



**Getting Lit:
Exploring Literacy through a
Lens of Transformative SEL
Exploring Real Emotions,
Real Life, and Real Learning**

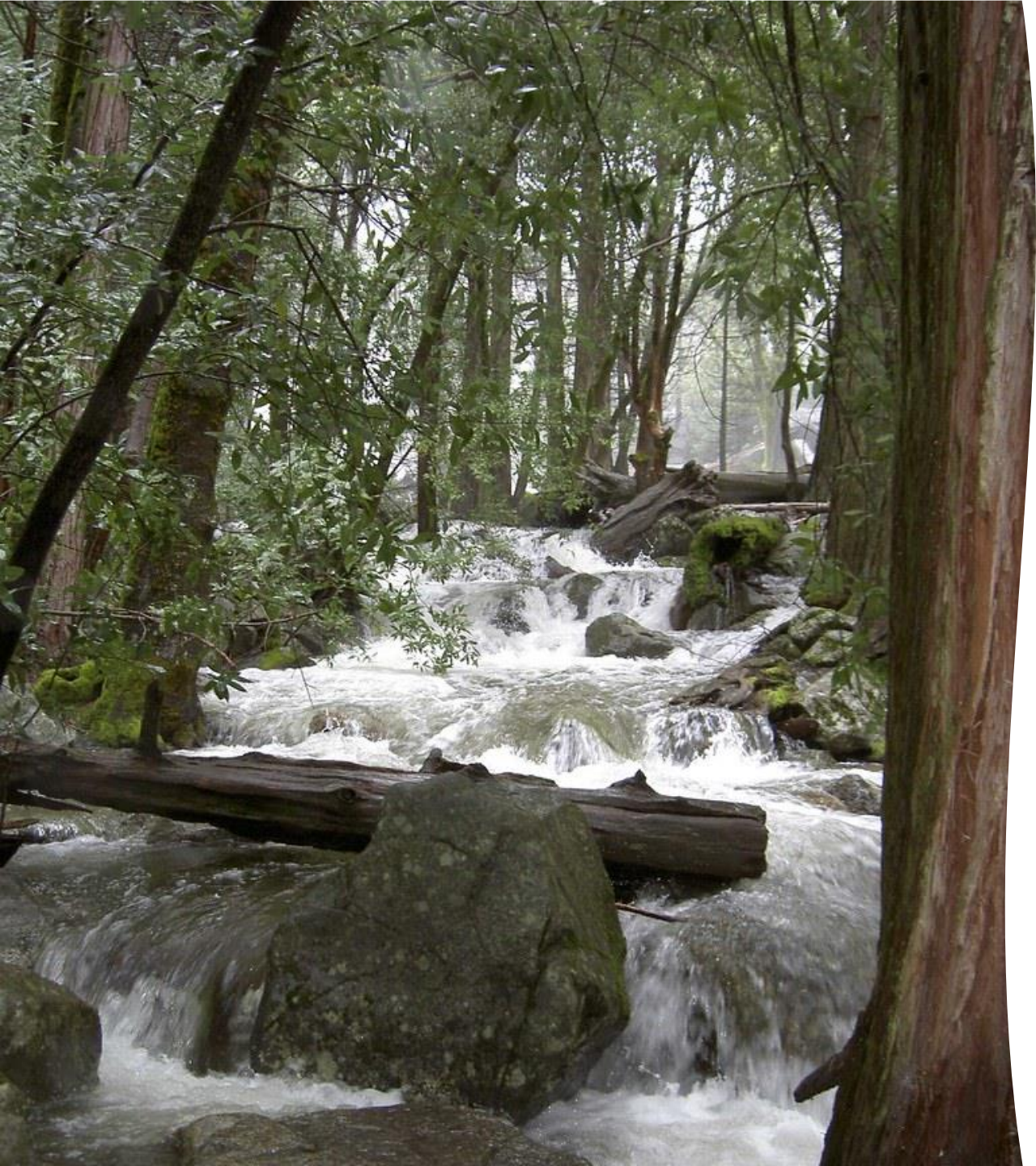
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October 19, 2022

National WRITE Center,
School of Education,
Univ. of California, Irvine



Session Anchoring questions

-
- What is literacy?
 - What is Transformative Social and Emotional Learning (TSEL)?
 - How might this deeper understanding guide us in decision making about content and pedagogy?
 - What are the conditions necessary for all literacy experiences to manifest Transformative SEL?



Session flow

- Content
- Connections
- Conditions

***Content:
Defining Literacy***



Literacy is

Reading

Writing

Speaking

Listening



Components of literacy instruction

Decoding

Phonological awareness

Phonemic awareness

Vocabulary

Spelling

Fluency

Comprehension

Transcription

Composition

Creative expression



Content: Understanding SEL





https://youtu.be/ouXhi_CfBVg

SEL 101: What are the core Competencies and key settings

Definition of SEL



Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions.

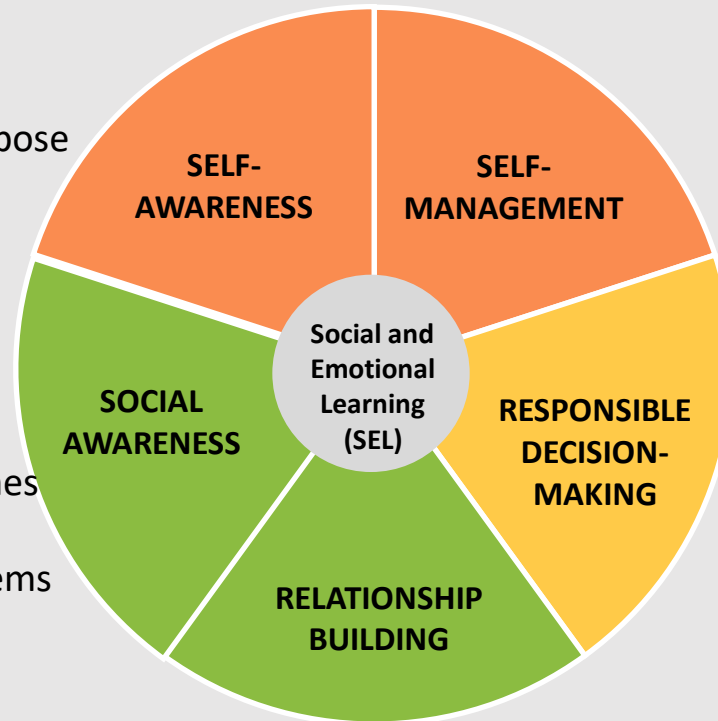
SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school-family-community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships, rigorous and meaningful curriculum and instruction, and ongoing evaluation. SEL can help address various forms of inequity and empower young people and adults to co-create thriving schools and contribute to safe, healthy, and just communities.

