When you know better, do better:
Developing Anti-Racist, Digitally Literate Educators through Critical Media Literacy

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Introduction

One goal of teachers committed to democratic education is to educate, empower, and advocate for learners at all levels in a diverse and changing society. The current moment in education requires an interrogation and deep reckoning with the academy's role in upholding an inequitable system. At the same time, this moment presents an opportunity to both envision and create a more equitable, anti-racist, and just future for all individuals. Unfortunately, many teachers currently in the classroom report feeling inadequate to teach critical conscious raising (Ladson-Billings, 1999) and anti-racist curricula (Au & Blake, 2003). While this requires a broader examination of the systems and structures of education, it also means we need to reimagine the tools we bring into the classroom. Although educators need support with conceptual frameworks and pedagogical strategies that work to disrupt racism, they also need support with aligning those frameworks and strategies with digital tools that position learners as content creators who contribute to the public discourse about teaching and learning, racism, and equity in our society.

Teacher education and development is a continually evolving challenge, in no small part due to the ever-changing digital landscape (Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016). Pedagogy is

increasingly informed by the theoretical construct of multimodality, which is the use of different modes of representation, such as language, image, sound, gesture, etc., to communicate meaning (Kress, 2003). Multimodal pedagogy can enhance students' critical, creative, and culturally responsive skills, as well as their affective and emotional engagement with the content (Lim et al., 2022). Multimodality can also address the needs of diverse learners, such as English language learners, who can benefit from multiple ways of accessing and expressing information (Rodríguez et al., 2021). Furthermore, anti-racist and anti-bias pedagogical practices are in a constant state of becoming, meaning there is no single stopping point (Sánchez et al., 2021). Scholars have contributed to our understanding of how these two bodies of work influence classroom instruction (Kinloch & Dixon, 2017; Price-Dennis et al., 2016). However, very little work has been conducted to pull these two threads together and identify ways to assist educators as they leverage racial and digital literacies in the classroom.

Critical media literacy and digital literacy are related concepts that empower learners in the digital age. Critical media literacy (Hobbs, 2019) involves analyzing and creating media messages and understanding their effects and social influences, while digital literacy (Garcia, Fernández, & Okonkwo, 2020) involves understanding and creating digital media, structures, and conventions. Both require decoding, meaning-making, and creating digital content, but critical media literacy further develops critical thinking, cultural awareness, and social responsibility in relation to media (Carlsson, 2019).

This intersection is not only deeply necessary but also challenging as it must be guided by non-White discourses in pre-service teacher education, a system that is largely white (Johnson, Lachuk, & Mosley, 2012). As such, white educators and pre-service teachers (PSTs) must ground practical self-work in Critical Race scholarship to expose essential questions as they

engage with race (Utt & Tochluk, 2020). A third space (Gutiérrez, 2008) is needed in which White people can understand opportunities to divest from the ways in which race and racism function as barriers and accelerants in theoretical and tangible ways (Reyes et al., 2021). Cultivating this requires a commitment to ongoing critical self-reflection, lifetime learning, and improvement. We face a choice of whether to challenge or comply with the spread of false or harmful information online, which can be described as digital wildfires (O'Byrne et al., 2022). These are situations where misleading or malicious content goes viral on social media platforms and causes damage to individuals, groups, or society at large.

In this chapter, we address the intersections of what it means to be a digitally literate educator as well as an anti-racist educator. We start by exploring the concepts of literacy (Kress, 2003), digital literacy (Reddy et al., 2020), and critical media literacy (Hobbs, 2019). We then utilize elements of socioemotional learning (Beard et al., 2021), Critical Race Theory in Education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), and racial literacy (Kohli et al., 2017) to envision a space in which PSTs and the educational systems that create them can do the work needed to move toward anti-racism and against complicity in current and future systems (Price-Dennis & Sealey-Ruiz, 2021). The chapter will conclude with opportunities to leverage critical media literacy to support anti-racist, digitally literate educators as they embed inquiry, empathy, and connection in and out of their classrooms (O'Byrne, 2019).

