Imagination PLAYce: Towards Critical Liberatory and Digitally Mediated Pedagogies of Higher Education

Veena Vasudevan, Tinukwa Boulder, and Beatrice Dias, *University of Pittsburgh, School of Education*

Motivation

As bell hooks writes, "classrooms remain the most radical space of possibility in the academy." We take up hooks' charge by exploring how we can reimagine classroom spaces as sites of critical discourse and joyful exploration, with meaningful applications of technology and digital media for learning.

Project Description

We are developing a classroom, entitled Imagination PLAYce rooted in the principles of play, productive failure, and critical discourse. With the Pitt Momentum Grant, we will:

1) Source technology and develop digital resources for the Imagination PLAYce
2) Engage faculty and students in play and critical discourse around technology and digital media
3) Collect data to conduct research and seed future work related to innovative technologies and digital media in classrooms.

Context

Teacher education and even faculty training and development don't effectively and authentically leverage digital media and technology to nurture and enhance learning experiences for students in K12 or higher education. Despite having access, institutions of higher education experience similar issues. In this work we will focus on providing the space, support, and time needed to think about how an orientation towards making and playing with digital media and technology can deepen and nurture existing pedagogical goals, create multiple entry points, and cultivate students' critical digital literacies.

University of Pittsburgh

Our team aims to support faculty and students in learning how to engage digital media and technology in more liberatory and critical ways.

Imagination PLAYce

Project Deliverables

· Submitted to 3 academic conferences
· Submit 2 manuscripts on digitally mediated critical pedagogies and creating spaces possibly in Learning, Media, & Technology, and, Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacies
· Hire and mentor two graduate research assistants
· Create new digital content to be leveraged by faculty, staff, students, and community members.
· Source, try out, and integrate new technologies into our professional learning support.
· Engender new critical pedagogies of making and play with digital media and technology in our teacher education classrooms and throughout our school

Potential Impact

Given our unique positioning at the School of Education, we have the opportunity to reimagine how teachers learn and practice with technologies in their classrooms. If our efforts are successful, participating educators will leave with authentic and meaningful learning experiences that help them discern the inherent value of play and making as entry points into deep learning for students of all ages. This will lay a foundation for future educators to design play-centered and impactful learning experiences with and across multiple tools and modalities.

References

hooks, b. (2014). Teaching to transgress. Routledge.

Acknowledgements

We appreciate the support of the leadership of the School of Education and our department, Teaching, Learning, and Leading (TLL).