

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	Weaver/ Holibaugh	School:	Hyatts
Book Title:	Please Stop Laughing at Me	Genre:	Biography
Author:	Jodee Blanco	Pages:	270
Publisher:	Adams Media	Copyright:	2003

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

In her poignant work *Please Stop Laughing at Me . . .*, Jodee Blanco tells how school became a frightening and painful place, where threats, humiliation, assault, and cruelty were as much a part of her daily experience as bubble gum and lip-gloss were for others. Readers will be engrossed by how: -- She was stoned by her classmates when she refused to dissect a baby pig-- She was nearly suffocated when classmates shoved fistfuls of snow down her throat-- She found rotten food stuffed in her book bag after she defended a fellow "outcast"-- Clothing was stolen from her locker -- and later found floating in the toilet-- She was humiliated, isolated, and constantly awaiting the next attack. This powerful, unforgettable memoir chronicles how one child was shunned and abused by her classmates from elementary school through high school. It is an unflinching look at what it means to be the outcast, how even the most loving parents can get it all wrong, why schools are often unable to prevent disaster, and how bullying has been misunderstood and mishandled by the mental health community. Readers will be shocked, moved, and ultimately inspired by this harrowing tale of survival against insurmountable odds. This vivid story will open eyes around the country to the harsh realities and long-term consequences of bullying -- and will show people of all ages how they can make a difference in the lives of teens today.

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

Reading Applications 8

8. Organize content from different sources on a single topic.

10. Examine author's purpose and style.

11. Determine purpose for reading and strategies needed for comprehension.

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

School Library Journal (May 1, 2003)

Adult/High School-From fifth grade through high school, Blanco was teased, shunned, and, at times, physically assaulted by her classmates because she was different. She befriended handicapped students, "ratted" on the activities of fellow 12-year-olds at her first boy/girl party, and could not bring herself to dissect a fetal pig. Her experiences with school bullies occurred in a

variety of settings, including religious and private schools. At various points in this visceral memoir, Blanco fumes at the injustice of being subjected to psychiatric diagnosis and medication while her tormentors remained unbothered and oblivious, and states that "sticking up for people" and/or being different is a "social death warrant." While her loving parents were sympathetic and supportive, their well-meant admonitions to ignore her harassers and "rise above it all" sprang from adult logic; adolescents simply interpreted her indifference as weakness. The author's emotional torment was partly due to a breast deformity; corrective surgery performed prior to her senior year allowed her, finally, to begin viewing her future optimistically. Adults may consider some of Blanco's scenes as hyperbole, but teens will find them authentic and apt. Many will take comfort both in the universality of the experiences and in Blanco's transformation from an unhappy, embittered ugly duckling to a poised, accomplished swan. Others, if they are honest, just might recognize bullying tendencies in themselves and become sufficiently chagrined to reexamine their views and actions toward nonconformists of all stripes. Dori DeSpain, Fairfax County Public Library, VA

Review #2

Booklist (March 15, 2003 (Vol. 99, No. 14))

Blanco relates her hellish experience, which began back in grade school. Unable to maintain her friendships with the "cool" group because she befriended a younger deaf student, Blanco was ostracized and, worse, tormented. Her parents sent her to a different school, but after an initial promising start, Blanco was again ostracized after she called her mom to pick her up from a party that got out of control. Another school switch and a psychiatrist did nothing to better Blanco's situation. She hoped high school would improve upon junior high, but the kids continued to torment her, even going so far as to beat her up. Blanco chronicles in detail her feelings of depression and how difficult it was for her to face her cruel classmates on a daily basis. Blanco's story is often painful to read, but her eventual success and triumph over the past are inspiring.

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: **A Child Called It**

Author: **David Pelzer**

Title: **Shadow Club**

Author: **Neal Shusterman**

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Title:

Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

bullying

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): 13+

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 11/8/07

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults