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Assessing the use of critical literacies in mis/disinformation literacy instruction

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ABSTRACT

In keeping with Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed and the theoretical perspicacity of Critical Race Theory, Lenoir and Anderson (2023) posit “technical solutions to political problems are bound to fail. Historical, structural, and political inequality—and especially race, ethnicity, and social difference—needs to be at the forefront of our understanding of politics and, indeed, disinformation”. The approaches to mis/disinformation in libraries and information studies have largely been grounded in two forms of literacy education; media literacy and digital literacy. Both media literacy and digital literacy offer a limited generic framing for engaging with digital information and myriad technology and fall short of providing the acute awareness of the systemic relationship that media and digital information platforms have with interlocking systems of oppression. This paper intends to identify the current application of critical approaches to disinformation literacy instruction to promote its adoption as a pedagogical practice in libraries and information studies.

Introduction

Disinformation is not a new phenomenon, lacking widespread primary analysis within academic scholarship before 2016 (Freelon & Wells, 2020). Starting with the invention of the printing press in 1453 examples of mis/disinformation have been seen in all forms of media and have historical roots in racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and ableism (Marwick, Kuo, Cameron, & Weigel, 2021). As early as the 12th century false narratives of child-murdering, blood-drinking Jews, served as a foundational part of the creation of anti-Semitism (Soll, 2016). In 1903, the fabricated anti-Semitic text *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* claimed to have evidence of a Jewish plot to control the world. It was widely distributed and defended in many countries, including the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany (Bytwerk, 2015). We continue to see the role of mis/disinformation evolve and persist throughout the twentieth century. The 1938 radiobroadcast of *War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells sparked terror during a time of heightened anxiety and fear around invasion, war, and political turmoil (Schwartz, 2015). The War on Drugs (1971) and the Just Say No campaign of the 1980s both relied on moral panic, misinformation, and disinformation to justify the creation and enforcement of harsh drug policies (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2009) that echoed Jim Crow era legislation disproportionately affecting the black community (Alexander, 2010). Hillary Clinton's white supremacist “Super Predator” fear-mongering campaign in 1996 based on racist

stereotypes and misinformation about increased criminal behavior among the black community aided in the creation of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 that launched minimum sentencing practices (Duru, 2004). Additional examples include the 1996 Welfare Reform and the invention of the welfare queen stereotype that depicted assistance recipients as lazy, dependent, and fraudulent, and used to justify cuts to welfare programs and to promote the idea that welfare recipients are undeserving of government support (Covert, 2019; Ernst, 2008). During the beginning of the HIV/Aids crisis mis/disinformation about how HIV is contracted and transmitted, led to fear and discrimination against gay men (Halkitis, 2012; Treichler, 1987). These examples reflect the power of mis/disinformation and the way it has historically constructed public perceptions and policy decisions, often to the detriment of marginalized communities (Kuo & Marwick, 2021). While this list of examples barely scratches the surface it demonstrates its trajectory as a political problem, its connections to racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and ableism, and charts its evolution from print to digital media. To meet the challenges of the current mis/disinformation landscape, one with “increasingly sophisticated methods to oppress, misinform, and sway people to behave in particular group interests” (Tynes, Stewart, Hamilton, & Willis, 2021) educators must seek out pedagogical solutions that are grounded in history, society, culture, and politics (Marwick et al., 2021).

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that seeks to

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analyze and understand how race and racism operate in society. CRT lays the groundwork for analyses of how social stratification and differentiation—including race and ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual identity—shape dynamics of disinformation and foreground questions of power, institutions, and economic, social, cultural, and technological structures as they shape disinformation, and have clear normative commitments to equality and justice (Marwick et al., 2021).

This paper intends to identify the current application of critical approaches to disinformation literacy instruction to promote its adoption as a pedagogical practice in libraries and information studies.

The specific research questions are:

- How prevalent are terms related to critical pedagogy in library one-shot mis/information lesson plans?
- What theories are being used to teach mis/disinformation literacy one-shot lessons?

Literature review

As previously mentioned disinformation has largely been absent from the literature before 2016 (Freelon & Wells, 2020). Since then academics have analyzed mis/disinformation from a myriad of disciplines on a wide range of topics including health/medical mis/disinformation, political mis/disinformation, climate change mis/disinformation, mis/disinformation, and science, as well as a theoretical and methodological examination of its creation, dissemination, and proliferation. While the scholarly conversation regarding disinformation may still be in its early stages, it is a rapidly growing area of research. The following literature review will focus on the existing mis/disinformation scholarship in libraries and information studies as it will provide insight into the current approaches to teaching disinformation in the library classroom.