Preparing PSTs to be Digitally Literate Educators

As we prepare PSTs to be digitally literate educators, one of the first key areas of exploration revolves around the need to examine and redefine what is meant by reading, writing, and text. As new and novel technologies impact society, there is a need to consider *what counts* in terms of teaching and learning. Teacher educators and PSTs privilege the ways in which they

learned and assume that is not only how future students will prefer to learn but also that these educational perspectives will carry on into the future (Freedman et al., 2016). Teacher educators, PSTs, and ultimately K–12 students need to act as collaborators as they learn about the complexities, advantages, and limitations inherent in the digital space. This requires a continual re-examination of the text and the knowledge, epistemic beliefs, and dispositions utilized as we engage and connect (Thomas et al., 2020). To adapt to this change, we must explore ways to transition students from passive consumers to active creators of digital content (O'Byrne, 2014).

As we increasingly consume and utilize texts, it is important to recognize that literacy does not occur in a silo, but is enriched by social, political, cultural, and other contexts. Texts are written and presented from a specific standpoint and contain a particular ideological and ontological focus. For the most part, there is no way to read, write, view, or speak a text from an impartial or neutral position. As a result, individuals need to be taught that these contexts and contingencies exist within texts and be challenged to respond to texts in a critical manner (Matias & Mackey, 2016). Educators and students must be taught to question a text and interrogate it to understand who created the text, controls the power, determines these power structures, and is not heard in the text (Pahl & Rowsell, 2012). In critical literacy, teachers and children ask questions "about language and power, about people and lifestyle, about morality and ethics, about who is advantaged by the way things are, and who is disadvantaged" (Comber, 2001, p. 271). This leads us to ask, What would PST education look like if the goal was to construct conditions for learning how to inquire about the relationship between knowledge construction and power? This is a challenge, particularly for PSTs, because they work and learn across various field placement contexts and have to constantly negotiate the extent to which they can engage in these practices with multiple stakeholders.

Applying a critical orientation to PST education embraces a dialectical view of knowledge that exposes the relationship between taken-for-granted assumptions and beliefs about people of color, class, language, and identity. Educators must identify instructional opportunities to accommodate these shifts in literacy and text and help prepare students to interrogate these texts in their own literate practices (Morrell, 2002). There is an opportunity to use multimodal content and media with young learners to help them understand connections and critique other forms of text as they read and synthesize across multiple modes of communication. In this process, educators and students engage in critical literacy (Morrell, 2015) and critical media literacy (Comber, 2015). Educators and students can develop a perspective of being healthy skeptics (Dunne, 2015) as they collaboratively read the word and read the world (Friere & Macedo, 2005) as they inspect the texts that are utilized in different spaces.

In considering the demands and challenges of integrating literacy instruction in the twenty-first century, there is an increased demand to consider the contextual elements of literacy and the languages surrounding them (Kellner & Share, 2019). As we recontextualize literacy in instruction, educators also need to value the texts and experiences students bring from home, family, and community. This integration of traditional *out-of-school* literacies and texts acknowledges the popular and beloved books and other media that students utilize in literacy practices outside of school as well as the importance of social learning (Street, 2014), in which text interpretation is a group rather than individual practice.

Literacy in digital contexts

Literacy is a collection of communicative and sociocultural practices that are constantly evolving with society and influenced by technology. To keep up with the changes, lifelong learning is necessary. One area that is always changing and evolving is the impact of new and

novel technologies on literacy as we adapt to digital spaces and tools. Digital literacy is the ability to use, understand, and evaluate digital technologies and media in various contexts. It involves not only technical skills but also critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Digital literacy is essential for participating in a networked information society where digital tools and platforms shape how we access, create, and share knowledge.

As the Internet grows in prevalence, digital social spaces replace the traditional public square, providing a space for citizens to connect and communicate. Though today's students are falsely considered to be 'digital natives', they still require instruction in reading within a digital context (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017). Digital literacy is a requirement for ordinary citizens in the modern world, but they also encounter a formidable challenge as we increasingly question the trustworthiness of digital information (O'Byrne et al., 2022). We must be ever prepared for the changes to come and expand our definition of "text" to include multimodal formats (Unsworth & Mills, 2020).

