

Using Linked Text Sets to Promote Advocacy and Agency Through a Critical Lens

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Preservice teachers self-selected print and nonprint texts, centering on a social justice theme, and then critiqued their texts through a critical literacy lens.

Nationwide, classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse demographically across race, culture, and ethnicity (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). More culturally and linguistically diverse students are making up classrooms across the United States, and issues of gender, identity, and sexuality demand attention from adolescent and adult literacy educators (Nieto, 2000; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). With this growing diversity and complexity of students' lives, it is necessary to prepare teachers in becoming culturally responsive to not only meet the unique needs of historically marginalized youths but also critically think about mainstream schooling structures and practices that perpetuate social inequalities. All teacher candidates need preparation that places social justice at the forefront to equip them with the tools needed to address issues that may arise surrounding race, class, gender, sexuality, language, and ability in students' lives (Cochran-Smith et al., 2016).

To develop a social justice orientation, teachers must also think about their own privileges and limitations of what they know about the experiences and realities of historically marginalized youths. One way to accomplish this is through reading. Reading provides powerful opportunities for individuals to learn more about issues outside of their own experiences (Gallagher, 2009; Kittle, 2013). More importantly, reading empowers individuals to learn about broader societal issues and provide opportunities to reflect on their responsibility to engage in those issues in a more socially just way (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2014; Wissman, 2007). However, when do adolescents, in particular, receive these opportunities in schools? When curricula seem to

be more focused on test preparation than social agency and responsibility, how will students and teachers confront and navigate issues that they hold close to their hearts?

As a former English teacher and now a teacher educator, I have witnessed the power of using multiple texts centered on urgent topics that have the power to promote activism and agency for students yet may be considered controversial in schools or teachers may not feel comfortable teaching. However, these topics are essential to advocate for students to resist the politics of silencing voices in schools (Wissman, 2007) by using literature as a source of information.

I recently taught a course entitled *Young Adult Literature and Other Forms of Media*, in which I focused on multicultural and marginalized voices in young adult literature. Deep conversations among preservice teachers occurred regarding using literature as a mirror and a window (Bishop, 1990), meaning students need to see themselves in the literature they read and experience others' lives that literature provides so readily. We talked about whose voices are heard and whose are not heard in the young adult titles that preservice teachers selected and read each week throughout the semester.

I wanted preservice teachers to experience reading centered on self-selected choice and reading multiple

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print and nonprint texts. Choice is essential when creating lifelong readers (Kittle, 2013), and choice in and of itself provides agency and activism. I also wanted preservice teachers to consider an alternative format to teaching texts rather than adopting the whole-class novel mentality. Most importantly, I wanted future educators to notice and reflect on their own implicit biases of text selection, such as protagonist choice of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. According to the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity (Staats, Capatosto, Wright, & Jackson, 2016), implicit bias is defined as “the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Activated involuntarily, without awareness or intentional control. Can be either positive or negative” (p. 14).

Therefore, the culminating assignment for the class centered on having students become aware of their implicit biases in a nonjudgmental, reflective way. First, students selected a topic that might often be neglected or avoided in schools within a social justice framework; that is, students found topics centering on human rights and equity and created a collection of texts to immerse themselves in and to use with their future students. Because the class was structured on a critical literacy framework, after creating their collection, called a linked text set (see the next section for a description), preservice teachers critiqued their set, noting what was still missing and how their personal biases influenced text selection. For students, what was missing proved to be the most important lesson they learned.

In this article, I share three preservice teachers’ linked text sets, which included young adult literature and other media forms, and their critiques of the linked text sets, centering on a self-selected social justice topic. These linked text sets are provided through narrative and visually via a link to each set on Padlet (<https://padlet.com/>), a visual bulletin board similar to Pinterest. The three preservice teachers’ topics were racism and the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement, rape culture, and ending the stigma behind mental health. I end the article with discussion of how preservice teachers felt advocacy and agency through creating and then critiquing their linked text sets and what recognizing their implicit biases means to their future students and teaching. My hope is that by sharing what these three preservice teachers found in their critiques of their work, other educators may be able to not only use these linked text sets and suggested text additions and create new linked text sets for their students, but also think about their own curricular decisions through a critical lens.

What Are Linked Text Sets?