Current approaches to mis/dis information literacy education

Librarians have been at the forefront of the fight against fake news, misinformation, and disinformation providing guidance and tools through information literacy instruction. One of the primary learning objectives of information literacy is teaching students how to evaluate information. The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education frame “Authority is Constructed and Contextual” offers an approach to information evaluation. The frame, “Authority is Constructed and Contextual,” acknowledges, “Information resources reflect their creators’ expertise and credibility, and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which the information will be used. Authority is constructed, in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required” (ACRL). However, “the frame’s definition is imprecise and can be interpreted as apolitical when authority and knowledge are always political. By not explicitly acknowledging the existence of this dynamic, ACRL is presenting information literacy as apolitical instead of a product of the environment it is created in” (Chomintra, 2023). Additionally, its insistence on knowledge hierarchies and intellectual ranking lays the groundwork for the employment of a checklist approach to information evaluation. Developed by Blakeslee (2004) the CRAAP (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Purpose) test is one of the tools librarians have used to teach students how to think critically about online information. It teaches students to look at four major areas: currency, relevance, accuracy, and purpose to determine a website’s “authority” and purpose”. Other checklist approaches employed by academic librarians are RAD CAB (Relevancy, Appropriateness, Detail, Currency, Authority, Bias) (Christensson, 2002) as well as Mike Caulfield’s SIFT Method (Caulfield, 2019). The SIFT Method is a checklist technique consisting of four moves. The four moves ask students to stop, investigate the source, find better coverage, and trace the original context to evaluate and engage with digital information.

It is not a surprise that a checklist approach is a popular solution to teaching students about disinformation. While these methods can be helpful they are rudimentary and do not address the conditions that allow this form of “information” to proliferate and as Kozłowska-Barrios (2023) points out, there is some “evidence that CRAAP or RAD CAB might not be effective, we can also question the practicality of SIFT as it is a very time and labor-consuming method. Therefore, regardless of the method, there is a need for more assessment of library instruction on MIL topics”.

For over a decade, LIS professionals have criticized checklist approaches. Citing that they advocate “a mechanical and algorithmic way of evaluation” (Meola, 2004), they do “not adequately address the evolving nature of the Internet and the information delivered through this medium” (Ostenson, 2014), are not “based on research about what skilled people actually do when facing a computer screen” (Breakstone, McGrew, Smith, Ortega, & Wineburg, 2018) and they “may lead students astray” (Breakstone et al., 2018). However, a recent study focused on understanding how academic librarians teach media and information literacy analyzed the evaluative criteria U.S. academic librarians employ in their instructional worksheets and checklists revealed that a vast majority of surveyed librarians (66.67 %) use worksheets and checklists to supplement their instruction (Kozłowska-Barrios, 2023).

Checklist approaches promote what Freire and Ramos (1970) describes as the banking model of education. The banking model is a pedagogical practice that sees students as passive recipients of knowledge; vaults in which knowledge is deposited by teachers and ignores education and knowledge as a process of inquiry (Freire & Ramos, 1970) creating what is referred to as oppressive pedagogy. Oppressive pedagogy is the practice of authoritarianism, control, and dominance in the classroom, where “the interests of the oppressors lie in “changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them”; for the more the oppressed can be led to adapt to that situation, the more easily they can be dominated” (Freire & Ramos, 1970).

The banking model also discourages students’ development of critical thinking skills as it emphasizes one-to-one transmission of knowledge and not the types of “problem posing “ engaged learning that provides students with the skills to interrogate the status quo. Without the formation of criticality students are working in service of the oppressor, “who care neither to have the word revealed nor to see it transformed” (Freire & Ramos, 1970, 73) putting the burden on the student to be able to identify disinformation without any of the sociopolitical and socio-technical knowledge that would sufficiently allow the student to truly become a critical thinker. The approaches to fake news and mis/disinformation in libraries and information studies have largely been grounded in two forms of literacy education; digital literacy and media literacy.

Digital literacy and media literacy

Digital literacy refers to the ability to use and navigate digital technologies effectively, including hardware devices, software applications, and online platforms. It encompasses a wide range of skills and competencies, such as basic computer literacy, digital communication, information management, online safety and security, and critical thinking (ALA’s Digital Literacy Task Force). While this definition includes an emphasis on critical thinking it is not contextualized in a way that calls attention to a broader, deeper, awareness of systemic inequalities and social injustice needed to raise consciousness about how digital platforms create and reproduce these inequalities (Kuo & Marwick, 2021; Noble, 2018).

