

**PART 1**  
**DECENTERING THE CANON**

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## 1. CURATING AGAINST THE CANON

### *Collaborative Curation for Critical Literacy*

#### THE CALL TO CURATE

Although the word “curate” might evoke images of a museum’s quest to preserve a distant past, today’s content-saturated information landscape empowers teachers and students to become critical curators of their own curriculum. With an internet connection and a well-stocked library, teachers can transform their dusty literature anthology or required book list into a critically curated invitation to text-inspired conversations that explore multiple perspectives, challenge dominant ideologies, and include marginalized voices within and beyond the literary canon.

To meet this challenge, educators need to examine the elements that contribute to robust, layered curation. In a young adult literature course, I teach pre-service teachers how to analyze, select, connect, and share resources that invite readers to read with and against canonical texts (Borsheim-Black, Macaluso, & Petrone, 2014). Four aspects of rich curation have emerged from this shared inquiry: developing thick conceptual frameworks, including counterstories and subjecting them to critical questioning, making multifaceted connections between texts, and taking an exploratory stance toward those texts. Teaching curation prepares pre-service teachers to read against the canon and own their own critical, inquiry-focused curriculum.

#### COLLABORATIVE CURATION FOR CRITICAL LITERACY

I frame this chapter around the concepts of curation, critical literacy, and conceptual learning. Together these frames facilitate the critical literacy necessary for teaching and learning in today’s content-rich, participatory culture.

These theoretical frames spring from both theory and from my experience as a secondary English language arts teacher and school librarian. I remember countless evenings spent lost on the internet as an early career ELA teacher, hunting for the perfect news article, poem, or short story for the next day’s lesson. Later, my degree in library science and experience as a school librarian helped me hone my search skills, discover new resources, and conceptualize literacy and text selection as an interdisciplinary act of collaborative curation between teachers and students, both within individual disciplines like ELA and across disciplinary lines. Together, these