

Do banned books have a place in schools?

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Essential Question: What reasons are given for banning books and are they valid?

Instructional Objectives:

- Students will be able to state reasons for why books are banned through reading various news articles.
- Students will analyze the sources of quotes for validity.
- Students will look at the 1st Amendment and judge how it applies to books and school.
- Students will read a banned book (of their choice) and form a judgment as to whether or not it should have been banned based on what they know about the first amendment.
- Students will evaluate the sources in both the news articles and videos (independent or self-interested).

News Literacy Skills to be incorporated:

- Verification
- Transparency
- Interested vs. Independent sources
- Assertion
- First Amendment rights

Note: A permission slip may be needed to allow kids to read the banned books depending upon what is banned or not banned in your school district.

Introducing and motivation the lesson:

- Ask the class to do a quick write. Ask them to all write about the same topic (for example: their favorite restaurant). Give them 5 to 10 minutes to write and when they are done say that you are going to ask them to share their work with the class, but first you need to know who wrote about (pick a topic). For example, if you had them write about their favorite restaurant, ask who wrote about a restaurant that serves meat (which will probably be everyone). Collect the papers of the students who wrote about a restaurant that serves meat and say that as a vegetarian, you don't want to hear about a restaurant that serves meat, so you are going to keep the entire class from hearing these papers.

- When students begin to question what is going on, engage them in a discussion about censorship. Ask them what they think censorship is, where it can occur, and how they think it affects them. Draw the discussion toward the idea of “freedom of speech” . What do students think that means and how does it apply in a school setting.

Lesson Activity:

- Begin with a philosophical chairs activity. Write on the board “Books should be banned in school.” Have the students sit on either the agree, disagree, or undecided side. Allow them to discuss their opinions. See Philosophical Chairs handout for instructions as to how the activity works. Have students reflect on the activity at the conclusion.
- Students will be placed into groups and each group will be given a news article (see attachments for article suggestions) about a book that has been challenged in schools.
- Groups will be asked to read the article together and pull out the main arguments that each person makes for challenging the book. Ask them to look specifically at what book is being challenge, what is the argument for challenging the book, who is the person making the challenge, and is that person associated with any group?
- Ask each group to present their article. What book is being challenge? What is the argument for challenging the book? Who is the person making the challenge? Are they associated with any group?
- As each group presents their articles, ask the class to make a decision – do you agree that the book should be banned and should it be banned for the entire school?
- Present the idea of independent and interested sources, transparency, verification, and assertion. Have students go back and look at their articles again. Who are the interested sources in the article, who are independent? What assertions does the article make? Are both sides represented? Does this affect how you feel about the book being banned?
- Ask students about the 1st amendment. What does it protect? What does it mean? How does it apply to school?

- Go over the first amendment and the cases concerning the first amendment in schools – Tinker v. Des Moines (1969), Bethel v. Frasier (1986), and Hazellwood v. Kulmeier (1988). Talk about the Bong HiTs 4 Jesus case (show video <http://www.bing.com/videos/watch/video/justices-look-at-bong-hits-4-jesus-case/6xqjsme>) and have them decide if the principal was correct.
- Ask students to think about how these ideas apply to reading and writing in school. Should we censor what students read and write? Are students' rights being violated if we do?
- Hand out the list of the 100 most banned books in the U.S. just to give students an idea of which books are being banned in schools.

Evaluation:

- Provide students with a pared down list of banned books to select from. Ask them, in groups, to each select one banned book to read. Have them research the book and the author to find out why the book was read.
- Students will need several weeks to read their books and compile their research. The final product will be either a written article or multimedia report with their findings, whether they think the book has a place in schools, and the opinions of other sources .

Resources:

- Philosophical Chairs handout
- Articles (suggestions):
 - Beaverton teacher calm about storm stirring over teen series
 - Books create turmoil at high school - Montgomery teacher's choices withdrawn from classroom
 - Schools fear book's vocabulary lesson - If GRPS can't return advanced English text, it may cut offensive pages
 - Author defends contested book
- 100 Most Banned Books 2000-2009 available at:
http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/banned/frequentlychallenged/challengedbydecade/2000_2009/index.cfm

Philosophical Chairs

1. Set up the chairs with two rows facing each other. A third row is then set up at the end.
2. Listen to the statement. Decide whether you agree or disagree. Sit in Row A if you agree with the statement and Row B if you disagree. If you are undecided, sit in Row C.
3. Someone on the pro side of the argument (A) begins the discussion with an argument in favor of that position.
4. Then someone from the Con side responds to that argument, explaining why it does not sway him or her.
5. The undecided should state their concerns or reservations at any time.

The ground rules are as follows:

- Participants should agree to be open-minded rather than insisting on "standing one's ground".
- Anyone can change seats at will and should move to the appropriate - row. There is no limit to the amount of times one may move.
- To agree, sit on one side or the other; you need not agree on all points or the merits of any specific argument.
- Do not interrupt each other. Listen carefully. Take notes in order to remember important points.
- The argument should continue back and forth; first side "A", then side "B", and so on. For example, when a participant from one side "A" makes a point, they may not comment again until someone from side "B" has spoken, and then **another participant from side "A" has spoken**, and then another participant from side "B" has spoken. In other words, 3 other people must speak before the same person can speak again.
- Enjoy the opportunity to discuss an important issue with your classmates.
- All students should be encouraged to participate.

Today's topic:

Philosophical Chairs A Quick Reference for Participants

- **Prepare** - *Examine* the issue, idea, opinion, or proposal using references provided. Prepare arguments for and/or against the issue, idea, opinion, or proposal.
- **Accept** - the **Rules** of Engagement:
- **Read** the Opening Statement carefully; be sure you understand it
- **Listen** to the person who is speaking
- **Understand** the person's point of view
- **Contribute** your own thinking, offering your reasons as succinctly as possible
- **Respond** to statements only
- **Change** your mind about th9'statement as new information or reasoning is presented
- **Move** to the opposite side or to the Neutral chairs as your thinking grows and changes
- **Support** the Mediator in maintaining order and helping the discussion to progress...
- **Reflect** on the experience via the closing activity or assignment
- **Arrange** - chairs in rows to facilitate choosing sides. Add chairs in the middle for times when
 - participants are temporarily undecided or choose to be temporarily neutral.
- **Listen** - to the Opening Statement and determine your opening stand.
- **Engage** - in the discussion.
- **Apply** - the Rules of Engagement.
- **Complete** - a reflection upon the conclusion of the Philosophical Chairs.

Philosophical Chairs

Rules of Engagement

1. Read the Opening Statement carefully; be sure you understand it.
2. Listen to the person who is speaking.
3. Understand the person's point of view.
4. Contribute your own thinking, offering your reasons as succinctly as possible.
5. Respond to statements only.
6. Change your mind about the statement as new information or reasoning is presented
7. Move to the opposite side or to the neutral chairs as your thinking grows and changes.
8. Support the Mediator in maintaining order and helping the discussion to progress.
9. Reflect on the experience via the closing activity or assignment.

**PHILOSOPHICAL CHAIRS
REPORT**

Name _____ Date _____

Statement _____

My original position: PRO _____ CON _____

How many times I changed position _____

My ending position: PRO _____ CON _____

How open-minded I was as I listened to other people talk:

Mostly open-minded _____

Halfway open-minded _____

Not very open-minded _____

My explanation and comments: _____