The What of Digital Literacy

Literacy and skills must be distinguished. Instruction must focus both on literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions and on specific skills needed to navigate digital spaces. Digital skills encompass a wide and varied body of knowledge, work habits, strategies, and dispositions, such as critical thinking, synthesis across texts, and technical actions (e.g., copy-pasting). They are similar to reading skills in their impact on literacy processes (Coiro, 2021).

Digital literacy, on the other hand, refers to the ability to interact with digital texts, tools, and content with awareness, attitude, speed, efficiency, and fluency (Wylie et al., 2018). Digital literacy means being able to use, create, and evaluate digital content and technologies in different

contexts. Digital literacy can be understood as a continuum of competencies that vary depending on the purpose, context, and audience of digital activities (Turner & Hicks, 2022). Text is ambiguous and deictic, meaning the understanding of literacy today will rapidly evolve with the arrival of new technological advances and social practices (Leu et al., 2017). It is likely to be different tomorrow.

The Where of Digital Literacy

According to Admiraal et al. (2017), the success of how technology is taught in teacher education programs is dependent upon how student teachers apply technology in schools when they become teachers. To increase teachers' use of technology with such guidelines or conditions, there are still questions surrounding the personal context, school support, and preservice education of first-year teachers and their ability to successfully integrate technology (McGarr & Ó Gallchóir, 2020). Teacher training is disconnected from what is happening in K–12 classrooms (Larson & Archambault, 2019); therefore, teacher education programs need to build improved partnerships with local schools (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). Teacher education programs also need to address the technology skills, practices, and dispositions of the faculty preparing new teachers. The vast majority of preservice teachers today grew up in digital environments, resulting in the assumption that they are digitally literate and dexterous within those spaces. This, coupled with the disconnect teacher education programs have with K–12 classrooms, highlights the need for identifying pathways to digital literacy for teacher development.

In essence, we view this as an opportunity to make real the vision of the New London Group (1996), which proposed a multiliteracies pedagogy that embraces linguistic and cultural diversity as well as multimodal forms of communication. We aim to make this vision more of a

reality in the current educational context. There are several learning pathways that exist for PSTs to become digitally literate, including formal coursework (Falloon, 2020), Professional development (Ceglie & Black, 2021), Peer learning (Robertson, Piotrowski, & Smith, 2022), and Self-directed learning (Stewart, 2020).

The Why of Digital Literacy

Institutional systems in our society are tethered to technology. Education is one of those systems. If we want future teachers to engage in impactful instruction that reflects commitments to anti-racist pedagogies and curriculum development that meaningfully integrates technology, PSTs must develop digital literacy skills and practices that reflect what is essential for teaching and learning in the digital age. PSTs need a robust conceptual and practical understanding of digital literacies for their own growth and to support their students' digital literacy skills and practices. It's important to explore learning pathways for PSTs as they become digitally literate.

Overall, becoming digitally literate as a pre-service teacher requires a combination of formal instruction, professional development, peer learning, and self-directed learning. Critical to all of these instructional formats is a risk-taking disposition with technology for the PSTs (and the faculty with whom they work). Findings suggest that technology modeling and program design within a teacher education program can have a significant impact on PSTs, thus improving their perceptions about their ability to integrate technology (Wilson, 2023).

Preparing PSTs to be Anti-Racist Educators

Considering the context of American education is an important place to start this conversation. To be blunt, our nation's school systems are places where racism and bias are acted out by educators, administrators, families, and students. Del Toro & Wang (2021) indicate that students of color experience 1) higher rates of discipline and harsher punishments for similar

behavior as white students; 2) fewer opportunities for taking advanced placement or gifted courses; and 3) overrepresentation in special education and remedial courses. Implicit bias suggests that these educators—mostly white—are unknowingly doing this damage as the effects of this discipline show up in school grades for years to follow (Del Toro & Wang, 2021).

