Unit 2: Social Issues Book Clubs -- Developing Critical Literacies

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Week 9**
Length: **8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Social Issues Book Clubs--Developing Critical Literacies will provide students with an introduction to critical literacy as readers read with the critical lens of social issues to think deeply about how power, relationships, and perspective help to shape a narrative's themes. Through the social structure of the book clubs, students will enact a variety of methods to engage in collaborative intellectual discussion and work. The reading work developed across the unit will act as a foundation for the writing work to be completed in the Literary Essays: From Character to Compare Contrast unit of study.

Standards

LA.RL.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
LA.RL.6.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
LA.RL.6.3	Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
LA.RL.6.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
LA.RL.6.5	Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.
LA.RL.6.6	Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.
LA.RL.6.7	Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video, or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.
LA.RL.6.9	Compare, contrast and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics.
LA.RL.6.10	By the end of the year read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above, scaffolding as needed.
LA.SL.6.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.SL.6.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

LA.SL.6.1.B	Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
LA.SL.6.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
LA.SL.6.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
LA.SL.6.2	Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
LA.L.6.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.6.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
LA.L.6.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Essential Questions

- How are the social issues developed within a fictional text similar to the issues of the world around me?
- How can I analyze how authors develop power dynamics and perspective in stories and other texts?
- How can I deepen my thematic interpretation of text by considering unfairness, power, and perspective?
- How can I read to be alert to social issues in stories and other texts?
- How can unfairness, power, and pressure shape the course of a narrative?
- How do authorial decisions influence the themes conveyed in a literary text?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Character relationships can assist or deter the resolution of a problem (conflict).
- Critical readers notice the influence of unfairness, power, and perspective in shaping the course of a story.
- Critical readers participate in collaborative discussion and debate to explore and extend literary ideas.
- Critical readers read not only to interpret themes, but also to examine how authors craft their messages within the text.
- Critical readers read thoughtfully and purposefully to deepen their literary interpretation.
- Critical readers think deeply about how characters deal with social issues as a way to face the same issues in the world today.
- Readers revise original theories as a story develops.
- The point of view influences how events of a story are perceived.

Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- Analyze how a particular chapter or moment within the text contributes to the development of the plot, theme, and social issues present.
- Analyze how perspective influence narrative elements and thematic meaning.
- Assemble relevant textual evidence, weighing the strength and validity of each to substantiate a claim.
- Cite textual evidence to support literal and inferential interpretation of the text.
- Compare and contrast power dynamics over time to observe change.
- Construct literary claims with evidence and reasoning.
- Define social issue, power, unfairness, power relationship, pressure, and perspective.
- Describe the influence of power on character dynamics and change.
- Determine a theme of a text.
- Distinguish a narrative's perspective and point of view.
- Employ active reading strategies to track and develop interpretation across a text.
- Employ critical reading lens to focus reading and deepen interpretation.
- Explain how a theme is conveyed.
- Identify instances of unfairness within the text.
- Identify power dynamics within text.

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

Suggested Teaching Points

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from the TCRWP curricular calendars and texts and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add and or emphasize based on their students' needs.

Bend I: Reading Thoughtfully to Deepen Interpretation -- Identifying Social Issues

- Teach readers that critical readers choose the lens through which we view a text.
- Teach readers that readers often notice social issues emerging from moments of unfairness.
- Teach readers that readers sometimes decide to think about more than one social issue, and use jots and notebooks to capture thinking.
- Teach readers that readers collaborate within discussions, bringing together clues within the text to generate big ideas about the social issue(s) present.
- Teach readers that readers collect clues about social issues as we read on in a text and step back to notice patterns emerging.
- Teach readers that readers connect moments within a text and discuss how the parts fit together.
- Teach readers that readers construct big ideas about stories by braiding together clues and asking, "What does this story say/teach us about ___?"

