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Digital Storytelling in Field Education: A Model for Critical Consciousness

Lisa M. Ibanez
University of St. Thomas, Minnesota

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Digital Storytelling in Field Education: A Model for Critical Consciousness

by

Lisa M. Ibanez

A Banded Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Social Work

University of Saint Thomas
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Abstract

The dissertation comprises three scholarly work that examine use of digital storytelling (DST) in social work education. The first scholarly work is a conceptual paper that integrates the constructivist framework in presenting DST as a foundational tool for enhancing critical consciousness among social work students. The second scholarly contribution is an exploratory mix-methods study of 10 seniors, who were derived from a convenience sampling method from students enrolled in a field seminar course in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree Bachelor of Arts. The participant's ages ranged from 21 to 40 years ($M_{age} = 23.4$, $SD_{age} = 5.82$), representing different races — Hispanic or Latino (44.1%), White (33%), Asian (7.8%), two or more races (5.5%), Black or African American (4.7%), Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders (0.39%), and American Indian or Alaska Native (0.34%). The social work students and participants of this study reflected the overall college campus demographics. The quantitative aspect of the study consisted of one-group pre-and posttest design. Findings showed that students' ratings moved significantly on certain measures at follow-up, compared to the baseline. The qualitative aspect is an analysis of students' final DST reflection essays within a field seminar course. Data was analyzed using the content analysis methodology. An overall theme emerged demonstrating that DST assignment serves as a mechanism that enhanced the participants' capacity to empathize with the storyteller's personal feelings and beliefs as they became motivated to act. The third product is an annotated overview of a peer-reviewed presentation at the European Association of Schools of Social Work Conference Madrid 2019, which took place at the Complutense University of Madrid. The poster presentation highlighted findings from the mix method study (described above) that examined use of digital storytelling using a constructivist framework in field education.

Keywords: digital storytelling, social work, field education, critical consciousness

Dedication/Acknowledgements

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Digital Storytelling in Field Education: A Model for Critical Consciousness

According to the International Federation of Social Work (2014) and the National Association of Social Work (2017), the priority for social workers is to promote social justice and change. Thus, as stewards of the profession, we use the social justice lens to guide the design of social work curricula (Moore et al., 2017; Munson & Bent-Goodley, 2014). Bransford (2011) stressed the need for social work educators to enhance social work students' critical consciousness in order to meet the demands of the social justice project. Lay and McGuire (2010) acknowledge the uncertainty about the current social work curricula, the social justice needs of the profession, and the relationship with our traditional assignments. Social justice advocates examine the development of a curriculum that explores implicit and explicit learning. Pitner and Sakamoto's (2016) examination of culture and critical consciousness in human service identifies critical consciousness development as an essential social work value and as important to cultural awareness. Suárez, Newman, and Reed's (2008) cross-sectional study uncovered the critical consciousness development gaps within social work education. Therefore, the examination of digital storytelling (DST) through the constructivist lens to build critical consciousness is significant to social work field education.

According to Wayne, Bogo, and Raskin (2010), "radical approaches to field education must be explored in order to overcome the roadblocks to high-quality field experience" (p. 327). Recent research indicates that field education should provide a more in-depth learning experience (Biggs & Tang, 2015). Therefore, the academy continues to explore field education curricula, assignments, and activities such as DST that will foster students' critical reflection. For social work, educators must embrace their responsibility as stewards of the profession; they must

contribute to developing a curriculum that enhances our social work students' critical consciousness.

DST is a method that has been used for more than 20 years as a way to communicate emotions, possibilities, and perceptions. DST engages the brain holistically, linking emotion, logic, linearity, and memory (Recchia, Wainryb, & Monisha, 2013). When memories become associated with the effect of DST, information becomes strongly encoded (Lambert, 2013). The integration of memory, emotions, and meaning can produce learning experiences for students aligned with the competency-based standards and for students in social work affiliated with the Council on Social Work Education.

Conceptual Framework

This banded dissertation is a constructivist approach to build critical consciousness by using DST. Scholars of the constructivist paradigm refer to learning as a participatory process. Constructivism is a philosophical notion that is utilized by various disciplines, such as philosophy, physics, psychology, counseling, and most recently, education (Benmayor, 2012; Fletcher & Cambre, 2009; Hafford-Letchfield, Dayananda, & Collins, 2018). At the turn of the 19th century, the constructivist and psychologist John Dewey, a colleague of Jane Addams (and a regular visitor of the Hull House), hypothesized that knowledge was a participatory action (Hendrickson et al., 1982). John Dewey's influence on the Hull House resulted in the constructivist framework serving as a model of teaching and learning. Dewey's attention to learning as a community permeated social work education and contributed to the field education model (Hendrickson et al., 1982). As a social work educator, this author examines engaging pedagogies that resemble Dewey's constructivist approach, such as DST.

In the 21st century, theorists Michael White and David Epston introduced narrative therapy from a fresh constructivist lens (Hendrickson et al., 1982). Their work influenced social work practice initially, and eventually enhanced the social work classroom. The narrative approach is the exploration of one's social realities through a story (Finn, 2017). Narrative therapy became a means for practitioners and educators to examine social justice concepts such as meaning, power, context, and possibility (Finn, 2017). It is through storytelling that students collaboratively create a shared understanding of diversity and difference in society. Stories within the social work curriculum engage students in the meaning making of complicated subject matter (Davidson, 2004).

Storytelling in the classroom requires students to engage in critical dialogue that informs, encourages, and invites us into each other's world (Baldwin, 2007). Sakamoto and Pitner (2005) emphasized the need for increasing students' abilities to "critically interrogate how his or her own identity is shaped by the dominant ideology" (p. 441). According to Siegel and Hartzell (2003), "Stories create a connection to others that builds a sense of belonging to a particular community" (p. 39). Constructivist scholars within the academy value the pedagogy of DST because of its capacity to facilitate the creation of knowledge (Sandars & Murray, 2009; Sukovic, 2014; Yang & Wu, 2012). The use of digital storytelling within the social work field course activates students' understanding of their resilience, creativity, and passion as emerging professionals.

This banded dissertation seeks to explore the enhancement of critical consciousness through DST in social work field education. The first article demonstrates the logical construction of the constructivist framework in DST pedagogy as it enhances the participant's critical consciousness. The second article is a mixed-methods study, which tests the use of DST

pedagogy as an enhancing mechanism for social work students enrolled in a BASW senior

seminar course. There is a theoretical and methodological rationale for the pedagogy of digital

storytelling in social work field education and its enhancement to critical consciousness. There is

also a descriptive analysis of how students expand their narrative from *my story* to *our story*.

Summary of Banded Dissertation Products

This banded dissertation consists of one conceptual research manuscript, one mixed-

methods-designed research manuscript, and an annotated analysis of the author's peer-reviewed

presentation at an international conference. The first conceptual article, titled "Digital

Storytelling a Constructivist Framework," explores the use of DST through a constructivist lens

in order to examine how it may increase social work students' critical consciousness. The paper

provides a conceptual constructivist model that supports the production of learning that takes

place in DST. The constructivist paradigm provides the basis that "we are both students and

teachers, and we are also learning and teaching" (M. Graham, VoiceThread communication,

February 15, 2018). DST is an engaging pedagogy that enhances a student's imagination and

creativity to build the skills necessary for today's social work student. DST is a significant

modality to a professional program as it develops one's professional identity and values and

helps students to think about thinking. Bransford (2011) stressed that the prerequisite for social

work educators is to enhance social work students' critical consciousness to meet the demands of

the social justice project.

The second manuscript, titled "Digital Storytelling in Social Work Field Education: A

Model for Critical Consciousness," describes a mixed-methods study in which 10 social work

students (n =10) participated. The quantitative data consisted of a one-group pre- and posttest

design. The qualitative data collection included final DST reflection essays. The DST assignment

proved to serve as a mechanism that enhanced the participants' capacity to empathize with the

storyteller's personal feelings and beliefs as they became motivated to take action. This research

study contributes to the exploration of DST within social work field education and its

enhancement of critical consciousness (CC) practice.

The third scholarly artifact, titled "Digital Storytelling: In Social Work Education,"

provides an annotated overview of a peer-reviewed poster presentation at the European

Association of Schools of Social Work Conference, which took place at the Faculty of Social

Work, the Complutense University of Madrid, Spain. The poster presentation examined the use

of digital storytelling from a constructivist framework in field education. The poster consisted of

the research question, abstract, introduction, sample description, study design, findings,

discussion, and references. This presentation delivered information about the development of

critical consciousness with ten BASW students and served as an exploratory study.

The purpose of this banded dissertation is to explore the enhancement of critical

consciousness through DST. The DST pedagogy is recognized as aligning with the constructivist

framework (Furman, Coyne, & Negi, 2008; Lenette, Cox & Brough, 2015). For a social work

field educational facilitator, the philosophy of teaching and learning continues to shape and

reshape upon the collective reflections and the exploration of student-shared experiences

(Anastas, 2010; Finn, 2017). Infield seminar classes creating relationships that cultivate trust, in

turn, allows all to enter the learning process (Furman et al., 2008). Field educational pedagogy

relies upon the connection and shared reality between all constituents (Gutierrez et al., 2017).

