
JOYFUL NOISE
SOLOIST
UNT0 THE
LORD!

SOLOIST
WHEN THE KING THREW DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN,
ENSEMBLE
THE GOOD LORD WORKS
IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS!

SOLOIST
GOD SENT A MIGHTY ANGEL,
BROUGHT HIM OUT AGAIN.
ENSEMBLE
YES, THE GOOD LORD WORKS
IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS!

SOLOIST
WHEN GOD SAW THE WICKED HE KNEW WHAT TO DO.
SAID, NOAH, BRING THE ANIMALS TWO BY TWO.
'CUZ I'M GONNA KEEP YOUR BOAT AFLOAT FOR 40 DAYS.
SOLOIST & ENSEMBLE
'CUZ THE GOOD LORD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS.
ENSEMBLE
YES, THE GOOD LORD WORKS
IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS.

ENSEMBLE
AH OOM AH OOOM
AH OOM AH OOOM
AH OOM AH OOOM
AH OOM AH OOOM
AH OOM AH OOOM

PA
Celie! Come on Celie, you slow as molasses.
NETTIE
Celie not feelin' good, Pa. She's goin' as fast as she can.
PA
Celie!

And finally Celie enters, fourteen years old and hugely pregnant. Pa stumps on to
church followed by a handsome man who has his eye on Nettie. The man's children
are with him. Nettie goes to help Celie.

CELIE
I'm sorry, Pa.

As Nettie and Celie walk past, the Church Ladies stop Celie. Pa looks back for Nettie.

PA
Nettie!
JARENE
Whatchu gon' call your baby, chile?

CELIE
If it's a boy, I'm gon' call this one Adam. An' the last one name Olivia.

PA
Celie!

JARENE
Livin' with that man what killed their mama. Now it gon' kill them too.

DORIS JARENE DARLENE
I HEARD ABOUT PO'
CHILE CELIE -

HEARD ABOUT PO' ALREADY RUINT
CHILE CELIE
TWO TIMES!

HEARD ABOUT PO' ALREADY RUINT
CHILE CELIE
TWO TIMES! SHE ONLY 14 YEARS OLD
WHO DA DADDY?
WHO DA DADDY?
WHO DA DADDY?
WHO DA DADDY?
WHO DA DADDY?
WHO DA DADDY?
WHO DA DADDY?
WHO DA DADDY?
CHURCH LADIES
NODBODY KNOW!
I HEAR HER PA TAKE HER CHIRREN
INTO THE WOODS AND DONE KILT THEM.

SOLOIST
DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME TRYIN' TO WRASSLE
WITH YOUR WORLDLY WOE,
ENSEMBLE
THE GOOD LORD WORKS
IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS.
SOLOIST
'CAUSE GOD WATCHIN' OVER YOU
WHEREVER YOU GO.
ENSEMBLE
YES, THE GOOD LORD WORKS
IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS.
SOLOIST ENSEMBLE
IF YOUR PORE BACK BREAKIN' OOOOH
UNDER ALL THAT WEIGHT OOOOH
ST. PETER GONNA LIFT IT OOOOH
AT THE PEARLY GATE. OOOOH
LET THE SPIRIT WALK BESIDE YOU
ON YOUR DARKEST DAYS.
ENSEMBLE
OH, THE GOOD LORD WORKS
IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS.
PREACHER
Now none of us know what the Lord's got planned for us, no sir.
So I want y'all to stop your moanin' and quit your groanin'.
Just throw awayyyyy your hankerchiefs.
Put your hand in His and follow where He leads. Lord have mercy!
That's what I'm talkin' about!
Don't you worry, now. 'Cause no matter what happens, I need you to know that here in church today, the Good Lord is walkin' witcha.
ENSEMBLE
WALKIN'!
PREACHER
THE GOOD LORD IS TALKIN' WITCHA -
ENSEMBLE
TALKIN'!
CHURCH LADIES
WALKIN' WITCHA,
TALKIN' WITCHA,
WHEN THE DEVIL START SQUAWKIN' WITCHA,
GOD WON'T QUITCHA.
CHURCH LADIES
NO HE WON'T!
ENSEMBLE
YES HE WORKS!
SOLOIST
WHOA, HE WALKIN'
ENSEMBLE
YES HE WORKS!
SOLOIST
YES HE WALKS
ENSEMBLE
YES HE WORKS!
SOLOIST
EVERYDAY
ENSEMBLE
YES HE WORKS!
SOLOIST
OH, IN EVERY WAY
ENSEMBLE 1 CHURCH LADIES
YES HE WORKS! WALKIN' WITCHA
YES HE WORKS! TALKIN' WITCHA
YES HE WORKS! WHEN THE DEVIL START
SQUAWKIN' WITCHA,
YES HE WORKS! GOD WON'T QUITCHA,
NO, HE WON'T.
YES HE WORKS! WORKS!
YES HE WORKS! WORKS!
ENSEMBLE 1 ENSEMBLE 2 CHURCH LADIES
YES HE WORKS! WORKS! WALKIN' WITCHA
YES HE WORKS! WORKS! TALKIN' WITCHA
YES HE WORKS! WORKS! WHEN THE DEVIL START
SQUAWKIN' WITCHA,
YES HE WORKS! WORKS! GOD WON'T QUITCHA,
NO, HE WON'T!
ENSEMBLE SOLOIST
YES HE WORKS! YES HE
YES HE WORKS! WORKS!
CELIE
Dear God!
ENSEMBLE
WORKS!
CELIE
Dear God!
2
SOLOIST
YOU KNOW THAT GOD WORKS . . .
ENSEMBLE
IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS -
DARLENE
SO MAKE A
ENSEMBLE DARLENE DORIS JARENE
JOY JOYFUL
NOISE
JOYFUL
NOISE
THROW YOUR HANDS UP
I SAID, A
JOYFUL
NOISE GET UP ON
YOUR FEET
JOYFUL
NOISE
JOYFUL
JOYFUL
JOYFUL
JOYFUL
JOYFUL
JOYFUL
PREACHER
COME ON!
AND MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE!
ENSEMBLE
UNTO THE LORD!
Introduction to the Song: “Somebodies Gonna Love You”

Lesson Plan:

The students will receive the character analysis from the teacher to familiarize themselves with the perspectives of the characters and the roles they will be using for scene reenactments. The teacher may opt to provide the list of characters to the students during the class and then assign roles so more or less desirable characters will be equally assigned. The goal is to have equal participation that honors the perspectives of the protagonists and antagonists in the scenes being reenacted so gendered preferences will not be an issue for students.

Begin with warm-up exercises to create a safe and comfortable environment for the students/spect-actors. These warm up activities should last for about three to five minutes before the actual scene reenactment occurs in order to decrease inhibitions and put the student spect-actors in the proper mindset for serious discussion and active participation. Prior to each scene reenactment, the students will review the provided character analysis so all the students can participate even if the character they have been assigned isn’t in the scene being acted out. Students can rotate as spect-actors when appropriate as prompted by the teacher/facilitator who acts as the joker or wild card during the scene reenactments.

During the scene reenactment, the character’s lines will be read by the student assigned that character. Small groups should be formed that will demonstrate their interpretations of the scene in rotations. As a class, the lyrics will be read aloud and then the appropriate theater application will be employed. For example, in the song *Somebodies Gonna Love You*, the scene is being reenacted using Forum Theater. This is where different outcomes are entertained as the spect-actors give rationales for their activity during the scene or make the scene interactions fluid by allowing the other spect-actors to determine how they affect the scene.

Standards:

Language Arts Standards:

1. Exchange information and ideas with others through oral collaborative discussions on a range of social and academic topics.
2. Reading closely literary and informational texts and viewing multimedia to determine how meaning is conveyed explicitly and implicitly through language.
3. Selecting and applying varied and precise vocabulary and other language resources to effectively convey ideas.
Social Studies Standards:

1. Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.

Visual and Performing Arts Standards:

1. Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them.
2. Make acting choices, using script analysis, character research, reflection, and revision through the rehearsal process.
3. Compare a traditional interpretation of a play with a nontraditional interpretation and defend the merits of the different interpretations.
4. Connecting and applying what is learned in theatre, film/video, and electronic media to other art forms and subject areas and to careers.
5. Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills.

Procedures:

Analyze the song and assign the students an appropriate role from the characters presented in the song. Write down what the characters are doing during the song and then reenact the scene through role playing. Consider variations that may improve the scene the song describes.

Teacher/Facilitator Role: Dissect complex subject matter.

Controversial Subject Matter: What do you think about adoption in this country?

Discussion: Protagonist Celie has her baby taken away from her in this scene. There's a moment in this scene where she knows that parting with the child will be difficult for her to handle. What do you think she is feeling emotionally as she spends some mother and child time with her new baby?

