

The Hydra Nature of Book Banning and Censorship: A Snapshot and Two Annotated Bibliographies

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In Fall of 2022 two researchers set out to explore both scholarly work on censorship and news articles via social media to help gain a broader understanding of censorship and book banning trends. The following research question guided their research: What does this wave of book banning and censorship look like across the US? What they discovered is a kind of censorship-Hydra, an evolving beast posing an ever-present danger, one that will likely take the courage, collaboration, and ingenuity of educators everywhere. This article offers a snapshot of this current beast of book banning and censorship in the form of two annotated bibliographies—one focused on news reports and trends in social media—the other focused on academic searches of scholarly articles.

According to Greek mythology, Hydra, also known as Lernean Hydra, was a multi-headed, water-loving serpent, nearly impossible to destroy. As soon as an adversary cut off one head, “two more heads emerge[d] from the fresh wound.” A modern interpretation of *Hydra* describes “a difficult or multifarious situation” ([Britannica](#), 2022). Whether student, educator, or concerned parent, with this current rise in book challenges and censorship across the US, we are all facing the same multi-headed beast, a dangerous and multifarious challenge to our fundamental rights for academic freedom and access to student-centered reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Figure 1 below represents the numbers of “K-12 student censorship incidents” since 2018 from the databases of the National Coalition Against Censorship. These incidents include book challenges, along with “censorship of student art, journalism, and other types of student expression in schools” (NCAC). Following the [link](#) to their database, researchers can find an interactive map capable of filtering dates, types of censorship, and more.

FIGURE 1

Book Challenges and Censorship Incidents January 2018 – July 2023 (NCAC)

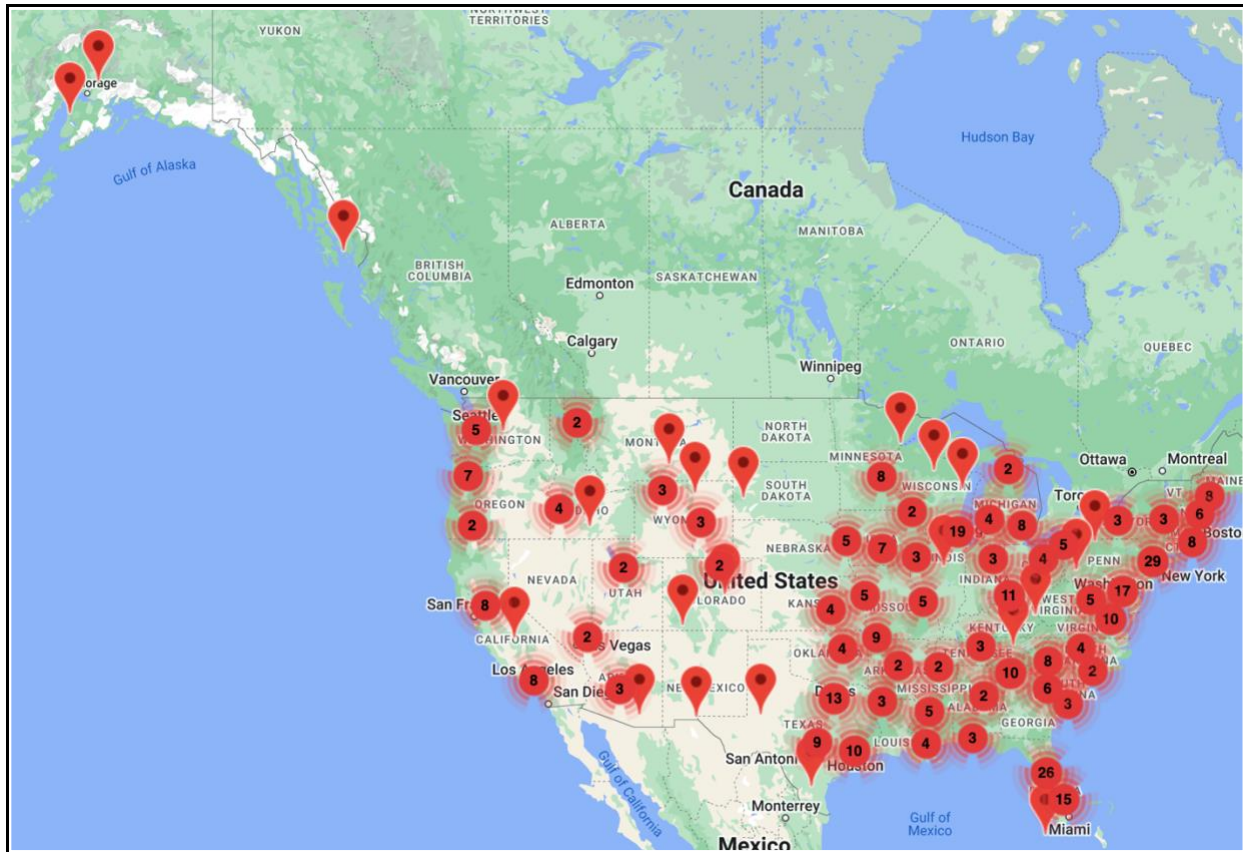


Image: Screenshot from NCAC Database

While Figure 1 captures a view of incidents reported concerning “student censorship incidents,” other organizations like the American Library Association, PEN America, and the School Library journal continue to research and report on the exponential rise of book bans and censorship, including those driven by state legislatures.

Until this past year, our own awareness of these organizations was minimal. We’d both experienced book challenges or some form of censorship, concerning titles and topics when we were in secondary classrooms. Shelly had experienced book challenges twice in her 23 years of teaching, once over teaching *To Kill a Mockingbird* in 1992 and once over teaching *The Giver* in 2008. In both incidents, parent wishes were accommodated by finding alternative titles for students to read and slightly modified assignments. The students missed out on valuable discussion, but the impact of both challenges remained on individual students, not the class as a whole, nor the classroom

library. Michelle's experience, more recent and more intense, may be indicative of this latest rise in book banning and censorship.

WHEN THINGS GOT REAL

MICHELLE

As a former high school newspaper reporter and editor, I was aware of censorship issues, but had not experienced any myself as a mostly compliant student and writer, and certainly not as the person in charge. So, censorship didn't really become real to me until my seventh year of teaching at a small rural high school. The movie "The Hate U Give" had just been released and my students were asking if they could read the book by Angie Thomas. I knew that there might be some issues in the conservative rural school where I taught. But I had learned about student-centered pedagogies in my Young Adult Literature class, through my National Board for Professional Teaching Standards process, and from a master's level course in the Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum program at the University of Oklahoma.

So, I designed a junior-level, American Literature unit called "American Justice" that started out with reading some of the more traditional poems like "I Hear America Singing" by Walt Whitman followed by Langston Hughes' response poem "I, Too, Sing America." Then students had the option to choose among four books on the same theme and one of those books was "The Hate U Give." As students read, they wrote their thoughts, questions, and epiphanies on sticky notes. At the end of a section, students would meet in their groups to discuss their notes and create two questions about the author's purpose that they thought would be important to discuss as a class. Then we held a Socratic seminar in which students posed their questions and discussed what the author had written that might serve as answers.