Discussion

This banded dissertation functions as a grounded theoretical framework for ongoing

research linked to DST pedagogy in social work field education. The first and second articles

offer the reader a logical and systematic framework for DST scholarship. The outcomes from these two products introduced the emergence of DST pedagogy research at an international social work education peer-reviewed conference in Europe. The DST research presented this banded dissertation recognized theory, new technologies, and social work education as an enhanced mechanism for one's critical consciousness.

The research and analysis from both articles introduce the tenets of DST pedagogy that connect with enhanced critical consciousness. The first tenant that emerges is that there is power in hearing, seeing, and experiencing storytelling amongst peers as it transports participants into each other's worldview. An additional tenet is awareness that sharing stories can lead to positive change. Finally, DST, as a practice of critical reflection, is a critical consciousness theme that emerged from this exploratory research. Results from these scholarly works demonstrate the need to further explore DST in social work field education in order to shape students' critical consciousness.

This banded dissertation began with a critical analysis and synthesis of critical consciousness—the use of the DST process from a constructivist perspective. Subsequent scholarship articles derive from the initial article by testing the conceptual framework in a mixed-methods study. Both qualitative and quantitative data indicated there was, in fact, a relationship between the DST process and the enhancement of social work students' critical consciousness—the results of the research-based article at the European Association of Schools of Social Work international peer-reviewed conference. At the peer-reviewed conference, the researcher received feedback and inquiries about the methodology and survey used. Peers offered the researcher suggestions and insight for how to test the methodology with students in

the Metropolitan School of Social Work in Copenhagen, Denmark. The researcher received

information that will contribute to future research.

Implications for Social Work Education

The International Federation of Social Work (IFSW; 2014) and the National Association

of Social Work (NASW; 2017) have given priority to social work professional practice that

promotes social justice and societal change. The overall components of DST group work

facilitation are consistent with the social justice lens. Social justice group leadership blends

readiness, one's capacity to expand the group participants' understanding, and the skills it takes

to increase the overall value of diversity and differences in the group experience (Mulder & Dull,

2014). Bransford (2011) stressed that the prerequisite for social work educators in the bachelor's

and master's degree programs is to enhance social work students' critical consciousness to meet

the demands of the social justice project. Lay and McGuire (2010) acknowledge the current

uncertainty within social work curricula and social justice needs. The social justice professional

education will include peer-teaching activities that DST group work offers. Social justice

scholars urge social work educators to develop curricula that explore students' consciousness

(Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2006). The DST curriculum is an innovative approach to field

education through the multiple student-centered learning strategies within the modality, which

includes social work's professional social justice distinguishing element.

Implications for Future Research

The research conducted within the three products in this banded dissertation demonstrate

DST's ability to facilitate reflective learning necessary at all levels of social work education.

Sandars and Murray (2011) viewed DST increase their medical students' awareness of their

professions' values. At the master's level of social work education, the required content

continues to grow but for an advanced generalist social worker to maintain an awareness of how clients view the automatic power imbalance within the helping relationship is of the upmost importance. At the master's level students could be introduced to the DST process and return to the DST process at the end of their program to assess the implicit interpersonal learning that took place in the program. Each student's initial digital story could serve as the baseline of a social work student's critical consciousness. The students' initial digital stories could be modified at the end of their MSW program and the DST could serve as qualitative data for CSWE's intrinsic competencies and practice behaviors.

Field education at all levels of education—bachelor's and master's—needs more teaching and learning pedagogies that are empirically shown to have worked. The development of critical consciousness is essential to the social work profession. The development of personal and professional identity occurs within the socialization of the profession within the group setting. Scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) has become a significant movement in social work education. Field education needs more teaching and learning pedagogies that are empirically shown to have worked. The development of critical consciousness is essential to the social work profession. The development of personal and professional identity occurs within the socialization of the profession within the group setting. Therefore, the use of the DST pedagogy within the constructivist framework requires further exploration. Self-reflection and the enhancement of critical consciousness are critical to our social justice practice model. Therefore, the integration and use of digital storytelling within social work field education as an enhancement to students' critical consciousness, as seen from the constructivist lens, is essential. The author intends to increase the SoTL linked to DST in social work field education.

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Digital Storytelling a Constructivist Framework

Lisa M. Ibanez
University of St. Thomas

Author Note

Lisa Ibanez is a doctoral student at University of St. Thomas. A conceptual manuscript in

partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Doctor in Social Work.

Correspondence concerning this article contact student by email at

iban7088@stthomas.edu.

Abstract

Social work field education provides a unique opportunity to engage in self-examination while developing a lens for analyzing why and how power imbalances exist. Essentially, the emphasis of reflection and systems analysis is the fabric of social work programs. Education in the social work field offers a more in-depth exploration into one's landscape of one's consciousness. In a social work field course, students participate in sharing their clients' lived experiences, and examine how their experiences affect us all. In essence, storytelling takes place amongst emerging social work professionals in a field seminar setting. Storytelling in seminars requires all to become meaning-makers. Digital storytelling (DST), the new form of storytelling, invites participants in the co-creation of knowledge by using storytelling, technology, and multimedia. Constructivist pedagogy supports the production of learning that takes place in DST. Informed by action research and through inductive knowledge, the application of DST has enhanced social work field education. The DST process allows all the participants to learn as a community by talking, listening, and creating documentaries of their experiences. The DST teaching methods used with undergraduates in a social work program support the blending of professional knowledge and personal narratives—vital to the professionalization process. In this paper, the author examines the use of digital storytelling while using a constructivist framework and exploring the impact it has on raising the participants' consciousness.

Keywords: digital storytelling, technology, constructivist, social work, field education

Digital Storytelling: A Constructivist Framework

The constructivist theoretical framework implements an epistemology identified as a participatory process. Philosophers of this paradigm recognize that facts do not exist. The constructivist paradigm provides the basis that "we are both students and teachers, and we are also learning and teaching" (M. Graham, VoiceThread communication, February 15, 2018). The current research centers on how learners construct knowledge through transactions within their environment. According to David Rigoni, as meaning-makers, we hold that "all truth is internally constructed in interactions with our social environments" (2002, p. 24). The co-creation of reality is enhanced through critical reflection, and this occurs throughout the students' creation of their digital story. Finn (2016) explains that self-examination occurs in the DST process through "discussing ideas, thoughts, and feelings with others, externaliz[ing] our thinking, and help[ing] us engage with others and work on open-mindedness" (p. 365). Critical, reflective, and participatory learning activities are integrated into the DST curriculum through peer dyads, research, story circles, and the sharing of artistic symbols. Constructivists in diverse professional education programs consider DST to be a tool that builds upon one's critical consciousness. Therefore, in this paper, the author explores the use of DST through a constructivist lens in order to examine how it may increase social work students' critical consciousness.

Paulo Freire (1978) introduced his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* curriculum, which served as a motivating determinant in social work field education research. Freire's research also sparked a scholarly examination of liberatory education. Liberatory education "connects the will to know with the will to become" (Cole & Schmor, 2004, p. 50). Social work pedagogy scholars studied the practice of professional knowledge construction. Paolo Freire's liberatory education philosophy invited social work educators to collaborate with students to concrete course content,

assignments, and community engagement experiences. As a steward of social work education, this scholar focused on enhancing students creatively participating in the world-making project. Therefore, as we collaboratively work with students and consider a pedagogy that explores the connectedness of head, heart, and hand, we, too, contribute to the world-making project. The use of digital storytelling in social work education presents learners with the opportunity to "construct their view of reality . . . based on the content and process of the course" (Graham, 1997, p. 41). Students become animators that ignite individual and group consciousness through dialogue and feedback.

Ira Shor (1992), a student of Paulo Freire, presents the concept of empowering education. Shor's critical teaching paradigm incites higher education to hold an activist position. An education that raises awareness about knowledge and its constant state of change is within the constructivist paradigm (Shor, 1992). Shor identifies the teacher as a facilitator who helps students find their voice. Social work programs explore a radical, activist approach in field education. Authors Joseph and Juwah (2011) discuss the applied academic and practice-based disciplines of empowering education. The empowering curriculum evokes the learning that is essential to the social justice foundation of social work discipline. In this paper, the author examines the use of DST in field education as it engages students in the process of finding their voices, becoming theory producers, as they construct and reconstruct field experience through storytelling.

Literature Review

Technology and the Constructivist Framework

Peck, Jonassen, and Wilson (1999) explored the role of technology within the

constructivist paradigm. As technology and media continue to shape the "world-making" project,

the constructivist perspective identifies the methodology that facilitates the shaping of meaning.

Technology—or media—is a fundamental element of a student's environment. Research and

scholarships continue to explore technology approaches that promote in-depth learning.

Skarpaas, Jamissen, Krüger, Holmberg, and Hardy (2016) conducted a mixed-method study that

examined the use of technology in an occupational therapy education program. Findings from the

survey indicated that technology multimodality within this professional program facilitates

increased knowledge with a reflective component identified as a storyboard, a visual tool used to

organize a storyline (Skarpaas et al., 2016; Lambert, 2013). In another study conducted by

Sukovic (2014), he tested a technological transliteracy methodology in a high school setting and

discovered that technology could have a lasting impact on learning and emotional engagement.

Like social workers, professional educators continue to focus on designing assignments that

require higher-order thinking, reflection, and connections in the way of technology. The

production process of the DST offers the components that meet the constructivist identified

tenants.

Social work field education and the constructivist approach. The constructivist

paradigm is essential to social-work field education. Wayne, Bogo, and Raskin (2006) examined

field education through the constructivist methodology and discovered a need to increase the

students' ability to think outside the box by engaging them in multidimensional creative project.

