

Student Curator Project:

Creating connections through collections, through a pandemic and beyond

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Background, aims and motivations of the projects

- **“How can we make the library come to life, and how can we make it relevant to students?”**
- The Student Curator project is a collaborative, co-creative initiative between the Library and Learning Services and the Students' Union
- » Embraces the diversity of our student population, celebrates inclusion and a sense of belonging
- Empowers students creatively and intellectually whilst developing real world skills such as project, budget and team management.
- Recognises the national debates around decolonising the curriculum and celebrating excluded voices
- Promotes and encourages the continuing diversity of the Library's collections to better represent the identities and lived experiences of our student body and support learning and teaching.



Will YOU be our next



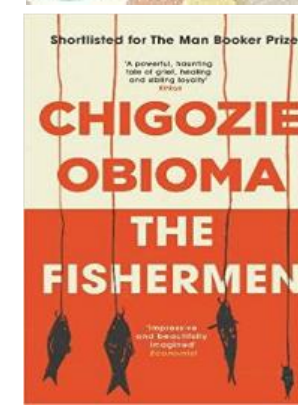
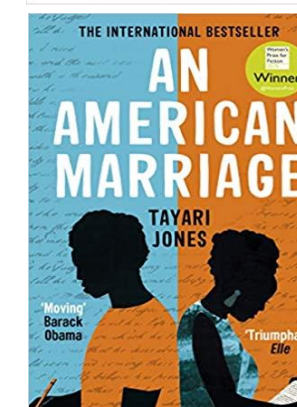
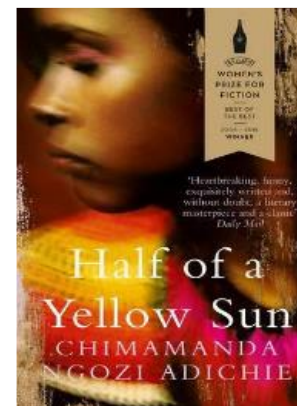
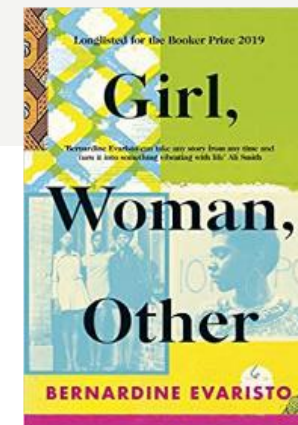
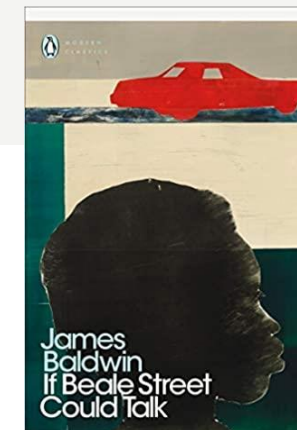
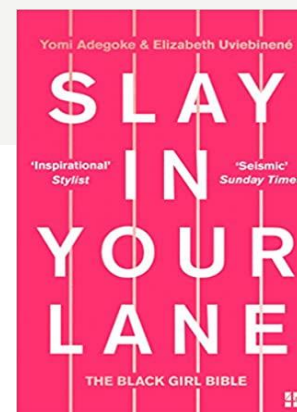
Student Curator

