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Curation: A Multimodal Practice for Socially-Engaged Action

The Role of Curation in Tenure and Promotion Documentation

By Seán McCarthy, James Madison University, Lori Beth De Hertogh, James Madison University, and Vanessa Rouillon, James Madison University

This webtext explores how curation can be applied to tenure and promotion (T&P) materials in the field of Rhetoric and Composition, specifically for scholars who practice multimodal scholarship in community engagement contexts. . The authors argue that as the field embraces curation in socially-engaged work, so too should we bring curation methods to how we assemble are our T&P materials/packets/portfolios. The authors theorize curation as a relational activity that suits scholars who practice community engagement; present case studies of their own work; and offer recommendations for how Rhetoric and Composition scholars can curate their own professional practice.

We have crafted this webtext using Adobe Spark Pages. A text-based version of this essay is available in Google Doc format.

Button with link to GoogleDoc

Introduction

Although curation has become a practice of interest to rhetoric and composition studies, particularly to those of us who work in community engagement and digital media, we rarely (if ever) talk about tenure and promotion documentation as a form of curation. Yet, it certainly is: Our annual, third year reviews, and tenure and promotion packets are assemblages of objects designed to rhetorically persuade specific audiences, within and beyond our departments and colleges. Viewed this way, we suggest there is a need for more theorizing about how our public curation work intersects with, is informed by, and is in tension with the curatorial work we do behind the closed doors of our academic institutions.

This webtext opens up an expanded idea of curation that is inclusive of both our public research and our professional advancement. In the section that follows, we offer some definitional work and discuss how curation has thus far shown up in writing studies. Following that, we present three short

case studies that explore our own curatorial work and how we have chosen to (or struggled to) respond to that work in tenure and promotion (T&P) documentation. In discussing these projects, we look at how our curatorial efforts in community spaces deeply inform the arrangement of our tenure and promotion materials and the kinds of rhetorical and curatorial arguments we have (and are) making within and through such arrangements and materials. Finally, we offer a provisional set of best practices for assembling curated T&P portfolios and documentation, as well as make theoretical claims about the value of theorizing T&P milestones as important instances of curation.

We represent scholars in three different career stages, each of whom is employed in the School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication at James Madison University, a four-year public institution located in Virginia. Each of us does public, socially-engaged curatorial work across a range of media and are at different stages of the tenure and promotion process. Lori Beth has recently completed her third year review; Vanessa is in the process of applying for tenure, and Seán was granted tenure and promotion to the level of associate professor in 2018. Our combined experience of public curation, along with our vantage points along different stages of the tenure and promotion process, has convinced us that viewing professional advancement as a form of curation can be of use to the field, particularly those of us engaged in curatorial practices that support socially-engaged work.

Curation and T&P: An Overview

Changing curatorial styles in the modern art gallery might seem like a somewhat unusual source of inspiration for thinking about T&P practices in writing studies. However, there is much to learn from this unusual pairing of domains, particularly for those of us who undertake community engagement scholarship. In *Ways of Curating* (2014), internationally renowned art curator Hans Ulrich Obrist makes the case that the role of the curator is to “bridge gaps and build bridges between artists, the public, institutions and other types of communities by connecting different people and practices, and creating the conditions for triggering sparks between them” (Obrist, 154). To those of us who practice community engagement, this might sound quite a lot like what we do and maybe not what is typically associated with art galleries. Indeed, the role of the curator in the 18th and 19th centuries aligned more with popular conception of the curator as someone whose primary role focused on the arrangement of objects.

Historically, galleries were designed *salon* style, where paintings filled every available space, floor to ceiling. As the philosophies, practices, and objects changed, so did exhibition spaces and the role of the curator. Art works such as Matisse's enormous, hazy canvases of lilies challenged the design of exhibitions spaces; and Duchamp's found object installations forced curator and viewer alike to consider what constitutes art in the first place. The arrival of modernism forever changed the conditions for experiencing art, and the role of curation changed accordingly. As Obrist writes, the contemporary exhibition "makes no pretence to being capable of producing something of value alone. The very idea of an exhibition is that we live in a world with each other, in which it is possible to make arrangements, associations, connections and wordless gestures, and, through this mise en scène, to speak" (Obrist, 32). In this framing, curation returns to its latin root, *curare*, to care for: a profoundly relational practice that mobilizes art as a springboard to reimagine social relations.

The depth of meaning associated with curation often get flattened by contemporary usage, thanks, in part, to the ubiquity of digital technologies and the deluge of data they produce and store. As Obrist sees it, curation surfaces in contemporary discourse as a way to deal with the pressing need to gather, contain, and manipulate digital data into sensible shapes. However, merely describing the selection and display of objects as "curation" reneges on the concept's history, professional standards, and potential for social transformation (Obrist, 23). We would do well to be careful how we use the term. That said, many scholars have productively adapted curation to other disciplinary contexts for a variety of purposes. Writing from the perspective of the digital humanities, Sabharwal writes about archivists who have developed digital curation skills to make archive collections more accessible (2015, 27). In education, Potter and Gilje (2015) explore curation as a new kind of literacy, and Almjeld (2015) mobilizes the concept to explore how teenage girls assemble images in social media as an identity-building practice in girlhood studies. These examples merely sample a growing number of scholarly publications that use curation as a metaphor or borrow curatorial methods to enrich a different kind of research.

From the vantage point of writing studies, curation clearly has much in common with the rhetorical canon of arrangement. Scholars such as Collin Gifford Brooke (2009) and Susan Delagrange (2011) have done admirable work updating the classical term for contemporary usage, particularly in how arrangement relates to digital environments. Even so, arrangement's

roots in speech, text, and argument seems less capacious than curation's more fluid relation between objects, space, and bodies.