Social and Emotional Learning Competencies

- Integrating personal and social identities
- Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets
- Identifying one's emotions
- Demonstrating honesty and integrity
- Linking feelings, values, and thoughts
- Examining prejudices and biases
- Experiencing self-efficacy
- Having a growth mindset
- Developing interests and a sense of purpose

- Managing one's emotions
- Identifying and using stress-management strategies
- Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation
- Setting personal and collective goals
- Using planning and organizational skills
- Showing the courage to take initiative
- Demonstrating personal and collective agency

- Taking others' perspectives
- Recognizing strengths in others
- Demonstrating empathy and compassion
- Showing concern for the feelings of others
- Understanding and expressing gratitude
- Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones
- Recognizing situational demands and opportunities
- Understanding the influences of organizations/systems on behavior



- Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness
- Identifying solutions for personal and social problems
- Learning to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data, facts
- Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions
- Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful in and out of school
- Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family, and community well-being
- Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community and institutional impacts

- Communicating effectively
- Developing positive relationships
- Demonstrating cultural competency
- Practicing teamwork/collaborative problem-solving

- Resolving conflicts constructively
- Resisting negative social pressure
 - Showing leadership in groups
 - Seeking or offering support when needed
 - Standing up for the rights of others

Connecting Components of Literacy and SEL

Reading
Writing
Speaking
Listening



Decoding
Phonological awareness
Phonemic awareness
Vocabulary
Spelling
Fluency
Comprehension
Transcription
Composition
Creative expression

Common words in a writing class

- Voice
- Audience
- Authenticity
- Drafting
- Peer editing
- Revising



Self-awareness

- Have students reflect on what they like to read and why.
- Ask how the plot/characters/themes make them feel.
- Probe the array of characters' feelings.

Self-management

- Teach and reward perseverance strategies.
- Help students journal to document thoughts and monitor progress.

Social awareness

- Have students take the perspective of different characters.
- Focus on how characters feel in different situations.

Relationship building

- Discuss how characters relate to each other.
- Use collaborative structures such as Socratic Seminars to foster understanding through relating with each other.

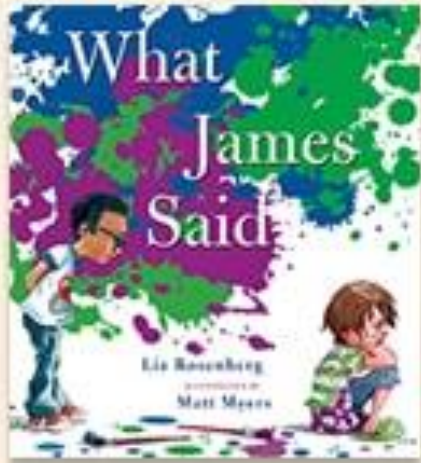
Responsible decision-making

- Have students apply decision making strategies to problems/conflicts characters face.
- Discuss situations as the result of responsible or faulty decision-making.

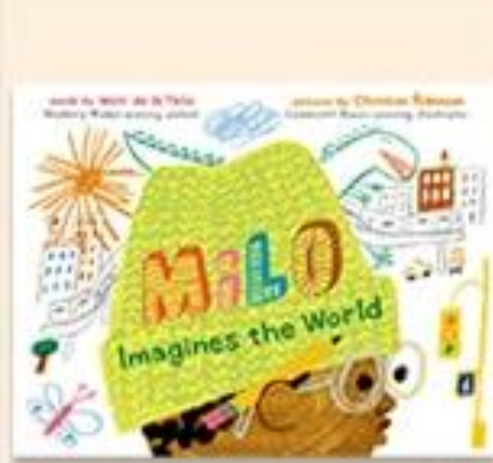
Sample Writing Prompts for college essays:

1. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure.
2. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea.
3. Describe a problem you've solved or one you'd like to solve.
4. Discuss an accomplishment or event that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood.

Source: Dr. Mary Tedrow's book Write, Think, Learn (Routledge)



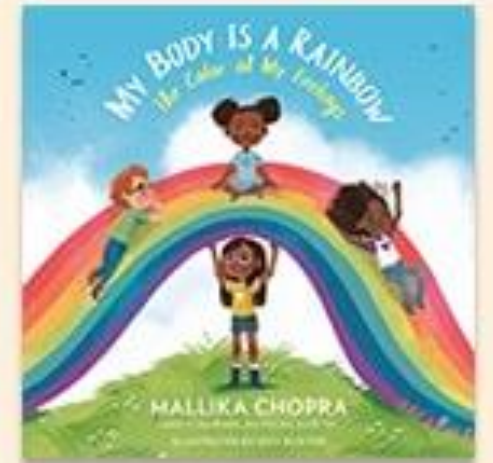
Honesty &
Integrity



Respect &
Empathy



Resourcefulness



Self-Control &
Mindfulness

Books marketed with SEL themes

In summary:

Connections between SEL and writing



Reading and writing as:

- tools for discovery, sensemaking, and processing
- Tools for connecting to one's identity
- Tools for emotional expression/outlet
- Tools for strengthening all SEL competencies necessary on the journey to humanity



<https://youtu.be/DQf80wKnUg0>

Jason Reynolds, author of Long Way Down, on the Human Journey

***Pause,
Ponder,
Process.***





Content:
Understanding
Transformative SEL

Transformative SEL



A process whereby young people and adults build strong, respectful, and lasting, relationships that facilitate co-learning to critically examine root causes of inequity, and to develop collaborative solutions that lead to personal, community, and societal well-being.

Core Features of Transformative SEL



- Academic content that integrates issues of race, class and culture.
- Instruction that honors and makes connections to students' lived experiences and identities, and scaffolds learning to build an understanding of others' lived experiences.

Core Features of Transformative SEL

- Enhancing social and emotional competencies needed for civic engagement and social change.
- Prioritizing students' individual and collective agency to take action for more just schools and communities.