Number of People: 2-3

Time: 3-5 minutes
**Scene Reenactment:** Show not tell how it might be for Celie to know the impending separation between her and her new child and how it might affect her. One student pretends to be Celie and another student pretends to be the helpless child. What resistance might she have to her child being taken from her? Celie doesn’t have any money coming in so she can’t afford to raise her child on her own. How might that affect the fight she puts up when the child is about to be taken? Show the effort Celie might display to show her love to her child. Celie seems to know her newborn child was not going to be harmed. Is this mother’s intuition or is there another reason you think she believes the child will be adopted? Is it her faith in God that is giving her strength?

**Wrap-Up/Cool Down:** The Joker asks the spect-actors what they learned about power dynamics in this scene regarding the protagonist character, Celie. What did the body language portray during the scene reenactments? What ideas can the spect-actors extract from the relationship between Celie and her newborn child? If there are different interpretations, how can they be discussed among the spect-actors so opposing viewpoints are understood more clearly? Do a quick write about how you can apply either the analysis of characters’ body language in your own life or describe the tools you have learned and are able to apply in a similar scenario. Would the reaction of the spect-actors mirror Celie’s? Explain, why or why not.
Song: “Somebodies Gonna Love You”

Celie:
Got nothin' to give you but a prayer.
    God's gonna see you through.
To part with you more than I can bear
    But somebody gonna love you.

    Sweet baby, sweet,
    This much I know is true.
    Sleep baby, sleep.
'Cause somebody gonna love you.
    Oh, I'm always gonna love you.
Introduction to the Song: “That Fine Man”

Lesson Plan:

The students will receive the character analysis from the teacher to familiarize themselves with the perspectives of the characters and the roles they will be using for scene reenactments. The teacher may opt to provide the list of characters to the students during the class and then assign roles so more or less desirable characters will be equally assigned. The goal is to have equal participation that honors the perspectives of the protagonists and antagonists in the scenes being reenacted so gendered preferences will not be an issue for students.

Begin with warm-up exercises to create a safe and comfortable environment for the students/spect-actors. These warm up activities should last for about three to five minutes before the actual scene reenactment occurs in order to decrease inhibitions and put the student spect-actors in the proper mindset for serious discussion and active participation. Prior to each scene reenactment, the students will review the provided character analysis so all the students can participate even if the character they have been assigned isn’t in the scene being acted out. Students can rotate as spect-actors when appropriate as prompted by the teacher/facilitator who acts as the joker or wild card during the scene reenactments.

During the scene reenactment, the character’s lines will be read by the student assigned the character. Small groups should be formed that will demonstrate their interpretations of the scene in rotations. As a class, the lyrics will be read aloud and then the appropriate theater application will be employed. For example, in the song below titled That Fine Man the scene is being reenacted using “Writing” Theater. This is where different outcomes are entertained as the spect-actors analyze the scenes lyrics and speculate about the activity that occurs during the scene.

Standards:

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1. Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.

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1. Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them.
2. Make acting choices, using script analysis, character research, reflection, and revision through the rehearsal process.
3. Compare a traditional interpretation of a play with a nontraditional interpretation and defend the merits of the different interpretations.
4. Connecting and applying what is learned in theatre, film/video, and electronic media to other art forms and subject areas and to careers
5. Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills.

Procedures:

Analyze the song and assign the students an appropriate role from the characters presented in the song. Write down what the characters are doing during the song and then reenact the scene through role playing. Consider variations that may improve the scene the song describes.

Controversial Subject Matter: The characters Jarene, Doris, and Darlene are speaking about Celie's younger sister Nettie being left with their father who they call a letch of a man. They fear for Nettie being trapped into having an incestuous relationship with their father if left alone in the house with no one to help her. What are the options for the sisters in lieu of their futures being planned out for them by their father? Are there solutions students might identify that will help the characters through their difficult scenarios?

Scene Reenactment: After role assignments, depict how life might be for Celie once she marries Mister.

Number of People: 3-5
**Number of People:** 2-3

**Time:** 3 to 5 minutes

**Joker:** Ask probing questions and allow for the students to bring up potential solutions or question the lack of involvement of the onlookers, Jarene, Doris, and Darlene.

**Wrap-Up/Cool Down:** The Joker asks the participants to remember what they discussed about power dynamics between the protagonist character Celie and antagonist character Pa. How are those power dynamics potentially repeating with Nettie and Pa? What did the body language portray during the scene reenactments between Nettie and Pa? Do you imagine Nettie handling the scenario differently than her sister Celie did? Why? How might have Celie felt she was protecting her sister or distracting Pa from harassing Nettie? If there are different interpretations, how can they be discussed among the spectators so opposing viewpoints are understood more clearly? Do a quick write about how you can apply either the analysis of characters’ body language in your own life or describe the tools you have learned and are able to apply in a similar scenario.
Song: “That Fine Man”

JARENE DORIS DARLENE
AND WHAT ABOUT
THAT FINE MISTER?
MARRYIN'
THAT FINE MISTER THAT PO'
HOMELY CHILD.
HMMPH!
AND WHAT ABOUT
THAT FINE MISTER? MARRYIN'
THAT PO'
HOMELY CHILD.
HMMPH!
SHE GONNA WORK LIKE
A MULE
WHAT ABOUT
THAT FINE MISTER? MARRYIN'
THAT PO'
HOMELY CHILD.
HMMPH!
HE GOT
TWO COWS
OUT THAT DEAL!
HAVE MERCY!
HAVE MERCY!
HAVE MERCY!
HAVE MERCY!
HAVE MERCY!
HAVE MERCY!
SAY, WHAT SAY, WHAT SAY, WHAT
GON' COME OF
THAT SWEET NETTIE?
'LONE WITH THAT
LETCH OF A MAN. OOH,
WHAT GON' COME OF
THAT SWEET NETTIE?
'LONE WITH THAT
LETCH OF A MAN. OOH,
THEY TWO
UNFORTUNATE GALS.
DORIS/DARLENE/JARENE
THEY NEED A CHARIOT TODAY
TO SWING LOW AND CARRY THEM AWAY!
Introduction to *Les Misérables* Lessons

**Lesson Plan:**

The students will receive the character analysis from the teacher to familiarize themselves with the perspectives of the characters and the roles they will be using for scene reenactments. The teacher may opt to provide the list of characters to the students during the class and then assign roles so more or less desirable characters will be equally assigned. The goal is to have equal participation that honors the perspectives of the protagonists and antagonists in the scenes being reenacted so gendered preferences will not be an issue for students.

Begin with warm-up exercises to create a safe and comfortable environment for the students/spect-actors. These warm up activities should last for about three to five minutes before the actual scene reenactment occurs in order to decrease inhibitions and put the student spect-actors in the proper mindset for serious discussion and active participation. Prior to each scene reenactment, the students will review the provided character analysis so all the students can participate even if the character they have been assigned isn’t in the scene being acted out. Students can rotate as spect-actors when appropriate as prompted by the teacher/facilitator who acts as the joker or wild card during the scene reenactments.

During the scene reenactment, the character’s lines will be read by the student assigned the character. Small groups should be formed that will demonstrate their interpretations of the scene in rotations. As a class, the lyrics will be read aloud and then the appropriate theater application will be employed. For example, the song titled *Do You Hear the People Sing* is being reenacted using Forum Theater. This is where different outcomes are entertained as the spect-actors give rationales for their activity during the scene or make the scene interactions fluid by allowing the other spect-actors to determine how they affect the scene.

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1. Make acting choices, using script analysis, character research, reflection, and revision through the rehearsal process.
2. Describe the ways in which playwrights reflect and influence their culture in such works as *Raisin in the Sun*.
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5. Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills.

Analysis of Characters

**Jean Valjean** – Cosette’s adopted father. Valjean is an ex-convict who leaves behind a life of hatred and deceit and makes his fortune with his innovative industrial techniques. He finds fulfillment in loving his adopted daughter and helping people who are in difficult situations, even when it means risking his own life and welfare. Valjean adopts pseudonyms to evade the police and combines a convict’s street smarts with his newfound idealism and compassion. His whole life is a quest for redemption, and he ultimately finds bliss on his deathbed (Sparknotes, 2013b, para. 1).

**Javert** – A police inspector who strictly believes in law and order and will stop at nothing to enforce France’s harsh penal codes. Javert is incapable of compassion or pity, and performs his work with such passion that he takes on a nearly animal quality when he is on the chase. He nurses an especially strong desire to recapture Valjean, whose escapes and prosperity he sees as an affront to justice. Ultimately, Javert is unable to say with certainty that Valjean deserves to be punished. This ambiguity undermines the system of belief on which Javert bases his life and forces him to choose between hypocrisy and honor (Sparknotes, 2013b, para. 3).
**Fantine** – A working-class girl who leaves her hometown of Montreuil-sur-Mer to seek her fortune in Paris. Fantine’s innocent affair with a dapper student named Tholomyès leaves her pregnant and abandoned. Although she is frail, she makes a Herculean effort to feed herself and her daughter, Cosette. Even as she descends into prostitution, she never stops caring for Cosette. She represents the destruction that nineteenth-century French society cruelly wreaks on the less fortunate (Sparknotes, 2013b, para. 4).

