

The Effects of Censorship Policies on Students' Exposure and Diversifying Knowledge on Key Educational Topics in Academic Institutions

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I. Abstract

Within current society, it is a well-known fact that politics have divided the American population, and this division has become most prominent in recent years. This research paper investigates the implications of political affiliation and censorship policies on students' learning acquisition within educational settings. Through a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and thematic interviews with educators, the study examines the correlation between political affiliation, attitudes toward censorship, and their impact on classroom dynamics. The findings highlight a significant correlation between participants' political leanings, predominantly towards the Republican Party, and their support for censorship measures. Furthermore, the research reveals concerns regarding the adverse effects of censorship policies on students' critical thinking skills and academic freedom. By shedding light on these complex dynamics, the study underscores the importance of reevaluating current censorship policies and promoting inclusive, intellectually stimulating educational environments. The research implications extend to policymakers and educators invested in fostering a robust educational ecosystem that values diversity of thought and supports informed citizenship.

II. Introduction

Historically, since 1637, the book ban and censorship policies have evolved to become one of the most politically divisive issues in America. In recent years, this polarization has become increasingly pronounced, reflecting broader societal divisions along political lines. Within the realm of education, debates surrounding censorship policies have intensified, with implications for students' access to diverse perspectives, academic freedom, and critical thinking skills. As censorship measures continue to shape curriculum content and classroom dynamics, it is essential to critically examine the intersection of political affiliation, censorship justifications, and their impact on students' learning acquisition. By exploring these complex dynamics, this research seeks to provide insights into the implications of censorship policies on educational environments and inform discussions surrounding the preservation of academic freedom and intellectual inquiry. Through a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and thematic interviews with educators, the study aims to elucidate patterns and correlations between political affiliation, attitudes toward censorship, and students' educational experiences. By shedding light on these issues, the research aims to contribute to ongoing debates surrounding censorship in education and advocate for policies that promote diversity of thought, critical inquiry, and inclusive learning environments.

III. Literature Review

Introduction

Despite society's discernible progressiveness in attitudes towards educational reform, curriculum change is a topic that continues to be a matter of blurriness. In the United States, the design and implementation of educational curricula are complex endeavors, influenced by a variety of factors, including state and local level policies, socio-political landscapes, and pedagogical philosophies. Florida specifically, has been at the forefront of educational reform for years, constantly revising curriculum. Book banning is one form of revision that has been around for years. “Books that were banned prior to the mid-1900s all had themes of obscenity and explicit sexuality present. Books after the mid-1900s have been banned due to the same reasons, as well as additional reasons: ideologies expressed, racial themes, and LGBTQ+ themes” (McDonough). Given Florida’s unique socio-political environment which encompasses a diverse array of students, it can be derived how these political behaviors may be attributed to a lack of students' knowledgeable wingspan. Additionally, with the several other educational reform bills passed, the potential nationwide impact of these new laws, “from the Mountain West to the Deep South, Florida-style bills are springing up in state legislatures' all across the nation.” (Craig). Furthermore, the majority of current studies on the effect of book bans and textbook censorship have delved into the challenges related to teaching styles and young students' inability to personify with characters. However, there has not been a study designed to dissect the causes curriculum changes have on the effects of students' abilities to diversity perspectives and a comprehensive analysis is done on how these policies affect students’ critical thinking skills. By examining these factors, a more synthesized approach to understand the effects of these policy changes on students' perspectives can be reached, and can be generalized across the nation.

Challenges Curriculum Changes Pose to the School Community

Multiple studies have highlighted the impact of policy changes on curriculum development, however, very few have dived into the effects of these policies on students' perspectives. One study in particular however, conducted by Amanda McDonough, a Graduate Student at the University of New York, helped to explain this stark gap in knowledge by explaining how “since this topic is happening in current time, most of the information came from news sources, journal articles, state curricula, teachers themselves, students, and parents”. Although this is the case, most studies conducted do provide a substantial amount of evidence that curriculum changes and students' success is connected in some way. These studies will serve as a foundation of knowledge and data that will be heavily useful throughout this experiment.

To begin with, education has long been a topic of debate because of the power authority figures have over the future of younger generations. These figures have the power to take certain information out of the curriculum or all in all ban the source of knowledge. The first banned book, in what was soon to be the United States of America, was *New English Canaan*, because it “critiqued Puritan customs and power structures” (McDonough). From this, it was clear that censorship was merely a way to control the literature people were exposed to. Fast forward to the modern day, censorship is still considered the suppression of materials that are politically unacceptable or a threat. According to the American Library Association, in 2019, out of the top ten most commonly banned books, 8 were banned due to having LGBTQ+ and racial themes while the other two were banned for anti-Christian views (Caskinett). This same Association conducted a study in 2022 and found that 17% of these books are challenged by political/religious groups while only 3% are by librarians/teachers (American Library Association). Another issue with book bans, currently occurring in Florida, is the banning of AP

African American Studies as it contradicts Florida law. Randi Weingarten, President of the American Federation of Teachers, voiced, “The students who want to take these classes are interested in them for a reason, so censoring them is doing a major injustice; students choose these classes for a reason and now their learning is compromised”(McDonough).

More specifically, in terms of core curriculum, teachers have strict guidelines given by their districts or state level officials, restricting them from teaching excess information. In particular, the textbooks of social studies in middle and high schools have been a topic of concern. Surveys conducted by the National Education Association 2021 revealed that, “everyone across demographics agrees” that removing history from curricula and banning books are tools that politicians use to control a political narrative”(Alleyne). During this survey, participants felt as if these political efforts of censorship have gone too far. Additional polling revealed that approximately 93% of democrats responded that they believe it is appropriate for schools to include discussions of slavery and racism in history classes while 71% of republicans responded that they believe these discussions are for schools (Alleyne). Given these results, it is evident how a majority of both parties believe the discussion of slavery and racism is appropriate in history classes, thus these decisions come down to the few legislatures. The book *How to Hide an Empire* focuses on the aspects of American history students do not learn. Throughout the literature in this book one can portray the United States as an Empire, due to how vast and powerful the 50 states are, as well as all the territories they own. However in several history textbooks Europe was projected as an empire but not the United States due to it being erased from several curriculums (McDonough). The reason behind this removal is to prevent giving the United States a negative connotation in the eyes of students. Immenheuer, the author of this literature, states, “A country that had started out resembling the British Empire, with centers of

power in the East and subordinated territory in the West, had been turned by their population bomb into something different: a violently expansive empire of settlers, feeding on land and displacing everything in its path” (Immerheaur). Immerheaur also provided validating claims that the removal of certain information and the rewording of first-hand experiences of history are ensuring that students are not learning the same information, thus impacting their worldly views. A 2023 study conducted by Amanda McDonough, a graduate student from the University of New York, examined United States history curriculum from New York, a liberal state, Michigan, a moderate state, and Texas, a conservative state. Upon examination of Texas’s curriculum, it was shown how minorities are rarely mentioned and only crucial parts of the Civil Rights Movement are covered. On the other hand Michigan's Social Study curriculum mentions the treatment of African Americans as well as the inequalities all people face. Students of New York analyzed indentured servants, slavery, and the development of slavery as a racial institution in the South(McDonough). From this, it is evident that students all across the United States are learning different materials, while some omitting certain topics altogether. With this being said, it comes to show how much of an influence politics ideologies and authoritative figures have on the knowledge of students and their views of society.

With a bulk of research conducted on educational policies clustered along state borders, more research, specifically student-focused, is needed to consolidate data and fully understand the effects of educational reform on students' diverse perspectives.

Implications of Intricacies of Curriculum Alterations on the Nation

A substantial amount of research has identified political ideologies and authoritative figures as obstacles that prohibit students from reaching their full potential, but research on how these influences have carried over state borders remains limited. According to Tim Craig, a

global journalist graduate from Columbia University, Florida-inspired bills have been on the rise in Georgia, Nebraska, Indiana, and beyond (Craig). Pen America, a freedom advocacy group, has identified 81 proposals that it believes are attempts to stifle educational freedom, while 20 of these proposals seem to be a carbon copy of laws enacted in 2022 (Friedman and Tager). Policymakers from both parties, conservative and liberal, are realizing that Florida's policies are providing a roadmap for other states, creating a rippling effect.

Conclusion

Existing literature relating to education reform and its impacts has found that authoritative figures and political ideologies gravely affect how much information children and young adults are being deprived of. However, researchers like McDonough and Immerheaur have focused on studying education reforms linked to members of a school community as a whole rather than the impact of education reform on students themselves. This study will address a gap in research by expanding on research that is currently concentrated nationwide in a high school in Florida. It will provide an in-depth analysis of students' attitudes and knowledge on educational reform as well as their belief in the knowledge of what they are being deprived of to determine if there is a linkage between educational reform and adjusted worldly views amongst students due to this shortage. The results and findings can be used in future research and serve as a policy implication to lessen the negative consequences of educational reform and provide needed resources to students.

IV. Methodology

To begin my research, I designed a survey in order to collect data needed for my experiment while also maintaining confidentiality and anonymity for the students. The first component of the survey includes questions pertaining to the demographics of the students being surveyed; this includes age, gender, and grade level. After filling out these demographics, the participant is asked about their knowledge of the current book ban at the local and national level, the impacts of these legislative changes on their education and teachers, and their personal stance on the topic. To answer the research question further, and effectively, structured interviews were conducted with Honors, AP, and Dual Enrollment English teachers at my high school. A structured interview is a standardized, open-ended, and detailed interview that can be used to explore people's interpretations of situations and their impact first handedly. As this study focuses on perspectives and interpretations, structured interviews were ideal to obtain a clear and concise understanding of the data. Contacts for interviews were made via email. Once the survey and interview were fully completed, I contacted 9th-12th grade teachers. After discussing dates and times with each teacher, I was able to obtain permission to go to their classes and pass out the consent forms to their students and the teachers themselves. I then went into each class on the predetermined date, gave a brief explanation of the experiment, and gave directions for the students to follow to take the survey, and while students took the survey I interviewed the respective teachers. Before asking the questions, it was established that the interviewees should not hesitate to share their unfiltered beliefs and that the researcher is open to hearing all beliefs. After all the students had completed the online questionnaire and survey, and after all of the interviews were conducted, I organized the data to determine any possible correlations between the censorship policies and students' diversifying perspectives.

V. Results & Data Analysis

Gender, Age, and Political Affiliation

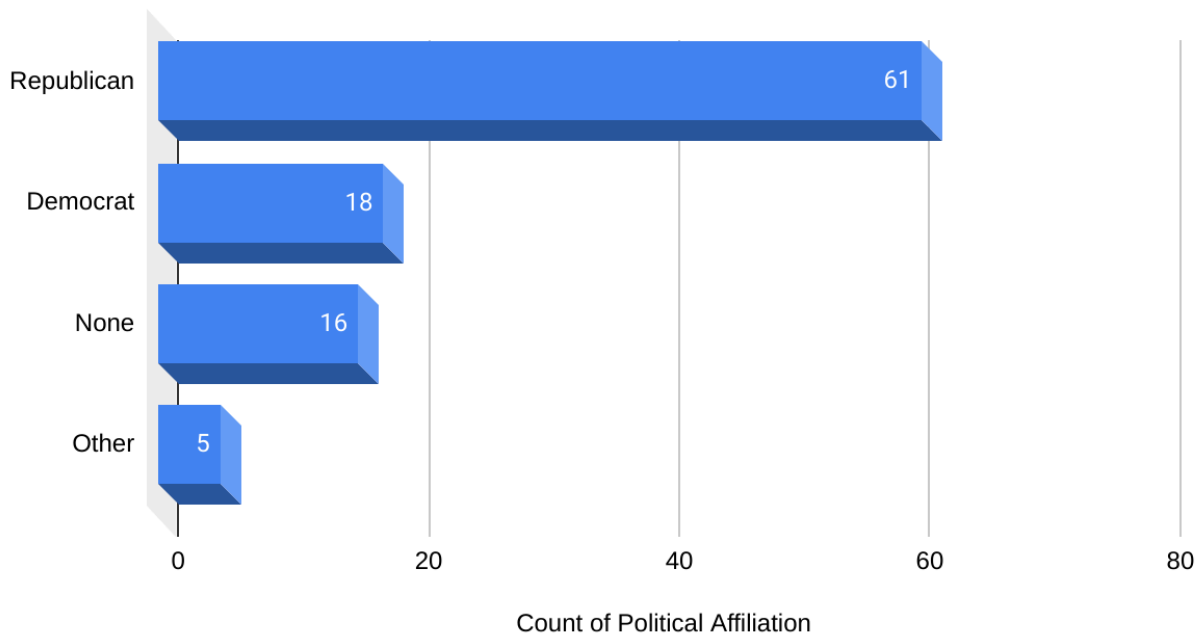
Of the 100 surveys received, 68 of the surveys were by females and 32 of them were by males.

