EIU Media Recommendations



One way to broaden our cultural awareness and proficiency is to learn stories about cultures that are different from our own. Each month, we will provide recommendations for books, TV shows, movies, and podcasts that we think you'll enjoy. We've included all different genres and explain why the recommendation impacted us personally.

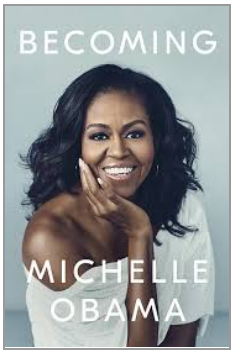
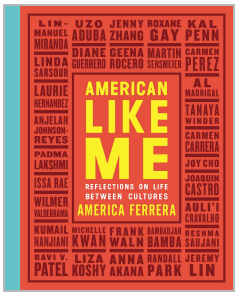
We are a small office and we do not corner the market on recommendations. Please send us your recommendations and let us know if we can include them in the newsletter. This month, we have recommendations from Learning and Achievement Specialist Jeff Mehr.

Thanks!



Yesenia Regalado

Current Mood:
I'm always searching for narratives that validate the intersectionality of my identities. I'm a first generation—closer to second—Spanglish speaking Latina, navigating the world through my millennial lens, and constantly reflecting on my roles as a wife, daughter, sister, friend, and racial equity warrior. My co-workers will tell you that I am always looking for opportunities for deep reflection and self-growth. My selections come from a place of empowerment; I hold a mirror up to myself and my culture, and look for windows into the world I want to create, full of love, empathy, and resilience. All of my book selections are audiobooks.

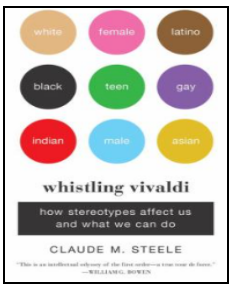
Becoming by Michelle Obama 	WOW, I don't even know where to begin. In her memoir, Michelle Obama shares the intimate details of her life and the things that have shaped her to be the woman that she is today. Her storytelling is mesmerizing. I think what I enjoyed the most about her story was learning about her evolution in the different stages of her life. I have more in common with her than I ever imagined! I loved her as first lady, but now I feel like I know her and she represents so much more to me. Listening to the very human perspective of defying expectations even as a child, falling in love, balancing the demands of motherhood and work, navigating her career decisions as a woman of color, plus her overall humor, warmth and commentary has been an incredible experience.
American Like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures by America Ferrera 	I initially decided to listen to this book because I love America Ferrera. She is a Latina actress and political activist who is a few years older than me and who was also born and raised in the United States. I didn't realize that the book is actually a compilation of many vibrant stories of first person accounts from prominent figures in the U.S and their experience of growing up between cultures. The storytelling from different actors, athletes, authors, writers, and activists is so inspiring. I love that many of the stories are from people's childhood and adolescence. I wish there was a book like this when I was growing up so that I could have learned sooner that living in "the hyphen" of your identity is hard, but it makes you phenomenal.
Latino USA Podcast by NPR 	Latino USA on NPR is the only national, English-language radio program produced from a Latino perspective. This outlet is important for me because although I am bilingual, I primarily read, write, and speak in English. This is where I get to listen to current events about the Latino community, in different parts of the United States. It also features news stories about political, social, and cultural history of different countries in Latin America that shape our current climate now. Through this podcast, I have learned more about my culture from an intellectual and political perspective. The episodes empower me to give voice to the intersectionality of what it means to be Latino in the United States. I would recommend this podcast to anyone who is looking to learn more about the Latino culture, learn more about issues that matter to the community, and to expand their knowledge in general about issues going on in the world.

Joan Mory

Great Reads

I have a tendency to read several books at the same time, moving in and out of them in a fluid manner. As I thought about my current reading list, there is a theme or common thread in each one is learning and the emotional and physiological impact of actions, statements, etc. and how the brain processes information, knowledge and skills.

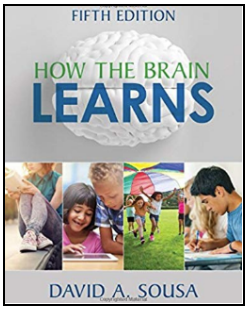
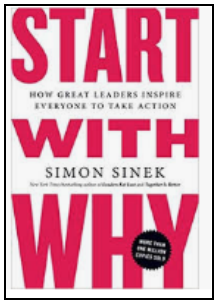
Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do (2010) by Claude Steele.