Students had been instructed to focus on what the author was trying to say. While there were a couple of tense moments in the discussion, students handled the situation admirably, with minimal facilitation on my part, and were able to accept different points of view and move on. The next hour though, two of my students returned to class to tell me that some other students were very unhappy and thought that I was a terrible teacher for letting this conversation happen. They said they overheard those students saying they would go complain to the principal. Since I was on my planning period, I wrote up an email detailing what had actually happened and sent that to him, along with an outline for the lesson, resources I'd used, and standards to back it all up.

The next day, I was called into the principal's office to explain myself because a parent complained that I'd been "preaching police brutality." After explaining what actually happened in class and pointing to what I'd already sent in my email, the principal admonished me that teachers should not discuss politics in class and sent me back to my room.

Two years later, I got called back to the office after showing a student (with her permission) how to fact-check a meme someone had sent her during the last five minutes of class. Her father claimed that I was "preaching politics" in class. This time, the now-superintendent told me that "teachers should never discuss politics with students."

Things are so much worse now.

SHELLY

The number of calls to ban books coupled with the deluge of legislation to create a system of fear and punishment seems an unprecedented attack on our school libraries and the classroom libraries of teachers working to extend (most often at their own expense) opportunities for students to choose and connect with the books they read. Looking over the list of titles under attack, I recognize many books I purchased for my own classroom library, titles I've booktalked, and books I intentionally placed in the hands of students who might find themselves on the pages: *Speak*, *The Hate You Give*, *Dear Martin*, and so many others. As I continue to read YA literature and YA texts, I realize I would have added titles like *New Kid* and *Stamped*, and I would have at least kept several other titles in a bookcase behind my desk, just in case I found a reader in need. One need all readers have is to be able to find your experiences mirrored in a main character working to overcome similar challenges. Another need is to be able to temporarily suspend one's own worldview to consider the perspective of others (Bishop, 1990).

While I'm no longer in a secondary classroom, I continue to work with both preservice and inservice teachers, and in 2022, things *got real* for me, my students, and many of my colleagues, when Oklahoma's HB1075 was passed into law. A friend and inservice teacher, who works with student interns and with those in their field experience, shared with me a frustration about a last-minute mandate by her district to vet her classroom library and limit accessibility to those titles that could be vouched for—titles she had personally read or for which she could provide two scholarly reviews. This mandate gave teachers exactly one day to vet those books before students arrived for

the first day of class. This teacher friend was annoyed but explained that she understood that the district was trying to protect teachers.

It may also have been that the district was trying to protect itself by getting ahead of possible repercussions. Just a few days prior on July 28, 2022, our state board of education downgraded two large districts for failing to comply with HB 1775 (Stafford, July 2022; Penharkar, Aug. 2022). The power of a state board of education to downgrade a district's accreditation without due process and while lacking clear evidence (Hill, 2023; PEN America, 2022) has left a "chilling effect" on teachers in Oklahoma and across the US (Woo, et al., 2023). So, even though the accreditation downgrades had nothing to do with the contents in any classroom library, it makes sense that districts across the state would be taking a closer look at the vague language (Foster, 2022; Hill, 2023; Taylor & Fife, 2023) of [HB 1775](#) to anticipate and avoid further negative outcomes.

By the first day of school, a teacher from a local high school, Summer Boismier, was removed from her classroom and by the next day she officially resigned (Edwards, 2022; Foster, 2022; Soares, 2022). Her initial response to the district's last-minute mandate was to cover the shelves of her classroom library, blocking access to the books she'd carefully curated over time and at her own expense (Tolin, n.d.). According to several news reports (Foster, 2022; Smith, 2023; Tolin, n.d.) she wrote in large black marker, "Books the state doesn't want you to read." And she provided a QR Code to the Brooklyn Public Library where students could apply for a library card and find the titles now covered "with butcher paper" (Edwards, 2022, Foster, 2022; Soares, 2022). A parent complained and Boismier was removed from her classroom before the end of the first day of school.

This teacher did nothing wrong. Nor was she suspended or fired. According to the district, "At no point was the teacher ever terminated, suspended or placed on administrative leave..." (Foster, 2022). But she was removed from her classroom on the first day of school, after a parent complained. Nothing in the state law prohibits sharing links to open access libraries. But the law allows for parents and students to turn in teachers who seem to not comply, creating an atmosphere where anyone—duly informed or not, politically motivated or not—might be on the lookout for teachers with nefarious intentions. Book banning and censorship, along with vague legislation designed to punish school districts and teachers, creates a climate of fear, permeating the heart of English curriculum—a "chilling" impact that could last for years (Penn America, 2023; Taylor & Fife, 2023).

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Most educators and authors are not new to censorship, but there is definitely something different about this particular wave, in both numbers and consequences to school districts, libraries, teachers, and classrooms. Buehler (2023) spoke via Zoom with several authors to get their take. She asked YA novelist Chris Crutcher, who's first book was challenged in 1981, to describe what he thought was different. His response:

I think it's a lot more sinister now... I think it's planned and supported and folded into a larger political conversation. And that's what I think is so new and so dangerous for teachers and librarians and ultimately for kids. (pg. 65)

Dangerous, indeed. Oklahoma's state superintendent has vowed to revoke Boismier's teaching certificate, despite, the state assistant attorney general's ruling,

I find that the State Department of Education has failed to prove by clear and convincing evidence that (Boismier) has willfully committed an act of moral turpitude and then violated the standards of performance and conduct for teachers. (Smith, 2023).

Connected to the unfounded claims tweeted by the state superintendent, Boismier "was called a pedophile" (Tolin, 2023) and received numerous death threats (KOKH Staff, 2022). Yet, her story is bigger than the danger posed by politicians—she has also received numerous messages of encouragement and opportunities for work in advocacy. Currently, she is working 1500 miles away from her home for the very library whose QR code she shared. Indeed, Boismier has modeled the courage it takes to advocate for academic freedom in order to teach with integrity.

It is tempting to concentrate on local impact, but we knew other states like Texas and Florida were also enacting laws that would impact the classroom. And we have since learned that in 2022, at least 17 states have enacted laws that place restrictions on how teachers can talk about race and gender (Woo, et al., 2023), while districts in states without those laws were just as likely to report district restrictions. Beginning this research in Fall 2022, we wondered, *What does this wave of book banning and censorship look like across the US?* As researchers, we set out to explore both scholarly work on censorship and news articles via social media, to help gain a broader understanding of the trends. What we are still discovering is a kind of censorship-Hydra, an evolving beast posing an ever-present danger, one that will likely take the courage, collaboration, and ingenuity of educators everywhere. What we offer here is a snapshot of the beast of censorship and book banning in the form of two annotated bibliographies. Michelle focused on news reports and trends in social media, while Shelly focused on academic searches.

MICHELLE'S METHODS

Over the 10 years I spent in the classroom, I developed a network of educators around the world on social media that actively tracks, posts, and comments on what is happening in the field of education. It's often the first place where I learn about what was happening, often within hours of local media reporting on events. Education leaders from superintendents of large school districts to classroom teachers share their experiences, link to local media reports, and comment on what is happening in real time. So, when the instances of censorship started escalating, I turned to my online network to discover what was happening. I started my search by entering "book censorship" or "book ban" into a Twitter search and looking for articles written in peer-reviewed journals, reliable news media, or industry-related news publications. I determined whether or not a source was reliable by checking with the [Ad Fontes Media Bias Chart](#) (2023) to ensure the publication ranks in the green box on the chart, which represents publications that, over all, engage in original fact reporting with significant effort or thorough fact reporting or fact-dense analysis. Some publications may also engage in a mix of fact reporting and analysis. I also check the bias through the [AllSides Media Bias Chart](#) (2023) to see which way a source leans, preferring to stay within the center, slightly right and slightly left leaning ranges.