Hull and Katz (2006) identified that a constructivist methodology offered opportunities for

understanding experience and found a need for more supportive social relationships among

students in professional programs. Field education constructivist pedagogy allows students and

teachers to explore meanings within their social locations. Hafford-Letchfield, Dayananda, and

Collins (2018) conducted a pilot project in an interprofessional leadership module. They

identified constructivist concepts that emerged from the qualitative data of a shared technology-

based project. Hafford-Letchfield et al. (2018) use of a technology-based project within an

interprofessional team endorsed the co-construction of knowledge among multidisciplinary team

members. Current interprofessional research within social work field education reflects the use

of experiential learning activities that facilitate multiple perspectives, learner-generated, and

significant process-oriented learning experiences (Lenette, Cox, & Brough, 2015). As one

participates in each DST activity, they engage in metacognitive thinking, which is when students

start to think about thinking. Metacognition allows students to engage in higher order thinking

and is significant to social work professionalization.

 Storytelling as a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. The use of

storytelling in-group consultation is often recognized as a vital practice within field instruction

(Witkin & Saleebey, 2007). Mostly, social work students are sharing stories of their experience

as well as their clients' perspectives. Within-group supervision and in social work practicum

seminars, students who participate in storytelling practices are shaped by narrating and listening.

De Maria's (1992) article challenges the social work academy to contribute to the radical social

work movement by enhancing their teaching pedagogy. De Maria (1992) identified the use of

storytelling as a technique to gather data that would then inform the direction of social work

education. As we practice storytelling within social work field education, the creation of

meaning becomes rooted in diverse lived experiences (Shor, 1992). Therefore, stories shared in

the classroom setting function as the collective text generated by diverse student teachers. As social work field educators look to encourage self-directed learners, with a powerful professional identity, with a strong commitment to our discipline, we must adopt in-class activities that cultivate this type of learning. Professional education scholars identify storytelling as a way one becomes a member of the culture.

  Social work group practice and the use of story in meaning-making. The integration of storytelling in-group work offers personal and meaningful experiences for group participants as well as for the facilitator (Lenette et al., 2015). Pelts and Galambos (2017) conducted a mixed-methods study that examined the use of in-group storytelling among long-term care providers and its impact on decreasing the negative attitudes toward older lesbian and gay consumers. The authors discovered that storytelling within a group setting is a useful tool for training and education (Pelts & Galambos, 2017). Storytelling researchers attest to the group setting having a more in-depth understanding of self as well as a collective community narrative (Lenette et al., 2015; Pelts & Galambos, 2017). Storytelling participants have an opportunity to test their assumptions, share solutions, and explore emotions. Social work group practice is an art and science of engagement that can result in a deeper understanding of the needs and potential of the client and worker (Furman, 2008). Stories are a window into others' experiences as they construct their realities (Finn, 2016). Therefore, the use of storytelling in a group setting is a contributing component to the construction of one's knowledge.

Digital Storytelling

  Digital storytelling requires the writing and critical analysis needed in many social work assignments. Additionally, it provides students with skills that allow them to shape rather than consume technology. Benmayor's (2012) exploratory study focuses on the technology of

introducing their initial story ideas (or pitching a script) in a story circle, receiving and providing

feedback, recording one's voice, selecting and arranging images, adding music, and editing to

complete a 3-minute digital story. DST requires multidimensional learning (Sukovic, 2014). DST

is an engaging pedagogy, which enhances a student's imagination and creativity to build the

skills necessary for today's social work student. DST is a significant modality to a professional

program as it develops one's professional identity and values and helps students to think about

thinking.

        Digital storytelling in social work education. Studies related to digital storytelling are

scarce within social work education research, but findings from studies include specific terms

and modalities used in this pedagogy (Regan, 2013). Historically, social work community

organizers used stories to give a voice to the vulnerable or oppressed. This practice transformed

into social actions through technologies recognized as "photovoice," which incorporates image

and narrative (Andrews, 2014). Action research utilizes the practice of collecting stories to

increase social work knowledge (Moxley & Charness, 2013). Within the past five years, social

work inductive research has concentrated on the use of digital storytelling as a client-centered

modality (Lenette et al., 2015). The researchers' use of digital client stories catalyzed the

construction of authentic relationships (Hafford-Letchfild et al., 2018). The current literature

provides the initial exploratory methods associated with the use of digital storytelling within

higher education. The author expands upon the existing body of knowledge by asking how the

use of DST within a social work course improves the classroom community learning experience

as well as relationships by using a constructivist lens.

        Digital storytelling as an evidence-based practice model. Parsons, Guldberg, Porayska-

Pomsta, and Lee (2015) conducted participatory research to observe the creation of DST with

autistic children. Their study focused on the use of DST as an evidence-based practice in

knowledge creation. The authors conducted action-based research, which contributed to the co-

creation of the participants and their technology-enhanced learning. Research by Bunnell et al.

(2017) focused on developing a protocol for evaluating best-practice interventions for veteran

services. AboutFace is a DST program identified as the ideal intervention, as it reduces stigma

and improves attitudes toward treatment-seeking among veterans (Bunnell et al. 2017). Marín,

Tur, and Challinor's (2018) research acknowledges that DST can demonstrate one's learning

carried out over time. Consequently, DST could primarily function as a measurement of the

knowledge created within a professional program.

      Digital storytelling and critical consciousness. Literature, regarding critical

consciousness, is diverse in subject matter, but all works attribute the works of Paulo Freire as

pioneering the conceptual framework (Mustakova-Possardt & Reid, 2010; Thomas et al., 2014;

Petchauer 2011). Over the past decade, DST research studies identify this modality as a

liberatory practice education, a framework necessary to socially just practice (Hardy et al.,

2016). Concepts within critical consciousness are identified as awareness of inequity, self-

reflection, a globalized orientation, and ecological, humanistic, and transformative worldviews

(Hardy et al., 2016; Petchauer, 2011; Podger, Mustakova-Possardt, & Reid, 2010). As the

inquiries continue to explore educational benefits within multiple professional fields mainly

related to enhancing one's critical consciousness using DST. Marin, Tur, & Challinor's (2018)

research demonstrates that through the DST process, the social care workers stories "evolve-

from one that is largely emotionally based, to one that is more politically aware" (p. 407). As we

build upon our social work students' commitment to social justice through this storytelling

model, we reinforce a link between personal experiences and macropolices.

Digital storytelling in social work field education. Social work field education, as the signature pedagogy, continues to struggle to define the roles and responsibilities that are most valuable to the profession. Multiple sources proclaim that field instruction should support the emergence of one's professional identity in social work (Shaffer, 2013; Royse, Dhooper, & Rompf, 2016; Finn, 2016). According to Shaffer, as the challenges to social work field education persist, there is a need to explore new approaches. Expanding the narrative from my story to our story by analyzing national political systems enhances and determines human capacity building. Thus, digital storytelling becomes a democratic forum to facilitate students' professional development as they explore attitudes, values, knowledge, beliefs, and skills required of an emerging professional helper. With DST in field education, students are provided with activities that make space for reflecting on how we are shaped by stories as a community of professional learners.

Digital Storytelling and the Co- construction of Knowledge

DST studies recognize the participants' practice of sharing in the story circle process as a contributing factor to the co-construction pedagogy. The story circle is the initial group-work phase of the DST process. According to authors Hartley and McWilliams (2009), the story circle modality is the fundamental engaging component within DST production. In the first story circle activity, members share and listen to each member's story ideas (Hartley & McWilliams, 2009). Earlier exploratory studies identified the story circle as a process of shared experience and the development of collective identity (Benmayor, 2012). Fletcher and Cambre's (2009) student discourse exploratory article recognized the reciprocity that occurs during the story-circle activity. The story circle activity fosters students' creativity, which is essential in the complex

field environment. Therefore, the DST constructivist pedagogy will enhance student learning in field education.

   Story circles and the creation of counternarratives. Authors Sandars and Murray (2009) conducted an exploratory pilot study that focused on the reflective component of DST processes. The participants of the study were undergraduate medical students in the first or second year of their professional program. A story circle is the reflective learning process within the DST creation that increases understanding of self (Sandars & Murray, 2009). Lenette et al. (2015) presented DST as a practice intervention for social work professionals who work with women from a refugee background. The DST case study recognized that the first story circle acts as the beginning technique for empowering participants to create a counternarrative. Counternarratives developed within the story circle process will aid participants in the framing and owning of their stories. The use of story circle activities within a practicum seminar empowers social work students to construct the meaning of their field experiences while challenging societal narratives. As constructivist educators, explore teaching methods that both challenge students' self-images and enhance their reflectiveness, story circles provide the necessary structure to meet these challenges.

   Digital storytelling: The student's praxis experience. Story circles offer social work students a necessary praxis experience connected to an empowering education. Praxis is defined as a conjoint action and reflection demonstrated in the intergroup dialogue process (Gutierrez, Garvin, & Galinsky, 2017). Teaching and learning occur while one engages in the action and reflection that is a result of the small-group, storytelling activities (Finn, 2016). Reflective dialogue is not a stagnant notion but is viewed as an action-oriented process (Shor, 1992). Sakamoto and Pitner (2005) emphasized the need for increasing students' abilities to "critically

interrogate how his or her own identity is shaped by the dominant ideology" (p. 441). Thus, DST activities activates the development of reflecting upon one's actions (praxis) through the sharing and revising of each participant's professional examination.

