

Disrupting Media: Utilizing Digital Curation to Promote Social
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Disrupting Media: Utilizing Digital Curation to Promote Social Justice

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Disrupting Media: Utilizing Digital Curation to Promote Social Justice

Digital curation is a framework that provides an opportunity to develop instructional materials that promote social justice through the development of unbiased and culturally relevant instructional resources, while maintaining alignment with prevailing curricular and accreditation standards. The ability to differentiate instructional materials allows all stakeholders the opportunity to present narratives not always available

when the prevailing dominant cultural materials are utilized. This paper will discuss how teachers can integrate digital curation framework within classrooms to aid in the reduction of cultural perspective inequalities that exist within current educational resources, thus making social justice more than a philosophical stance.

Keywords: social justice, digital curation, culturally responsive curriculum, differentiated instruction

Introduction

The dyadic relationship between teacher and learner, materials and medium, supply opportunities to express and honor culturally rich perspectives often not found in prevailing educational resources. The promotion of social justice is often impeded by the lack of commercially available resources for diverse students since they are often reflective of the dominant, white, Anglo perspective and represent few lived experiences of the diverse students that populate today's classrooms. To capitalize upon the perspectives of various cultures, educators require a means to elicit the specific student cultural expressions in the instructional setting. Digital curation framework provides an opportunity for students to bring their identities and cultural realities into the classroom.

Disrupting media with digital curation provides a means for sharing perspectives, providing opportunities to push against the dominant cultural narrative through the showcasing of personal lived experiences. Without knowing it, the choice of materials might inadvertently marginalize or oppress the groups of diverse students that we are trying to build up and assist through instructional efforts. Therefore, we operationalize social justice, in terms of instruction as equitable access to content that is unbiased, anti-oppressive and culturally responsive. Do more than just engage in reflective practice: act upon the injustice when the only perspective provided is that of the dominant culture.

Social justice is encouraged, supported, and proliferated when there is interplay between different cultural perspectives. In this paper, we discuss a framework that provides a support mechanism and process to assist educators as they assemble, create, and disseminate instructional materials designed to enhance social justice by providing students a vehicle through which they can express their identities and lived experiences.

The Social Power of Disrupting Media

Socially constructed materials provide the narratives and perspectives necessary to express the diversity of student lived experiences, thus allowing for greater cultural sensitivities and understandings. Cochran-Smith (2000) challenges educators to examine how they maintain cycles of oppression (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997) throughout operations in the classroom. We argue that a paucity of culturally responsive materials and resources used in classrooms undermine well-intended efforts of social justice advocates to create true educational equity. Tibbo (2013) supports this position by stating “[C]uration of digital assets, whether cultural, educational, scientific, or economic, remains one of the central challenges of our time” (p. 1).

Cultural perspective and voice of students often goes unconsidered due to power dynamics that exist within classrooms. These dynamics go beyond that of teacher and learner, adult and child, dispenser and receiver of content. These dynamics continue to exist and are exacerbated by an unwritten dynamic, that of social or cultural class or perspective. Students that have lived experiences differing from the dominant cultural perspective often have power dynamic issues in the mainstream, margin, and media realities (Hunter, 2001) of the classroom. See Figure 1.