Five key frames for Transformative SEL

- *Identity*
- *Agency*
- *Belonging*
- *Collaborative problem-solving*
- *Curiosity*

Identity

- refers to how you view yourself and is multi-dimensional
- also implies an awareness of the perceptions others have about your identity



Identity and literacy ...

- Themes that recognize and affirm the diverse identities of young people and position them as assets
- Themes validating students' lived experience and backgrounds





Literature Supporting Identity

Elementary

- **The Proudest Blue**, Ibtihaj Muhammad
- **The Name Jar**, Yangsook Choi
- **Let's Talk about Race**, Julius Lester
- **Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match**, Monica Brown
- **The Three Names of Me**, Mary Cummings
- **Crown: Ode to the Fresh Cut**, Derrick Barnes
- **Bodies are Cool**, Tyler Feder

Middle School

- **A Good Kind of Trouble**, Lisa Moore Ramee
- **Blended**, Sharon Draper
- **All American Muslim Girl**, Nadine Jolie Courtney
- **Crossing the Wire**, Will Hobbs
- **The Hate U Give**, Angie Thomas
- **Slay**, Brittney Morris
- **All American Boys**, Jason Reynolds
- **Wonder**, R.J. Palacio

High School

- **Homegoing**, Yaa Gyasa
- **The Bell Jar**, Sylvia Plath
- **The Outsiders**, SE Hinton
- **The Giver**, Lois Lowry
- **The Poet X**, Elizabeth Acevedo
- **Clap When You Land**, Elizabeth Acevedo
- **American Born Chinese**, Gene Luen Yang
- **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings**, Maya Angelou
- **The Book Thief**, Markus Zusak
- **Chlorine Sky**, Mahogany L. Brown
- **The Sun is Also a Star**, Nicola Yoon

**What titles would you add?
Drop them in the chat, please.**

Agency...

- refers to the perceived and actual capacity to affect change through purposeful action



Agency and literacy

- Themes about voice, power, and determination
- Themes about overcoming personal challenges and/or engaging in individual or collaborative problem-solving and collective efficacy





Literature Supporting Agency

General Resource:

Representing Agency in Popular Culture, edited by Ingrid E. Castro and Jessica Clark

Elementary

- **Ambitious Girl**, Meena Harris
- **Let the Children March**, Monica Clark-Robinson
- **Kamala and Maya's Big Idea**, Meena Harrisgara
- **A is for Activist**, Innosanto Na
- **Inside Out and Back Again**, Thanhha Lai
- **Esperanza Rising**, Pam Munoz Ryan

Middle School

- **A Good Kind of Trouble** - Lisa Moore Ramee
- **Same, but Different** – Holly Robinson Pete
- **Piecing Me Together** – Renee Watson
- **Adult Assembly Required** – Abbi Waxman
- **Inside Out and Back Again**, Thanhha Lai

High School

- **Coming of Age in 2020: Teenagers on the Year that Changed Everything**, Ed. By Katherine Schulten
- **With the Fire on High**, Elizabeth Acevedo
- **Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High**, Melba Pattillo Beals
- **When We Make It**, Elisabet Velasquez
- **Watch Us Rise**, Renee Watson and Ellen Hagan
- **Kneel**, Candace Buford
- **Fight to Learn: The Struggle to Go to School**, Laura Scandiffio
- **On the Come Up**, Angie Thomas
- **Everything, Everything**, Nicola Yoon

**What titles would you add?
Drop them in the chat, please.**

Belonging...



- About acceptance, respect, and inclusion within a group or community.
- Implies feeling recognized and being fully involved



Belonging and literacy...

- Themes about origin
- Themes about displacement and adjustment
- Themes about fitting in



Literature Supporting Belonging

Elementary

- **The Day You Begin**, Jacqueline Woodson
- **Lost and Found**, Oliver Jeffers
- **We Belong Together: A book about Adoption and Families**, Todd Parr
- **My Clothes, Your Clothes**, Lisa Bullard
- **Nana Akua Goes to School**, Tricia Elam Walker

Middle School

- **Blended**, Sharon Draper
- **A Place to Belong**, Cynthia Kadohata
- **We Belong**, Cookie Hironaka
- **The Insiders**, Mark Oshiro
- **Posted**, John David Anderson
- **Sofia Acosta Makes a Scene**, Emma Otheguy
- **Behold the Dreamers**, Imbolo Mbue

High School

- **Everything I Never Told You**, Celeste Ng
- **Home Is Not a Country**, Safia Eihillo
- **Odd One Out**, Nic Stone
- **Speak**, Laure Haise Anderson
- **Almost American Girl**, Robin Ha
- **Dragon Hoops**, Gene Luen Yang
- **Bronx Masquerade**, Nikki Grimes

**What titles would you add?
Drop them in the chat, please.**

Collaborative Problem-Solving...



- the capacity of an individual to engage in a process with others to solve a problem by:
 - sharing the understanding and effort required to come to a solution, and
 - pooling their knowledge, skills, and efforts to reach that solution.

Collaborative Problem-Solving and literacy ...



- Themes about valuing diverse perspectives
- Themes about overcoming personal challenges, and/or engaging in individual or collaborative problem-solving and collective efficacy



Literature Supporting Collaborative Problem Solving

Elementary

- **How to Solve a Problem: The Rise (and Falls) of a Rock-Climbing Champion**, Ashima Shiraishi
- **The Real McCoys: Two's a Crowd**, Matthew Swanson and Robbi Bear
- **Beach Toys vs. School Supplies**, Mike Ciccotello
- **A Sled for Gabo**, Emma Otheguy

Middle School

- **Posted**, John David Anderson
- **Look Both Ways**, Jason Reynolds
- **Code Talker: A Novel About the Navajo Marines of World War Two**, Joseph Bruchac
- **Shirley and Jamila Save Their Middle School**, Gillian Gomez
- **The Dollar Kids**, Jennifer Richard Jacobson

High School

- **Not My Problem**, Ciara Smith
- **One of Us is Lying**, Karen McManus
- **Can't Take That Away**, Steven Salvatore
- **Star Girl**, Jerry Spinelli
- **Rayne and Delilah's Midnite Matinee**, Jeff Zentner
- **In the Wild Light**, Jeff Zentner
- **Long Way Down**, Jason Reynolds
- **Fighting Words**, Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
- **We Speak in Storms**, Natalie Lund

**What titles would you add?
Drop them in the chat, please.**

Curiosity...



