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Developing Critical Communities for Critical Conversations in K-12 Classrooms

NATALIE SUE SVRCEK AND HENRY "CODY" MILLER

As educators, teaching to challenge social inequities and the oppressive systems that uphold them is central to our work in imagining and creating a just and democratic future (Ahmed, 2018; Germán, 2020; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Mirra, 2018; Morrell, 2005; Vasquez, 2014). We aim to support both teacher candidates and practicing teachers in creating classrooms “where students [can] learn to be critical and conscious beings, but also a place where they [can] empathize and ultimately become active participants in society” (Pitts, 2020, para. 3). Understanding this critical role, that we as educators must play, is of the utmost importance, especially in our current socio-political landscape that is marked by rampant inequities, political violence, and the curtailing of social progress. The 2016 presidential election and its aftermath have exacerbated existing forces of oppression. The amplification of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, classism, and other forms of oppression that have been a hallmark of the Trump administration will reverberate long after the 45th president has left office. Those forms of oppression, whether in rhetoric or policy, do not exist in a vacuum; such forms of harm manifest within schools. We believe, like many teachers and teacher educators, that our classrooms can be spaces to teach events and topics in ways that challenge inequity and strive for justice.

In this article, we present a framework for K-12 classroom teachers to begin to teach into important events and topics by developing critical communities within their classrooms and subsequently creating brave space for critical conversations. Our own experiences as classroom teachers have revealed to us the need to create a classroom space for critical conversations. Across our collective experiences we have witnessed how political moments, through rhetoric

and policy, can shape the experiences of our students and the conversations they are engaging in outside of class. The material reality of politics, whether policies that seek to expand upon rights or those that seek to entrench harm, manifest in the lives and conversations of our students whether we opt to acknowledge them or not. We have and continue to want to engage in those conversations because we believe that teachers hold powerful positions, which can be “vehicle[s] for freedom, for truth telling, for hell raising” (Pitts, 2020, para. 2).

In part, such teaching can be achieved through critical literacy and developing critical communities for critical conversations. The following framework was created as part of a larger project funded by Teaching Tolerance’s Educator Grants. Teaching Tolerance is the educational wing of the nonprofit Southern Poverty Law Center. Our work and teaching suggestions throughout this article draw heavily on Teaching Tolerance’s curricular materials, which are free and widely available through the organization’s website.

Who We Are

Before outlining our work, we want to name our positionalities. Naming how our own identities shape our relationships to the content at hand is a vital step in engaging in critical conversations (Vetter et al., 2018). Doing so allows us to be transparent about our relationship to power and the topic(s): Do we hold power in this moment? Are we adjacent to power? Do power dynamics existing in this topic marginalize us? Answering such questions allows us to name the ways our beliefs and knowledges about a given topic are shaped by our own positioning in our socio-cultural and political landscape. Subsequently, this practice is one we encourage all educators to become familiar with. Both of the authors believe that texts, when married to critical

pedagogies, can provide a roadmap to imagine and create a more equitable and just reality.

Natalie is an assistant professor of literacy education at SUNY Brockport. As a white, cisgender, heterosexual, and able-bodied woman, she saw the world and texts as representative of her own lived experience. However, Natalie's experience teaching for eleven years in Texas elementary schools and working with teachers and students who did not share her own cultural and linguistic background influenced her understanding of culture's influence on literacy and the world (e.g., Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Souto-Manning & Yoon, 2018). After becoming aware of her biases, she began to purposefully work towards ensuring her students experienced windows, mirrors, sliding glass doors (Bishop, 1990) in the curriculum. Now, Natalie works with teacher candidates and practicing teachers to acknowledge their own biases and deficit thinking, and to utilize texts as tools for social justice and critical conversations (e.g., Papola-Ellis, 2020; Vasquez, 2014).