Bend II: Reading Critically for Power, Pressures, and Relationships

- Teach readers that readers search to understand their characters in deeper ways. (Traits, Motives, Desires)
- Teach readers that readers deepen their understanding of characters by looking at what pressures and rules the character faces.
- Teach readers that readers consider significant moments in the text, and ask, "Who or what has power here?"
- Teach readers that readers distinguish the types of power within the text by asking, "Is this power over? Is this power to do?"
- Teach readers that readers examine power relationships to consider its influence on the characters. (traits, motives, desires, pressures)
- Teach readers that readers connect power relationships to larger social issues present in the text.
- Teach readers that readers distinguish pivotal moments within the plot that act as turning points for characters and power relationships.

Bend III: Reading to Learn How Authors Craft Stories to Convey Messages

- Teach readers that readers think thematically to interpret a text. (Problem-based, Perspective-based, Author-based)
- Teach readers that readers pay attention to how an author conveys his/her message.
- Teach readers that readers notice the writing decisions an author makes and think about the goals and effects of those decisions.
- Teach readers that readers reflect on how they are writing about their reading and thinking.
- Teach readers that readers enliven discussion by debating with other readers.
- Teach readers that readers share their thinking with others.

Suggested Activities

- Mini-lesson to include connection, teaching point, modeling, active engagement, and link to independence.
- Develop and use reader's notebook for modeling, exemplar entries, and a timeline of teaching points
- Create authentic artifacts (logs, jots, etc.) for examination and inquiry
- Think aloud during process to model strategies, sentence stems, and problem-solving techniques
- Model creation of artifacts during read aloud
- Examine mentor and student exemplars
- Read aloud a mentor text or whole class text with strategic stopping points for teacher think aloud, turn and talk, and stop and jot opportunities

- Construct authentic anchor charts (specific teaching points + student observations + student friendly terms/examples)
- Create process checklists to guide reading work into independence
- Incorporate multimedia and visual texts as a means for active engagement and practice
- Small group strategy lessons
- Individual conference with students

Assessments

Assessment within this unit of study arrives in three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. The development and use of assessment will happen strategically throughout the unit as a means of maintaining a "pulse of learning" to ensure that students are grasping and mastering the skills and strategies intertwined within the teaching points prior to advancing on in the unit. Assessment will be formal and informal, as well as teacher-driven and student-driven. Students will be given the opportunity to self-assess their work to identify areas of weakness and development in order to develop ambitious, feasible goals. Students will also be asked to collaborate with peers in their assessment practices in order to support learning across zones of proximal development. On-going teacher assessment will take place in the context of the conference. Conferences, both small group and one-on-one conferring, are used to reinforce expectations, provide advice/or assistance, and to support growth.

Diagnostic Assessments:

- TC Running Record (http://readingandwritingproject.org/resources/assessments/running-records)

The running record forms provide a book introduction, the typed text, a sidebar of reading characteristics, a scoring guide, comprehension questions with sample responses, and space to take notes and to jot student responses. A Teacher Guidebook for Levels A-K and one for Levels L-Z+ is available in the Supporting Documents and explains in detail the assessments and includes suggestions for how to use the assessments to plan differentiated, explicit instruction for each student assessed.

Formative Assessments:

- Unit pre-assessment (On-demand performance task)
- Examination of student reading logs
- Examination of student developed jots and notebook entries
- Informal conferring and observation of independent reading habits and accountable talk
- Collection of anecdotes from teacher-student conferences: individual, small group, strategy, and guided
- Collection of observations from active engagement within mini-lesson
- Quick jots
- Exit tickets

- Student reflection

Summative Assessments:

- End of unit post assessment (On-demand performance task)
- Reading logs, notebook entries, and other evidence of students improving skills
- Published writing composition
- Portfolio (collection of process work to reflect growth across a unit)

The majority of assessments will be brief and informal, relying heavily on conferences and small groups to demonstrate growth across this unit of study. Writing about reading can be a powerful way capture students' learning both formally and informally. If students are writing their thinking on sticky notes, teachers can collect a sample set of their best thinking on day one of the social issues unit to compare their work at the start of the unit to their work as the unit progresses. By collecting their notebooks at least once, it provides a sense of how deeply they are taking in the work. In addition, have students self-assess to reflect on their work and how they are growing as readers during the unit.