Linked text sets seem to have originated from expanding the high school English canon (Tatum, Wold, & Elish-Piper, 2009; Wold, Elish-Piper, & Schultz, 2008). Originally, text sets have traditionally been print based (Short & Harste, 1996), whereas linked text sets extend the notion of text to include print (written) and nonprint (e.g., movie clips, music, art; Wold & Elish-Piper, 2009) to respond to the New London Group’s (1996) argument for a broader definition of literacy. Research on linked text sets has also included social justice issues, such as Dodge and Crutcher’s (2015) work on using linked text sets to challenge heteronormativity, thus inviting an inclusive classroom for LGBTQ students. The purpose of this project was for new literacy educators to extend Dodge and Crutcher’s (2015) work by critiquing their linked text set to recognize their biases in curriculum creation and then expand it by challenging not only heteronormativity but also the lack of representation of gender, race, and able-ism in the texts found in many classrooms.

There are numerous benefits to incorporating linked text sets in the classroom. First, by providing an array of titles in print and nonprint modes, students reading these texts must make intertextual connections between and among them. Intertextuality facilitates the construction of new meaning by having students think generatively and reflectively among multiple text structures (Pytash, Batchelor, Kist, & Srsen, 2014). These intertextual connections invite students to notice similarities, who and what are being commonly represented, while also noticing various (or differing) perspectives.

Today’s adolescents are in need of diverse forms of texts and texts from a diversity of cultural voices. Linked text sets take the reader beyond comfortable, conventional experiences and provide multiple socio-cultural voices. These counternarratives help students “get exposure to nondominant views, and hear voices often silenced in the school curriculum” (Moss, 2011, p. 46).

Adolescents today view literacy broadly, and linked text sets do not privilege print over nonprint modes. Therefore, students who play video games, listen to music, or watch YouTube videos outside of school can feel that their interests are honored and included inside school walls. Moreover, one text format should not be the only way to experience compelling thought, especially when these texts are designed to broaden intellectual possibilities and empathies by taking the reader beyond comfortable, conventional experiences and providing multiple sociocultural voices (Elish-Piper, Wold, & Schwingendorf, 2014).

Typically, linked text sets build on thematic issues (e.g., adversity) or topics (e.g., war) or are centered on essential questions (e.g., How can literature serve as a vehicle for social change?), which can generate powerful discussions while diving deeper into complicated or controversial issues, thus providing opportunities to promote activism and agency among students and to disrupt the single story (Adichie, 2009), which often silences the experiences of marginalized voices (Dodge & Crutcher, 2015).

In particular, the linked text sets that the three preservice teachers highlighted in this article created centered on thematic issues and topics through which students felt they could become agents of change by implementing their linked text set in their future classrooms and student teaching experiences, while also advocating for marginalized students based on these self-selected topics of race, rape, and mental health. As Shipp (2017) noted, “by infusing ideas, arguments, and texts that are culturally relevant, educators create and expand opportunities for students to think critically about the world and themselves and to formulate ideas that promote civic engagement” (p. 36).

There are numerous ways to use and create linked text sets. For example, one way is to center it on one anchor text, which all students read. Students are then invited to select additional texts throughout the unit to read and discuss either in small groups, such as literature circles (four or five students each), or independently. Conversations will then be based on intertextual connections, or new noticings based on the theme or topic surrounding the linked text set. Additionally, if the set is connected via essential questions, discussions in class and in small groups can be centered on how the texts address the questions. For this particular assignment, preservice teachers selected a topic centered on a social justice issue that they wanted their future students to better understand and become immersed in, that is, a topic of urgency that quite often may be neglected in the curriculum or even avoided. No particular text initiated the linked text sets. Instead, preservice teachers collected and read numerous texts surrounding their chosen topic and visually linked them using Padlet. The project is described next in further detail.

Social Justice Linked Text Set and Critique Assignment

As mentioned earlier, as a culminating activity, preservice teachers created their own linked text set centered on a social justice issue that was of deep interest to them, and practicing educators can follow this activity

to reveal and question their own curriculum. Preservice teachers were asked to collect at least 10 texts (print and nonprint) so they could dive into their issue and then aesthetically arrange the texts in a Padlet, providing a two- or three-sentence summary of each text above its title. (The Padlet layout allowed book jacket images and links to websites and videos to be embedded in the display.) Students then wrote a summary of how the text set addressed their chosen social justice issue and how reading these texts would impact their future students.

