Empowering Student Voices 2.0

Scott Pierce & Sandi Cahill
“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view ... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

Atticus Finch
Soundtracks

List 3–4 Songs that are significant to you: connected to a memory of an event or person, or some significant time in your life.

Now choose one of the songs to create a 1 min story about how that song is significant to your life.

Pair–Share: Partner A, share your 1 min story about your song and its significance in your life.

Partner B, listen attentively in order to formulate two how or why questions for Partner A.

Partner B, ask your questions...Partner A respond...

Switch
Building Culture

Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among rocks.-Emily Bronte

I write from my knowledge not my lack, from my strength not my weakness. I am not interested if anyone knows whether or not I am familiar with big words, I am interested in trying to render big ideas in a simple way. I am interested in being understood not admired.-Lucille Clifton
Critical Literacy?

Combined, children of American Indian/First Nation, LatinX, Asian Pacific and African Americans is 14.2%

These students are more likely to see themselves in a story as an inanimate object or animal rather than a person.

Diversity in Children’s Books 2015

Percentages of books depicting characters from diverse backgrounds. Based on the 2015 publishing statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison: ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp

- 0.9% American Indians/First Nations
- 2.4% Latinx
- 3.3% Asian Pacifics/Asian Pacific Americans
- 7.6% African/African Americans
- 12.5%* Animals, Trucks, etc.
- 73.3%** White

* About a quarter of the total children’s books published in 2015 were picture books, and about half of those depict non-human characters, like animals & trucks.
** The remainder depict white characters.
Diversity of Authors?

How do we as educators impact these statistics?
“Books are sometimes **windows**, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also **sliding glass doors**, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a **mirror**.”

-Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop
If we think of education as an act of knowing, then reading has to do with knowing. The act of reading cannot be explained as merely reading words since every act of reading words implies a previous reading of the world and a subsequent re-reading of the world. There is a permanent movement back and forth between reading reality and reading words—the spoken word too is our reading of the world. We can go further, however, and say that reading the word is not only preceded by reading the world, but also by a certain form of writing it or rewriting it. In other words, of transforming it by means of conscious practical action. For me, this dynamic movement is central to literacy.

Paulo Freire, 1985
Stories and Counterstories

Blue: 4th Grade Teacher in San Diego

Pink: Undocumented Mother/Father recently arrived in the United States

Yellow: An unemployed auto plant worker in Indiana...your factory shut down and moved to Mexico.

Purple: You are an immigrant from Somalia who just received your citizenship after being in the United States for over 12 years.
Intellectual Discussion Points

From your assigned position what are your initial thoughts?

Do you feel as if your personal story (assigned position) is valued or devalued? Do you feel as if your voice is marginalized? Silenced? Empowered? Why?

From your assigned position, what do you think is the overarching message of this story?
Stories and Counterstories

Blue: A parent of small children in Aleppo


Yellow: A veteran of the first War in Iraq.

Purple: A college senior majoring in International-Relations
Intellectual Discussion Points

From your assigned position what are your initial thoughts?

Do you feel as if your personal story (assigned position) is valued or devalued? Do you feel as if your voice is marginalized? Silenced? Empowered? Why?

From your assigned position, what do you think is the overarching message of this story?
Intellectual Discussion Points

From your own personal position what are your initial thoughts?

Do you feel as if your own personal story (assigned position) is valued or devalued? Do you feel as if your voice is marginalized? Silenced? Empowered? Why?

From your own personal position, what do you think is the overarching message of this story?

How does your own personal position compare to your assigned position, when discussing the topic? Similarities? Differences?
Culture
Text
Voice