At the precise time that we are coming to terms with the unspeakable damage being meted out in our school systems and in the larger context of society, states across the country, including those where most of us work, are passing laws to exclude the use of terms like equity, critical race theory, or inclusion. Education has become the political football that conservative politicians are using to punt around as they attempt to wrest back power over conversations about race, ability, class, and gender. These laws are taking aim at public institutions that engage in teacher preparation, making it almost impossible to carry out a mandate to prepare anti-bias and anti-racist educators. The work we do is under considerable duress at precisely the same time as it is needed more than ever.

Celebrating Diverse Epistemologies

Anti-racist pedagogies honor students' experiences, ways of knowing, and ways of being in the world (Muhammad, 2022). Teachers in anti-racist classrooms not only incorporate diverse texts and authors, but they also involve students in building collaborative curricula and create spaces where students feel safe taking risks because failure is not a possibility—just reflection and revision as students continue to make meaning. Anti-racist teaching does not fit traditionally sanctioned norms and processes within spaces of schooling, though some professional organizations have laudably used the language of anti-bias and anti-racism in their work and, in the case of the National Council of Teachers of English, in their standards for teacher preparation (National Council of Teachers of English, 2021).

An individual's varying social, economic, cultural, and political identities intertwine in discriminatory and privileged ways. Identities are created through gender, sex, race, ethnicity, class, caste, sexuality, religion, dis/abilities, weight, appearance, and even regions. The way such social factors overlap can be empowering and/or oppressive, depending on how they interact and are viewed within larger systems of power, where some identities are marginalized and others are upheld by a larger society. Crenshaw (1989) offered the term *intersectionality* as a way to analyze and discuss varying identities and how they operate within larger political systems. A single identity has implications for how one is perceived, yet that identity becomes more complicated when placed in tandem with other identities held within an individual. For these reasons, the historical and cultural knowledge of every student is also necessary, so their multiple identities aren't lost (Crandall et al., 2022).

To promote educational equity and social justice, PSTs and teacher educators must celebrate diverse populations and embed anti-racist pedagogy into their instruction. By respecting and valuing their students' identities, cultures, and experiences, educators create opportunities for learning from each other (Picower, 2021). To deepen their understanding of race and racism, educators must analyze education's role in disrupting white supremacy and systemic oppression of black, indigenous, and people of color and use media literacy to do so (Johnson, 2018). Educators at all levels have opportunities to build positive relationships, create inclusive learning environments, and empower students to challenge racism and injustice in their own contexts (Riley & Solic, 2017).

The What of Anti-Racist Pedagogy

Anti-racist pedagogy includes a form of transformative social-emotional learning (SEL) that aims to address racial injustice and create inclusive spaces for all students. It builds on

students' cultural assets, critically examines systems of power, and develops better ways of teaching, learning, and being. It also decenters the teaching self within the classroom to make space for youth voices and experiences. We draw on Muhammad's (2020) concept of urgent pedagogies from *Cultivating Genius*, which include decentering the self as a teacher. This means that we are willing to take risks and challenge our own assumptions and practices in order to create more equitable and responsive literacy education.

We can ensure that marginalized voices are heard and amplified by focusing on work at the grassroots level and being descriptive before moving to the prescriptive (O'Byrne, 2019). This means engaging with communities to understand their needs and perspectives and then using digital spaces to document and address inequalities (Stornaiuoluo & Thomas, 2017). Cultivating a spirit of dialogue and listening leads to better understanding, which helps create equitable learning environments for youth (Lynn & Smith-Maddox, 2007).To ensure equitable educational experiences, prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in curriculum design and development. Take action against discrimination and bias, and hold those responsible accountable. By working together and staying committed to these principles, we can build a society that truly serves the needs of all people, regardless of background or identity.

There are two unique factors about this, one is the fact that every single individual is at a different place in their journey towards becoming an anti-racist educator (Goering & Riesco, 2023 in press) so the notion that this is the goal for teachers with whom we work is inherently complex and multi-faceted. Second, as educators who lead and prepare teachers, we need to prioritize our own development and engage in vulnerable conversations that challenge our existing beliefs and practices. This is especially important for us as white people, who benefit from racial privilege. We also need to dedicate ourselves to the ongoing and never-ending

journey of anti-bias and anti-racist education. Following DiAngelo's (2018) pursuit of disrupting white fragility, "we need to build our capacity to sustain the discomfort of not knowing, the discomfort of being racially unmoored, the discomfort of racial humility" (p. 14). To confront one's own way of being in this world is not work that we'd argue most teachers and educators are specifically prepared to do.

The Where of Anti-Racist Pedagogy

Although much more research needs to be conducted, there are several learning pathways for teachers to become anti-racist educators. First, pre-service educators need to do the work of examining themselves. This means that they need to work to better understand bias and racism and their own roles within systems of power, such as schools. This work can include reading books, articles, and attending workshops that help educators understand and recognize bias and racism. PSTs also need to work to develop cultural competency by learning about and valuing diverse cultures and experiences. This includes attending professional development opportunities, reading books and articles, and engaging with diverse communities. This also involves working with families and communities to create inclusive and equitable learning environments. Teachers should engage with community organizations, involve families in the curriculum, and seek out community resources and partnerships.

As educators do the work and better understand the intersection between anti-racist pedagogies, they need to integrate these materials, resources, and perspectives into their curriculum that reflect diverse perspectives and experiences. This can include texts and tools that amplify diverse voices and perspectives, such as incorporating podcasts, videos, and social media into the curriculum. This includes creating spaces that are inclusive of all students, regardless of their backgrounds or experiences. Teachers can learn about accessibility and

inclusive design and work to create tools and content that are accessible to all students. Lastly, educators need to continue to work to *know better and do better* by engaging in reflective practice. This means that educators need to critically examine their own beliefs, assumptions, and practices, as well as the systems and structures that shape their teaching and learning environments (e.g., Early & Crandall, 2023). By engaging in reflective practice, educators can identify and challenge the biases and racism that may exist in their own work and in the media they use.

The Why of Anti-Racist Pedagogy

Beginning teachers should take an open stance towards global cultural diversity and actively combat any biases or racism they may not be aware of. This is especially crucial in the digital realm. Educators should strive for racial literacy by promoting equity with culturally and historically responsive literacy frameworks (Price-Dennis & Sealey-Ruiz, 2021; Muhammad, 2020). Furthermore, they should host anti-racist workshops (Chavez, 2021), strive for linguistic justice (Baker-Bell, 2020), and be proactive in interrupting any inequity in their classrooms (Perry & Zemelman, 2022). New teachers should have a critical outlook to foster improvement, promote democratic representation in texts, empower students with the choice to select work, and develop a culturally literate approach.

Challenging the status quo of racism involves understanding how different aspects of identity, such as race, gender, and sexuality, intersect and impact experiences of bias and discrimination. Educators can attend workshops, read books, and engage in conversations about social justice and intersectionality. But to do so, educators must prepare for this work by examining their own implicit and explicit biases through self-reflection and self-critique, considering the following questions (Washington, 2017):

Table X: Guiding Questions for Examining Biases

- Who are you in this work? Is that who you want to be?

- How has this part of my identity shaped who I am in this moment?

- How has my understanding or experience of this identity changed over time?

- What have been key experiences that have shaped this part of my identity?

- How do I currently feel about this part of my identity?

- What is the level of cultural privilege associated with this part of my identity?

- How has this impacted my experiences growing up?

- What have I been taught to think about myself and others based on this part of my identity?

- How might certain biases I hold have been shaped by any of the above?

How one answers these questions better situates the context for engagement in the professional developments necessary within anti-racist education.