Cody is an assistant professor of English education at the same institution. He is a white, able-bodied, cisgender queer educator. Cody spent his seven years as a high school English teacher positioning texts as vehicles to discuss broader socio-political issues in students' lives and worlds. His own experiences as a closet queer kid in rural K-12 schools foregrounded his approach to providing students with textual experiences that reflect their realities. Attending high school at the height of the George W. Bush administration's attempt to restrict marriage rights to only heterosexual couples, Cody witnessed several classroom discussions where the humanity of LGBTQ people were debated and ultimately ridiculed. LGBTQ experiences were not only absent in his curricular experiences, they were actively mocked and banned. Cody's time as a K-12 student influenced his work at imagining and creating classrooms and teachers that challenge homo-, bi-, trans-, and queerphobia.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The twin pillars of critical literacy and critical conversations served as the theoretical foundation for our conceptualization of this framework. Further, this article was envisioned as a support for teachers in developing critical stances and therefore pulses with the scholarships of critical

literacy and critical conversations. Critical literacy and critical conversation scholarship has guided our work as K-12 teachers and teacher educators. For instance, Natalie has asked students to analyze school policy and unpack ideological forces within seemingly objective reading plans in one of her graduate courses while Cody has used both nonfiction articles and young adult literature to facilitate critical conversations with high school students on socio-political topics ranging from school funding to criminal justice reform. Both theory and experience inform our approach outlined in this article.

Critical Literacy. Critical literacy frameworks interrogate power and disrupt the status quo, seek to understand multiple viewpoints, and work towards actionable steps for redesigning a more equitable world (Janks, 2010; Lewison et al., 2002; Vasquez, 2014). Moreover, critical literacy is a way to participate in the world, both in and out of school (Morrell, 2005; Vasquez, 2014). Critical literacy is active, requiring readers to engage with texts, examine how power works, and seek to understand how "social norms" are upheld (Teaching Tolerance, 2016).

Engaging students in critical literacy means that teachers must critically engage in all texts they consider for use in their classrooms and all texts that they engage with in the world. One must always consider who we are listening to, whose voices are missing, and factors which influence how we read a text. As educators encounter texts, we encourage them to ask the following questions:

- Whose voices/perspectives are heard? Whose are missing?
- Whose reality is presented? Who is ignored?
- What questions/topics are raised? Which questions/topics are ignored or not addressed?
- How can this text contribute to a larger set of texts? Media? Current news and events?
- How does this text present attitudes and beliefs in relation to the theme and author's purpose? How does the author's voice play a role?
- How does this text situate itself in the cultural context of the time period it is set in? What is there to unpack?

We encourage not only educators, but everyone, to consider every interaction they have with a text, critically. When considering texts for classroom use, using an analysis tool to assess texts can be helpful. For example, see the analysis tool we developed to assess professional development

texts, which could easily be modified and used (see Miller & Svrcek, 2020).

Critical Conversations. Developing critical literacy practices works in tandem with engaging in critical conversations to support students in unearthing oppressive ideologies to name and eventually challenge. Schieble (2012), channeling Fecho and colleagues (2010), notes that critical conversations are teaching practices that help students unearth “tensions in perspective” with the goal of critiquing the ways “power has an impact on people’s social, material, and psychological lives” (p. 214). Like Schieble and colleagues (2020), we believe classroom talk can be a gateway to action that facilitates social change, especially when combined with critical literacy practices (Janks, 2010; Morrell, 2005; Vasquez, 2014). Critical understanding of major socio-political issues is an important prerequisite for informed action. In other words, we want our students to have a deep and nuanced understanding of topics before they consider movements to spur change. Critical conversations can act as fertile ground for the seeds of action to be planted.

Addressing Misconceptions Upfront. We want to acknowledge a common misconception we hear in our work with white students, white teacher candidates, and white practicing teachers before moving further. Critical literacy and critical conversations are relevant in any school context: urban, suburban, rural; racially diverse or not; in schools largely funded by Title I to schools with what seems like never-ending funding. Critical literacy and critical conversations are relevant to all students, but particularly white students in nearly all white contexts. Whiteness is complex and culturally varied, its privilege often goes unnamed, and the importance of multicultural literacy assists in the uncovering and identifying of cultural biases (Eakins, 2020). In writing about teaching white, privileged students, Torres (2020) reminds that teachers must help that group of students “understand how privilege works at a systemic level that may have given students an edge that, while it may be one they didn’t ask for, is still very real” (para. 9). We confront the common belief that white students are somehow immune to the importance of critical literacy and critical conversations as a primer when working with our mostly white teachers. This primer allows us to open up conversations about how critical literacy and critical conversations can manifest in teachers’ unique socio-cultural school contexts.

