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The Bernikow quote, “What is commonly called literary history is actually a record of choices” speaks to me after analyzing and studying the awards and classics in this course, as I learned that the choice, judging committee, and winner is more political than I had ever imagined. There are so many different awards and committees that acknowledge and recognize annual winners, and the winners bring in different aspects to the story, depending on what the reader is looking for. I feel that there are now more opportunities for readers to find a book that they identify with. There are so many other awards and committees other than the Caldecott and the Newbery award, so that every reader can identify with a particular story or character depending on the race, gender, sexual preference, culture, and so much more. If you are looking for a children's book that acknowledges works in gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender than the Stonewall Book Award is where you should look. The Coretta Scott King Award can help readers find children's books that show an appreciation of the African American culture and universal human values. The Children's Africana Award can also help readers learn more about the African culture. If teachers or families are looking for a novel that tells stories about American Indians for their student, than they can look to the American Indian Youth Literature Award. The Jane Addams Award is an excellent category if you're looking for a children's novel that includes stories for social justice, peace, community and equality of all people. I feel that I could incorporate many of Jane Addams award winners throughout the years into my Social Studies units. If students are looking to read stories or novels that include literary excellence, the Michael L. Printz Award winners would be the place to start your search. There are many other cultures that are represented within book awards, such as the Pura Belpre Award which presents an award to a Latino writer or the Ashley Glover-Schurig which awards literature written by and about Arab Americans. Lastly the Schneider Family Book Award honors an author or illustrator for a book that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences. With all of these awards along with the Caldecott and Newbery Awards you can now search for a novel or book that can reach any audience.

Although there are so many different award committees where readers and audiences can choose a category of their choice, it is important to remember that some awards are indeed political and sometimes writers and illustrators that may have been more deserving are overlooked to award another author that may be a better choice for the committee's reputation. I was surprised to discover that the judging committee didn't match the criteria for the award. For example, the American Indian Youth Literature award comprised of $\frac{2}{3}$ of American Indians within the jury. I would think that it would be important to have members who directly relate to the award within the immediate judging committee. As my teammate for this particular project, Breane Mason stated, “I feel that having members who relate to the award within the jury/committee is important when reviewing the nominated books and selecting a recipient. Based on what I read, it doesn't seem that all committees have this.” In order to ensure that every

demographic is represented within the award, I would feel that it would be necessary to have a committee that includes jurors who have the same age range and category for the criteria, with an equal amount of men and women.

When discussing what makes a winner or a classic I thought my classmate, Brittany Knue, brought up an excellent point when she said, "I think we consider picture books and novels as good literature when they win awards but what makes them good or super-good literature and worthy of such a high honor such as the Jane Addams award? (Brittany Knue) There is no answer to Brittany's question and relates perfectly to the Bernikow quote. Perhaps it's subjective to what specific criteria you're looking for in an award winning book. As a reader you will determine what choice you'll make by deciding what you want out of the novel, do you want it to inform you, entertain you, or persuade you? As a teacher the best book comes from your opinion based off of what you want your students to get from it. Do you want to teach them a lesson, teach different cultures, backgrounds and many other diverse topics. It is difficult to choose what makes a story a winner, or a classic. Perhaps the winners and classics are the books that speak to their reader's heart, and make them think, laugh, or learn.

A story is awarded by any of these organizations if the theme meets the criteria, organization's mission, and passes the approval of the judging committee. It is difficult to please a jury as they all bring in their own beliefs, experiences and opinions. What a challenge it is to pass these specifications, and continue to engage the child reader simultaneously! The Bernikow quote, "What is commonly called literary history is actually a record of choices" is relevant to this as the Newbery and Caldecott awards have been giving the unofficial "white experience" reputation. The author of the article "The 2015 Youth Media Awards: A Crossover Year for Diversity" stated that perhaps the Newbery and Caldecott award committee may have chosen a particular story that included diversity rather than choosing the best candidate, to rid of their white reputation. Perhaps that was a historical choice instead of the best literary choice. "The idea that diverse books limit potential readership assumes that the Newbery and Caldecott awards should be, by default, reflect a white experience. Perhaps that assumption exists because, for much of their history, they have." (Nina Lindsay, School Library Journal) The Newbery and Caldecott judging committee seems to be filled by all white critics, "We have yet to tackle publicly, the fact that the standards of excellence that we promote through these awards are defined by an all white lens." (Lindsay) It seems that if the Newbery and Caldecott wants to award and reach a broader audience, they need to adjust the demographic of their judging committee and book criteria. Other critics stated that this year's awards were not given to the best books, however were solely awarded to African Americans to rid of the white experience reputations the Newbery and Caldecott award now has. The critics stated the best books were no longer being recognized with the award at the American Library Association (ALA) midwinter meeting this past February in Chicago.