Library and Learning Services



Evolution of the projects

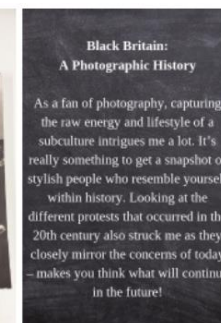
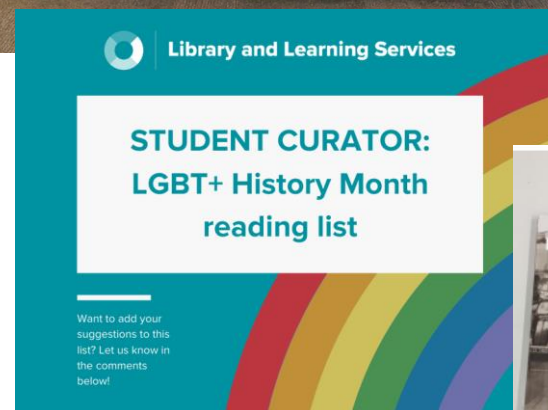
- Self-nominated students lead the different themes with a small Library project team to produce either a physical or virtual showcase of library collections
- Explore different learning tools and resources such as the online reading list system, Archives and Special Collections, Library digital resources
- Have a dedicated budget to purchase new book titles to add to the collection
- Archive of Student Curator [reading lists](#)
- Themes - Black History Month, LGBT+ History Month, Invisible Disabilities, Navigating Neurodiversity, Empowering Women, Life as I know it, Culture and Tradition and Colourism
- Evolved during the pandemic into Virtual Student Curator projects #SurreyLibCurator #StudentCurator



Approaches taken by the Student Curators

Each Student Curator project and theme has built on the experience of the last:

- Physical displays in the library using book and archive collections
- Creation of AV displays and slideshows to highlight digital items from library collections, inspirational quotes, reflections from the Student Curators themselves
- Innovative use of the online reading lists to share finds from our existing collections and to promote new purchases
- Panel talks, playlists, interactive display activities such as lucky dips, collaboratively written haikus, reaction boards and book reviews
- During the pandemic our Virtual Student Curator's took over the library social media and blog accounts, ran social media campaigns to talk to the University community using online quizzes, interviews and more



What partnership means to us

Overall the project is based on certain values and hopes:

- Student is the “subject” expert
- Shared responsibility between the Library staff and Student Curator
- Empowerment and inclusivity
- Dedication that student participation is valued and valuable.
- Engagement – co-creation, students involved from the very beginning in the design process
- Not having a specific disciplinary or departmental association means our scheme can be open to all areas of the university and be a truly transformative experience.



Initial assessment of the impact of the project

- 400+ books added to the collection by the Student Curators
- Students reserving items from the online reading lists – *'Girl, Woman, Other'* most requested
- Increasing interest and engagement from students via social media
- Student Curator campaigns have been in the top 3 for the Library's social media accounts
- 2,204 Twitter impressions for one post, over 1,500 likes and comments on Instagram
- Student societies coming forward to volunteer to be part of the project
- Students suggesting items to purchase via social media and comments cards



Leading voices

 **Student Curator**
Library and Learning Services

'Colourism: Beauty in every colour' Reading list

Let us know what titles you'd like to add to our collection on the subject of Colourism in the comments below!