- About the need to continuously surface and curate information about oneself, others, and the outside world
- About exploring with the hope of closure or resolution

Curiosity and literacy...



- Themes about questioning self and society
- About exploring with the hope of closure or resolution



Literature Supporting Curiosity

Elementary

- **Monster and Boy**, Hannah Barnaby
- **Zoey and Sassafra #3: Merhorses and Bubbles**, Asia Citro
- **Curios George's First Day of School**, H.A. Rey
- **Maya and the Robot**, Eve L. Ewing
- **Here and Now**, Julia Denos
- **Towers Falling**, Jewell Parker Rhodes
- **The Dreamer**, Pam Munoz Ryan

Middle School

- **Harbor Me**, Jacqueline Woodson
- **As Brave As You**, Jason Reynolds
- **Okoye To The People: A Black Panther Novel**, Ibi Zoboi
- **The Thing About Jellyfish**, Ali Benjamin
- **Breda's Island**, Jessie Ann Foley
- **Rebound**, Kwame Alexander

High School

- **Tigers, Not Daughters**, Samantha Mabry
- **The Talk: Conversations About Race, Love, and Truth**, Ed. By Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis
- **Me (Moth)**, Amber McBride
- **Trell**, Dick Lehr
- **The Revolution of Birdie Randolph**, Brandy Colbert
- **Black Cake**, Charmaine Wilkerson

**What titles would you add?
Drop them in the chat, please.**

Connections between 5 SEL competencies and 5 transformative frames

5 Competencies

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making

5 Transformative frames

- Identity
- Agency
- Belonging
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Curiosity