Curation brings an embodied presence to the rhetorical art of arrangement—which is perhaps why it aligns so well with community engagement. Consider the sheer breadth of activities considered by the CCCC's Statement on Community Engaged Projects: interactions such as facilitated public discussions, artistic performances, or policy debates sit alongside artifacts and publications such as rhetorical histories, digital humanities projects, newspapers, and community publications. The engagement scholar's practice of moving from textual practice to embodied performance has strong parallels with the curator's role of facilitating social interactions around art objects. We may hesitate to call ourselves curators proper, but there is no doubt that the relational spirit of *curare* animates both domains.

Nobody has done more work to bring the relational potential of curation to writing studies than Tobi Jacobi. In his article "Against Infrastructure: Curating Community Literacy in a Jail Writing Program" (2016), Jacobi explores the various valences of curation in relation to the The SpeakOut! program for incarcerated writers. This long-standing program has a variety of curated public presences, including on-site workshops, a website, and a print journal aimed at a variety of audiences such as writers, local facilitators, prison educators and a global readership (Jacobi 65). Jacobi suggests that along with this public-facing understanding of curation should also be accompanied by a more inward-looking one. The SpeakOut! program, in common with many community initiatives, suffers from precarious funding and uneven infrastructural support. In response, Jacobi and his coalition of writers, teachers, and supporters have developed what he calls a participatory curatorial model by building strategic support networks, more short term, tactical partnerships, and demonstrations of activism such as publishing alongside students and incarcerated writers. In short, for Jacobi and his collaborators, "A curatorial approach provides a method for thinking through institutional infrastructures, sustainability, and public investment—and effective story-making" (Jacobi, 68).

Following Jacobi's call to mobilize curation as an alternative approach to static institutional infrastructures can be extremely valuable particularly for those of us who practice engaged and non-traditional scholarship. Every year, most of us, whether we are on the tenure track or not, assemble our

work for performance evaluations such as end-of-year and third or fourth year reviews, or tenure and promotion applications. Yet this labor is largely viewed as a standard administrative task that requires little creativity and differs little from one year to the next: a necessary but boring accounting that stands in stark contrast to the more exciting, public, and impactful ideas that we normally attach to curation. Bringing a curatorial approach to the important inward-looking labor of T&P might shift the somewhat static process of arranging texts to a more animated, curated experience that invites conversation, deepens understanding of non-traditional work, and rewards the kinds of creative and activist risks that engaged projects demand.

What would it be like to present such work that makes sense of its public-facing presence alongside the teaching, research, and the service work that might have powered it—to balance accountability with care? In the next section, we begin to answer this question by looking at specific examples from us that explores how we have grappled with and adapted T&P protocols to suit our curatorial work. First, Lori Beth De Hertogh will account for her experiences aligning her work in directing an international organization called the Feminist Scholars Digital Workshop with her third-year review. Second, Vanessa Rouillon will explain how she accounted for an extensive community-based archival and memory project about Albert R. Lee (1874-1948) in her tenure materials. Finally, Seán McCarthy will detail how he gently bent the rules of his tenure submission to do justice to a community-based project about the importance of education to the African American community in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

From Print to Multimodal: Lori Beth's Case Study

In the summer of 2018, I met with my department chair to discuss strategies for crafting my up-coming third year review, which was due the following spring. Traditionally third-year reviews, like tenure and promotion packets, are curated portfolios intended to persuade individuals tasked with faculty assessment that a scholar's work is meaningful, impactful, and in alignment with college and university goals.

A third-year review portfolio might include things like syllabi, student evaluations, refereed publications, and grant proposals. Traditionally, scholars create their portfolios by printing out their materials and organizing

them into oversized binders where everything is carefully stapled, tabulated, and labeled.

Because I am primarily a multimodal scholar, physical binders of my work did not fully capture the different modes represented in my work. For example, interactive web texts had to be printed, hole-punched, and handcuffed between metal rings, a process that supported the text-based aspects of my scholarship, but not the interactive, visual, design elements of my work.

Late one evening as I sat on my office floor listening to the whirl of an exhausted printer and surrounded by silver paper clips and loose papers, I realized that a different curatorial approach to my portfolio was needed. I met with my department chair the next day and made a case for curating my third-year review as a multimodal text. My chair and I agreed that I would still need the binders to meet traditional tenure and promotion standards and to obviate any potential push-back on my portfolio. But we also decided that it absolutely made sense for me to create a multimodal iteration of my third-year review.

With renewed vigor, I recreated my portfolio using Adobe Spark Pages. I used this platform to curate and showcase my work in what the CCCC Position Statement on “Promotion and Tenure Guidelines for Work with Technology” (2015) describes as “the medium and native environment in which it was intended to be viewed" (n.p.). But the real advantage of Spark was that it allowed me to embody a curatorial space where the things I care about a multimodal scholar—design elements, written words, visuals—merged to make a rhetorical argument about the value of my work.

Unlike the binders, my digital portfolio captured the different modalities of my scholarship and allowed me to demonstrate how my projects connected to and informed each other. For example, the hyperlinking and image capabilities of Adobe allowed me to showcase my extensive work in founding and directing an international organization called the Feminist Scholars Digital Workshop and, later, in creating a digital archive of workshop materials. Founded in 2013, the Feminist Scholars Digital Workshop (FSDW) was an online, interdisciplinary conference for individuals working on feminist research projects. The idea behind the workshop was to create a community-oriented, socially-engaged space for scholars, artists, activists, and teachers to receive peer feedback on

feminist projects. Using a digital platform to curate the work I had done in directing FSDW, and later in creating the workshop's archive, allowed my reviewers to interact with my scholarly content in its native environment, understand connections across my projects, and to see the broader impact of my engagement work.