Student Curator Reading Lists

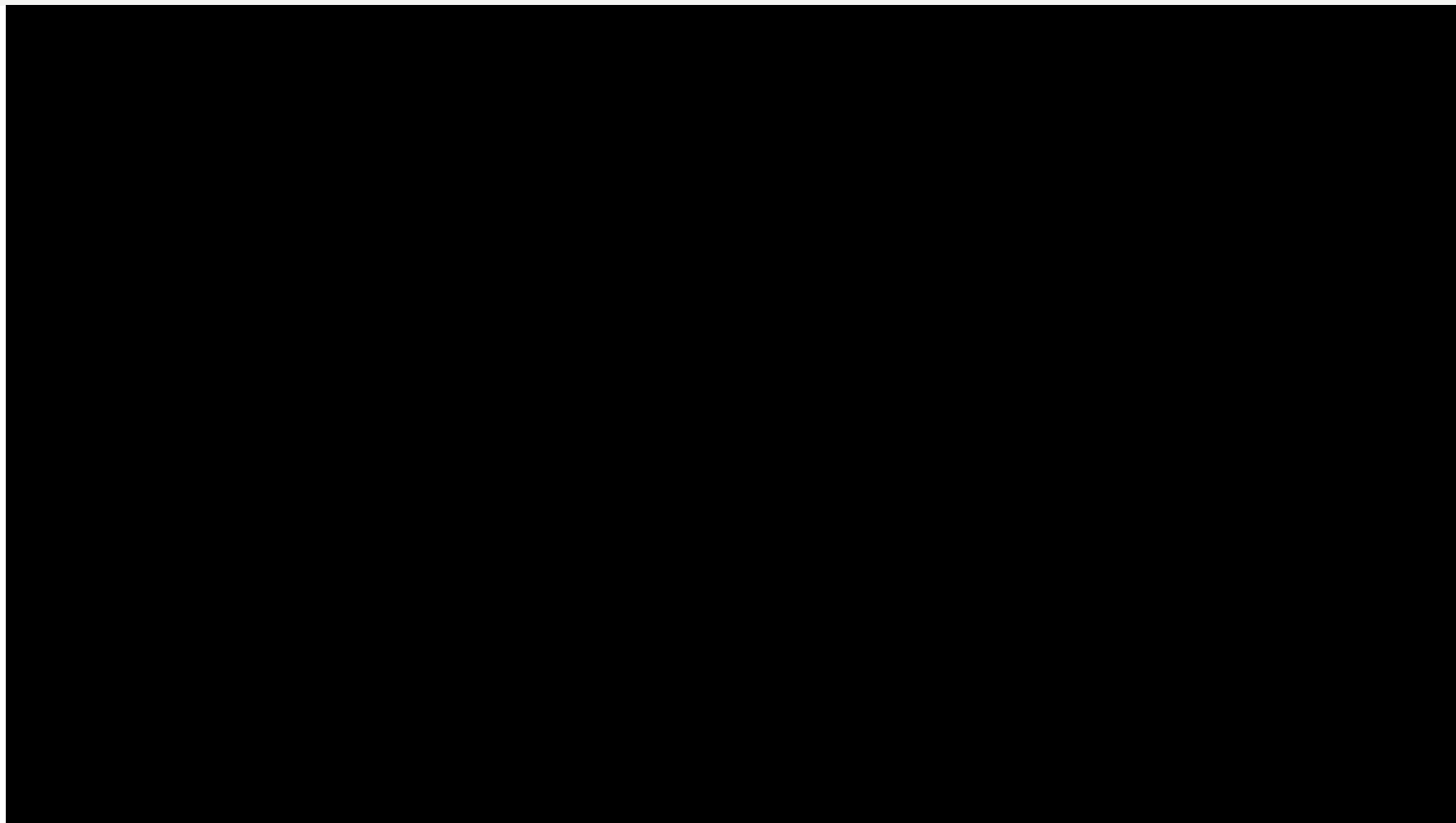
A collection of reading lists from the various different Student Curator projects at the University of Surrey Library and Learning Services

STUDENT_CURATOR_FULL (2020-32, Library Administered) [More info](#)



-  Black History Month (2) >
-  LGBT+ History Month (3) >
-  Empowering Women (1) >
-  Healthy Learning (1) >
-  Invisible Disabilities (1) >
-  Mental Health Awareness (1) >
-  Life As I Know It (1) >
-  Colourism (1) >
-  Working Class Cultures, Voices and Communities (1) >
-  Navigating Neurodiversity (1) >

Catherine Anyanwu video



Reading list discussion thread

Life as I know it - Student Curator March 2021 ↕


PUBLISHED STUDENT_CURATOR_011 (2020-32, Library Administered)

ADD ⋮

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LIBRARY REVIEW
NEW SECTION
ADD ITEMS +

Inspirational titles (Citations: 7, Pages: 187) ↕




AUDIO RECORDING **Everything, everything : a novel**

Yoon, Nicola author., Turpin, Bahni, narrator.; Daymond, Robbie, narrator., Unabridged., United States, Findaway World, 2015

🏷 Add Tag

✔ Complete 🔗 View online




BOOK **Stigma [electronic resource] : notes on the management of spoiled identity**

Goffman, Erving., London :, Penguin Books, [1990], Total Pages 1 online resource (173 pages)

Note: A book about the theme of stigma and what it means to be stigmatised and considered 'different' by society. Whilst exploring a range of people who co...