After conducting this initial search, I created eight categories of resources that represented those impacted by the book bans, including: popular media, author blogs and interviews, publisher's news, professor's blogs and interviews, ELA teachers' blogs and interviews, industry-related nonprofit news, industry publication reports, and student interviews. I realized that while Twitter was a good source for censorship information from the popular media, publishers, and industry reports, I struggled to find content from the other sources outside individual tweets or tweet threads. So, I conducted a Google search using the term "ya author blog censorship" and found articles from as far back as 2018 discussing the impact of censorship on YA literature or the author's perspectives on the topic.

One group whose voices I haven't seen a lot of in my research is that of the students themselves. I googled "high school student opinions book banning" to discover what opinions might have been curated. In the most notable student opinions published by The New York Times, high school students have overwhelmingly opposed book banning (The Learning Network, 2022). The report by Education Week, which did not interview or survey actual students, reported that a majority of library personnel "didn't seem to notice" book bans (Pendharkar, 2023).

While this bibliography is nowhere close to being exhaustive, I selected articles that seemed to be representative of the reporting in popular media and by actual stakeholders. After curating articles in a [spreadsheet](#), I categorized 22 articles into the following genres (defined in Appendix A):

- 2 Teacher Voices
- 6 Industry Publications
- 6 Popular Media
- 2 Publishing Companies
- 2 Nonprofit Organizations
- 2 Author Voices
- 2 Student Voices

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON CENSORSHIP AND BOOK BANNING VIA NEWS REPORTS AND POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Authors speak out on censorship. (2022, March 11). National Council of Teachers of English. <https://ncte.org/resources/ncte-intellectual-freedom-center/authors-speak-out-on-censorship/>

The National Council of Teachers of English Intellectual Freedom Center published a list of links to several young adult novel authors, including Sherman Alexie, Judy Blume, Chris Crutcher, who have spoken out about censorship in literature. The authors discuss the impact of censorship on their books and their personal lives, highlight the role of gatekeepers in censorship, and express their opposition.

Backus, F., & Salvanto, A. (2022, April 6). *Big majorities reject book bans - CBS news poll.* CBS News. Retrieved September 25, 2022. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/book-bans-opinion-poll-2022-02-22/> DOI:<https://doi.org/10.3886/icpsr04092.v1>

This CBS News Poll from February 2022 shows that more than 80 percent of respondents reject book bans.

Blake, M. (2022, July 27). *A surprising list of recently banned books.* Penguin Books UK. <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2022/05/surprising-books-that-have-been-recently-banned-2019>

Blake notes that censorship has plagued our society for as long as we've had books, but that the instances of book bans have been on the rise. Interestingly, he opens his article with an anecdote about a 4th century BC Chinese emperor who, it is traditionally purported, killed hundreds of scholars and burned all the books in his kingdom to control how his reign would

be remembered. The writer segues to an uptick in book banning from the early 1980s that lead to the establishment of Banned Book Week and follows up with a list of books that have been banned in recent years. He notes why each book has been challenged, the circumstances surrounding the challenge, and any responses to the book censorship efforts.

Chess, K. (2018, September 8). *Why I hate censorship in ya fiction*. Khristina Chess. <https://www.khristinachess.com/blog/2018/9/8/why-i-hate-censorship-in-ya-fiction>

Khristina Chess is the author of several YA novels about troubled teens overcoming adversity. In her blog post, she has written a passionate argument against censorship and a defense of the value of reading diverse materials. Chess states she believes that censorship is ineffective and harmful. As a Generation X latch key kid, she grew up with limited YA choices and parents who let her read whatever she could find, including books that were intended for adults. Because of her experience, she argues that individuals should have the freedom to decide what to read. She also notes that banning books does not address the root causes of the problems teenagers face and that books illuminate. She also points out that banning books can backfire, making them more popular.

Banned & Challenged Books: Simon & Schuster. New Book Releases, Bestsellers, Author Info and more at Simon & Schuster. (n.d.). Retrieved September 25, 2022.

<https://www.simonandschuster.com/p/bannedbooksweek>

American publishing company and a subsidiary of Paramount Global, Simon & Schuster states that the current U.S. book ban movement is unprecedented. The company stands against censorship and supports librarians, educators and booksellers working to defend and expand access to books. Simon & Schuster state they stand with organizations including the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC), American Booksellers for Free Expression (ABFE), PEN America, and the American Library Association in their efforts to combat censorship.

Friedman, J., & Farid Johnson, N. (2022, September 19). *Banned in the USA: The growing movement to censor books in schools*. PEN America. Retrieved September 25, 2022.

<https://pen.org/report/banned-usa-growing-movement-to-censor-books-in-schools/>

Pen American, a nonprofit organization established to defend free expression and advance literature and human rights worldwide, reports that today's book bans are orchestrated by advocacy organizations whose missions are to censor specific books and worldviews in schools. This article contains data about censorship efforts starting in July 2021 and including legislative gag orders, inflammatory language, and attempts to eliminate libraries.

Frisaro, F. (2023, May 24). *Amanda Gorman's inauguration poem banned by Florida School*. PBS. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/amanda-gormans-inauguration-poem-banned-by-florida-school>

National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman expressed disappointment on Twitter after one parent complaint led a South Florida elementary school to restrict her poem, "The Hill We Climb." The parent framed her objection to Gorman's book, and others, under the guise that books should be "appropriate" for children while at the same time claiming she was not in favor of censoring books. However, Gorman wrote that restricting children's access to literature violates their right to free thought and speech. Gorman's poem was intended to inspire young people, and she has received numerous letters and videos from children who were inspired to write their own poems. Book bans are becoming more prevalent in Florida where Governor Ron DeSantis is promoting policies that allow censorship in schools. The White House has condemned the decision to ban Gorman's poem, emphasizing that banning books is a form of censorship that limits American freedom.

Gregory, J. (2022, September 9). *22 titles pulled from Missouri district shelves to comply with state law and more: Censorship roundup*. School Library Journal. Retrieved October 2, 2022. <https://www.slj.com/story/22-titles-pulled-from-missouri-district-shelves-to-comply-with-state-law-and-more-censorship-roundup>

In this article, School Library Journal provides a roundup of recent censorship efforts across the United States including efforts by parent groups to criminalize the inclusion of books in school libraries that they claim contain "explicit sexual material;" a Virginia judge dismissed a lawsuit that sought to stop a national bookstore chain from selling books that the suit claimed contained material that was "obscene;" and an Oklahoma teacher was threatened by the state secretary of education with losing her license.

Jensen, K. (2022, August 4). *A template for talking with school and Library Boards about book bans: Book censorship news, August 5, 2022*. Book Riot. Retrieved September 25, 2022. <https://bookriot.com/book-censorship-news-august-5-2022>
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11647/obp.0173.0203>

Book Riot, a book recommendation review website and podcast, shares templates and guides to action for readers who want to fight censorship in their local school districts and communities.

