**Design Clinic Notes**

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**Context:**

Situation in 5th level of ESL at Bellevue College. Textbook and companion novel. Have problems with all the books being used.

**Could you help me…**

Please do a couple of things:

1. Help know where to look for other books (novel-type books) for the class
2. Have suggestions on whether he should ask other teachers (and how to ask) about changing the books, or if they mind if he uses other books

**Notes**

**Share more about...**

* Salam – Share more about the problems and major concerns with the books, and why he wants to change them
  + Who is Malala Yousefzai – The cover is too childish for the adult students, and the tone is also too childish. Even though the message is good that women should have equal rights to education, one pitfall is that it can promote Islamophobia as it talks about how **bad** the Taliban is.
  + What was the March on Washington – Likes the theme and content. Same publisher, and feels childish. Learn a lot from the book about the important players in the Civil Rights Movement. Books with similar themes is good. At the end of the book, makes it seems that the election of Obama made it seem that everything about racism was solved.
  + A Long Walk to Water – This cover he likes the most, and is most like a real novel. Received complaints this quarter, particularly from Ukrainian students. This book is about a boy fleeing a war. The book is a bit too real for the immigrant and refugee students. Feels bad, and tells students he doesn’t like the book. Very large jump in length and difficulty from the previous two quarters, but would prefer to read something like this. This book can also promote Islamophobia (Sudan as an Islamic state trying to impose upon Southern
* Nicky – What class do you teach? What is the audience.
  + Language skills. Likes teaching with a novel to learn more words and vocab. Immigrants and refugees
* Nicky – Have you asked what the students want to read?
  + No, because these are part of the curriculum
* Krista – Who chose these books?
  + No idea. Longer than he has been at the college?
* Krista – Do you have curriculum?
  + Yes. Assignments, etc.
* Nimisha – Is it just these three books, or more?
  + Main book per quarter.
* Krista – Your ideas?
  + So far, has looked at the approved list with the LWSD at the reading level range. Tried to look at different novels, but hasn’t chosen any yet. Just a cursory look so far.
  + Provide books that students in America would normally read. Being able to pick up on references about books normally made.

**This makes me think of…**

* Nicky – Still stuck to the old curriculum.
* Salam – A time when she was substitute teaching at a predominately Hispanic school, and students didn’t want to read. They were reading Huckleberry Finn, which can be hard to relate to. She loved reading growing up because she could hand select books she related to / the personal connection to have with a book.
* Nimisha – One of the programs is Early Literacy. Let’s get books in hands of kids, and should reflect diversity. The kids wanted Barbie and Superman books. They tried to be intentional, but kids will need mainstream books and some diverse authors. Journeys that aren’t traumatic but tell others about journeys.
* Krista – The many times in ESL she has been given a class and don’t have anything (nothing) and need to develop everything, the topics, curriculum, assignments. Often the day before, and how exhausting it is. And not have the time to go back… The many conversations with ESL to have curriculum for every class for teachers to choose if they want. Something for instructors to hang ideas on, but with freedom to go own way.
* Justin – Experience with ESL, and feeling that he shouldn’t be in it. Everything being dumbed down to him, and seen as not competent and literate. We often sent students to ESL who are already fluent. We don’t recognize how smart they are already, and give them dumbed down books.
* Krista – Students may want to talk about big ideas. They may need the vocabulary, but need the space to share.
* Nicky – Refugees want to take classes that are then translated to the local language. DEI training – Afghan staff, everything in English. He would have the translate it.
* Sapan – Adult education is about tapping into the experiences of our adults.

**You might try…**

* Justin – just don’t have the dumbed down books. Try to move on from these books.
* Salam – Understand why Tim wouldn’t want to use the books, but how difficult it is to move on from curriculum. Maybe encourage the students to look at it from a Critical angle. Let’s talk about stereotypes. Let’s talk about racism. Use the books in a different capacity that engages the students a bit more and connect them to the American public. This could be a first step.
* Krista – Talk about the tone. Have them analyze the tone and talk about it so they are looking at the tone Critically.
* Nimisha – Have the Malala book, with different reading levels for those who may not be able to read it vs. finding it too dumbed down. Essentially, four different levels of the book.
* Nicky – Take Malala out of the picture entirely. It’s not as current. She has grown up and has essentially moved on.
* Krista – Try talking with the Level Lead. (But how?)
* Salam – Talk with her from an equity standpoint. These books don’t paint accurate pictures of the people being depicted. They don’t provide a realistic image.
* Krista – Survey students and rate the books, and bring to the Level Lead.
* Nicky – Male or female when they choose the book, perhaps when surveying the book. Get a book that empowers these people (women) to strengthen and be more independent.
* Sapan – Get this onto the agenda and talk with other instructors during a meeting. They might have similar feelings, and maybe there might be information about who chose them and when.
* Krista – Ask questions of teachers to bring up the thoughts from their students about these books, too.
* Krista – Offering to pilot a group one quarter, particularly if this curriculum has been around for a while. Another teacher might be open to joining him.

**What struck me…**

* Really appreciated that others agreed with him that the books aren’t that great (though he might have influenced it by talking about them in a negative way).
* Don’t couch in the way of “not liking the books,” but do the other classes of students like them, how long have these books been used, etc.?
* What Justin said struck him – a tendency of language teachers to underestimate what the students can do. This can lead to students underestimating themselves, which isn’t great.
* May be setting himself up for a lot of work.
* That Nicky wasn’t a fan of the Malala books, etc.