All participants were between the ages of 13 and 18, as shown in **Table 1**. Political affiliations were extremely biased towards Republicans, with a 61% majority over all other parties, represented in **Figure 1**.

Table 1: Age Distribution of All Participants

18	5
17	14
16	37
15	28
14	15
13	1

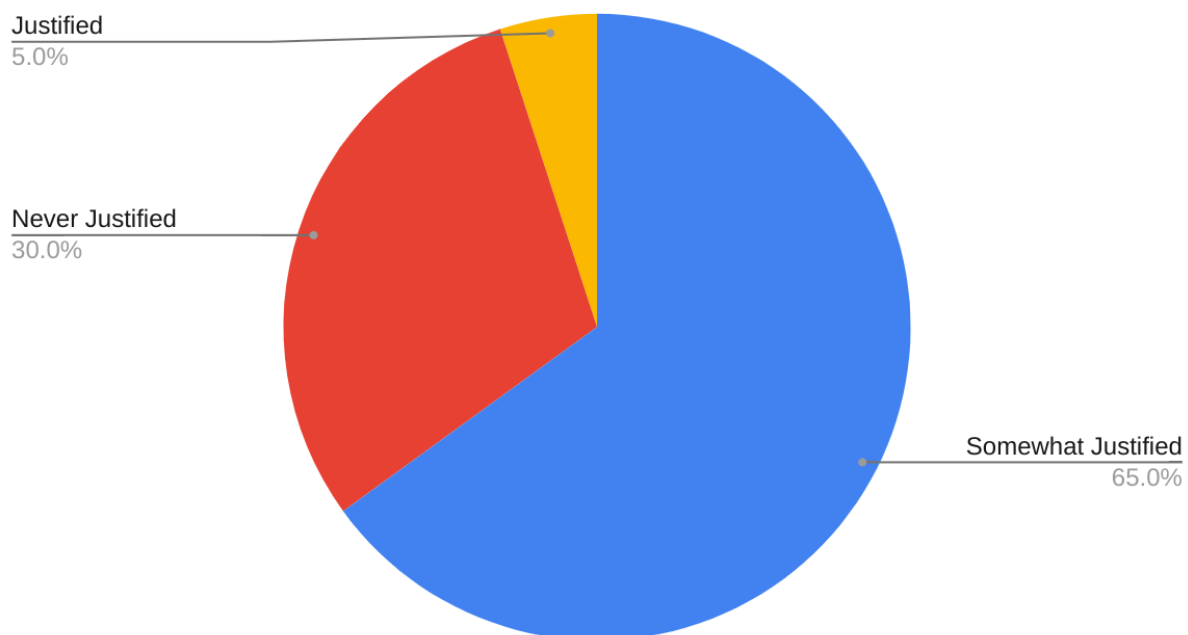
Figure 1: Party Affiliation



Party Affiliation Relation to Censorship Justifications

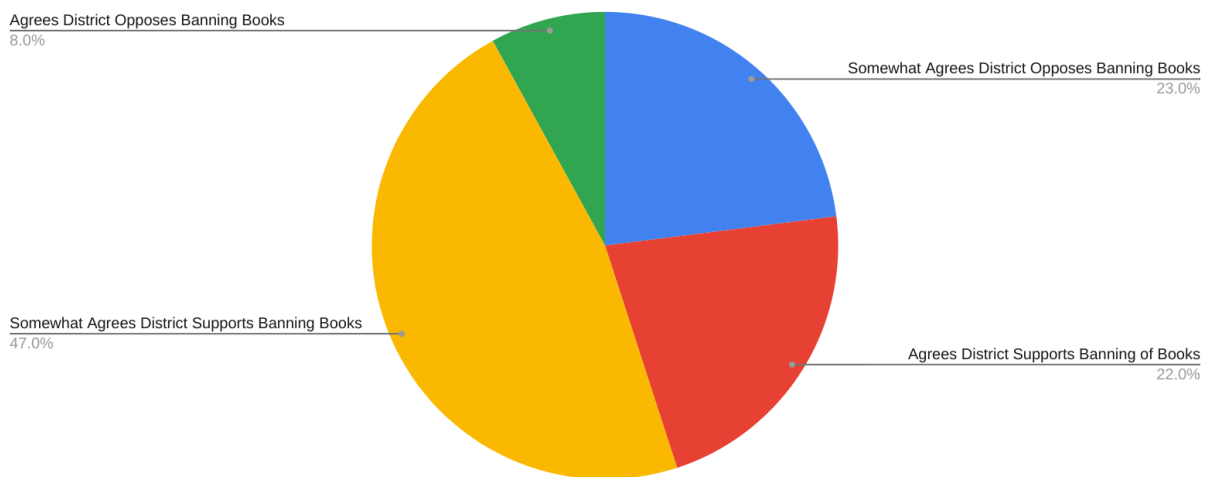
To put it succinctly, the majority of the subjects who filled out the survey claimed affiliation with the Republican party (**Figure 1**). This specific trend highly correlated with those who thought the book ban was somewhat justified. As seen in **Figure 2**, the majority of participants, 65% exactly, thought that the book could be somewhat justified. Simultaneously, 61% identified affiliation with the Republican Party. This stark similarity goes to show how there is a trickle-down effect where politicians create division, which is then projected into media outlets, and, consequently, teenagers are becoming politically polarized, due to major issues, such as censorship, becoming divisive. Moving forward with the experiment, I did anticipate a majority of participants to claim affiliations with the Republican Party while also claiming that Censorship was Justified/Somewhat Justified based on patterns I have recognized where the experiment took place.

Figure 2: Stance on Censorship Policies



In addition to the political aspect, the district component of the experiment produced my predicted results. Once again, given the location of the experiment, and the political majority of the participants, it is evident that the majority of participants somewhat agree more to the statement that the district generally supports the banning of books.

Figure 3: Perception of District Policies



Effects on Students' Learning Acquisition

In the arena in which political views and censorship justifications were most common, the results of how these censorship policies affected students were strikingly shocking. Given that the Republican Party believes that the book ban has positive effects on students' overall learning experiences, my experiment proved otherwise. With 61% of participants identifying with the Republican Party (**Figure 1**), and 70% of participants claiming these bands were either justified or somewhat justified (**Figure 2**), only 5% of these participants claimed that the censorship policies had no negative effect on their learning in core subjects (**Figure 4**). This specific trend ended up supporting my hypothesis at a surface level, but to an even greater extent than I initially anticipated. Given that the Republican party is largely for the banning of materials

from classrooms, many would claim that censorship has no effect on student learning. However, in contrast, 57% claimed that they have been most affected in Language Arts by the curriculum changes, with the second highest percentage being History (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4: Impact on Core Subjects

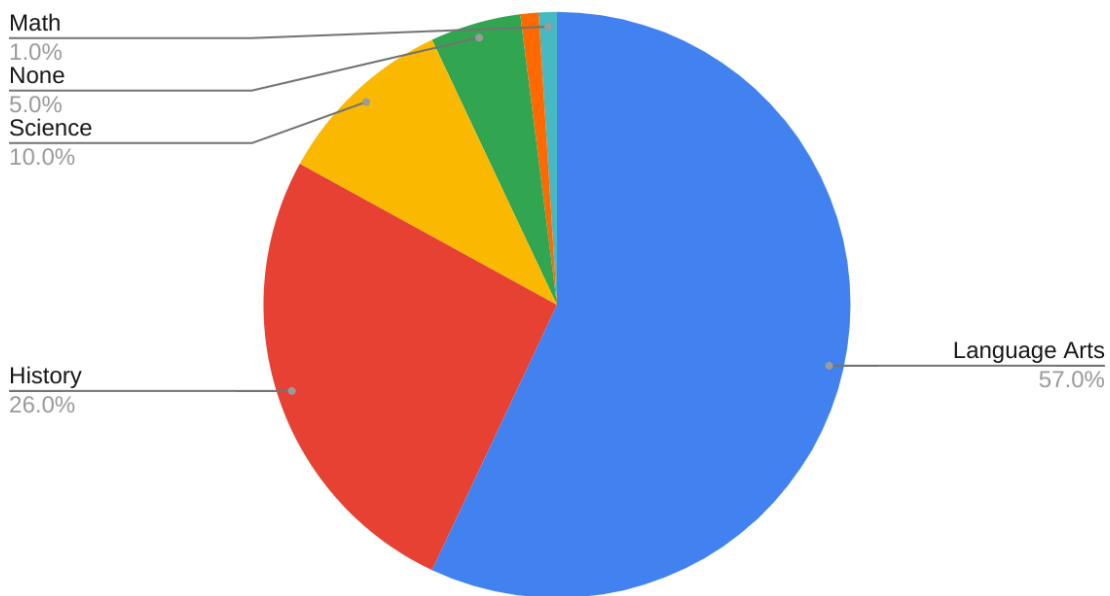
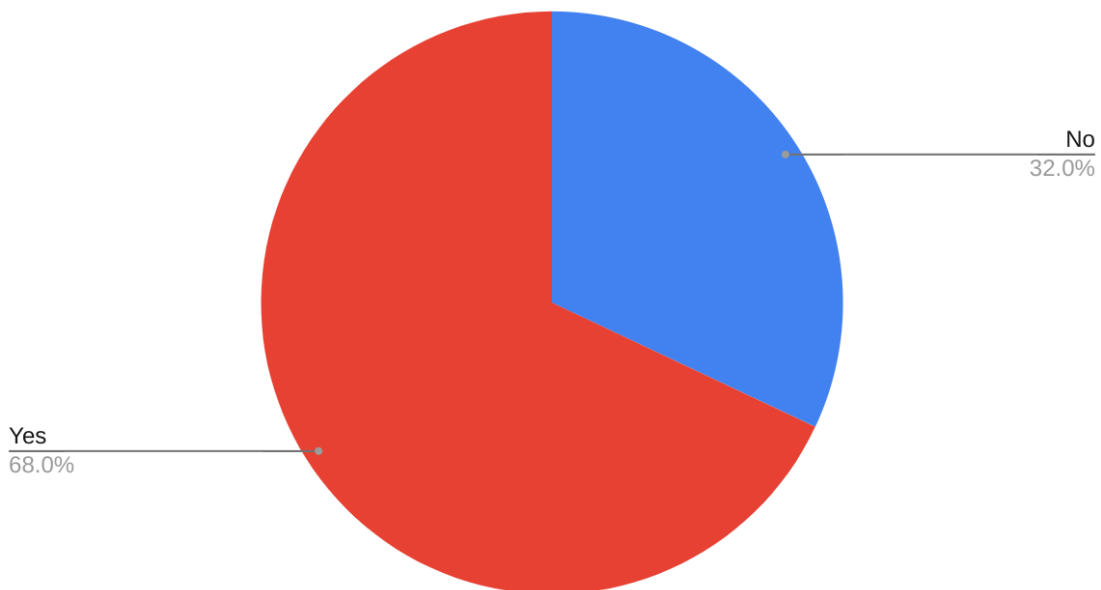
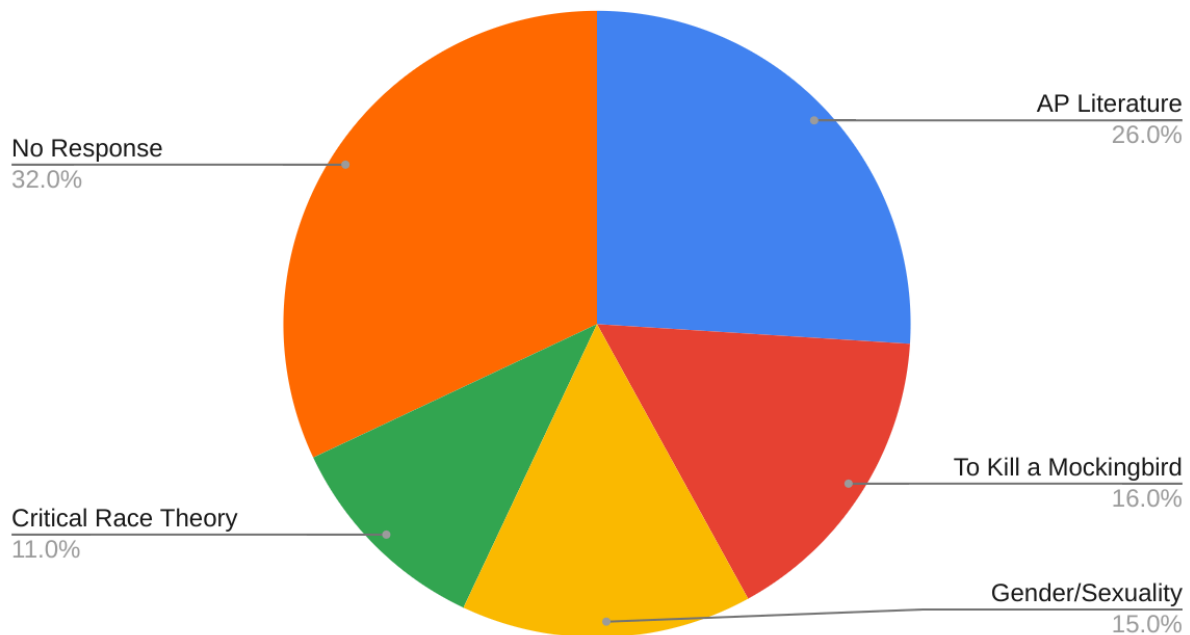