Jensen, K. (2022, August 25). *States that have enacted book Ban laws: Book censorship news, August 26, 2022*. Book Riot. Retrieved October 2, 2022. <https://bookriot.com/states-that-have-enacted-book-ban-laws-2022/>

This article provides a general overview of legislation that has been enacted within the past year that will impact how teachers and librarians choose reading materials and manage discussions in their schools.

Jensen, K. (2023, May 25). *When do we move from advocacy to preparation?*. Book Riot. <https://bookriot.com/when-do-we-move-from-advocacy-to-preparation/>

Proposed legislation in Texas and Florida is already impacting the decisions teachers and librarians make regarding the books and curriculum in their schools. Proposed and current legislation is endangering the lives of marginalized individuals in public education and limiting access to information for young people. Schools are implementing rating scales for challenged books and removing LGBTQ+ content.

The Learning Network. (2022, February 18). *What students are saying about banning books from school libraries*. The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/18/learning/students-book-bans.html>

The New York Times asked high school students to share their perspectives on book banning via their daily Student Opinion forum. Upon curating student resources, the editors determined that most students opposed book bans, citing reasons including the right to access unsanitized history, exposure to diverse perspectives, critical thinking benefits, and the ineffectiveness of book bans in the digital age. They published a selection of the student responses. The New York Times did not report the demographics of students or the sample size they analyzed.

Lopez, S. (2023, May 8). *The extreme new tactic in the crusade to ban books*. Time.

<https://time.com/6277933/state-book-bans-publishers/>

Book banners have stepped up their game in the censorship wars by targeting publishers with legislation that could require fines and imprisonment as consequences. Tennessee passed a bill that makes it a felony for publishers to provide “obscene matter” to public schools while Texas has passed legislation requiring schools to rate and restrict books that reference sex.

Magnusson, T. (n.d.). *Book censorship database by Dr. Tasslyn Magnusson*. EveryLibrary Institute. Retrieved September 25, 2022.

https://www.everylibraryinstitute.org/book_censorship_database_magnusson

Dr. Magnusson is a researcher, writer and poet with PhD in History from Case Western Reserve University and an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from Hamline University. In partnership with EveryLibrary Institute, a nonprofit that supports library funding in the United States, she has compiled a database of book bans and challenges dating back to October 2021.

Miller, S. (2022). *Intellectual Freedom Center Provides Support for Censorship Challenges*. *Council Chronicle*, 32(1), 16–18.

<https://publicationsncte.org/content/journals/10.58680/cc202232050>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58680/cc202232050>

The Intellectual Freedom Center has compiled resources to help teachers combat censorship in their schools, including a book rationale database, state NCTE affiliate webinars, and the Intellectual Freedom Fellowship, which will fund research on censorship in K-12 English language arts classrooms.

“Not recommended” reading: The books Hong Kong is purging from public libraries. (2023, May 26). Hong Kong Free Press. <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/05/26/not-recommended-reading-the-books-hong-kong-is-purging-from-public-libraries>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110966879.26a>

In several waves of censorship, the Hong Kong government has removed books from its public libraries, claiming that they were "not recommended," including those related to democracy and protests, those written by prominent satirists, and those presenting alternative perspectives on local politics. This article has been one of the first I've seen confirming that this wave of censorship is global, not just limited to the United States.

op de Beeck, N. (2023, May 2). *Turning a censorship controversy into a learning opportunity*. PublishersWeekly.com.

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-industry-news/article/92172-turning-a-censorship-controversy-into-a-learning-opportunity.html>

In support of Freedom to Learn's National Day of Action on May 3, Candlewick Press discounted two ebooks that present anti-racist and equity-oriented information to young readers. The temporarily discounted ebooks included *Love in the Library*, a picture book by Japanese American author Maggie Tokuda-Hall and illustrator Yas Imamura; and *Better Than We Found It: Conversations to Help Save the World* by married couple Frederick Joseph and Porsche Joseph. Tokuda's picture book tells the story of how her Japanese American grandparents met in an American incarceration camp in Idaho during World War II. Josephs' *Better than We Found It* includes stories from more than 20 activists, thought leaders, and celebrities on social justice action and perspectives. Tokuda-Hall had faced censorship challenges after she refused a request from Scholastic to remove a line from her book that directly addressed racism in exchange for publication. (Scholastic later apologized.) Freedom to Learn is an organization co-founded by Columbia Law School professor Kimberlé Crenshaw who created the terms intersectionality and critical race theory as part of her research into race and gender issues and civil rights.

Parker, C. (2023, July 25). *Readers can now access books banned in their area for free with New App*. *Smithsonian Magazine*. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/banned-book-club-app-180982592/>

Parker reports that the Digital Public Library of America combined the resources of public libraries with online tools to launch a Banned Book Club app, which provides free access to banned titles based on readers' locations. The app is designed to use GPS-based geo-targeting to identify users' areas and provide them with access to books that have been banned at their libraries.

Pendharkar, E. (2023, June 29). How students are reacting to book bans in their schools.

Education Week. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/how-students-are-reacting-to-book-bans-in-their-schools/2023/06>

This article by Education Week claims to report student perspectives, but the data was gathered by a survey of more than 1,700 library personnel from across the United States. While this is a relatively large sample size, the sample is not representative of the student population since actual students were not surveyed. For example, one survey question asked library employees about the impact of book challenges on students and 57 percent of them said that "they (students) don't seem to notice." But the article doesn't report what methods employees used to determine students' opinions on this topic.

Price, R. (2022, September 19). *The power of reading, or why I do what I do*. Adventures in Censorship.

<https://adventuresincensorship.com/blog/2022/9/17/the-power-of-reading-or-why-i-do-what-i-do>

An Associate Professor of Political Science at Weber State University, Richard Price reflects on their love for reading and how it shaped their adolescence. They recall a childhood experience of being shamed for reading a book perceived as feminine which influenced their reading habits, leading them to turn to fantasy novels as an escape. Price specifically mentions Mercedes Lackey's books, among others, as a significant influence that introduced them to a fantasy world with female heroes and LGBTQ+ characters. They specialize in challenges to books in schools and libraries, particularly queer-inclusive literature, and are currently working on a project titled *Annie Shouldn't be on Your Mind: The Perils of Queer Literature*.

Russell, B. Z. (2022, September 23). *Panel: Book-banning push is coordinated, national effort*.

Idaho Press. Retrieved October 2, 2022. https://www.idahopress.com/news/local/panel-book-banning-push-is-coordinated-national-effort/article_cb6606aa-3b89-11ed-be6c-67820ea458a1.html

In this article, panelists from PEN American characterize today's censorship efforts as an "ed scare," comparable to the "red scare" McCarthyism from the 1940s and 50s in which politicians and other leaders incited an anti-communist scare that cost falsely accused people their careers and reputations.