Digital storytelling and small group facilitation. Liu, Huang, and Xu (2018) conducted a pilot study that concentrated on the group facilitation processes during DST production phases. The data extracted from this study designated that the DST group facilitation methodology encourages students to take charge of their own learning experience (Liu et al., 2018). The authors also discovered that the facilitator's encouragement toward students was significant in taking the initiative by not only providing group guidance when necessary but also encouraging group members to offer peer feedback and support (Liu et al., 2018). Gutierrez et al. (2017) confirmed that DST personal narrative sharing provokes apprehension amongst participants (Liu et al., 2018). Studies have also established that the DST facilitator must foster the collaborative learning experience by creating an environment that focuses on the development of the members' safety and trust of one another (Liu et al., 2018). Thus, the constructivist worldview considers DST group facilitation to be a means of reinvigorating human agency, a transformative experience that encourages teaching and learning in field education.

Digital storytelling facilitator and its impact on social justice practice work. The International Federation of Social Work (IFSW; 2014) and the National Association of Social Work (NASW; 2017) place the priority of social work professional practice on promoting social justice and effecting societal change. The overall dimensions of DST group work facilitation are consistent with the social justice lens. Social justice group leadership combines their readiness and capacity to expand the group participants' understanding and the skills it takes to increase the overall value of diversity and differences in the group experience (Mulder & Dull, 2014).

Bransford (2011) stressed that the prerequisite for social work educators is to enhance social

work students' critical consciousness to meet the demands of the social justice project. Lay and

McGuire (2010) acknowledge the uncertainty related to the current social work curricula and

social justice needs. The social justice professional education will include the peer-teach

activities that DST group work offers. Social justice scholars urge social work educators to

develop curricula that explore students' consciousness (Wayne et al., 2006). DST curriculum is

an innovated approach to field education through the multiple student-centered learning

strategies within the modality, which includes social work's professional social justice

distinguishing element.

   Digital storytelling within social work education literature. The social work scholarship

of teaching and learning (SoTL) is lacking in regard to research related to the use of DST within

the undergraduate social work field education. Innovative DST research includes related

professional programs, and its SoTL is in the exploratory phase and used within their curriculum

(Hafford-Letchfield et al., 2018; Sandars & Murray, 2009; Hardy et al., 2016; Yang & Wu,

2012). Current social work DST research is in its infancy phase, and the studies focus on the use

of DST as services that provide modality (Lenette et al., 2015; Goldingay, Epstein & Taylor,

2018; Regan, 2013). The research presented serves as the newly integrated constructivist

framework, which includes DST development processes, and field education pedagogical

understanding serves as the foundation for the conceptual framework. The concepts explored

within these authors' examination relate to the construction of knowledge within a digital

storytelling group experience.

Discussion

Over the past decade, extensive research has highlighted the correlation between DST and liberatory practice in higher education (Hardy et al., 2016). DST pedagogy scholarship uncovers themes of liberatory practices that enhance the creators' critical consciousness. Reed, Newman, Suarez, and Lewis (1997) describe critical consciousness as "a process of continuous self-reflection coupled with action" (p. 46). As social workers and educators continue striving to enhance social justice pedagogies within our advanced technology environment, we need to consider DST as a new pathway to lifelong self-reflection, action, and accompaniment, which increases social change (Finn and Jacobson, 2008). Social works participation in DST scholarship will enhance our students' ability to integrate critical consciousness and cocreation of our discipline's knowledge.

The Implication of Digital Storytelling as a Social Justice Approach

The digital storytelling curriculum, which explores the inward and outward learning of social work students, relies upon reflective assignments. The process requires social work students to examine their social location through dialogue and critical reflection (Lay & McGuire, 2010). Critical reflection is a concept, as well as a process of self-examination, in which one simultaneously looks at the external context in order to be introspective and open-minded (Finn, 2016). Sakamoto and Pitner (2005) emphasized the need to improve students' abilities to "critically interrogate how their own identity has been shaped by the dominant ideology" (p. 441). Constructivist scholars within the academy value the pedagogy of digital storytelling because of its capacity to facilitate the creation of knowledge in the context of critical reflection and critical consciousness.

The implication of using digital storytelling as an evaluation method within the social work curriculum. Social work educators are responsible for the assessment of implicit and explicit curricula. Scholarship within social work education continues to explore the evaluations of implicit and explicit learning. Anastas (2010) posed that the evaluation of implicit and explicit learning continues to be a challenge amongst social work programs across the nation. If the academy were committed to exploring the use of experiential learning activities, such as DST, throughout the social work curriculum, it would allow our students to partake in multiple measurements in addition to the internship evaluation tool (Witkin & Saleebey, 2007). Research was linked to the use of DST and its use in professional education programs. Moreover, DST construction processes are identified as experiential learning experiences (Pelts & Galambos, 2017). DST's existing mixed-method pilot studies within professional education programs have established evaluation tools that contribute to the critical reflection that takes place during the DST creation. Researchers identify the correlation between the implicit learning that occurs within the story circle module (Stewart & Ivala, 2017). Research in social work education indicates that social work students' interpersonal helping skills have proven to decrease upon the completion of their direct client work during their internship experiences (Wodarski, Feit, & Green, 1995). When students participate in the creation of their DST, it contributes to the implicit and explicit learning that occurs within a peer-feedback paradigm.

The implications for future research. Field instruction-related research continues to be a necessity for social workers' SoTL contributions (Wayne et al., 2006). Field research needs teaching and learning models that are proven empirically to have worked. The development of critical consciousness is essential to the social work profession, and the development of personal and professional identity occurs within the socialization of the profession in a group setting. DST

will be examined through exploratory research. Accordingly, the theoretical and methodological

use of the DST pedagogy is within the social work field constructivist framework and thus will

be explored further. Self-reflection and the enhancement of critical consciousness are critical to

our social justice practice model (Finn, 2016). Therefore, the integrating and use of digital

storytelling within social work field education enhances critical consciousness, as viewed from

the constructivist lens. The author intends to increase the SoTL linked to DST in social work

field education.

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Digital Storytelling in Social Work Field Education: A Model for Critical Consciousness

Lisa M. Ibanez

University of St. Thomas

Author Note

Lisa Ibanez is a doctoral student at University of St. Thomas. This mixed methods

research study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Doctor in Social Work.

Correspondence concerning this article contact student by email at

iban7088@stthomas.edu.

Abstract

Digital storytelling (DST) in social work field education is an innovative teaching and learning approach identified as an enhancement of one's critical consciousness (CC). The DST process allows the participants to learn as a community by talking, listening, creating, and documenting their lived experiences. The DST pedagogy used with undergraduate social work students supports the increase in CC through the creation of digital narratives. Ten social work students (n = 10) participated in a mixed-methods study. The quantitative data consisted of a one-group pre- and posttest design. The qualitative data collection consisted of final DST reflection essays. The DST assignment proved to serve as a mechanism that enhanced the participants' capacity to empathize with the storyteller's personal feelings and beliefs as they became motivated to take action. This research study contributes to the exploration of DST within social work field education and its enhancement of CC practice.

Keywords: Mixed methods, Digital storytelling, Critical consciousness, Field education

Digital Storytelling in Social Work Field Education: A Model for Critical Consciousness

Whittier College Bachelor of Social Work (BASW) students enrolled in the senior field seminar course to partake in the construction of knowledge through digital storytelling (DST) pedagogy. DST continues to serve as the culmination product in the BASW program for the last 8 years. DST is a result of integrating the art of storytelling, creative writing, and artistic expression. DST development includes the use of group formation, Socratic seminars, peer-to-peer feedback, and in-class experiential activities.

A digital story (DS) is a 3-5 minute autobiographical documentary. The video includes the use of multimedia, reflective storytelling, and a demonstration of one's critical awareness, which is crucial to an emerging social justice practitioner. In the past 20 years, scholars within the academy recognize DST as a process in which students have the opportunity to critically reflect, communicate emotions, explore possibilities, and consider others' perceptions in the roles of storyteller and listener. According to Benmayor (2012), the process of creating one's DST within the helping professions is an enhancement to the participant's critical consciousness.

Literature, regarding critical consciousness, is diverse in subject matter, but all works attribute Paulo Freire as the pioneer of the conceptual framework (Podger, Mustakova-Possardt & Reid, 2010; Thomas et al., 2014; Petchauer 2011). Rendon (2009) defined critical consciousness as one's ability to seek a deeper understanding of power and inequality as well as having an awareness of their rights and responsibilities to become a "change agent." Praxis, the "action and reflection upon the world in order to change it" (Hooks, 1994, p. 14), is a vital component of critical consciousness or consciousness-raising within the DST process. Bransford (2011) stressed that the prerequisite for social work educators is to enhance social work students' critical consciousness to meet the demands of the social justice project. Therefore, the author examines the use of DST as an enhancement mechanism for student's critical consciousness.

Ronald Pitner and Izumi Sakamoto's (2016) define critical consciousness as, "the process of continuously reflecting upon and examining how our own biases, assumptions, and cultural worldviews affect the ways we perceive difference and power dynamics" (The Critical Consciousness Conceptual Model section, para. 1). This study will also examine the components of the DST process contributing to one's critical consciousness.