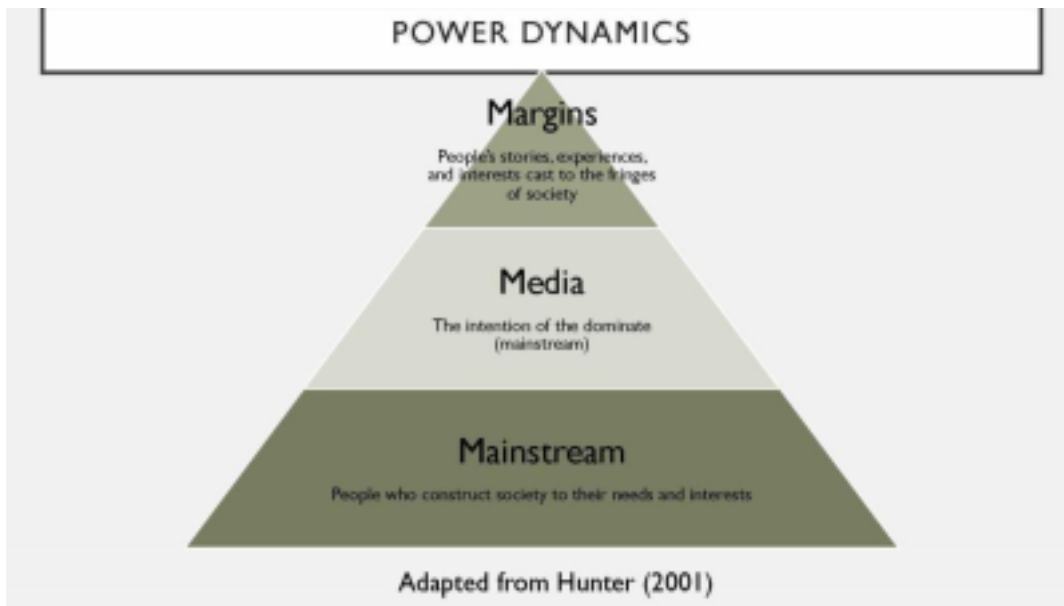
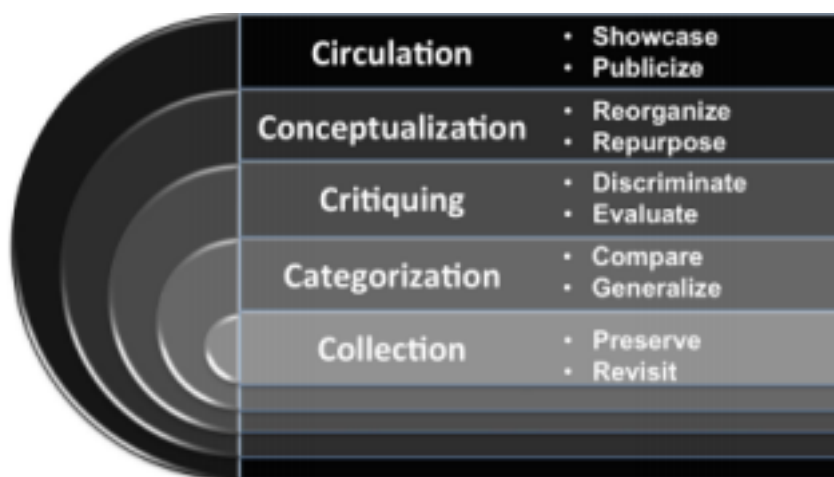


Figure 1. Power Dynamics

The intentional utilization of media to disrupt the social power dynamic within the educational setting allow individuals to form complex understandings, provide a voice to disrupt the collective conceptualization, and create a new perspective to the prevailing group narrative.

Disrupting Media Through the Digital Curation Framework (DCF)

The Digital Curation Framework (DCF) (Deschaine & Sharma, 2015; Sharma & Deschaine, 2016) provides a means to effectively integrate the utilization of tools and materials to amplify and integrate student voice and perspective in the instructional resources that they develop and utilize within the classroom. See Figure 2.



Note. From "The Five Cs of Digital Curation: Supporting Twenty-First-Century Teaching and Learning," by M. E. Deschaine and S. A. Sharma, 2015, InSight: A Journal of

Scholarly Teaching 10: 21. Copyright 2015 by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Park University. Reprinted with permission.

Figure 2. Digital Curation Framework.

In order to demonstrate the ways DCF can foster social justice, we provide examples from an experience one of the authors had on a recent trip to Portugal. Mouraria, a bairro in Lisbon was once considered to be a ghetto, it served as the home to disenfranchised and marginalized groups of different faiths. This bairro provides the context utilized to illustrate some elements of the DCF. Other examples represent digitized artifacts the authors have collected over time.

Collection

In this first phase, the educator, or student, collects content from available resources for potential instructional use. To be most effective and transferable to several settings, resources should be digitized. To preserve and keep the integrity of the collection, the teacher should also document where the item came from, for documentation and reference purposes (Deschaine & Sharma, 2015; Sharma & Deschaine, 2016). Secure cloud storage systems make accessing your files from any location with internet access efficient. We recommend selecting one that provides sharing features as well as a robust search function, e.g. image text recognition.

