

What Books are We Teaching?

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DRAFT—PRELIMINARY REPORT

Purpose of Study

- Identify titles
 - Prepare my preservice students
 - Spur conversation/debate
- Re-kindle relationships and school-university communication

Interview Sample



Representative Mid-Hudson Valley Schools N = 14

- 3 Independent + Feeders
- 2 Catholic + Feeders
- 9 Public
 - 2 large/suburban
 - 2 small/village
 - 2 small city/“high-needs”
 - 3 large city/“high needs”

Sample Interview Questions

- What are the most recent titles you have purchased this year for classroom reading at this grade level?
- Please discuss any summer reading program at each of the grade levels.
- Please discuss any independent reading program at each of the grade levels.

Sample Interview Questions

- Are there certain titles or authors you have stayed away from due to community standards or censorship concerns?
- Tell me about an exemplary literature course or program in your district.
- Tell me about an ongoing challenge or concern related to the literature curriculum in your school.

Titles Required in 30% or More Public Schools

- Hudson Valley 2010 compared to Nation in 1988 & 1963
- [Top Public4.xlsx](#)
- Data is in process of being confirmed and findings are preliminary!

Your Thoughts....

- What do *you* notice about the most popular book-length titles required?
- What texts are critical for “college readiness?”
- For “career (including vocational) readiness?”
- What texts are potential “hooks” for creating a leisure reading “habit” and self-identification as “a reader”?

Your Thoughts

- *If* the end of literature instruction is not to teach skills, terms, and techniques, then why *do* we teach literature?

(Carol Booth Olson)

Perceived Strengths (draft)

- Big Read/One Book One Community
 - Kite Runner
 - Their Eyes Were Watching God
 - Poe (2010)
- Thematic Curriculum
- Alignment with Social Studies Curriculum
 - 9th grade Global Studies
 - 11th grade US History

Recent Titles-6th

- *The Penderwicks*, Birdsall
- *Stealing Freedom*, Carbone (slavery)
- *The House of Dies Dreer*, Hamilton
(underground Railroad)
- *One Thousand and One Nights*, McCaughrean
(Global Studies)
- *The Wednesday Wars*, Schmidt
- *The Cage*, Sender (Holocaust)

Recent Titles-7th/8th

- *Chains*, Laurie Halse Anderson (slavery)
- *Warriors Don't Cry*, Melba Patillo Beals
(Memoir-Integration Central High/Civil Rights)
- *When I was Your Age* (Vol 1 & 2) Amy Ehrlich
(Ed). (Coming of Age stories)

Recent Titles-9th

- *Siddhartha*, Hesse (Global Studies)
- *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, Edwidge Danticat
- *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri
- *The Book Thief*, Markus Zusak

Recent Titles-11th/12th

- *The Glass Castle*, Jeanette Walls (Memoir)
- *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, Junot Diaz
- *Remains of the Day*, Ishiguro
- *Never Let Me Go*, Ishiguro
- *Into the Wild*, Krakauer
- *Into Thin Air*, Krakauer

Summer Reading (draft findings)

- Catholic and Independent Schools (Expected)
- Most Public Schools-No required or formal programs (except for AP and Honors)

Independent Reading (draft findings)

- Catholic and Independent Schools (Expected. Points, book reports/projects)
- Most Public Schools (Reading promotions/challenges; sometimes replaces required reading in some middle schools; development of extensive classroom libraries or “Accelerated Reading Programs”)