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LOOKING FORWARD: TYING THE CRITICAL TO THE DIGITAL IN PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

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Abstract

For 40 years, the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education has been instrumental in promoting debate on critical pedagogical approaches and sharing best practices in engaging in transformative education models. A few months into 2020, it became clear that not only were we in a new age—the digital age—identified by some as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2021), but the rapid threat of the coronavirus and vaccine complications have resulted in a paradigmatic global shift in how we do "all the things." This paper argues that it is no longer useful or even relevant for critics to simply reject the digital world in its entirety now that it is firmly embedded as part of people's daily lives, drawing three main conclusions: (a) it is crucial that we build the new with the old, recognizing and valuing decades of critical pedagogical theorization and approaches that centre a power analysis and look to transformative social justice approaches; (b) the moment to deepen our transformative stance is also a moment of accepting the digital era in an "it's here, it's now—what's next?" framework; and (c) articulating how we understand digital critical pedagogy as a transformative approach that is about both doing—equipping learners with agility, fluency, and self-confidence to be in the digital world— and thinking—developing and applying a critical analytical social justice lens for understanding the doing as transformative. Given the rise in authoritarianism, adopting a critical digital pedagogy in contemporary democratic societies is vital to ensure future generations are not only easily digital but fluent and, importantly, critical.

Résumé

Depuis 40 ans, l'association canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation des adultes fait la promotion active du débat sur la pédagogie critique et partage les pratiques exemplaires en éducation transformatrice. En 2002, nous avions franchi une nouvelle ère numérique, le coronavirus ayant entraîné un changement paradigmatique mondial dans toutes nos activités. Le présent article soutient que les critiques doivent cesser de rejeter le numérique en tirant trois conclusions : (a) il faut créer le nouveau à partir de l'existant, s'appuyer sur les décennies de théorisation en pédagogie critique;

(b) en approfondissant nos analyses critiques, nous acceptons l'ère numérique selon le cadre « c'est ici, c'est maintenant – qu'en faire? »; et (c) il est temps d'articuler la pédagogie numérique critique comme approche à l'action – outiller les apprenants en matière d'agilité et de facilité – et à la pensée – développer et appliquer une perspective d'analyse critique de justice sociale. L'adoption d'une pédagogie numérique critique par les sociétés démocratiques contemporaines est fondamentale pour que les générations futures soient numériques et qu'elles fassent preuve de facilité et d'esprit critique.

> At one time, adult education was considered an emerging field of university study. Today, it is fading fast. In places it has been swallowed by neo-liberal forms of lifelong learning, corporatism, and theory wherein humans are resources to be developed. (Boshier, 2011, p. 23)

Historically, the *Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education* (CASAE) and the Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education (CJSAE) have been important platforms for debate and discussion on adult education, including critical pedagogical approaches. There have been definite challenges and obstacles propagated by the infusion of neo-liberal ideology and discourse into both formal and informal adult education, such as a focus that obscures evident inequities and relationships to power (Brigham et al., 2021, p. xii) while largely narrowing in on skill development and job preparedness. Despite the challenges of neo-liberalism, both journal and association have proven to be key spaces for discussion and advancement of transformative, critical educative practices. It is in this spirit that this article encourages a recognition that the new global context calls on educators to let go of static debates on whether the digital—technology, social media, and e-learning—is a positive or negative development in adult education, thereby limiting the debate to either full-on rejection or full-on adoption. Rather, it is time to accept that we are indeed in a digital transformation that is implicating all our ways of being. The COVID-19 pandemic has cemented this new age—sometimes identified as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2021)—and rather than debate its merits, we need to accept the new reality so that we can move toward a robust critical digital pedagogy that will serve to equip adult learners with the necessary skills to not only understand and adapt but, most importantly, challenge and transform the troubling hegemonic aspects of the digital era.