Figure 5: Change in Teaching Style



In addition to first-hand student impacts, strikingly, 68% of students noticed a difference in the way teachers are delivering lessons **(Figure 5)**. Several schools within the state of Florida have policies such that if a teacher mentions a certain topic, addresses a certain piece of literature, or sparks a discussion on a sensitive topic, they will have their teaching licenses revoked. In the following question, students who responded yes were asked in a written response format, why they thought this change occurred. The majority of students' responses, who were in the 12th grade, had to do with AP literature books being banned, and how teachers are being cautious with their words because several of the banned books are needed for the exam. The next largest percentage discussed the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Several 10th-grade classes use this piece of literature to discuss grammatical concepts and literary devices. The next largest group discussed how gender/sexuality discussions were prohibited in their 1101 English classes. The next largest group of participants discussed the Critical Race Theory and how several concepts in history had to be cautiously told. The rest of the participants chose that they did not see an effect, and thus were not required to answer.

Figure 6: Student Perceptions



Interviewee Thematic Analysis

Five interviews were conducted with English teachers within my school to further answer the research question. Of the advanced English teachers at my school, all were females. In the case of this research question, a thematic analysis allowed for the development of themes in the participants' responses. Transcription of the recorded interviews was completed one at a time to allow for a more focused analysis. Upon transcription, each interview was analyzed by myself and codified into four categories, which were then titled and formed the themes of this study.

Table 2: Definition of Themes	
Theme	Definition
Frustration Towards Policies	Throughout interviews, individuals make clear their resentment towards policies. Key concepts discussed included wrongfulness, insensitive to students, not inclusive, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and impeding rights of American Citizens.
Negative Impact on Critical Thinking Skills	Individuals stated that because students lack exposure under these policies, they lack being exposed to other ways of thinking or perspectives. Key concepts discussed included Martin Luther King, the Great Gatsby, lack of knowledge, lack of exposure, and the lack of the ability to analyze the past.
Detriment towards the Education System	All individuals stated that censorship policies are limiting the scope of children's education, jeopardizing those who aren't privy to such information. Key concepts discussed included limited scope, limited exposure, and students not able to get a full education.
Fear	Individuals stated that they felt threatened by these new policies for fear of getting their teaching license revoked. Several stated that they felt micromanaged in a way that they had to reassess whether they even wanted to continue teaching or not. Some individuals stated that they had to remove or reexamine certain books on their classroom shelves while others opposed doing so, stating that they were not going to listen to the laws. Key concepts included feeling threatened, micromanaged, media pressure, reexamining books, and resentment.

Table 3: A Summary of the Five Interviews		
Individual #	Summary of Interview	Themes Present
1	Actively tried to make their classroom more inclusive and open-minded however with the new policies it was difficult and frustrating.	Frustration towards Policies
1	Believes that when students are taught one thing for so long they lose the ability to think critically beyond what they are exposed to. Students are losing the ability to analyze from different perspectives and lose the ability to think beyond their own lived experiences.	Negative Impact on Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills
1	Believes that these policies shape the majority while limiting the perspectives of minorities, hindering the education system to only live experiences. Also believes that these bans put those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in jeopardy.	Detriment towards the Education System
1	Stopped teaching and removed the book <i>Maya Angelo</i> because it was challenging. Wanted to include several books in the classroom library, however, didn't in fear that it may someday be challenged.	Fear
2	States that it is awful when books are banned without any explicit concepts or themes in them. Believes that this is a way to whitewash history.	Frustration towards Policies
2	Believes in the importance of understanding theories and perspectives, and that these bans limit that. Mentions Martin Luther King, the Civil Rights Movement, and <i>The Great Gatsby</i> , portraying how students need to understand these themes within literature but can't,	Negative Impact on Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

	limiting exposure.	
	Limits students' freedom of speech and the right to learn, hindering their education and their teachers.	Detriment towards the Education System
	Fear that they might someday upset parents, administration, or students. Mentions how this fear has even influenced the way they have to teach, being more cautious.	Fear
3	Believes that censorship is wrong and that several books banned from high schools are going to reappear in college anyway.	Frustration towards Policies
3	States how Florida has close-minded views and how this is prohibiting students' ability to think outside the box.	Negative Impact on Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills
3	Mentions how these new laws are making students feel uncomfortable, causing a detriment to the system.	Detriment towards the Education System
3	Reexamined a poem and decided to pull it in spite of fear from parents and the administration. Explains how they have to be very sensitive in the way they teach to prevent material or discussions that could be controversial.	Fear
4	Believes that educated teachers will do what is right for their students despite these policies.	Frustration towards Policies
4	Limits the topic students can grasp, preventing critical thinking skills	Negative Impact on Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills
4	States that students can relate to books and know how to respond to certain situations when they read a book about a situation similar to theirs, thus believing it is limiting students' education and personal skills.	Detriment towards the Education System
4	Had to remove a set of books in fear that parents might object to it.	Fear

5	Believes that there should not be censorship on literature. States how we should view and study literature as it was written and not try to cleanse it. Claims that such bans are robbing students and their ability to learn.	Frustration towards Policies
5	Expresses how censorship lowers the ability for higher-order thinking and the ability to grasp historical literature.	Negative Impact on Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills
5	Censorship causes students not to grow in the way that they should. States how they must teach several books for the AP Literature examination as they are found on the actual exam, however they can't, causing students to be unprepared for such exams.	Detriment towards the Education System
5	States fear removal and the revoking of their teaching license.	Fear

VI. Discussion

Survey interpretations

This section of the research study will delve into the interpretations and significance of the results obtained, elucidating the implications of censorship policies on students' diversifying knowledge. This section will also survey and explain the limitations and real-world applications regarding the research. One possible interpretation of students' heavy-leaning conservative views could be the region in which they reside. The surrounding area is heavily populated with conservatives, with very few liberals and other party affiliations. This can contribute to participants being discouraged from opposing views as in dense politically populated areas, opposing politics are usually defamed and never reach the younger cohort. It also highlights how political polarization can influence individuals' perspectives on educational policies, potentially shaping classroom dynamics and learning experiences. Teens are also subject to misinformation through a plethora of platforms of outlets, such as their parents or social media. Such platforms can sway a teen's opinion heavily, despite learning the facts. Thus having a majority of student participants respond that the book bans were somewhat justified was of no surprise given the region in which the survey took place and external factors. The research findings also illuminate the effects of censorship policies on students' learning acquisition and classroom dynamics. Contrary to the prevailing belief among participants affiliated with the Republican Party, who largely supported censorship measures, the data reveals significant concerns regarding the adverse impacts of such policies on students' educational experiences. While proponents of censorship often argue for its purported benefits in preserving certain values or protecting students from perceived harm, the data paint a different picture. A substantial majority of participants expressed dissatisfaction with the impact of censorship on their learning experiences,

particularly in subjects like Language Arts and History. These findings challenge the notion that censorship policies have a negligible effect on students' academic development, highlighting instead their potential to hinder critical thinking, limit exposure to diverse perspectives, and impede the exploration of complex historical and social issues. Moreover, the data suggest that censorship policies have broader repercussions beyond curriculum content, influencing pedagogical approaches and teacher-student interactions. The observed changes in teachers' instructional methods and classroom dynamics, driven by concerns over compliance with censorship regulations, underscore the chilling effect of such policies on academic freedom and educators' autonomy.

Interviewee Interpretations

Recurring Theme 1: Frustration Towards Policies

All interviewees spoke about their frustration with censorship policies, specifically regarding how they limit a student's full potential. For example, individual 1 stated, "I think it limits the school students are exposed to. I think it limits viewpoints, and shapes the majority comfortably, limiting the perspectives of those in the minority no matter what the minority is, whether it's ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation." Besides limiting students' potential, many feel that such policies are giving legislative makers too much power to make educated decisions. For example, individual 2 stated, "It affects everything, because now it's given people like this power, and it's people who are uneducated unfortunately, and who don't know what exactly they are doing, and don't know who exactly it is hurting or the damaging effects." Sentiments along the same lines were echoed multiple times portraying the frustration from an educator's standpoint. Several interviewees also portrayed frustration by stating how they felt micromanaged to the point where they considered leaving the field of education. Interview 3

stated, “I felt almost like a couple of years ago that my job and livelihood were threatened because most English teachers do not want to be told what they’re going to teach and how they’re going to teach it and be micromanaged like that and I considered pursuing another career.” Like in this excerpt, genuine frustration has evolved within several English teachers, hitting many breaking points.

Recurring Theme 2: Negative Effect on Critical Thinking Skills

All five individuals asserted that censorship policies are hurting students' critical thinking skills. Not introducing students to topics or concepts that they would otherwise never cover was an argument made across the board as it negatively impacted students' critical thinking skills. Individual 5 stated, “We know what challenged our students and if we take that off the table, which the state of Florida has done, it lowers the ability for higher order thinking and critical thinking skills.” Individuals 1, 3, and 4 explicitly stated limiting exposure to diverse literature is affecting students' critical thinking skills. Individual 1 stated, “When you’re taught one thing for so long, you lose the ability to think beyond what you are exposed to. And so when you are constantly taught one way of thinking, and you’re not exposed to other ways of thinking, or other perspectives, you lose the ability to think beyond your own experiences.” Overall, the most heavily held opinion was that citizenship policies are limiting students' scope, and hindering their critical thinking skills.