In the glideshow that follows, I visually present both the physical and multimodal ways I curated scholarly materials for my third-year review. Although much of my pedagogy is also embedded in digital modes of production, the glideshow focuses on my scholarly productions and engagement work in founding and directing the Feminist Scholars Digital Workshop.

This glideshow demonstrates both how I curated my portfolio and underscores the essential difference between traditional curations of tenure and promotion materials and multimodal ones. Another goal of the glideshow is to illustrate how curation for tenure and promotion is fundamentally a "multimodal rhetorical practice" (Hawkins and Novotny, n.p.)—or a practice intended to influence and persuade. Ultimately, I hope this glideshow offers other multimodal scholars ideas for how to curate their own scholarship as a multimodal rhetorical practice.
The binders I initially created for my third-year review were divided into three categories: Teaching, Scholarship, and Professional Development. While the binders allowed me to see the physical materiality of my work (Shipka, 2011), they simultaneously dissolved other modes of scholarly production.

Lori Beth's tenure folders.

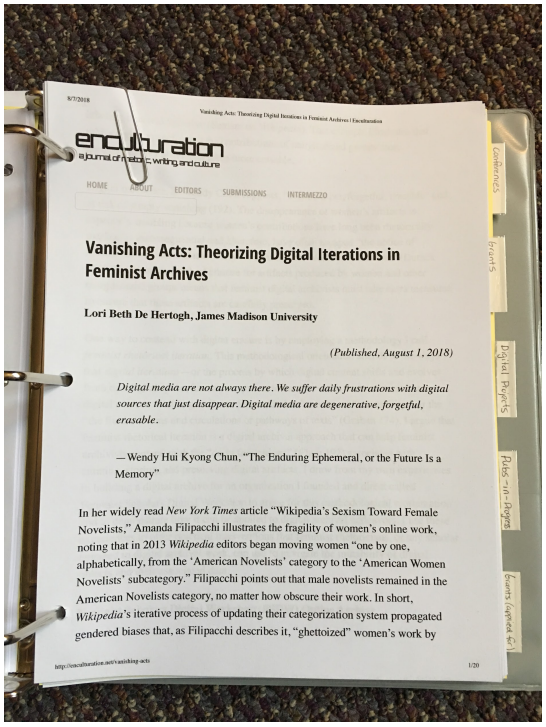
The following is a short video of me thumbing through printed pages of materials from FSDW. I share this video because it highlights how a printed version of an online text flattens its multimodality and information architecture.

youtube video of me thumbing through my third-year binders

My third-year review binders also included screenshots from an online archive I created of FSDW materials. While the written text was preserved, the interactive, rhetorical features of archived materials (e.g., videos, interactive maps, social media content) were lost on the printed page.

Screenshot of Feminist Scholars Digital Workshop Online Archive.

I also included in my binders a printed copy of a refereed webtext entitled "Vanishing Acts: Theorizing Digital Iterations in Feminist Archives" published in the journal Enculturation. This article was crafted as a multimedia text that included elements such as digital archival materials, images, and hyperlinks. When printed out, the rhetorical work of these different modes were erased.


enculturation
a journal of rhetoric, writing and culture

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Vanishing Acts: Theorizing Digital Iterations in Feminist Archives

Lori Beth De Hertogh, James Madison University

(Published, August 1, 2018)

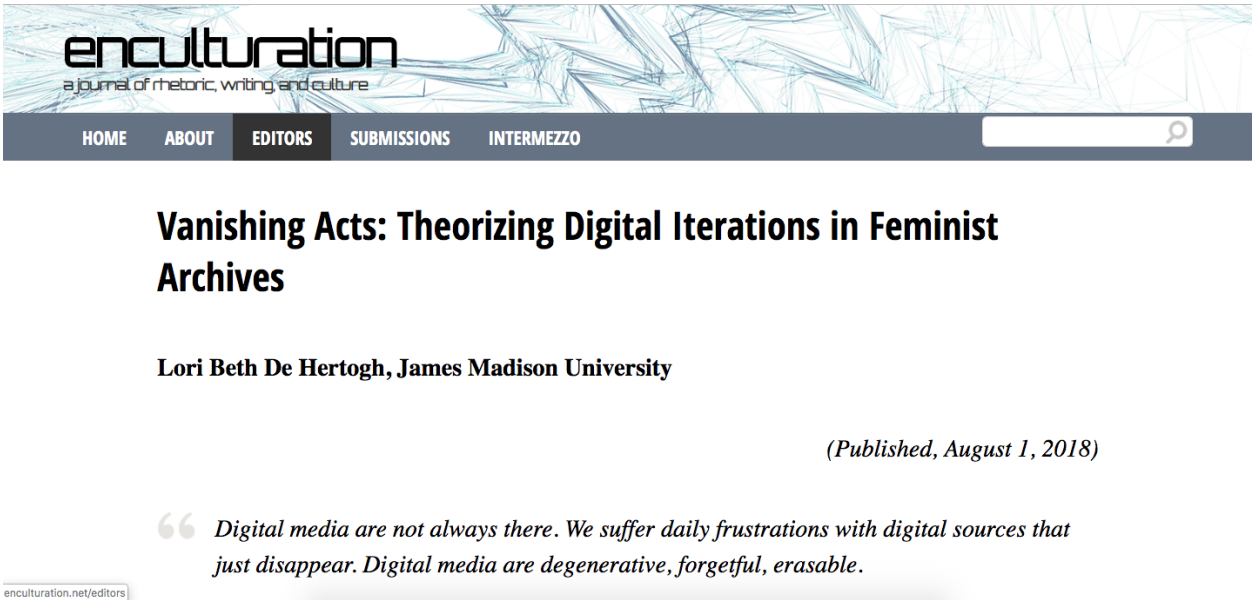
Digital media are not always there. We suffer daily frustrations with digital sources that just disappear. Digital media are degenerative, forgetful, erasable.

—Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "The Enduring Ephemeral, or the Future Is a Memory"

In her widely read *New York Times* article "Wikipedia's Sexism Toward Female Novelists," Amanda Filipacchi illustrates the fragility of women's online work, noting that in 2013 *Wikipedia* editors began moving women "one by one, alphabetically, from the 'American Novelists' category to the 'American Women Novelists' subcategory." Filipacchi points out that male novelists remained in the American Novelists category, no matter how obscure their work. In short, *Wikipedia*'s iterative process of updating their categorization system propagated gendered biases that, as Filipacchi describes it, "ghettoized" women's work by

Image of Lori Beth's *Enculturation* article in a binder.

The multimodal version of my third-year review allowed me to curate and share articles like "Vanishing Acts" in their native environments. For example, I was able to include hyperlinks to refereed webtexts and online archival work as well as to media content such as Google slides.



Screenshot of Lori Beth's Enculturation article on the web.

The multimodal version of my portfolio also allowed me to share interactive artifacts from the FSDW workshop such as a Zee Map of participants. Including a "live" version of the map in my review showcased the workshop's global reach.

Screenshot of an interactive web-based map showing locations of workshop participants.

As this glideshow reveals, the work of scholars who create and compose in different modes cannot be captured in traditional tenure and promotion materials. Thus, I call for fellow scholars in the field to shift how we approach curating multimodal artifacts for tenure and promotion. Printed binders of materials—or even electronic files uploaded to an online system—simply cannot capture the complexities of multimodal scholarship and the impact of that work on our colleagues, our communities, and our scholarly identities.

Expanding What Counts as Scholarship, Validating Community Folks as Peers: Vanessa's Case Study

In Spring 2009, I found the Albert R. Lee Papers at the University of Illinois Archives—a collection of letters, minutes, programs, reports, and manuscripts—documenting the African American experience in Champaign, IL, in the early 1900s. The son of slaves, Albert R. Lee (1874-1948) served 52 years (1895-1947) in the President's Office at Illinois as clerk. He is remembered as the unofficial dean of Black students. Recognizing the value of his work in an overwhelmingly white and seldom racially-supportive location, I made Lee's papers the main sources for the scholarship I produced since, which was quite traditional—a dissertation, articles, conference papers, and chapters for two extended manuscripts. Only after advancing a celebration for Lee with memorials on campus and in his church, on the seventieth anniversary of his passing, did I understand this part of my work as an instance of *creative-critical scholarship*. This

work had material and multimodal counterparts—a headstone, programs, proclamations/texts written and performed, and a documentary film, all vetted by community and university peers. It would also be intellectual, relational in content and community interactions, and grounded in African American rhetorics. It would finally resist the reductive classifications of traditional academic outcomes. These distinctions brought me concern, as I intended to argue for the inclusion of these memorials (outcomes and processes) in my tenure and promotion application (from assistant to associate professor).

Albert R. Lee (1874-1948), ca. 1938.

Albert R. Lee with President David Kinley and staff, 1930.

Made to follow the customary classifications for tenure materials—Scholarship, and Service (though I changed my labels to Scholarship in Service of Community and Scholarly-Grounded Service)—my goal was to articulate in my narratives the intricacies of reading archives with community partners, elevating the latter to knowledgeable peers vetting the work, and demonstrating scholarly community memory. Hence, the tenure committee needed context and a long trajectory of community-engaged work, culminating with a headstone and a short film. I shared processes, relationships, and identities:

While reading material for fieldwork confined me to the University Archives and other repositories in Illinois, frequent references to Lee's church—Bethel A.M.E. Church—brought me to what I have called *domestic* archives, the segregated homes and churches of African Americans (place), and the records (texts/memories) they keep. Finding these familial instances of curation revealed what the public sphere has neglected: *relational curation* stemming from racial relationships, common experiences, and familial kin. Yet, when recovering memories *with* community folks, when being taught how lived experience challenges official records, when curating artifacts for dissertation work, I acknowledged myself as an emergent public historian, not just an interested researcher. I was crossing borders, being constantly marked an

outsider—I am not African American—but building and never appropriating knowledge.

When I met Bethel congregants (2009), per this imperative to collaborate and *listen*, my writing developed into engaged *memory* projects, far more complex though, and significantly less lonely. A notable deviation from traditional academia, I defined in my tenure narrative a memory project:

"as a work in various media (print, alphabetic, visual, digital, and performative) informed by archival research and oral testimonies, which the practitioner analyzes, and presents to, writes with and performs for students (teaching), peers (scholarship), and community folks (service)."

This definition allowed me to argue for Lee's memorials, the unveiling of his new stone and the multiple rhetorical exercises that followed (readings, recitations, songs, proclamations, and archival exhibits) as crucial evidence of my scholarly work. But, when I worked with Bethel women, in their eighties/nineties, who had known Lee in their youth, and my church-counterparts for Lee's celebrations, I further claimed, my research became communal, multivocal, and consequential. Hence, I articulated:

"that memory projects [are further] historical, multimodal, feminist (in their inclusive and recovery angles), and non-traditional [for academia] … the project category should therefore be the lens through which [university authorities] ought to read my contributions."

Years of community interactions and tense recoveries were seminal in the curation and delivery of Lee's memorial. But my decision to see a headstone for Lee, initially a matter of care/compassion, and later of ethics, determined my time, my commitments, and the kinds of output—traditional or not—I could produce being close to my tenure application (Fall 2019). I was facing a kairotic moment: Wait until it was safe to tell his story with a memorial (after being granted tenure) or acknowledge this urgency for reparations with a stone given to a regular man? I decided for the latter.

Much like Alice Walker trying to find Zora Neale Hurston's grave in Florida, I found a broken foundation.