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BOOK **The secret garden**

Burnett, Frances Hodgson., Minneapolis, MN :, First Avenue Editions A division of Lerner Publishing Group Inc, [2014], Total Pages 1 online resource (272 pages).

Note: A classic novel being one of the earlier ones to begin tackling the issue of disability representation in literature and includes a wheel-chair using charac...

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Collaborators (1) >

Student Discussion (0) ↕

Add your comment:

SUBMIT COMMENT
↻ Refresh

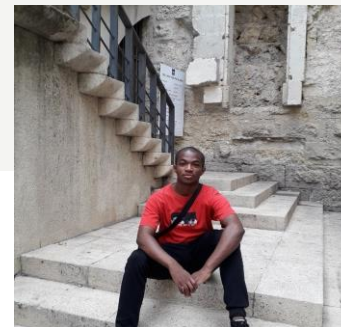
Library Discussion (0) >

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Student Curator reflections

Positives

- Satisfaction in raising awareness of diverse and marginalised voices
 - “It was good to see people stop and admire different aspects and perspectives that contribute to contemporary British and worldwide cultures, as the goal was to uplift and incite curiosity”*
- *“I enjoyed how I was able to express what kind of books that I enjoyed through the stand and reading list we had. I also enjoyed how cooperative and friendly the Library staff were.”*
- *“Running my project has had a huge improvement in my self-confidence”*
- *“Decided I want to stay in education and represent BAME women”*
- *“100% recommend, the best thing I have done this year.”*
- *“I feel like I have gained more confidence in “putting myself out there”. I have not made a pop-up display like that before”*



Challenges

- Time management – I found it difficult at first to structure my time.
- Working independently
- Coping with meeting clashes

Sarah Surget video



Library staff reflections

- Fantastic opportunity to work closer with our students and build some very long-lasting relationships, the creativity of the students is amazing
- It was time intensive for Library staff to properly support and facilitate the Student Curator
- Difficult to work to timescales with final year students
- Needed to continually adapt our working approaches as we worked with different students
- Will students be too radical? Can we say no?
- Essential to the success of this project is centring it around the lived experience of our students
- Positives of learning to be disruptive, librarian's and students guiding on inclusive practices
- Positioning of content and encouraging safe and brave spaces for critical debate
- Challenge assumptions that universities are already fully inclusive



Next steps

- Greater ownership of the Library's social media channels for students to suggest themes and create posts
- Work closer with University central marketing teams to further highlight the project around the University
- Improve the [web archive](#) of past curations to inspire and showcase curators, themes and ideas
- Explore how the on-going work on decolonising the curriculum can be advanced through the Student Curator project
 - Established a student led collection of fiction and non-fiction that explores areas of global voices
 - Improve the % usage of Student Curator purchases in online reading lists
- Investigate how the Student Curator project can be integrated with graduate skills and digital competencies framework
- Build on experience of co-producing interventions with students – wider reading list audits, reading list focus groups, critical user experience studies, sharing of suggestions
- Reward and recognition for the Student Curators



Links and references

University of Surrey Student Curator Project
webpages

<https://library.surrey.ac.uk/student-curator>

Stephen C, Batson C, Surget S and Weller J
(2020) 'Student Curator Project at the University
of Surrey: Encouraging and Embracing Inclusivity
and Diversity Through a Staff-Student
Partnership' *Teaching and Learning Together in
Higher Education* vol 1 (31)

<https://repository.brynmawr.edu/tlthe/vol1/iss31/6/>





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