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Promoting Sensitivity and Understanding in Classrooms with Undocumented Latinx Students

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Promoting Sensitivity and Understanding in Classrooms with Undocumented Latinx Students

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Statistics

In 2014 11.7 million, or 28% of U.S. immigrants living in the U.S. came from Mexico, and almost half entered without documentation.



2004-2014 Latinx students enrolled in U.S. public K-12 schools increased- 19 % to 25 %

By 2026 This number is expected to increase to almost 30 %

Poor living conditions and desperate circumstances motivate many Latinxs to cross the border into the U.S., encouraged by the promise of better pay and a higher standard of living.



For most, entering the U.S. without documentation is perceived as the only viable option.

Funds of Knowledge

Funds of Knowledge Are Not:

- static traits of individuals
- cultural artifacts, e.g., lists of clothing, foods, and holidays



Funds of Knowledge

“Historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being.”

Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, (1992).



Funds of Knowledge are created in various settings throughout an individual’s life, primarily in activities outside of the classroom, and are utilized to transmit information that will enhance survival Genzok (1999).

Social, physical, spiritual, and economic resources students use to survive

Examples:

Household Dynamics

- Child care
- Budgeting
- Cooking
- Religion
- Moral knowledge and ethics
- Parents' Professions



It is the totality of experiences that shape a student's funds of knowledge

Deficit Funds of Knowledge Model

- **Viewing a student, family, or community as missing specific qualities or abilities.**
- **As a result of a focus on what is not possible, students are viewed as possessing gaps that need to be filled.** Felton-Koestler, Simic-Muller & Menendez, (2017), p. 124.
- **Historically, non-mainstream and marginalized students have been viewed through this deficit lens, often seen as being in situations in which they must be saved.**

Assets Funds of Knowledge Model

Focuses on the knowledge and strengths that students, families and communities possess.

How can teachers use this knowledge and these strengths to help students succeed?



Community and Curriculum

School Communities

- Tend to be relatively homogenous groups
- Ethnic gaps created between teachers and many of the students they serve.
- Teachers in these environments tend to recall and draw on knowledge and experiences of white middle class children more frequently.
- As a result, Latinx students are marginalized and held to lower expectations.

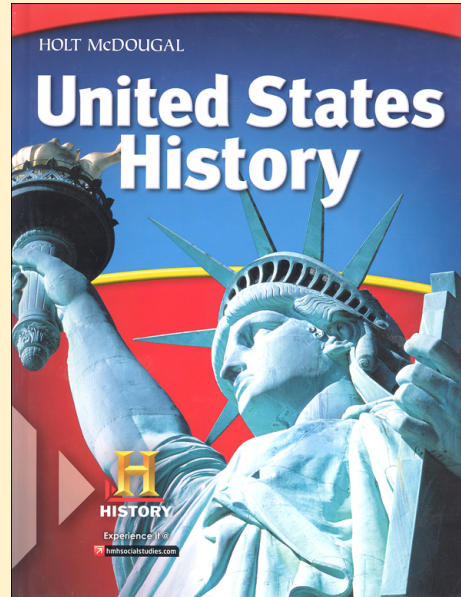
Irvine, 2003; Rosebery, McIntyre, & Gonzalez, 2001; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, (1992).

Standard-based curriculums paint a limited picture of what it means for students with varying backgrounds and cultures to be intelligent and for families and communities to be supportive.



The scope and sequence designs used to manage curriculums offer limited opportunities for teachers to learn more about their students' funds of knowledge, much less opportunities to value and celebrate them.

Ethnic gaps are exacerbated when school districts politicize education through the inclusion and/or exclusion of specific academic curriculum.



“Teachers teach in pre-assigned classroom spaces, social spaces which are highly politicized (albeit mostly unseen) as competing national and local agendas vie for ownership over curriculum and textbooks.”

Miller, S. J., Beliveau, L.B., Rice, P., Destigter, T., & Kirkland, D. (2008)

Knowledge should be obtained by children, not imposed by adults

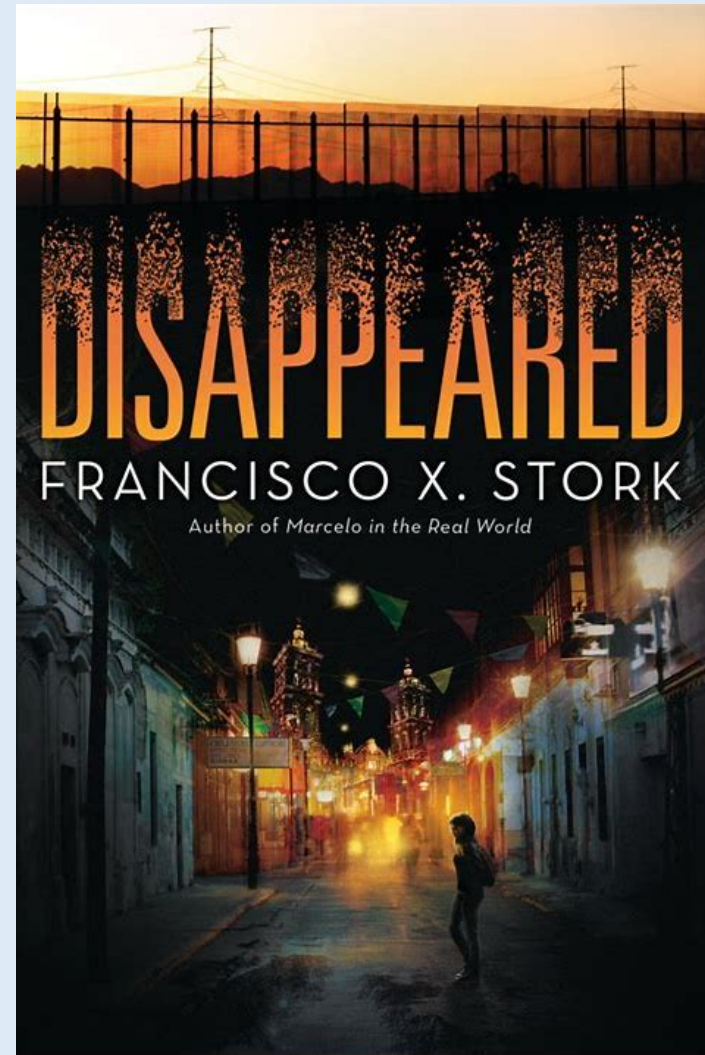
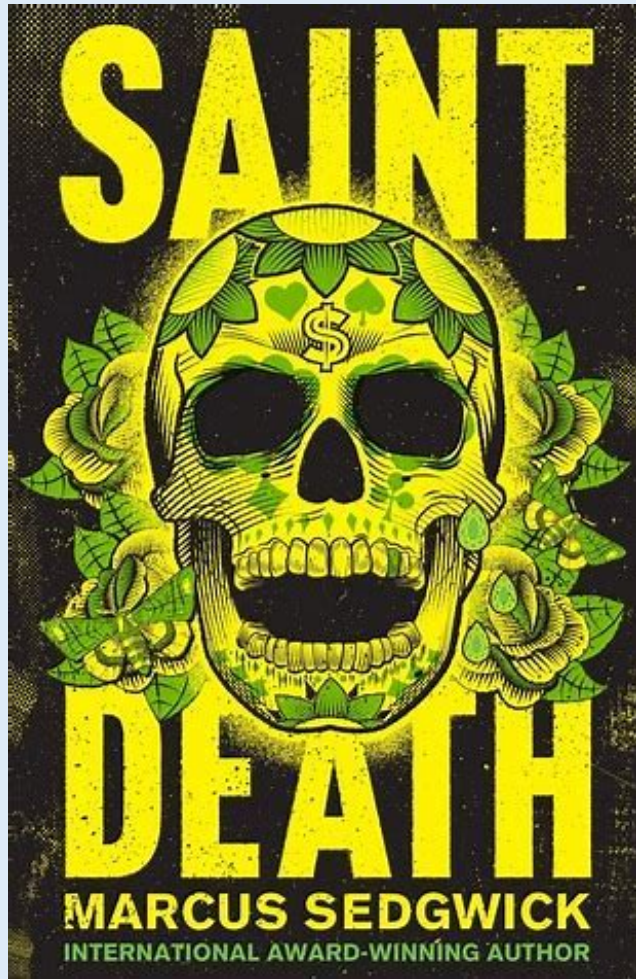


