

**Counter 00:04**

**Karen 0001**

So now what I'm really interested in is ... tell us about the book that you've chosen for your unit.

**Lizzy 0002**

Ok. I chose *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven*, and it's a collection of short stories by Sherman Alexi who is actually native American. And I chose this book because I wanted... there are a lot of books written about Native Americans by people who aren't Native American. And, this summer I learned that that's actually like kind of a problem in the Native American community that other people are trying to tell their story.

**Karen 0003**

So you haven't taught this book before, it's the first time that you're teaching it?

**Lizzy 0004**

No, I never have and I just read it myself this year

**Karen 0005**

What class will you be using this book in?

**Lizzy 0006**

I'll be teaching it to my Reading class, which is sophomores. And it's an extra class that only 40 sophomores take.

**Karen 0007**

And, um, are they in this class for any particular test scores or profile in any way that...

**Lizzy 0008**

Sort of. They're the kids from last year who didn't do that well in Reading but also didn't totally fail. They had to have good attendance and sort of seem like they were trying. But they just needed some extra help.

**Karen 0009**

These are kind of what we classify as, characteristically "Fall through the crack kids," though with maybe a little more support um, they can...they can do it.

**Lizzy 0010**

Yeah. Exactly.

**Karen 0011**

And, um uh, have you used Young Adult Literature with your class before?

**Lizzy 0012**

Yes. All the time.

**Karen 0013**

And, and what's their response to it?

**Lizzy 0014**

They love it. It's my favorite thing to use.

**Karen 0015**

Yeah? Um, and, um, what do you think the percentages of the kids, outside, outside of school, what percentage of those kids, those 40 sophomore kids, you think read Young Adult Literature for pleasure? Your opinion, just your ballpark.

**Lizzy 0016**

Um, maybe like 20%.

**Karen 0017**

So one out of five?

**Lizzy 0018**

Yeah, that sounds about right.

**Karen 0019**

What do you think they read for pleasure?

**Lizzy 0020**

I don't think they read anything for pleasure.

**Karen 0021**

Really?

**Lizzy 0022**

Sometimes I'll see them with a magazine or a comic book. I actually do silent reading in my freshman class. So that's why I'm saying that. Because they are so reluctant to bring anything in and I told them they could bring anything they want. And they never do. So...

**Karen 0023**

The cheat manuals for World of War Craft or...

**Lizzy 0024**

What?

**Karen 0025**

Oh, oh okay. So, so, so the stuff that they're reading on the Internet and stuff like that they...

**Lizzy 0026**

Oh, like each others blogs? Would you say that?

**Karen 0027**

*Nods yes.*

**Lizzy 0028**

Yeah, so I guess that's their outside reading.

**Karen 0029**

But not in class. They don't bring that in, so...

**Lizzy 0030**

No, um. I mean like literally on the computer, the blogs that their friends write...

**Karen 0031**

Hmm. Well I'm a...I'm wondering a little bit about, about your training for use of Young Adult Literature in the classroom. Can you, can you tell me, um, where you were trained?

**Lizzy 0032**

Um, I went to DePaul for Grad school for an MED. And I think I had one or two classes there, where they told us to choose some kind of novel to write a unit.

**Karen 0033**

How would you characterize the support they gave you for developing those units?

**Lizzy 0034**

Not very much. Um I felt like we learned about some strategies but more we talked about theories behind them. So it wasn't until I started student teaching that I really like took a book and made a unit and did like day-to-day activities.

**Karen 0035**

What did you was, um, hard about doing that?

**Lizzy 0036**

Um, the thing that I still think is really hard is combining, getting through a book, like reading the book with also understanding the book with also not just sitting in class and reading it. Like combining activities that the kids, that help the kids

with actually getting through the book. Because I've taken...last year I did, um, a novel and it took two months to get through it and that's just too long for the kids.

**Karen 0037**

That must have been too long for you too?

**Lizzy 0038**

Yeah, it's rough. So that's still a big problem I think. Cause I just don't want them to miss anything.

**Karen 0039**

Um, what kind of support do you, um, think is available to you from either the building, your LLT, CPS? Um, you know, what kind of support do you think is out there from the System to support you in using these kinds of books in your curriculum?

**Counter 04:40**

**Lizzy 0040**

At this school people really talk about what they're teaching. So I know that I could ask any teacher here for help. And they would give me ideas. Um, outside of the school, I'm not really sure; the only thing that I've really come across is GEAR UP. That really is committed to helping teachers use Young Adult Literature. I know that there's professional development about a number of topics, but I don't really like to go to that random workshop stuff if I don't know like who's giving it or what it really is.