Recurring Theme 3: Detriment Towards Education System

The thought process that censorship policies are hindering our education system, was a prominent theme across all individual's responses. Individual 4 says, “I feel like it limits topics students can learn about when certain books are banned, and it might be something students need to learn about. They can relate to and know how to respond to certain situations in a book so I

feel like it's limiting.” When asked about how these policies affect students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, the responses from individuals were in unison. Individual 3 stated, “I feel that students who are more sheltered or have a more cushy lifestyle aren’t learning enough because the ones that are a little bit poor, or don’t have as much or you know, whatever, they learn it in the streets right? They’re gonna learn the truth no matter what.”

Recurring Theme 4: Fear

The final theme observed was that the threat of having teaching licenses revoked has created much fear among English teachers. Individual 3 states, “And all of that is this fear of like, am I gonna lose my job? Am I gonna lose my license?” This fear was expressed to have prompted teachers to begin to shift their teaching styles. Individual 3 states, “I have to be very, very sensitive to materials that could be controversial.” Several teachers also stated that they had to remove books from their classroom shelves in fear of parents and administration causing chaos.

Limitations

The largest limitation I encountered was the lack of a sample size and the opportunity to survey and interview subjects outside of the area in which I was able to survey. However, I did receive both a sample size and results to provide valid results for this project and study. Consequently, I conducted this research at a Charter school in the panhandle of Florida, which tends to be a more conservative area of the nation. Due to this, I did expect more individuals to hold conservative views which is exactly what the data reflects. There were interesting trends that were not necessarily expected (majority of conservative students believing the book ban has negative effects), so it was interesting and informative to see the results of that data. Another limitation was the lack of gender balance among interviewee subjects. All five Honors/AP/Dual

Enrollment English teachers within my school were females. The exclusive participation of females may raise concerns regarding the representativeness of perspectives and experiences, particularly in a context where educational policies and censorship issues can impact individuals of all genders. However, it is worth noting that the focus of this study was primarily on eliciting insights from English teachers regarding their perceptions of censorship policies and their effects on students' learning acquisition.

Real World Applications

Finally, this experiment is going to have profound, real-world applications. Politics and education are the two dominating forces in American discussion because, more often than not, society looks at either or both of them as the foundation of our thinking. Thus, this study offers the opportunity for all to understand the connection between the two dominating forces. Not only can my research provide valuable insights into the impact of censorship policies on students' learning acquisition and classroom dynamics, but policymakers can also use these findings to inform the development of evidence-based educational policies that strike a balance between addressing legitimate concerns and safeguarding academic freedom and intellectual knowledge. My research can also be used to inform teacher training programs and professional development initiatives aimed at equipping educators with the necessary skills and strategies to address censorship issues effectively. Lastly, curriculum designers and review committees can use these insights to critically evaluate existing curriculum materials and ensure that they reflect diverse perspectives and foster critical thinking skills. Overall, the real-world applications of my experiment expand far beyond the academic realm and have the potential to make informed policy decisions aimed at promoting intellectual freedom and critical thinking.

VII. Conclusion

According to the data above, I can affirm that those exposed to the curriculum materials under the censorship policies are being deprived of essential knowledge that has adverse negative effects. The findings of this research illuminate the intricate interplay between political affiliation, censorship justifications, and their impact on students' learning acquisition within educational settings. Through a comprehensive analysis of survey responses and thematic interviews with educators, this study has uncovered significant patterns and correlations that underscore the urgent need for critical examination and reform of current censorship policies in education. The correlation between participants' political affiliation, predominantly with the Republican Party, and their support for censorship measures highlights the influence of ideological beliefs on attitudes towards academic freedom and freedom of expression. While proponents of censorship may argue for its purported benefits in preserving certain values or protecting students from perceived harm, the data suggest that such policies have far-reaching implications for students' educational experiences and critical thinking skills. Moreover, the observed changes in teachers' instructional methods and classroom dynamics, driven by concerns over compliance with censorship regulations, underscore the chilling effect of such policies on academic freedom and educators' autonomy. The reluctance of educators to engage with certain topics or materials due to fear of reprisal reflects a broader erosion of intellectual freedom within educational environments.

In light of these findings, it is imperative for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to reevaluate current censorship policies and enact reforms that prioritize academic freedom, intellectual inquiry, and inclusivity in education. Moving forward, further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of censorship policies on students' educational outcomes and

strategies for mitigating the adverse impacts of censorship on academic freedom and intellectual inquiry. By critically examining and addressing the challenges posed by censorship in education, we can work towards creating a more equitable, inclusive, and intellectually vibrant learning environment for all students.

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IX. Appendix A: Scripts

Entry A:

Survey Script

Below is the brief script I read to each class on the day of the second class visit.

Hello, my name is XXXX and I am an AP Research scholar. A large piece of our curriculum for the AP Research class is the year-long experiment we must complete. My experiment has to do with discovering a potential connection between censorship policies and students' diversified knowledge. This survey will gather information about your personal political views and your stance on the topic. The results will be anonymous and confidential so please answer honestly. You will have 10 minutes to complete the survey. Please sign the consent form or pass your signed parent consent form forward.

Collect consent forms

I will now pass out the surveys. You have ten minutes to complete the survey.

Wait 10 minutes to collect completed surveys

After collecting the completed surveys, I read each class the following debriefing statement.

Thank you for participating in my experiment. My hypothesis is that the students exposed to the updated curriculum will demonstrate challenges in their overall learning outcomes, including decreased critical thinking skills and diversified perspectives as they are having less exposure to a wide range of literature and other stimulus materials. Thank you again.

All consent forms and surveys were placed in folders and will be analyzed by me.

Entry B:

Interview Script

Below is the brief script I read to each teacher on the day of the second class visit.

Hello, my name is XXXX and I am an AP Research scholar. A large piece of our curriculum for the AP Research class is the year-long experiment we must complete. My experiment has to do with discovering a potential connection between censorship policies and students' diversified knowledge. This survey will gather information about your personal political views and your stance on the topic. The results will be anonymous and confidential so please answer honestly. Please sign the consent form and hand it to me.

Collect consent forms

We will now begin the interview process. The interview consists of 15 questions during which you can answer with as much depth as you prefer. If you feel like you have something important to say or an idea you would like to share, you are more than welcome to do so as you may add a new dimension to the discussion. All responses are completely anonymous; no emails or names will be recorded. To protect confidentiality, the final paper will not contain information that will personally identify you. Should direct quotations be employed you will be referred to as Individual (A-G).

Conduct Interview

After recording each interview, I read each teacher the following debriefing statement.

Thank you for participating in my experiment. My hypothesis is that the students exposed to the updated curriculum will demonstrate challenges in their overall learning outcomes, including decreased critical thinking skills and diversified perspectives as they are having less exposure to a wide range of literature and other stimulus materials. Thank you again.

All consent forms and transcription copies were placed in folders and will be analyzed by me.

X. Appendix B: Consent Forms

Entry A:

Parent/Student Consent Form (Students)

Researcher: XXXX

As part of the AP Research course, students must complete a research study throughout the year. Participants in my study will receive a survey to complete, under a teacher's supervision, that will ask them about their personal views and political opinions on the book ban. There are no risks involved in the experiment, and participants may choose to withdraw at any time. While the results will be used in data analysis, all answers will remain anonymous and confidential.

I understand that through my participation in this study, I will not undergo any physical or emotional harm. I give my consent and agree to participate in this psychological study.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Any questions or concerns may be referred to the AP Research course supervisor XXXX at vaughrl@bayhaven.org or (270) 871-4400.

Thank you!

Entry B:

Teacher Consent Forms

Researcher: XXXX

Please read this consent document carefully for participation in the interview.

Purpose of this Interview: The purpose of this interview is to learn about your perception of the book ban/textbook censorship policies as well as the impact it has had on your career and your students thus far.

What you will be asked to do: In this interview you will be asked to respond to questions surrounding the topic for the purpose of collecting qualitative data. If you feel like you have something important to say or an idea you would like to share, you are more than welcome to do so as you may add a new dimension to the discussion.

Time required: 30 minutes

Confidentiality: All responses are completely anonymous; no emails or names will be recorded. To protect confidentiality, the final paper will not contain information that will personally identify you. Should direct quotations be employed you will be referred to as Individual (A-G).

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. There is neither a reward nor penalty for choosing not to participate.

Agreement: If you wish to participate in this interview, please sign the form below. A signature will indicate agreement to participate and not share the content of the interview in any way.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Any questions or concerns may be referred to the AP Research course supervisor XXXX at vaughrl@bayhaven.org or (270) 871-4400.

Thank you!

XI. Appendix C: Survey/Interview

Entry A:

Survey

1. Gender: Male or Female
2. Current Age Group: 14 15 16 17 18
3. Current Grade Level: 9 10 11 12
4. Do you affiliate yourself with a specific political party? (circle one) Yes No
 - a. If yes, which party? (circle one) Democrat Republican Other
5. What is your personal position on the banning of books, themes, and or content from school?
 - ☐ Justified
 - ☐ Somewhat Justified
 - ☐ Never Justified
6. Please indicate which statement you agree with more, or somewhat more, than the other.

My school/district generally supports the banning of books

 1. Agree
 2. Somewhat agree more
 3. Somewhat agree more
 4. Agree

My school/district generally opposes the banning of books
7. Which subjects, if any, do you feel have been most affected by the curriculum changes?
 - ☐ Language Arts
 - ☐ History
 - ☐ Science
 - ☐ Math
 - ☐ None
8. Have you noticed any changes in how your teachers are delivering lessons due to the new curriculum changes?

☐ Yes

☐ No

9. If yes, please describe why you think this change occurred.

Entry B:

Interview

1. Can you please state your educational background?
2. Can you please state your occupation and what class you instruct?
3. Are you aware of the recent book ban/textbook censorship policies in your school, district, or across the nation?
4. Are there any books that are currently banned or being challenged by your school or district?
5. What is your personal position on the banning of books, themes, and or content from school?
6. In your opinion and based on your experiences, do you believe our school/district generally supports or opposes the banning/censorship of books?
7. In your opinion, how have these curriculum changes affected the overall quality of education in Florida?
8. Do you believe that the legislative curriculum changes in Florida have a positive or negative impact on student's critical thinking and problem-solving skills?
9. Have you noticed, or think there are any disparities in the impact of these changes on students from different socioeconomic backgrounds?
10. Are Florida students better prepared for standardized tests and assessments under the new legislative changes?
11. How do you perceive the long-term implications of Florida's legislative curriculum changes on students' readiness for higher education and the workforce, both within the state and across the nation?

12. Have you physically removed or thought to remove any books in your personal classroom because you were worried that parents might have an issue, worried that it may someday be banned, or because it is already banned?
13. Have you initiated any conversations about the book ban with your students? If so, what were their responses?
14. Has the recent conversations and mainstream media around banned books influenced the titles you choose for your class?
15. Has the recent conversation and mainstream media around banned books influenced the way you teach or expect that it may one day influence the way you teach?