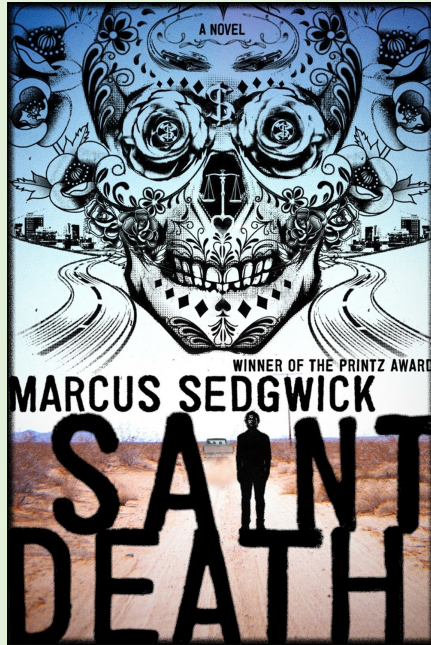
2012- An entire curriculum is banned from an AZ school district.

2017- Judge rules ban was motivated by racial discrimination and violated pupils' constitutional rights



How YA Literature Can Help





- The protagonists are teens who were born and live in Juárez, Mexico.
- Each tries to help loved ones leave Mexico
- *Saint Death* and *Disappeared* are excellent fictional, yet realistic portrayals of the lives of empathetic characters who seek better lives in America.

Saint Death Summary

Arturo lives in a small shack on the outskirts of Juárez, Mexico. At the end of his neighborhood lies a fence, and through that fence he can see America. El Norte seems like an impossible destination when Arturo considers how difficult it is to make an honest living in Juárez. He works at an auto shop and tries to steer clear of gang members and the cartel.

When Faustino tells Arturo that he “borrowed” \$ 1,000 from a gang boss in order to purchase safe passage to America for his pregnant girlfriend Eva, Arturo reluctantly agrees to help his friend. The money must be replaced within 36 hours, or Faustino, and most likely Arturo, are as good as dead.

Throughout the story, Arturo and Faustino are being observed by Saint Death (Santa Muerte), the holy patron and folk saint to rich and poor, prostitute and cartel boss, criminal and police chief. Santa Muerte watches impassively as corruption, the drug trade, human trafficking, and the effects of social class inequalities engulf the people of Juárez.

Will Santa Muerte come to Arturo's rescue if he prays hard enough or should he just rely on good luck? Will she simply watch as Arturo heads toward an unhappy ending or will she save him?

Disappeared Summary

Sara is a newspaper reporter in Juárez, Mexico. After her best friend is abducted by a local gang, Sara begins writing a column in which she features stories of young girls who have been abducted. One day, she receives an encrypted email in which the sender threatens to kill Sara and her family unless she stops writing about the abductions. Instead, bolstered by the hope that she may find her best friend, Sara decides to begin an investigation into who sent the e-mail.

Sara's brother, Emiliano, is a star soccer player for his school's team, and he runs his own folk-art business. Emiliano uses his bicycle to transport works created by neighborhood artisans to local shopkeepers to sell. His dream is to earn enough money to take his mother and sister to America, away from the dangers that surround them in Juárez. One distraction has the potential to derail Emiliano's dreams. Her name is Perla Rubi, and Emiliano has a huge crush on her.

Perla Rubi invites Emiliano to a party at her ostentatious home. Her father offers to help Emiliano with his business, an offer that promises to make Emiliano four times the amount of money he is making currently. This is an offer Emiliano can't refuse. It is then that he learns that Perla Rubi's father is an attorney for the cartel.