I am currently reading, *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do* (2010 by Claude Steele. Prominent social psychologist Claude Steel discusses the great social power of stereotypes in this book. He coined the term "stereotype threat" in 1995 based on research with African-American students where they performed differently on the GRE when they were told the test was related to intelligence versus when they were told it was just a game. *Whistling Vivaldi* is part memoir and part meta-review of Steel's thirty-plus years of psychological research on the effects of stereotypes.

Steele offers practices educators can use to help counteract these messages. For instance, self-affirmation exercises in the classroom, particularly for students of color, can be enough to counter negative messages that trigger stereotype threat. Some other practices include emphasizing incremental views of intelligence (i.e. intelligence as an expandable as opposed to fixed characteristic) and facilitating faculty-to-student or student-to-student mentoring and cross-racial interactions.

This book is easy to read and quite thought-provoking. Of particular interest to me were the sections where he discusses how the brain processes stereotype threat and the emotional and physiological implications. The brain research indicates that identity and stereotypes threats divert "attention and mental capacity away from the task at hand, which worsens performance and general functioning, all of which exacerbates anxiety, which further intensifies the vigilance for threat and diversion of attention." In chapter 9 Steel talks about how we can reduce identity and stereotype threat through the use of self-affirming statements or positive affirmation. Two of the benefits of making self-affirming statements are an increased awareness of your own negative self-talk and a better sense of perspective that helps one through the negative aspects of the given situation. These changes do not happen immediately but over time, with persistent effort, more positive thinking can become second nature. Through neuroplasticity these positive, self-affirming thoughts can change the structure and function of our brains.

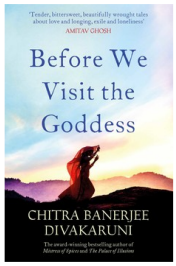
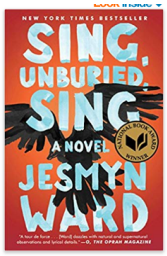
How the Brain Learns (2017) by David Sousa.  	Recent discoveries about the human brain have the power to transform the way we teach and learn. World-renowned educational neuroscience consultant David A. Sousa has helped tens of thousands of educators understand how brain research can improve teaching and learning. He continues his tradition of translating new findings into effective classroom strategies and activities in this updated version of his bestselling text. The fifth edition of How the Brain Learns integrates recent developments in neuroscience, education, and psychology and includes Written for anyone who wants to better understand the way people learn, *How the Brain Learns* unlocks the mysteries of the human mind and allows educators to experience the joy of seeing students reach their full potential. Chapter 2 was of special interest to me as it talks about how our brains process information, remember it and the impact of self-esteem on learning. I appreciated the impact that emotions have in the acquisition and retention of learning.
Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to take Action (2009) by Simon Sinek.  	In 2009, Simon Sinek started a movement to help people become more inspired at work, and in turn inspire their colleagues and customers. Since then, millions have been touched by the power of his ideas, including more than 28 million who've watched his TED Talk based on START WITH WHY -- the third most popular TED video of all time. Sinek starts with a fundamental question: Why are some people and organizations more innovative, more influential, and more profitable than others? Why do some command greater loyalty from customers and employees alike? Even among the successful, why are so few able to repeat their successes over and over? START WITH WHY shows that the leaders who've had the greatest influence in the world all think, act, and communicate the same way -- and it's the opposite of what everyone else does. Sinek calls this powerful idea The Golden Circle, and it provides a framework upon which organizations can be built, movements can be led, and people can be inspired. And it all starts with WHY. Chapter 4 talks about the biology of how the human brain processes emotion, decision-making, etc. He talks about the neuroscience in the limbic system or region of the brain and the neocortex.

Marya Hay



Great Reads

My reading list is a cheat sheet for audio books. I love to listen on a long drive, or just relax at home with the soothing voice of someone reading to me. I count that as equal to reading and have found some excellent reads. You can also pick up each of these in paperback. They have allowed me to connect to the familiar and give me a perspective to look into the intimate window of worlds I know less about.