**Karen 0041**

Kind of like a quality assurance.

**Lizzy 0042**

Right. Okay. Um, uh the teachers here are very helpful. The English teachers we all talk a lot. We are...we're told to have meetings every week with people teaching the same level. So we do talk about strategies and what we're teaching a lot. Outside of the school I don't really get any support with anything except for GEAR UP. Where...

**Karen 0043**

What do you notice about GEAR UP that you think is helpful to you, second year teacher, in a tough school, tough class?

**Lizzy 0044**

Um, I like, I like the books that GEAR UP chooses. I like that there are a lot of really good strategies, that I've learned at GEAR UP events and functions. I think the people at GEAR UP are really nice. Which is important because sometimes teachers you work with are not that nice. Um, and I like that I always

feel that there is always something for me, for my class and my level at GEAR UP things that I go to.

**Karen 0045**

Um, you know you said that, um, uh, your fellow teachers have um, um, they talk about what they're doing and they share. When you came into your classroom, Day One, what materials were available for you to use for instruction?

**Lizzy 0046**

The textbook.

**Karen 0047**

And what was the textbook?

**Lizzy 0048**

You mean who makes it?

**Karen 0049**

Well, that's all right, it was a... Tell me about the textbook not... I don't care who makes it.

**Lizzy 0050**

Oh, yeah, I don't know, um....

**Karen 0051**

Like an anthology?

**Lizzy 0052**

Yes. Like an anthology. With just like stories and plays and questions. There is also a book room which is very dusty it has 500 hundred copies of *The Pearl* and that's about it. And um, it was really funny cause last year when I taught the sophomore class there was nothing. There were no books for it, no curriculum, nothing. And since there's only, there's only two sections of it in the school, like no one cares about it. So I was just doing anything I could last year, just like printing articles off the Internet and stuff like that. So...

**Karen 0053**

First year teacher, no curriculum...

**Lizzy 0054**

Yeah it was, it was kind of fun though. It was a nightmare at first but then it was really fun because I realized I could do whatever I wanted. So...

**Karen 0055**

What did you learn from doing that? Last year's experience, what do you think was like the two or three most key important ideas you learned about yourself as a teacher?

**Lizzy 0056**

Um, well I definitely learned that I want to try and teach something I enjoy, as much as possible. Because it's just more fun and I think that it is more fun for everyone. Um, I learned that you don't need a lot of materials...you don't need expensive materials to teach a unit. You know we did a unit that was all newspaper articles from the Internet and that was fine. Um, but I do think that it works better when you start with a quality piece of fiction or non fiction as like your basis, your anchor piece.

**Count 08:21**

**Karen 0057**

How much of the time do you use, um, Young Adult Literature in your instruction? Approximately?

**Lizzy 0058**

Maybe 30 to 50%.

**Karen 0059**

How much of that is textbook?

**Lizzy 0060**

I never use the textbook now.

**Karen 0061**

Those are expensive things. Okay, and what about other reading material, you know, magazines or stuff you get off the web?

**Lizzy 0062**

Yeah, we do a lot of that, a lot of newspaper article units. Um, or just poetry that I find that I like.

**Karen 0063**

Okay, um how...how would you characterize...now you're a second year teacher, in a class, no curriculum. So it's like the Lizzy Show from beginning to end. Okay, so...

**Lizzy 0064**

Yeah, it's great

**Karen 0065**

Yeah, I know. A lot of people would have rolled over and died, and here you are smiling and saying yeah this totally rocks. It's fabulous. But how would you characterize the level of success you feel you've had in meeting the literacy needs of the, um, of the students in this class? So we're still talking about the sophomore class.

**Lizzy 0066**

That...I'm a little insecure about that because I'm not really sure. It's really hard to tell. I know that they are interested in the topics that we've been doing. And I know that some of them have gone above and beyond and done extra research. But I don't know how much of their skills I've really worked on. Because I have focused so much on, like, topics that I think are interesting. Like immigration and like you know, um, contemporary issues like abortion and same sex marriage. So, um, I not really sure. I...I kind of hope that if they're interested in it, they're going to read more and really make more of an effort. But I think I need to work more on explicitly, like, helping them be better readers.

**Karen 0067**

How do you know if a kid is a good reader?

**Lizzy 0068**

If they understand what they read.

**Karen 0069**

*Movement with hands, to elaborate*

**Lizzy 0070**

If they can answer questions that I ask them, or if they don't say anything crazy when I talk to them about what they read.