XII. Appendix D: Raw Data

Survey Raw Data

Entry A:

Gender	Age	Grade	Political Affiliation
Female	17	12	Republican
Female	17	12	Democrat
Female	18	12	Republican
Female	18	12	Other
Male	17	12	Democrat
Female	18	12	Democrat
Female	17	11	Republicans
Female	17	11	Republicans
Female	17	11	Democrat
Female	17	11	Republican
Female	16	10	None
Male	16	11	Republican
Male	16	10	Republican
Female	16	10	Republican
Female	16	10	Republican
Male	17	11	None
Female	15	10	Republican
Female	17	11	Republican

Male	14	9	Democrat
Female	15	9	Democrat
Male	15	9	Republican
Male	14	9	Republican
Female	14	9	None
Male	15	9	Democrat
Female	15	9	Democrat
Female	15	9	None
Female	14	9	Other
Female	14	9	Republican
Male	15	9	Other
Male	15	9	Republican
Female	15	9	Republican
Male	14	12	Republican
Female	14	9	Republican
Female	15	10	Republican
Female	16	10	Democrat
Female	16	10	None
Male	16	10	Democrat
Male	16	10	Republican
Female	16	10	Republican
Male	16	12	Democrat

Female	16	12	None
Male	16	12	Republican
Female	16	12	Democrat
Female	16	12	Republican
Female	15	12	Republican
Female	16	12	Republican
Male	16	10	Republican
Female	16	10	Republican
Male	16	10	None
Female	16	10	Republican
Female	15	10	Republican
Female	15	10	Other
Male	16	10	Democrat
Male	16	10	None
Female	16	10	Republican
Female	15	10	Republican
Female	15	12	Republican
Female	15	9	Republican
Male	15	9	Republican
Female	14	9	Republican
Female	15	9	Other
Female	15	12	Democrat

Female	14	9	None
Male	14	9	Republican
Female	14	12	Republican
Male	14	9	Republican
Female	14	12	Republican
Male	15	9	Republican
Female	14	9	Republican
Female	14	9	Republican
Female	13	9	Republican
Female	16	10	Republican
Female	15	10	Republican
Female	15	10	Republican
Male	16	10	Democrat
Female	15	10	None
Male	15	10	Republican
Female	16	10	Democrat
Female	15	10	Republican
Female	15	10	Republican
Male	16	10	None
Male	16	10	Republican
Male	17	11	None
Male	17	11	Republican

Male	16	11	Republican
Male	16	11	Republican
Female	18	12	Republican
Female	16	11	Democrat
Female	17	11	None
Female	17	11	Republican
Female	16	10	Republican
Female	16	10	Republican
Female	18	12	None
Female	15	10	Democrat
Female	15	10	Republican
Female	16	10	Republican
Female	17	12	None
Male	16	11	None
Female	16	10	Republican
Female	16	10	Republican

Entry B:

In column 2, the number means...

1-Agrees District Supports the Banning of Books

2-Somewhat Agrees District Supports the Banning of Books

3-Somewhat Agrees District Opposes the Banning of Books

4-Agrees District Supports the Banning of Books

What is your personal position on the banning of books, themes, and or content from school?	Which statement do you agree more or somewhat more than?	Which subjects, if any, do you feel have been most affected by the curriculum changes?	Have you noticed any changes in how your teachers are delivering lessons due to the new curriculum changes?	If yes, please describe one positive change and one challenging aspect you have observed.
Somewhat Justified	3	Language Arts	No	To Kill a Mockingbird
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Never Justified	3	Language Arts	No	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	2	History	No	No Response
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	No	No Response
Never Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Never Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Somewhat Justified	8	Language Arts	No	Critical Race Theory
Somewhat Justified	1	Language Arts	No	No Response
Somewhat Justified	1	Language Arts	No	No Response
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	No	Gender/Sexuality
Never Justified	2	Language Arts	No	No Response

Somewhat Justified	3	Language Arts	No	Gender/Sexuality
Never Justified	8	Language Arts	No	No Response
Never Justified	1	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Somewhat Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Never Justified	1	Language Arts	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Never Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Somewhat Justified	8	Language Arts	No	No Response
Somewhat Justified	3	History	No	No Response
Somewhat Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	To Kill a Mockingbird
Somewhat Justified	2	History	Yes	Critical Race Theory
Never Justified	3	History	Yes	AP Literature
Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Somewhat Justified	2	History	Yes	Critical Race Theory
Somewhat Justified	2	History	No	AP Literature
Never Justified	1	History	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	2	History	No	AP Literature
Never Justified	1	History	Yes	Critical Race Theory
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	No Response

Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	3	History	Yes	To Kill a Mockingbird
Never Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	AP Literature
Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	AP Literature
Justified	3	Language Arts	No	AP Literature
Never Justified	2	Language Arts	No	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	1	Science	Yes	To Kill a Mockingbird
Never Justified	1	Language Arts	Yes	Critical Race Theory
Somewhat Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	To Kill a Mockingbird
Somewhat Justified	1	History	No	To Kill a Mockingbird
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	No	To Kill a Mockingbird
Somewhat Justified	2	None	No	No Response
Somewhat Justified	8	None	No	Gender/Sexuality
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	No	Critical Race Theory
Somewhat Justified	3	Language Arts	No	To Kill a Mockingbird
Somewhat Justified	1	Science	No	AP Literature

Somewhat Justified	3	Science	No	No Response
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Never Justified	1	Science	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	Critical Race Theory
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Somewhat Justified	2	Science	Yes	No Response
Never Justified	1	History	Yes	No Response
Never Justified	1	Language Arts	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Somewhat Justified	1	Language Arts	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	2	History	Yes	No Response
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Somewhat Justified	1	History	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	1	History	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Somewhat Justified	1	History	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Somewhat Justified	1	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Never Justified	2	History	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Somewhat Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	To Kill a Mockingbird
Never Justified	8	History and science	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	2	History	Yes	To Kill a Mockingbird

Somewhat Justified	2	Science	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	8	History	No	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	2	History	Yes	To Kill a Mockingbird
Somewhat Justified	2	Science	Yes	Critical Race Theory
Somewhat Justified	1	None	Yes	No Response
Somewhat Justified	3	Science	Yes	AP Literature
Never Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	2	History	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	2	Science	No	No Response
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	No	Critical Race Theory
Never Justified	2	Language Arts	No	No Response
Somewhat Justified	1	Language Arts	No	To Kill a Mockingbird
Never Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Never Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Somewhat Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Justified	3	History	Yes	Critical Race Theory
Somewhat Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Never Justified	2	Science	No	To Kill a Mockingbird

Somewhat Justified	2	History	No	No Response
Justified	1	Math	Yes	No Response
Never Justified	3	History	Yes	To Kill a Mockingbird
Never Justified	2	None	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Somewhat Justified	2	None	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	AP Literature
Never Justified	1	Language Arts	Yes	Gender/Sexuality
Never Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	To Kill a Mockingbird
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	AP Literature
Somewhat Justified	8	Language Arts	Yes	Critical Race Theory
Somewhat Justified	2	Language Arts	Yes	No Response
Never Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	AP Literature
Never Justified	3	Language Arts	Yes	To Kill a Mockingbird
Somewhat Justified	8	History	Yes	No Response
Somewhat Justified	2	History	Yes	No Response

Interview Raw Data

Entry A: Individual 1 Interview Transcription

First, we're going to start off with a few demographic questions. Can you please state your educational background? bachelors? And can you please state your occupation? What classes are currently instructed?

I am an English teacher and I teach ninth and 10th grade.

Now we're going to move into the question portion of this interview. Are you aware of the recent book ban slash textbook censorship policies in your school district or across the nation? Yes. Are there any books that are currently banned or being challenged by your school or district?

Yes.

And if you could give any examples of some of them that you've noticed.

So I know, last year, the book ace of spades was challenged. I believe I removed the district schools. Before that when I was teaching. Not my first year, but I think it was my second year here. We got a new curriculum. And one of the recommended books was my Angelo's, I Know Why the Caged birds see. And so I was teaching that with the unit because it was recommended it was recommended in the textbook for the unit. And it was challenged while I started teaching it and I haven't stopped teaching it. Those are the two that come to mind. I know of several others that I have heard about. I don't know if they are actively being banned at the moment in our school, but it wouldn't surprise me.

What is your personal position on the banning of books, themes or content from schools?

Yeah, I'm not not a fan. I have actively tried to make my classroom more. In inclusive, more intersectional, more open minded with the books that I allow students to read, that I provide in my library. And at the moment, I haven't had any parents come to me telling me that they don't want their kids reading whatever they choose to read in my classroom. With regards to the books that I provide in my library, but yeah, it is difficult.

In your opinion, and based on your experiences, do you believe that our school slash district genuinely supports or opposes the banning of textbooks? censorship.

As a whole, I think the district is fairly willing to ban books that become challenged because they don't want to deal with controversy. I think if they were challenged on the challenge, they may back down. But I know that for quite a few people that is just wanting to keep people complacent, not upset. Yeah, for the area that we live in it is much more much more willing to ban things that are controversial work outside of the norm for this area.

In your opinion, how have these curriculum changes affected the overall quality of education within the state of Florida?

I think it's harmful. I really do think it's harmful. I think it limits the scope. Students are exposed to, I think it limits viewpoints, it shapes the majority, comfortable while limiting the perspective of those in the minority no matter what the minority is, whether it's ethnicity, or religion, or

sexual orientation, and whatever it is. There are viewpoints that are being suppressed and limited. And making sure that there is access to stories about outside viewpoints outside perspectives is important, not just for those who are not represented in the stories, but for those in the majority who aren't privy to those things in their own lives. And allowing those viewpoints to be shared with everybody can open everyone's minds to the possibilities outside of what they grow up seeing every day. That's powerful.

Do you believe that the legislative changes within the state of Florida have a positive or negative impact on students' critical thinking and problem solving skills?

For sure, when you are only taught one thing For so long, you're a real one sure that you lose the ability to think critically beyond what you are exposed to. And so when you are constantly taught one way of thinking, and you're not exposed to other ways of thinking or other perspectives, you lose, you lose the ability to think beyond your own experience. And being exposed to things beyond your own experience is important for growth, not just at school, but as a human being entering into society where you will be around people that are outside of your own perspective. Have you noticed or think that there are any disparities? And the impact of these changes on students from different socioeconomic backgrounds?

Yes, yes. Especially if you don't have access to books at home, where are you going to get those books, if they're not being provided for you at school, if you don't have access to a library, if you are in a classroom, and that's your only source for reading material, and those are being limited by the state, you're not going to be able to access those on your own if you don't have the, the

resources to obtain them on your own. Especially if you live in a place that doesn't support your lifestyle, if you if you are closeted if you don't have a supportive family, and you don't have access to books that maybe you can see yourself reflected in, you know, if those are being limited in schools in the district, then you yourself?

Are Florida students better prepared for standardized tests and assessments under these new legislative changes.

Yes, and no. The fact of the matter is that standardized tests tend to focus on specific things repeatedly, and may not be the same texts. But there's always going to be a Shakespeare pass, there's always going to be some kind of ancient Greek passage. And so in our textbooks, we will always read something by Shakespeare and will always read the Odyssey or the Iliad, or something about Ancient Greece. And so they're going to be prepared for things like that. But beyond standardized testing, there's more to books than just passing a test. When you alter the curriculum to be just geared towards passing a test that limits what you're exposed to that limits your education. So you may pass a test. But what does that even mean? If you're only learning about the things that you know, are you going to be on the test?

How do you perceive the long term implications of Florida's legislative curriculum changes on students' readiness for higher education and the workforce, both within the state and across the nation?

It's going to be difficult to adapt if you are only exposed to certain materials, because that's what the state allows you to read. When you leave school, you're going to be in a world where there are going to be people that you don't agree with or people who live differently than you or have experienced life differently from you. And if you are not prepared to interact with people like that in a humane way, you may isolate yourself, you may isolate them, you may encounter hostility, you may create uncomfortable situations, because you have been ignorant to the possibility of life outside of your own experiences in the workforce. There are different careers where people are a little more homogenous in their viewpoints. So if you end up in that career, you may be around people that agree with you and have the shared experience that you have. But if you enter a career where people are more diverse, no matter what that diversity looks like, you may be in a situation that you are illiquid to handle. And so having the experiences before you reach that point, helps you prepare for life outside of your own little bubble.