After creating their linked text set, preservice teachers critiqued their collection in a reflection paper, taking on a critical stance in which they reflected on how their collection represented gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, and other positionalities. Specifically, they were asked,

What’s missing? Whose voices are not heard? Whose view is privileged? What systems of power and social issues are present? What are you noticing through viewing your linked text set again, but this time with a critical lens? What would you do differently?

These questions are often posed in critical literacy. Critical literacy posits readers’ need to take on a critical perspective when engaging with texts, because texts are never neutral, and understand the sociopolitical systems in which we live, such as race, class, and gender, by examining the interaction between language and power (Lewison et al., 2014).

The following sections highlight the linked text sets created by the three preservice teachers. Each section begins with an overview of the social justice theme and why the theme was selected. Then, I discuss various titles included in the linked text set, highlighting, in particular, young adult literature. Each section ends by sharing preservice teachers’ personal critiques and reflections of what they noticed when reviewing their linked text set with a critical lens and what they would do differently.

“#BlackLivesMatter: Why You Should Care (Because You Really Should)”

The first linked text set’s aim and purpose is to help shape students’ understanding of historical and cultural context of the Black Lives Matter movement. Tasha (all names are pseudonyms) chose the Black Lives Matter movement because

I have Black friends who matter. Every night, I think about their safety and well-being, and with everything that is going on in the news, it concerns me even more. I am aware

of my privilege as an Indian American middle class female, and I want to use this platform to echo the voices and stories of Black people without overtaking them. If I don't use my platform as an educator to bring awareness to this topic, then I feed into the ignorance of which I want no part of.

As the reason for creating this set, Tasha stated,

Through various texts, students will be able to analyze and piece together how the mistreatment of Black individuals in America predates this movement and still continues today. Using both nonfiction and fiction lenses, students move through this [linked text set] understanding the different perspectives that brought this movement to the mainstream media.

To view her linked text set in its entirety, visit her Padlet at <https://padlet.com/stephetm/blacklivesmatter>.

Tasha's underlying questions were "What does it mean to be a Black person in America today?" and "Who is often the face of the Black Lives Matter movement? Whose stories are often excluded from the movement?" Specifically, she addressed why the stories of many black women (specifically, black trans women) and girls are often ignored by mainstream media, as well as members of the LGBTQ and disabled communities. Tasha commented that many of her selected texts significantly address these questions. In fact, she created an extensive linked text set of over 20 possible suggestions for students.

Tasha's linked text set included young adult literature titles, such as Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely's (2015) *All American Boys*, which tells the story of a black teen named Rashad who is beaten by a police officer in the community. The town takes sides, and racial tension arises. Tasha also included *Monster* by Walter Dean Myers and Kekla Magoon's (2014) *How It Went Down*, which follows the story of a black teen shot by a white man, where again the community is divided by race.

Additionally, Tasha's set included other print forms, such as John Lewis and Andrew Aydin's (2013) graphic novel *March: Book One*, in which Lewis recalls events leading up to the Civil Rights movement in memoir fashion, and Marilyn Nelson's (2005) picture book *A Wreath for Emmett Till*, which is told through a poem centered on the life of Emmett, a black teen who was lynched for allegedly whistling at a white woman. Tasha paired this last text with Chris Crowe's (2003) *Getting Away With Murder: The True Story of the Emmett Till Case*, which discusses Emmett's case before, during, and after the trial. Tasha also included a historical representation of the Black Lives Matter movement, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (2016).

Furthermore, this linked text set includes Ta-Nehisi Coates's (2015) *Between the World and Me*, written by the author to his son regarding what it means to be a black man or woman in society. Tasha also included voices often underrepresented when talking about the Civil Rights movement, such as Claudette Colvin. Her story about how she refused to give up her seat before Rosa Parks is told in the book *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* by Phillip Hoose (2009).

Regarding nonprint media, Tasha included numerous videos that capture the voices of the Black Lives Matter movement and its founders, as well as numerous videos and images leading up to the creation of the movement, such as the protests and riots in Ferguson, Missouri following the shooting death of a young black man by a white policeman. Tasha also included images and videos discussing violence against black trans women.

