

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Mrs. Stoll Grade: 7 School: Orange Middle School

Book Title: Unwind Genre: Science Fiction

Author: Neal Shusterman Pages: 335

Publisher: Simon and Schuster Books for Young Readers Copyright: 2007

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 a society where unwanted teens are salvaged for their body parts, three runaways fight the system that would "unwind" them. Connor's parents want to be rid of him because he is a troublemaker. Risa has no parents and is being unwound to cut orphanage costs. Lev's unwinding has been planned since his birth, as part of his family's strict religion. Brought together by chance, and kept together by desperation, these three unlikely companions make a harrowing cross-country journey, knowing their lives hang in the balance. If they can survive until their eighteenth birthday, they can't be harmed--but when every piece of them, from their hands to their hearts, are wanted by a world gone mad, eighteen seems far, far away.

(taken from the book flap summary)

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 Literary: Gain and demonstrate a deeper understanding of human story by reading varieties of genres. #1, #2, #3

Using a read-aloud in the classroom unites all of the learners by creating "common ground". Students will be completing a unit on science fiction novels, and this read-aloud will be the common thread that unites the class as we study what science fiction is.

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

Shusterman's *Everlost* (2006) dealt with death and children with a sense of innocence, redemption and even humor. None of that is present here. In a time not far distant, life is deemed to be sacrosanct from the instant of conception until the age of 13. From 13 to 18, however, parents and guardians have the opportunity to have children "unwound." Technically, life doesn't end, but every part of the child is "harvested" to be parceled out and passed on to the highest bidder. In this gruesome age of organ harvest, readers meet Connor (doomed to be unwound by his parents), Risa (doomed as a ward of the state due to overcrowding) and Lev, a tithe, conceived for the express purpose of being unwound and "donated" to society. Their story of escape and struggle to survive in a society that lauds itself on the protection of life, but which has reduced human body parts to market commodities, unrolls against a bleak background of indifference, avarice, guilt, regret, loss, pain and rebellion. Well-written, this draws the reader into a world that is both familiar and strangely foreign, and generates feelings of horror, disturbance, disgust and fear. As with classics such as *1984* and *Fahrenheit 451*, one can only hope that this vision of the future never becomes reality. *Kirkus Reviews*, October 1, 2007 (Vol. 75, No. 19)

Review #2

Shusterman's latest novel takes place after the Heartland War. Waged between the Pro-Choice and Pro-Life "armies," the conflict was settled with the drafting of The Bill of Life, which states that life is protected until the age of Reason, but between the ages of thirteen to eighteen a child can be "unwound" at the request of the parents. Unwinding is an honorable action according to adults, but it is a terrible fate for the Unwind in that the organs, limbs, and brain tissue are disseminated to other humans who require transplants or appearance "upgrades." The novel follows three protagonists who are attempting to "kick-AWOL" and survive to eighteen to escape their unwindings: Connor, the rebellious teen; Risa, a ward of the state being unwound because of budget cuts; and Lev, a tithe born as an unwind sacrifice. The novel begs two questions: When does a life have value? Who determines whether it is worth keeping? Unfortunately, who is unwound and who gets which "parts" is often determined by socio-economic status. In addition, parents seem to shamelessly unwind their children for typical teen frustration and rebellion. Betrayal by parents and the system is a horrifying truth for the protagonists. As such, there are many passages that are difficult to read either for their heartrending nature or their shocking specifics, particularly the detailed "harvest" of a well-known character. Poignant, compelling, and ultimately terrifying, this book will enjoy popularity with a wide range of readers beyond its science-fiction base. Courtney Wika (VOYA, October 2007: Vol. 30, No. 4)

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

Title: The Giver Author: Lois Lowry

Title: Gathering Blue Author: Lois Lowry

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Title: Author:

Document any potentially controversial content:

The "harvesting" of body parts in one scene is heartwrenching and, of course, shocking, but is also necessary if the reader is to truly understand what it means to be "unwound."

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): Gr. 7-9

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 11/30/07

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