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Problematize, Theorize, Politicize, and Contextualize: A Social Justice Framework for Postsecondary Integrated Reading and Writing Instruction

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It has become commonplace that the nightly news offers snapshots of symbolic violence, police brutality, and hegemonic power, which demonstrates the increasingly hostile cultural and racial climate within the U.S. Given this toxic climate and the trauma it wreaks, now, more than ever before, social justice education is desperately needed. As Bell (2007) has argued, "the goal for social justice education is to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression

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and their own socialization within oppressive systems and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities in which they participate" (p. 2). Recent reform efforts in higher education offer an opportunity to re-envision social justice education within these spaces.

One key site for higher education reform is within developmental education, a field of study and of practice that has traditionally offered course- and non-course-based interventions intended to support student transitions to college-level work. Central to state-mandated reform in developmental education coursework is a focus on shortening the pipeline to college-level, credit-bearing coursework through acceleration. Acceleration is "the reorganization of instruction and curricula in ways that facilitate the completion of educational requirements in an expedited manner," which involves "a departure from the multi-course sequence in favor of a streamlined structure that ultimately better supports students' college-level degree program learning objectives" (Edgecombe, 2011, p. 4). Specifically related to developmental literacy courses, acceleration emphasizes academic literacy through integrated courses where developmental reading, writing, and critical thinking are taught in one course with reduced hours (Edgecombe, 2011; Hern, 2011, 2012). For many states and systems, integrated reading and writing (IRW) courses have been a focus of policy-driven developmental education reform (Armstrong et al., 2018). However, as Hayes and Williams (2016) point out, "very few of these new, integrated courses actually address the curricular, pedagogical, and affective barriers that have stifled the success of students in traditional developmental reading and writing courses" (p. 13).

Developmental-level integrated reading and writing (IRW) classrooms in community colleges are a particularly meaningful vehicle for a social justice framework because many students enrolled in developmental education courses are classified in the minoritized groups most affected by social injustices (Schak et al., 2017). Despite its recent resurgence in the midst of developmental education reform that focuses on acceleration, IRW is not a new curriculum model, as it has origins at the University of Pittsburgh in the 1980s (Bartholomae & Petrosky, 1986). The original instantiation of the model was rooted in pedagogical and theoretical perspectives that view reading and writing as interrelated communication processes (e.g., Emig, 1982; Graham & Hebert, 2010; Kucer, 1985; Langer, & Flihan, 2000; Parodi, 2013; Rosenblatt, 2013; Shanahan,

1990; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). However, as noted, this grounding may not be reflective of current practice within the reform era:

> From an acceleration perspective, the benefit of such a structure is that it often combines multiple developmental reading and writing courses into a single course, thereby reducing time in developmental education (Saxon et al., 2016a). However, from a literacy perspective, the benefits are pedagogical with potential to better support students' transitions to college literacy practices. Unfortunately, despite IRW's long history and rich theoretical base, in its current reconceptualization across the field, principle-driven, theoretically sound models are not being emphasized. (Armstrong et al., 2019, p. 1)

For our own curriculum design and instruction, we adopt a theoretically driven approach rooted in language and literacy theory, as opposed to one that privileges acceleration as a curricular driver. Thus, in this manuscript, we describe IRW as a curricular structure that values reading and writing as literacy practices that are bound by sociocultural, identity, contextual, and power constraints. In practice, this curricular structure often takes the form of a course that includes both reading and writing foci.

Given the nature of such instruction—at the outset of a college transition where tacit literacy practices are both high-stakes and prevalent, IRW becomes a significant site for the present social justice framework. Emphasizing the importance of literacy curriculum and pedagogy that reflect the racialized identities and experiences of students, Gay (2000) asserts that literacy "is a powerful medium through which students can confront social injustices, visualize racial inequities and find solutions to personal and political problems" (p. 131). This includes providing learners with opportunities to develop tools to navigate media-based text for both academic and non-academic reasons. Of course, classroom conversations about racial violence and social and economic inequities are challenging to initiate and navigate; however, the trauma that students are experiencing as a result of this violence and these inequities is undeniable. As educators, we also enter the classroom space with our own traumas, as well as with our own privileges. This chapter offers theoretically based, practical recommendations for navigating these conversations by checking our own traumas—and privileges—while ensuring that learner voices are primary.