Before We Meet the Goddess by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni 	My first book recommendation is **Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's book Before We Meet the Goddess**. I was introduced to this writer at eighteen. Her book, *The Mistress of Spices* was the first time I saw someone who had similarities to me as a character in a book. This story is about three generations of Indian women and how their lives intertwine through life experiences while also diverging. The text flows between the life of a grandmother born, raised and living her life in Bengal,India , her daughter also born in India who immigrated after marriage to the US and her granddaughter who is a first generation American. Through similar life experiences of love, struggles and death, these women find connections that thread through their triumphs and tribulations. It's beautifully written prose that shares the story of family and generational cultural challenges. My mother is from this area of India and each story resonated with me as a mirror of the strong and flawed women in my life.
Sing Unburied, **Sing a Novel** by Jesmyn Ward 	I was introduced to Jesmyn Ward by a cousin who is an author and heard Ward at an open reading. Her words are melodic and rich and lead you into the world and minds of her characters. This novel is the story of a young boy, Jojo and his journey to understand both himself and the complex nuances of family members and their dynamics. The story has aspects of fantasy and ghosts while being embedded in the realities of historical impacts of race in a small town in Mississippi.

What's on the Tube

You may also find yourself ready to Netflix and chill or just gather around the TV for some family bonding. Here are some of the shows I have binged watched in the past few weeks.

	Hasan Minaj (one of my favorite Indian-Muslim comedians, keeps you cracking up while also breaking down the current events from his point of view and extensive knowledge.
	**Seven Seconds** When 15-year-old black cyclist Brenton Butler dies in a hit-and-run accident -- with a white police officer behind the wheel of the vehicle -- Jersey City explodes with racial tension. This crime drama explores the aftermath of the accident, which includes an attempted cover-up by the police department and a volatile trial. Assistant prosecutor KJ wants to prosecute the hit-and-run as a hate crime, in addition to negligent homicide. The longer the case drags on without a resolution, the more tense the situation becomes.

Listen Up! Podcasts

Are you about to embark on a long drive or flight during the winter break? Check out these podcasts to keep you entertained.

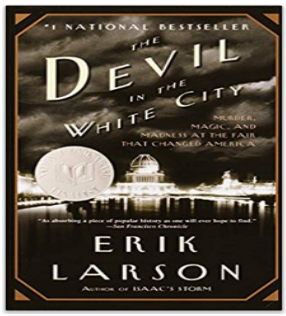
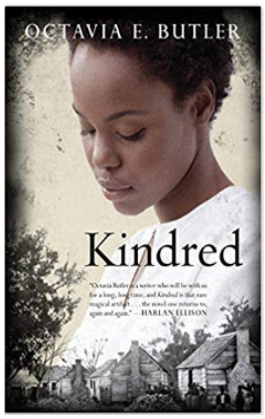
	This podcast has it all. It's the story of Prodigy a famous rapper who also battled Sickle Cell Anemia for years and died as a young man in 2017. Each episode uncovers the layers of the disease in the Black community as well as the drive and commitment Prodigy brought forth in his career as a prolific artists.
	Catch up on current events and laugh along with a range of hosts and guests on this podcast. It's been a favorite of mine and my kids for years.

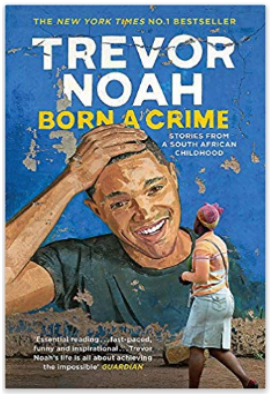
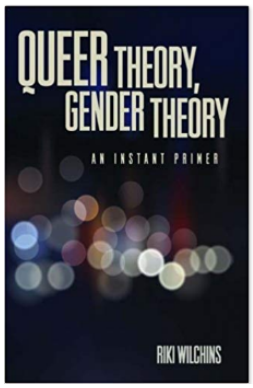
Deanna Kuhney



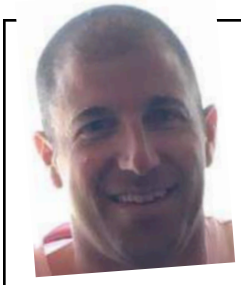
Is Deanna Reading or NOT? You decide.

I tend to "**read"** multiple books at a time. Of course my son Wesley disagrees-cuz that's what teenagers were made for. Whenever, I say that I'm going to read, he insists, "Mom! Listening to an audiobook DOES NOT constitute reading." You too may have an opinion about this- but what I do know is that **Audible** has allowed me to increase my book completion rate by almost 100%. Audiobooks have also afforded me the opportunity to expand into genres that I never afforded myself the time to do when I had to sit still to read a book. So surprisingly, the next two selections are books that **Wes** and I are engaged in on Audible. I've finally gotten him to read. Ha!