Lessons Learned: Building the New With the Old

> Democratic forms of education and various elements of a critical pedagogy are vital not only to education and students but also to our economy, the public sphere, our democratic institutions, and future leadership. (Macrine, 2020b, p. 8)

For forty years, CASAE has played an important role in identifying and promoting debate on critical pedagogical approaches and sharing best practices in engaging and transformative education models rooted in analysis of power and social constructed inequities. While this has not come without challenges (Butterwick et al., 2003; Little, 1991; Welton, 2011), CJSAE, as a part of CASAE, has lifted debate and deepened understandings of adult education as necessarily critical and vocationally social justice-based. In particular, the 1991 special

edition on critical social theory served to elevate debate. Writing in that issue, Little (1991) emphasized the need for a shift in practice toward a more engaging model (p. 3), noting that "dialectical thinking is the process by which the contradictions and inconsistencies between what we believe and what we experience in everyday life are explored in an attempt to grasp more of reality" (p. 8). In 2003, Butterwick et al. reviewed the CJSAE trajectory of liberatory trends, noting that while there was some intentional work, there was a lack of scholarly work on Indigenous rights, feminism, and anti-oppressive practice (p. 9), concluding that during the 1990s there was "low frequency of research in these areas or within the ideology of radical or progressive education" (p. 16). In 2011, Welton observed that some of the debates about adult education had landed firmly along political lines (pp. 4–8), suggesting that CASAE work toward "resituating [itself] within the movement for social justice" (p. 8). Despite the lack of unity in purpose, this brief and incomplete history helps highlight the backdrop of deliberative thinking on critical adult education approaches among scholars. Regarding Canadian adult education, Fenwick et al. (2006) proposed the following definition:

> A set of unyielding social purposes, informed by passion and outrage, and rooted in a concern for the less privileged; a systematic and sustained philosophical and critical analysis that develops the abilities to connect immediate, individual experiences with underlying societal structures. (p. 17)

Thus, a clear commitment to critical pedagogy is evident and very present in Canadian adult education practices. Rooted in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), at its core, critical pedagogy is an educational model based in empowerment and solidarity. It is necessarily a political process of unearthing systemic power imbalances and oppressions. Through dialogue, the co-creation of knowledge, and valuing lived experience, which in turn lead to a heightened awareness or consciousness raising, people are then empowered to—with knowledge—work toward social justice and toward a transformed equitable society. Critical pedagogy is always praxis—applying theory to lived experience to move toward discernment, deep power analysis, and ultimately to action. Critical pedagogy is always personal. Critical pedagogy is always political.

Approaches to critical pedagogical practice illustrate the personal, political praxis. Mayo (2020) noted, "We require a critical pedagogical approach to education that takes as its point of departure, a new and more pressing notion of solidarity, one that cuts across class, gender and racial lines" (p. 40), encouraging us to think of critical knowledge sharing as educative practice moving beyond instrumental approaches of education, such as employability and skills for employment or a reproductive praxis, "but for the social end of helping in the formation of politically engaged social actors" (p. 41). Darder (2020), working from Freire (1970), noted how the opportunity of conscientization and/or consciousness raising signals a moment when "human beings become both critically aware and intolerant of the oppressive conditions in which they find themselves and push towards new ways of knowing and being in the world" (p. 45), and through the classroom process of problematization, "students can critically question, deconstruct, and recreate knowledge without repercussions or reprisals in ways that enhance their sense of ethical responsibility to self and community" (p. 50). Giroux (2020) reminded us that with critical pedagogy, "knowledge is shared not for instrumental reasons (i.e., for employment) but for the

social end of helping in the formation of politically engaged social actors" (p. 41). In their pursuit of consciousness raising for empowerment and social justice, critical pedagogical approaches also help articulate the dominant power structures that shape ideology and practice, which for several decades now has and continues to be neo-liberal ideology. As Carpenter (2021) noted, "For education, neoliberal policymaking emphasizes the commodification of education services and the use of education to discipline populations" (p. 337) and moreover emphasizes individual responsibility, such as "their place in this new world order is to either comply and toe the line or suffer the consequences of failure and abject poverty, with no one to blame but themselves" (Macrine, 2020a, p. 98). The emphasis on instrumental or functional skills-only education (reproductive pedagogy) aligns with neo-liberal ideology, which has embedded its "common sense" in our daily lives.

Neo-liberalism is also the ideological backdrop onto which digital technology, social media, and online learning have emerged. While this alone is cause for concern, debating the merits of these three elements of a societal digital shift as two ends of a spectrum or an either/or dichotomy has, I argue, been rendered irrelevant since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has thrust us into and embedded the digital transformation in all aspects of society. The general consensus is that we will never fully return to the way things were and will encounter digital environments with frequency in our work, home, school, and social lives. In that regard, it is more crucial than ever to shift scholarly and public discourse from all-out rejection to applying the principals and practice of critical pedagogy to the digital.