On a surface level, such a revisioning entails offering meaningful texts reflective of students' social identities and experiences (Gay, 2000;

Tatum, 2009; Williams, 2013); however, this is but a single step toward a literacy-focused social justice framework. Indeed, social justice pedagogy is much larger than only text selection, and begins with theoretically sound, evidence-based curriculum and instruction that make learning purposes transparent for students. Toward that end, this chapter presents a social justice focused curricular and pedagogical framework that we can use as literacy instructors and that aims to problematize, theorize, politicize, and contextualize language, text, and *thinking* about language and text (literacies). The structure we adopt for this manuscript mirrors our assumptions about effective curricular design in that it foregrounds philosophy and theory and works outward from there toward curriculum and actual instruction. As instructors problematize literacies, we set the stage for students to consider the power tension between and among literacy issues. Next, as instructors theorize literacy, we lay a foundation for students to meaningfully engage with literacy issues. Taken together, problematization and theorization form the basis for the more practical aspects of this framework—politicization and contextualization. As we politicize literacies, instructors urge students to consider the larger implications of literacy issues by asking questions like "who benefits from current literacy structures?" And finally, as instructors contextualize literacies, we support students in considering literacy issues through the lens of various identities/positions/roles. This approach to social justice education can play a critical role in students examining root causes of inequalities with the goal of recognizing (North, 2006) and providing corrective solutions (Freire, 1970b).

Problematize

Enacting a social justice framework for literacy instruction requires that we first acknowledge and problematize the political nature of education in general and literacy more specifically. Patton et al. (2007) cite that "the classroom—where knowledge is constructed, organized, produced and distributed—is a central site for the construction of social and racial power" (p. 49). They further explain that too often, college faculty ignore the role and systematic complexities of race, class, gender, and other social identities. This is echoed by Grayson (2017) who points out that, despite the impact of institutional racism on student lives, there are too few opportunities for them to discuss their racialized experiences or the social and cultural ideologies that shape these experiences. Specifically

related to literacy, Willis (2008) illuminates issues of power that ungird traditional literacy research and practice. Based on her extensive study of the historical, social, and political foundations of literacy testing and instruction, she concludes that literacy instruction in the U.S. "was used to inculcate dominant ideologies as natural, commonsensical, and universal" (p. xi). In doing so, traditional literacy instruction validates and privileges the literacy practices of some and negates and marginalizes the literacy practices of others. This stratification of literacy occurs along racial, gender, and class differences. When the role of race, class, gender, and other social identities and their systematic complexities are ignored, all students, especially those from marginalized groups, are disadvantaged.

To address the inequality and injustice inherent to traditional literacy instruction, a large body of research points to the value of a critical sociocultural approach where reading, writing, and thinking skills are contextualized by the student's diverse social, linguistic, and cultural identities and experiences (i.e., de Kleine & Lawton, 2015; Delpit, 2006; Freire, 1970a, 1991; Gay, 2000, 2010; Hale, 2001; Lesley, 2001; Wenger, 1998; Williams, 2008, 2009). This critical sociocultural conception of literacy instruction emerges from studies of the social, political, cultural, economic, and historical contexts in which literacies are practiced (Gee, 2001; Lankshear & Knobel, 2006; New London Group, 1996; Street, 2003). Specifically related to college literacy, Paulson and Armstrong (2010) argue that faculty must "stress the importance of including an understanding of identity in postsecondary literacy educational contexts" (p. 3). They emphasize that students do not meet their academic goals by simply mastering basic skills through a linear process. Instead, literacy has a variety of purposes that are dependent upon a variety of academic and discourse-community contexts. Students must need to be able to recognize and navigate these contexts; this recognition and navigation involves "sophisticated matters of socialization and acculturation" (p. 3) that are ultimately linked to students' identities (Paulson & Armstrong, 2010). A critical sociocultural approach to literacy instruction acknowledges, values, and engages the diverse ways of knowing, being, and doing that serve as the basis for students' literacy practices. For example, Gay (2010) argues for instruction that uses "the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performative styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for students" (p. 31). Likewise, Ladson-Billings (2009) calls

for "a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (p. 20). At the heart of this critical sociocultural approach to literacy instruction is social justice.