School Library Journal. (2023, May 25). *Amanda Gorman's Inaugural Poem Restricted in Florida District After One Parent Complains / Censorship News.*

<https://www.slj.com/story/newsfeatures/Amanda-Gormans-Inaugural-Poem-Restricted-in-Florida-District-After-One-Parent-Complains-Censorship-News>

In this roundup of Censorship news, School Library Journal notes that LGBTQ books are the main target of a wave of schoolbook challenges, according to a Washington Post article published on Twitter by The Author's Guild, a group of 12,000 member authors working together to defend free speech, protect copyright, and ensure fair pay. Opposition to LGBTQ books has drastically increased in recent years, with the percentage of challenges rising from less than 1% in the 2000s to 45.5% in 2022. Book challengers argue they are fighting for children's innocence and well-being, while advocates highlight the negative impact on LGBTQ students' mental health and lack of exposure to diverse perspectives. Some challengers go to extreme lengths, demanding the removal and burning of books they deem objectionable. The American Library Association has been tracking these challenges since 2003, and data shows a significant increase in challenges related to LGBTQ content. A majority of the complaints come from a small number of individuals mainly citing a desire to shield children from sexual content as their reason for challenging LGBTQ books. The second most common reason is to prevent children from reading about LGBTQ lives. Nearly half of the challenges targeted books with LGBTQ characters or themes, and 36% targeted books featuring characters of color or dealing with issues of race and racism. Overall, out of 986 challenges faced by school libraries, 598 listed "sexual" content as a reason. Some challengers believed that reading books about LGBTQ people could influence children's sexuality or gender while some challenges also mentioned other reasons such as inappropriate content, alcohol/drug use, and graphic material. According to the article, 42% of challenged books have LGBTQ characters or themes and Individuals who filed 10 or more complaints were responsible for more than 65% of all challenges. Individual parent complaints are the only challenges faced by school libraries.

SHELLY'S METHODS

I began with the question: What does this wave of book banning and censorship look like across the US? We wanted to find out what educators and authors were saying about this particular wave, and we wondered when the rise in censorship might have begun. In the Fall of 2022, I began my searches with the ERIC database with Boolean Phrases: *Young Adult Literature AND Censorship* narrowed to the years 2010-2022, which yielded 10 titles. Narrowing the years to 2016-2022, yielded six of those titles. Adding the database, Academic Search Premier yielded 19 titles for 2010-2022 and 13 for 2016-2022. I tried other variations like *Literature AND Censorship* and *Authors AND about*

book bans OR about censorship. I also searched other databases like JSTOR and by the spring I added *State Legislation* to the string of search phrases.

While I came across a number of academic articles linked to censorship throughout the world, I kept my focus on censorship in the U. S. Occasionally, I searched through Google Scholar which tended to yield an overwhelming number of titles, but I often found something of interest at the top of the list. Throughout the process, titles emerged through snowball finds—the reading of one article linking me to several more—and to those titles I came across by listening to a podcast or just happened to read, like when a new issue of *English Journal* arrives in my mailbox.

Titles for the following annotated bibliography were selected because they added to my understanding of censorship in our classrooms and school libraries. This was not an exhaustive search nor is what follows all that is worth reading. But the titles add significantly to the ongoing issue of censorship and the conversations and resources we have to support both teachers and students. After sorting and coding titles, genre, topics, and abstracts / abouts / annotations on a [spreadsheet](#), I categorized the 34 titles into the following genres (defined in Appendix B):

- 9 Empirical Studies
- 9 Critical Studies, two linked to empirical work
- 3 Position Papers
- 6 Reports
- 2 Interviews
- 1 Newsletter
- 4 Online Resources, listed at the end

For most titles, the abstract has been copied from the original source. For a few titles, I've provided a brief annotation.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CENSORSHIP AND BOOK BANNING VIA ACADEMIC SEARCHES AND SNOWBALL FINDS

Beck, S., & Stevenson, A. (2018). Teaching contentious books regarding immigration: the case of *Pancho Rabbit*. *Reading Teacher*, 72(20), 265-273. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/trtr.1739>
 ANNOTATION: This critical study examines the US cultural wars over immigration and, in particular, the criticism of the book *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote*, as well as other children's' picture storybooks.

Boyd, A. S., Rose, S. G., & Darragh, J. J. (2021). Shifting the conversation around teaching sensitive topics: Critical collegueship in a teacher discourse community. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 65(2), 129-137. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1186>

ABSTRACT: Shifting the Conversation around Teaching Sensitive Topics: Critical Collegueship in a Teacher Discourse Community Abstract: In this book club study designed to examine practicing teachers' perspectives on a young adult book dealing with identity, mental health, sexuality, and family, researchers describe the tensions that arose in participants' dialogue regarding self-censorship and the desire to meet students' needs. Authors note findings related to how teachers from rural schools responded to the novel under study and collaborated to reach new understandings. Findings also included a pattern of critical collegueship, where participants both challenged ideas regarding the limits of sensitive topics and supported one other in building upon ideas of how to teach texts with potentially taboo content, highlighting the value of discourse communities as professional development. [Empirical Study]

Buehler, J. (2023). Voices of Young Adult Literature authors in the conversation about censorship. *English Journal*, 112(5), pp. 64-70. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58680/ej202332423>

ABSTRACT: Buehler reports that in a wide-ranging Zoom discussion, a group of young adult literature authors contemplated the priorities for thinking about intellectual freedom and for talking about challenged books in the classroom. Authors of books for young adults have a long track record of speaking out against censorship. Over the past twenty years, she has seen authors of challenged books provide material support and strategic assistance to teachers and students in need. They have written letters to school officials, donated copies of censored titles, and provided public testimonials that remind us of literature's power. Teachers aren't alone in the impulse to contact authors for help: for the past two years, the American Library Association has invited a censored author to serve as honorary chair of Banned Books Week. At a time of manufactured outrage, arguments made in bad faith, and the weaponization of books, words, and identities, they can dignify authors' work when it is under attack, not simply defend it. [Interview]

Collins, J. E. (2022). Policy solutions: Defying the gravitational pull of education politics. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 104(1), 62-63. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00317217221123654>

ABSTRACT: The biggest threat to an equitable and prosperous American society is not a particular educational policy, but the gravitational pull of politics, explains Jonathan Collins. Before educational policy can be developed and put into place, the politics that drive education must be acknowledged and addressed. Violence is erupting at school board meetings across the country over mask mandates, book bans, and critical race theory. Meanwhile, as has been the case throughout U.S. history, the political division and vitriol distract us from ensuring that our most vulnerable children are getting needed academic

support. It is time, Collins says, for a politics of solutions that can defy the gravitational pull of politics that sidetrack leaders addressing the real problems students face. [Position Paper]

Dallacqua, A. (2022). "Let Me Just Close My Eyes": Challenged and Banned Books, Claimed Identities, and Comics. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 66(2), 134-138.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1250>

ABSTRACT: This column centers around the voices of two AP English students as a way to consider the current book challenging and banning occurring throughout the United States. The column reviews the 2021 year of book challenges in the news and media, students' own perceptions of these bans, with a focus on comics. Finally, there are suggestions and reviews of policies in support of diverse texts in schools and libraries. [Critical Study]

Dávila, D. The Tacit Censorship of Youth Literature: A Taxonomy of Text Selection Stances. *Child Lit Educ* 53, 376-391 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-022-09498-5>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-022-09498-5>

ANNOTATION: A synthesis project, drawing on the author's on-going research along with the scholarship of other children's literature researchers, this article utilizes affect theory to examine entrenched stances of resistance, many teachers unknowingly take on in an attempt to avoid conflict and confrontation. [Critical Study]

Garnar, M., Lechtenberg, K., & Vibbert, C. (2020). School Librarians and the Intellectual Freedom Manual. *Knowledge Quest*, 49(1), 34-38.