The author explored the development of critical consciousness with 10 BASW students through experiential exercises; however, they viewed DST pedagogy as the catalyst for enhancement. A phenomenon occurs during the process of creating and sharing one's DST. Exploratory studies identify DST as shared curricula that foster the coconstruction of meaning (Yang & Wu, 2012). The DST is considered as an application of creative writing that enhances one's curiosity. Therefore, this research study explored the use of DST in social work education. The qualitative data consisted of students' final reflective surveys. The reflective surveys assist in answering whether the use of DST in field education enhanced the students' critical consciousness and the components of the DST process that served as contributing factors.

Literature Review

Critical Consciousness Development

In 1968, Paulo Freire introduced his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which was a call to action in higher education and introduced the concepts of liberatory education through the increase of critical consciousness (CC) development. Liberatory education "connects the will to know with the will to become" (Cole & Schmor, 2004, p.50). In 1985, Freire's *Politics of Education: Culture Power and Liberation* encouraged the social work profession to participate in the community engagement through shared experiences with the intention to know and become.

The development of consciousness-raising requires social work students to examine their social location through dialogue while maintaining a process of reflexivity (Lay & McGuire, 2010).

Pitner and Sakamoto's (2016) examination of culture and critical consciousness in human service identifies critical consciousness development as an essential social works value and importance of cultural awareness. Critical consciousness starts with an awareness that society constantly needs to impose value on individuals, families, groups and communities that connect to one's identity characteristics (Pitner & Sakamoto, 2016). Nicotera and Kang's (2009) conceptual study holds social work educators accountable for maintaining the profession's value of social justice by enhancing students' critical consciousness through experiential activities that examine students' power, privilege, and an awareness of one's oppressive behaviors. The authors offer group activities and in-class assignments that would explore the social work student's conscious-raising (Nicotera & Kang, 2009).

Storytelling in the Academy

A pioneering psychologist, Carl Jung introduced the concept of using storytelling as a teaching and learning mechanism (Alzak, 2008). A number of storytelling or narrative theories and pedagogy have since emerged. Contemporary storytelling research recognizes the methodology of teaching and learning. Storytelling researchers also acknowledge that students of color find the pedagogy culturally congruent (Lechuga-Peña & Lechuga, 2018; Pelts & Galambos, 2017). In 2016, Nelson, Cordova, Walters, and Szecsy conducted a mixed methods study and established that the use of storytelling is an empowering experience to the teller and the listener. An earlier qualitative study focused on the use of storytelling through hip-hop music and uncovered the fact that participants of the study felt as though the academe has a restricted depiction of their realities (Petchauer, 2011).

Meaning-making and narratives. The 21st-century theorists Michael White and David Epston introduced narrative therapy from a fresh constructivist lens. Their work influenced social work practice initially and gave rise to the term "meaning-making," which was a new way of exploring social realities through a story (Finn, 2016). Narrative therapy became a way for practitioners to examine social justice concepts such as meaning, power, context, and possibility. A sense of coherence is established once a story is told and heard (Nelson et al., 2016). Cook's (2019) qualitative study examined themes that emerge amongst public child welfare workers who participated in story circles. The story circles served as a form of supervision for the welfare workers (Cook, 2019). Cook's study indicated that as one person shares their story, the group starts to formulate meaning and, in turn develops the groups' professional identity.

Storytelling is the process of constructing knowledge. The storytelling process has been identified as a change agent within the teaching and learning association. Stories within the social work curriculum engage students in the meaning-making process connected to the complicated subject matter (Davidson, 2004). Storytelling in the class requires critical dialogue, and it empowers us as students (Benmayor, 2008). Storytelling provides new wisdom, a narrative of knowing (McAdams, 2006). Stories inform, encourage, inspire, and transport us into each other's worlds (Baldwin, 2007. According to Siegel and Hartzell (2003), "Stories create a connection to others, which builds a sense of belonging to a particular community" (p. 39). Social work students can develop more in-depth learning and build an awareness of how stories shape and construct what we know.

Digital Storytelling

DST is a new pathway to lifelong self-reflection, action, and accompaniment, which enhances social change (Finn & Young, 2008). It engages the brain holistically, comprehensively

linking emotion, logic and memory, as opposed to teaching methods that encourage the practice

of merely reporting information. When our memories connect to a personal account, moment,

memory or experience, the information becomes firmly encoded (Lambert, 2013). The

integration of memory, emotions and meaning contributes to the learning experiences for BASW

students.

Digital storytelling and social justice. Social justice advocates urge social work

educators across the globe to develop a curriculum that will explore inward and then outward

learning. Inward learning is metacognitive development that occurs through increased self-

awareness and critical reflection. Outward learning is the understanding of others' experiences

through narrative thinking, considering the contextual environments. The DST process requires

social work students to examine their social location through dialogue and the process of

reflexivity (Lay & McGuire, 2010). Sakamoto and Pitner (2005) emphasized the need for

increasing students' abilities to "critically interrogate how his or her own identity has been

shaped by the dominant ideology" (p. 441). Constructivist scholars within the academy value the

pedagogy of digital storytelling because of its capacity to facilitate the creation of knowledge

(Lenette, Cox, & Brough, 2015).

Digital storytelling in social work education. Studies related to digital storytelling is

scarce within social work education research. However, the limited studies examining this

concept offer a definition of DST and identify the necessary elements of production (Regan &

Young, 2008). Historically, social work community organizers used stories to give a voice to the

vulnerable or oppressed, which transformed into social actions through technologies recognized

as "photovoice" image and narrative (Andrews, 2014). Action research utilizes the practice of

collecting stories to increase social work knowledge (Moxley & Charness, 2013). Within the past

5 years, social work inductive research concentrated on the use of digital storytelling as a client-centered modality (Lenette et al., 2015). Hafford-Letchfield, Dayananda, and Collins (2018) administered an action research case study in an interprofessional leadership course. The authors recognize DST as a catalyst for the construction of authentic relationships (Hafford-Letchfield, et al., 2018). The current literature provides the initial exploratory methods associated with the use of digital storytelling within higher education.

Digital storytelling method in a BASW field seminar course. According to Wayne, Bogo, and Raskin (2006), "radical approaches to field education must be explored in order to overcome the roadblocks to high-quality field experience" (p. 327). Recent research indicates that field education should provide more in-depth learning (Biggs & Tang, 2015). Therefore, the academe continues to explore field education curricula, assignments, and activities that will foster the students' critical reflection. In order for social work educators to fully embrace their responsibility as stewards of the profession and align with the required competency-based standards, we need to pay attention to teaching methods correlated to the standards identified by CSWE. Collectively, social work educators need to contribute to the development of a curriculum that enhances our social work students' integration of critical consciousness and professional identity.

Methodology

Protection of Human Participants

This study was approved by the author's educational institution and granted IRB approval. The University of St. Thomas ultimately upheld the IRB responsibility. This mixed-method study tested the use of digital storytelling in social work education, using a sequential explanatory design. According it Fetter, Curry, and Creswell (2013), in a sequential design the intent is to

have one phase of the mixed methods study build on the other. In my study, I took the results

from the one-group, pre-and posttest scores, as well as the themes explored in Critical

Continuous Inventory to do my qualitative coding. The sequential design served as a guide for

the author's research procedures. The two-phase design allowed for collection of students'

quantitative data which were analyzed and used to expand the qualitative examination. The

research question was: How does use of DST enhance social work students' critical

consciousness, and if so, what components of the DST process in contributing to the

consciousness enhancement from the students' perspective? The researcher coded each reflective

essay by hand and examined for the following four themes: pre-critical-Issues of inequality and

oppression are not recognized; beginning Critical-Individuals begin to recognize oppression and

inequality; critical-One has a solid awareness of critical consciousness; and post Critical-

Includes some form of personal or social action in response to oppression or inequality.

Sample

The study sample consisted of 10 Bachelor of Arts students who were acquired through a

convenient sampling method. The participants were social work majors who had senior status, as

indicated by their enrollment in a senior level Social Work Field Seminar course (SOWK 413),

and their ages ranged from 21 to 40 years (M = 23.4). Whittier College demographics of both

undergraduate and graduate students are 44.1% Hispanic or Latino, 33% White, 7.77% Asian,

5.45% two or more races, 4.68% Black or African American, 0.386% Native Hawaiian or Other

Pacific Islanders, and 0.338% American Indian or Alaska Native.

Data Collection

The researcher conducted all pretests (using the critical consciousness inventory, CCI) to ascertain each student's baseline before introducing them to DST. The recruitment materials included an email informing participant of the researcher's objective to explore the use of DST in social work education. The email also described the author's hypothesis that DST holds the potential to be an enhancing mechanism for raising consciousness among social work students enrolled in a field seminar. The email described the 15-minute, self-report, CCI measurement tool (see Table 2). The email also explained that all participation was voluntary, and the answers would be kept confidential. If students were interested, they were encouraged to click on the CCI survey link for additional information, as well as the test. Additional information included an automatic $5 Starbucks gift card offered and an electronic signature option made available. Once the participants agreed to an electronic signature, the CCI inventory commenced. The CCI inventory consisted of a nine-item scale that incorporated the developmental perspectives using a Likert-type scale. The CCI was available online through a web-based tool, Qualtrics.