**Enjolras** – The leader of the Friends of the ABC. Enjolras is a radical student revolutionary. He is both wild and beautiful. Together with Courfeyrac and Marius, Enjolras leads the insurrection at the barricade (Sparknotes, 2013b, para. 12).

**Courfayrac** – A peripheral character and member of the Friends of the ABC. Together with Enjolras, Marius, Combeferre, and Feuilly, Courfayrac joins the movement to stage the insurrection at the barricade.

**Combeferre** – A peripheral character and member of the Friends of the ABC. Together with Enjolras, Marius, Courfayrac, Feuilly, and Combeferre joins the movement to stage the insurrection at the barricade.

**Feuilly** – A peripheral character and member of the Friends of the ABC. Together with Enjolras, Marius, Combeferre, Courfayrac, and Feuilly joins the movement to stage the insurrection at the barricade.

**Introduction to the Song: “Do You Hear the People Sing”**

**Procedures:**

Analyze the song and assign the students an appropriate role from the characters that are presented in the song. Write down what the characters are doing during the song and then reenact the scene through role playing. Consider variations that may improve the scene that the song describes.

**Controversial Subject Matter:** Classism is defined as a biased or discriminatory attitude based on distinctions made between social or economic classes (classism, 2013).

**Discussion:** The French Revolution was fought by disgruntled men and women against the military. What do you know about revolutions? Name any other revolutions you know about that have happened around the world, including those that have occurred in the U.S. Can you name a country that has recently gone through a revolution? (Egypt) What was the underlying reason the Egyptian revolution occurred? What have you
learned about the French Revolution through your research or classroom discussions? What causes would you organize and fight for (PETA, the environment/Global warming, etc.)?

**Number of People:** 5-7

**Time:** 7-10 minutes

**Scene Reenactment:** One person starts trying to rally people together or sign them up. When the first person touches another person, the person touched then becomes the organizer and the first person stops. The second person tries not to duplicate the behaviors of the first person but tries to get other people involved in their movement. Act as though you are picketing or play as though you have a loud speaker, passing out leaflets and are trying to get the involvement of onlookers or observing pedestrians. The second person touches another person and the same action repeats until every person in the group has a turn. After the activity is over and each member is part of the demonstration, discuss what the most challenging part of the activity for each group member was, what could have been done differently, and what worked for different members.

**Wrap-Up/Cool Down:** The Joker asks the spect-actors what they learned about power dynamics in this scene regarding the central characters through the song’s lyrics. How do the men try and persuade people to join their cause and how do you think these methods affect the recruitment of people for their organization? How might organizing renew the passion of the characters so they continue with their struggle until their common plights are resolved? Is there some cause or issue you can see yourself identifying so much with that you could become an activist or organizer for it? Why or Why not? If there are different interpretations or answers, how can they be discussed among the spect-actors so opposing viewpoints are understood more clearly? Do a quick write about how you can apply either the analysis of characters’ body language in your own life or describe the tools you have learned and are able to apply in a similar scenario.
Song: “Do You Hear the People Sing”

Enjolras:
Do you hear the people sing?
Singing the song of angry men?
It is the music of a people
Who will not be slaves again!
When the beating of your heart
Echoes the beating of the drums
There is a life about to start
When tomorrow comes!

Combeferre:
Will you join in our crusade?
Who will be strong and stand with me?
Somewhere beyond the barricade
Is there a world you long to see?

Courfeyrac:
Then join in the fight
That will give you the right to be free!

All:
Do you hear the people sing?
Singing the song of angry men?
It is the music of a people
Who will not be slaves again!
When the beating of your heart
Echoes the beating of the drums
There is a life about to start
When tomorrow comes!

Feuilly:
Will you give all you can give
So that our banner may advance
Some will fall and some will live
Will you stand up and take your chance?
The blood of the martyrs
Will water the meadows of France!

All:
Do you hear the people sing?
Singing the song of angry men?
   It is the music of a people
   Who will not be slaves again!
When the beating of your heart
Echoes the beating of the drums
   There is a life about to start
   When tomorrow comes!
Introduction to the Song: “Javert’s Suicide”

Lesson Plan:

The students will receive the character analysis from the teacher to familiarize themselves with the perspectives of the characters and the roles they will be using for scene reenactments. The teacher may opt to provide the list of characters to the students during the class and then assign roles so more or less desirable characters will be equally assigned. The goal is to have equal participation that honors the perspectives of the protagonists and antagonists in the scenes being reenacted so gendered preferences will not be an issue for students.

Begin with warm-up exercises to create a safe and comfortable environment for the students/spect-actors. These warm up activities should last for about three to five minutes before the actual scene reenactment occurs in order to decrease inhibitions and put the student spect-actors in the proper mindset for serious discussion and active participation. Prior to each scene reenactment, the students will review the provided character analysis so all the students can participate even if the character they have been assigned isn’t in the scene being acted out. Students can rotate as spect-actors when appropriate as prompted by the teacher/facilitator who acts as the joker or wild card during the scene reenactments.

During the scene reenactment, the character’s lines will be read by the student assigned the character. Small groups should be formed that will demonstrate their interpretations of the scene in rotations. As a class, the lyrics will be read aloud and then the appropriate theater application will be employed. For example, in the song titled Javert’s Suicide, the scene is being reenacted using Cop in the Head. This is where different outcomes are entertained as the spect-actors analyze the scene’s lyrics and speculate about the activity that occurs during the scene.

Standards:

Language Arts Standards:

1. Exchange information and ideas with others through oral collaborative discussions on a range of social and academic topics.
2. Reading closely literary and informational texts and viewing multimedia to determine how meaning is conveyed explicitly and implicitly through language.
3. Selecting and applying varied and precise vocabulary and other language resources to effectively convey ideas.
Social Studies Standards:

1. Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.

Visual and Performing Arts Standards:

1. Make acting choices, using script analysis, character research, reflection, and revision through the rehearsal process.
2. Compare a traditional interpretation of a play with a nontraditional interpretation and defend the merits of the different interpretations.
3. Connecting and applying what is learned in theatre, film/video, and electronic media to other art forms and subject areas and to careers
4. Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills.
5. Describe how skills acquired in theatre may be applied to other content areas and careers.

Procedures:

Analyze the song and assign the students an appropriate role from the characters presented in the song. Write down what the characters are doing during the song and then reenact the scene through role playing. Consider variations that may improve the scene the song describes.

Controversial Subject Matter: Suicide

Number of People: 1-2

Time: 5 to 7 minutes

Scene Reenactment: Discuss what internal conflicts Javert must have been going through to cause him to be in such despair. What are Javert’s alternatives to committing suicide? Does the narrative talk about whether Javert has any family? What can you say about Javert’s commitment to his occupation?
**Joker:** Ask one of the participants to pretend to be the good conscience trying to talk Javert out of suicide. Tell the spect-actor to mirror the body language of Javert’s character, freeze, and then act separately as the alter ego within him when he begins talking about what he has chosen to be the way out of his woes. Try to stop Javert from committing suicide, show not tell the desperation and urgency of the scenario.

**Wrap-Up/Cool Down:** The Joker asks the spect-actors what they learned about power dynamics in this scene regarding the central characters through the song’s lyrics. How can you identify with Javert’s character and the turmoil he is experiencing? Do you empathize with Javert’s struggles or have insight as to why he is so harsh with his judgments of himself and others? Why or Why not? If there are different interpretations or answers, how can they be discussed among the spect-actors so opposing viewpoints are understood more clearly? Do a quick write about how you can apply either the analysis of characters’ body language in your own life or describe the tools you have learned and are able to apply in a similar scenario.
Song: “Javert’s Suicide Lyrics”

   Javert  
Who is this man?  
What sort of devil is he?  
To have me caught in a trap  
And choose to let me go free?  
It was his hour at last  
To put a seal on my fate  
Wipe out the past  
And wash me clean off the slate!  
All it would take  
Was a flick of his knife  
Vengeance was his  
And he gave me back my life!  
Damned if I'll live in the debt of a thief!  
Damned if I'll yield at the end of the chase.
I am the Law and the Law is not mocked  
I'll spit his pity right back in his face  
There is nothing on earth that we share  
It is either Valjean or Javert!