And That's a Wrap: It's Here, It's Now

My message to educators is that we need to teach dangerously and live with optimism. (McLaren, 2020, p. 223)

Since their emergence, social media platforms and other digital technologies have generated much debate. Witness the Shirky vs. Morozov *New York Times* (2011) debates on the merits of social media platforms as tools for social change and social justice and Gladwell's (2010) critique of social media for its low-stakes—armchair activism—methods. Yet something substantial did shift with the introduction of social media and the user-generated content of Web 2.0, which many educators embraced—the notion of an engaged and participatory media that lends itself to creation, creativity, and, very simply, participation (Jenkins et al., 2009). Whereas, collectively, we were seen as passive consumers of mainstream media through television, radio, print, and initially the internet, Web 2.0 signified a shift to both encouraging user-generated content and relying on it, primarily through social media—the hope being that it leads to a more engaged and active population that has the tools to actively contribute and participate in the digital public sphere. This participatory culture has born witness to the capacity to livestream police abuse; create critical podcasts, blogs, and videos; make funny memes; participate in interest-based communities or cultures; and more. In activist circles, there is a general understanding and acceptance of the importance of hybrid organizing that incorporates both online and offline actions and engagement (McCaughey, 2014). Yet many educators remain skeptical, while others are overly enthusiastic, landing on both ends of the spectrum rather than seeing the nuances on engagement through a continuum that brings both positive and negative outcomes.

Within the neo-liberal backdrop, educational institutions are neo-liberal entities. By all accounts, all post-secondary educational institutions have had to embrace online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, which many were already advocating for before the pandemic. Not surprising, yet disturbing all the same, is that in many of these institutional approaches, critical analysis of online approaches, tools, and teaching practices seemed to fall to the wayside while potential revenue generation/cost savings figured prominently. Macrine (2020a) reminds us that neo-liberalism is an "aggressive phase of capitalism that connotes a form of liberal politics that embraces market-based solutions to political and social problems (p. 95). Moore et al. (2021) identified the current context as a form of disaster capitalism, with the educational sector capitalizing on current precarious conditions, stating that "corporations are using this health crisis to further mobilize the neoliberal agenda, and encourage policies, practices, and technological infrastructure that will be used to rationalize ongoing online learning" (p. 1).

These are not the only concerns surrounding social media, digital technologies, and online teaching, because—to no surprise—neo-liberal ideology has embraced and dominated the online as much as the offline. And there is cause for concern! Early adopters will remember a Facebook with no ads. Now algorithms inundate us with ads that are based on our posts and private communications and, as Noble (2018) wrote, are often based on racist and sexist programming identified as "algorithms of oppression" (p. 4). Benjamin (2019) identified this as the New Jim Code: "the employment of new technologies that reflect and reproduce existing inequities but that are promoted and perceived as more objective or progressive than the discriminatory systems of a previous era" (pp. 5–6). Zuboff's *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism* (2019) not only exposed the extent of surveillance our digital activity produces but also raised how our personal information is essentially commodified and then used to target and sell us products. Many have rightly critiqued the shrinking nature of actual public debate, noting that we exist in echo chambers. Nguyen (2020) made the distinction between epistemic bubbles, where members "may lack exposure to relevant information and arguments," and echo chambers, whose members have evolved to "systematically distrust all outside sources," demonstrating that while epistemic bubbles can be broken through, it may be harder to "escape from an echo chamber… requiring a radical rebooting of one's belief system" (p. 1). This connects to widespread concern over the spread of fake news, which clearly serves political purposes as outlined by Anderson (2018), who documented the spread of fake news encouraging Black American voters to stay at home during the 2016 election, and the rise of deep fakes, doctored videos that are practically impossible to distinguish between fact and fiction (Engler, 2019). Lest we think fake news is not a Canadian issue, a 2019 Ipsos poll found that over 56% of Canadians had been duped by some fake news online. When tested, 63% of participants identified only three of six fake news headlines correctly. Fake news stokes fears, spreads rumours, isolates readers, and creates conflicts (Steuter & Spinney, 2020). Moreover, there are valid concerns over access to the digital (who has it and who does not), specifically in low-income neighbourhoods (Smythe, 2021, p. 207) but also in rural, largely Indigenous, communities. Interestingly, the pandemic has served to highlight and expose these inequities and the urgent need to address them. In Toronto, this has resulted in (after a lengthy campaign by ACORN) the city passing a 2021 budget item to increase access to affordable high-speed internet, thereby increasing digital equity in low-income neighbourhoods (City of Toronto, 2021), and in light of the current context, the prime minister has committed

to ensuring that 96% of all Canadians will have high-speed internet by 2026 (CBC News, 2020).

