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#### Young Adult and Canonical Literature Instruction in the High School Classroom: Assessing Students' Reading Interest

Alexis Yang Binghamton University--SUNY

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## Young Adult and Canonical Literature Instruction in the High School Classroom: **Assessing Students' Reading** Interest

#### Alexis Yang BACKGROUND

- In the high school English classroom, classic novels such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* are taught for their literary merit (Balinska-Ourdeva et al., 2014).
- However, students often skim through the readings or decline to read altogether (Bowmer & Curwood, 2016).
- Teaching young adult literature (YAL), a genre written for teens, may boost student reading interest.

# AIM

• Determine how teaching YAL in the high school classroom, as opposed to canonical works, affects students' interest in the texts.

## METHODS

Distributed survey via Qualtrics, consisting of a 4-point Likert scale and open-ended questions measuring students' interest in YAL.

**Demographics:** 57 high school students ages 15-17 studying YAL in Binghamton and Johnson City, NY.

2. Performed Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, descriptive statistics and openended coding.

**SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS** 

Students:

- Expressed interest and disinterest in both YAL and canonical literature.
- Scored positively for curiosity and involvement in YAL.
- Connected with characters in both genres due to common experiences and similar actions.
- Did not connect with characters in both genres due to their different lives.





Students read The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, a young adult novel about a 14-year-old Native American boy who transfers from his reservation school into a white high school.

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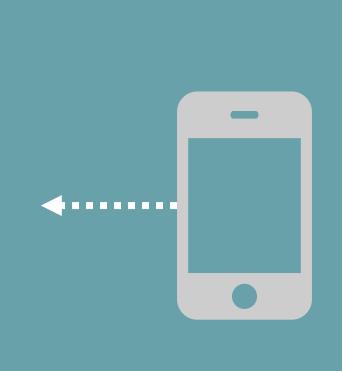
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# Teaching a combination of Young Adult and canonical literature may promote students' interest.

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you can relate to.



Take a picture to download my literature review paper.

# fer canonical novels

# pping

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connection with characters in True

## ciocultural difference

am not 'poor' or oppressed by people ng to change my culture."

nection with characters in canonical

## mmon experience

ome of the characters have gone ough stuff I have also [gone] through."

# **Enjoy reading for English class**

Enjoy class discussion "I get to be a part of lots of very good discussions, and I like to hear other people's opinions on the book we are reading."

#### Captivating

"I enjoy it if it is captivating and interesting and leaves you surprised at the end of every page."

#### Dislike reading for English class

Mandatory curriculum "I wouldn't say I like reading the books my teachers pick out because they don't know my types of books I like reading."

#### **Reliability Analysis**

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Overall	.940
Curiosity*	.932
Involvement**	.773

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation
Overall	2.6140	.670066
Curiosity	2.5278	.71328
Involvement	2.7865	.66499

\*Curiosity: assesses whether students' reading stimulated interest and current excitement about the reading task and topic

**\*\*Involvement:** assesses students' desire to understand what they are reading in the content area

## DISCUSSION

(Neugebauer, 2017)

- Students were curious about the YAL book and wanted to understand it, indicating that teaching YAL may promote student interest.
- Teaching books that students relate to may increase interest. However, students noted that reading books about characters with different cultures also increased their interest and enriched their understanding of others (Olan & Richmond, 2017).
- Increasing student autonomy may promote reading interest, as some students noted that while they enjoy reading books of their own choice, they do not enjoy the books selected for class (Morgan & Wagner, 2013).
- Teaching a combination of YAL and canonical literature may increase student reading interest while also broadening students' understanding and worldviews.

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