

Employee Development Fellows, Leah Rosenmiller and Lisa Young

D.E.I. Reading Challenge: Read. Learn. Grow. Connect.

As avid readers and co-workers for years, Leah and I (Lisa) have often discussed the books we are reading, what we are learning, and how we connect it with our lives. After several impactful deaths of black individuals at the hands of police in the Spring of 2020, and the growing support of the Black Lives Matter movement, we had teacher friends reaching out to us for book recommendations to share with their students. Inspired by our community's growing interest in reading books to help create a more just and inclusive world, we started the [DEI Reading Challenge](#).

To participate in the DEI Reading Challenge, you [sign up](#) as a participant and fill out a pre-evaluation form. Then, you read one book a month from each of our monthly themes. This is a self-paced challenge so you can always read from our Fall themes or in any order you would like! We provide [booklists](#), but you can select any book that fits with each month's category. After you finish each book, you fill out a [short reflection form](#). We hold [monthly virtual discussions](#) where we reflect on what we are learning, our experience of reading, how our lives are being enriched by reading diverse books and how our service at Lindenwood is being impacted. We keep track of [points and award prizes](#) (swag bag and a Barnes and Noble gift card) for participants. We just ask that you submit your titles to us by April 30th to be awarded prizes.

Since our launch in early October, we have been posting the [participants' progress](#), tracking the [books read by participants](#) and have led two monthly discussions. We have received evidence of immeasurable impact as well. One professor added a book they read for the challenge to their course's reading list. Several professors have mentioned intentions to share more diverse perspectives in their courses. One reader sent me a message that the book she read (featured on our March Neurodiversity booklist) was "a gift." There have been several mentions of eye-opening reading experiences.

Join us in our quest to be better humans *to* each other and *for* one another by signing up, reading, discussing, growing, connecting! (And earning a swag bag and a Barnes and Noble gift card in the process!)

With Winter Break quickly approaching, we hope that you will join us and begin reading from our [4 monthly themes](#) coming up in the Spring!