And so here we are. Among educators, talk of digital technology often elicits a negative or dismissive response—even now, after the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. This can easily turn to adopting a critiquing stance rather than a critical pedagogical stance and thereby disregarding all things digital as problematic. In other words, we often tend to throw the baby out with the bathwater! At the same time, it is important to value academic debates, as they help shape future thinking and theorizing. Take, for example, the public debate between Clark and Kozma in the 1980s to early 1990s regarding the extent to which the medium influences learning (Clark, 1994; Kozma, 1994). Of note, this academic debate took place before social media platforms even existed! Kozma concluded, "If media are going to influence learning, methods must be confounded with medium. Media must be designed to give us powerful new methods" (1994, p. 16). Kozma then posed a question that is still relevant to critical digital pedagogy: "In what ways can we use the capabilities of media to influence learning for particular students, tasks, and situations?" (p. 18). Rather than rejecting all digital technology, today's educators would do well to apply Kozma's musing to the current context. The pandemic has led us to an all-things-digital world, including karaoke parties, weddings, job interviews, crafting sessions, the dispelling of fake news, collective movie watching, Zumba classes, and public debates, to name just a few. Indeed, like it or not, the digital world—the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2021)— is here and now in ways never imagined.

If we accept this embedded digital hegemony as part of 21st-century neo-liberalism, adult educators can then adopt a critical digital pedagogical stance. It is 2021 and the yea/ nay debate has evolved. But now there is much urgent and vital work to be done. It is time to think critically about these corporate tools and their implications in learning to discern practices to safeguard content and learners while simultaneously also learning from the countless examples of people building community, taking action, building resistance, and disrupting power using online tools. As much as these tools remain corporate, they rely on usage and so, to an extent, are also tools of the people. There are examples of citizen journalists outing injustice as it happens, gamers rattling stock markets, and people, rather than the mainstream press, shaping stories, visibilizing those outside of the dominant status quo, organizing massive transnational mobilizations, and more. As Ingerick and Forte (2020) noted, "There are far too many positive benefits of organizing and mass social movement building that has opened up through the online world" (p. 62). People are participating more in their own lives through social media as producers and creators but also as wallflowers. Social media provides opportunities for rapid critique and change; for example, in the summer of 2020 during widespread Black Lives Matter protests and marches, the oppressive algorithms contained within Siri, Echo, Alexa, and other digital assistants when asked about Black Lives initially responded with a non-answer or a problematic answer, such as "all lives matter." When exposed, this was quickly changed in all assistants to more accurate responses, such as "Black Lives Matter. I think people deserve to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect" (Peters, 2020) and "Saying Black Lives Matter doesn't mean that all lives don't. It means Black lives are at risk in ways others are not" (Lerman, 2020). This speaks to how the medium itself can form part of the disruption and resistance and move towards a progressive social justice agenda. Indeed, a recent investigation concluded that the actions of Black Lives Matter, including their use

of social media, were linked to a decrease in police abuse (Campbell, 2021). Portelli and Eizadiral (2018) suggested that we can consider subversion as a tactic, here applied to the digital world, stating that "subversion is defined as subtle mechanism(s) of resisting abusive forms of power that create and/or maintain oppression and harm" (p. 53).

And so, in recognizing that the digital era is not without its problematic nature as a dominant hegemony that is here to stay, the job of critical pedagogues now becomes to facilitate a robust, strong, and critical digital analytical practice that will equip learners with the necessary tools to navigate the digital while exposing the layers of manipulation, commodification, and coercion and at all times initiating challenges, resistance, and subversive counter-hegemonies.