**Karen 0071**

Yeah. Um, uh, let's talk a little bit about the unit now. Why this unit? For these kids, at this time of the year, right now? Tell me your thinking about it, a little bit.

**Lizzy 0072**

Okay, well this summer, this past summer I did, um, a fellowship that was five weeks long. And we learned about African American, Native American and Asian American literature. So I decided that since this class, that I can do whatever I want, that I would use what I learned this summer and so right now we're doing... We did, first we did immigration. We did mostly Mexicans. Then we did the research paper where they researched issues where like the government was getting involved in people's lives. Now we are doing African Americans and so I think that Native Americans is going to be a...it's going to come at good time because it will be connected to the other units, it will be about injustice and the government and people being treated unfairly. Um, but it's about people that they probably don't know. Most of the kids here probably don't

know anything about Native Americans. I didn't before this summer. So I think that if I had done it earlier, they wouldn't be able to relate to it as much. And now they'll see that it's part of a bigger picture about society, and the U.S. and the world.

**Karen 0073**

How do you think the reading level of this book is for your kids?

**Lizzy 0074**

It's going to be very challenging. I think not really because of vocabulary but because it's very figurative. There's a lot of things that are very symbolic and I think that they're going to have a hard time with that. We've done much more stuff with, like, straight forward, um, literature and non fiction.

**Karen 0075**

What excites you about teaching this unit?

**Lizzy 0076**

Um, I think it'll, I think part of it's going to blow their minds. Because they've just never heard anything about it and it's amazing how much information there is about this. Like I think Indian boarding schools is the craziest thing I've ever heard of and I didn't even know that, that it existed. So I think that it will be really cool.

**Karen 0077**

What's your biggest concern about teaching this unit?

**Lizzy 0078**

That, um, there's too much. I don't want to do it for two months. I think that's too long and there's so much that I want to cover. Plus I want them to understand the book that we're reading. So I think that's going to be really hard, not to just race through it and pack everyday with, like, five activities. And it's a problem too, cause like they don't really do homework. So that really cuts out what I can do.

**Karen 0079**

Yeah, because it all has to happen within the class period?

**Count 13:00**

**Lizzy 0080**

Right. And that's kind of intimidating.

**Karen 0081**

Have you already thought about, like the additional kinds of materials you'll use in addition to the um, to *The Tonto and Lone Ranger* as the anchor text?

**Lizzy 0082**

Hm. For sure. There's lots of poetry. There's a lot of really good Native American poetry. There's a movie that was made that was loosely based on the book called *Smoke Signals* which is a really good movie, that they'll really like. Um, and then the issues in it are so, accessible, like alcoholism, you know the fathers not being there, and just like the community is dissolving. Which I'm going to have to find lots of supplementary stuff for that. And also, as I've said before, the Indian boarding schools. There's tons of photographs and first person accounts.

**Karen 0083**

Okay. Um, now let's, uh, let's kind of shift to like you as a researcher. You know, what do you...what do you hope to learn about your kids through, um, uh, having us document, observe and sort of, um, you know, just...just be an extra set of eyes, um, in this process?

**Lizzy 0084**

Um, I would love to have more access to the kids who are very quiet and don't participate. And see if you guys can tell me what you think is going on with them. Cause I have...I have some loudmouths in these classes and they're great. And they always say exactly what I want them to say, but then there are so many kids who never talk but they come every day so I just don't really know what's going on with them. Um, and also just...I know that those kids who talk all the time understand everything but I don't know about the other kids, the majority of the class.

**Karen 0085**

Got it. What do you want us to, um, uh, look at or think about as far as you as a teacher?

**Lizzy 0086**

Everything. Um, this is only my second year, so I'm not really confident about anything that I do. Um, yeah, just everything that I do. If...I always say that I feel like standards are silly because you're obviously covering all these standards because they're so integral in what teachers do. Like, especially, for English. I don't know about the other subjects, but they're just like word knowledge and you know, understanding the author's meaning. So I would like to know if...if I really am covering all those standards that I think I'm covering.

**Karen 0087**

Okay. And, um, now we're going to shift a little bit to, um, uh, the YAL Conference. Okay? Now did you attend the conference this year?

**Lizzy 0088**

*Nods yes.*

**Karen 0089**

How would you describe that conference, where you know I'm a new teacher, and you know, I can go if I want. How would you describe that conference to me?

**Lizzy 0090**

I love it. It's my favorite thing. Am I not supposed to talk about that I went the other year too?