Although this appears to be a well-rounded linked text set regarding positionalities, Tasha felt that she would have liked to include more marginalized people within the black community and the ways they have been disadvantaged: "I don't feel as if I have completely covered everything about this movement and the history surrounding it." However, she said that creating this set and examining it with a broader, critical lens helped her and will help her students

understand how this is all connected in society. The Black Lives Movement didn't start out of nowhere. Due to institutional racism and various other systems that surround it, the disadvantaged were easy targets for those who had power and no consequences.

Tasha believes that this linked text set is important to include in her curriculum because

students will know someone who has been affected by the killings of Black people, and it is especially critical for non-Black students to experience a perspective that is often erased from the media or twisted to fit into a dehumanizing narrative about Black people; this movement shows students to think beyond themselves and work together to actively combat against racism in their communities and beyond.

Tasha also mentioned bias when critiquing her linked text set; she said she was speaking on the topic from a privileged point of view.

Anti-blackness is common in my culture, and though I tried to do my best in finding appropriate resources, I acknowledge that I cannot speak on behalf or speak over the experiences of Black people with the bias that is rampant in my community.

Regarding the overall experience, what Tasha appreciated the most about the critiquing was that she learned that creating a linked text set is a work in progress: “It wasn’t enough because there is so much more that needs to be addressed that unfortunately is not being published in young adult novels, and it should be!”

“I Never Wanted This: Victim-Blaming and Rape Culture”

The next linked text set centers on perspectives of rape and rape culture, especially regarding the media, as in music videos such as Robin Thicke’s (2013) “Blurred Lines” and Jamie Foxx’s (2008) “Blame It.” To view Serena’s linked text set in its entirety, visit her Padlet at <https://padlet.com/hamilts8/RapeLinkedTextSet>. Specifically, it focuses on victim blaming. Serena said, “Both of the music videos I added address a man’s perspective by placing the blame on the girl because she was wearing something sexy or drinking alcohol, and that it was her fault, that she was asking for it.” In creating her linked text set, Serena said, “I wanted to bring about an entire new lesson for students about rape and how our culture has justified it through some perverse ideas that women don’t need to say yes to it.” In particular, she wants her students to question and notice why these texts seem “eerily similar” regarding the plotline, especially when many of the plots include how adult figures (e.g., parents, school administrators) treat the victim differently after the rape, often degrading or not believing them, and to notice that few rapists are prosecuted if they are reported to the police.

When creating her linked text set, Serena chose to include more adult novels, such as *The Hotel New Hampshire* by John Irving and *Room* by Emma Donoghue, to show rape in the context of other events, whereas she included Alina Klein’s *Rape Girl* and Laurie Halse Anderson’s *Speak*, which focus almost solely on the circumstances and events of the rape. Serena also included images from the Terre des Femmes ad campaign featuring names that females may be called based on their heel heights and skirt hemlines. Serena argued that her future students’ exposure to these texts, and other artwork, will address how our culture shames and blames victims, noting how the media contributes to these opinions.

Serena also included short stories (e.g., “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?” by Joyce Carol Oates), poems (e.g., “Rape” by Adrienne Rich), and TED talks (e.g., Brynne Thomas’s “A Life of Rape Culture”). Furthermore, Serena included nonfiction articles, such as “When the Rapist Doesn’t See It as Rape” by Nicholas

Kristof (2015), written from the viewpoint of men, and Alexandra Molotkow’s (2015) piece entitled “Why Are Women Reluctant to Use the Word Rape?” which discusses the power of words.

Most impressive, however, was her inclusion of young adult literature titles, such as *Asking for It* by Louise O’Neill (2016), *What We Saw* by Aaron Hartzler (2015), and *Living Dead Girl* by Elizabeth Scott. *Asking for It* tells the story of Emma O’Donovan, who struggles to accept being raped at a party and to regain acceptance by her peers and the town. The following morning, Emma wakes up on her front porch unsure of what happened the night before, but when pictures start to circulate of her rape, she is ostracized and struggles to have people believe her, including her own family. *What We Saw* also involves a party and pictures and discusses the struggle of walking the line between guilt and innocence. When pictures surface of Stacey Stallard being raped after a party, the protagonist, Kate Weston, must determine what happened that night and who witnessed it.

