CLIMATE FICTION

“CLI-FI”
History has always proved that books are the first plain on which certain battles are found.

-Toni Morrison
Why climate fiction?

• Helps us live alternate realities
  – Our worst nightmares
  – Our highest hopes
• Goes where science cannot
• Can galvanize society

A rising tide of hopelessness, along with rising sea level, is lapping at the toes of our young adolescents. Thus, our young adult fiction is different from the young adult nature fiction of thirty years ago.
  -David Sobel, Orion 2017

http://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/oct/14/margaret-atwood-road-to-ustopia
"I don't want to do this work forever. I just want to go to school and stop collecting rubbish." Emmanuel, 14 yo

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/picture_gallery/08/africa_kenya_scavengers/html/5.stm
It’s a mirror

• Is this character like me?
• How do my actions affect others?
• How am I like “the other”?

“Woman pulls gun on Smart Meter installer”
July 2012
Develops hope. Inspires Solutions.

William Kamkwamba
Makes things more “managable”

There’s a new environmental tragedy lurking in every newscast. Is it any surprise that young adults are attracted to dystopian visions of the future? It puts their worst fears right out there on the page, and that makes them somewhat more manageable, more quantifiable.

-David Sobel, Orion 2017
Can *Harry Potter* Teach Kids Empathy?

By Melissa Dahl  

There could be an incredibly easy way to teach kids empathy toward outsiders: Hand ‘em a *Harry Potter* book. In a paper published online this week in the *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Italian researchers report that kids who read the series — which features a world in which elves, werewolves, goblins, poltergeists, and other fantastical creatures coexist — exhibited fewer prejudiced feelings toward stigmatized groups, when compared to kids who didn't read the books.
Perhaps the more compelling, and historically consistent, feature of dystopian fiction is the hero’s quest. Faced with an unimaginable tragedy, there is a character who rises to the challenge, faces unbeatable odds, and sometimes beats them, though often suffering grueling pain in the process. The young reader wants to be that hero, wants to rise out of the boring sameness of her everyday life and right the social order, vanquish the enemy... . If we want to avoid the environmental catastrophes and repressive central governments pictured in current dystopian fiction, we’re going to need more adolescents willing to be heroic. We need heroic behavior not just in the arena, but in our everyday lives, at work and in school; we need students and community members who dare to change the social order. If...these other heroines compel us to be heroic, then perhaps these books are part of the solution.

-David Sobel, Orion 2017
How does it work scientifically?

• Truth versus accuracy
• Is the premise scientifically credible or feasible?
• What do we know?
• How does the book reflect or depart from this?
Use in the classroom

Ways to use fiction:
• Cross-curriculum
• Book club
• ELA standards
• Science connections
  – Could this really happen?
  – Scientific dialog

NJ High school cli-fi book club display
Bookclubs

In your groups read aloud from the materials provided and discuss
• How does the book work as a story?
• What themes are in the story?
• How does it work scientifically?
• What connections to “real life” can be made?
• How would you use this with your students?
• What other connections might you ask you students to consider when reading the book?

Create a poster for your book that “sells” the book to other potential readers
#TeachClimate Network

- Monthly
- Virtual
- Opportunity to network and discuss classroom successes and challenges

JOIN US THIS YEAR!