While digital literacy focuses more on engaging with technology. Media literacy aims to address the need for understanding the ways information performs in the media. The Center for Media Literacy defines media literacy as “a 21st-century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and participate with messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet.

Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy". The current definition draws attention to the political by expressing that media literacy is necessary for creating "citizens of a democracy". However, what is problematic about this definition is that it does not name the systems that have created the political landscape of media information creation and dissemination. This definition is also void of insistence on building students' ability to interrogate the ways that their own "contextual biases lead them to believe or disbelieve in the first place" and how their own bias can influence their "disposition to believe and share negative things about those with whom they disagree" (Bali, 2019).

Both media literacy and digital literacy offer a limited generic framing for engaging with digital information and myriad technology. In recognition, critical media literacy and critical digital literacy emerged. Advancing the two types of literacy education towards a more contextualized and nuanced approach that includes considerations for examination of the ways bias and assumptions are baked into our interactions with media. However, both fall short of providing an acute awareness of the systemic relationship that media and digital information platforms have with interlocking systems of oppression. "While critical media literacy implores an examination of media from all facets of production, distribution, economic and audience impact, and experience, it, along with media literacy itself, does not directly address the racialized nature of media today" (Cubbage, 2022).

Critical race media literacy & critical race digital literacy

Coined by Tara Josso in 2002, critical race media literacy (CRML) combines critical race theory and Paulo Freire's model of critical pedagogy to provide a theoretical and pedagogical framework to engage with media. At its core, CRML assists students in understanding that all media messages (a) are generated by people; (b) utilize specific and intentional language; (c) are perceived in different ways; (d) are created from a specific perspective and are value-laden; and (e) are designed with the purpose of obtaining and maintaining power and/or profit (Kellner & Share, 2005). Synthesizing the work of many foundational CRML scholars (King, 2017; Kohnen & Lacy, 2018, p. 104; Mills, 1997; Yosso, 2002, 2020), Cubbage (2022) unpacks the ways CRML can theorize how race is constructed and white supremacy is reinforced in the media landscape: "critical race media literacy asserts that because media creates a racial contract that is largely consented to by audiences through the continued consumption of racialized messaging and social acquiescence, the 'dominant culture' assigns societal roles for those subordinate to its power while at the same time, avowing a position of authority with an assumed priority for themselves. These role designations are largely drawn upon racial and socioeconomic lines or boundaries and non-Whites are ascribed an inferior status to Whites" (Cubbage, 2022). While initially applied to the examination of the deficit discourse surrounding Chicanas/os representation in film CRML has valuable applications in engaging with and evaluating other types of media including digital media.

Critical Race Digital Literacy (CRDL) (Tynes et al., 2021) expands upon CRML by assessing the disinformation literacy needs and skills of students in the digital world. Critical race digital literacy refers to the understanding and analysis of the intersection between race, racism, and digital technologies. It encompasses the examination of how race and racism operate within digital spaces, as well as how digital technologies can perpetuate or challenge racial inequalities. CRDL allows for "developing counternarratives of racist discourses online, training in how to situate race-related digital content in historical context, detecting issues of power in search results, and determining the range of race-related disinformation and misinformation that can come from a range of sources both foreign and domestic" (Tynes et al., 2021).

Methods

To determine (1) how prevalent are terms related to critical pedagogy in library one-shot mis/information lesson plans and (2) what theories are being used to teach mis/disinformation literacy one-shot lessons, 26 lesson plans were evaluated for use of critical approaches to disinformation literacy instruction. Inclusion criteria included published lesson plans in both print and digital formats focused on fake news, misinformation, and/or disinformation created for use in the library classroom. Digital lesson plans were selected by searching information literacy repositories; Project CORA, MERLOT, and the ACRL Sandbox using the keywords fake news, misinformation, and disinformation. Print lesson plans were sourced from the ACRL manuscript, *Teaching About Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences* (2021).