The Doing and Thinking of Critical Digital Pedagogy

> The idea always is to make the political more pedagogical and the pedagogical more political. (McLaren & Jandric, 2020, p. 90)

Critical digital pedagogy has the potential to empower digital users and use technologies through a social justice lens. It builds on the tradition of critical pedagogy and strives to respond to digital technology in the best possible ways (Rorabaugh, 2012) and can be seen as "pedagogy 2.0 [which] implies an active, social learning" (Careless, 2015, p. 52). Moreover, because of the necessary user-generated content of Web 2.0, the acts of doing social media (making, posting, debating, etc.) can be seen as a means to developing some digital literacy skills (Rheingold, 2011). Markham (2019) called on educators to move beyond "simply rejecting the concept of data. Instead, we (academics, teachers, scholars) should use our long training in pedagogy and teaching and our knowledge of interpretive and inductive/ emergent methods of analysis to create better literacies about what data can mean" (p. 759).

Rather than focus on instrumental aspects in educating or critical (thinking) aspects in educating, a critical digital pedagogy requires a holistic approach that encompasses both.

When developing a critical digital practice, I propose a holistic two-pronged approach that encompasses both the thinking and the doing. Thinking practice builds on existing robust literature on media literacy and critical pedagogy enabling analysis on how we participate, how we make connections and build communities, what measures we take to safeguard privacy concerns, and how we counter the rampant spread of fake news. Doing practice develops critical digital fluency skills, including the agility and confidence to try/ fail/try and adapt as new technologies or platforms emerge.

The Doing

> In an age when civic literacy and efforts to hold the powerful accountable for their actions are dismissed as "fake news," ignorance becomes the breeding ground not just for hate, but for a culture that represses historical memory, shreds any understanding of the importance of shared values, refuses to make tolerance a non-negotiable element of civic dialogue and allows the powerful to weaponize everyday discourse. (Giroux, 2020, p. 24)

Critical digital fluency will enable those entering the 21st-century workforce to adapt and change with evolving technology changes, discern and curate large volumes of information, and engage in confident decision making and critical analysis in addition to wielding some specific digital skills. Sparrow (2018) identified how digital fluency moves beyond digital literacy: "digital literacy is an understanding of how to use the tools; digital fluency is the ability to *create* [emphasis added] something new with those tools" (para. 3). Creativity should never be de-emphasized, as "art is also a powerful medium for achieving social change" (Butterwick, 2021, p. 125), but specifically within the Web 2.0 user-generated digital realm, creativity is immersed into online interactions and wholly visibilized. Critical digital fluency, then, includes the ability to think about the tools you are choosing to use in all their complexity and being in control of what you are producing/making/creating. In that way, critical digital fluency implies lifelong learning. Learning, Belshaw (2016) reminded us, is "inherently a social phenomenon" (p. 14) that requires context. He identified eight holistic elements of digital literacy as cultural, cognitive, constructive, communicative, confidence, creativity, being critical, and civic-oriented (pp. 41–55), while Potter (2019) was more skills-focused, identifying the seven skills of media literacy as analyzing, evaluating, grouping, inducing, deducing, synthesis, and abstracting (pp. 11–13). Mihailidis (2019) identified key components of a civic media literacy—a literacy required to "meaningfully participate in daily life"—as including four key abilities: analyze, evaluate, create, and act (pp. 7–9). It is important to again make the distinction between the pedagogue and the institution, as often the neo-liberal institutional focus is on tools that serve to primarily facilitate curriculum delivery, such as learning management systems and other brokered institutional licences. In other words, some of the digitally based skills the institution is emphasizing may be more about contracts and less about critical digital pedagogical practices.

In reality, you cannot separate the thinking from the doing; together, they are the praxis. A robust analysis combined with digital fluency and the confidence to adapt and learn as systems and platforms emerge leads to a robust, reflective, responsive critical digital practice. Critical digital pedagogy encompasses both thinking and analysis, skill building (both critical digital literacy and online skills), self-confidence, and agility in the form of a critical digital fluency.

I have identified the top 10 critical digital fluency skills that, although skills-based, definitely cross over into the thinking aspects below. They are discerning truth, developing core (platform-transferable) digital skills, being adaptable, writing/posting/memeing to the medium, getting creative, curating content, remembering soft skills, developing professionalism, understanding privacy and surveillance and having the ability to take appropriate safeguards, and adopting a train-the-trainer model in the digital "doing" (Jeremic & Bouchard, 2019).