The researcher conducted the posttest once the students completed their DST. The posttest followed the previously discussed pretest data collection process, with one exception: The researcher added a final semistructured reflection essay, which corresponded to the digital storytelling process (see Table 3). The reflective essays consisted of seven questions attached to critical consciousness topics, and final reflection themes were explored, such as story circle activities. The reflection questions examined the groups' ability to explore issues of equity; assumptions that were tested during the process; learning that occurred because they created a DS; social justice actions; and solutions shared within the group exercises. Finally, students were asked to explain what they felt while they viewed each other's DS. They were then required to

submit the reflective essays through the learning management system, Moodle. A $5 Starbucks gift card was offered for the posttest and reflective essay participation.

Procedures

Ten social work students were enrolled in the senior seminar course. All 10 students participated in the pretest. While nine students participated in the posttest, all 10 participated in the final reflective essays. The mixed-methods design allowed me to examine storytelling (DST) pedagogies used in the social work field senior seminar. The research further explored the use of DST in field seminar as a contributing factor to participants' critical consciousness development, and the increase of students' critical consciousness, what component or components contributed to students' advancement in their CCI scores. The researcher explored the following questions:

1. Does the use of digital storytelling enhance critical consciousness of social work student enrolled in a field seminar course as indicated by students' increased CCI posttest scores; and,

2. What components of the digital storytelling process contribute to the students' enhanced critical consciousness.

The sequential explanatory design allowed the researcher to have a thorough look at the relationship between DST and students' consciousness-raising. Qualitative data related to the development of the DST processes provided additional insight. The researcher assessed if the CCI score increased, decreased, or remained unchanged between baselines and followed up. The results of phase I's quantitative data indicated that there was, in fact, an increase in CCI scores and, therefore, allowed the investigator to move forward to phase II. In phase II of the sequential explanatory design, the participants submitted semi-structured reflective essays, which focused

on the DST process and the components that had a positive impact on their critical consciousness development.

Method of Analysis

I analyzed the quantitative data using independent sample t-test to. I tested the hypothesis as to whether there would be an increase in the students' CCI scores with. The CCI included the Guttman scale (also known as cumulative scaling, scalogram analysis, or implicational scaling) and is the process of measuring a unidimensional concept based on a rank-ordering system, so that an agreement with a statement on the scale measuring the concept implies agreement with the previous, lower-ranking statements measuring that concept (Allen, 2017). The researcher decided not to use the Guttman scale but instead used the Likert scale. The Guttman scale is criticized for its forced ranking. The five-point Likert scale allowed the data to be tested in multiple ways. I used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The researcher sought to find if students experienced a decrease in the Stage 1 Precritical (Issues of inequality and oppression are not recognized) as well as a decrease in Stage 2 Beginning Critical (Individuals would begin to recognize oppression and inequality). The researcher wanted to know if there were increases in Stage 3 Critical (One has a solid awareness of critical consciousness) and Stage 4 Postcritical (Includes some form of personal or social action in response to oppression or inequality) score. Table 1 provides the pre-test and posttest score that revealed that the students' Critical Consciousness Invitatory and the critical consciousness development increased (see Table 1).

Phase II, the qualitative analysis, included studying the reflective essays and extracting themes, also known as content analysis. The content analysis also encompassed selective coding using the CCI four developmental stages. The researcher coded each reflective essay by hand

and examined for the following four themes: pre-critical: Issues of inequality and oppression are not recognized; beginning Critical: Individuals begin to recognize oppression and inequality; critical: One has a solid awareness of critical consciousness; and postcritical: Includes some form of personal or social action in response to oppression or inequality. Additionally, the researcher collaborated with a community expert. The expert who is a DST-trained facilitator. The DST community expert approved themes extracted from the reflective essays.

Reliability and Validity Quantitative

My use of mixed-method design as a systematic approach to collecting reliable and valid data. When doing mixed methods research, it is essential to compensate for the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of another method. Reliability and validity procedures used reflected the purpose and design of this study. The CCS self-report scale has been documented as having good psychometric properties (Diemer et al., 2017). Finally, the CCI scale captured what I intended to measure which was the movement from critical consciousness developmental stage to the next critical consciousness development stage.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1990) developed a criterion that spoke to a qualitative researcher needs to address their credibility and trustworthiness of the research. The five tenants of Lincoln and Guba's credibility and trustworthiness framework included credibility, dependability, confirmability, transformability, and authenticity. The credibility of my research is a result of my participation in five peer reviewed social work education conferences since 2013. My participatory action research dates to 2010.

In order to obtain the content validity of the qualitative research data, the author collaborated with a DST community expert. First, I collected the qualitative data in order to

obtain detail and depth of the subjects' experience with DST. Second, the content analysis also

encompassed selective coding using the CCI four developmental stages. The researcher coded

each reflective essay by hand. Finally, a digital storytelling community expert validated the

content extracted from the reflective essays. The community expert was trained in digital

storytelling and worked closely with the founder of Story Center (a center for digital storytelling

education and training).

Quantitative analysis

The sample consisted of students between the ages of 21 and 40 (M_{age} = 23.4, SD_{age} =

5.82) (CI; 22.63, 30.97). The participants include 50% Hispanic or Latino, 30% White, and 20%

Asian. Participation in the research study was strictly voluntary for all students enrolled in the

course. In all, 80% of all participants had either a full-time or part-time employment in addition

to their 16 hours-a-week internship experience.

T-test – group statistics. In the first column, column one of Table 1 exhibits all four

developmental stages of the Critical Consciousness Innovatory (Thomas et al., 2014). Column

two, of Table 1, the pretest (value 1.00) and posttest (value 2.00), coincides with the number of

pretest/posttest students turned in. In the first two categories, Precritical and Beginning-Critical

decreased by .16 and .18, while Critical and Postcritical scores increased by .63 and .10. The

mean of each developmental stage pre- and posttests demonstrates that the students moved

through the stages upon the culmination and creation of their digital stories, which indicates

promising practice.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative content analysis encompassed selective coding utilizing the CCI's Critical

and Postcritical developmental stage concepts. An experiential learning activity of developing

one's digital story identified throughout students' final reflective essays showed that script writing, story circles, and the final product were enhancing components of DST. Three common themes that emerged from students' reflective essays were critical reflection, critical motivation, and critical action. In order for social work students to gain such crucial skills identified above, the process of storytelling creation, exploration, and dissemination processes that occurred in a field social seminar course, suggests that there is a correlation between the DST process and consciousness-raising. Additionally, it was through reflective essays, students articulated their understanding that the DST process is as valuable as the outcome.

Critical Reflection

The concept of critical reflection became the most identified theme linked to scriptwriting activities. The initial stage of the scriptwriting process commenced with an exercise identified as the *pitch*. The pitch is a series of questions or a statement that students make as they describe their story. Day one of the DST process began in the students' spring semester. The pitch activity guidelines integrated the use of peer feedback and self-reflection group processing. According to one participant, due to the brevity of the documentary, students identified that the DST product demonstrates their ability to reflect on one topic using multiple angles. Reflective essays such as the one used in this study allow participant to take part in a meta-reflection, which is the highest form of learning. The following quote demonstrates one student's meta-reflection because of her participation in the reflective essay activity: "I learned that I had firsthand knowledge of experiences that pose significant barriers to anyone in a similar situation. This understanding allowed me to empathize and honor the experiences and struggle that others face and guided me in the way that I practice social work with other people."

Critical Motivation

Consistently, students viewed the completed DST product as well as the DST screening as a critical motivated activity. Students repeatedly spoke of a revitalization type of experience that occurred while giving and receiving peer feedback. Students' experience of critical motivation became as they indicated that they now had a voice within their communities: "The digital story process gives you a platform to teach others about what you know, but in the process of teaching, we are continually learning through those 'ah-ha' moments." This student's statement demonstrates her ability to find critical motivation through this median and view it as a teaching and learning tool.

Critical Action

The term critical action identified as being a result of the processes, activities, and dissemination components within the development of students' DST. Emerging themes within the reflective essays included clear action plans. The response data was collected from question 5 (see Table 3): "How would you go about doing something related to the social justice issues posed during the story circles?" A study participant noted a marked understanding, "that as an emerging social work professional," their DST is a form of action as well as practice of listening to others' stories in a nonjudgmental and empathetic manner (see Table 4).

Qualitative Data Summary

The qualitative content analysis encompassed selective coding utilizing the CCI of four developmental stages that included the five open-ended questions presented in Table 3.

Participants experienced an increase of intensity level, as indicated in students' reflective essays. The DST processes identified in the reflective essay are the following: script writing and sharing; group processing; story circle; and story screening.

<div align="center">

Discussion

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The author investigated if the use of DST was an enhancing mechanism to social work students' critical consciousness, and if so, what components of the DST process were contributing to students' consciousness increasing from the students' perspective. This exploratory mixed-methods study suggests that the use of DST in social work field education served as a mechanism for enhancement of participants' capacity to empathize with the storyteller's personal feelings and beliefs, as they became motivated to take action. Overall, the quantitative and qualitative findings support the author's hypothesis that the DST pedagogy is an enhancing mechanism that correlates to social work students' consciousness-raising. The students' Critical Consciousness Inventory scores suggest that consciousness-raising developed over the three months. Within the months, students developed a 3-5-minute video documentary that scholars and educators refer to as a digital story (Lambert, 2013).