**Karen 0091**

You can talk about whatever you want. I want to hear everything. Just tell me about this conference.

**Lizzy 0092**

Okay. My first year I went because you get a lot of CPDU's and it sounded really cool, Young Adult Literature. And then it was so fun. The place that you stay at is really nice. And the rooms are so nice and the food is really good. But then also all of the workshops are amazing. And you want to write down anything that anyone says. The books, the first year...

**Karen 0093**

About the books the first year...

**Lizzy 0094**

Um, yes, the books, the first year the book that changed my life was *Warriors Don't Cry*. I love that book so much, that's my favorite book in the whole world. And um, just to get that one book from the conference was enough to make me think that it was totally worthwhile. But I also got *When My Name Was Keoko*, and that was a really good book too. I taught that three times last year. So that was great.

**Karen 0095**

I'm hoping three different classes.

**Lizzy 0096**

Yes. *Laughing*

**Karen 0097**

This year's curriculum will be Keoko. Um, okay and um, are you into this October's YAL?

**Lizzy 0098**

*Nods yes.*

**Karen 0099**

Is there anything you learned, saw, thought about from that YAL that you've done already in your classroom?

**Lizzy 0100**

Definitely. I just can't remember what. I'm picturing what I went to...

**Karen 0101**

Let me ask that question backwards...

**Counter 17:50**

**Lizzy 0102**

Oh wait, I just remembered something. I went to this poetry casino on the Friday night. And that was really fun so I made the poetry cards. Which is like playing cards with phrases on them. And I got the wooden cubes from the store in the CTC and I put the words on them. And we did that in my class and it was really fun. That was great.

**Karen 0103**

Cool, kids like it?

**Lizzy 0104**

Yeah, the kids really....especially the cards. I was amazed. And I told them... they were doing it at first and they didn't really care. And then I would come over and they'd say, "Is this good?" And I'd be like, "Well read it out loud." And then they would read it out loud and realize it was like the deepest poem ever. And it was so good! It was amazing how they sounded so good when they read them out loud.

**Karen 0105**

So you've attended twice?

**Lizzy 0106**

Nods yes.

**Karen 0107**

What advice could you give to the planners of the next YAL for people who have come a couple of times, you know? And you want to keep the experience really good, what advice would you give us?

**Lizzy 0108**

Just keep having lots of options for the workshops. I just... I think that there's always something that you want to go to. And as long as you keep...I mean

there was so many. **There's always like three that you want to go to and you can't go to all of them.** So I think that's really good. Um, I always feel like there's too many Middle School books, but probably the Middle School teachers think that there's too many High School books. So I don't really know.

**Karen 0109**

But you'd like to see more High School books?

**Lizzy 0110**

Uh, yeah, I would. I haven't...this year I did not feel, um, the way I felt about *Warriors Don't Cry*, about any of the books that were there, but...That was a very special feeling.

**Karen 0111**

Okay, um, uh, have you participated in the Units for Books Program?

**Lizzy 0112**

Yes.

**Karen 0113**

Um, uh, what's working about the...tell me, tell me the advantage of the unit...well explain the Units For Books Program.

**Lizzy 0114**

Okay so the Units for Books Program is you follow this format that's online. It's a bunch of templates you fill them out, and then you get a class set of books. And that's it. Any book you want, as long as you fill out the whole thing, it's fine. It's not really...it's more of just like a form than an application, which is really good so you don't feel any anxiety about it.

**Karen 0115**

What about the forms?

**Lizzy 0116**

Um, there's a lot of them.

**Karen 0117**

Um, and,um how were they to fill out for you?

**Lizzy 0118**

It's...it was kind of long. I wish that I had done it with another teacher and just split it up. I really like....there is one thing that I use in like just for myself. It's like a grid, of, um where you just put like topic, activity and homework. And I think that...

**Karen 0119**

The calendar, the map, where it's just boom, boom...

**Counter 20:41**

**Lizzy 0120**

Right. That's just how I like to think about units. So I do like that. I think a lot of it, um...in grad school we had to write a lot about like how you modify for levels, and how you modify for different learning abilities and that's kind of tedious but you know it's totally worth it though because you get your books that you want. So...

**Karen 0121**

Cool. Um, any recommendations for improving it?

**Lizzy 0122**

Make it...make it shorter maybe.

**Karen 0123**

Okay that, um, that's the cover sheet? That, that...that...the long....