Developing Anti-Racist Digitally Literate Educators

Educators can use digital, networked technologies to empower youth by facilitating social change, encouraging participation in activities that drive progress, and amplifying often overlooked perspectives. Rather than passive viewers, youth are active agents with the potential to influence others and their digital environment. Educators should recognize this power and possess an understanding of the multiple groups their students belong to. To activate and nurture student voices in digital spaces and achieve equity, educators should check for biases, use emotional and cultural intelligence, and expand upon traditional U.S. curricula. Price-Dennis and Sealey-Ruiz (2021) suggest considering "What does it mean to show up to your classroom and

provide the most humanizing pedagogy you know how to offer?" Unlearning lessons that lead to disempowerment is necessary for better democratic practices in both physical and digital spaces.

Doing the work to become a digitally literate, anti-racist educator involves skills, knowledge, and dispositions as they relate to critical media literacy practices in local and global communities. PSTs and teacher educators must create inclusive spaces that consider a student's background and experiences. To effectively engage with digital technology responsibly and productively, teachers should learn about accessibility and opportunities for inclusive pedagogy and foster critical friendships and thinking partners. This will help instill anti-racist and anti-bias teaching practices (James & Crandall, 2023).

As an illustrative example, we provide the work of educator-scholar Seth French, who completed a dissertation on Critical Media Literacy (CML) in 2020 and immediately took a job in a high school teaching, amongst other things, a media literacy course. In an effort to constantly build skills for CML amongst his students, he borrowed from Kellner and Share's (2019) Critical Media Literacy Framework to create the "Daily Six," an activity that he uses to start his classes most days. The process is amazingly simple, something welcome to teachers new and not-so-new; French introduces a piece of media—usually a photograph, short video, or meme—and flashes six questions on the screen (see Table X: The Daily Six), which, after students have a bit of time to digest the media and questions, leads to a small and large group discussion.

Table X: The Daily Six

1. Who are all the possible people who made choices that helped create this text?
2. How was this text constructed, delivered, or accessed?
3. How could this text be understood differently?
4. What values, points of view, and ideologies are represented or missing from this text or influenced by the medium?
5. Why was this text created and/or shared?

An educator bringing the Daily Six into the classroom leverages CML perspectives and pedagogies as students interact with text and each other to educate, empower, and advocate for youth and each other in and out of their varied contexts as they become digitally literate, anti-racist educators (O'Byrne, 2019). CML provides an approach to teaching and learning that empowers students to critically analyze and produce media texts and to use media as a tool for social change.

Educate in this context means teaching and learning intellectual, moral, and social skills for oneself and others (Sleeter & Carmona, 2017). It also means challenging the dominant power and ideology in education and creating more inclusive and fair learning spaces (Carter, Skiba, Arredondo, & Pollock, 2017). Educators can help students educate by using digital tools and social media to amplify marginalized voices and encourage critical dialogue and action. Educators can support students in their learning journey by providing them with digital technologies and social media to amplify marginalized voices, promote societal change, and reshape silenced narratives. Educators can model the importance of ongoing learning, dialogue, and taking action to address social injustices. Students should be encouraged to critically analyze media messages and engage in dialogue with others of different perspectives.

Empower means to give oneself and others the authority and confidence to act and become stronger (Römer et al., 2022). Educators and students can give themselves and each other the power to act and grow with digital technologies. These tools and practices can also be used to break the status quo, oppose inequalities in education and society, allow individuals to share experiences of resistance and self-realization, and emphasize the diversity of their communities. They can use these to build platforms for underrepresented voices and

self-development, disrupt familiar power structures, and oppose educational and societal inequalities (Patin et al., 2021). Moreover, they can tell tales of struggle and transformation or bring attention to their students' and communities' varied experiences.

Advocate means to publicly support a cause or policy for social change. Educators and students can advocate for social change by using digital technologies to share their messages and collaborate with others, connecting with community organizations, participating in local events, and challenging the status quo (Manca et al., 2021). Digital activism includes creating social media campaigns, producing digital media, and using digital storytelling, podcasts, blogs, or wikis to share their stories of advocacy or showcase the perspectives and cultures of the community. They can empower themselves to expose injustices and create spaces for alternative perspectives (Stornaiuolo & Thomas, 2018). Educators and students should be mindful of the power dynamics and potential risks involved in advocacy work, such as online harassment or censorship.

