

Hacking

The derivation of the term “hack” comes from a verb around 1200 found in stem of Old English *tohaccian* “hack to pieces”, meaning “to cut with heavy blows in an irregular or random fashion” (Yagoda, 2014). As used in “Hacking the classroom”, diverse panelists challenged the outmoded disciplines of institutional structures, practices, and pedagogies by rethinking, deconstructing, and trying to “hack the classroom” in the era of technological proliferation.

Among the collection of multimodal pieces in “Hacking the classroom”, the three readings, including “We need to talk” by Knight, “Ten principles for a Hacktivist Pedagogy” by Losh, and “Hacking my mind” by Kuhn, placed emphasis on the significance of human-centered pedagogy by implementing the theory-practice model in a technology classroom, and I felt the need to better understand the creative model that can possibly link effective pedagogies and students’ critical thinking and learning. Knight introduced us to an exemplary space where students engage with hands-on activities, and emphasized on the physical presence of people as well as various opportunities of technological literacy practices for students from diverse backgrounds, which posits learning as a social event where human relationship plays an important role. Losh emphasized the role of affect that can help teachers to respond to students’ needs and goals in a differentiated way. “Hacking my mind” by Kuhn has helped me feel the urge to develop a level of critical consciousness” and “transfer the sensibility” to media production.

In “Pedagogy of the Oppressed” by Paulo Freire (1998), Freire questions the traditional model in which teacher-student relationship involves “banking” concept of

education (p. 53). Specifically, the teacher, as the depositor, “fills” the information that may not tap into the previous experiences of the student, whereas the student memorizes mechanically the content without using critical thinking. While I was wary of understanding this significance of humanization that challenged my basic understandings of institutional practices and learning spaces, expanding the human centered-space to educational settings in other fields may not come along naturally and possibly involve “trying out” in advance. This is because I experienced the realities of education that inevitably stunt teachers’ responsibilities and students’ experiences and attitudes toward new ways of settings in a normal classroom setting.

The dichotomy between theory/suggestion and reality is expanded to the dichotomy between the haves and not-haves/the oppressor and the oppressed in a critical discourse analysis, “FCJ-156 Hacking the Social: Internet Memes, Identity Antagonism, and the Logic of Lulz” by Milner (2013). Milner uncovers the dynamic nature of dominance and counter, observed in the mediated public discourses of participatory media collectives, such as 4chan and reddit. The essay deconstructs the whiteness, historically prevalent in the participatory media collectives by illustrating agonistic ideology rather than antagonism in the discourses on gender.

The technological connotations of the word have increased rapidly in both scope and presence, to the extent of dynamics of networked “resistance and its consequences on power” (Cammaerts, 2013, p. 432). This networked resistance can be exemplified by the cases of information and communication activists, such as the hacker collective Anonymous as well as non-profit organization WikiLeaks.

“Networked Resistance: The Case of WikiLeaks” by Cammaerts (2013) contributes to our understandings of mediation through networks that enables agency and resistance, but at the same time shows how structure retaliates. Cammaerts posits the case of WikiLeaks at broader debates of social movement and mediation theory, pointing to the contradiction that “striving for transparency of governance and freedom of information requires a degree of internal secrecy and all concealment of the identity of those that take the risk of relegating government or corporate secrets to the public domain”. (p. 422) What can be observed at the center of the advent of the information era and the digitalization of information seems to be the dynamics of resistance between “transparency of governance and freedom of information” that relate to human rights protection and national security and “its consequences on power”. The power to harm and silence the information and communication activists and WikiLeaks will be widespread and “the culture of secrecy and information control restored” (p. 433), at least for the moment, whereas we will be expecting new opportunities to emerge, as indicated by the scholar. While I remain wary of the inclusive property obtained by the logic of lulz, which enables diverse voices of the oppressed/the minorities to be heard, it does seem to me that in the participatory collectives, the exclusive property is prevailing, as racist discourses consistently mark the oppressed/ the minorities for their minority status.

References

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- Yagoda, B. (2014, March). A Short History of Hack. *The New Yorker*.

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