   How can I now allow this man  
To hold dominion over me?  
This desperate man whom I have hunted  
He gave me my life, he gave me freedom.
I should have perished by his hand!  
It was his right.  
It was my right to die as well  
Instead I live, but live in hell!  
And my thoughts fly apart  
Can this man be believed?  
Shall his sins be forgiven?  
Shall his crimes be reprieved?  
And must I now begin to doubt  
Who never doubted all these years?
My heart is stone and still it trembles  
The world I have known is lost in shadow.
Is he from heaven or from hell?  
And does he know
That granting me my life today
This man has killed me even so?
    I am reaching, but I fall
And the stars are black and cold.
    As I stare into the void
Of a world that cannot hold
I'll escape now from the world
From the world of Jean Valjean
    There is nowhere I can turn
There is no way to go on.....

[He throws himself into the swollen river.]
Introduction to the Song: “I Dreamed A Dream”

Lesson Plan:

The students will receive the character analysis from the teacher to familiarize themselves with the perspectives of the characters and the roles they will be using for scene reenactments. The teacher may opt to provide the list of characters to the students during the class and then assign roles so more or less desirable characters will be equally assigned. The goal is to have equal participation that honors the perspectives of the protagonists and antagonists in the scenes being reenacted so gendered preferences will not be an issue for students.

Begin with warm-up exercises to create a safe and comfortable environment for the students/spect-actors. These warm up activities should last for about three to five minutes before the actual scene reenactment occurs in order to decrease inhibitions and put the student spect-actors in the proper mindset for serious discussion and active participation. Prior to each scene reenactment, the students will review the provided character analysis so all the students can participate even if the character they have been assigned isn’t in the scene being acted out. Students can rotate as spect-actors when appropriate as prompted by the teacher/facilitator who acts as the joker or wild card during the scene reenactments.

During the scene reenactment the character’s lines will be read by the student that the character is assigned to. Small groups should be formed that will demonstrate their interpretations of the scene in rotations. As a class the lyrics will be read aloud and then the appropriate theater application will be employed. For example, in the song below titled *I Dreamed a Dream* the scene is being reenacted using Image Theater. This is where different images are acted out as the scenes are being dissected and analyzed. Coming from the perspective of Fantine, the spect-actor(s) analyze the scenes lyrics and speculate about the activities that may have occurred during the reflections, as described below.

Standards:

Language Arts Standards:

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1. Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.

Visual and Performing Arts Standards:

1. Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre
2. Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them.
3. Make acting choices, using script analysis, character research, reflection, and revision through the rehearsal process.
4. Compare a traditional interpretation of a play with a nontraditional interpretation and defend the merits of the different interpretations.
5. Connecting and applying what is learned in theatre, film/video, and electronic media to other art forms and subject areas and to careers

Procedure:

Analyze the lyrics of the song. What can you tell about the circumstances of Fantine near the end of the song, is it full of desperation, despair, rage or something else? What things do you think she might do in order to survive now that her innocence has been taken? In the context of the time period and the French Revolution about to begin, what options if any does Fantine have for the survival of her and her daughter?

Controversial Subject Matter:  Women’s Issues
Discussion: Because Fantine is a single mother without the help of the father and without a job, do you think that there is another alternative for her to help her daughter?

Number of People: 2-5

Time: 3-5 minutes

Scene Reenactment: Show, not tell how Fantine feels during this scene. Does it sound as though surviving in this place, during this time was easy if you didn’t have the support of your family or a man? Show Fantine being introduced to different things such as a flower in a field, or a new food in a grocery store. At the same time, show how Fantine
could be feeling about being exposed to all these interesting things. Speculate at the reason why her short lived relationship didn’t work out.

**Wrap-Up/Cool Down:** The Joker asks the participants what they learned about power dynamics between the protagonist character Fantine and the man who fathered her child. How did the end of the relationship that Fantine had with the father of her daughter affect her life? What did the body language portray during the scene reenactments? How did the body language of Fantine change as the song neared the end? What ideas about gendered privilege and oppression can the spect-actors extract from the relationship between Fantine and the father of her child? If there are different interpretations, how can they be discussed among the spect-actors so opposing viewpoints are understood more clearly? Do a quick write about how you can apply either the analysis of characters’ body language in your own life or describe the tools you have learned and are able to apply in a similar scenario.
Song: “I Dreamed A Dream”

[Fantine is left alone, unemployed, and destitute.]

Fantine

There was a time when men were kind
When their voices were soft
And their words inviting
There was a time when love was blind
And the world was a song
And the song was exciting
There was a time
Then it all went wrong

I dreamed a dream in time gone by
When hope was high
And life worth living
I dreamed that love would never die
I dreamed that God would be forgiving
Then I was young and unafraid
And dreams were made and used and wasted
There was no ransom to be paid
No song unsung
No wine untasted

But the tigers come at night
With their voices soft as thunder
As they tear your hope apart
As they turn your dream to shame

He slept a summer by my side
He filled my days with endless wonder
He took my childhood in his stride
But he was gone when autumn came

And still I dream he'll come to me
That we will live the years together
But there are dreams that cannot be
And there are storms we cannot weather!

I had a dream my life would be
So different from this hell I'm living
So different now, from what it seemed
Now life has killed the dream I dreamed
Introduction to the Song: “Fantine’s Arrest”

Lesson Plan:

The students will receive the character analysis from the teacher to familiarize themselves with the perspectives of the characters and the roles they will be using for scene reenactments. The teacher may opt to provide the list of characters to the students during the class and then assign roles so more or less desirable characters will be equally assigned. The goal is to have equal participation that honors the perspectives of the protagonists and antagonists in the scenes being reenacted so gendered preferences will not be an issue for students.

Begin with warm-up exercises to create a safe and comfortable environment for the students/spect-actors. These warm up activities should last for about three to five minutes before the actual scene reenactment occurs in order to decrease inhibitions and put the student spect-actors in the proper mindset for serious discussion and active participation. Prior to each scene reenactment, the students will review the provided character analysis so all the students can participate even if the character they have been assigned isn’t in the scene being acted out. Students can rotate as spect-actors when appropriate as prompted by the teacher/facilitator who acts as the joker or wild card during the scene reenactments.

During the scene reenactment the character’s lines will be read by the student that the character is assigned to. Small groups should be formed that will demonstrate their interpretations of the scene in rotations. As a class the lyrics will be read aloud and then the appropriate theater application will be employed. For example, in the song below titled Fantine’s Arrest the scene is being reenacted using Forum Theater. This is where different outcomes are entertained as the spect-actors analyze the scenes lyrics and speculate about the activity that occurs during the scene.

Standards:

Language Arts Standards:

1. Exchange information and ideas with others through oral collaborative discussions on a range of social and academic topics.
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1. Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre
2. Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them.
3. Make acting choices, using script analysis, character research, reflection, and revision through the rehearsal process.
4. Describe the ways in which playwrights reflect and influence their culture in such works as *Raisin in the Sun*.
5. Compare a traditional interpretation of a play with a nontraditional interpretation and defend the merits of the different interpretations.
6. Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills.

Procedures:

Analyze the song and assign the students an appropriate role from the characters that are presented in the song. Write down what the characters are doing during the song and then reenact the scene through role playing. Consider variations that may improve the scene that the song describes.

Controversial Subject Matter: Prostitution

Discussion: Although, there is a moral issue most individuals have with prostitution should she consider illegal any other means to make money or has life dealt her a bad hand? The individuals’ right to choose their partners regardless of their occupation is important. Valjean is a helpful bystander that ends up being a good Samaritan to the distressed Fantine, how does this reflect on the character of Valjean? What can you say about Javert’s coldness toward perceived law breakers? Do you believe Javert is dedicated to his job or is using his job to pass judgment about who he thinks are undesirable individuals in society?
Number of People: 4-5

Time: 7 to 10 minutes

Scene Reenactment: Valjean does not seem to judge Fantine being a prostitute and genuinely tries to help her out of her situation. Show the internal conflict that Valjean might be going through before he finds out that she used to work for him. Now that Javert believes that Valjean is an upstanding citizen, (he has become the mayor) show how he treats him verses the way he treats Fantine. Show Javert wagging his finger at Fantine, or threatening her with a baton. Another perspective is to show him trying to prevent Valjean from helping Fantine. Demonstrate Javert using his body or hands to try and hold Valjean back from assisting Fantine. Do you believe Javert is doing what he thinks is right in the eyes of the law or is he judging Fantine because he finds out that she is a prostitute?

Wrap-Up/Cool Down: The Joker asks the participants what they learned about power dynamics between the protagonist character, Fantine and antagonist character Javert. Now discuss what spect-actors learned about the distorted expectations and verbal exchange between Fantine and Bamatabois? What did the body language portray during the scene reenactments? What ideas about oppression and conflict can the spect-actors extract from the limited interaction and/or relationships between Fantine, Javert, and Bamatabois? Discuss what is expected of Fantine’s character and others like her from the men in the lyrics? Valjean approaches the situation with Fantine differently, why do you think he does this? What if anything does this say about Valjean’s character and his empathy for those who may be downtrodden? What ideas can the spect-actors extract from the position of men versus women in this society during this time? If there are different interpretations, how can they be discussed among the spect-actors so opposing viewpoints are understood more clearly? Can you relate the oppression of Fantine to any of the previous lyrics? Why or why not? Do a quick write about how you can apply either the analysis of characters’ body language in your own life or describe the tools you have learned and are able to apply in a similar scenario.
Song: “Fantine’s Arrest”

[Bamatabois is a well dressed gentleman.]