Close to the memorials, the foundation was being worked.

Once the ground was ready, the cemetery flagged the headstone's placement.

A headstone veiled.

Lee's grandchildren unveiling the stone.

"Regarded as Dean of African American Students at the University of Illinois."

Through Lee's memorials, local, university folks, and I modeled for academia what compelling articles resemble when performed for intersecting yet distant communities. We did so when preparing for and unveiling Lee's headstone—a traditional epideictic gesture in Rhetoric, but not one in academia, y*et*. Translating these claims to my tenure application required not only photographic evidence and copies of written texts, but also a scholarly articulation:

"While epideictic discourse, the genre of discourse of praise (or blame), and one of the three branches of Rhetoric, is not a traditional discourse in Writing Studies/Composition, … it is a long-standing *oratorical* practice in classical Rhetoric. The memorials … were all rhetorical displays (and deliveries) grounded in material memory—a headstone, two plaques, a veil

in need of sewing, an archival exhibit, and two written programs—and in performative discourse—speeches, talks, and proclamations. Collectively, these memorials were a series of rhetorical exercises aimed at illustrating and praising the … racial work of one man, and by extension one community. … these memorials had a clear argumentative … angle: To align all involved in one mindset, which was the elevation of this local African American history."

Curating texts and (re)creating/documenting memories alongside Bethel folks, I claimed in my narrative, were not only critical acts of scholarship, but also demonstrations of the relational possibilities of academia when placed in service of communities.

Devising, planning, and writing for Lee's memorials have been at once my most labor-intensive, (occasionally) unrecognized, heartrending, and illuminating research *hybrid* and community activism I have engaged in. Such heavy tasks are not the reason for how this communal work was significant in my tenure packet. Only when I had these responsibilities did I finally fully appreciate the ramifications of community work, and the value of presenting personal curations—kept in the Black community and in my own collections—for public consumption, and hopefully, for renewed relations and historical memory.

Release of Documentary on Lee's Contributions, April 2019.

Too easily had I included Lee's memorial as my contribution to Service (in previous annual evaluations), when all processes and outcomes for these memory celebrations were the result of new knowledge possible via community collaborations and informed (but critical) research. I was determined to do otherwise in my tenure application. Hence, I argued,

"In recovering a forgotten figure such as Lee, not only [have I] re-inscribed a local activist man, but [I have] expanded the kinds of civic rhetorics that should be part of the rhetorical canon … [Lee] was a local instance of the New Negro trope … [and] in opening up this trope to include regular folks like Lee (and extending it beyond well-known, highly educated, middle-to-upper class African Americans), [I] offer a more nuanced understanding of Black citizenship projects in smaller localities."

At great risk to my professional advancement, I took on the responsibility of a communal memory and I have advocated for a new attitude in the reading of my Scholarship and Service contributions. I further claimed that these community projects, drawing from two communities at odds, were foremost scholarly, rigorous, generative of new knowledge, mindful of memories forgotten/discarded, and vetted by community partners. As such, they should be worthy, when accomplished *this* way, of satisfying the research requirement of my application.

While to my knowledge, no scholar has yet to include a memorial event with the unveiling of a stone, an archival exhibit, and a lyceum evening as scholarly work vetted by knowledgeable community peers—Black congregants with lived experiences and University ones with archival curatorial knowledge—I have done so. By bringing the personal curatorial work to a public venue and by offering performances—readings, recitations, eulogies, and songs, we have brought a non-traditional outcome to academia.

I offer as visual example of curation s relational my short documentary film on Lee.

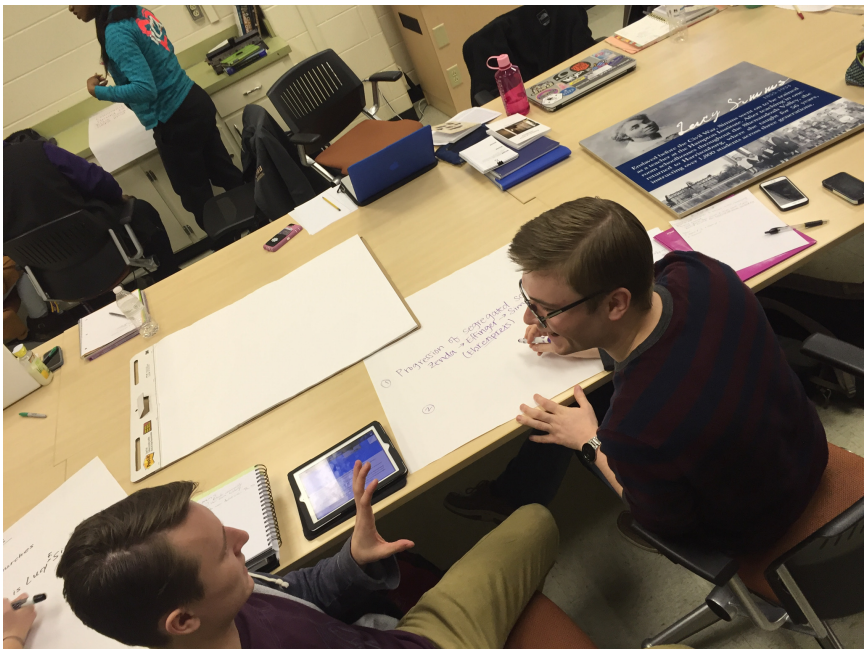
Documentary *"A Man of Substance, One of Illinois' Finest Traditions"*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPLPhhkQMe4

Sean's Narrative (1268 words)

My work has a lot in common with that of my co-authors. Similar to Lori Beth, much of my scholarship and teaching is in digital literacies and rhetorics; I also do a lot of community engagement work, sometimes in community archives like Vanessa. I designed a digital-born project for my dissertation and I was initially keen on continuing that trajectory by submitting a digital portfolio for my tenure and promotion packet. In conversation with my department head, however, we decided to go for a paper format. We agreed that a paper submission might better match my audience, which were small in number, diverse in their appreciation of digital work, and all very influential in terms of my continuing career. Besides, I had already completed a third year review in paper, so continuing that process for my tenure application would actually be judicious in saving time (if not trees and ink, an environmentally unkind aspect of my final portfolio that I still regret). With the understanding that good projects come out of design constraints, I chose to do the best I could given the benefits and limitations of the classic paper and three ring binder approach to tell the story of my career thus far.