The selected lesson plans were then reviewed by employing both close and distant reading for indicators of the presence of critical approaches to disinformation literacy instruction. This was completed by utilizing a list of 62 pre-established terms and concepts that are associated with critical theories and social justice education. For example, equality, inclusion, lived experience, marginalized, race/racism, social justice, systemic injustice, and critical pedagogy. The full list can be accessed in the appendix. The terms were identified using the work of Bussmann, Altamirano, Hansen, Johnson, and Keer (2020). Bussmann et al. (2020) is a four-part series dedicated to defining terms related to equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice (EDISJ) for librarians. The series uses a scaffolded approach. Each of the four parts is dedicated to a set of words that have been assigned to a complexity level; foundational, intermediate, advanced, or capstone. Starting with foundational concepts and building up to increasingly complex and nuanced terms. The lessons were also examined for any reference made to the application of theory. In total twenty-three lesson plans were selected from "Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences" published in 2021 by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and three lesson plans were selected from Project CORA for a total sample size of twenty-six.

The lesson plans were analyzed using Voyant Tools. Voyant Tools is an open-source text analysis tool that allows you to upload a corpus (a body of text) and analyze it for patterns, themes, and other textual comparisons and visualizations. Text analysis has gained significant traction in recent years due to advancements in computational power, natural language processing techniques, and the availability of large amounts of digital textual data. Text analysis techniques have been used to examine a wide range of race and DEI topics. A leading example of the application of text analysis in DEI research is Heilig, Brown, and Brown's (2012) content analysis of the Texas social studies standards and how they address race, racism, and communities of color. Analyzing textual data from lesson plans allows for extracting valuable insights, patterns, and trends that can be paramount to enhancing educational outcomes and improving instructional practices.

Results

Text analysis

The text analysis revealed that terms related to critical pedagogy in library one-shot mis/disinformation lesson plans were not prevalent. Represented in Fig. 1, the most used terms were news, fake, research, students, and information. The term critical was used 195 times, the 28th most repeated word. Critical in this context was typically used in conjunction with thinking; referring to the concept of critical thinking. Critical thinking is defined as "a metacognitive process (i.e., thinking about thinking) that refers to purposeful, self-regulatory, and reflective judgment consisting of a subset of skills (i.e., analysis, evaluation, and inference) and dispositions (e.g., open-mindedness, perseverance, and organization) that, when used appropriately, enhance the likelihood of

social, cultural, and political contexts in which misinformation and disinformation are produced. The employed theories also lack the lens with which to examine how misinformation and disinformation are systemically and historically connected to racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and ableism creating inadequate opportunities to build critical thinking and analysis skills that lead to critical consciousness. One suggestion would be to use these theories as a compliment or in tandem with CRML/CRDL.

Discussion

The results of the text analysis and theory analysis highlight important findings regarding the application of Critical Race Pedagogy in library one-shot mis/disinformation lesson plans. The results indicate that there is not a strong adoption or application of pedagogical approaches rooted in critical theory. Ultimately, the problem of fake news and disinformation requires a multi-faceted solution. In keeping with Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed and the theoretical perspicacity of Critical Race Theory Lenoir and Anderson (2023) posit, "technical solutions to political problems are bound to fail. Historical, structural, and political inequality—and especially race, ethnicity, and social difference—needs to be at the forefront of our understanding of politics and, indeed, disinformation". Not only will CRT and critical pedagogy provide a lens to analyze how misinformation and disinformation are created, spread, consumed, and subscribed it also generates the opportunity for students to engage with and create counter-narratives to the ambiguous explanations and approaches to misinformation and disinformation.

Infodemic narratives "frame large parts of the population as irrational beings that can be easily manipulated. This view leads to political constructions where with the right information people would make the right political choices" (Lenoir & Anderson, 2023). This creates a one-dimensional narrative about how people interact with information and is void of critical examination of the systems that create these constructs. Acknowledging that there is more to misinformation and disinformation than just being able to identify it expands the lines of inquiry to include deeply rooted beliefs, confirmation bias, and its connection to racism, power, and oppression. While it is common for people to share and create misinformation and disinformation that reinforces their beliefs, it is not necessarily evidence of them falling for misinformation or disinformation (Broderick, 2023). It is more of an indicator of wanting to share what they believe. Simply "pulling up a digital forensics report that shows that the video is fake isn't going to make them stop believing that. Sure, *that* video might be fake, but what it's depicting is assuredly real... to them" (Broderick, 2023). Rather than focusing on individual actions around information literacy and consumption, it may be more productive to examine the power structures that facilitate disinformation's spread, such as large technology companies, state actors, and media and information systems (Kuo & Marwick, 2021; Marwick et al., 2021; McMillan Cottom, 2020) and their racialized nature (Cubbage, 2022). CRT provides the theoretical context for identifying why and how people's beliefs are a motivator for the spread of misinformation and disinformation.