Student outcomes from a transformative approach

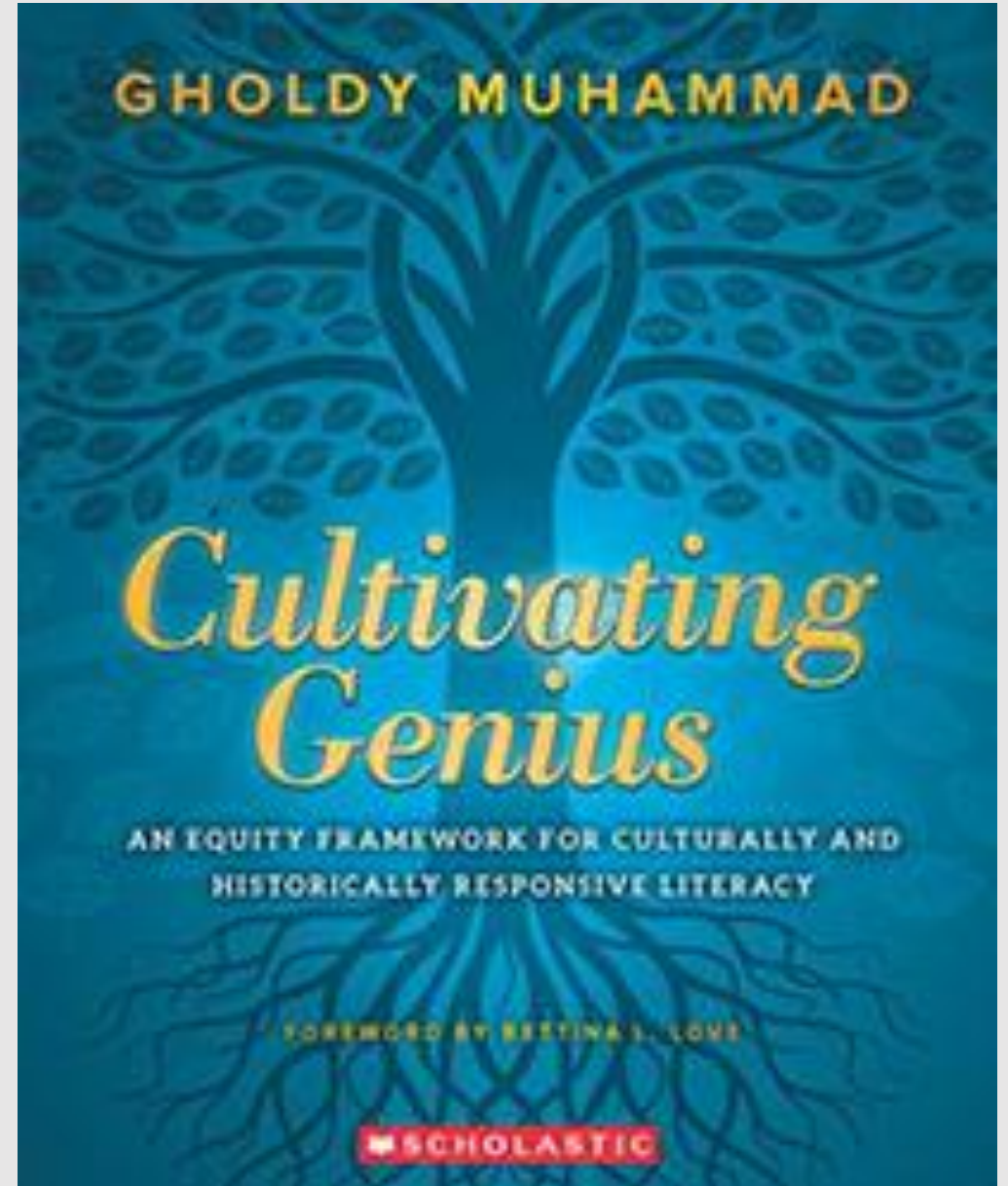


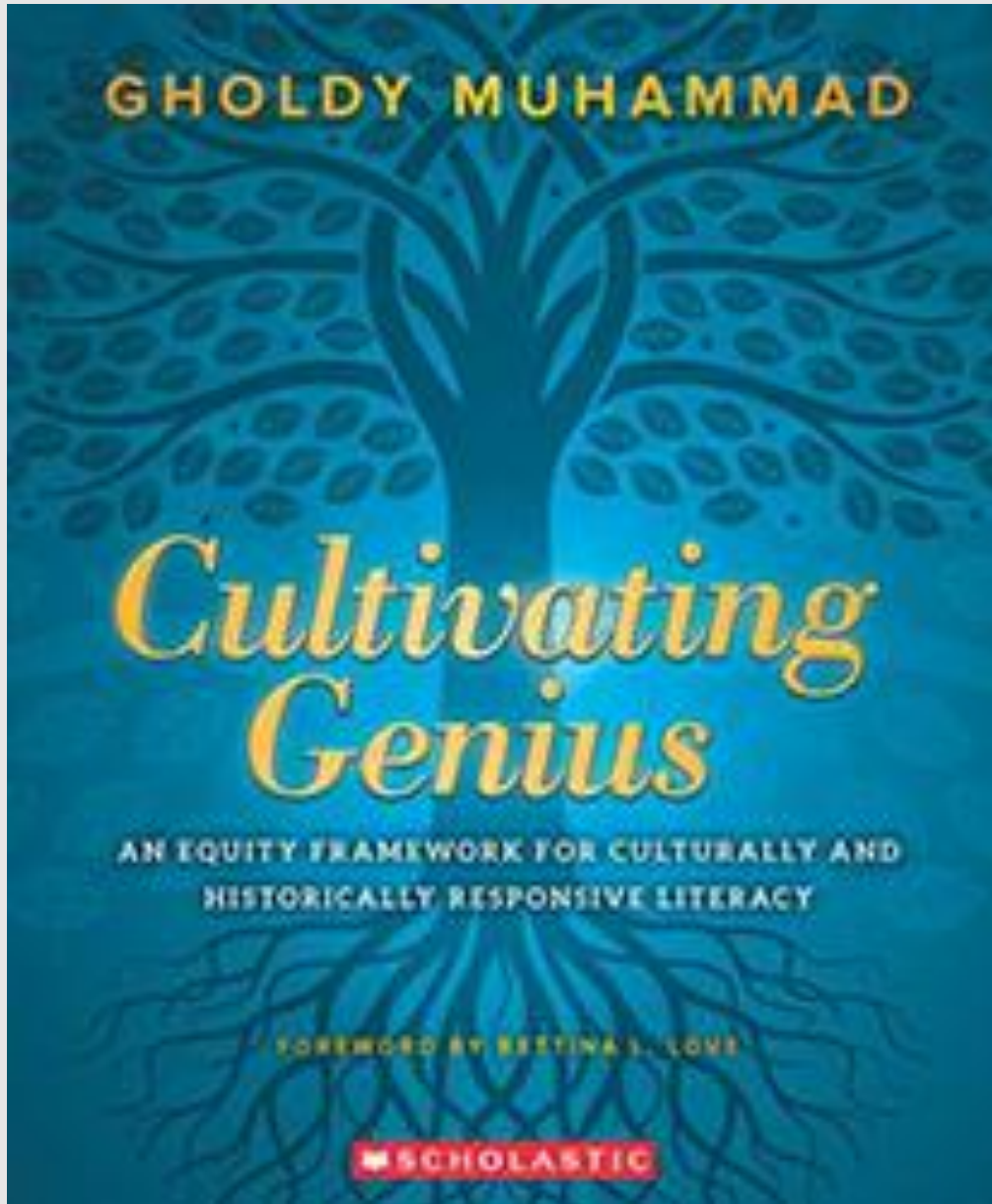
- Deep introspection
- External projection
- Being aware
- Demonstrating care
- Promoting advocacy
- Advancing humanity

*Essential questions for
connecting literacy and
transformative SEL*



1. How might we be ***intentional*** in providing writing prompts/assignments that help students be reflective about their social and emotional capacity as agents of positive transformation?
2. How might we be ***intentional*** in finding literature with themes relative to concepts of Transformative SEL?





Historically Responsive Literacy Framework*

- Identity (understanding self and others)
- Skills (mastering skills relative to literacy)
- Intellectualism (becoming smarter)
- Criticality (power, equity, anti-oppression)

*from 19th century African American Literary Societies



Creating the Conditions for Success



How might classrooms become contexts where real emotions and real life contribute to real learning?



<https://youtu.be/KyoAFpEzXCy>

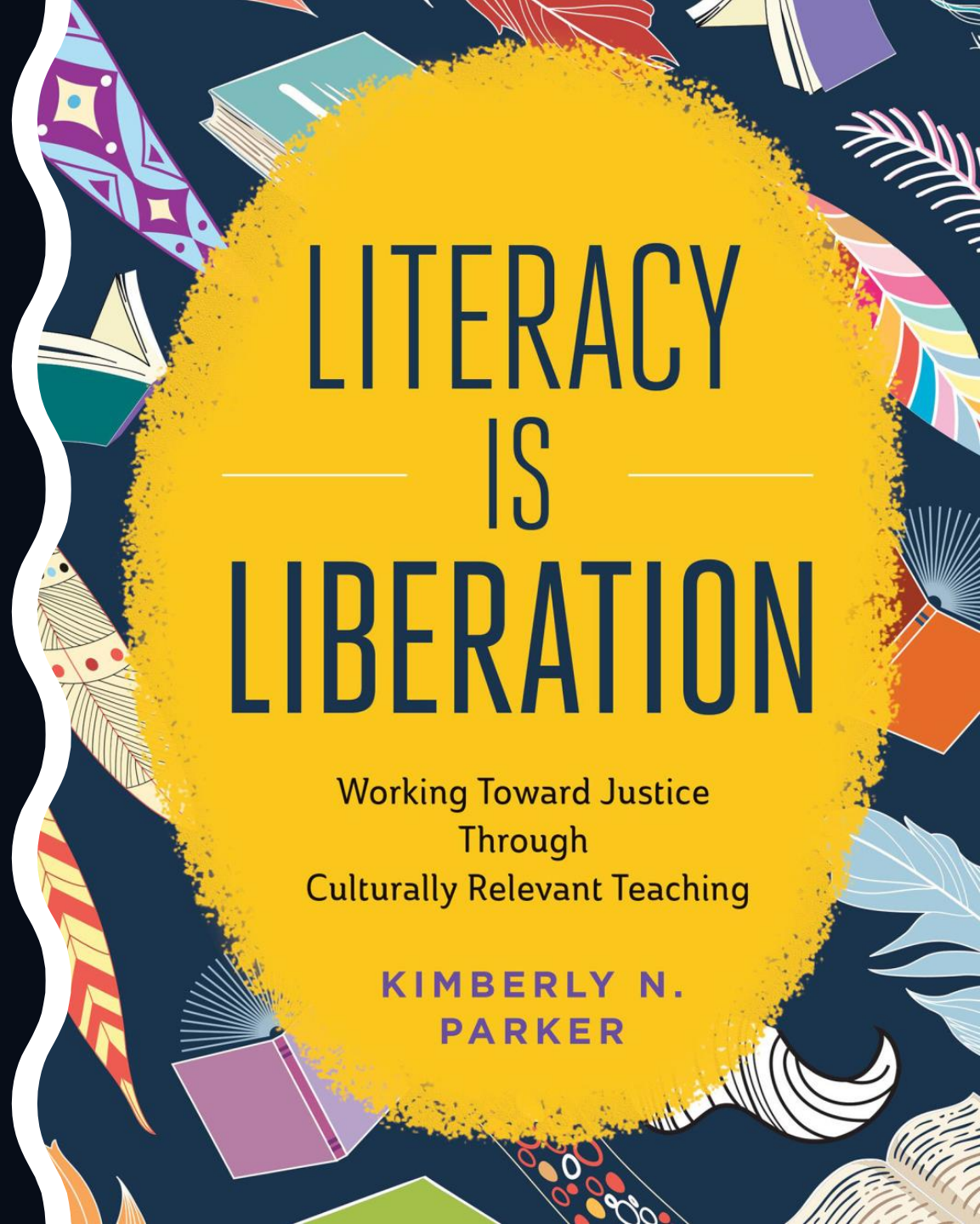
Daily Advisory- Building Social, Emotional and Academic Skills