Bamatabois:
Here's something new, I think I'll give it a try. 
Come closer you, I like to see what I buy! 
The usual price, for just one slice of your pie

Fantine:
I don't want you, no, no, M'sieur, let me go.

Bamatabois:
Is this a trick? I won't pay more!

Fantine:
No, not at all.

Bamatabois:
You've got some nerve, you little whore 
You've got some gall.

[He hits her with his stick, she claws at his face, drawing blood.]

Fantine:
I'll kill you, you bastard, try any of that! 
Even a whore who has gone to the bad 
Won't be had by a rat!

Bamatabois:
By Christ you'll pay for what you have done 
This rat will make you bleed, you'll see! 
I guarantee, I'll make you suffer 
For this disturbance of the peace 
For this insult to life and property!

Fantine:
I beg you, don't report me, sir 
I'll do whatever you may want

Bamatabois:
Make your excuse to the police!
[Javert enters, accompanied by constables.]

Javert:
Tell me quickly what's the story
Who saw what and why and where?
Let him give a full description
Let him answer to Javert!
In this nest of whores and vipers
Let one speak who saw it all
Who laid hands on this good man here?
What's the substance of this brawl?

Bamatabois:
Javert, would you believe it?
I was crossing from the park
When this prostitute attacked me
You can see she left her mark

Javert:
She will answer for her actions
When you make a full report
You may rest assured, M'sieur,
That she will answer to the court.

Fantine:
There's a child who sorely needs me
Please M'sieur, she's but that high
Holy God, is there no mercy?
If I go to jail she'll die!

Javert:
I have heard such protestations
Every day for twenty years
Let's have no more explanations
Save your breath, save your tears
Honest work, just reward,
That's the way to please the Lord.

[Fantine gives a last despairing cry as she is arrested. Valjean as M. Madeleine emerges from the crowd.]

Valjean:
A moment of your time, Javert
I do believe this woman's tale

Javert:
But M'sieur Mayor!

Valjean:
You've done your duty
Let her be
She needs a doctor, not a jail.

Javert:
But M'sieur Mayor!

Fantine:
Can this be?

Valjean:
Where will she end -
This child without a friend?

(to Fantine) I've seen your face before
Show me some way to help you
How have you come to grief
In a place such as this?

Fantine:
M'sieur, don't mock me now, I pray
It's hard enough I've lost my pride
You let your foreman send me away
Yes, you were there, and turned aside
I never did no wrong

Valjean:
Is it true, what I have done?
Fantine:
My daughter's close to dying
Valjean:
To an innocent soul?
Fantine:
If there's a God above
Valjean:
Had I only known then...
Fantine:
He'd let me die instead

Valjean:
In His name my task has just begun
I will see it done!

Javert:
But M'sieur Mayor!

Valjean:
I will see it done!

Javert:
But M'sieur Mayor!

Valjean:
I will see it done
Abu Graib by Botero

Introduction

Due to the explicit and realistic depictions of the paintings in this exhibition, extreme caution is necessary when displaying the artwork to students under the age of 18. Parental/guardian permission slips giving information on the lesson plan(s) dealing with sensitive or controversial subject matter should be handed out to the students and returned signed. Students should be made aware of the seriousness of the subject matter in this lesson and that human rights and ethics in war tactics will be brought into the discussion. The students will either view the paintings on the overhead projector or the pictures will be passed around the classroom so students may view the pictures while the Iraq war and Al Qaeda is being discussed by the teacher facilitating the discussion.

The teacher as the facilitator will ask probing questions and give the students homework before the discussion to research the September 11, 2001 attacks and the subsequent War on Terror followed by the Iraq War. A discussion about Fernando Botero being an accomplished, seasoned, and well-respected Latin American artist should preface the viewing of his Abu Graib work. Make sure to give the students the option to view the works of art and address the fact that Botero created the exhibition in direct response to the leaked pictures of the abuses of prisoners by U.S. soldiers.

Standards:

Language Arts Standards:

1. Exchange information and ideas with others through oral collaborative discussions on a range of social and academic topics.
2. Reading closely literary and informational texts and viewing multimedia to determine how meaning is conveyed explicitly and implicitly through language.
3. Selecting and applying varied and precise vocabulary and other language resources to effectively convey ideas.

Social Studies Standards:

1. Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.
**Lesson Plan:**

Analyze the paintings and assign the students to discussion groups so they may discuss the depicted events. Write down what the characters must have been experiencing, whether it is fear, humiliation, anger, etc. Get the formed groups talking about the criminal acts involved in these depictions. Scene reenactment in this example can include role playing of a judge and jury evaluating hard evidence. Consider what conclusions you and the jury would come up with to punish the individuals who committed these human rights violations.

**Background:** Fernando Botero is a Latin American artist who depicted human rights violations against prisoners at Abu Graib. What do you already know about Arab peoples, their religions, and nations? The artist depicts scenes inspired by the true events that occurred in Abu Graib. The images look cartoonish, which contributes to the surreal nature of these images. What do you think about the artist’s stylistic approach using somewhat cartoonish figures to recreate the humans and animals in the paintings? What do you think Botero was trying to convey by using this style? Seeing anger as one of the emotions people felt about the World Trade Center attacks, do you believe there is ever a time when this treatment of another individual is justified?

**Controversial Subject Matter:** Human rights. Violations such as the ones mentioned above can occur without making it to U.S. National media outlets.

**Discussion Points:** Do you feel there was more empathy toward Islamic captives after exhibitions like Botero’s? What evidence have you found that there has been an Anti-Arab culture in parts of the U.S. since the September 11th attacks?

**Wrap-Up/Cool Down:** The Joker asks the participants what they learned about power dynamics and abuses through these paintings? In your opinion were the persons depicted in the paintings being taken advantage of or was their treatment in some way justifiable? Why or why not? Does your knowledge about September 11th change your beliefs about the way the soldiers were treating the men in the picture? Do the images of terrorists and terrorism in the National media make these depictions easier to accept in your opinion? Why or why not? If there are different interpretations, how can they be discussed amongst the spect-actors so that opposing viewpoints are understood more clearly? Do a quick write about how you can apply either the analysis of characters’ in the painting more generally about human rights or describe the tools you have learned about non-violent means of protest (such as the paintings of these images) and how you might apply these strategies in a similar scenario.
CAUTION:

The images that follow this excerpt are graphic in nature, contain nudity as well as display violent depictions. This is a warning for sensitive subject matter and imagery. Please use caution when attempting to view the next few pages.

Every student underneath 18 years of age needs to submit signed parental or guardian permission before viewing the images shown below.

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Thank you for your cooperation.

