

I quite enjoyed the lecture given by George M. Johnson. I found it to be very interesting and insightful, especially when considering classroom libraries. I have frequently thought about my future classroom library – What books will I offer? How will I organize the different genres? Will there be a checkout system? What will it look like? Where will it be? – and I have found that my biggest questions and concerns lie with the practice of book banning. With so many important works being contested and banned from schools, how will I create a diverse classroom library filled with important works that students need to be exposed to? In his lecture, Johnson offered a few interesting techniques for how to combat the effects of book banning in classroom libraries. Johnson suggests taking the covers off the books that have a history of being contested or simply labeling classroom libraries as student research or resource centers. Books are such an important resource for students to learn about themselves as well as the world. Books build empathy, while also helping students to not feel alone in their struggles. By taking these books away from kids, we are taking away their opportunity to see themselves in literature; we are taking away their resources. Books are often banned for certain subjects they suggest that are considered too heavy for youth. However, many students are already learning about or experiencing these heavy subjects, and books about those things become resources to help students with the difficult things they are experiencing. It is important to do our best to combat book banning and provide students with the opportunity to engage with these important books. Although Johnson reminded us not to lose our jobs over his book, or any book for that matter, it is still important for teachers to provide students with influential works and help them see their identities reflected in the literature studied in the classroom.