Summative final products can consist of several literary essays (both on-demand and process pieces) during this time, which will show off some of their newly strengthened reading ability. Sharing final products could be as simple as an in-class gallery walk to show off the best work clubs have done, or as elaborate as an opportunity for clubs to present their understandings of how social issues are presented in literature to an interested audience--parents, schoolmates, or others in the community. Since many kids are savvy enough with setting up blogs, tumblrs, and wiki page, they could also share their thinking that way, reaching a wider audience.

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

Differentiated instruction is accomplished through pre-assessment and ongoing formative assessments that inform independent work, small group strategy lessons, and individual conferences. Differentiation in content, product and/or process addresses the needs of exceptionally able students, and scaffolding of varying degree is provided to support less ready students in meeting worthy and appropriately rigorous learning outcomes. Instructional objectives, strategies and materials emphasize relevance, authenticity, and student-centered learning.

In compliance with 504 plans and IEP's, teachers will review applicable documents, consult appropriate personnel connected with special-needs students' cases, work closely with inclusion teachers and classroom aides, and communicate with parents in an effort to see to the specific needs of all students. Due to varying dispositions and learning styles, teachers promote various strategies during all phases of the reading process. Students will have opportunities to work alone, in pairs, and in groups.

The reading workshop incorporates a variety of instructional techniques to meet the continuum of learners' interests, learning profiles, and readiness levels.

Differentiating through Independent Reading: After using the TCRWP benchmark assessments to determine corresponding Fountas and Pinnell text gradient levels A-Z+, students choose appropriate "just right" books that match them as readers based on interest/readiness. The strategy or skill being taught might be the same, but the book choice, or content, is differentiated.

Differentiating though Reading Response Methods: One option to differentiate product is to allow students to use different methods to track their thinking. For example, if students are working on inferring and using their notebooks, students can choose how to record their thought process (Venn Diagram, T-Chart, etc.) to use evidence and explanation to support their decision. The teacher can assign how students respond to literature based on their reading goal or need, or the student can decide.

Differentiating through Conferences and Small Groups: Teachers should listen to students as they read and take notes during one-on-one conferences. Reading conferences can be used to encourage students' reading interests, help students find appropriate leveled books to read, and to monitor student progress. The teacher can also pull small groups for extra practice at this time. These small groups can be used to challenge higher-level students, give additional practice to all students in small groups, or to meet with lower readers to focus on areas of weakness. Small groups are meant to be flexible and change to fit the needs of students. During this time students can share their thinking with partners and with the small group, and then receive feedback from the teacher.

Individual conferencing and small group instruction allows for instruction at various levels, remediation or enrichment of specific skills, as well as the differentiation of the method of instruction and the presentation of information.

In addition to these forms of differentiation other modifications can be made. They can include, but are not limited to those suggested below.

Differentiating for special education:

- *Learning Environment*: Allow space for students to choose; Use preferential seating; Provide opportunities for movement; Vary activities both in and out of desk/table
- *Curriculum:*Adapt amount of work required; Use different forms of assessments that demonstrate different learning styles; Allow different visual aids, concrete examples, hands-on activities, and cooperative groups to learn new concepts; Allow work to be completed in various formats
- *Teaching and Learning Styles:*Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner- use multiple teaching styles to teach a new concept; Use concrete examples and move towards the abstract; Provide an overview of lesson at beginning; Monitor the rate and manner in which the material is being presented
- *Time Demands*: Allow extra time to complete tests; Give different versions of tests; Follow a routine;