The students' DST final reflective essays identified specific processes used during the DST development, which served as the primary catalyst for consciousness-raising. The DST processes highlighted by students' essays are (a) scriptwriting and sharing, (b) group processing, story circle, and (c) final DST screening. Three themes were identified by the researcher and verified by a DST community expert are (a) critical reflection, (b) critical motivation and (c) critical action. Overall, the exploratory study suggests further investigation and study replication in order to test the validity of DST productions as it correlates to the enhancement of critical consciousness development. DST advances the way social work educators approach the vital process of critical consciousness development in social work students.

Digital Storytelling Implicit and Explicit Curriculum

Social work educators are responsible for the assessment of implicit and explicit curricula. Scholarship within social work education continues to explore the evaluation of

implicit and explicit learning. The evaluation of implicit and explicit learning continues to be a

challenge among social work programs across the nation (Anastas, 2010). If the academy

committed to exploring the use of experiential learning activities such as DST throughout the

social work curriculum, it would allow students to partake in multiple measurements in addition

to the internship evaluation tool (Witkin & Saleebey, 2007). Research has linked the use of DST

to its use in professional education programs. DST construction processes are identified as

experiential learning experiences (Pelts & Galambos, 2017). DST's existing mixed-method pilot

studies within professional education programs have established evaluation tools that contribute

to the critical reflection, which takes place during DST creation. Researchers identify the

correlation between implicit learning that occurs with the story circle module (Stewart & Ivala,

2017). Research in social work education indicates that social work students' interpersonal

helping skills have proven to decrease upon the completion of their direct client work during

their internship experiences (Wodarski, Feit & Green, 1995). Students' participation in the

creation of their DST contributes to the implicit and explicit learning that occurs within a peer-

feedback paradigm.

Digital Storytelling Conceptual Framework

The DST processes catalyze the cocreation of knowledge using storytelling, technology,

and multimedia. Constructivist pedagogy supports the production of learning that takes place in

social work education. Informed by action research and through inductive knowledge, the

application of DST has enhanced social work field education. The DST process allows

participants to learn as a community by talking, listening, creating, and documenting their lived

experiences. The DST teaching methodology used with undergraduate social work students

supports the blending of professional knowledge and personal narratives, which is vital to social work field education.

Implication for Social Work Field Education

The International Federation of Social Work (IFSW, 2014) and the National Association of Social Work (NASW, 2017) have given priority to social work professional practice that promotes social justice and societal change. The overall components of DST group work facilitation are consistent with the social justice lens. Social justice group leadership blends readiness, one's capacity to expand the group participants' understanding, and the skills it takes to increase the overall value of diversity and differences in the group experience (Mulder & Dull, 2014). Bransford (2011) stressed that the prerequisite for social work educators is to enhance social work students' critical consciousness to meet the demands of the social justice project. Lay and McGuire (2010) acknowledge the current uncertainty within social work curricula and social justice needs. The social justice professional education will include peer-teaching activities that DST group work offers. Social justice scholars urge social work educators to develop curricula that explore students' consciousness (Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2006). The DST curriculum is an innovated approach to field education through the multiple student-centered learning strategies within the modality, which includes social work's professional social justice distinguishing element.

Study Strengths and Limitations

The author's use of a mixed-methods design, expert checking, and the diversity of the participants strengthened the validity of this exploratory study. DST is a pedagogical tool that can be used with diverse groups of students. The diversity of the student population will be changing, and it is expected that by 2050, Latinos will populate half of the country (Pew

Research Center, 2019) Students also practice professional self-disclosure in a safe and

supportive environment. Conversely, the small sample size (n = 10), the structured reflection

prompts, and the absence of member checking limited the generalizability of the study results.

Action research is a strength of this study and should be used more in these types of studies.

The Implication for Future Research

Field instruction-related research continues to be a necessity for social workers' SoTL

contributions (Wayne et al., 2006). SoTL has become a significant movement in social work

education. Field education needs more teaching and learning pedagogies that are empirically

shown to have worked. The development of critical consciousness is essential to the social work

profession. The development of personal and professional identity occurs within the socialization

of the profession within the group setting. Therefore, the use of the DST pedagogy within the

constructivist framework requires further exploration. Self-reflection and the enhancement of

critical consciousness are critical to our social justice practice model (Finn, 2016). Therefore, the

integration and use of digital storytelling within social work field education as an enhancement

to students' critical consciousness, as seen from the constructivist lens, is essential. The author

intends to increase the SoTL linked to DST in social work field education.

Conclusion

The use of digital storytelling in social work honors the other ways of knowing that

reflect diverse student cultures and learning styles. The DST process allows the participants to

learn as a community by talking, listening, and creating and by documenting their lived

experiences. The DST teaching methodology used with undergraduate social work students

supports the blending of professional knowledge and personal narratives, which is vital to social

work education. Over the past decade, DST research studies identify this modality as a liberatory

practice in education, a framework necessary for a socially just practice. The themes that

scholars identified as indicators of one's consciousness rising include having an awareness of

inequity, self-reflection, a globalized orientation, and ecological, humanistic, and transformative

worldviews, which were similar to the themes found within the participants' responses. This

study supports what other professional disciplines revealed—the fact that DST is an

enhancement mechanism for students' consciousness-raising. consciousness-raising (Yang &

Wu, 2012).

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Table 1

Group Statistics

	Pre/Post	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-Critical	1.00	10	1.91	.456	.144
	2.00	9	1.75	.391	.130
Beginning Critical	1.00	10	3.27	.409	.129
	2.00	9	3.09	.361	.120
Critical	1.00	10	4.08	.238	.075
	2.00	9	4.17	.249	.083
Post-Critical	1.00	10	3.56	.557	.176
	2.00	9	3.66	.272	.090

T-Test Group Statistics

Table 2

Critical Consciousness Inventory

1a I believe that the world is basically fair.
1b I believe that the world is basically fair but others believe that it is unfair.
1c I believe that the world is unfair for some people.
1d I believe that the world is unfair, and I make sure to treat others fairly.
2a I believe that all people are treated equally.
2b I believe that some people don't take advantage of opportunities given to them and blame others instead.
2c I believe that some groups are discriminated against.
2d I work to make sure that people are treated equally and are given equal chances.
3a I think that education gives everyone an equal chance to do well.
3b I think that education gives everyone who works hard an equal chance.
3c I think that the educational system is unequal.
3d I think that the educational system needs to be changed in order for everyone to have an equal chance.
4a I believe people get what they deserve.
4b I believe that some people are treated badly but there are ways that they can work to be treated fairly.
4c I believe that some people are treated badly because of oppression.
4d I feel angry that some people are treated badly because of oppression and I often do something to change it.
5a I think all social groups are respected.
5b I think the social groups that are not respected have done things that lead people to think badly of them.
5c I think people do not respect members of some social groups based on stereotypes.
5d I am respectful of people in all social groups, and I speak up when others are not.
6a I don't notice when people make prejudiced comments.
6b I notice when people make prejudiced comments and it hurts me.
6c it hurts me when people make prejudiced comments, but I am able to move on.
6d when someone makes a prejudiced comment, I tell them that what they said is hurtful.
7a when people tell a joke that makes fun of a social group, I laugh and don't really think about it.
7b when people tell a joke that makes fun of a social group, I laugh but also feel uncomfortable.
7c when people tell a joke that makes fun of a social group, I realize that the joke is based on a stereotype.
7d I tell people when I feel that their joke was offensive.
8a I don't see much oppression in this country.
8b I feel hopeless and overwhelmed when I think about oppression in this country.
8c I feel like oppression in this country is less than in the past and will continue to change.
8d I actively work to support organizations which help people who are oppressed.
9a I don't feel bad when people say they have been oppressed.

Table 2 (cont.)

Critical Consciousness Inventory

9b I feel sad or angry when experiencing or seeing oppression.
9c I often become sad or angry when experiencing or seeing oppression, but I find ways to cope with my feelings.
9d I work to protect myself from negative feelings when acts of oppression happen.

Table 3

Digital Storytelling Final Reflection Essay Questions

Question 1.	What digital storytelling experience or experiences contributed to your ability to reflect upon the lack of access to resources and issues of equality?
Question 2.	What did you learn during the creation of the digital stories that will enrich your understanding of issues of justice and equality in society?
Question 3.	How did the digital storytelling process influence you, your assumptions, and/or your place in the world?
Question 4.	Please, discuss the five most important types of learning you experience when you created your digital story.
Question 5.	How would you go about doing something related to the social justice issues posed during the story circles?

Table 4

Themes Extracted from Final Reflection Essays

Themes	Quote One	Quote Two
Critical reflection	Writing my script contributed to my ability to reflect upon issues of equality.	I gained an awareness of the barriers others face during our story circle.
Critical motivation	I learned that DST film festival is a form of empowerment.	I learned the importance and the power that comes from creating a DST about ourselves and about our work that will inform others about social justice issues,
Critical action	Collaborate with my classmates and come to a consensus on advocating social justice issues.	Our digital stories bring awareness to social justice issues therefore; we are educating and bringing awareness to social issues.

Digital Storytelling: A Model for Building Critical Consciousness

Lisa M. Ibanez

University of St. Thomas

Author Note

Lisa Ibanez is a doctoral student at University of St. Thomas.

A scholarly presentation and reflection in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Doctor in Social Work.

Correspondence concerning this article contact student by email at

iban7088@stthomas.edu.