According to Bell (2007), social justice is both a goal and a process. The goal of social justice is "equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs… in which distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (Bell, 2007, p. 1). Witnessing increasing symbolic violence, a steady encroachment of women's rights, inhumane treatment of immigrants seeking asylum, flagrant racism and hateful rhetoric, and the recurring experience of literally watching life leave the bodies of unarmed Black men on social media undoubtedly take a huge mental and emotional toll. Although classroom conversations about these occurrences are challenging to initiate and navigate, the trauma that students are experiencing should not be ignored. Given this reality, postsecondary literacy classrooms can and should provide a space for students to process their trauma. Using a social justice education framework, reading, writing, and critical thinking can be used to perform meaningful reflection and healing.

By infusing a social justice perspective in literacy instruction, students are provided with an opportunity to problematize and grapple with critical issues and the impact that they have on their lives. They are given an opportunity to call out and question the power dynamics within literacy that privileges some literacies, while marginalizing and negating others. They have the space to call out and question unequal distributions of power and privilege in all areas of their lives and in larger society. More importantly, students have an opportunity to imagine and enact remedies to all forms of injustice. Problematization is not only pivotal to the student's personal development, it is an integral part of their postsecondary literacy acquisition. The power of social justice-oriented literacy instruction has the potential to help students navigate and ultimately dismantle oppression of all kinds in all areas of their lives and in society at large.

Theorize

Having problematized literacy, the next phase in this framework is to theorize. Although not new to postsecondary contexts, and particularly to developmental education (see Armstrong et al., 2018), across the past ten years or so, IRW has been reemerging as a curricular approach (especially in co-requisite and other reform-era models). Whereas a holistic approach to English language arts is already a staple of PK-12 curricula, at the college level, reading and writing have held separate, siloed spaces for years. Although there are volumes of theoretical support for integration (i.e., Clifford, 1988; Emig, 1982; Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000; Nelson & Calfee, 1998; Rosenblatt, 2013; Shanahan, 1990, 2006, 2016; Shanahan & Tierney, 1990; Tierney & Shanahan, 1991), that literature has not prompted the two coming back together at the college level in recent years. Instead, a focus on acceleration has been the impetus (Saxon et al., 2016a, 2016b). As one major reform in a much-larger college-completion agenda, acceleration models have largely been imposed rather than developed in purposeful, pedagogically sound ways.

Given the description above regarding the historical theoretical grounding for IRW juxtaposed with the current models rooted in a principle of acceleration rather than literacy theory, the current climate has further complicated the development of a social justice-oriented perspective in what is currently a theory-less or otherwise theory-ambiguous curricular model. Given our frustration with the theory-less state of most IRW curriculum and instruction presently, as we conceptualize a social justice-oriented IRW (SJ-IRW) model, it is all the more important to us to be explicit about our foundational assumptions that inform curriculum and pedagogy. The present SJ-IRW model is informed by three major literacy-based assumptions:

1. literacy-development is a lifelong endeavor and instruction is therefore warranted at the postsecondary level;
2. literacy instruction at the college level must be rigorous and challenging, providing authentic academic literacy experiences;
3. beginning college students bring language and literacy expertise, experiences, goals, and potential that must be honored within the curriculum.

First, we adopt a perspective that literacy is context-dependent, and thus that learners require focused literacy support across contexts. Further, because contextual differences across a lifetime are not isolated to only the primary grades, literacy instruction across a lifetime of contexts is warranted. As endorsement of this assumption, we rely upon Alexander's (2005, 2006) argument that we are always developing as readers and learners. Extending this to the postsecondary level, we also acknowledge that beginning college students are faced with a number of transitions, including personal, social, cultural, geographical, linguistic, and academic ones. In addition, most beginning college students also face a literacy transition, which becomes an enculturation process that involves discovering and then adopting the appropriate academic literacy practices and expectations of multiple discourse communities across higher education (Armstrong, 2007; Jolliffe & Brier, 1988; Rafoth, 1988). Students are thus forced to "invent the university," to "learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community" (Bartholomae, 1985, para. 2; see also Bartholomae & Schilb, 2011). Such a significant transition clearly warrants explicit, focused, and informed literacy instruction within that context.