Set specific time limits for test

- *Cooperative Learning:* Use flexible grouping; Use student choice in grouping; Assign peer helpers to check in on one another
- *Behavior Concerns:* Give clear expectations of goals for the class period; Be consistent in follow through with both positive and negative consequences; Use of cues; Give immediate positive reinforcement and feedback; Avoid power struggle
- *Attention/Focus Concerns:* Give notification of transitions; Use of cues to refocus; Seat near teacher or in area of less distraction; Introduce assignments in sequential steps; Make sure books/materials are on the correct pages
- *Organization:* Give copy of notes; Allow student to leave unnecessary materials in a nearby area; Color-coded materials; Use of binder system; Use a checklist for work in smaller units
- *Written Expression:* Allow use of manuscript, cursive, or typing for assignments; Leniency in spelling and neatness (to an agreed upon level); Provide a copy of notes; Avoid pressures for speed or accuracy
- *Visual Processing:* Give highlighted/color coded copy of notes; Avoid copying notes from the board; Check in with student to be sure that visuals are comprehended from the beginning of lesson; Avoided cluttered worksheets keeping them clear and well defined
- *Language Processing:* Give both written and verbal directions; Slow the rate of presentation and paraphrase information; Keep statements short and to the point Allow for extra wait time; Use student‘s name before asking a question; Use of visuals and hands-on materials; Familiarize students with new vocabulary before lesson
- *Audio Processing:* Provide a copy of notes; Use of a checklist; Keep statements short and to the point; Use of eye contact; Have student sit closer to instruction; Use of student buddy to check in with sitting nearby; Use of visuals; Stop and check in for understanding

- **Content specific modifications may include:**
    - Instruction aligned to student's performance level according to Teacher's College Reading Continuum
    - Personal student goals designed to move student along Teacher's College Reading Continuum

Differentiating to extend learning for gifted students:

Reading programs for the gifted should take into account the individual characteristics of the children, capitalize on the gifts they possess, and expand and challenge their abilities. Tasks should be commensurate with ability and achievement. Accommodations may include:

- Compacting the regular curriculum; acceleration of content and/or text at a pace and depth appropriate to the capacity of able learners
- Inquiry reading and independent study opportunities; use of more advanced books
- Focus on developing higher-level comprehension skills, along with higher level questioning
- Exploration of literary tropes and elements (i.e. craft, irony, symbolism, foils, unreliable narrators, and multiple perspectives) on a highly abstract level and with highly nuanced applications
- Special emphasis to the critical-thinking components of the standard scoring rubrics
- A wider and more in-depth array of related topics and cross-curricular connections
- Opportunities for students to engage in peer instruction
- Requiring more initiative and independence from students, emphasizing metacognitive skills that foster self-directed learning
- Encouraging students to apply insights revealed in group discussions to their own analysis of literature

Differentiating for ELL's:

General modifications may include:

- Strategy groups
- Teacher conferences
- Graphic organizers
- Modification plan
- Collaboration with ELL Teacher

Content specific vocabulary important for ELL students to understand include:

- Point of View, Analyze, Critique, Story Elements, Theory, Inference, Interpret, Evidence, Evaluate, Compare, Contrast, Contradiction

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

Consistent with the concept of differentiated instruction, students should learn the knowledge and skills of this unit in conjunction with concepts from various content areas. While some teachers will provide instruction that includes specific concepts from various content areas, all should direct students to specific text and online resources pertinent to various content areas. Also, teachers will consult grade-level content area teachers on concepts covered in their classes, allowing subjects, lessons, and experiences to reinforce each other.

The diverse genres of narrative reading make this highly feasible, and mini-lessons can apply to concepts from multiple subjects. Here are some of the possible correlations:

- historical fiction: social studies
- science fiction: science and mathematics
- fantasy: mythology and folklore
- fan fiction: literature

Writing Workshop

- apply language and ideas from read alouds and independent reading
- utilize read alouds and independent reading as mentor texts
- expand written vocabulary from read alouds and independent reading
- apply sentence, paragraph, and narrative structure from mentor texts
- utilize other elements of author's craft seen in mentor texts and independent reading books