Abstract

This poster presentation explores the use of Digital storytelling (DST) in social work field education is an innovative teaching and learning approach identified as an enhancement to one's critical consciousness. This poster presentation highlighted the mix method study. The use of the DST process allows each participant to learn as a community by talking, listening, creating, and documenting their lived experiences. The DST pedagogy used with undergraduate social work students supports the increase in CC through the creation of digital narratives. Ten social work students (n=10) participated in a mixed-methods study. The quantitative data consisted of a one-group pre-and posttest design. The qualitative data collection consisted of final DST reflection essays. The DST assignment proved to serve as a mechanism that enhanced the participants' capacity to empathize with the storyteller's personal feelings and beliefs as they became motivated to take action. This research study contributes to the exploration of DST within social work field education and its enhancement of CC practice.

Keywords: mix-method, digital storytelling, critical consciousness, field education

Digital Storytelling: A Model for Building Critical Consciousness

The poster titled, *Digital Storytelling in Social Work Field Education: A Model for Critical Consciousness* was presented at the peer-reviewed European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW) conference in Madrid, Spain. The Faculty of Social Work, the Complutense University, hosted this conference from June 4-7, 2019. The conference theme focused on "Meaning of Quality of Social Work Education in a Changing Europe," a topic linked to the use of engaging pedagogies such as DST.

Summary of Feedback Received from Participants

Both qualitative and quantitative data indicated there was, in fact, a relationship between the DST process and the enhancement of social work students' critical consciousness—the results of the research-based article at the European Association of Schools of Social Work international peer-reviewed conference. At the peer-reviewed conference, the researcher received feedback and inquiries about the methodology and survey used. Peers offered the researcher suggestions and insight on how to test the methodology with students in the Metropolitan School of Social Work in Copenhagen, Denmark. The researcher received information that will contribute to future research.

Critical Analysis

This presentation disseminates the findings of an exploratory mixed-methods study. The subjects of this study included Whittier College Bachelor of Social Work (BASW) students. The subjects met the following criteria: held senior status in the BASW program, enrolled in the senior field seminar course, and participated in the construction of knowledge through digital storytelling (DST) pedagogy. DST continues to serve as the culmination product in the BASW

program for the last eight years. The author's use of the DST process is considered a "change agent."

DST is a result of integrating the art of storytelling, creative writing, and artistic expression. DST development includes the use of group formation, Socratic seminars, peer-to-peer feedback, and in-class experiential activities. A digital story (DS) is a three- to five-minute autobiographical documentary. The video includes the use of multimedia, reflective storytelling, and a demonstration of one's critical awareness, which is crucial to an emerging social justice practitioner. In the past 20 years, scholars within the academy recognize DST as a process in which students have the opportunity to reflect, communicate emotions, explore possibilities critically, and consider others' perceptions in the roles of storyteller and listener (Fletcher and Cambre, 2009). According to Benmayor (2012), the process of creating one's DS within the helping professions is an enhancement to the participant's critical consciousness.

Literature, regarding critical consciousness, is diverse in subject matter, but all works attribute Paulo Freire as the pioneer of the conceptual framework (Mustakova-Possardt & Reid, 2010; Thomas et al., 2014; Petchauer 2011). Rendon (2009) defined critical consciousness as one's ability to seek a deeper understanding of power and inequality as well as having an awareness of their rights and responsibilities to become a "change agent." Praxis, the "action and reflection upon the world in order to change it" (Hooks, 1994, p. 14), is a vital component of critical consciousness or consciousness-raising within the DST process. Bransford (2011) stressed that the prerequisite for social work educators is to enhance social work students' critical consciousness to meet the demands of the social justice project. Therefore, the poster examines the use of DST as an enhancement mechanism for student's critical consciousness. Ronald Pitner and Izumi Sakamoto's (2016) define critical consciousness as, "the process of continuously

reflecting upon and examining how our own biases, assumptions, and cultural worldviews affect the ways we perceive difference and power dynamics" (The Critical Consciousness Conceptual Model section, para. 1).

Therefore, this presentation sought to deliver information about the development of critical consciousness with ten BASW students through experiential exercises; however, they viewed DST pedagogy as the catalyst for enhancement. A phenomenon occurred during the process of creating and sharing one's DST. Exploratory studies identify DST as shared curricula that foster the co-construction of meaning (Yang & Wu, 2012). The DST was considered as an application of creative writing that enhances one's curiosity. Therefore, this research study explored the use of DST in social work education. The mixed-method study examines the ten BASW students' Critical Consciousness Inventory (CCI) data results. According to Matthew Diemer, Ellen Hawley McWhirter, Emily Ozer, and Luke Rapa (2015), the CCI scale, "assess[ed] awareness of marginalization and discrimination at the interpersonal level" (p. 814). The qualitative data consisted of students' final reflective surveys. The reflective surveys assisted in answering weather the use of DST in field education enhanced students' critical consciousness and the components of the DST process that were contributing factors.

The poster presentation titled, "Digital Storytelling: In Social Work Education," consisted of the research question, abstract, introduction, sample description, study design, findings, discussion, and references. This presentation delivered information about the development of critical consciousness with ten BASW students and served as an exploratory study.

Digital Storytelling in Social Work Field Education:
A Model for Critical Consciousness

Lisa Ibanez, MSW, DSW (student), Lecturer
The School of Social Work-St.Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas

Research Questions

Q1) Does the use of digital storytelling enhance critical consciousness of social work student enrolled in a field seminar, which is the signature pedagogy of social work education?

Q2) What components of the digital storytelling developmental process enhance critical consciousness of social work student enrolled in a field seminar, which is the signature pedagogy of social work education?

Abstract

Digital storytelling (DST) in social work field education is an innovative teaching and learning approach identified as an enhancement to one's critical consciousness (CC). The DST process allows participants to learn as a community by talking, listening, creating, and documenting their lived experiences. DST pedagogy used with undergraduate social work students supports the increase of CC through the creation of digital narratives. Ten social work students (n=10) participated in a mixed methods study. The quantitative data consisted of a one group pre-posttest design. The qualitative data collection consisted of final DST reflection essays. The DST assignment proved to serve as a mechanism that enhanced the participants' capacity to empathize with the storyteller's personal feelings and beliefs as they became motivated to take action. This research study contributes to the exploration of DST within social work field education and its enhancement of CC practice.

Introduction

The social work program has used digital storytelling as a capstone project in senior seminars for the past eight years, and the method has been observed to be a change agent within the curriculum. Field education requires a more in-depth understanding of the self, and a collective community narrative is relevant for social work students as they integrate professional knowledge with personal narratives, particularly in field education. Digital storytelling is a tool that honors the "thumbprint," the unique skills and story of the student as a social work professional (Benmayor, 2012). Digital storytelling (DST) is a method used for more than twenty years as a way to communicate emotions, possibilities, and perceptions. Praxis is recognized as an enhancing component in the construction of critical consciousness as the process of praxis requires action and reflection (Freire, 1997). Higher education scholars have identified digital storytelling as a pedagogy for developing students' critical consciousness.

As a professor of social work, the author used innovative teaching techniques, but one method viewed as a game changer was digital storytelling. A phenomenon occurs during the process of creating and sharing one's digital story. Therefore, the research question is, Does the use of digital storytelling, the signature pedagogy of social work education, enhance the critical consciousness of social work students enrolled in a field seminar? The research study uses the Critical Consciousness Inventory survey and final reflective surveys.

Subjects

- Ten students participated in this study.
- Student's ages range from 21-40 years of age.
- Participants were social work students with senior status as indicated by their enrollment in the social work field course.
- The geographic region of students is the following: 70% from California, 20% from Illinois, and 10% from Oregon.
- Gender identified as 80% female, 20% male
- 80 % have either full or part-time employment
- Ethnicity: 20% Asian, 60% Hispanic or Latino, and 30%, Non-Hispanic or Non-Latino

### Research Design and Methods of Data Collection

- Mixed Method Research Design
  The quantitative data included the Critical Consciousness Inventory (CCI) scale used as a pre-post survey. The CCI is a nine-item developmental perspective scale concerning critical consciousness. The Likert scale captured the multi-dimensional components of critical consciousness.
- Students participated in a story circle to develop their scripts. The students gathered images that supported their narrative. Next, the students continued creating their DST by using a storyboard process (organizing images with words or phrases from their scripts).. As manuscripts became sound, the students digitally recorded their narratives. The digital storytelling platform WeVideo enabled the mixture of the digitally recorded narration, images, and music
- Figure 1 represents the DST creation process
- Qualitative research included a final DST reflection essay
- There were seven questions
- content analysis conducted by the researcher collaborated with a DST-trained facilitator/authority approved themes extracted from the reflection essays.

Findings

T-Test
T-Test - Group Statistics - May 24, 2019
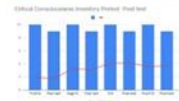
Quantitative Analysis included an Independent Sample T-Test. Author used SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)

Discussion

Quantitative

Participants experienced a decrease in the Pre-Critical and Beginning Critical scores in the Critical Consciousness Inventory tool. Participants also indicated an increase in the Critical and Post-Critical scores within the Critical Consciousness Inventory tool, which indicates promise when using digital storytelling in the social work field seminar course as a model to enhance critical consciousness. The small sample sizes suggest promises but future research will need to include a larger sample size.

Qualitative

Participants experienced an increase of intensity level correlate to their critical reflection, critical motivation, and critical action, as indicated in the written responses. Future studies designs should include face-to-face interviews in order to gain well-defined sentiments.

References

References