*ABU GRAIB* by FERNANDO BOTERO
Two pictures painted by Fernando Botero.
Two pictures painted by Botero.
Two pictures by Botero.
## Matrix Challenged Materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grade Level Recommendation</th>
<th>Controversial Topics</th>
<th>Act Up! Techniques</th>
<th>Sparknotes Availability</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Abu Graib</em></td>
<td>Fernando Botero</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Explicit and graphic images</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><em>Adventures of Sherlock Holmes</em></td>
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<td>Occultism and Spiritualism. 1929</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Adventures of Tom Sawyer</em></td>
<td>Mark Twain</td>
<td>1876</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Racist, sexist, degrading, insensitive, oppressive. 1876-1997</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
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<td><em>Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland</em></td>
<td>Lewis Carroll</td>
<td>1865</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Animals using human language associated with human level. 1931 (China)</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Arabian Nights or The Thousand and One Nights</em></td>
<td>Anonymous</td>
<td>1706</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Obscene passages, blamed for wave of rapes. 1927-1931, 1985 (Egypt)</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Ethnic Studies, Language Arts/ English</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Author</td>
<td>Year</td>
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<td>Subjects</td>
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<td>Beowulf, a New Telling</td>
<td>Robert Nye</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Inappropriate evil motivations of characters, violence. 1998</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bible</td>
<td>Martin Luther’s translation</td>
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<td>High School</td>
<td>Violence, indecent, obscene, turning tables on religious right. 1534, 1624, 1926-2001</td>
<td>3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Social Studies, History</td>
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<td>Blubber</td>
<td>Judy Blume</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>Objectionable language and subject matter, dark narratives without resolution. 1989-1999</td>
<td>1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English, Visual and Performing Arts, Social Science</td>
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<td>Brave New World</td>
<td>Aldous Huxley</td>
<td>1932</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Moral content, language, negative activity, contempt for religion, drugs, sex, and suicide. 1930-2000</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English</td>
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<td>Title</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Grade Level</td>
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<td><em>Call of the Wild</em></td>
<td>Jack London</td>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>Not listed. Italy and Yugoslavia 1929. Burned in Germany, 1933</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Canterbury Tales</em></td>
<td>Geoffrey Chaucer</td>
<td>14th Century</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Sexual content. 1928, 1995</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Carrie</em></td>
<td>Steven King</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Inappropriate language, satanic violence, age appropriateness, sexual description. 1975-1994</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English</td>
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<td><em>Catcher in the Rye</em></td>
<td>J. D. Salinger</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Anti-white and obscene vulgar language, dealing with the occult, sexual scenes, moral issues, and violence. 1960-2004</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</em></td>
<td>Roald Dahl</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>Poor philosophy. 1988</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Chocolate War</em></td>
<td>Robert Cormier</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Foul language, violence, rape, masturbation, gangs, blasphemy, degradation of schools teachers, and women; immorality. 1981-2006</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Christine</em></td>
<td>Steven King</td>
<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Offensive Language, violence, explicit sex, inappropriate language. 1985-1994</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
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<td><em>Color Purple</em></td>
<td>Alice Walker</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Sexual explicitness, objectionable language, homosexuality</td>
<td>1, 2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers</td>
<td>Jacob Grimm, and Wilhelm</td>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Middle School and</td>
<td>Violence, negative portrayal of women, and anti-Semitic references. 1994</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and</td>
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<td>Grimm</td>
<td>K. Grimm, Translated by</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Performing Arts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jack Zipes</td>
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<td>Confessions of Nat Turner</td>
<td>William Styron</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>High School and</td>
<td>Sexual materials. 1987</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Ethnic Studies, Language Arts/English,</td>
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<td>Crucible</td>
<td>Arthur Miller</td>
<td>1953</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Inappropriate language. 1982</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
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<td>Da Vinci Code</td>
<td>Dan Brown</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Anti-Christian, Anti-Islamic. 2006</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
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<td>Daughters of Eve</td>
<td>Lois Duncan</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Promotes risky behavior and violence; profanity and sexual content. 1997-2005</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English</td>
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<td>Death of a Salesman</td>
<td>Arthur Miller</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Profanity. 1974-1997</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
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<td>Divine Comedy</td>
<td>Dante Alighieri</td>
<td>1308-</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Church banned. Needed correction in Portugal. 1487-1987 (Ethiopia)</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Partially</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and</td>
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<td>1321</td>
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<td>Dracula</td>
<td>Bram Stoker</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Unacceptable sexual descriptions. 1994</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Grade Level</td>
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<td><em>Everything You Need to Know about Sexual Abstinence</em></td>
<td>Barbara A. Moe</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Sexual content. 1996-1999</td>
<td>4,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Health Science</td>
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<td><em>Everything You Wanted to Know about Sex, but Were Afraid to Ask</em></td>
<td>David Reuben</td>
<td>1969 and updated in 1999</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>“Filthy” content. 1984</td>
<td>4,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Health Science</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Farewell to Arms</em></td>
<td>Ernest Hemingway</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Sex, painfully accurate of account of Italian retreat 1929-1980</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Forrest Gump</em></td>
<td>Winston Groom</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Insensitive towards blacks, sexual references, foul language,</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Girl, Interrupted</em></td>
<td>Suzanna Kaysen</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Strong language and vivid descriptions. 2006</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Giving Tree</em></td>
<td>Shel Silverstein</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Middle School and Elementary School</td>
<td>Sextist. 1989</td>
<td>1, 2,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Grade Level</td>
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<td><em>Godfather</em></td>
<td>Mario Puzo</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Vulgar language, and obscene. 1975</td>
<td>4, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English</td>
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<td><em>Gone With the Wind</em></td>
<td>Margret Mitchell</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Derogatory language, racial slur. 1978-1984</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Gorillas in the Mist</em></td>
<td>Dian Fossey</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Masturbation and mating. 1993</td>
<td>5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Grapes of Wrath</em></td>
<td>John Steinbeck</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Vulgar language, unfavorable propaganda, profanity, sexual language, profane. 1939-1993</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Great Gatsby</em></td>
<td>Scott F. Fitzgerald</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Language and sexual language. 1993</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Hamlet</em></td>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>1603</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Not listed. 1978 (Ethiopia)</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Grade Level Recommendation</td>
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<td>Act Up! Techniques</td>
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<td><em>Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban</em></td>
<td>J.K. Rowling</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Satanic, intense violence, scary, sucking animal blood, promotes witchcraft, smart aleck retorts to adults, sorcery. 1999-2006</td>
<td>3, 4, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone</em></td>
<td>J.K. Rowling</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Dark themes, anti-family, lacks educational value, promotes witchcraft, scary, contradicts Arab or Islamic values, smart aleck retorts to adults. 1999-2006</td>
<td>3, 4, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>How to Eat Fried Worms</em></td>
<td>Thomas Rockwell</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Middle School and Elementary School</td>
<td>Violence and vulgar language, contains bad language. 1988</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Hunger Games</em></td>
<td>Suzanne Collins</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Middle School, High School</td>
<td>Unsuited to age group, violence 2010</td>
<td>3,4,5,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</em></td>
<td>Maya Angelou</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Sexually Explicit, rape scene, drug abuse, negative portrayal of white people, gross evils. 1983-2006</td>
<td>1, 2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Ethnic Studies, Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Indian in the Cupboard</em></td>
<td>Lynne Reid Banks</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Objectionable language, stereotypes inconsistent with diversity goals. 1995</td>
<td>2,3,4,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Grade Level</td>
<td>Controversial Topics</td>
<td>Act Up! Techniques</td>
<td>Sparknotes Availability</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
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<td><em>James and the Giant Peach</em></td>
<td>Roald Dahl</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>Inappropriate language i.e. ass, alcohol, drugs i.e. tobacco, and snuff. 1991-1999</td>
<td>2, 3, 8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td><em>Jaws</em></td>
<td>Peter Benchley</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Sexually explicit, objectionable and obscene language. 1978-1986</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English</td>
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<td><em>Jungle, The</em></td>
<td>Upton Sinclair</td>
<td>1906</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Socialist views. 1929-1985</td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Social Studies, History, Language Arts/English</td>
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<td><em>King &amp; King</em></td>
<td>Linda de Haan and Stern Nijland</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Elementary School</td>
<td>LGBT themes. 2007</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
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<td><em>Koran or Qu’ran</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>To outlaw “deviant” Islamic sects 1790-1995</td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Social Studies, Religious Studies</td>
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<td><em>Learning Tree</em></td>
<td>Gordon Parks</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Objectionable material, obscene language, sexual intercourse, blasphemy, violence, murder, racial slurs, inappropriate language. 1976-2006</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English</td>
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<td><em>Les Miserables</em></td>
<td>Victor Hugo</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Prostitution 1864-1959, 1904</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Grade Level Recommendation</td>
<td>Controversial Topics</td>
<td>Act Up! Techniques</td>
<td>Sparknotes Availability</td>
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<td>Lord of the Flies</td>
<td>William Golding</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>Demoralizing, excessive violence, bad language, racial slur, profanity, defamatory to minorities, God, women, and the disabled. 1974-2000</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
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<td>Lord of the Rings</td>
<td>J.R.R. Tolkien</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>Satanic. 2001</td>
<td>1, 2, 3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
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<td>Matilda</td>
<td>Roald Dahl</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Middle School and</td>
<td>Disrespect for adult figures. 1993-1995</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<td>Mein Kampf</td>
<td>Adolf Hitler</td>
<td>1925, vol. 2</td>
<td>Post Secondary</td>
<td>Promoting Nazism. 1932-1937</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>History, Social Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moby Dick</td>
<td>Herman Melville</td>
<td>1851</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Conflict with values of community. 1996</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Son</td>
<td>Richard Wright</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Objectionable language, vulgar, sexually explicit, violent. 1979-1998</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Grade Level Recommendation</td>
<td>Controversial Topics</td>
<td>Act Up! Techniques</td>
<td>Sparknotes Availability</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Of Mice and Men</td>
<td>John Steinbeck</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Blasphemous, depressing themes, profanity, questionable patriotism, social implications, racist behavior, filthy, vulgar language, offensive language, attitude, racial slurs, defamatory to minorities. 1974-2006</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
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<td>Homer</td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>High School</td>
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<td>Oliver Twist</td>
<td>Charles Dickens</td>
<td>1838</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Religious Bias in Rosenberg vs. Board of Education of the City of N.Y. 1994</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
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<td>One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest</td>
<td>Ken Kesey</td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Pornographic, promotes criminal activity, describes bestiality, bizarre violence, torture, death; promotes secular humanism. 1971-2000</td>
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<td>Pet Sematary</td>
<td>Stephen King</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Age appropriateness. 1994</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince of Tides</td>
<td>Pat Conrad</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Pornographic imagery. 1988</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
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<td>Language Arts/ English</td>
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<td>Sapphire</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Sexually explicit, promoting homosexuality. 2005</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Ethnic Studies, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raisin in the Sun</td>
<td>Lorraine Hansberry</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Degrading to African Americans. 1979</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
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<td>Rosemary’s Baby</td>
<td>Ira Levin</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Immorality. 1976</td>
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<td>Stephen King</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Objectionable words, sexually explicit language. 1986</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Grade Level</td>
<td>Controversial Topics</td>
<td>Act Up! Techniques</td>
<td>Sparknotes Availability</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scarlet Letter</td>
<td>Nathaniel Hawthorne</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>High School and Middle School</td>
<td>Pornographic and obscene, clergy fornication, undesirable content, conflict of values. 1852-1999</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
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<td>Spoken Word Revolution: Slam, Hip Hop &amp; the Poetry of a New Generation</td>
<td>Mark Eleveld</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Profanity, references to sex, drugs, and mistreatment of women, inappropriate content. 2006</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepford Wives</td>
<td>Ira Levin</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Questionable and potentially offensive nature. 1979</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strange Fruit</td>
<td>Lillian Smith</td>
<td>1944</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Obscene, indecent, immoral, promotes lustful desire. 1944-1953</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their Eyes Were Watching God</td>
<td>Zora Neale Hurston</td>
<td>1937</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Language and sexual explicitness. 1997</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/ English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Grade Level Recommendation</td>
<td>Controversial Topics</td>
<td>Act Up! Techniques</td>
<td>Sparknotes Availability</td>
<td>Subjects</td>
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<td>Thinner</td>
<td>Stephen King</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Age appropriateness. 1994</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English</td>
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<tr>
<td>To Kill a Mockingbird</td>
<td>Harper Lee</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Inappropriate content and language, filthy, racial slur; promotes white supremacy, racial hatred, division, and separation, conflicts with values, incest, sexual intercourse, institutionalized racism. 1977-2006</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Available</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Visual and Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman in the Mists: The Story of Dian Fossey &amp; the Mountain Gorillas…</td>
<td>Farley Mowat</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Racial slurs, passages, degrading to women, profanity, discussion of abortion. 1991</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wretched of the Earth</td>
<td>Franz Fanon</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Post Secondary</td>
<td>Not listed. South Korea 1985</td>
<td>2,3,4,5,6,7,8</td>
<td>Currently Unavailable</td>
<td>Language Arts/English, Social Science</td>
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**Student Handout**