And this is just a follow up question to that one. Do you believe that literature is sort of a gateway for students to kind of grasp the skills necessary to have more diversified perspectives, like you said, when you're entering the workforce?

Absolutely. If you live in a world that looks exactly like you and you don't have experiences beyond it or understand that there are other lifestyles out there, having a book that shows you how people live differently than you or how they interact with people who are different than you can be a window into that world and it helps you to see maybe what a positive interaction may be or a negative interaction, what to avoid it. So having literature that is available to you, that shows you what it's like to be an LGBT student, or what it's like to be a person of color, or what it's like

to be a person of a political background that's different than the majority surrounding you, that gives you a window into what life could be like in the real world, because we do not stay in our bubbles forever. And so having literature that is available, that shows you how vast and varied the world is, is extremely important to be a well rounded human being to be a person who can interact with others without being prejudiced or biased, or even hateful. And so with the lies, a lot of the hateful activity and hate crimes you've seen, you know, I think it directly correlates to vindicate the band's limits on outside perspectives in schools. When you have people who are constantly told that you have to look or sound or think one way, they grow up believing that that's the only right way to think or feel when you speak. And when you only have one way to talk to you for so long. You think about everything. And, like very limited ways of looking at the world. And it's a very harmful way of looking at the world. If everybody looks, we're apps or talks the same way, we're gonna end up in a dystopian hellscape. And nobody actually walked by somebody who thinks they do.

Have you physically removed or thought to remove any books in your personal classroom? Because you were worried that parents might have an issue? Where could they someday be banned? Or because it is already banned?

I mean, yes, with my Angelou, I ended up having to stop teaching that and remove it from my classrooms for Polytune. I had her burqa, you know. So I ended up having to remove that because it was challenged. And there have been books that I purchased wanting to put them in my class library, but I read them first and realized that they would be challenged. And you know, if I have parental permission, or I know a student, particularly who relates to the story, I would let them read it privately. But I don't have it in my class library.

Have you initiated any conversations about the book band with your students? And if so, what were their responses? No.

Well, I did speak to them after we had to stop reading my *Angelo*. And I had to explain that we were being told to move on to a different book. And I actually had several students that chose to read it privately on their own and really enjoyed it and told me that they believe that it should stay in high schools. But at that point, we had already moved on. And we weren't able to continue reading it because the school and parents had already caused a problem. So we had to move on. But they didn't understand why. Why it had been removed and why we couldn't read it together as a class because they thought it was important. And it is an important story that students should be exposed to. But at that point, we didn't really have a choice. That was really the only time where I specifically spoke to students about it was because we had already begun reading the story. And I had to stop and explain to them that we couldn't, we couldn't keep reading it.

Has the recent conversation in mainstream media around book bands influenced titles and what you're choosing for your class?

Typically no. Like I said, the only times where I've not put a book in the library was because there were a couple of scenes that I believed would be upsetting to parents if they found out that it was in my class library. But even then I would allow one or two students to read it if I knew that their parents were okay with it. And they would particularly relate to that story. Especially

with something like Song of Achilles where there is the depiction of not I wouldn't call it graphic, but there is a depiction of a sexing between two boys that was a little bit much in the sense that I didn't think parents would be happy if they found out that it was there. So I do have it in my private collection and I have recommended it to a couple of students if I knew that that was something that they were already interested in, and that they wanted to read the story. But it's not something that I have on the shelf available to just anyone to pick up.

Has the recent conversation and mainstream media around book bans influenced the way in which you're teaching? Or do you expect that it may someday influence the way in which you're teaching?

Yes. It's not at the moment. It's been pretty consistent for the last couple of years. But having this conversation, the legislation that has come up in the past year, makes me question what the future may be for certain texts, even texts like Romeo and Juliet. It's interesting, when you look at it through the eyes of could this be banned for any reason? And saying, potentially, there are, there are scenes and phrases that I could see someone wanting to challenge and not knowing whether that's going to happen in the future or not, is frustrating considering the importance of Shakespeare in the classroom, and, you know, on tests there, there's always Shakespeare, but also just the importance of the language and the story, and the connections that students make to it and the fear of the possibility that it could potentially one day be challenged. It's not at the moment. i It's been pretty consistent for the last couple of years. But having this conversation, the legislation that has come up in the past year, makes me question what the future may be for certain texts, even texts like Romeo and Juliet. It's interesting, when you look at it through the

eyes of could this be banned for any reason? And saying, potentially, there are, there are scenes and phrases that I could see someone wanting to challenge and not knowing whether that's going to happen in the future or not, is frustrating considering the importance of Shakespeare in the classroom, and, you know, on tests there, there's always Shakespeare, but also just the importance of the language and the story, and the connections that students make to it and the fear of the possibility that it could potentially one day be challenged.

Entry B: Individual 2 Interview Transcription

So first, we're gonna start with a series of demographic questions. Can you please state your educational background?

I am an English teacher and have been teaching English for seven years.

And can you please state your occupation and what classes instruct my occupation as an English teacher? And I have taught English, two, three and four, as well as intensive courses for those screens?

All right, and now we're going to go into the portion of the interview. Are you aware of the recent demand slash textbook censorship policies in your school district or state?

Yes.

Are there any books that are currently being banned or being challenged by your school or district?

By my school? No. I don't believe in my district, either. I believe it's coming. I don't know a lot about the district level here, because we are a charter school. And so a lot of those rules do not apply in our room. I do know I have teacher friends in the area, who had to go through certain policies and certain things. But since I'm not teaching in the district, it didn't really affect me. So I'm not privy to that information. But state wise, I have been listening and following up on what is going on with folk bands.

What is your personal position on the banning of books, themes or content for schools?

You know, it's hard to even answer that question, because I am religious. And I was raised with very conservative parents. And so I understand being conservative, I understand following certain guidelines for your parents, I mean, for your children, I understand certain families allowing certain things and I understand that that is their right to do so. I also believe that as United States citizens, we have the right to freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom, a lot of things right, as long as it's not hurting anyone we have the freedom to do. And so I feel very strongly about the book ban because of the fact that it is impeding on our rights as American citizens.

In your opinion, and based on your experiences, do you believe that our school slash district generally supports or opposes the banning of censorship of books?

Okay, so again, with the basis of me being military and moving around, I don't know a lot about the district. But from what I do know, I believe that they are just followers, and they just follow whatever. Right now, it's DeSantis. But whatever is being said, higher up. They don't speak up. They don't. And I don't think it's just our district. I think that comes pretty much Florida, in general.

In your opinion, how have these curriculum changes affected the overall quality of education in Florida?

It's a drastic change. It's awful. So books are being banned, that don't even have anything in them. So recently, I did an entire bulletin board outside of Banned Books, and people would come by all the time and be like, what do you mean that Charlotte's Web is a banned book? What do you mean that Lord of the Flies is a banned book? We read that? Yes, we read that there was nothing wrong with that. Yes, there was nothing wrong with that. Why is it banned? Good question. Because one person, one parent, one extremist one, whatever, one person's opinion, decided to make a stink. And that stink was big enough to then affect everybody, right? And I feel like nobody is speaking up and being like, Oh, hey, guess what? So don't read it. We send permission slips home, that say, Do you permit your child? Or do you understand that your child is going to be reading this book based on our curriculum, you know, so if it's something that you really don't want your children to read or be exposed to, then that's fine, they can do a different study. And they'll be fine. We'll pick something that maybe, you know, fits your family's values, your family's whatever, and go that route. I'm not saying again, back to the beginning, that I want it to be what my point of view is, because as a person who is conservative and is raised, you

know, very Catholic, and very, in a certain way. I don't read certain things, I don't expose myself to certain things, you know, but it doesn't mean that everybody doesn't have the right to do whatever they want to do. That's the whole point on why we are America. That's the whole point on why America was even a thing. And it was because of the fact that we were being controlled, wherever we were. That's why people come here from everywhere, because they hate the fact that they're being, you know, in any way controlled. So yes, it's affecting our students. I have a fear as an educator to bring up certain topics, certain things, and it all goes based on book bans as well. It even includes things like, am I going too long, okay. It includes things like, I've had issues because I am a teacher that accepts everyone, even though I would never live my life a certain way doesn't mean that I'm not going to be supportive of others, right or be there for others. And so I've been accused of many different things, things like that. Teaching critical race theory because I was teaching a story that was in our textbook in our curriculum, based on a civil war in Africa. I was attacked by parents saying that I was doing subliminal messaging in my PowerPoint, because there was a Tifa. Signs, and I don't know what else there was not, there was the fist of unity, but not just one fist, which is what Black Lives Matters movement uses as their symbol, but several fists, which used to have the meaning of the fist of unity. And as in a civil war, we're all together regardless of where we come from, and who we are. And I had used it because we were learning about Black History Month and I saw Black History Month, a cute little slideshow, and I was like, This is so cute. And I put it in there. Never in my wildest dreams would I have thought that a parent was going to come to the school and file a complaint against me. And it was going to involve principals. And it was going to involve everyone just because of the cute slideshow that I had done to kind of make things more interesting and not so boring, and black and white, you know. And so that book bans it literally, it stems down to everything,

because even in our curriculum, parents want a say in it. And I'm not saying parents shouldn't have a say. But again, it goes back to how far is too far to limit what we are censoring people on and their right to know that information, their right to understand that information, their right to information in general, you know, and so it, book bans are being done for books on race, including factual, historical, elementary books, on Rosa Parks, on the freedom fighters on gay and lesbian on being different. And so even though I myself, personally, am not gay, do not believe that that is the right choice of life, even though that doesn't even matter. Right? What my belief is, it doesn't mean that a student that's going to come into my room is not going to be accepted by me, because that's his choice. And that is why we live in the United States of America. And so, to me, it's this big deal, because you're taking away all of these children's ability to learn about something that might make them feel like they're not alone might make them feel like they're not the only one out there that's dealing with this, you know, and so I also feel like, so it's hindering our teachers, it's, it's a fear of even like, am I going to upset a parent? Because am I teaching something they don't like? Because I have one class of 30. Okay, that's one period, so then multiply that by four. So now I have got a plethora of students that I could potentially upset and God forbid, if you teach in the public school where you've got seven periods of 30. Or if you're doing the AMB courses, which you've got eight periods of 30. And so that's a lot of parents that you could potentially upset, you know, and the craziest and even smallest things will upset parents nowadays. And all of that is this fear of like, am I gonna lose my job? Am I gonna lose my license? It's not just the fans, I feel like it. It affects everything, because now it's given people like this power and it's people who are uneducated, unfortunately, and who don't know what exactly they are doing and who don't know who exactly it is hurting or the damaging effects. they're just like, in my opinion, being very selfish on the matter. And

like, well, I don't think it's okay. And so nobody should be exposed to this. Well, okay. But you have the right to feel that way. Now, I should have the right to feel my way. And so I'm very big. There should be two sides. There should be two opinions. There should be two things. But then there should be some consensus in the middle and not just this fight back and forth. And I feel like that's kind of what's happening with this book ban is it's like, either you're with the ban, or you're not you're against it. And unfortunately, like it's literally it's not just the book ban, the book man affects so much it affects the Black Lives Matter movement that affects you know, African American history, like history that actually happened. They're wanting to ban books. For what reason? Because one person says, That's not appropriate. That's your story. That's your version. Right? And every story has two versions, two sides, two opinions to everything. And so I don't know if I'm going around in circles, but I feel like the nicest way to say it is like, yeah, so sorry.

So I'm going to be asking a follow up question to work, like you just said, because you kind of got to the point that I really liked the point where you said, we're this history actually happened. So do you believe that the United States is banning these books because they're afraid of portraying what they really are? And how would you compare this with other countries?