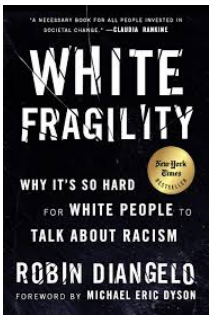
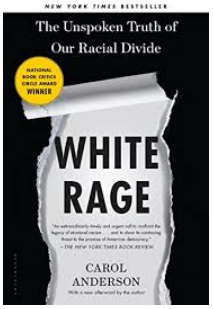
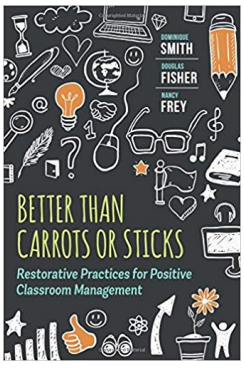
Devil in the White City, by Erik Larson 	**Devil in the White City**, set in 1893 and interweaves the **true tales** of Daniel H. Burnham, the architect behind the 1893 World's Fair, and Dr. H. H. Holmes, pharmacist and serial killer who lured his victims to their deaths in his elaborately constructed "Murder Castle". If the author didn't reveal, upfront, that the story isn't fiction, you would swear that it was! **Caution**-it's a long "read". **A side note:** Wes aspires to be a Landscape Architect, and he stumbled upon this book, while researching the work of Landscape Architect, Frederick Law Olmsted-considered to be the "father" of Landscape Architecture. Olmstead's story around designing the fairgrounds is woven into this fascinating story. A bit of trivia- Olmstead also designed the original grounds of the U.S. Capitol in DC.
Kindred, by Octavia E. Butler 	**But Kindred...you like Science-Fiction? I don't...usually.** However, the impeccable writing of science-fiction author Octavia Butler, who just happens to be African American, blew me away! The story follows Dana, the Black female hero—through time to face the horrors of slavery and explore the impacts of racism, sexism, and white supremacy then and now. Dana, a modern black woman, is celebrating her twenty-sixth birthday with her new husband when she is snatched abruptly from her home in California and transported to the antebellum South. The precision of words, sentence structure, and vivid language made me want to duck behind a tree, at times in the story-just amazing. ***Kindred*** is absolutely one of the most enjoyable reading experiences, I've ever had. Unfortunately, Ms Butler was not an author that I was remotely aware of in the past-not sure why. In my opinion, her work should not be left up to chance, it should sit prominently in all libraries. Next up, **Parable of the Sower, also by Octavia Butler**-hardcover at that!

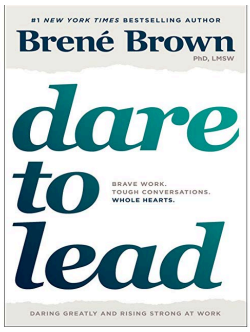
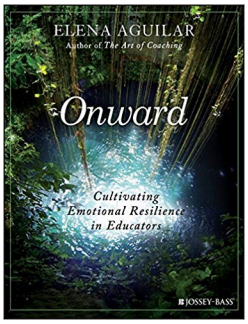
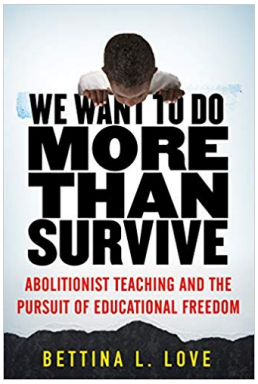
Born a Crime, by Trevor Noah 	**"Trevor Who?"** I've never been one to watch much television - and yes, it makes me feel out of touch, at times. So when I was invited to see Trevor Noah live last year, I knew very little of him. His performance was comedic, intelligent, authentic - brilliant and I wanted to hear more from him. ***Born a Crime***, delightfully narrated by Noah, wittingly tells the story of his childhood growing up with his bold, fearless, black mother-Patricia, who was determined that she nor her children would be bound by the restrictive culture/structure of apartheid, in South Africa. Fyi. I still haven't watched Trevor on tv, but I certainly know who he is now.
Queer Theory Gender Theory: A Primer, by Riki Wilchins 	**UP NEXT! A BOOK-because it's NOT on Audible…** **I am often reminded when listening to my own children and interacting with students in schools, how little I know about our LGBTQ communities. Queer Theory Gender Theory,** is a book my colleague Yesenia lent me. It promises to be a one-stop, no-nonsense introduction to the core of postmodern theory, particularly its impact on queer and gender studies. Nationally known gender activist Riki Wilchins combines straightforward prose with concrete examples from LGBT and feminist politics, as well as her own life, to guide the reader through the ideas that have forever altered our understanding of bodies, sex and desire. This is that rare postmodern theory book that combines accessibility, passion, personal experience and applied politics, noting at every turn why these ideas matter and how they can affect your daily life. **I'm looking forward to uping my LGBTQ awareness IQ.**
America To Me 	**Oh My God! This docu-series is a must see for all educators,** in my humble opinion. It's on Starz: The filmmaker Steve James, who followed two African-American high school basketball players in "Hoop Dreams," spent a year with students, teachers and parents at Oak Park and River Forest (O.P.R.F.) High School in suburban Chicago In this integrated, progressive school he finds a community of white and black students whose education is not separate, but whose experience is not equal-- **not unlike many of our schools in MCPS.** In the 1960s, its community resisted white flight as black families moved in, along with liberal whites. Now, the school has a faculty conscious of diversity and reflective about bias.But for all the good intentions, students of different races find themselves on different tracks, in different classes, with different outcomes, in a school that one teacher says "functions as two schools in one." **I'm enjoying adapting this to fit professional development and student engagement**. **Please contact me if you want to explore ways to use this student voice.** https://youtu.be/Fbfx9OpcUoc