ABSTRACT: In 2020 the tenth edition of the "Intellectual Freedom Manual" will be published by American Library Association (ALA) Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF). As with each new edition, this one includes guidance on the latest issues, the newest policy statements related to intellectual freedom (IF), and the core documents that outline the library profession's commitment to free expression, free access to information, privacy, and other intellectual freedom principles. In this article Martin Garnar, editor of the tenth edition, talks with Kate Lechtenberg, a school library educator and former school librarian, and Carolyn Vibbert, an elementary school librarian, about what's new in the "Intellectual Freedom Manual" and how intellectual freedom connects with AASL's "National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries." Changes to the manual include new interpretations of the "Library Bill of Rights" approved by the ALA Council since the last edition, information about when to call the police, an essay about censorship beyond books (e.g., programs, displays, databases, etc.), expanded content about developing library policies that support intellectual freedom, and an expanded "Glossary of Terms." [Interview]

Goodman, C. L. (Ed.) (2022). IDRA Newsletter. Volume 49, No. 2. Intercultural Development Research Association.

ABSTRACT: [Texas] The "IDRA Newsletter" serves as a vehicle for communication with educators, school board members, decision-makers, parents, and the general public concerning the educational needs of all children across the United States. The focus of this issue is "Combatting Classroom Censorship." Contents include: (1) A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing -- The Attacks Against Equity through School Censorship and How Educators Can Still Teach the Truth (Chloe Latham Sikes); (2) Playing Defense is Not Enough -- Let's Recommit to a Vision of Public Schools that Values Every Child, Every Educator, Every Community (Michelle Castillo); (3) Families Must be Centered in Education Policymaking, Not Used as Puppets; (4) Reclaiming the U.S. Constitution -- Legal Considerations for Combatting Classroom Censorship Laws (Paige Duggins-Clay); and (5) New Advocacy Guide Shares Tips and Lessons from Classroom Censorship Fight (Morgan Craven). [Newsletter]

Greathouse, P., Eisenbach, B., & Kaywell, J. (2017). Supporting Students' Right to Read in the Secondary Classroom: Authors of Young Adult Literature Share Advice for Pre-Service Teachers. *SRATE Journal*, 26(2), 17-24.

ABSTRACT: Young adult literature spotlights the complexity of the adolescent human condition, which helps adolescent learners better understand themselves and those around them (Wolk, 2009). Yet, teachers who are able to find a place for young adult literature in their classrooms or schools often find themselves defending their choices rather than celebrating them (Curwood, Schliesman, & Horning, 2009). Because nobody is more invested in books than the authors, we wondered how they perceived censorship of young adult literature in the classroom. This article shares the advice young adult authors offer to secondary preservice teachers as they prepare to infuse young adult literature in their future classrooms. [Critical Study]

Hartsfield, D. E., & Kimmel, S. C. (2020) Exploring educators figured worlds of controversial literature and adolescent readers. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 63(4), 443-451. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.989>

ABSTRACT: Educators assume the role of gatekeepers when they make literature selections for adolescent classrooms. Their taken-for-granted assumptions, or figured worlds, about adolescent and youth literature may inform their decisions to either select or preemptively censor books. In this qualitative study, the authors examined the figured worlds of six preservice and inservice middle and secondary educators as they read and discussed controversial youth literature (i.e., challenged or banned books). Three themes emerged in the analysis: figured worlds about youth, figured worlds about "appropriate" literature, and figured worlds about how adolescents should access controversial literature. These figured worlds may shape which books these participants would choose to include or exclude from their classrooms. The authors conclude by sharing suggestions that educators may use to

deconstruct their own figured worlds and promote wider access to a diverse range of literature for adolescent readers. [Empirical Study]

Hlwyak, S., Ed. (2021, April). *State of America's libraries 2021: Special report: Covid-19*. American Library Association.

<https://www.ala.org/news/sites/ala.org.news/files/content/State-of-Americas-Libraries-Report-2021-4-21.pdf>

ANNOTATION: This annual report by the American Library Association moved from a normally broad focus of trends to narrowed focus, in order to capture the trends driven by the impact of Covid-19 on libraries. Ten articles plus an introduction provide an insightful perspective of the issues libraries were facing in the midst of 2021.

Ivey, G., & Johnston, P. (2018). Engaging disturbing books. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 62(2). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.883>

ABSTRACT: There is evidence that student-selected reading of compelling, relevant young adult literature helps address the problem of low reading engagement among adolescents, but schools rarely take up this option as a curricular priority. A major source of apprehension for adults is fear that students might be placed at risk by exposure to realistic content of some young adult books or that parents might object. In this article, the authors take up this problem by describing the experiences of eighth-grade students in classes where engaged reading of disturbing books was the norm. The authors offer students' perspectives, as well as those of some of their parents. Students documented the many positive ways that they were transformed by the books and the ensuing conversations. Their parents agreed and described resulting changes in family conversations and relationships. [Critical Study]

Leland, C. H., & Bangert, S. E. (2019). Encouraging activism through art: Preservice teachers challenge censorship. *Literacy Research: Theory, Method, and Practice*, 68(1), 162-182.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2381336919870272>

[Empirical Study] ABSTRACT: According to the American Library Association, book censorship is on the rise. While many censored books are adolescent novels, some titles for younger children are challenged as well. Books dealing with difficult social issues have been targets for censors historically, but recent attacks have focused on books portraying members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and other sexual identities (LGBTQ+) community. The goal of this qualitative study was to build prospective teachers' (PTs') knowledge of censorship while also providing an opportunity for them to take a sociopolitical stance. Students in a children's literature course read source materials and reacted by creating a transmediation that used some form of art. Lenses for data analysis included qualitative research, critical discourse analysis, and visual discourse analysis. The first major theme focused on freedom and democracy and the threat censorship poses. Within this category, two subthemes were identified: (1) children having freedom to learn about real-world issues

and (2) children having freedom to read books that meet their personal needs. A second major theme focused on how PTs thought people should respond to censorship. Responses expressing fear and/or confusion about censorship were coded as demonstrating a teacher dilemma, while examples showing a challenge to censorship were coded as demonstrating resistance. Findings indicate that PTs were shocked by what they learned about censorship, and many of them engaged in culture jamming, which involves using the arts to challenge oppressive systems. Many used art to critique censorship and advocate for children's rights. This study challenges the common cultural assumption that teaching is an apolitical or neutral activity.

Lycke, K., & Lucey, T. (2018). The Messages We Miss: Banned Books, Censored Texts, and Citizenship. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 9(1), 1–26. 3

ABSTRACT: The purpose of this qualitative research study was to describe preservice teachers' views on the use of banned or censored texts and taboo topics in the classroom. The study sought to discern how elementary and secondary teacher candidates enrolled in methods courses at a Midwestern university thought about issues of censorship, citizenship, and curricular materials they may or may not decide to use. The study found that, when introduced to banned and censored texts related to citizenship, teacher candidates conceptually appreciated the notion of exploring controversial citizenship issues with students. [Empirical Study]

Matthews, C. (2018). Sexuality. *Brock Education: A Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 27(2), 68-74.

[Critical Study] ABSTRACT: Sexuality is both everywhere and nowhere in children's literature since it collides with an ideology of childhood innocence that works to erase childhood sexuality altogether. Debates about identity, self-expression, the boundary between childhood and adulthood--and attempts to police that boundary--often center on sexuality. Anxiety around children and sexuality often results in censorship, particularly when it comes to sex education. While young adult literature can fill some gaps left by inadequate sex education, expecting it to serve as an adequate substitute can give adolescents unrealistic expectations about sex that can harm them at least as much as lack of information. Depictions of sexuality in adolescent literature work to some degree to regulate and even prevent the healthy development of young adult sexuality. Similarly, while there has been a recent much needed increase in LGBTQ representation in children's and young adult literature, many still leave any sex that falls outside the strict bounds of heterosexuality implicit rather than explicit, subtly othering queer desire via its relative invisibility.