A Framework for Critical Communities and Critical Conversations

Our framework includes three concepts: 1) How teachers can begin to prepare to engage in critical conversations with students; 2) Laying out necessary steps for structuring classrooms to cultivate critical conversations; and 3) Illuminating how young adult and children’s literature can be leveraged to serve these broader goals.

Preparing Teachers For Critical Conversations. One thing teachers should keep in the front of their minds is having conversations about inequities and privilege takes practice (Teaching Tolerance, Spring 2016). We want to reiterate that developing stances to enact critical literacy and critical conversations is not a linear process nor one with a finite ending. We encourage teachers to take some time to read, plan, and reflect on what their goals are. We stress that engaging students in critical conversations is imperative, and to consider why this work is important to their identities as teachers and secondly assess their comfort level (Teaching Tolerance, Spring 2016). We tell teachers to acknowledge their vulnerabilities, their areas of strengths, and identifying the supports they need (Teaching Tolerance, 2019).

Before teachers can begin considering practices for their classrooms, they must first begin with their own identities, histories, and beliefs. Working to be a critical educator is an ongoing, discursive process that requires constant reflection, revision, and action. Such work begins by addressing our own knowledges, lineages, and socialization.

Teachers reflecting on their own discomforts and gaps in knowledge can be an important starting point. Before engaging in critical conversations, teachers need to assess their own knowledge gaps and consider how their own learning is vital to facilitating critical conversations. As Bazemore-Bertrand (2020) reminds, “a lack of knowledge about how to facilitate class discussions around social issues keeps teachers from having these discussions in their classrooms” (p. 22). This lack of knowledge can actually thwart attempts to honor students’ histories, cultures, and experiences and deny students access to historical insights as teachers avoid critical conversations due to discomfort and unfamiliarity (Bender-Slacks, 2010; Germán, 2020; Milner, 2010). We want to reiterate the importance of teachers beginning with themselves before turning to teaching texts.

Finally, there are many resources available to support teachers as they engage in critical conversations with students while reminding that resources and organizations

Table 1
Questions for Self-Reflection

The Importance of Critical Conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to have critical conversations with my students because... • What is the most challenging thing about having critical conversations? • I feel the most concerned about... • I feel the most confident about...
Exploring Your Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do I identify? For example, my ability, age, race, gender identity, religion. • What messages did I learn about my identities growing up? • How does being a person with a different identity than me affect my day to day life? • What messages about my identity do I convey to students?
Your Practice as an Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there particular topics that are triggers for me? For my students? • How prepared do I feel to talk about critical topics? Are there topics I feel more prepared to talk about? • What can I do to grow as a critical educator? Do I have a colleague that might want to work on this with me? • In the past when critical conversations arose in the classroom, what do I do? In the future, I want to ... differently? • When I am asked about the importance of having critical conversations, what will I say?

which support critical conversations with students, even our framework should be critically examined. Some spaces that have been valuable to us as educators are Teaching Tolerance, National Equity Project, #DisruptTexts (Ebarvia et al., 2018), the National Council of Teachers of English, GLSEN, and Rethinking Schools.

Educators often avoid engaging in critical conversations due to feeling uncomfortable, being worried about conflict or unintentionally misspeaking (Ahmed, 2018; Milner, 2010). One way to prepare is to clarify terms such as identity, diversity, and injustice. Further, we suggest that teachers take time to reflect (see suggestions in Table 1) and implore them to be prepared to speak to their students, support system and families, colleagues, administrators, and the school community about their goals.

Building Critical Communities

In our work, teachers frequently ask how to prepare a group of students to engage in critical conversation? We begin by cautioning teachers that jumping into critical conversations without preparing themselves or their students might produce some unwanted tension and moments that they are not prepared to engage in. We suggest, and others implore (Ahmed, 2018; Arao & Clemens, 2013), that starting by building a community in their classroom or class sections is imperative to social justice learning. Building community

can be done with students of any age, and although it will look different, the goals should be the same--building a community around equity and justice for all.

We remind teachers that they have an important role to learn about their students individually and collectively. Relationships are at the core of teaching and learning (Milner, 2010; Sleeter, 2011) and can be the center of our curriculum and pedagogy (Milner, 2018). We must acknowledge our students' individuality and desire to know them. With some teachers having over 100 students a semester, we understand this can feel overwhelming, but it is an absolute first step.