Collection with Social Justice in Mind

When collecting materials, intentionally assemble, and purposefully target items that disseminate cultural narratives and messages (Kalantzis, Cope, & Cloonan, 2010). The ability to collect content from resources other than those traditionally available supplies an expansive opportunity to assemble instructional content to support differing social perspectives and realities. Encourage students to include alternative frames of cultural reference in the narrative, creating opportunities for students to find relevant curricular connections in terms of who they are.

In the Sunny Corner project in Lisbon, Portugal Autoria Camilla Watson

celebrates the existence of a small Portuguese community on a corner for generations (1896-1908 and 2007-2017). These images intend to celebrate and remind us of the importance of community, and how we must treasure the spirit that it brings to a neighborhood, especially during times of dramatic change in the borough. See Figure 3.

Figure 3. Photo taken by Author, 2019 of *The Sunny Corner* by Autoria Camilla Watson on a wall in Mouraria, a Lisbon neighborhood.

Categorization

Once potential instructional materials are collected, the teacher compares items within the collection and creates categories for the assembled media (Deschaine & Sharma, 2015; Sharma & Deschaine, 2016). During this process teachers often become aware of their cultural predispositions and perspectives. Additionally, there are multiple cultural and social perspectives that exist within any one source. Therefore, it is helpful for a teacher to be able to articulate how and why a certain attribute supports the cultural attribute under consideration. This step, although time consuming, provides a vehicle for the baseline assessment of the cultural perspectives of the media or materials being utilized.

Categorization with Social Justice in Mind

It is important to identify and recognize whose interests are the meanings there to serve? How is the receiver positioned in the media choice we make as a teacher? Is the receiver positioned to create positive identifies? During Categorization, one compares and generalizes cultural experiences among digitized artifacts. For example, there is a statue on one of the street corners in Lisbon that pays homage to Mouraria as the “Berço do Fado”, or the birthplace of Fado music. This statue reminds locals and visitors alike of the community’s pride in Maria da Severa’s legacy for capturing the plight of everyday life with her fado songs. Compare this with a digitized street image

of a contemporary Fado artist, Mariza. She too grew up in this ghetto and learned to sing Fado music in a local restaurant. Even though this restaurant is now closed, the image of her painted on a street wall elevates the community's pride in their connection to her. See Figure 4.



Figure 4. Photo taken by the author of Mariza, contemporary Fado singer, painted on a wall in the Mouraria, a Lisbon neighborhood.

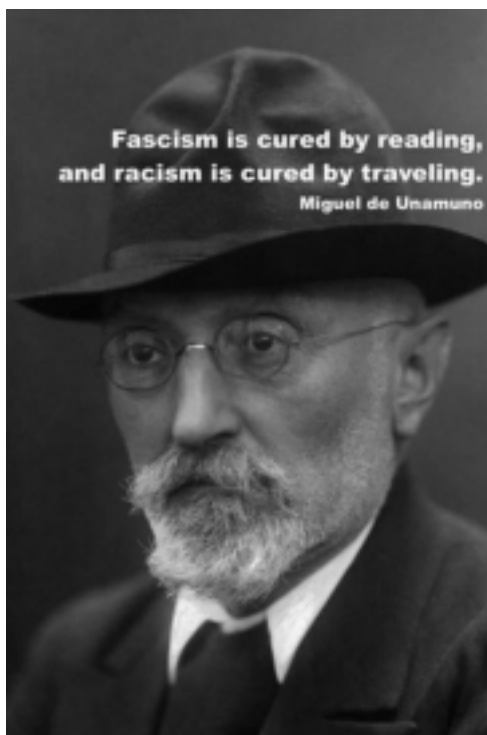
Critique

During the critique stage, a more refined exploration of the items under consideration is conducted. Those utilizing the items engage in discrimination, evaluation, and judgment of the resources, and assign a rating of relative importance or significance (Deschaine & Sharma, 2015; Sharma & Deschaine, 2016). Finer discriminations often need higher levels of understanding of content (Oh, Ishizaki, Gross, & Do, 2013), and the cultural perspective from the person doing the critiquing.

The critique part of the framework needs close attention to the materials under consideration. Although the item might be culturally reflective, it may not be proper from a curricular perspective. Critiqued materials that do not meet the curricular needs of the specific setting often can be utilized for an instructional purpose in the future, for different curricular needs.