As I began to write up the narrative, however, the format of the T&P application halted me in my tracks. I often undertake projects that combine research and teaching (e.g. Godfrey and McCarthy 2017), or teaching projects that I then write about as scholarship (e.g. McCarthy 2015). The tenure application in our college requires separate sections on teaching, research, and service, which forced me to constantly refer to my work in different contexts across the narrative. Although annoying, I could have put up with this for some of my projects. But I found writing about one in particular difficult in such a chopped up fashion. “Celebrating Simms: The Story of the Lucy F. Simms School” explores the history and value of education in a largely African American neighborhood. Scroll through the images below to find out more about the project:

"Celebrating Simms" Exhibit.
Celebrating Simms is a permanent exhibit, website, and book that celebrates the importance of education to the Northeast neighborhood in Harrisonburg, VA, and documents the life of famed African American educator, Lucy F. Simms.



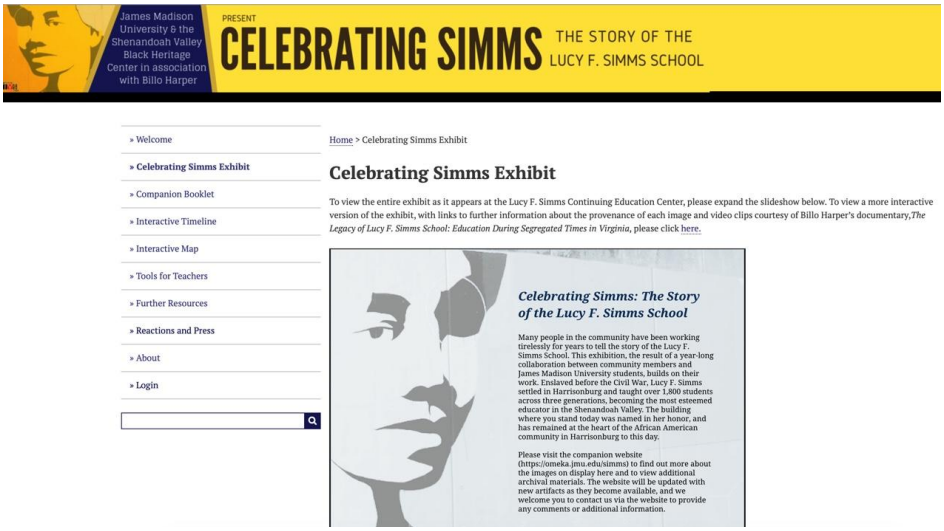
Students discussing the design of the exhibit in a classroom.
Over the course of the 2015/2016 academic year, students collected images and documents that explored the life of the school, built a narrative

that explored African American education since the 19th century, and designed, built, and launched an exhibit, book and website.

Dr. Mollie Godfrey talking to the “Celebrating Simms” Advisory Board. Throughout the writing and design process, an advisory board of community members worked with students and faculty to shape the narrative of the exhibition, as well as verify facts and other details.

Holding the “Celebrating Simms companion booklet.

To ensure that the exhibit was accessible, students recreated the narrative in a booklet that also included several images in the exhibit. There are currently 1500 copies of the booklet in circulation.



Homepage of the “Celebrating Simms” website.

We also built a website using the digital humanities publishing tool, Omeka, which allowed us to attach metadata to each object in the exhibit for cross-referencing. The site also contains archival materials not found in the physical exhibit, as well as lesson plans for teachers materials for teachers, and interactive tools such as maps and timelines for further context on the topic.

Guests at the opening of the Celebrating Simms exhibit.
We hosted several public events relating to the exhibit, including a grand opening that attracted over 300 visitors and that was covered in the local press.

Godfrey and McCarthy's article about the "Celebrating Simms" project in the online journal, *Public*