Serena also took great interest in studying the symbolism and imagery represented on the young adult literature book jackets. In particular, she talked about the cover of *Asking for It*, where “all that is depicted is a completely naked Barbie doll, shown from her waist down, posed seductively.” She argued that the use of the Barbie represents the way in which women are seen in a sexual manner, unable to be believed but rather used for the purpose of another’s pleasure.

After critiquing her linked text set, Serena realized that viewing it from a critical lens allowed her to notice that the majority of the protagonists and authors are white, middle class, heterosexual females centered on Western culture. She also noticed that whereas the protagonists are typically female, the female voice is not the privileged view, but rather the rapist and the rest of society are the privileged voices. She said she would include more perspectives into her linked text set, specifically focusing on “the male perspective, both as the victim of rape and the perpetrator as well as perspectives from other cultures and countries in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America.” Furthermore, Serena noticed that most of the young adult literature centers the rape event during a party or “during a moment where the character is drinking alcohol, and I think it’s important to include stories and perspectives from voices that fall outside of these supposed moments when rape is most likely to happen.”

Serena reflected that her linked text set provides students a way to identify themselves in the voices of other characters throughout these texts, allowing

students to delve deeper into how society perceives and treats this issue. She hopes that reading, viewing, and discussing rape and victim blaming through multiple texts will tackle this controversial issue head-on, thus providing voice for the often silenced victims of rape and how students can alter their thinking about victim blaming and eliminate potential rape situations that they might encounter or be a part of in society.

Reflecting on the critique component, Serena, now in her first year of teaching, noted that she critiques curriculum, either created by her or given to her, on a continual basis:

Without learning how to view texts through a critical lens in your class, I would not have the understanding or ability to continue this practice into my first year of teaching, and wow, have there been some voices missing in my current curriculum, and I feel that it is my job to put them back in.

“Ending the Stigma Behind Mental Health”

Ellen selected an issue that affects her personally. Her mother is a mental health therapist who works with runaway children and teens. As a future educator, one of Ellen’s missions in her classroom is to help her students who may be struggling with various mental health issues and to provide a safe environment in which to discuss and bring to light numerous mental health disorders. She stated, “I included texts where students who were struggling with these issue could relate and for students who need to be aware that their peers could be affected by them and how to be there as a friend.” She also discussed how she has witnessed several occasions of bullying, where some situations led to suicide. Ellen wants the stigma surrounding mental health to end and believes that immersing students in various texts regarding mental health will hopefully provide empathy toward this topic. Her linked text set on Padlet can be found at <https://padlet.com/collineb/wi6nytox8ui5>.

Ellen chose several young adult literature titles to represent a variety of mental health disorders. For example, *Cut* by Patricia McCormick (2000) tells the story of 15-year-old Callie, who cuts her wrists to cope with her personal life. Eventually, she is sent to a mental health facility for treatment and meets other girls with various mental health disorders (e.g., eating disorders, drug addictions, depression). While in this facility, she learns that it is OK to ask for help. *OCD Love Story* by Corey Ann Haydu (2013) depicts Bea, a high school senior who is diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder. Throughout the novel, she comes to terms with

her diagnosis and what that means for her while still trying to be a normal teen. *Everything, Everything* by Nicola Yoon (2015), Ellen’s favorite text in the set, depicts mental illness as a surprise twist in the plot. She also included *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher to encourage discussion about depression and suicide in teenagers. In fact, after completing this assignment, Ellen continued to search for titles and found *Made You Up* by Francesca Zappia (2015), which is told through the most unreliable narrator, a high school senior who struggles with schizophrenia.

Ellen’s linked text set also included nonfiction titles, such as Jerold J. Kreisman and Hal Straus’s (2010) *I Hate You—Don’t Leave Me: Understanding the Borderline Personality*, which covers different aspects of borderline personality disorder and the ways that it can manifest itself, and a YouTube video entitled “What It’s Like to Have ‘High-Functioning’ Anxiety.” Ellen included the song “It Comes Back to You” by the band Imagine Dragons and images of mental health from Huffington Post’s Stronger Together initiative’s “Ending the Stigma” ads. Finally, she incorporated a clip of a mental health awareness ad campaign depicting a young girl waiting for the bus, in which viewers can see inside her head and witness all of the negative thoughts she has about herself and her life.