Second, a learner-centered, theory-supported SJ-IRW curriculum could, at least in part, draw upon the work of Bartholomae and Petrosky (1986), whose postsecondary-specific model was holistic in nature, emphasizing whole texts and authentic academic discourse practices. On a pedagogical level, such a model "could easily be imagined as an honors course and not a remedial or developmental one" (Bartholomae & Petrosky, 1986, Preface). In other words, IRW curricula can be simultaneously rigorous and deliberately scaffolded. One way to accomplish this is to better align IRW curricula to the next-level academic literacy practices students will encounter, providing authentic literacy experiences truly reflective of the rigors students will face in their next-level courses. Recent research exploring literacy practices within introductory-level general education (Armstrong et al., 2015a, 2016) and career technical education courses (Armstrong et al., 2019) may provide a model (Armstrong et al., 2015b) for the types of "reality checks" that Simpson (1996) described. Providing experiences that allow access to otherwise-tacit and highly specialized literacy practices is, in and of itself, a social justice concern; however, it also provides a space for querying and critique regarding why such literacies are so tightly held in the first place.

Third, a key assumption in the model we describe is that both curriculum and instruction in an SJ-IRW course would honor the language and literacy expertise and potential that students bring with them to college contexts (Harklau, 2001; Hoff, 2020; Rose, 1985; Young, 2020; Young et al., 2014). Although such a perspective has been a staple of theoretical scholarship in both composition and literacy for many years, it warrants an explicit position within our model as far less work of a practical nature has been done to demonstrate how to employ such an approach in practice. Acknowledging and honoring students' existing literacies happens both on a curricular and pedagogical level. For each to happen, however, SJ-IRW curriculum designers and educators must first do the work of understanding what students bring as they enter the academy.

Although the three key assumptions presented here serve as foundational principles for the SJ-IRW we envision, it is clear that the field needs a postsecondary-specific theoretical model of academic literacy development (see also Paulson & Armstrong, 2010). Even if other assumptions and perspectives are incorporated and blended, employing theory to drive curricular models ensures that our work in support of students is purposeful.

Politicize

Having problematized and theorized literacy, we can now move into one of the more practical aspects of this proposed framework: politicize. As many social justice education scholars have argued, for effective implementation of social justice instruction, it is necessary for us to first acknowledge our privilege and understand how those privileges impact how we perceive and interact with the world around us (e.g., Bell, 2007; Carter, 2018; Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Additionally, we should respect the traumas and experiences that students bring to the classroom and understand how those experiences influence the growth and learning of students and instructors alike. By acknowledging our privileges and understanding the issues that affect the students we serve, we are forced to become comfortable with the discomfort of allowing constructive dialogue to occur within a safe space. The primary question becomes how do we—all at once, and with care and grace—allow ourselves to recognize our privilege, acknowledge the social injustices

of the students we serve, and ensure that we are meeting the learning objectives as outlined in the curriculum?

The answer to this question is simple in that it means that we, as instructors, must first acknowledge the privileges that exist at multiple levels. It is no secret that educational inequalities exist at the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels (Carter, 2018). It can be argued that privilege is manifested at these same levels within educational settings. We observe these manifestations at the macro-level in the campus culture and with the decision-making of executive administrators and content experts. It is displayed at the meso-level through the adoption of the culturally biased curriculum and assessment models that currently exist at all levels of education. At the micro-level, our own personal privilege is on display in the way that we conduct our instruction and assessment of student performance. It is at this micro-level that we have the ability to begin to deconstruct the deeply rooted injustices that exist within these institutions by recognizing how our privilege is exhibited in our own instructional methods, shifting the focus from our own desired teaching methods to instead allowing our students to take a self-directed approach to their learning. There are two assumptions that are arguably pertinent to college students: (1) the student's experiences should serve as one of the core elements to learning, and (2) instructors should engage in a process of mutual inquiry with students rather than engaging in the transmission of knowledge and evaluating a student's conformity to that knowledge (Lindeman, 1989). In aligning our instructional practices with these assumptions, we empower our students to enlighten us on their individualized experiences and traumas resulting from a multitude of injustices. With the adoption of such an approach, our sole responsibility is to establish the framework for how this process will occur. The curricular inclusions with this framework should consist of clear learning objectives, identification of appropriate topics, relevant reading materials, and congruous writing prompts.

The process for implementing social justice instruction rests with the ideals of the desired learning outcomes. In conventional IRW courses, some of the common learning outcomes include application of active reading and writing practices to identify and incorporate key ideas, evaluation and analysis of sources, and utilization of rhetorical strategies to effectively convey messages. These elements are no different in SJ-IRW classrooms. However, the divarication from traditional reading and writing instructional approaches is that the student has the authority to

control the narrative as it relates to how those learning outcomes are achieved. With this in mind, it is necessary for us to place value in the experiences of our students and recognize how those experiences contribute to our overall enlightenment and understanding. Additionally, we must relinquish our role as *sage on the stage* for *guide on the side* and exhibit a willingness to establish ourselves as mutual learners within the classroom and provide students with the platform to impart knowledge based on their individual experiences, in this case, as they relate to social issues.