Mehan, K., & Friedman, J. (2023). Banned in the USA: State laws supercharge book suppression in schools. *PEN America*.

<https://pen.org/report/banned-in-the-usa-state-laws-supercharge-book-suppression-in-schools/>

ANNOTATION: Looking at the data from the 2022/2023 school year index of banned books and censorship, this article shares key findings including the increasing percentages of calls for book bans, the number of books impacted, and they kinds of books challenged the most. One important finding concerns the full impact of book banning being too great to accurately measure as “teachers and librarians in several states have been directed to catalog entire collections for public scrutiny within short timeframes, under threat of punishment from new, vague laws.” [Report]

Metzgar, M., & McGowan, M. J. (2022). Viewpoint diversity at UNC Charlotte. *Acta Educationis Generalis*, 12(3), 1-12. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2478/atd-2022-0020>

ABSTRACT: Introduction: A number of recent surveys have shown that college campuses are becoming intolerant of different viewpoints. Part of the mission of any college should be to create a space where different viewpoints can be debated in a healthy, intellectual way. To gauge the campus climate at their own University, the authors deployed a survey to business students asking how comfortable they were sharing and responding to different viewpoints. Methods: Business students were surveyed for their attitudes towards diverse viewpoints. The survey instrument has been used at other colleges to survey students for several years. Results: A portion of students are censoring their views on controversial topics. There is often a reluctance to present honest viewpoints in the classroom. Discussion: Faculty needs to be mindful of the classroom environment they create. Colleges should be a major place where different viewpoints are discussed and debated. Limitations: Only business students were surveyed. There may be different outcomes for students in other majors. Conclusions: These results suggest that many students are self-censoring their views in class. Faculty should be aware of this and create an environment where different viewpoints are welcome. [Empirical Study]

Moffet, J. (1988). *Storm in the Mountains: A Case Study of Censorship, Conflict, and Consciousness*. Southern Illinois University.

ABSTRACT: Speaking to some of the most urgent issues we are facing in education today, *Storm in the Mountains* (recipient of the David H. Russell Award for Distinguished Research in the Teaching of English in 1992) recounts the aftermath of one of the most prolonged, intense, and violent textbook protests in American history. The protests were a response to Moffett’s comprehensive language learning program, *Interaction: A Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading Program* (1973), which he developed after garnering widespread acclaim for his early publications, including *Teaching the Universe of Discourse* (1968). *Interaction* consisted of a vast array of different language arts materials, utilized culturally diverse subject matter, and was designed to approximate organic, self-sponsored reading, writing, and speaking. Yet, by 1974, it was precisely because of these progressive ideas that *Interaction* was protested to the point of cancellation by residents of Kanawha County, West Virginia. To write the book, Moffett returned a decade later to Kanawha County to speak to and interview the protestors and advocates of book banning who had objected to *Interaction*.

Interweaving their unedited interviews with official objections written by citizens in 1974, Moffett presents a moving case study of censorship in America that lays bare the many political, cultural, and religious issues which undergird society and education in our country. [Empirical Study, but perhaps this is more like the case studies you would find in journalism]

Page, M. L. (2017). *Teaching in the cracks: Using familiar pedagogy to advance LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum*. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 60(6), 644-685.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.616>

ABSTRACT: English language arts teachers and other literacy educators have the opportunity to create more positive and more inclusive school experiences for gender- and sexual-minority students, but many hesitate to transform their curricula and practices because of fear of community protest. To support educators who feel vulnerable or constrained, this article summarizes challenges facing gender- and sexual-minority students and then describes the benefits and limitations of a variety of familiar instructional approaches that teachers can use to make curricula more inclusive, ultimately reducing isolation and invisibility of LGBTQIA students and experiences. [Critical Study]

Pekoll, K. (2020). *Managing censorship challenges beyond books*. *Knowledge Quest*, 49(1), 28-33.

ABSTRACT: School libraries are no longer solely repositories for the information that has traditionally been published in books. School library professionals are providing education and access to information in many different formats and technologies. The role of the school librarian is much more than just literacy; it is about visibility, culture, and access to the world. When providing services and resources to all, school librarians and educators often encounter obstacles that target learners who need them the most. These obstacles can include censorship and inequitable access. This article discusses challenges to managing censorship. In providing services and resources to all, library workers and educators have often encountered obstacles that target the students that need them the most. Censorship and inequitable access to programs, online resources, and displays not only harm students but also society. [Position Paper]

PEN America. (2022, April). *Banned in the USA: Rising school book bans threaten free expression and students' First Amendment Rights (April 2022)*.

<https://pen.org/banned-in-the-usa/#what>

ANNOTATION: Reporting on data officially indexed by Penn America, an organization dedicated to the protection of free expression in the US and worldwide. "While this is the first time PEN America has conducted a formal count of books banned, the organization has fought back against book bans for decades." Linked within this article and the one below (Sept. 19, 2022) is a comprehensive index of books banned between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. [Report]

PEN America. (2022, Sept. 19). *New report: 2,500+ book bans across 32 states during the 2021-22 school year*. <https://pen.org/press-release/new-report-2500-book-bans-across-32-states-during-2021-22-school-year/>

PEN America updates its tally and analysis of book bans during the first half of the 2022-2023 school year, from July to December 2022. This research builds on PEN America's 2022 report, *Banned in the USA: The Growing Movement to Censor Books in Schools*, which covered book bans from July 2021 to June 2022. (website) [Report]

Pérez, A. H. (2022). Defeating the censor within: How to hold your stand for youth access to literature in the face of school book bans. *Knowledge Quest*, 50(5), 34-39.

ABSTRACT: YA author Pérez offers encouragement and insight into book challenges today, which are about much more than just a book. Offering tips for how to prepare for challenges and amplify student voices, the reader will also find ideas to help marginalized learners still find their way to targeted books. [Position Paper].

Rumberger, A. (2019). The elementary school library: Tensions between access and censorship. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 20(4), 409-421.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949119888491>

ABSTRACT: Children's news media offers access points for students to learn about the complex and evolving world around them, and school libraries are spaces where students develop the skills and knowledge necessary to interact with media. Yet despite the potential of children's news media, school libraries often become regulatory spaces where children are directed away from texts (both digital and printed) that are deemed inappropriate due to sophisticated content (Heins, 2007) or in some cases, are encouraged to read on their "level" (Kontovourki, 2012). This constructs children as vulnerable and in need of protection (Robinson, 2013). Instead, I seek to position the focal children as active, critical agents at the center of their own lives. In this article, I analyze conceptions of childhood innocence (James and Prout, 1997), arguing that both childhood and literacy are fluid and permeable constructions. I ask: What are the ways in which texts and literacy practices are censored in one elementary school library? To investigate this, I followed one school librarian, Deborah, and three first-grade students in their school library at City Partnership School as they navigated texts, learned about the world around them through multimedia platforms, and constructed their own identities as readers in a system with clear expectations for what a "readerly" identity looks like. [Empirical Study]

SLJ Staff. (2023, April 20). New PEN America Report Shows Increase in Book Bans Driven by State Legislation. *School Library Journal*. <https://www.slj.com/story/censorship/New-PEN-America-Report-Shows-Increase-in-Book-Bans-Driven-by-State-Legislation>

ANNOTATION: This report highlights findings of and links to a PEN America report on state legislation pushing book bans.