That's a great question. So a lot of people believe that it's a whitewash of history that's like, the word or the term that you hear amongst educators. And I'm not like I read a lot. But I read more for pleasure than I do for, like real deal stuff. Because if you know anything about me, then you know, my life's been complicated. And so I just want to read for fun, right? But, it doesn't mean that I don't stay in the loop of what's going on. And so I listen to a lot of different perspectives on

things. And I don't know that whitewashing is the term. But I do feel that it's a way of censoring what happened in the United States in order to portray their depiction of the perfect image for the United States. The United States is not perfect. Now, are we way better than, in my opinion? Any other country out there? Yeah. Are there things that we're looking at and sucka? Yes, up. So flipping loosely, right. And I've lived in England, and I've lived in Germany, I lived in England for three years, I lived in Germany for my husband was in South Korea for a year. And so I didn't live there. But I went there and stayed for a month, month and a half. And so I've been exposed to other countries, right? My parents are Cuban. And so I know what education was like in Cuba, I've been there three times for 21 days each time. And so I've seen things in very many different countries. And I can tell you, the United States is not perfect by any means. However, a lot of the things we do are phenomenal. And a lot of the things we strive for are the best, however. Yes, they are, in a way, I feel trying to erase things that don't particularly show the image they want to see or the message. It's almost like, only one person's version of the truth is correct. And even though you lived it over here on this side, you're not right. Because this person is educated. So they, they're right, right, like, and I'm not saying that's the exact you know, but like, it's almost like they're saying, like, these people are better than you they were educated their story, we believe, because you are the little people, we can erase your story because you're just not important. And that's not true. You know, and in every argument, there's two sides, there's two perspectives. And sometimes, even when I'm talking to my own students, and they're telling me about their argument with their parents, and I'm, a lot of times I even wonder like, oh my goodness, your parents are awful, right? Because I'm hearing the kid's perspective. And then sometimes I have to sit back and think about it. And I'm like, Wait, how did mom feel when you did this? You know, like, what was mom thinking? Or what was your parents worrying about?

And so that's what is not being put into consideration when they're doing all these book bans and these like censoring type things is I feel like they only are worried about their image and kind of just what they want to portray as the truth and not everybody

In your opinion, how these curriculum changes affected the overall quality of education in Florida?

I feel like for many teachers, we've worked our way around it. Some of us are like we're just gonna do whatever we want anyway, because we know what's right for the kids that are in front of us. It's like a teaching intensive and I've taught regularly. I've never taught advanced but I don't think I want you guys to be too smart for me. But um if I have got two to 30 students in front of me, I can tell you what each student needs. Now, there's going to be certain students that are more quiet and they kind of hide when there's a class of 30. Right. But when there's a class of 15, for example, you're going to know what each of those students need. And if I feel that they need more history, before they can learn a certain concept, for example, *The Great Gatsby* is in the English curriculum. *Great Gatsby* has many themes in it. It's actually a banned book, not in Florida, but a banned book. And so it's a classic, but it's banned because it talks about racism, it talks about sexual innuendo, it talks about several other topics that I can't remember. But if my students don't understand about the racial discrimination that happened, and Martin Luther King and the entire Civil Rights Movement, then they're not going to understand those innuendos in that book, they're not going to understand those themes, they're not going to understand those messages. And so sometimes, I'll just find other ways to teach them when I need to teach them. I'm very big on teaching it. And only the facts and not my personal opinion. Because again, my

opinion is not what matters. It's what was the truth that happened. Now, there might be multiple truths. And so I do like to show different perspectives. But if they're not exposed to that, then how will they learn those themes? How will they learn those things? And without history? What's to stop us from rewriting the same thing that's happened before? What's to stop us from having all of that? Go backwards? So

Do you believe that these legislative and curriculum changes in Florida have a positive or negative impact on students' critical thinking and problem solving skills?

Negative and negative? And really, I don't even need to explain.

Have you noticed or think there's any disparities in the impact of these changes on students from different socio economic backgrounds?

Repeating the question, please.

Have you noticed or think there was any disparities in the impact of these changes on students from different socio economic backgrounds?

Absolutely. I feel that students who are more sheltered or have a more cushy lifestyle aren't learning enough. Because the ones that maybe are a little bit poor, or don't have as much or you know, whatever, they learn it on the streets, right? They're gonna learn the truth no matter what. Or if you're a certain race, or you come from a certain background, you might experience your own racist comments, your own racist remarks, like even being Hispanic, I've experienced it. So

definitely, you know, I might be white, but that doesn't mean that people have not made fun of me or made me feel less than because sometimes I can't even pronounce certain words, because my second language was actually English. And so these kids that it's hurting them, because they're not able to get a full education. It's being pulled back out of fear and out of censorship.

Are Florida students better prepared for standardized tests and assessments under these new legislative changes?

I don't think it really affects their standardized tests in a way. And then it also does to I don't know, I feel that. I don't know that they correlate, really, because of the fact that for standardized tests, it's stupid. They're literally just trying to test whether you understand these concepts or not. And they're not testing your world knowledge. They're not testing, not like the fast for example. So no, I don't think it's really negatively affecting them, other than the fact that I can't really grasp their interest with reading and improve it if I don't have a good selection of books in my pocket.

How do you perceive the long term implications of Florida legislative curriculum changes on students' readiness for higher education and the workforce, both within the state and across the nation?

It's gonna keep going down. And I'm not sure that that has to do just with book banning, I think that has to do with a lot of the changes that are being placed. But number one, the fear that educators have now to lose their license, something that they worked maybe not as hard as a doctor for but very much as hard as most other you know, bachelor degree professions, right? If

not more, because a lot of us continue our education as we go. Then we're all so afraid that it's bound to go down because with that fear comes the inability to actually try different things and to push boundaries that I'm not saying are wrong, but boundaries that you're just perceiving as like, What if someone sees that as wrong? What if someone believes I'm doing something wrong? Just because it might be different? So

Have you physically removed or thought to remove any books and your personal classroom because you were worried that parents will have an issue for you that may someday be banned? Or because it already is banned?

No, I am the complete opposite. I will go find books that have prevented this and not just that, like it's so this is gonna make me very not people are gonna know who I am. But I do a yearbook at my school and I did a yearbook where we did a retro cover, and we were going with a Pink Floyd very retro, VHS vibe. And one person from our board or school board decided without ever even looking inside the book that that cover was the LGBT flag. And immediately called the principal and made a stink and made it a big deal that you know, LGBT blah, blah, blah, how dare I. And so I rebelled by putting a big flag of rainbow in my room and buying everything that's rainbow and now my life is rainbows. And before I took down my classroom I had a few rainbows that lit up and I had rainbows on my board and rainbows everywhere because I am the complete opposite. I'm like, come get me.

Have you initiated any conversation with the book band with your students? And if so, what were their responses?

Yes. And they could not believe it. Especially the books that I mentioned that were banned. We did it with my bulletin board.

Has a recent conversation in mainstream media around the books influence the titles you choose for your class?

Yes. It has. And I tried to research ones that have to do with what's going on in the world.

Has a recent conversation in mainstream media around bookmans influence the way you teach or expect that it might someday influence the way we teach?

Yes, because I'm at the point where I no longer want to teach because of some of the regulations that are being placed, especially when I'm the kind of person that, believe it or not, personally wouldn't do most of what these parents are, you know, some of the things are just stupid. But most of the serious concerns, I would never push that on any students.

Entry C: Individual 3 Interview Transcription

So first, we're going to start with some demographic questions. Can you please state your educational background?

All right, yes. I have been teaching almost 24 years and the high school setting English and I've taught basically children that need help with reading. So I've been at the very, very bottom with

challenging students. And then I teach college English so I kind of have a wide array of skills. And I actually teach at the college level at Chipola. College. So basically, my background involves a lot of reading instruction and writing instruction.

Can you please state your current occupations and what specific classes you instruct

I'm a dual enrollment English instructor, and I teach English loving one elimination two and one English for class.

Right now we're gonna go into the long discussion questions of the interview. So the first one is are you aware of the recent book slash tech textbook censorship policies within our school districts or across the nation?

Yes.

Are there any books that are currently being banned or challenged in your school or district that you are aware of?

We did have a discussion on controversial topics and English 1101 And I do have a student that's writing about banned books. They tend to change but the last time I checked, I found it offensive. Fahrenheit 451 was on the banned book plus several others books that were on there. I don't really understand why they would be there. Yeah, and I'm trying to remember the names of them and now I can't remember who they are completely. And then they did put a ban a couple of years ago. And this is confidential as an English Department. We're going to go down to the

school board meeting that they had here at school and protest. Our liaison for the school told us we probably should not do that. But we were infuriated that they pulled my angel loose. I know that caper caged bird sings and to me that's an ethnic situation. It looks like they're pulling minority literature which I despise. Zora Neale Hurston is one of my favorite authors and she's African American. I don't think students are exposed enough to other types of literature. So that was particularly offensive. They pulled Maya Angelou. A couple of years ago, *The Handmaid's Tale* was another one. I have not read the books but the TV show was very sensitive and I felt like that was the impetus for pulling *The Handmaid's Tale*. So I find the banning just extremely absurd. Trying to think of the book and I can't think of that that they banned. Honestly, I don't know if they still teach it, though. Famous famous book. I can't think of it. Sorry.

We can continue on if you remember. What is your personal position on the banning of books, themes or content from school?

I know you've previously stated that but I think censorship is often I feel like as an English instructor, if I'm inspiring students to respond to literature, they should be able to respond to all types of literature and censorship is wrong. Now I do agree there's some sensitive material that probably should not be in a high school setting like some books, but a lot of the books that you've chosen to ban, I think, expose students to things they're going to be exposed to in college anyway.

In your opinion, and based on your experiences, do you believe that our school's slash district generally supports or opposes the banning slash censorship of books?

I think this school system supports both. Yeah, and I felt almost like a couple years ago that my job and livelihood were threatened because most English teachers do not want to be told what they're going to teach and how they're going to teach it and be micromanaged like that. And I consider pursuing another career.

In your opinion, how have these curriculum changes affected the overall quality of education within the state of Florida?

I think it's been super detrimental to the education system. I do feel like our governor tries to implement good practices but he's kind of overreaching in the censorship area. I know that the AP World was impacted when he pulled the psychology course that he pulled out. I agree with that. He did make some laws about gender which were strange. I've had students be called by nicknames before that did not bother me. I had students who wanted to be called by a male name instead of a female name. Whatever makes you feel comfortable in the classroom is fine with me. So for 24 years I've been doing that so to be told, we're going to pull your teaching certificate. If you do those things it is offensive. I've been trying to get teachers to pick out.

Do you believe that the legislative curriculum changes in Florida have a positive or negative impact on students' critical thinking and problem solving skills?

I think the state of Florida is overreaching its bounds when it comes to education, and they kind of have a closed minded view of what education is. And those of us that have been teaching for a

long time. We try to get students to think outside the box. Okay to think of other points of view. That's the purpose of education.

Have you noticed or think there's any disparities in the impact of these changes on students from different socio economic backgrounds?

Yes. I have had different levels students. ask me about the legislation and it made them very uncomfortable in the classroom. I had a situation last term in English 1101. We're talking about basically, gender differences and studies etc. Students really need to be able to articulate themselves in that manner. And some students were just very uncomfortable, actually had to kind of break up an argument over it, but I told them, they're going to encounter these types of issues when they pursue a degree in a four year university. And that's what I'm trying to do in my 1101 classes and 1102 classes, is getting students to articulate their opinions but to attack the issue and not the person and that's a skill.

Are Florida students better prepared for standardized tests and assessments under these new legislative changes?

I don't think so. I still think the education system in Florida is geared toward testing too much. And they can say that they changed the test. But we're still testing students too much and not preparing them for the real world.

How do you perceive the long term implications of Florida's legislative curriculum changes on students' readiness for higher education and the workforce, both within the state and the nation?