Knowing all of this information, I plan on continuing to share the Caldecott and Newbery awards with my second graders, even throughout the political criticism this year. However I will

not solely use these two award winning groups. I will begin to reach out to other awards such as the Stonewall Book Award, Schneider Family Book Award, Coretta Scott King, Children's Africana Award, The American Indian Youth Literature Award, Michael L. Printz Award, Jane Addams, Ashley Glover-Shurig and Pura Belpre and include them all to give a more well rounded experience. I am sure that I now have the knowledge and tools from this class to enhance lessons. I can use these awards as resources to enhance my lessons on Diversity, Gender, Culture, life styles, disabilities, and so much more. I've learned as a reader to explore other Book Awards, and I've learned as a teacher to use these awards to choose stories that will be relevant and meaningful to my students. You could create entire unit plans on some of these stories, as I think of the Pura Belpre award winner *I Lived on Butterfly Hill*, as it included language, cultural lessons, and even geography. The role of literature has changed in my mindset of how it was previously used in the classroom. Instead of using books to help students with comprehension and discussions, I can enhance lessons with these stories with diverse themes. Rather than reading a story for information or entertainment, I can now use several from the list to give the children a tool to understand life in someone else's shoes by giving them a powerful award winning story.

When making choices as an educator as to what classics and awards to share with my students I will have to reflect on what I want my students to get out of the story. I will need to think about the objective of my lesson or unit, and choose the most relevant and meaningful novel. Do I want my students to be informed on a topic, be entertained, or be persuaded? There are many award winning stories or even classics that I can choose from depending on the objective of my lessons and units. I am excited to share *Peter Pan* with my students. I think it will be an excellent lesson when sharing the original version written by JM Barrie to the Disney version that they all know. All of my students know and have background knowledge of the character, Peter. I will be able to build on that common knowledge and the plot that they are familiar with. I think they will be interested in learning that the version they have come to know and love is not the traditional story. How interesting for them to read and understand that their version of Peter Pan is so different than the actual, which ends in sadness. I can already visualize the discussions the children will have when comparing the classic version to their more relevant version. There are so many discussions that can be created by simply introducing this topic. My students will be able to compare and contrast the two different versions of the story, learn about JM Barrie as an early author, and discuss why they think the story was adapted and changed. I'm interested to see which version they will like the best, and also if they notice the major character traits that are different in Peter Pan within the two different editions. I think it will be important to share this classic with my students because classics do have much to offer to today's readers. I think it is important for students to analyze the original version and reflect on the classics from our time. It's also valuable for students to view the different themes, gender roles, and language from the past. It's important for teachers and students to view where the author of the classic comes from, and the time they lived in that influenced their creation. I do not prefer one version

of the Peter Pan story over another, rather I find it more interesting to see all of the different adaptations.

Bernikow's quote makes me think about *Peter Pan* and the time it was awarded in. Was it truly an award winner of its time because of its exceptional theme? Was Peter Pan the most distinguished contribution of that year? Did JM Barrie publish this original book, or was this story simply one of the record of choices. I do believe that it won the award because it was the most distinguished of the year. Although I didn't read the original the year it was published, as it was long ago, I did read it today and was still engaged, entertained, and learned much about the time it was published. The fact that the book had the power to teach me and entertain me after all these years does make it a classic in my eyes.

The award winners from the past and present greatly affect the history of our literature. It is important that we continue to adapt to times and acknowledge books that are often left behind because they are not popular to the large population. As teachers we need to introduce these classics and award winners to our students so that literature is constantly adapting and including a broader and more diverse group of authors. I believe Louise Bernikow's quote "What is commonly called *literary history* is actually a record of choices" reminds us to embrace the award winning books from these committees, but to remember to keep an open mind and your own opinions when deciding on a book. Trust yourself as a reader to make your own decisions, and do not simply buy a book based on whether or not it is an award winner. As we all know, you can't judge a book by its cover!