The Thinking

> Transformative pedagogy empowers learners to engage in dialogue to co-construct meaning from educational material and experiences through an inquiry-based approach—it also promotes personal experiences, dialogical pedagogy, and aligning education with social justice. (Funk et al., 2016, p. 30)

Critical analysis, combined with digital and social media skills understood as critical digital fluency, is an increasingly robust pedagogical approach. In a world in which personal online data are mined, collected, and then used in conjunction with social media platforms to spread fake news, manipulate electorates, and track and stop lawful protests, the importance of critical digital fluency has become paramount. "Key critical thinking and analytical skills take on new meaning in an online environment. The ability to discern and verify and select online information remains a cornerstone for a critical digital fluency" (Jeremic & Bouchard, 2019, p. 37). Moreover, the Web 2.0 moment has opened the doors to a participatory and creative Web that calls for engagement and activity. There should be no doubt that as a result of these tools, a lot of citizen engagement, social justice, awareness, and dissemination has occurred. At the same time, we are witnessing a new moment in which the same social media tools that encourage active citizenship are being used to promote false information, distrust in media, and distrust in evidence-based practice. Giroux (2018) identified this moment as a moment of growing civic illiteracy, in which illiteracy is seen as a political tool, "a willful practice and goal used to actively depoliticize people" (p. 77). In this way, "ignorance has become weaponized, posturing as a refusal to know" (p. 75). Critical digital pedagogy and its ability to purposefully unearth and undertake robust power analysis and develop resistance and collective power are more crucial than ever.

There are a number of ways to develop a critical digital pedagogical practice. Funk et al. (2016) suggested guiding questions not only about the text but also about the text construction, such as "How was the text constructed?" "What values and ideologies are represented?" "Why was the text created?" and "Whom does it advantage?" (pp. 7–8), while Kozolanka and Oriowski (2018) called for a "constructive use of digital technology [that] requires ongoing analysis and interpretation" (p. 169). Patterson et al. (2016) called for a Black feminist approach that "equips us with certain skills…and pushes us to resist media images that attempt to delimit and diminish" (p. 41). And by centring the experiences of marginalized peoples, in this case Black girls' lived experience, McArthur (2016) stated that critical media literacy "can teach critical thinking and interrogation," enabling a visibility and counter-narrative (p. 362).

Critical digital pedagogy needs to be understood as a political process more than an educational model. Morris and Strommel (n.d.) defined critical digital pedagogy as community-based and collaborative. They state that it "must remain open to diverse…voices and thus requires invention to reimagine the ways that communication and collaboration happen across boundaries" (p. 9). Moreover, they see it as necessarily a "method of resistance and humanization" (p. 11). Kellner (2000) proposes a "critical theory of technology" that calls for equal emphasis on both technology and pedagogy, seeing how "technology can be used, and perhaps redesigned and restructured, for positive purposes such as enhancing education, democracy, [and] overcoming the divide between haves and have nots" (p. 248).

In that way, critical digital pedagogical practices require reflection and thought, an approach that also considers types of processes. It is necessarily political and serves to unearth power relations and dominance (often hidden) in pursuit of social justice and equity, including equity in access. Critical digital pedagogy embraces community engagement and movement-building activism (Amgott, 2018; Roumell, 2019; Strommel et al., 2020) and embodies collaboration and collective action, be it remix/reuse, social movement building, or facilitating the gathering of people (Snow & Tulk, 2020). It develops thinking and direction on what active citizenship (Bali, 2016) looks like and discerns how emotions

are manipulated (Boler, 2019) and how hegemony is socially constructed, but also how to fight back and find truth, evidence, and facts (Steuter, 2020). Strommel et al. (2020) noted, "Critical pedagogy is activism as much as it is a field, practice as much as it is theory, derived from experience and then reflection upon the experience" (p. 1). In that way, encouraging a literacy and fluency within the digital can challenge the neo-liberal hegemonic aspects of the digital world. After all, as we well know, knowledge is indeed power.

Looking Forward

An enormous amount of justice work takes place in the pockets and crevices of everyday life and practice. (Brookfield, 2016, p. 28)

Without a doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the nature of debate on the digital era and transformation. And so, perhaps it is time now to lean in to the hegemony in order to go deeper than the yea/nay debate and instead work with learners to develop skills to disrupt, resist, demand, organize, educate, and expose; to develop counter-hegemonies and social justice-based ways of being and doing online; and to engage in active citizenship and be ready and responsive to the internet of tomorrow, come what may. Increasingly, our "pockets and crevices"—our daily life activities and work, big and small—find themselves online. Here, critical digital pedagogical approaches are more urgent than ever to ensure a robust, engaged, active, and discerning citizenry. The time is now. Let's not lose it.

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