**Lizzy 0124**

Yeah....if possible I would say make it shorter. I mean I don't know, it depends...It's hard to tell who's reading it. Because some of the stuff, you feel like if a teacher was reading it, it would be obvious. So it makes me think that teachers aren't reading it, because you have to spell stuff out. So because for me I feel like the way I learned to teach, like, everything is...everything can be done in some way by like someone who doesn't really speak English or someone who is not as high level as everyone else. So I don't really feel like I need to spell it out all the time, but...um, I guess sometimes you do.

**Karen 0125**

Well certainly if you want to get free books.

**Lizzy 0126**

Yeah...

**Karen 0127**

At the moment anyways.

**Lizzy 0128**

It's, It's okay.

**Karen 0129**

Um, um, it's the start of the second semester, um, so you're half way done with the school year, um, tell me about your kids. What, um, um, tell me about a success you've had in...in your, uh, class this year.

**Lizzy 0130**

Okay, um...well when we did the immigration unit the enthusiasm they had, I felt was a success. They really got so into it.

**Karen 0131**

What did you have them do?

**Lizzy 0132**

Um, we read this book called *The Short Sweet Dream of Eduardo Giutierrez* which is a non fiction book and it's really interesting. It's a about...it's based on the story...of this guy Eduardo Giutierrez who is an illegal immigrant and who died. Um, and we...the book itself was really good, cause it had a lot of information in it, about just statistics about illegal immigrants, and many, many stories, anecdotes about different people. So it...it was a really good book to read because it weaves everything into this one guy's central story. Um, we also looked at legislation of immigration which the kids really got into. One day in class, I brought in this, poster about, um...I think it was about...it was about the Dream Act which is about, students, um, illegal students getting to become citizens.

**Karen 0133**

Undocumented kids?

**Lizzy 0134**

Right, oh sorry...

**Karen 0135**

That's all right.

**Lizzy 0136**

Undocumented students. Um, and on it, it said "Call your representative if you want to support the Dream Act." And it had a phone number. So some kid took out a cell phone and we practiced what he was going to say and then he called and left a message and the kids thought that was really cool. It was fun.

**Counter 23:45**

**Karen 0137**

Very cool. Um, tell me about, um, one of the challenges you are facing right now that, um...you know I always call it my head-banging issue. You're driving home and you're thinking you know...TYRONE IS NOT READING...or whatever it is, so you know, what is that, for you, today? Right now.

**Lizzy 0138**

Yeah. Well I have this...Reading class, is, um, two sections. Second period and eighth period. And second period is amazing. And the kids like get totally into everything and they do everything I ask. And they're just perfect. And then eighth period, for no reason, these kids are like crazy. And they never want to do anything. Yesterday we were reading an article about gangs. For two days we were reading about gangs and how they work and crack dealers and there was a part about prostitutes. You'd think that this would be interesting but the kids were just like poking each other and like talking and just like not being involved. And I just don't...I have no idea why these two classes are so different. So that's really driving me crazy.

**Karen 0139**

Is eighth period the last period of the day?

**Lizzy 0140**

For them it is, yeah.

**Karen 0141**

Okay, think that has something to do with it?

**Lizzy 0142**

Yeah, probably.

**Karen 0143**

Yeah, it's hard isn't it?

**Lizzy 0144**

Seems unfair though.

**Karen 0145**

Um, you know, um, uh...what, what do you think about, um, uh, having a coach, help you in the development and maybe the implementation...what are your hopes for that relationship?

**Lizzy 0146**

I'm really excited about it. I'm really excited for any help that I can get. Because, you know in your first year, everyone wants to help you and you have a mentor and then you have, um, all these teachers who want to help you out. And now in my second year, there are first year teachers that want help from me. And the help and support has really dropped off. So I'm really excited to get that back and just have someone to bounce ideas off of. Also, since I'm the only person who teaches this class, no one...I never discuss things with anyone. It's just all if I think it's a good idea or not, which is fun, but I could really use another brain on the unit plans. So I'm really excited, and I think that I'll learn a lot from it.

**Karen 0147**

Well, we're so excited that, you know, you're... 1. That you're willing to do this and let us be, you know, a part of your work in the classroom. That...that's number one. But number two is, um, it's just a great opportunity for us to see how the good idea that...that...that we think YAL is, um, really translates into practice in the classroom. And really is a chance of really helping kids, um, you know, stay in high school, do better in high school, get...get into post secondary, be successful and um, you know maybe, you know, change a life. Maybe two, even in eighth period. So...

**Lizzy 0148**

That would be great.

**Karen 0149**

That would be really good. Thanks Lizzy for your time.

**Lizzy 0150**

Thank you.

**Counter 27:00**