

# Redefining the Canon:

## Restorative and Responsive Pedagogy

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# Introductions and Overview



The American literary canon fails to celebrate the merit of non-traditional texts and the diversity of student populations in modern classrooms. This presentation will focus on how educators can redefine the literary canon to include perspectives and language that strengthen inclusive classroom community, academic rigor, and positive student identity development.

# Why Redefine the Canon?

## It's a Restorative Practice

*A classroom framework that focuses on positive relationship development and building classroom community.*

### Examples:

- **Prioritize Inclusion**

- Intentionally group students with different peers, encouraging critical thinking and problem solving. In doing so, students can share individual and collective perspectives.

- **Cultivate Confidence**

- *Eliminate the intimidation associated with assessments by creating different platforms for students to demonstrate skills and understanding. Help students focus on personal growth through offering multiple rounds of feedback. Allow students to assess their own progress and performance.*



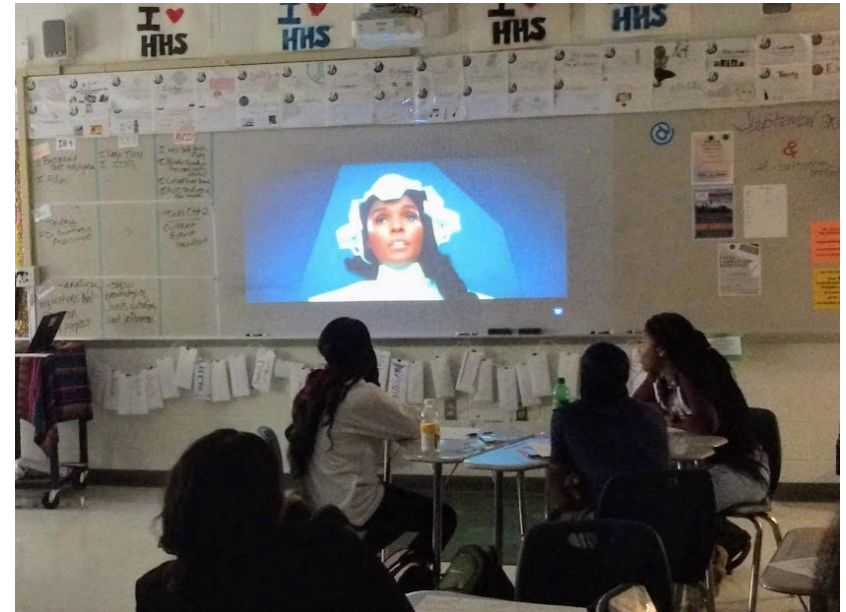
# Why Redefine the Canon?

## It's a Culturally Responsive Practice

*A pedagogical approach that uses familiar cultural information for the purpose of scaffolding learning and promoting effective information processing.*

### Examples:

- **Use of Media that Positively Depicts Represented Cultures.**
  - *Beyoncé's "visual-album" Lemonade paired with bell hooks "Moving Beyond Pain" can help students to grapple with the notions of language, race, class, gender, and sexuality. The use of different media combined with representation boosts student engagement.*
  - *Nikki Giovanni's "Thug Life" tattoo interview with Sway Universe, in conjunction with her poem "All Eyez on Me" helps students to process major themes. Giovanni presents a worldview that contradicts the dominant narrative surrounding Tupac and Black culture.*



# How to Redefine the Canon

- “Ready for Rigor” Framework
- Swapping Texts
- Supplementing Texts

## Examples:

- ***Of Mice and Men* X *Girls Like Us* by Shelia Weller**
  - *The power of empathy, the rigidness of life, and the need for human connection are just as present in Girls Like Us as in Of Mice and Men.*
- ***The Grapes of Wrath* X *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie**
  - *The connotations of poverty and humanity are represented in both texts. Both The Grapes of Wrath and The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian feature protagonists who take massive risks to find new opportunities. Full of hardship and misfortune. both highlight the power of resilience and friendship while calling readers to examine views of the “American Dream” beyond its known stereotype.*



# Key Takeaways

- Redefining the canon is a best practice for educators because it is a restorative practice and a culturally responsive practice that encourages both academic and socio-emotional growth for students.
- Redefining the canon should be a student-centric process that aims to challenge the limitations of dominant culture.
- Classroom tested ways to redefine the canon include swapping out texts by considering multiple perspectives and common themes, widening one's definition of "text," applying a critical lens to canonical texts, pairing canonical texts and disruptive texts, and providing student choice.

Thank  
You!