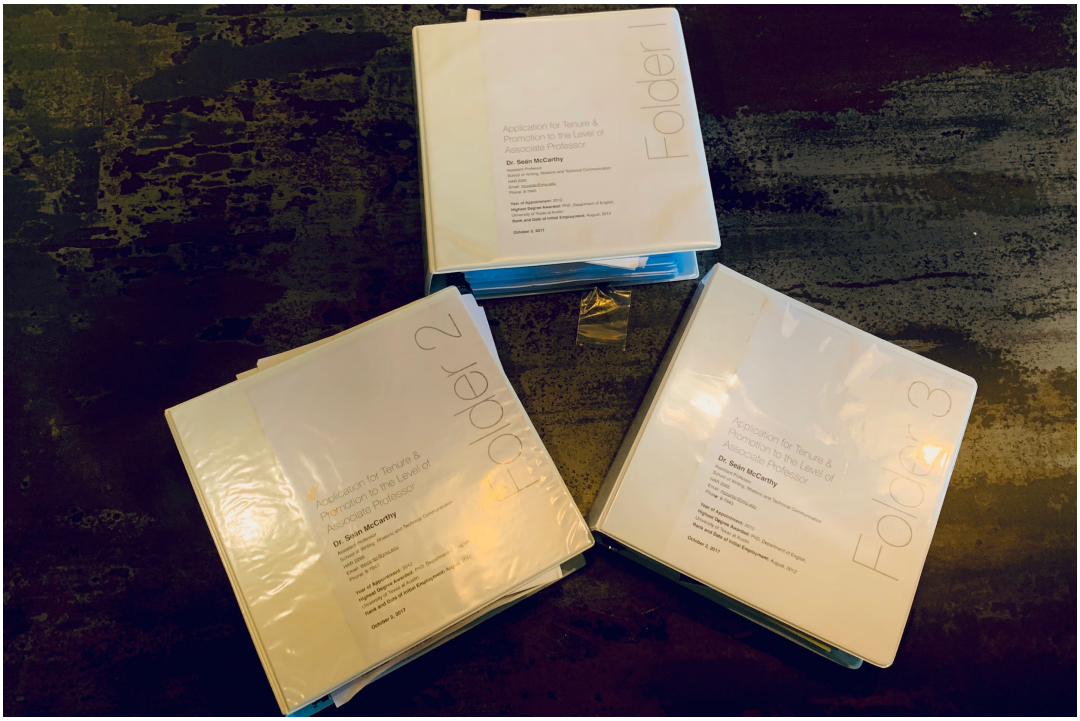
Mollie Godfrey and Seán McCarthy (the project leaders) published a peer-reviewed article about "Celebrating Simms" in a digital humanities special issue of *Public*, and they are currently writing an article with community members for the *Community Literacy Journal*.

Trying to do justice to the "Celebrating Simms" in the tenure packet was infuriating; the project would turn up only as a peer-reviewed article under the research category. I found this difficult to stomach, conceptually and ethically. "Celebrating Simms" comprised fifty six collaborators, including an undergraduate class and several community members, who together created new knowledge that was published in a variety of media, peer reviewed by scholars and community members, and has been recognized by our field as exemplary work. Why should its value as research depend solely on the peer-reviewed article after the fact by two professors?
I eventually came up with a fix of sorts. I knew I would have to write the narrative according to the three traditional buckets of teaching, research, and service… but did the organization of the folders with accompanying

materials have to follow that route? Couldn't I organize at least some of my work in terms of *project* so readers could holistically assess work that crossed traditional boundaries? With the blessing of my department head, I submitted a portfolio that contained a traditional narrative and this slightly unorthodox packet of supporting materials. The following images will give you some sense of how the final folders looked.

Glide show:

Picture of Seán's Tenure and Promotion Folders



Text: Binder 1 — the binder that would normally deal with scholarship alone—contains five projects that are a mixture of teaching, scholarship, and service

Binders two and three are traditionally organized: binder two contains teaching materials such as course evaluations; binder 3 provides evidence of service.

Image: Picture of the table of contents for the Projects folder of Seán's tenure and promotion materials

Welcome

About the Organization of this folder

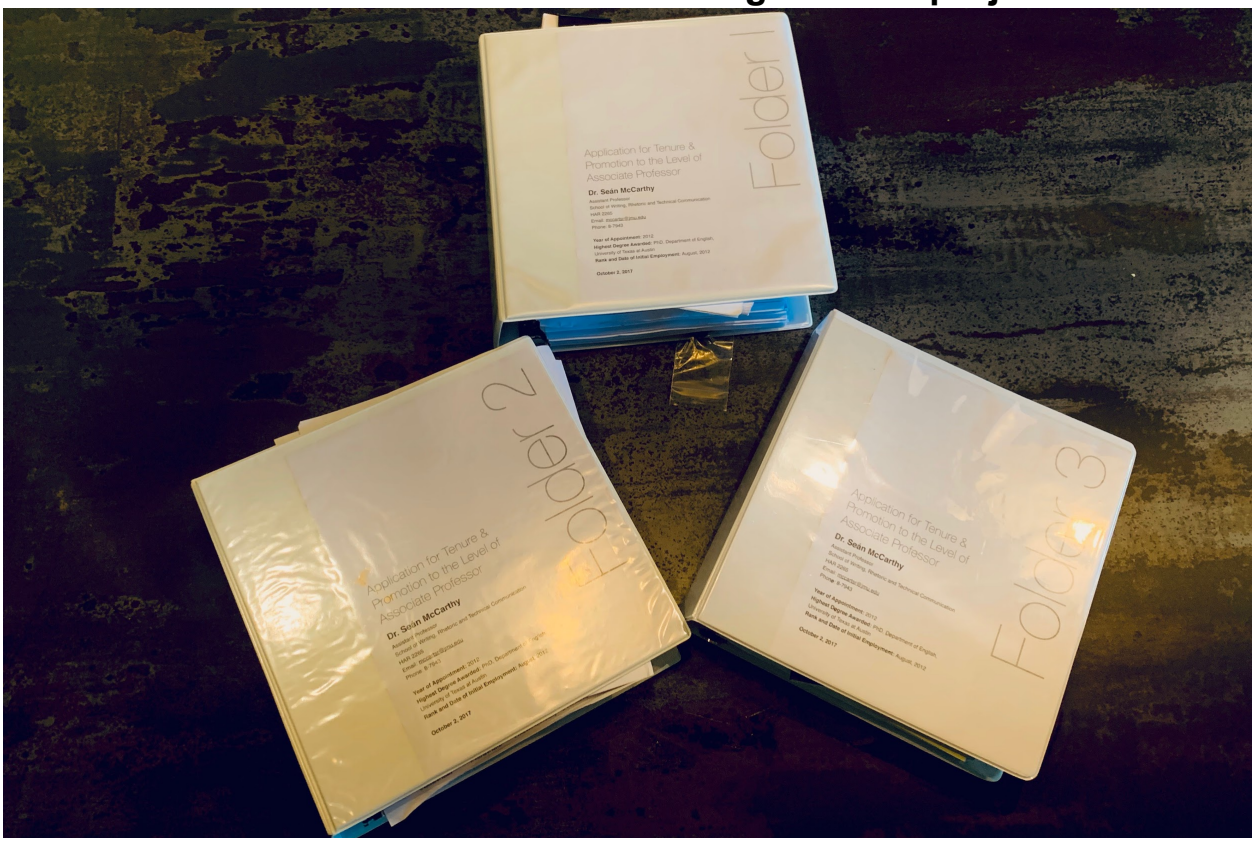
As I have outlined in the narrative in Part I, each of the tabs in this folder are organized by project. To help you find different pieces of evidence easily within each project section, I have included a simple table of contents on the first page of each section.