Building community is an important first step for both students and teachers (Ahmed, 2018). The process of developing and sustaining a community is an iterative process, and similar to any process it ebbs and flows and needs attention to maintain a healthy balance. Building community will not eliminate students' nor teachers' discomfort during critical conversations, but a solid community can help ease the transition. As teachers, we want our classrooms to be affirming spaces for students; however, students, particularly members of marginalized, nondominant, or targeted identity groups—may feel especially vulnerable and never completely safe (Teaching Tolerance, Spring 2016; 2016). We suggest shifting away from the word safe and towards invoking brave and courageous spaces in the classroom which signals the challenge involved

(Arao & Clemens, 2013; Germán, 2020). In the remainder of this section we outline some steps teachers can develop in order to nurture critical conversations with their students.

Establishing community agreements. A first step is to establish community agreements in the classroom. These can be built with students of any age. A distinction between community agreements and rules or norms is that agreements are “a collective vision” for how a group of people want to be in relationship with one another” (National Equity Project, n.d., para. 3). Having community agreements allows everyone in the community, including the teacher, an agreed upon structure that is upheld by the group. We emphasize the importance of building these agreements together. Finally, we want to note that community agreements have the potential to be vehicles to replicate dominant ways of knowing and being, which is inherently oppressive to students with marginalized identities. For instance, a focus on “niceness” thwarts critical conversations that are needed to challenge inequities because dominant social norms dictate that discussing racism is considered outside the bounds of “normal” and “nice” behavior (Castagno, 2019; Dyches, 2016). Therefore, teachers must constantly interrogate community agreements to unearth and challenge unspoken, harmful ideologies, even consensus-driven ones.

Establishing goals. After working to establish community agreements, we turn to establishing goals for engaging in critical conversations leaning on theories of critical literacy. We suggest teachers start with what they know about their students. Asking questions about how to make the world a better place or what injustices students see in the world, deliberately addressing students’ social and cultural questions is a great place to begin (Vasquez, 2014). We hear the concern that these goals may not be implementable for young students, but scholarship suggests otherwise (see Batista-Morales et al., 2019; Leland et al., 2005; Vasquez, 2014) and what may come of this critical work often surprises teachers.

Curating the disparate and interconnecting interests of students can look different depending on the particulars of the classroom context. For instance, some teachers may want to chart students’ ideas on paper or host a digital space where all ideas are visible to affirm students’ voices and feelings. Building from what students see or have personally experienced in the world helps make the goals for learning and for critical conversations relevant to students (Vasquez et

al., 2019). Below are some suggested goals for students from Teaching Tolerance (2019):

- Connect a critical topic to shared principles like respect, fairness and individual worth.
- Demonstrate an understanding of perspectives and experiences different from their own.
- Explore ways they can put their ideas into action.
- Respect and respond to the experiences of their classmates. (p. 17)

Being forthcoming about the process and establishing shared goals supports everyone’s entry into critical conversations.

Expecting the unexpected. Engaging in critical conversations with students takes courage and a commitment to make a stand for justice for all. Teachers should expect to feel uncomfortable at times, but being uncomfortable does not mean that they have to feel unsafe (Teaching Tolerance, Spring 2016). Our aim in establishing community agreements and goals ahead of time is that the unexpected may not be *so unexpected* and that preparing as a community before entering into conversations will help support a meaningful start. Teachers cannot be prepared for every situation that they will encounter, but they can be prepared to expect the unexpected. Subsequently, we suggest teachers should prepare some routines to stay engaged in the work when engaging in critical conversations becomes difficult or unexpected, including: taking care of themselves (Teaching Tolerance, Spring 2016); finding critical colleagues who are willing to engage in this work (Dyches, 2016; Lord, 1994); debriefing with trusted peers, and taking time to reflect as they do this work. These steps help mitigate the uneasiness of unexpected and expected tensions when preparing and engaging students in critical conversations.