Know Better. Do Better. Be Better.

In this chapter, we've made the argument that supporting youth literacies in digital spaces requires a commitment to democratic education and recognition of an ever-changing society, with direct intentionality toward anti-bias and anti-racist teaching practices. This requires critical self-evaluation, a willingness to explore the heterogeneity of youth communities, and a dedication to inquiry, empathy, and human connection. It is the goal of pre-service education to best prepare tomorrow's educators to be ready to educate, empower, and advocate for all students, especially with inclusive, diverse literacy instruction.

In this chapter, we indicate that this is largely an individual decision, but teacher educators and ultimately PSTs have an opportunity to not only make these decisions for

themselves but also create situations that can spur pedagogies such as the ones indicated in this chapter. Each of the authors of this piece has made their own decisions and continues to ask new questions. We ask, would the world be a better place if all citizens had an opportunity to engage with such questions more frequently? That's an easy and resounding, yes. What is also worth mentioning is the notion that ideas such as critical media literacy can seem scary and even dangerous in states that have banned such "divisive concepts." Of course, analyzing such policies through this lens would lead students to question authority and to both know and do better.

Education is far from neutral; it reflects dominant ideologies and power structures that inform its curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment practices. To create equitable, inclusive learning spaces that honor diversity, educators must question the status quo. Culturally competent teachers promote egalitarian practices and celebrate the complexities of multiple viewpoints that represent the heterogeneity that exists in every school. They encourage writing toward democracy (East & Caskey, 2018) and the identity work necessary within anti-racist literacy practices (Ebvaria, 2021). Perhaps the best way for beginning educators to establish a pedagogical stance for literacy is to begin with self-reflection. New teachers should ask, "What does it mean to be democratic? Why does representation matter? Where might I go to find knowledge so that I can enhance what is possible for classroom instruction for all students?

Today's educators need to be prepared for the diversity of U.S. schools and the various media consumed daily by young people. Several scholars have proposed frameworks for culturally relevant or sustaining pedagogies (e.g., Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Muhammad, 2022; Paris, 2012). Tochelli-Ward & Boyd (2022) emphasize culturally compelling instruction, which involves teachers gaining an understanding of their students' Funds of

Knowledge, discourses, language and cultural experiences, and personal interests. It is also important to consider the multimodalities and semiotic systems used by youth to make meaning from the many visual, print, conversational, mediated, and overheard stimuli they encounter daily.

Educators can help students educate themselves and others by creating opportunities for them to use digital technologies and social media to engage in social action and dialogue with diverse perspectives. Educators can also demonstrate the importance of lifelong learning and critical thinking, as well as the value of taking action to address social injustices.

Your overview of the CML pedagogical chapters will go here:

As you continue reading this book, the next two chapters you'll encounter connect with the points we presented in our piece. *Forging Communities in Contested Spaces: Critical Media Literacy as a Social Justice Practice* by Lucy Arnold explores how contested spaces contribute to the understanding of social justice practices. This exploration of contested spaces contributes to the understanding of social justice practices by highlighting the importance of recognizing power dynamics and inequalities within these spaces. By examining the ways in which power operates and influences various aspects of society, including education, media, and policy, we can develop a critical awareness of the systems and structures that perpetuate injustice. This understanding allows for the identification of marginalized voices and the creation of inclusive and equitable spaces where social justice can be pursued. This is followed by *Navigating the Benefits and Harms of Media in the Age of Disinformation, Digital Surveillance, and*

Misinformation by Keisha L. Green, Torrey Trust, and Allison Butler. The authors provide insight into how digital literacy practices can be used to address antiracism, equity, and justice. They draw from Freire's critical pedagogy, which challenges the passive banking model of education, and emphasize the importance of power analysis in understanding media and popular culture by looking beyond the surface of media texts and examining the ownership, production, and distribution of these texts.

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