Jeff Mehr



Summer is a wonderful time to be outdoors, soak in the vitamin D, pause, breathe, read, reflect, grow and expand our minds and widen our cultural aperture. My summer was full of fascinating reads that helped me to continue to unpack dominant ideology and how socialization makes it difficult for me to recognize how I participate in a system that churns out racial inequalities. Each title below will help readers identify and interrupt inequalities in the educational system and beyond. Anti-racism requires deep examination of our biases and asking ourselves not "if" but "how" we contribute to outcomes that are predictable by race and ethnicity.

	Robin DiAngelo defines White Fragility as a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress for people of European American backgrounds becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and quickly exiting the situation. These behaviors function to reinstate white racial equilibrium. This book analyzes and develops in detail the dynamics of White Fragility and how we can build our capacity in the on-going work towards racial justice.
	*White Rage* adds an important new dimension to the national conversation about race in the United States of America by carefully linking how historical social progress for African Americans was/is countered by deliberate and carefully crafted opposition. Carol Anderson exposes the long covered actions made in the name of protecting democracy, fiscal responsibility, or protection against fraud, rendering visible the long lineage of white rage.
	Better than Carrots or Sticks is a highly recommended and very quick read for anyone looking to examine restorative justice. The research demonstrates that when educators empower students to address and correct misbehavior among themselves, positive results are long lasting and wide reaching. The authors provide a blueprint for creating and maintaining a cooperative and respectful classroom climate in which students and teachers work through behavioral issues together. This book will help teachers to ensure that their classrooms are inclusive, rigourous, and creative environments built on mutual respect and designed to promote high levels of student engagement and achievement.

	Decades of research have led Brene Brown to assist readers to create a path to courageous leadership. She states that leadership isn't about titles or power, but about recognizing potential in people and ideas and making the time and effort to develop that potential. Her words and stories connect with readers hearts and minds by challenging what we think we know about brave leadership and providing an actionable approach with tools to bravely and mindfully lead in our work and life.
	As we know, working in the field of education is incredibly demanding. Elena Aguilar helps readers identify and reflect upon twelve factors of emotional resilient educators. She writes about one factor per month that is aligned with common feelings based on the time of the school year. This book is a paradigm shift in thinking of how we accomplish education goals. Student achievement does not occur without student well -being, and staff well -being is essential to student well -being. This books highlights the urgent and important need for self care and provides essential questions and activities to help us navigate our path to emotional resiliency.
	Bettina Love's new book, We Want to Do More Than Survive, explores the implications of predominantly white teachers working with children of color. Love's belief that teachers must be social justice warriors is the basis of her writing. She draws upon creativity, rebellion and determination of abolitionists, and argues for radical change to education in the United States of America so that black children matter enough that their teachers, schools and communities fight for them.