Please choose topics and fill in the information below for each challenge reason.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abortion</th>
<th>Nudity</th>
<th>Sex Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anti-ethnic</td>
<td>Occult/Satanism</td>
<td>Sexism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-family</td>
<td>Offensive Language</td>
<td>Sexually Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Political Viewpoint</td>
<td>Suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Unsuit to Age Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccurate</td>
<td>Religious Viewpoint</td>
<td>Violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insensitivity</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Name of material | Type of material* | Consumer Reviews

________________________________________________________________________

Initial Reaction: ___________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Reflection post discussion: ______________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. Name of material | Type of material* | Consumer Reviews

________________________________________________________________________

Initial Reaction: __________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Reflection post discussion: ______________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

*Print: Book, Magazine, Newspaper, Pamphlet, Play, Student Publication, Textbook
Non-Print: Artwork, CD-Rom, Film, Photo, Sound Recording, Video
Other: Collection, Exhibit, On-Line Resource, Performance, Speech, Varied
APPENDIX B

Challenge Reporting Form (CFR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALA OFFICE FOR INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE DATABASE FORM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ALA OFF Use Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Off Record No.:                    |
| Date of Report:                    |
| File by:                           |

1. CHALLENGED WORK

Title: ____________________________

Author/Performer(s): ____________________________
(last, first name)

Copyright/Issue Date: ________________ Published ________________
Publisher/Producer: ____________________________

2. TYPE OF WORK

Non-Print:  Artwork  Film  Photo  Sound Recording  Video  CD-ROM
Other:  Collection  Exhibit  Performance  Speech  On-Line Resources  Other

3. GROUNDS FOR CHALLENGE: (check all applicable)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Sexual</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Social Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Anti-Ethnic</td>
<td>Homeosexuality</td>
<td>Anti-Family</td>
<td>Abortion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insensitivity</td>
<td>Nudity</td>
<td>Offensive Language</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td>Sex Education</td>
<td>Political Viewpoint</td>
<td>Occult/Satanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexism</td>
<td>Sexually Explicit</td>
<td>Religious Viewpoint</td>
<td>Suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccurate</td>
<td>Unsuitable to Age Group</td>
<td>Violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. INITIATOR OF CHALLENGE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrator</th>
<th>Bd Member</th>
<th>Clergy</th>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Patron</th>
<th>Elected Official</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Pressure Group</td>
<td>Religious Orgn</td>
<td>Other Initiator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING CHALLENGE:


6. INSTITUTION BEING CHALLENGED:

Name: 
Address: 
City: State: Zip Code: 
Phone: 

7. TYPE OF INSTITUTION BEING CHALLENGED:

School Related: School or School Library: Grade Level Affected ___ to ___
Other Library: Academic ___ Public ___ Prison ___ Special ___
College/University ___ Community Group ___ Museum/Gallery ___ Publisher ___
Student Group ___ Theater ___ Other: ___

8. CONTACT PERSON FOR INSTITUTION:

Name: 
Address: 
City: State: Zip Code: 
Phone: 
Fax: 
E-Mail: 

9. STATUS OF MATERIAL

____ Unknown ____ Material Retained ____ Materials Removed ____ Materials Stolen/Defaced


PLEASE NOTE: THIS INFORMATION IS FOR STATISTICAL USE ONLY
NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL
Feel free to attach news clippings or other supporting material
Return to: Office for Intellectual Freedom, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611; FAX: 312-280-4227
FEEL FREE TO COPY AND DISTRIBUTE FORM
APPENDIX C

Educator Questionnaire on Improved Curriculum

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

Occupation: ___________________________________________________________

Number of years teaching: _____  If occupation is teacher state what grade level(s):
________________________

What subject(s) do you teach: ____________________________________________

Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement by replying yes or no to the questions below and write the corresponding explanations on the lines provided:

1. Do you think teachers would benefit from learning ways to teach controversial topics and/or Banned Books? __________

Why/Why not:

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________

2. I would consider teaching the strategies and concepts suggested in the ImprovEd curriculum? __________

Why/Why not:

______________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________
3. Did this presentation teach you any new ideas you could use in your teaching or classroom instruction?

__________

Why or Why Not:

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

4. The curriculum and projects of this ImprovEd course are clear and easy to understand.__________

Why/Why not:

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

5. After reviewing this ImprovEd curriculum do you have any suggestions or comments about the lessons?

Comments/suggestions:

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Extra Comments and suggestions regarding the ImprovEd presentation:

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

Thank you very much for your participation!
APPENDIX D

ImprovED PowerPoint

A supplemental guide to classroom curriculum using a multidisciplinary approach to teach controversial subjects.

By: Ms. Shani Ellington
MA Curriculum & Instruction Candidate

Projects includes techniques for:
- Elementary, Middle School, High School
- Using Banned Books and materials to teach.
- Using character lives in these materials to discuss controversial idea and topic.
- Through drama and theatre approaches, students will act out situations to have a better understanding of discrimination, prejudice, problem solving, and critical thinking.

Five points about ImprovEd:
- ImprovEd incorporates ideas and concepts from Freire and Boal with instructional methods.
- ImprovEd gives educators a guide featuring over 100 challenged and banned resources with relevant information about the complaints for the books and other pre-lesson preparatory resources.
- ImprovEd gives teachers sample lessons that can be adopted for classrooms use.
- ImprovEd uses narratives and artwork to translate student’s struggles and interests from a more objective standpoint.
- ImprovEd uses banned books with a unique teaching modality to discuss difficult and controversial topics.

ImprovEd uses variations of select theater techniques found in the book Teachers Act Up! Creating Multicultural Learning Communities Through Theater (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010),

ImprovEd adapts the selections found in Teachers Act Up! to the researcher’s suggestions so educators can implement new variations for K-12 classroom use.
Five points about ImprovEd:

- ImprovEd allows teachers to develop comfort with drama techniques such as improvisation inside the classroom.
- ImprovEd also includes recommendations for lesson plans to supplement current curricular selections.
- ImprovEd offers engaging and relevant discussions and unconventional performative versions of teaching versus solely lecture based format.
- ImprovEd initiates dialogue with students in using an objective focus.
- ImprovEd encourages students to be active learners rather than passive receptacles that information is deposited in.

Paulo Friere

Friere developed the Pedagogy of the Oppressed theories in South America during the 1960's.