Critique with Social Justice in Mind

Many opportunities for cultural perspectives exist when traveling. The traveler brings with them ideas and predispositions related to activities, cultural gatherings, or artifacts encountered. The social significance of these are often lost within a deeper understanding of the historical, as well as the contemporary meaning of the items in question. The critiquing of media requires the educator to delve beyond the surface of the items, and to more fully interrogate the social significance beyond the presumed impact.



Please share. This is the truth.

Figure 5. Meme of the social perspective of Spanish philosopher and poet, Miguel de Unamuno. retrieved from https://www.reddit.com/r/QuotesPorn/comments/athi5h/fascism_is_cured_by_reading_and_racism_is_cured/

For example, the meme found in Figure 5 is of a Spanish philosopher and poet. The combination of text and photo creates an underlying message of the building of cultural and social tolerance through experiences.

As noble as this quote seems it warrants a closer look. In Figure 6 below, the author of this blog uses questions and historical facts to critique the seemingly

innocuous meme found in Figure 5. We recommend that educators or students wishing to utilize blogs to reflect the cultural insights of those posting it need to spend a great deal of time critiquing, thus inferring, social impact via context and positions of statements, supports, queries, and rebuttals of the participants. Deep levels of meaning often exist within short bursts of narratives, and it takes time to tease out the intricacies of cultural impact and social justice issues.

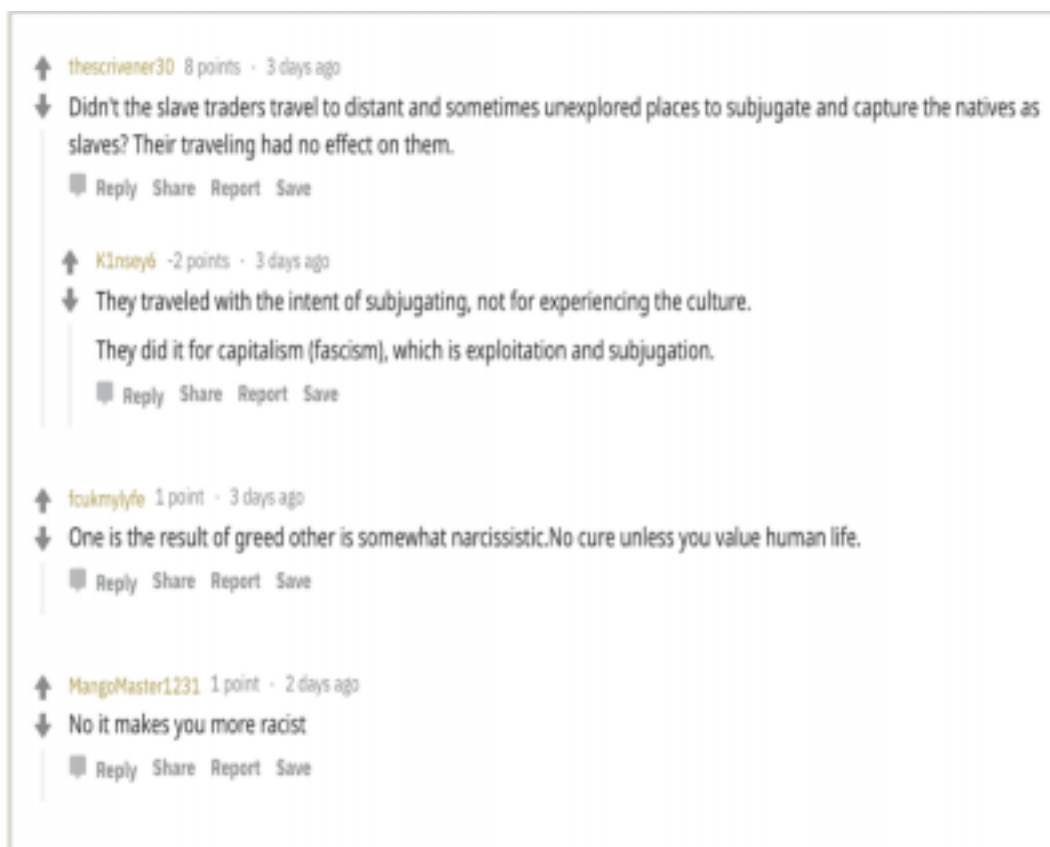


Figure 6. Image from a blog critique of the meme of Miguel de Unamuno's quote.