Ellen noticed that the majority of her texts center on female characters who are white, middle/upper class individuals. She said, “I found it ironic that the majority of the well-known texts I found only portray White females.” She especially noted how there is a lack of sexual orientation in her characters, which bothered her, too. She stated,

Many LGBT teens and young adults are struggling with acceptance from their friends and families as well as from society. Depression and suicide rates are extremely high for this demographic, and I think that would be very important to include when I revise this linked text set.

Ellen further reflected,

After examining my [linked text set] from a broader lens, I am able to see more clearly that not all of the texts are relatable for all of my future students. I need to add more variety, more depth in demographics.

Concluding Thoughts

Eighty percent of the U.S. population of teachers identifies as white, female, and middle class (Boser, 2014), which means that many teachers work with students with backgrounds, perspectives, and ideologies that are

different from their own. This particular activity assisted preservice teachers in recognizing the imbalance that their personal viewpoint might have on curricular choices, and they now recognize that they will view decisions they make in the classroom with a more critical stance. I encourage all educators to ponder, Whose voices am I leaving out in this unit? Who needs to be better represented in the text selections that I encourage in my classroom?

When teachers confront the implicit biases that they carry, a deeper awareness emerges of their curricular decisions based on these biases. In this study, preservice teachers noted that their critique of their own work gave them the freedom to notice their own biases and what was quite possibly missing in the literature for young adults. Preservice teachers commented on how looking at their work with a critical lens allowed them to notice whose voices they were privileging in the texts that they selected and to feel that this activity of critique would be worthwhile to have their students conduct as well.

Moreover, as these three preservice teachers noticed, there is a danger of the single story being used in classrooms. For example, Ellen recognized that the majority of characters portraying mental health issues are white, upper class females and that these stories are privileged over others. This connection also relies on preservice teachers' understanding of intersectionality, which their linked text sets exemplified, and is part of the conversation regarding privilege, oppression, and marginalization within a social justice framework. When educators are able to ascertain that diversity includes an overlap of identities, especially within the texts that they want their students to encounter, then there is more of a chance that the single story will be recognized and eradicated.

Finally, preservice teachers' creations of their linked text sets provided passion and feelings of empowerment that they had not felt in their prior schooling. They felt inspired to become more aware of social injustices through reading texts, which they believed made a difference in themselves and had the potential to make a difference in their future students. Preservice teachers noted that they wanted to take their linked text sets to the next level with their future students, meaning that they envision including activism as next steps. For example, one preservice teacher stated,

We could learn about writing petitions, or make ad campaigns, you know, like posters, flyers, or commercials, to have other students in the school also become involved in our topic and get more students aware of what is happening in our own backyard.

TAKE ACTION!

1. Think about a social justice issue that tugs at your heart. Turn this issue into a theme centered on two essential questions that will drive this issue for your students.
2. Create a linked text set of 10 to 15 different texts—print, such as picture books, novels, and magazines, and nonprint, such as YouTube videos, TED talks, zines, artwork, dance clips, and song lyrics—that will allow your students to delve deeply into this issue.
3. Look through the linked text set to critically analyze each text (and your set as a whole) for its display of the following: gender, race and ethnicity, culture, age, body image, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation. In particular, what is missing? Whose voices are not heard? Whose view is privileged? What systems of power and social issues are present (other than the theme that you selected)? What do you notice through viewing your linked text set again, but this time with a critical lens?

Educators can learn from these preservice teachers by reflecting on the various texts that they use to explore these topics with their students and by considering what topics the texts actually address. Critiquing these topics and texts through a critical literacy lens can provide similar noticings and even a way to share these noticings with students. Although some topics may be considered too controversial to teach, educators can position themselves by providing a list of high-quality, award-winning texts to administrators and offering the numerous position papers by the National Council for Teachers of English that address how censorship can be dangerous to society and education. These topics exist both in and outside of school, and when educators provide opportunities to discuss them, the term *controversial* often fades away because students become informed, enlightened, and grounded via immersing themselves in the numerous texts that linked text sets provide.

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