When topics of personal identity come up in the classroom, conversation may be unpredictable. Properly facilitating those conversations means getting comfortable with discomfort; it means being aware of our own biases and conditioned beliefs; and it means relying on a consistent model of classroom discussion so teachers can handle emotional responses thoughtfully (Collins & Ehrenhalt, n.d.). Undoubtedly, teachers and students will make mistakes and even unintentionally do harm. Teachers can publicly commit to understanding the nature of the harm, apologizing for the harm done, and make steps to not make the same mistake again when such moments occur. Similarly, restorative justice approaches to classroom

interactions are key to redressing harm done, intentional or not, by teachers and students alike (Winn et al., 2019). Finally, facilitating conversations means understanding the power dynamics external of the classroom that influence the internal dynamics of the classroom (Collins, 2019).

Refusing to debate someone's humanity. Teachers should never position any person's identity or humanity as debatable, especially when discussing contemporary social and political issues (Miller et al., 2020; Mirra, 2018). A question like, "Should President Trump's Muslim ban exist" creates a space to adjudicate the humanity of Muslim people, thus presenting "two sides" to a question that unequivocally has only one: No, the ban should not exist as it is a form of Islamophobia. As Collins (2019) points out, "both sides" framing often cloaks power dynamics, leads to false equivalencies, and prioritized intent at the cost of impact. Teachers can address the contemporary policies and rhetoric in ways that avoid the "both sides" trap. In discussing current events, such as the Trump administration's Muslim ban, teachers could ask, "How has the United States historically created insiders and outsiders using the legal system?" That type of question could allow for students to make connections between contemporary political topics like the Muslim ban and historical ones like the Roosevelt administration's internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. This type of question does not debate people's humanity, and it fosters deeper historical thinking around the role of the US government in upholding oppressive systems.

If teachers have concerns about their comfort level with facilitating these conversations, start with the publication *Let's Talk!* by Teaching Tolerance (2019)—which provides additional self-assessment inquiry questions and strategies that will help teachers get there. With the internal, personal work established (but never complete), we now offer children's and young adult literature to consider for facilitating critical conversations.

Leveraging Children's and Young Adult Literature for Critical Conversations

Educators send powerful messages through their text selection. Choosing texts for use in your classroom to teach from or to include in your classroom library cannot be approached lightly. The texts that educators choose for inclusion send messages about which identities are

affirmed, valued, and celebrated and those that are not (Collins & Ehrenhalt, n.d.; Miller et al., 2020). Like all forms of curriculum, text selection and classroom libraries are political, whether intentional or not, espouse ideologies and values (Dyches, 2018; Ebarvia et al., 2018; Thomas, 2016; Worlds & Miller, 2019).

Ultimately, teachers' choices should be guided by their students, their goals for teaching and learning, and a close reading of the text. We do not advocate picking up a book for the first time and reading it aloud to students; teachers' planning and preparation is key. The pedagogical dimensions of a teacher's stance matter as much as the curriculum and how the curriculum is enacted. For instance, teachers can approach canonical texts in critical ways that facilitate discussions and understandings rooted in a social justice tradition (Dyches, 2018); conversely, young adult literature can contribute to the further marginalization of communities, for instance by commodifying Black pain (McKinney, 2020). From that understanding, all texts have the potential to unearth and challenge oppressive ideologies and teach in critical ways just as all texts have the potential to reify those same oppressive ideologies. Books are never enough--what teachers do with books matters. From that understanding, we offer a list of suggested topics and books to consider given our current socio-political landscape.

In writing about the importance of discussing major themes of the 2020 presidential election, Germán (2020) notes that "a more inclusive text selection and curriculum leads to a more inclusive and meaningful class dialogue" (p. 11). The injustices and inequalities that have become major headlines during the Trump administration existed long before Donald Trump's political career. However, these socio-political oppressive forces have been exacerbated in the aftermath of Trump's inaugural address that was marked by the phrase "American carnage." Classrooms, acting as miniature laboratories of democracies, can be dialogic spaces where students come to name and understand these inequities and injustices in order to challenge them. Next, we outline a few suggestions for children's and young adult literature that could potentially spark critical conversations in English and literacy classrooms.