Conceptualization

When instructional resources are conceptualized, the teacher finds new or novel ways materials can be utilized for a different lesson, in a different setting, or with a different cultural perspective (Deschaine & Sharma, 2015; Sharma & Deschaine, 2016). A repurposing of items might take place, so new cultural truths are identified, or often, exemplified to create emphasis on the topic at hand (Deschaine & Sharma, 2015). This broadening of the original intent allows for increased utilization of the instructional materials, often leading to a broader understanding of how the individual's social justice perspectives interplay within the educational and social

structures.

We caution that conceptualizations often result in a need for clarifications amongst participants utilizing the content. It often causes individuals to rethink their own positions, potentially leading to disagreement when incongruences and inconsistencies between perspectives arise. Thus, we recommend creating dialogue ground rules as part of your classroom procedures.

Conceptualize with Social Justice in Mind

The Carnation Revolution of 1974 started and ended without a shot being fired because a flower seller conceptualized her carnations as a weapon of peace when she placed a flower on the muzzle of a soldier's rifle during a street demonstration. A street image of a carnation in Mouraria commemorates the significance of this act that resolved the revolution without a shot being fired. See Figure 7 of the carnation street image.



Figure 7. Image of a street image of a carnation in Mouraria, a Lisbon neighborhood. **Circulation**

When instructional content is shared with others, or if it is kept in a final form for the individual to retrieve it later, it is considered to have been circulated.

Circulation can be completed publicly or privately: it can be carried out on a limited scale, through a classroom presentation, or can be done on a larger, more grandiose scale, like through the establishment of a website (Deschaine & Sharma, 2015; Sharma & Deschaine, 2016). Either way, circulated materials supply the opportunity for the individual to publish content that is reflective of their students' cultural perspective, thus supporting the understanding of others and promoting social justice. Circulated materials supply not only content, but also provide an opportunity to showcase multiple perspectives, thus enabling individualized voice, and increasing personal agency and accountability.

Circulation with Social Justice in Mind

Cities today are covered in graffiti both good and bad. This is true especially in the variety of street images found throughout Lisbon. Some street images provide a platform for circulating political perspective. In Figure 8, a wall representing the European Union is being constructed to keep the refugees out that are seen in the reflection of the person's glasses. This presents a counterpoint to the narrative of acceptance that we have tried to offer in this paper. It is important that educators take the time to explain the social, political, religious, legal, and ethical stances they encounter in circulated media.



Figure 8. A street image of a political perspective being circulated on a wall in Mouraria, a Lisbon neighborhood.

The Need for Culturally Responsive Instructional Resources

Students that have not been enculturated to the predominant culture often find themselves lacking, socially, emotionally, culturally, and intellectually. Students considered to be different from the prevailing dominant culture often do not have a vehicle for their perspective or point of view to be provided to their peers. These students can suffer from a lack of agency and voice perspective: since their voice and narrative is not understood, identified, accepted, or wanted within the current social discourse within a classroom.

It becomes the responsibility of the teacher to create opportunities for all cultural perspectives to be shared, understood, appreciated, and celebrated. Teachers interested in creating curricular materials that support social justice, have at their disposal more tools than ever to differentiate their instruction. Having access to culturally responsive materials can create a linkage between what the students have known and experienced in the past, with their current and future realities within society. Engaging students in the Five Cs of digital curation creates an opportunity for all members to highlight their own perspectives and understandings with everyone in the learning environment. Students have the potential to gain increased voice and agency in the dominant culture, projecting their cultural perspective onto the educational scene.

Finally, allowing students to work together in teams during digitally curated instructional development sessions allows for the giving and getting of meaning (Gee, 2010), as the students within the work team must consider and integrate aspects from multiple cultural perspectives. This social interchange also provides students with a chance to learn from their peers and gives a referent for future instructional activities

and interactions, thus enhancing the prospects for true social justice.

Educators need to allow themselves to be culturally vulnerable as they provide students the opportunity to express their perspectives and understandings of the world around them. The disruptive aspect of curated media will often present challenges to the current structures of curriculum and instruction, teaching and learning, educators and students, and schools and society. We believe educators have a tremendous opportunity to incorporate digitally curated resources to promote social justice, a process that allows for student voice and perspective to become a central and important part of the educational resources utilized to teach the goals and objects within the curriculum.

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