An example of critically engaged mis/disinformation pedagogy can be seen through the work of The Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (CITAP). CITAP's Critical Disinformation Studies syllabus (Marwick et al., 2021) outlines four pedagogical principles for studying or analyzing disinformation grounded in critical theory. The principles provide a framework for understanding how and why critical approaches to mis/disinformation can be taught in the library classroom. The principles are outlined below.

1. Holistic Approach: consider, history, society, culture, and politics when studying disinformation

2. Social Inequality: understand how race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual identity, shape disinformation
3. Power Structures: recognize that institutions and structures (economic, social, cultural, technological) shape disinformation
4. Equality and Justice: establish and maintain clear normative commitments

The principles allow for countering mis- and disinformation to go beyond current solutions like "fact checking" or "media literacy" which place responsibility on individuals to become informed media consumers (Marwick et al., 2021) and move towards information literacy pedagogy strongly rooted in theory.

The theories identified through the lesson plan analysis did not adequately address the systemic and historical connections between misinformation, disinformation, and issues such as racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and ableism. This restricts the opportunity to develop critical thinking and analysis skills that lead to critical consciousness. To overcome this constraint, it is suggested that these theories be used in conjunction with CRML/CRDL (Critical Race Media Literacy/Critical Disability Media Literacy) frameworks. Integrating these frameworks would provide a more comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing the social, cultural, and political dimensions of misinformation and disinformation. Examining how systems of power operate can help us better understand the interplay between technological solutions and broader cultural and social forces.

CRT/CRML/CRDL can provide the additional context needed to unpack the underlying power dynamics that are at the center of many mis/disinformation campaigns that contribute to systemic oppression and marginalization. However, one cannot learn how to be skeptical of claims that reinforce existing power structures and stereotypes if the historical, cultural, and sociopolitical underpinnings are not identified, named, and theorized. The results of the analysis underscore the need for a stronger incorporation of critical pedagogy principles and a more comprehensive theoretical framework in library one-shot mis/disinformation lesson plans. By considering the broader social contexts and adopting CRT/CRML/CRDL frameworks, educators can enhance students' critical thinking skills, promote a deeper understanding of the social implications of misinformation, and foster critical consciousness among learners.

Limitations

The current study is limited in its lack of qualitative data. Reviewing lesson plans for specific keywords/terms does not account for or capture other qualitative classroom data such as discussions, questions, or any informal discourse. Additionally, the EDISJ terms are not an exhaustive list. The vacancy of a term(s) from the list is not necessarily a guaranteed indication of the absence of critically informed teaching. For example, upon closer reading of the rationale behind the instructors' pedagogical choices included in the sampled lesson plans, it was apparent that the work of McGlynn Bellamy & Archer, 2021 was influenced in some capacity by critical theory. McGlynn Bellamy and Archer (2021) discuss algorithmic bias and use Safiya Nobel's work to demonstrate the ways algorithms are used to create cultural bias and stereotypes. A survey or interview with instructors could provide additional qualitative insight into the classroom experience.

An additional limitation is the potential for inflated EDISJ term counts because the lesson plan bibliographies were included in the text analysis. This could potentially increase the total count of a "critical" keyword. However, if an author consulted a piece of scholarship that referenced a key term it can be argued that it was influential in the construction of the lesson plan and therefore should be counted. Additionally, the 23 lesson plans included from "Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audience" (Benjes-Small, Wittig, & Oberlies, 2021) included narrative explanation and rationale for their pedagogical choices whereas the three from Project Cora did not.

An additional constraint arises from the criticism of critical theories and pedagogy within the United States, which presents obstacles in incorporating critical language into educational resources such as syllabi and lesson plans. Instructors may opt to avoid explicitly mentioning these concepts in official documents due to apprehension about potential repercussions from administrative bodies, particularly as certain states enforce laws restricting teachers' utilization of CRT within school settings. Furthermore, the prevailing one-shot format, widely employed by librarians as their primary teaching modality, poses significant pedagogical limitations that hinder the effective instruction of critical concepts.

The primary teaching modality of librarians is the one-shot or workshop-style approach. This approach makes it very difficult to achieve any breadth or depth of content and its effectiveness is consistently being questioned (Bowles-Terry & Donovan, 2016; Mery, Newby, & Peng, 2012; Nicholson, 2016; Pagowsky, 2021; Pho et al., 2022) and is progressively falling out of favor with librarians interested in critical work. Often we favor quantity to demonstrate our value and impact. This “reduces complex, multi-dimensional work into simplistic pieces to gather and check off a list. It brings us back to examining what we value and determining if these constructs and forms of measurement are actually leading us astray, and potentially causing harm” (Pagowsky, 2021).