In providing students with this platform to share their experiences and promote self-direction in their learning, it is also necessary to be flexible with the topics that students choose to address. Instructors should provide students with the opportunity to select topics with which they are personally connected. When students are given the freedom to choose topics that are personally relevant, they are more inclined to invest an appropriate and genuine energy into their work while also potentially drawing connections to their issues beyond the classroom (Knowles, 1975). Some students may be able to connect their topics to their respective programs of study. For example, someone studying criminal justice might choose to examine the discrepancies in how law enforcement handles situations with white individuals in comparison to their non-white counterparts. Similarly, a student pursuing business-related or social science majors might decide to research the role that implicit bias plays in decision-making practices. This type of flexibility also affords the opportunity for more cross-curricular instruction to be incorporated so that reading and writing are not taught in isolation. Some common topics related to social justice include criminal justice reform, human trafficking, LGBTQ+ issues, sizeism, colorism, gender equity, sexual harassment or assault, climate change, and immigration reform.

With social justice being ubiquitous in our media, identifying exigence for such issues is effortless. One can simply turn on the television or computer screen, pick up a newspaper, or scroll through the news feed on the cell phone to identify social issues that are relevant in some capacity to many of the students we serve. The available literacies related to social justice issues are endless. In addition to class texts that reference such topics, instructors can access news and journal articles (from credible outlets), and transcripts from TED Talks. Therefore, it is only fair to allow students the autonomy to discuss what is personal to them in order for their learning to be meaningful and their concerns to be shared.

Contextualize

Having problematized, theorized, and politicized literacy, we engage in the final and most practical aspect of the proposed framework: contextualize. Being able to provide authentic literacy experiences for students in an SJ-IRW environment is critical as it helps bring relevance to their personal and academic experiences, and allows for greater potential transference of these experiences within the differentiation of academic content and contexts (Voge, 2011). Contextualization, defined as teaching essential communication modes in a disciplinary context, has been proven to increase the transference of these skills in a variety of contexts and content areas while offering students authentic literacy experiences that can be both relevant to their personal and academic needs (Zimmerer et al., 2018).

Bringing lived experiences into the classroom can be a navigational landmine, particularly where developmental education and content-area instructors may not be fully aware of the subsequent daily reading and writing requirements that students find challenging in their credit-bearing coursework. Furthermore, faculty may be unwilling to utilize contextualization in the classroom due to the overwhelming commitment to the skill-and-drill implementation of instruction that has been engrained in much of a student's prior educational experiences.

In the current racialized climate that has been so pervasive in the day-to-day lives of students, they may not have the discourse opportunities in which to examine the social justice issues that are being lived out in a culture that has been desensitized. Further, they may be seeking safe spaces in which to express their voices as well as their trauma. Thus, building from the foundation of contextualization may ultimately serve as a way to inform students' literacies as well as give them the opportunity to develop the academic reading and writing skills necessary for college and life success.

However, the implementation of contextualized learning can be intimidating and overwhelming for some faculty, so included are some best practices for making the delivery a not-so-complicated undertaking along with some curriculum resources that have proven multiple ways to integrate the issues while developing the skills needed to engage in the discourse. According to Andriotis (2017) and Berns & Erickson (2001), curriculum design should be:

1. Relevant. This can include knowledge-based, cognitive, and skills-based.
2. Effective. Design activities that go beyond just achieving the learning objective but also that teach processes and procedures, as well as the application of the knowledge and content.
3. Transferable. The contextualized content can be organized in a conceptual framework in order to allow for greater transference of knowledge and skills.
4. Socially conscious. Factor in social and cultural nuances when developing contextualized learning activities.
5. Iterative. Focus on broad contextualized learning content.
6. Learner-focused. Design with interdependent learners in mind. Students will be working for others and their learning should reflect their ability to do so.
7. Appropriately assessed. Evaluate learners based on authentic assessments.

Other ways that contextualized teaching and learning can be accomplished include infusing academic courses, linking courses, and team teaching of integrated academic and career technical education courses (Baker et al., 2009; Perin, 2010). Further, faculty should maintain regular and on-going communication with each other as well as synchronize those syllabi that include a progression of skills and joint projects (Baker et al., 2009).

