

Chapter 27

Machitia: An Educator–Focused Liberation Platform for Education

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ABSTRACT

Machitia is an educator-focused mobile app prototype where educators create, collaborate, and share lesson plans. These lesson plans embed the following liberating and transformative theoretical frameworks and pedagogies called in this chapter “circles of liberation”: (1) Dis/ability critical race theory (DisCrit), (2) biliteracy, (3) culturally sustaining pedagogy, (4) radical healing, (5) critical pedagogy, (6) proficiency-based learning, (7) queer theory, and (8) decolonizing theory. After introducing those frameworks, a mapping of currently existing educator-focused platforms prelude the review of mobile technology theoretical frameworks Machitia’s design incorporates. Then, the discussion turns to how all the circles of liberation and mobile technology theoretical frameworks manifest as features within Machitia. By the end of the chapter, learners and educators will have a sense of the various possibilities of, and the need for, an education-focused liberation platform.

INTRODUCTION

The word “machitia” in the Mexican indigenous Nahuatl language means, “to teach someone something”. By starting with centering an indigenous language and word, this chapter seeks to decolonize the intersectionality and possibilities of lesson plans, pedagogies, mobile technology, transformation, as well as liberation. At the core of Machitia is focus on an education for liberation platform, where educators create, collaborate, and share lesson plans. Through this core task, educators are empowered and enabled to further their own lifelong learning, facilitate peer to peer constructive criticism, labor alongside each other in the education justice movements, and, most importantly, build community among the various intersectionalities that are found within the community of educators dedicated to the emancipatory potential in teaching and learning.

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The aim of this chapter is to consider that transformative and liberating theoretical frameworks and pedagogies are neither static or monolithic, but fluid and directly connected to each other. Such frameworks and pedagogies must manifest themselves beyond the classroom and actualize within the lifelong learning, teaching of an educator through their lesson plans on mobile technologies, and community building. Just as knowledge is constructed and deconstructed, an educator focused mobile application (app) prototype has been constructed as a platform, in order to invite, engage, and lead how education for liberation is a constant process of transformation of learning and unlearning. The chapter will offer reports from the user testing in addition to the usability testing conducted by using the interactive mobile app prototype.

OVERVIEW OF CIRCLES OF LIBERATION

Prior to any discussion on the specific mobile technology theoretical frameworks informing Machitia's design, it is vital to understand what liberating, transformative theoretical frameworks and pedagogies the author will draw from, as well as how technology can facilitate the process of education for liberation. Since the purpose of Machitia focuses on liberating and transformative lesson plans, it is important to articulate what that means. There are eight theoretical frameworks and pedagogies that have been identified that collectively make up what a liberating and transformative lesson plan has the potential to be. We call these within Machitia, "circles of liberation": (1) Dis/ability Critical Race Theory (Dis-Crit), (2) Biliteracy (3) Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, (4) Radical Healing, (5) Critical Pedagogy, (6) Proficiency Based Learning, (7) Queer Theory, and (8) Decolonizing Theory.

Dis/ability Critical Race Theory

DisCrit combines aspects of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Disability Studies to propose a new theoretical framework that incorporates a dual analysis of race and ability. CRT has at least five tenets that "inform theory, research, pedagogy, curriculum, and policy: (1) the intercentricity of race and racism; (2) the challenge to dominant ideology; (3) the commitment to social justice; (4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and (5) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches" (Yosso, 2005, p. 73). While there are different ethnicities, the word racism is used here as it has been purveyed as a trope in society, even though scientific fact indicates that there is only one race. The word racism in this chapter is used to refer to forms of bias and discrimination experienced by people because of their ethnicity.

While there are seven tenets of DisCrit:

1. DisCrit focuses on ways that the forces of racism and ableism circulate interdependently, often in neutralized and invisible ways, to uphold notions of normalcy (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2016, p. 11);
2. DisCrit values multidimensional identities and troubles singular notions of identity such as race or dis/ability or class or gender or sexuality, and so on (ibid, p. 11);
3. DisCrit emphasizes the social constructions of race and ability yet recognizes the material as well as the psychological impacts of being labeled as raced or dis/abled, which sets one outside of the western cultural norms (ibid, p. 11);

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