Fortunately, I'm gifted enough that I'm able to teach college courses at a high school setting which to me, I think is a gift. I do try to prepare students in my courses for material and people and other opinions that they're going to encounter at the college setting. So that's my goal. And I tell my students that when you leave this school I want you prepared to be involved and in a college setting. And when I see them very successful, that makes me very happy. So if I was ever constrained in any form, or I could not prepare them for that, that would be detrimental to my teaching career.

So this is just a follow up question to that response. Do you believe that literature is kind of a gateway to the workforce in order for them to have, like you said, these special critical thinking skills or the ability to see things from different perspectives?

I do. I believe that reading literature, literacy, all types of books and offerings, the written word is our gateway. That's our ticket to understanding people that we might not encounter.

How have you physically removed or thought to remove any books in your personal classroom because you're worried that parents might have an issue where they may someday be banned, or because it already is banned?

Yeah. I have had to reexamine a renaissance poem and my webinar of course, that was a little sensitive as far as physical relations go. It was very eloquent and beautiful, but I thought it would

be misconstrued in a different way, even though poetry is art. Felt like that might be too sensitive. So I did pull a poem.

Have you initiated any conversations about the book band with your students? And if so, what were their responses?

Yes, we did have a debate on book banning. I think, actually, last week, I have a couple of students that are writing their argument research papers on both banning and most students agree that it is not beneficial to a student to pull on numerous books that they can't have access to.

Has the recent conversation in mainstream media around banned books influenced the titles in which you choose for the class?

I basically because I teach college courses. When we had a debate, a couple of years ago and a department meeting with our former principal. He asked me what I was doing in the class and I told him, and then he basically said, Oh, well, you fall under the college umbrella. So I kind of escaped all of that. Controversy, and I have what I feel is meaningful material. I have had parents come to open house and question me before about material but they left satisfied that their student was going to be prepared, even though they were exposed to sensitive material.

As the recent conversation in mainstream media around books ban influenced the way you teach, or do you expect that it may someday influence the way in which you teach?

It has definitely influenced the way I teach. I have to be very, very sensitive to material that could be controversial. In all of my classes, especially, well, teaching Shakespeare, I do teach Hamlet and we just got done with the Canterbury Tales in English for and there's some very sensitive information and both of those Macbeth Hamlet the key never retails. There's adult information in that and that's why students don't get that information until they're juniors or seniors. But I feel that it's very appropriate because that's college preparedness, because you need to be exposed to Shakespeare and cultural references to Shakespeare pop culture references to Shakespeare. If you're going to enjoy seeing a play, I do have an existential play that's recorded Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, which is not super popular either, because it is an existential work but students need to be exposed to all types of thinking

Entry D: Individual 4 Interview Transcription

The first set of questions will be demographic questions. Can you please state your educational background?

Yes, I have a master's in teaching from Charleston Southern in education specialist degree from Liberty University I'm currently working on my education doctoral degree from the University.

Can you please state your occupation and what class you instruct

I am an English language arts teacher and I teach three honors courses for 10th graders in one regular 10th grade class.

Right now we're gonna go into the portion with the actual research questions. Are you aware of the recent book bans slash textbooks censorship policies within your school district or across the nation? Yes. Are there any books that are currently being banned or being challenged by your school or district that you are aware of?

I know that recently, like a year ago, I believe the book was challenged and was not allowed to be taught. Currently the state of Florida requires us to inform students and parents what we plan to teach at the beginning of the year so that if there are any objections, they can voice those objections.

What is your personal position on the banning of books? slash themes and or content from schools?

I think that it 's usually teachers who are educated, pick out books whose educational value is going out way. Small amount of content in them that might cause him to be censored or banned. Of course, I think there should always be an alternative offered to parents subject to content in a certain book or their child.

Based on your experiences, do you believe that our school or school district generally supports or opposes the banning of textbooks?

I think our school and district will follow the state policies and then address teachers with choices that they want to teach on a case by case basis and don't agree with the making of the

book. I think its educational value outweighs a little bit of questionable content or what some people might find. For the most part, I feel like those decisions should be left up to the teachers. That's what they are educated for, but I do feel like parents should have a voice. And that's where an alternative book could come into play instead of just banning the teacher from teaching something to all of their students

In your opinion, how have these curriculum changes affected the overall quality of education within the state of Florida?

I feel like it limits topics that students can learn about when certain books are vegans, and it might be something students need to learn about. They can relate to and know how to respond to certain situations they were read about in a work, so I feel like it's limiting.

Do you believe that the legislative curriculum changes within the state of Florida have a positive or negative impact on students' critical thinking skills as well as their problem solving skills?

I feel like they have a negative impact because again, I feel like in limits, topics that they can talk about, you know, still teachers communities in learning activities to promote critical thinking. But I feel like when they start to limit when the state starts limiting what you can teach starts from the to your critical thinking opportunities. To some degree.

Have you noticed or think there are any disparities in the impact of these changes on students from different socioeconomic backgrounds?

I cannot say that I have observed that directly because I haven't studied it and so I don't have the exact data on that. We don't really

Are Florida students better prepared for standardized tests and assessments under these new legislation procedures?

I think our creative teacher piece still properly prepares students for the standardized test thinking that will start being many educational opportunities are limited.

How do you perceive the long term implications of Florida's legislative curriculum changes on students' readiness for higher education and the workforce, both within the state and within the nation?

I feel like it could possibly limit some of the students' preparation for the future when these folks are banned or the choices are limited. One thing that I've noticed is that in this state's standards, it has a suggested list of books for each grade and some places are treating that suggested list like these are the only books you can teach and that is not what it says. And so I just feel like districts and schools have to be careful how they really state standards.

Have you physically removed or thought to remove any books in your personal classroom because you were worried that parents might have an issue. were worried that it may someday be banned, or because it already is banned?

I haven't taken any bugs out of my classroom library. I do have a class set of books that I was not tempted to put in my curriculum because of the language and I feel like parents, so I feel like there would be enough parents who would object to it that it might not be worth it.

Have you initiated any conversation about the book being banned with your students? And if so, were there any responses that you can remember?

I have had discussions but I did put the list of texts or handle teaching on my series this year. We had students get onto their packs design.

Has a recent conversation and mainstream media around book ban influenced the titles that you're choosing for your class?

This year it has not influenced titles yet I'm choosing for my class.

Has the recent conversation in mainstream media around book ban influenced the way you teach or expect that one maybe one day expect the way in which you teach?

I don't think it will, unless they come to a point about wanting to check out or prove to be talked about.

Entry E: Individual 5 Interview Transcription

First, we're going to start with a few demographic questions. Can you please state your educational background?

Yes, I have a bachelor's degree in English, a master's degree in education and a master's degree in American literature.

Can you please state the occupation that you are currently teaching and what classes you instruct

I am an AP English teacher and AP research teacher at North Bay Haven.

All right, and now we're gonna go into the question portion of the interview. Okay. Are you aware of the recent book banned slash textbooks censorship policies in your school district or across the nation? Are there any books that are currently being banned or being challenged by your school or district?

Currently on the banned list? There are several books that I need to teach for AP Language and Literature and also for AP Literature and Composition. Books like *Of Mice and Men* by Steinbeck, *Catcher in the Rye*. Those are just a couple. These are books that are often found on the actual AP exams. So I feel like this state has tied my hands in that these are banned books, but these are books that students need to read in order to be prepared for the exam.

Thank you for that. What is your personal position on the banning of books, themes and or content from schools?

So I don't think that we should have any censorship on literature. I think it was written in its time period and timeframe with purpose. And that's how we should view it and study it. So I'm against any censorship of any kind. Personally, I think that a lot of the classic novels that are being banned, we're actually robbing our students, the ability to learn not just great literature, but the historical context in which it was written.

In your opinion, and based on your experiences, do you believe that our school slash district generally supports or opposes the banning slash censorship of books?

I'm not certain. I feel like our district slash school stays neutral at this point, because I am in a position of being the person who needs to teach the literature that's currently banned. And I haven't received any backlash yet. I'll take that back at the beginning of the year, we were told to look at the list. But that's as far as they've gone with it. So no administrator, or board member has told me that I can't teach something. I haven't been challenged by a parent yet. But I'm just pushing forward with material that I need to teach whether it's something listed or not.

In your opinion, how have these curriculum changes affected the overall quality of education within the state of Florida?

I think that Florida is, I'm just bluntly gonna say, looked at as a joke. When I talked to my teacher friends around the nation, especially friends and groups that teach AP, they all discuss Florida and how we've gone 10 steps backward in things like the boat veiny censorship, how we

are micromanaging teachers how we are causing students to not to be able to learn and grow in the way they could in the past in the manner that they should. And people don't want to teach in this state. They don't want to live under the bridge ID laws. And it makes teaching more difficult in Florida.

Do you believe that these legislative curriculum changes within the state of Florida have a positive or negative impact on students critical thinking and problem solving skills?

I think even if students aren't aware it has a negative impact. Because if we don't teach, we should be the experts as the teachers to know what curriculum. We should have a say in the curriculum. But we know what challenges our students and if we take that off the table which the state of Florida has done, it lowers the ability for higher order thinking and critical thinking skills.

Have you noticed or think there are any disparities and the impact of these changes on students from different socio economic backgrounds?

I haven't noticed that you yet, I'm just into the semester where all my AP classes for English have started. I think there could be, though, if we're not allowed to teach some of these books and articles. And it's not just books, it's other pieces of literature that are being banned. I think there could be an impact, though, because I think one of the ways we teach cultural diversity is by being able to teach these books, and looking at them in context of the history in which they were written, the cultures in which they were written. And what Florida in essence has done is said,

they have said, you will teach about this culture, this group, this ethnicity. And suddenly, students are being robbed of the fact that it will have an impact on us. Our Florida students better prepared for standardized tests and assessments under these new legislative changes. Absolutely not know them and if teachers follow the changes, and they don't go rogue and still teach the material, I don't know where to put it. Students will not be prepared for AP exams, nor will they be prepared for other standardized tests.

How do you perceive the long term implications of Florida legislative curriculum changes on students' readiness for higher education and the workforce, both within the state and across the nation?

I think that if this continues, they are hoping for great changes, and they see the mistake they've made, but if the Florida legislature continues to ban and in essence, tie teachers hands, these students will be left behind. So when they get to colleges, there'll be the students who are behind the rest of the pack.

Have you physically removed or thought to remove any books in your personal classroom? Because you were worried that parents might have an issue where we may someday be banned, or because it already is banned?

I maybe should but I don't, they're still in my room. And I still plan to teach what's on the AP exam, whether it's on the banned list or not. I have thought that backlash will be coming from

parents at some point, or maybe my own administration, and I'll cross that bridge when I get there. But no, I have not removed these yet.

Have you initiated any conversation about the book band with your students? And if so what were their responses?

I haven't initiated the conversation, but it has come up in my AP classes. Obviously, for example, with my seniors in AP Literature, they're concerned because one of the components of the tests, which is a third of their exam, is about novels. And AP sends us a list of the novels. More than half of the novels on the list are banned. In Florida. Currently, we also received a message from College Board, AP, who said Florida, we have to push forward with the exam. We're not altering it for you. So I have had students say this one, are we going to be prepared for the test? And I assure them that they will be

Has the recent conversation and mainstream media around book bands influenced the title. So what are you choosing for your class currently?

No, I currently teach the books that are going to be on the test. And unfortunately, they're on the banned list. But I will continue to teach those until I guess they remove me.

Has the recent conversation in mainstream media around bedbugs influenced the way you teach or expect that it may someday influence the way in which you're teaching?

It doesn't at the moment, but it could impact the way I teach with the fear of them revolving around my teaching licenses. If they enforce this. Again, at this point, my own school hasn't. My administration hasn't come to me in person and said, Stop teaching this. That's a conversation, I would have to have a Verage out to have to cross because I will fight for my students. And I will fight for them to be ready for these exams and be ready for college.