***Pause,
Ponder,
Process.***



Purpose drives
Practice

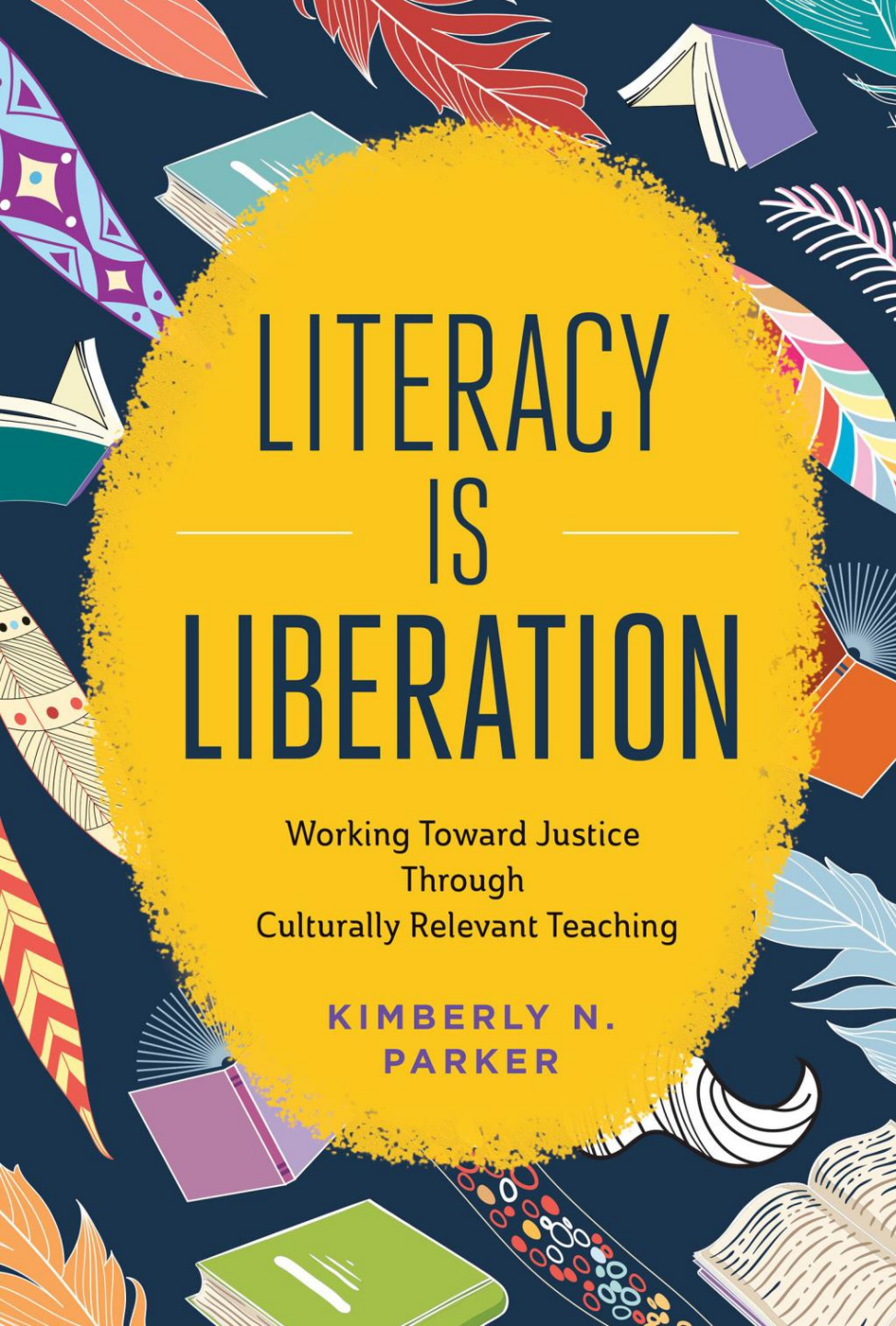
Literacy to what end?