There was a dictatorship and economic peonage similar to slavery that was reproduced at local levels.

Boal found that during Image Theatre reenactments people unknowingly usually sided with the oppressed not the oppressor.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed & Theatre of the Oppressed

Paulo Friere

Oppression can be expressed in education as well as in society. Pedagogy of the Oppressed (P.O.) highlights the idea that even within a democracy (not a dictatorship), oppressive forms of power can develop (p. 23) or be reproduced by transmission of information.

Banking Education can limit democratic participation by normalizing passivity of students in the classroom. Problem-posing education can challenge the status quo.

Augusto Boal

Boal's work and what he coined as the Theatre of the Oppressed (T.O) are philosophies that emerged in S. America while oppressive regimes were in power.

The T.O. created discourses with marginalized groups in hopes of challenging the status quo through the performances.

The T.O. approach would encourage action through problem-solving and engaging dialogues found within "problematized" generative themes.

Theorists who guided study:

Paulo Friere

Teachers learn from and about students.

Learning communities identify larger issues that shape oppressive situations.

Using generative themes, the student's experiences are made central to the curriculum allowing problem solving and critical thinking activities to evolve and be utilized in the classroom.

Augusto Boal

Rather than standard test-driven pedagogies that are modeled similarly to the Banking System of Education, Theatre of the Oppressed techniques are utilized arounng dialogue in marginalized groups.

Although the depictions acted out on stage were not real scenarios, there are liberating experiences that can be harnessed as teachable moments.
Definitions for students

Antagonist- 1.) A person who is opposed to or competes with another; opponent; adversary 2.) In drama or literature the opponent of the hero or protagonist.

Extemporaneous- 1.) Done spoken or performed without preparation 2.) Prepared in advance but delivered using few or no notes.

Generative- 1.) Capable of producing or creating.

Improvisation- 1.) The act of improvising

Spectactors- 1.) Participants are both spectators and actors to enhance facilitation of discussion through multi-dimensional perspectives.

Status Quo- 1.) The existing state or condition i.e.) The dominant group or ruling class.

Objectives and Aims of Improvised

Four objectives

- Objective #1: To provide teachers with lesson plans and resources for adaptation into the classroom.
- Objective #2: In the lessons and matrices provided give variations of how to apply controversial topics that are generative themes in the lives of the students.
- Objective #3: Use controversial topics to engage students using productive and intriguing narratives.
- Objective #4: Provide correlating standards for the content areas that the controversial subjects fall under.
Objectives and Aims of Improved

Four Aims

- Aim #1: To elicit passionate responses from students and give teachers tools to act as a guide while navigating challenging curricula.
- Aim #2: Give teachers the option to enhance their curricula through different media, including film, plays, television movies, music, musicals, and online summaries.
- Aim #3: Encourage teachers and students to seek resources and supplements outside of the standard curriculum.
- Aim #4: To broaden the students understanding of difficult subjects as well as give them problem solving tools and strengthen analytical skills.

Using Freire and Boal’s theories to meet the project’s objective and aims.

Controversial Materials

- Banned and challenged books often have content that is already problematic.
- Using controversial subject matter that are detailed in the experiences of protagonists and antagonist in the narratives, the students can be objective when problem solving or analyzing situations.
- Students learn techniques to apply to their own lives to become more active and empowered citizens.

Unconventional Strategies

- Rather than standard text-driven pedagogy that are modeled similarly to the Banking System of Education, Theatre of the Oppressed techniques are utilized.
- Combining concepts from the Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Theatre of the Oppressed with suggestions for an instructional comparison.

Banned Book Titles to Consider

- The Scarlet Letter
- The Bluest Eye
- Canterbury Tales
- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
- Blubber
- Divine Comedy
- Catcher in the Rye
- Forrest Gump
- The Jungle
- The Great Gatsby
- Hamlet
- James and the Giant Peach
- I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
- Indian in the Cupboard
- Moby Dick
- Les Miserables
- A Raisin in the Sun

Moby-Dick

Banned Books

We as educators must remain vigilant in our pursuit to bring diverse and quality educational resources and experiences to our students.
Banned Books

Books such as The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison offer challenging issues that the protagonist must face. Whether the characters are of race or about survival through traumatic experiences, they allow the reader a window into different realities.

Banned Books

Whether educators make the decision to use the original written material or an alternative source it is important to explore multicultural perspectives for increased engagement opportunities.

Banned Books

Discussions can have an array of theoretical and philosophical topics that are pertinent to the lives of the students and educator.

Banned Books

Whether the book is used in a honors course or checked out at a school library there is a long movement to ensure that the ideas, viewpoints, and choices of expression by authors are protected.
The Color Purple is one such story that has clear protagonists and antagonists.

In the story the main character Celie is the protagonist. Early on she faces adversity in that her mother is dead and she is pregnant by her father with her second child.

She shares a bond with her younger sister Nettie but they find themselves separated when she is married off to an abusive man named Mister.

The Color Purple gives readers a chance to delve into topics such as teen pregnancy, abuse, and rape.

Lesson to teach *Color Purple*

- Variations to book include a musical
- Lyrics can be read aloud in class
- Scene reenactment with ImprovEd
- Scene from musical [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HezV0Qj370](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4HezV0Qj370)
- Discuss terms and ideas presented in scene
Conclusions About Model Comparison

Rather than purging emotions at the end through the traditional model, students internalize the information through ImprovEd and channels the emotions into transformative performance.

The goal of the performances is not for the students to hold the audience in a suspended belief, but as spectators to critically think about the problems that the protagonist and in some cases the antagonist encounter.

Final Discussion

- A commonality between ImprovEd and Teacher’s Act Up is that problems are written as scripts and then acted out to find solutions.
- Teacher’s Act Up addressed the need for teachers to have a safe space where educators can vent their frustrations.
- An added benefit of group efforts is collective problem solving.
- Students can easily decipher as problematic advocacy.
- Students may identify with the protagonist issues in an objective way or empathize with their struggles.
- Students might be able to defend protagonists positions or have further inquiries about their circumstances.

Theatre of the Oppressed Concepts and New Law SB 48

- It is important to engage our students and give underrepresented groups a voice central role in classroom curriculum. The Theatre of the Oppressed is incorporated into a teaching strategy for classroom implementation.
- Teachers fear of addressing topics which are controversial instead should be to combat issues directly to bring marginalized groups forward and to activate students’ voices during conversations.
- SB 48 or the Fair Education Act is a law that will take effect in July 2013 that will allow for more diversity in classroom tests by requiring the inclusion of groups with various ethnic, sexual, and cultural identities as well as ability by emphasizing their historical contributions including roles of notable figures and key players in society.
- There are seven main strategies that are facilitated by the teacher with an additional strategy added into ImprovEd called “Writing” Theatre.

Questions?

- I would appreciate some feedback on my curriculum project.
- Thank you for your time.
- Contact information for Shani Ellington via email at wayofabsence@hotmail.com.
APPENDIX E

Background of the Researcher

Shani Ellington was born and raised in Sacramento, California and attended Center Jr. High and High School. During her primary education, she was placed in many gifted and enrichment programs where she began her love of education. Her parents were both in the Armed Forces and lived near base housing where many other enlisted men and women settled, as the housing development surrounding the base expanded homeownership opportunities.

Although discrimination was overt in some instances due to cultural insensitivity by others regarding her immigrant parents and due to others’ racist perceptions, it was not until the beginning of her transition into middle school that these behaviors were salient. Academically, Ms. Ellington performed well and was among one of the academic leaders in her school. After changes in her family’s household and an athletic interest taking the forefront, Ms. Ellington maintained an above-average grade point average while engaging in a more active social and extracurricular life. After graduating high school, she attended California State University, Sacramento (CSUS), receiving her undergraduate degree within the department of Social Science and Interdisciplinary Studies.

During her undergraduate career, Ms. Ellington sought an internship in her ideal career field and began working in what was formerly called the Learning Skills Department at CSUS with a Master Teacher who also acted as the Math Coordinator. He
introduced her to the concept of developing a teaching persona and gave her practical experience in teaching. She began developing her own lesson plans and maintaining a grading and recording book while noting gender-related developments professionally and academically. Social justice issues were very important to her so she pursued both academic and experiential knowledge. She believed there is power in representation and attended lectures that inspired her to gain a deeper knowledge of the systems in society that affect young and marginalized populations.

Enriching her academic coursework, Ms. Ellington received the privilege of meeting and speaking with experts in historical movements, organizational management, and social justice arenas. She met Dr. Cornel West, embraced Dr. Angela Davis, and vicariously relived experiences through the shared stories and knowledge sets of Elaine Brown, Dolores Huerta, Jessie Jackson, and others who inspired and impacted her tremendously. Her enlightening experiences, lectures, and academically applied information continues to broaden her scope of political, educational, scientific, and social matters throughout the completion of her Master’s degree program.
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