Activity

The following activity consists of several writing and discussion prompts

- The prompts are designed to create opportunities for students to connect with the lived experiences of characters in each story.
- Once written, students share their responses in groups of two to four while the teacher facilitates.
- **Note:** If students choose not to respond to one of the personal connection portions of any prompt (for reasons other than lack of background or experience) allow this, as refusal is a student's right. However, do give them the opportunity to explain why they refused.

In Pairs

- 1. Select a story from the list below or select a story both of you are familiar with.**
- 2. Choose one of the four prompts and share your thoughts with your partner.**
- 3. Share with the group**

- *Cinderella*

- *The Three Little Pigs*

- *To Kill a Mockingbird*

1. Select a character from the novel and describe his/her background, belief system and principles. How do you think that character arrived at these belief systems and principles? Do any of your selected character's values compare to yours? Explain.

2. Describe an episode in the novel when your character felt helpless, oppressed, desperate or when they oppressed or made someone else feel helpless. Has this ever happened to you?

3. Place yourself in your chosen character's environment. Select two to three specific situations in the novel (student or teacher may select) and describe how you might have responded differently than your character in each situation? Provide reasons for your responses.

4. Connect two to three situations from the novel with real world issues and events. If you have experienced or witnessed similar situations to those portrayed in the novel, feel free to share.

Show Me Activity

hope

trust

understanding

gratitude

YA Titles that Will Help Students and Teachers Ally with Latinx Youth

The Poet X”

Mexican White Boy

Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass

Shadowhouse Fall

Out of Darkness

I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter

More Happy Than Not

Elizabeth Acevedo

Matt De La Peña

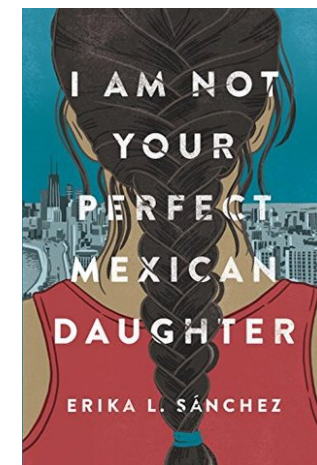
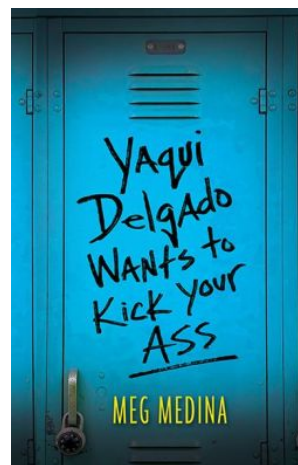
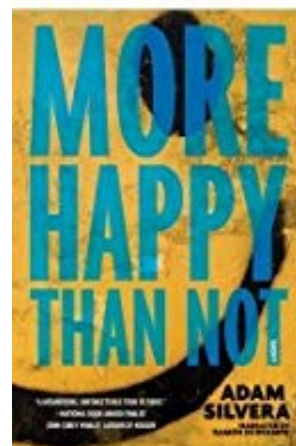
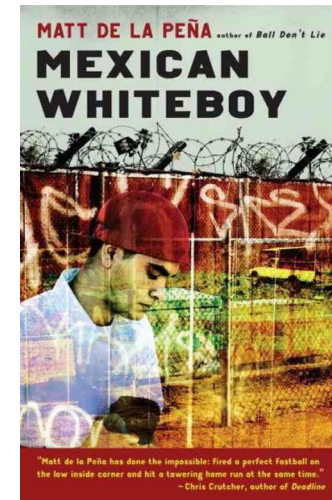
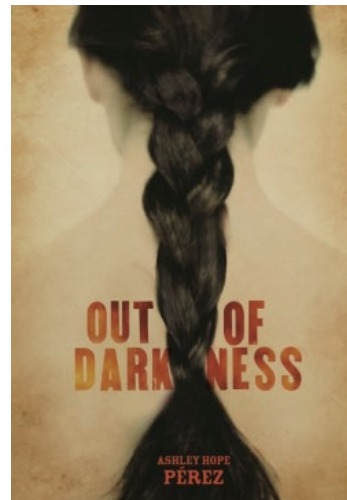
Meg Medina

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Erika L. Sánchez

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