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Teaching Philosophy

Critical digital pedagogy applies critical perspectives to digital environments and data by having learners engage with the political, social, and cultural implications at every level of the technological stack, from the hardware created to the digital documents we compose on. Drawing from traditions of bell hooks and Jesse Stommel, I integrate critical digital pedagogy to empower students to critique and transform systems of power and technology systems that are embedded in their everyday composing — particularly digital composing — practices. My teaching prioritizes social justice, and I am devoted to encouraging my students to advocate for themselves and others. I received the 2019 Kairos Teaching Award because of my investments in critical digital pedagogy and extensive experience applying it across the curriculum.

As the Assistant Director of the Digital Integration Teaching Initiative (DITI), I incorporated critical digital pedagogy into every workshop I developed and led. I collaborated with faculty from across the disciplines to develop workshops that extended their learning goals, demonstrating both my pedagogical flexibility and my experience with faculty development. For example, I created a [hands-on activity introducing computational research methods](#) in which students learn research workflows, including building a corpus, as well as how to analyze results and present findings. I introduce them to Voyant and Lexos — web-browser text analysis tools — and teach them the different features of the tools. I use a corpus of State of the Union addresses as an example. We parse rhetorical differences across the political parties and discuss how to analyze the results. Students then use this as a template to examine their own corpora, determining linguistic patterns and ideologies across the texts they chose. One key lesson students learn is that the results of computational text analysis are contextual and always reflections of the corpus, but these reflections can still expose cultural and political ideologies.

I also incorporate activities and assignments on data and digital justice, specifically that algorithms and data are not neutral and are forms of composing. Students evaluate data, metadata, and methods of data analysis as rhetorical, recognizing how data are collected for particular purposes as well as how these data and purposes may reify or resist systems of power. For example, I built a hands-on activity called “[Adopt or Not?](#)” in which students take on the role of a machine learning algorithm to assess data about dog adoption applications. This activity not only teaches students about the logics of machine learning, but demonstrates how machine learning results are impacted by data and how data replicates particular ideologies. I emphasize how digital tools and methods can reveal ideologies within data and, in the right hands, can be used for justice; this work is of particular importance when teaching STEM students.

I merge critical pedagogy, digital rhetoric, and rhetorical genre studies to help learners interrogate generic conventions and the ideologies embedded in these genres. In my Writing for Social Media online course, which I designed, I assigned students a discourse community analysis paper on a particular social media online community with a focus on the ideologies reinforced in these communities. Most students selected online communities that tied explicitly to their own investments and identities. One student analyzed the subReddit r/AskHistorians, critiquing the Western, male-centered focus; he recognized the one-sided stories often repeated, and pointed to how these stories mirror those told in K-12 education. Another student analyzed the Facebook Group Subtle Asian Traits as a way for Asian people across the diaspora to connect and name their shared and differing experiences. This Facebook group helped her establish connections with other Asian people who shared similar lived experiences, and she wanted to analyze the importance of this connection for herself and others.

I advocate for critical digital pedagogies that center learners’ agencies. How can learners use digital tools, methods, and data to empower themselves and others? I invite learners to analyze, critique, and participate in genres, from traditional academic genres to those produced on digital platforms. I integrate this approach in my classrooms, DITI, workshops I have led, and my research that always prioritizes pedagogy. My goal is to provide students with the tools they need to transform their professions, their own perspectives, and their cultures.