Santa Ana College's Book of the Year, 2015 - 2016 is "Spare Parts".

Overview:

*Spare Parts: Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and the Battle for the American Dream*

Four undocumented Mexican American students, two great teachers, one robot-building contest and a major motion picture.

In 2004, four Latino teenagers arrived at the Marine Advanced Technology Education Robotics Competition at the University of California, Santa Barbara. They were born in Mexico but raised in Phoenix, Arizona, where they attended an underfunded public high school. No one had ever suggested to Oscar, Cristian, Luis, or Lorenzo that they might amount to much—but two inspiring science teachers had convinced these impoverished, undocumented kids from the desert who had never even seen the ocean that they should try to build an underwater robot.

And build a robot they did. Their robot wasn't pretty, especially compared to those of the competition. They were going up against some of the best collegiate engineers in the country, including a team from MIT backed by a $10,000 grant from ExxonMobil. The Phoenix teenagers had scraped together less than $1,000 and built their robot out of scavenged parts. This was never a level competition—and yet, against all odds…they won!

But this is just the beginning for these four, whose story—which became a key inspiration to the DREAMers movement—will go on to include first-generation college graduations, deportation, bean-picking in Mexico, and service in Afghanistan.

Joshua Davis's Spare Parts is a story about overcoming insurmountable odds and achieving a goal. The challenges that these four teenagers overcame might not be ones that you can relate to specifically. But, all of us can relate to something that is a challenge to overcome.

It is difficult to ask you to read the book before our course completes, but I would like to offer this:

Please view this video trailer and read the book overview above:

If you have more time, read the book - our college library has multiple copies for this event!

This is a true story about overcoming insurmountable odds and achieving a goal. The challenges that these four teenagers overcame might not be ones that you can relate to specifically. But, all of us can relate to something that is a challenge to overcome.

You are choosing to improve your education. In a sense, you must have some challenges that you need to overcome, or are in the midst of overcoming to complete your education.

Please discuss in your blog post: (click to "Create Blog Entry")

- What are your "challenges"?
- What are you doing to overcome them?
- Do you think you will complete your educational goal?

Please feel free to comment on your classmate's posts!