Steele, J. E. (2020). A History of Censorship in the United States. *Journal of Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*, 5(1), 6-19.

<https://www.ala.org/news/sites/ala.org.news/files/content/State-of-Americas-Libraries-Report-2021-4-21.pdf>

ABSTRACT: Censorship is a centuries-old issue for the United States. The importance of intellectual freedom and the freedom of speech is particularly evident in libraries, organizations dedicated to the access and spread of information. Issues regarding censorship and intellectual freedom have even reached the US Supreme Court. The following essay serves as a history of censorship in the United States, particularly in its libraries, and how the same issues of censorship have now transitioned into the digital age. [Critical Study]

Sulzer, M. A., & Thein, A. H. (2016). Reconsidering the hypothetical adolescent in evaluating and teaching young adult literature. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 60(2), 163-171. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.556>

ABSTRACT: Courses on teaching young adult literature (YAL) often encourage preservice English language arts teachers to consider their future students as they evaluate texts for classroom use. In this study, Sulzer and Thein analyzed preservice teachers' responses to familiar questions used to frame discussions of YAL-questions that ask them to read on behalf of a hypothetical adolescent reader. Findings suggest that evaluating YAL this way may naturalize myths about who adolescents are, what they care about, and what they are capable of. Understanding and addressing these myths may be beneficial to all who are involved in selecting literature for adolescents. [Empirical Study—not about censorship but about teachers considering the “hypothetical adolescent” and other questions, which could aid the process of access and building a classroom library.]

Vissing, Y., & Juchniewicz, M. (2023). Children's book banning, censorship and human rights. In J. Zajda, P. Hallam, & J. Whitehouse (Eds.), *Globalisation, values education and teaching democracy*, vol 35 (pp. 181-201). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-15896-4_12

ABSTRACT: Censorship of information that children and youth may access is nothing new, as some materials have been deemed forbidden for centuries. However, the current political environment in the United States has impacted what libraries can make available, what teachers can use as instructional materials, and what young people may decide to access on their own. History of book banning and its current iterations are explored, along with their social implications and impact on children's human rights. Book banning is contrary to

children's human rights, their access to information, and development of critical thinking skills. [Critical Study]

Walter, B., & Boyd, A. S. (2019). A threat or just a book? Analyzing responses to *Thirteen Reasons Why* in a discourse community. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 62(6), 615-623. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.939>

ABSTRACT: In this study, the authors examined how parents, preservice teachers, and teens responded to their reading of one controversial young adult novel. Analyzing the discourse of participants through the lens of positioning theory, the authors found that student readers approached the book as a story, examining its various literary elements. Youths also noted the reality of the text and drew personal connections to plot elements. Parents, however, considered the book as a tool and expressed concerns over the text's message and potentially negative influence. The authors also discuss conflicts that arose in the dialogue and conclude with implications for teachers and teacher educators. [Empirical Study, not about censorship, but of responses to a controversial YA novel.]

Woo, A., Lee, S., Tuma, A. P., Kaufman, J. H., Lawrence, R. A., & Reed, N. (2023). *Walking on Eggshells—Teachers' Responses to Classroom Limitations on Race-or Gender-Related Topics: Findings from the 2022 American Instructional Resources Survey*. Research Report. RR-A134-16. RAND Corporation. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7249/rra134-16>

ABSTRACT: In this report, drawing on the spring 2022 American Instructional Resources Survey, the authors examine teachers' awareness of and responses to limitations on how they can address race- or gender-related topics in their instruction. Teachers experienced limitations that infringed on their instructional autonomy, which included their choice of curriculum materials and topics for classroom discussion. These limitations originated from a variety of sources, including state, school, and district leaders and family and community members, and encompassed a wide span of topics, including, but not limited to race- or gender-related topics. The multifaceted nature of these limitations highlights how teachers exist in an increasingly complex policy environment in which they must consider and weigh not only their own perspectives but also the perspectives of multiple stakeholders, along with numerous messages and directives from a variety of sources about what and how to teach. In this complex environment, the authors found that teachers' responses to restrictions on their classroom instruction ranged broadly from compliance with to resistance against these restrictions; teachers also engaged in numerous strategies to navigate the existence of these restrictions. Moreover, limitations placed on how teachers can address contentious topics may be leading to consequences for teachers' working conditions and for student learning. Teachers perceived that teaching students under these limitations has become more difficult and that these limitations make it more difficult to engage students in learning, support students' critical thinking skills, and develop students' ability to engage in perspective taking and empathy building. [For "American Instructional

Resources Survey. 2022 Technical Documentation and Survey Results. Research Report. RR-A134-14," see ED626089.]

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APPENDIX A: MICHELLE'S CODED GENRES DEFINED

GENRE	DEFINED
Author Voices	I defined "author voices" as blog posts or articles on association websites written by young adult novel authors.
Industry Publications	I defined "industry publications" as magazines, journals, or websites published for and by stakeholders including educators, librarians, information specialists, and authors.
Nonprofit Organizations	I defined "nonprofit organizations" as entities organized and operated for the purpose of promoting a public or social benefit related to education.
Popular Media	I defined "popular media" as news media that is widely consumed and enjoyed by a large audience.
Publishing Companies	I defined publishing companies as businesses that produce, distribute, and market young adult novels and other printed materials targeting adolescents.
Student Voices	I attempted to define "student voices" as blog posts or articles on association websites written by actual secondary students, but could not find these. So, I sought surveys and qualitative data collected from actual students.
Teacher Voices	I defined "teacher voices" as blog posts or articles on association websites written by actual classroom teachers.

APPENDIX B: SHELLY'S CODED GENRES DEFINED

GENRE	DEFINED
Critical Study	According to the Google Search Engine: "A Critical Study is "a serious examination and judgment of something. examen. a critical study (as of a writer's work.)"
*Critical Study	I defined a subversion of <i>critical study</i> as an article focused on the critical examination of something that comes from the work of a larger research study.
Empirical Study	According to Penn State University Libraries, "Empirical Research is based on observed and measured phenomena and derives knowledge from actual experience rather than from theory or belief." As I read/scanned the articles, I looked for a methods section, typically including participants, data collection, and data analysis.
Interview	I defined <i>interview</i> as: an article sharing a conversation between two or more experts on the topic. In most cases, the conversation has been revised for clarity.
Newsletter	For the purpose of this research, I defined <i>newsletter</i> as a small collection of shorter writings, often sharing positions, concerns, or helpful information.
Online Resource	I used this genre code for websites supporting teachers and librarians with resources and scholarship concerning censorship and book challenges.
Position Paper	According to Dictionary.com, a position paper is "a formal, usually detailed written statement, especially regarding a single issue, that articulates a position, viewpoint, or policy, as of a government, organization, or political candidate."
Report	Twnkl.com provided the following definition: "A report is a concise piece of writing that uses facts and evidence to look at issues, situations, events, or findings. Reports are informative texts that aim to analyze different topics with a specific purpose and audience in mind."