Designing effective contextualized learning experiences for students in integrated reading and writing classrooms helps to build bridges across various disciplinary departments. This allows for a more formal structure that enables the development of a framework from which to help students to understand complex issues and processes while being engaged in a meaningful way where they will be able to create their own narrative in how they view and interpret the world around them.

Examples of Contextualized Learning Experiences and Activities

For cultivating student understanding of their situations and validation of their struggles:

1. Construction of a formal, critical notebook in which they create a catalog of short journal entries (1–2 paragraphs) that translate the assigned readings and helps to focus on their practice of reading. Utilization of prompts that ask students to provide summaries in their words that include identifying key things and explain how it helps them to better understand the concepts of literacy (Listoe, 2015).

2. Use of popular culture as pedagogical tools to aid in student learning to examine and unpack existing stereotypes, perceptions, and prejudices because it often mimics the social, political, and economic times in real time (Gaynor, 2014). For example, the HBO TV Series *The Wire* can be used to build culturally competent curriculum and teach the concepts to students (Gaynor, 2014).

Resources for Developing Contextualized Content Involving Social Justice Issues

Although themes for SJ-IRW-based curricula are many, here we identify one focal topic, police brutality, as an exemplar for compiling resources en route to contextualized curricular design. We recommend identifying sources from different modes and media, as well as sources that offer particular opportunities for literacy instruction (development of an academic argument, integration of text evidence, various rhetorical approaches, etc.).

Books
Crump, B. (2019). *Open Season: Legalized Genocide of Colored People*. HarperCollins Publisher.

Films
Coogler, R., Bongiovi, N. Y., Whitaker, F., Chow, M. Y., Jordan, M. B., Diaz, M., Spencer, O., et al. (2014). *Fruitvale Station* [Film]. Anchor Bay Entertainment. DuVernay, A. (Director) (2016). *13th* [Film]. Netflix.

Print News
Kelly, J., & Nichols, M. (2019, October 14). We found 85,000 cops who've been investigated for misconduct. Now you can read their records. *USA Today*. https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/investigations/2019/04/24/usa-today-revealing-misconduct-records-police-cops/3223984002/.

Richmond, K. (2016, July 7). *Philando Castile's mother: He was 'black in the wrong place'*. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2016/07/07/us/phi lando-castile-family-new-day/index.html.

TED Talks
Robinson, I. (2019). *Social media's impact on cases of police brutality* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_Y3_y_hzp8.
Russell, M. (2015). *We police have become great protectors, but forgot how to serve* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KIMWf_ e7ZJI.

Television
Noah, T. (2016, July 7). The fatal shootings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile. *The Daily Show* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.you tube.com/watch?v=tP0awqth0XI.

This list of resources is, of course, partial, as the topic of racially motivated police brutality could (and should) necessarily extend into many arenas, including academic areas such as history, sociology, criminal justice, and psychology. Those charged with curriculum design should proceed with resource-selection based on their program- and institution-level outcomes and goals, as well as the interests and needs of their students.

Conclusion

We argue that acceleration of developmental education coursework and the subsequent shift away from theoretical approaches has deviated from the intended purpose to equip students with the skills they need to persist in their postsecondary studies. However, such reform has simultaneously provided an opportunity for professionals to re-examine current pedagogical practices and re-envision how to establish a more holistic approach to literacy instruction in the reading and writing classroom. Specifically, as part of the acceleration movement, integration of previously separated courses has reignited the premise that reading and writing are interconnected and should not be taught in isolation. Academic goals are not met by linear processes. Instead, pedagogy that allows for recognition and navigation of contexts with which students can identify and are empowered to integrate their own experiences and identities into their learning yield more fruitful results to knowledge retention.

Revisioning the design of IRW that offers a contextualized approach to instruction and is reflective of the identities and experiences of the students it is meant to serve, while also addressing social justice issues existent both within and beyond the classroom has endless possibilities. The infusion of social justice instruction in IRW courses offers a platform upon which students can reflect, analyze, synthesize, and confront issues that impact them. This process extends beyond traditional text selection, and is inclusive of multiliteracies such as television, movies, music, and social media. An SJ-IRW classroom encourages instructors to acknowledge the systematic complexities that privileges some and marginalizes others. Most importantly, this model adopts a more inclusive approach to learning by allowing students a space to express their views on a variety of social issues from their own perspectives.

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