LITERACY IS LIBERATION

Working Toward Justice
Through
Culturally Relevant Teaching

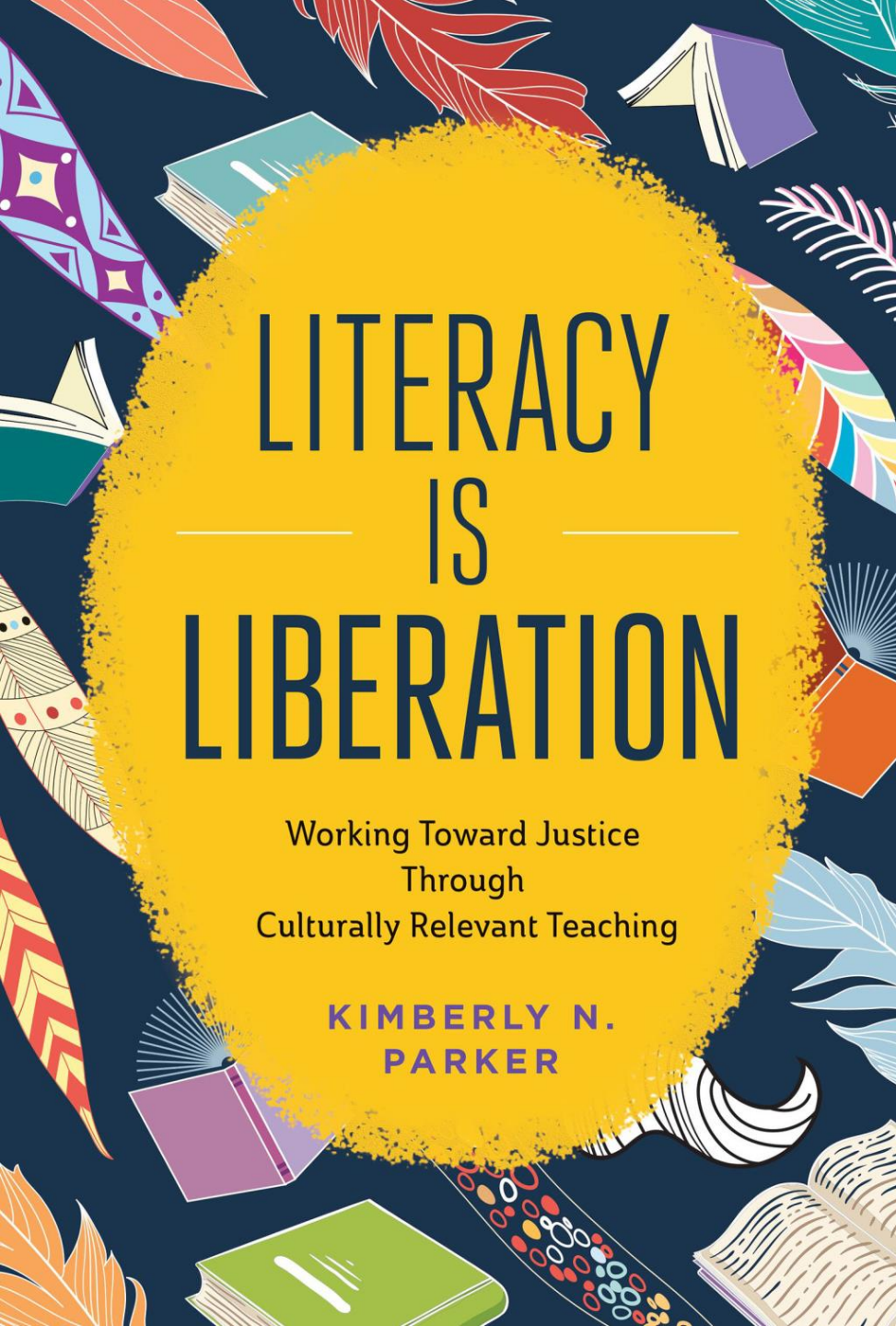
KIMBERLY N.
PARKER



3 Images*

- Windows (unfamiliar experiences)
- Mirrors (connections to self)
- Sliding glass doors (transformative texts that change us as readers)

* (Bishop, 1990)



LITERACY IS LIBERATION

Working Toward Justice
Through
Culturally Relevant Teaching

**KIMBERLY N.
PARKER**

Critical considerations

1. Who is telling the story?
2. Any harmful stereotypes of people or settings?
3. What identities are represented and various representation of focal groups throughout the year?
4. Any harmful, racist language or concepts?
5. Am I fully aware of the historical context and setting?

LITERACY AS A TOOL FOR LIBERATION



"TEACHING DURING
THIS POLITICAL MOMENT
DEMANDS OUR COMPASSION
AND UNDERSTANDING."