The Projects

- Celebrating Simms
- The Magazine Project
- Transdisciplinary JMU X-Labs classes
- "The Engaged Swarm"
- Notes Toward a Values-Driven Framework for Digital Humanities Pedagogy

Text: This image is a replication of the first page of Binder 1, where each tabbed section contained a variety of materials, all of which contained documents that pertained to scholarship, teaching and service. Although readers would learn about these areas in separate sections in the tenure narrative, they could assess them together as projects in Binder 1.

Picture of the contents of the "Celebrating Simms" project in Folder I



In the Simms tab in Folder 1, I could house all of these materials together: the booklet, a poster to show the event, a paper copy of the article, the syllabus for the course etc. This made it easy for readers to see the relationship between the different aspects of the project, which in a traditional T&P application would have been scattered across different folders. I followed this method of organization for the other four projects in Folder 1, all of which brought together artifacts that combined teaching, research, and service.

As you can see, the intervention in my tenure packet was modest, but the organization of the supporting materials in the “Projects” binder opens the possibility of an alternative way of reading, one that is inherently curatorial (even if I wasn’t thinking of curation as a guiding concept at the time). It provides a little bit of wiggle room for both author and reader to peruse projects in a holistic fashion that would be impossible using the traditional format.

As responses to tenure submissions are limited to formal letters, I can’t claim that my humble proto-curatorial intervention had a significant impact on my tenure case. (I can’t honestly claim that it was noticed at all.) But the process certainly helped me frame how I wrote about my work, and lent a great deal of positive energy to a writing task that initially felt both daunting and mundane. If a curatorial approach can energize the composing process of a tenure packet, then I think that’s of value in and of itself. If it moves colleagues to more fully appreciate the spirit of *curare* that goes into engaged work, then it is a practice that is most definitely worth pursuing.

Conclusion

The above case studies provide three ways that curation as a concept can be applied to tenure and promotion cases. Lori Beth stresses the importance of the modality of T&P documents in order to illuminate the labor and materiality of digital texts. Vanessa’s account of her work in Illinois stresses the variety and value of alternative knowledge-making practices and outcomes in community engagement projects. Finally, Sean's work shows how even simple tweaks to a tenure and portfolio case can provide different ways of assembling T&P materials that contain digital and engagement projects, offering candidates with alternative ways of theorizing and presenting their own work.

Over our many conversations as we built this essay, we shared ideas, strategies, and questions about how we might make our particular cases generalizable without flattening the highly specific and situated nature of the kinds of multimodal and engagement work for which we advocate. To further our call for renewed action for situating curation as a valuable concept in designing T&P documentation for engaged and digital projects, we close this webtext by presenting recommendations that might be applied to a variety of situations. We hope these recommendations offer an entry point for any scholar, regardless of their institutional affiliation or position within the tenure and promotion process, a portable framework that can inform the curation of tenure and promotion materials.

Employ "project" as a unit of analysis.

The term “project” does valuable work in representing labor that requires planning, designing, management and collaboration—work that is so often the engine of engaged and digital teaching and scholarship, but that often gets annexed as service in T&P documentation if it shows up at all. Further, “project” offers the opportunity to include teaching, scholarship, and service in relationship to each other, thereby breaking down traditional T&P silos and doing justice to engaged and multimodal work as a continuum of all three areas, as Ernest Boyer (and most engaged practitioners) have long called for (Boyer, 2009). For deeper theorization of how projects apply to engaged work, see the CCCC Statement on Community Engaged Projects in Rhetoric and Composition” (2015); for an exploration of how projects inform digital research, see *Digital_Humanities* by Drucker et al (2012).

Make curation of materials for tenure and promotion purposes part of the research methodology.

Taking a curatorial approach to T&P means thinking beyond public curation toward how a scholargathers, arranges, and makes available work for very specific and specialized audiences. Publicly accessible materials may be used differently in T&P documentation, and data for T&P materials (such as event and user statistics, for example) may not be useful to particular audiences. Bergman and Whitaker’s work on personal information management (2017) can be a useful resource for thinking about public and personal curation strategies.

Mobilize field reports and research to make for non-traditional engagement projects.
The Conference on College Composition and Communication has position statements on Promotion and Tenure Guidelines for Work with Technology (2015); and Community-Engaged Projects in Rhetoric and Composition (2016). Both will be useful to scholar-practitioners and administrators alike in introducing how multimodal and engaged work conforms to and departs from traditional academic labor. These documents are also good starting points for thinking about what a scholar-practitioner should think about curating for tenure and promotion portfolios. Within the arts and humanities more broadly, Ellison and Eatman's report, "Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Public University" (2008) remains a valuable resource.

Develop mentorship relationships.
Scholar-practitioners who undertake engagement and digital projects often rely heavily on backchannel and mentorship opportunities. What value can these conversations and relationships bring to tenure and promotion applications? One possibility is to find mentoring relationships with tenured faculty within and beyond scholar-practitioner's home department. Mentors can help junior scholars shape complex digital and engagement projects, and then to speak to the quality and impact of that work in letters that become part of a promotion portfolio.

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