Content Areas: Science, Social Studies, Health

- read just right books in the content areas
- use mentor texts to deliver social studies content
- compare content area ideas and issues to character struggles in read alouds and mentor texts
- apply reading skills and strategies to the reading done in the content areas

Study Skills

- use graphic organizers to support reading
- use checklists and rubrics to monitor progress
- use Venn diagrams and t-charts to gather, compare, and contrast events
- use highlighters, note cards, post-its, and other tools to keep track of events, details, and ideas
- keep a log and notebook

The Arts

- analyze illustrations in books for details
- compare illustrations to other forms of art
- illustrate a passage that was just read to show details, ideas, and lessons
- act out a scene from a book to better visualize how a character feels

Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources

Suggested Teaching Resources:

- Beers, Kylene and Robert E. Probst. *Notice and Note: Strategies for Close Reading*. New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2013. Print.
- Calkins, Lucy McCormick. *The Art of Teaching Reading*. Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc., 2001. Print.
- Ehrenworth, Mary, Hareem Atif Khan, and Julia Mooney. *Constructing Curriculum: Alternate Units of Study*. New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2010. Print.
- Serravallo, Jennifer. *The Reading Strategies Book: Your Everything Guide to Developing Skilled Readers*. New Hampshire: Heinemann, 2015. Print.
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Reading Curricular Calendar, Sixth Grade 2016-2017: "Social Issues Book Clubs: Developing Critical Literacies."

Suggested Mentor Texts:

- *Across the Alley* by Richard Michelson
- *Crash* by Jerry Spinelli (Guided Reading Level: V)
- *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt (Guided Reading Level: n/a)

- "To This Day" by Shane Koyczan

Suggested Mini-Lesson and Strategy Group Texts:

- *Chrysanthemum* by Kevin Henkes
- *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting
- *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Oliver Button is a Sissy* by Tomie dePaola
- *An Angel for Solomon Singer* by Cynthia Rylant
- *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts
- *The Other Side* by Jacqueline Woodson

Suggested Book Club Titles:

- *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper (Guided Reading Level: S)
- *Wonder* by R.J. Palaccio (Guided Reading Level: U)
- *Rules* by Cynthia Lord (Guided Reading Level: R)
- *The Misfits* by James Howe (Guided Reading Level: W)
- *The Skin I'm In* by Sharon G. Flake (Guided Reading Level: W)
- *Double Dutch* by Sharon Draper (Guided Reading Level: T)
- *Firegirl* by Tony Abbot (Guided Reading Level: V)
- *A Mango Shaped Space* by Wendy Mass (Guided Reading Level: Y)

21st Century Skills

CRP.K-12.CRP1.1	Career-ready individuals understand the obligations and responsibilities of being a member of a community, and they demonstrate this understanding every day through their interactions with others. They are conscientious of the impacts of their decisions on others and the environment around them. They think about the near-term and long-term consequences of their actions and seek to act in ways that contribute to the betterment of their teams, families, community and workplace. They are reliable and consistent in going beyond the minimum expectation and in participating in activities that serve the greater good.
CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP5.1	Career-ready individuals understand the interrelated nature of their actions and regularly

	make decisions that positively impact and/or mitigate negative impact on other people, organization, and the environment. They are aware of and utilize new technologies, understandings, procedures, materials, and regulations affecting the nature of their work as it relates to the impact on the social condition, the environment and the profitability of the organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP6.1	Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP8.1	Career-ready individuals readily recognize problems in the workplace, understand the nature of the problem, and devise effective plans to solve the problem. They are aware of problems when they occur and take action quickly to address the problem; they thoughtfully investigate the root cause of the problem prior to introducing solutions. They carefully consider the options to solve the problem. Once a solution is agreed upon, they follow through to ensure the problem is solved, whether through their own actions or the actions of others.
CRP.K-12.CRP11.1	Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.
CRP.K-12.CRP12.1	Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal. They apply an awareness of cultural difference to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction. They find ways to increase the engagement and contribution of all team members. They plan and facilitate effective team meetings.