ILLUSTRATION BY DONALD ELY

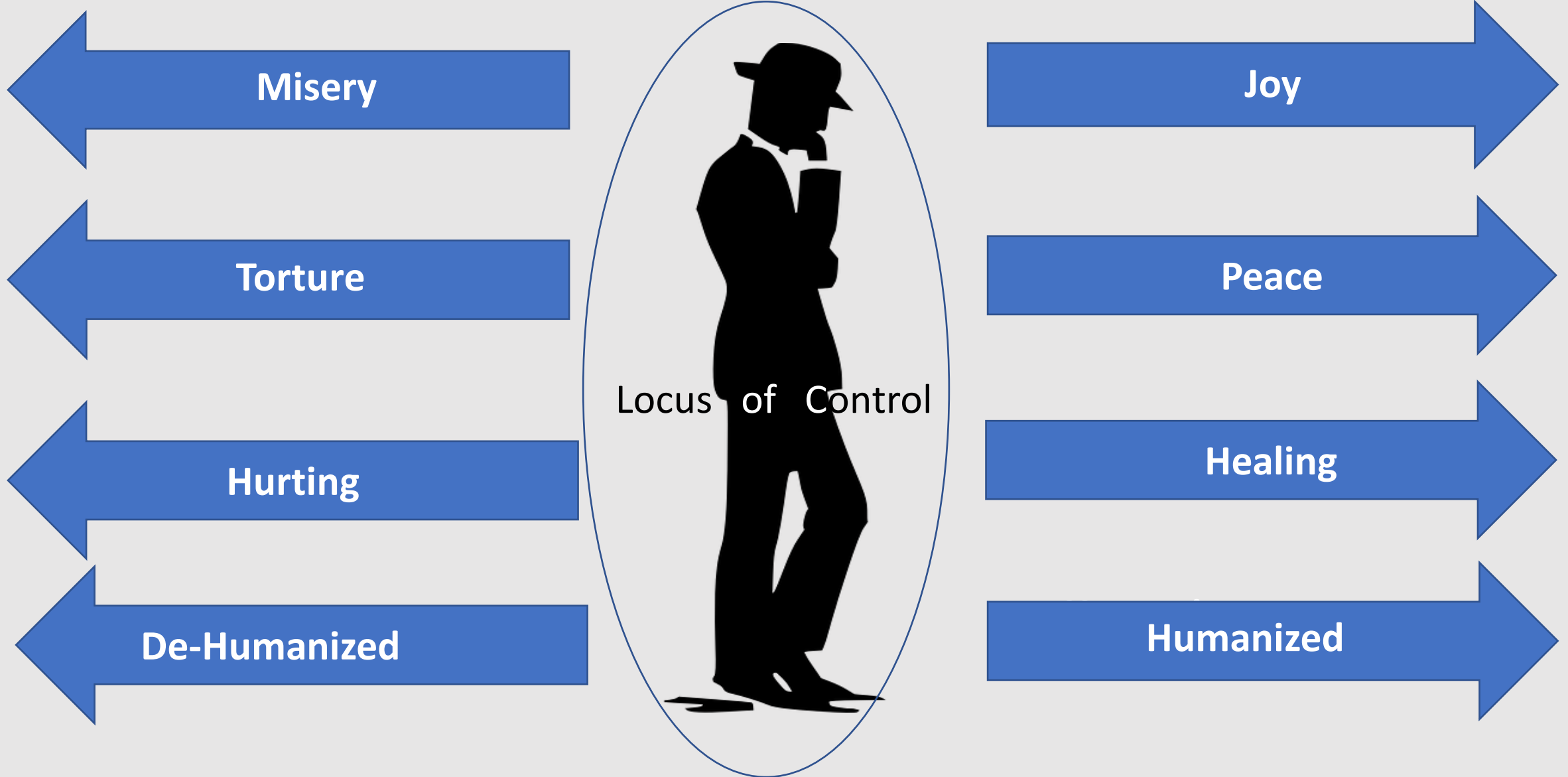
Implications for adult behavior

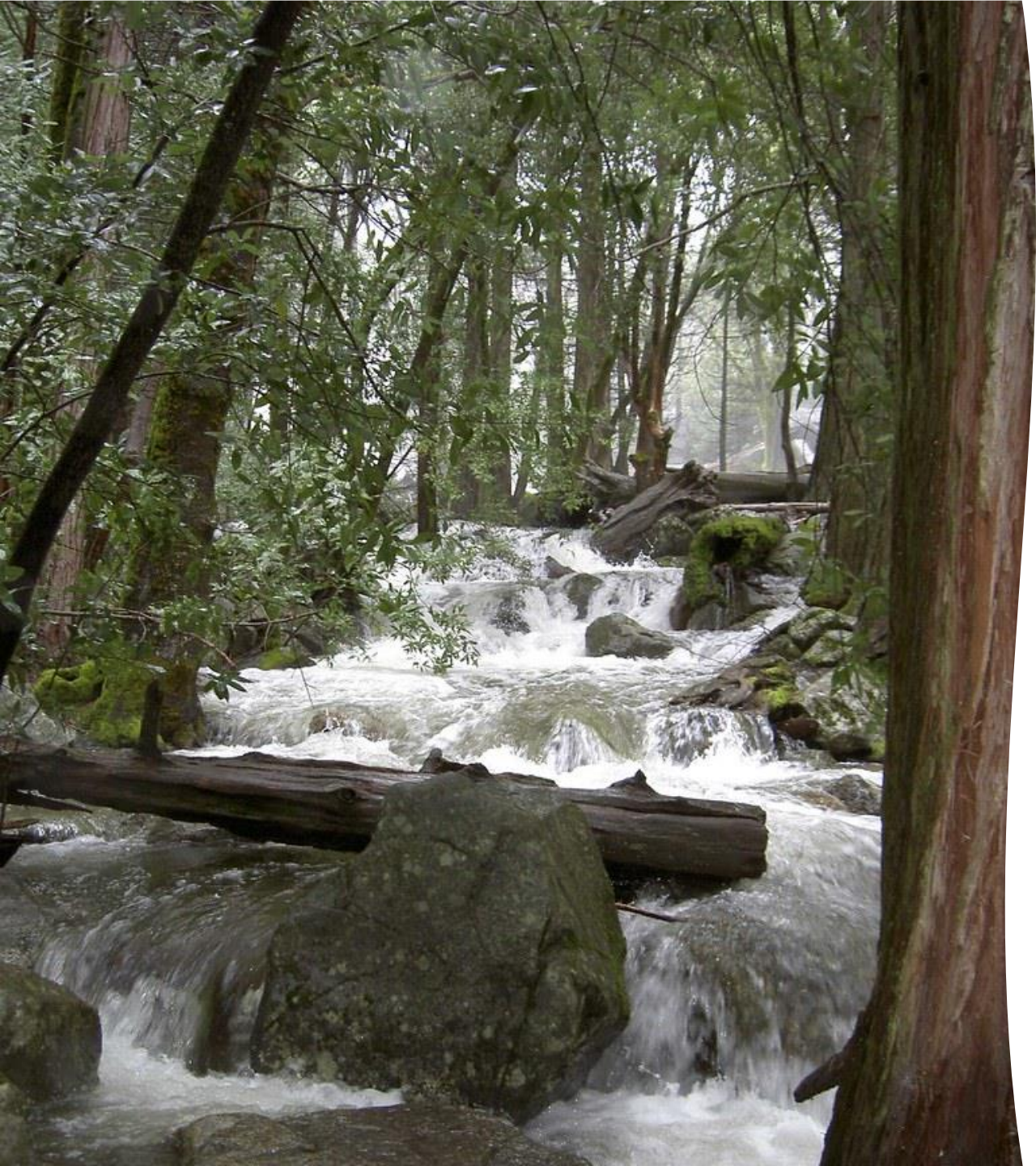
I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis is escalated or de-escalated and a person is humanized or de-humanized. If we treat people as they are, we make them worse. If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them become what they are capable of becoming.

Haim Ginott



What are you bringing into the classroom that swings the pendulum....





Session flow review

- Content
- Connections
- Conditions



Session Anchoring questions

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Final thought...



To write is to become familiar with your light and darkness and everything in between. It becomes the gray matter of your existence. Reading puts you in contact with others. Writing puts you in contact with yourself.



Alfred W. Tatum

FEARLESS VOICES

Engaging a New Generation of
African American Adolescent Male Writers

SCHOLASTIC

—Alfred W. Tatum,
*Fearless Voices: Engaging a New
Generation of African American Ado-
lescent Male Writers*

**WE ARE
TEACHERS**

Thank you!

Dr. Deidre R. Farmbry

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