We suggest the following themes and topics as well as accompanying titles in Table 2 that, when paired with critical literacy pedagogies, can transform our educational spaces into "sacred truth-seeking classrooms" (Germán,

2020, p. 10). This list is by no means exhaustive. Additionally, while we organized certain titles with certain themes, several of the titles could be positioned in multiple thematic units. The essential questions teachers construct can frame where certain texts fit in their curriculum. For instance,

we positioned Oshiro's *Anger is a Gift* under the theme of "youth activism" due to the way young people engage in civic activism. Oshiro's book would make a great text in a unit driven by an essential question such as "How do young people make change in their communities?" However, the

Table 2

Literature Suggestions for Sparking Critical Conversations

Potential Topics & Themes	Type of Text	Title, Author, Year of Publication
Immigration Justice	YA	<i>Americanized: Rebel Without a Green Card</i> by Sara Saedi, 2018
	YA	<i>Dear America: The Story of an Undocumented Citizen</i> by Jose Antonio Vargas, 2019
	PB	<i>Dreamers</i> by Yuyi Morales, 2018
	PB	<i>Mama's Nightingale: A Story of Immigration and Separation</i> by Edwidge Danticat, 2015 (L. Staub, Illus.)
	MG	<i>My Family Divided: One Girl's Journey of Home, Loss, and Hope</i> by Diane Guerrero with Erica Moroz, 2018
	YA	<i>Internment</i> by Samira Ahmed, 2019
LGBTQ Affirmation	YA	<i>The Black Flamingo</i> by Dean Atta, 2020
	PB	<i>The Boy & the Bindi</i> by Vivek Shraya, 2016 (R. Perera, Illus.)
	YA	<i>Felix Ever After</i> by Kacen Callender, 2020
	YA	<i>The Henna Wars</i> by Adiba Jaigirdar, 2020
	PB	<i>They, She, He easy as ABC</i> by Matthew Sg and Maya Christina Gonzalez, 2019 (M. Gonzalez, Illus.)
	PB	<i>When Aidan Became a Big Brother</i> by Kyle Lukoff, 2019 (K. Juanita, Illus.)
Structural and Systemic Racism and Inequities	YA	<i>Brown Girl Dreaming</i> by Jacqueline Woodson, 2014
	PB	<i>Journey for Justice: The Life of Larry Itliong</i> by Dawn B. Mabalon and Gayle Romasanta, 2018 (A. Sibayan, Illus.)
	YA	<i>Miles Morales: Spider-Man</i> by Jason Reynolds, 2017
	PB	<i>Not My Idea: A Book about Whiteness</i> by Anastasia Higginbotham, 2018
	MG	<i>One Crazy Summer</i> by Rita Williams-Garcia, 2010
	PB	<i>Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation</i> by Duncan Tonatiuh, 2014
Youth Activism	PB	<i>A is for Activist</i> by Innosanto Nagara, 2012
	YA	<i>Anger is a Gift</i> by Mark Oshiro, 2018
	YA	<i>Glimmer of Hope: How Tragedy Sparked a Movement</i> by The March for Our Lives Founders, 2018
	YA	<i>How I Resist: Activism and Hope for a New Generation</i> Paperback edited by Maureen Johnson, 2018
	YA	<i>Like a Love Story</i> by Abdi Nazemian, 2019
	PB	<i>Young Water Protectors: A Story About Standing Rock</i> by Aslan Tudor and Kelly Tudor, 2018

Key: PB=Picture Book, MG= Middle Grades Novel, YA=Young Adult Novel

book could also be positioned in the “immigration justice” and “LGBTQ affirmation” themes we suggest. Teachers should use these suggestions as just that: suggestions.

Conclusion

Our framework is not meant to be an exhaustive set of steps to become a critical educator nor is it meant to be a pitstop along the way of teaching to fulfill institutional calls for equity. The work of becoming a critical educator working towards justice is a continual process of becoming, unlearning, reflecting and revising, apologizing, and holding ourselves accountable (Milner, 2010). We have offered guidelines and steps to consider when building critical communities to support critical conversations. Further, we suggest teaching with literature as tools to open up conversations that can guide students to critical consciousness (Freire, 2011). Drawing heavily on scholarship and the work of Teaching Tolerance, we believe teachers can build critical communities, foster critical conversations, and develop students’ capacities to create a just tomorrow.

We hope the provided framework will support teachers who are interested in building critical communities and engaging in critical conversations with students. We firmly believe that teachers are public intellectuals, and thus have the knowledge of their own unique contexts to fill in the specifics of the framework. To return to our opening, our hope is that the way we position books fulfills Pitts’ (2020) call for teaching that is “a vehicle for freedom, for truth telling, for hell raising” (para. 2). Let us raise hell.

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