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Teaching Diverse Literature For School Justice in the Rural English Classroom

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Oral Presentation ES O2.2

TEACHING DIVERSE LITERATURE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE RURAL ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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In racially and linguistically homogenous communities, a lack of diverse literature can lead to a lack of diverse perspectives within the classroom. In previous studies, researchers found that after teachers incorporated multicultural literature in the classroom, students were able to notice oppression and discuss its effect, relate to the characters and their situations, and move from empathy to action through global citizenship. This study aims to identify how incorporating multicultural literature in a secondary English classroom can impact students' perceptions of the lives of others. This study was conducted in a rural high school with a class of fifteen sophomores and juniors. The students engaged in whole class and small group discussions where students reacted to the varying perspectives of characters and worked on individual reflections about what they discovered in the literature. The data includes student work samples, student surveys, teacher field notes, and teacher reflections. In today's classrooms, empathy and understanding are invaluable learning outcomes, and this study identifies students' reactions to multicultural literature in their homogenous classroom.