Future directions

As Yosso (2020) states, future CRML scholarship should pay particular attention to (a) the intentionality of racial imagery, and recognition of media as pedagogy; (b) the role of history and the continuities of racial scripts applied against different groups; and (c) contestations of majoritarian narratives across generations. Both CRML and CRDL can be applied to race-related media content, whether entertainment media or digital media and can elucidate misinformation and disinformation as a key way in which whiteness in the United States has been reinforced and reproduced.

While conducting initial research for this project the author realized that there is a deficit of robust or formalized approaches to evaluating lesson plans for DEI-related content or critical pedagogical application. The work of Jaime Ding (2020) and the Open LibGuide Review project at the CalPoly/California State University system is a good example of a collaborative initiative aimed at evaluating the use of an anti-racist framework for Libguides. It “works towards implementing an open review system to ensure that LibGuides hold the criticality to fight against the farce of neutrality within knowledge organizations” (Ding, 2020). The researcher is planning to work to build an assessment tool for the implementation of CRT/CRML in mis/disinformation lesson plans with the creation of a framework/rubric as well as expand on the stages of critical consciousness in mis/disinformation literacy to create practical examples for lesson plan integration and adoption.

Yosso (2002) applies Freire (1973), Freire and Ramos's (1970) stages of consciousness as an analytical lens to explore the continuum of critical consciousness needed in media literacy education. Table 4 below, outlines the current researcher's interpretation of Freire's stages of critical consciousness when applied to mis/disinformation literacy instruction. The first column names the state of consciousness and the second describes the behaviors associated with each stage. The third column introduces a description of students' behavior at each level of consciousness in relationship to mis/disinformation literacy. This adaptation provides theoretical context to students' levels of awareness that can be used to create critically informed lesson plans and/or the

development of a lesson plan evaluation rubric for surveying mis/disinformation lesson plans for the application of CRT/CRML/CRDL.

Table 4
Freire's model of critical consciousness applied to mis/disinformation literacy.

Stage of critical consciousness (Freire, 1973)	CRML behavior (Yosso, 2002)	Critical consciousness in mis/dis information literacy
Magical	Students blame inequality on luck, fate, or God. Whatever causes the inequality seems to be out of the student's control, so they may resign themselves to do nothing about it	Students in this stage may be less likely to engage in dialogue with students who have different opinions, be skeptical of sources, be unaware of the role emotion plays in mis/disinformation, and have had little to no previous experience with evaluating information
Naive	Students may blame themselves, their culture, or their community for inequality. Students may try to change themselves, assimilate into the white, middle-class, mainstream culture, or distance themselves from their community in response to experiencing inequality	Students in this stage may accept dominant cultural narratives without questioning them, may be unaware of bias and agendas in the media, and may have few opportunities to engage in dialogue about mis/disinformation
Critical	Students look beyond fatalistic or cultural reasons for inequality to focus on structural, systemic explanations. At this level, students look towards changing the system as a response	Students at this stage can identify how structural and systemic inequalities contribute to the creation, dissemination, and adoption of mis/disinformation. They work to create counternarratives and combat its spread as a response

Conclusion

Technology did not create the problem of disinformation and technical solutions alone are not the answer, especially as they can exacerbate existing harms (Tufekci, 2018; Washington & Kuo, 2020). Examining how systems of power operate can help us better understand the interplay between technological solutions and broader cultural and social forces. Critical race digital literacy offers a holistic pedagogical approach to disinformation literacy education that allows for the requisite nuanced discussions of hegemony, ideology, power, and systemic white supremacy. “Through centering questions of power and grounding inquiry in historical contexts and social difference, a critical approach to disinformation can inform transformational possibilities and address uneven dynamics of power in our digital landscape” (Kuo & Marwick, 2021). As information professionals and educators academic Librarians have the opportunity to lead the charge and provide an intersectional approach to disinformation that will provide the critical thinking necessary for the next generation of conscious citizens.

Declaration of competing interest

There are no competing interests or conflicts of interest. This is a single authored work.

Appendix A

Table 1

Lesson plans included in analysis.

Citation	Chapter title/lesson plan name	Lesson plan located in	EDISJ term used	Theory	Theme
McGlynn Bellamy & Archer, 2021	Chapter 1: The Net is Not Neutral: Teaching Hidden Biases in Everyday Internet Use	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences	Marginalized (1) Racism (11) Colorblind (1) Neutrality (1) White Supremacist (1)	N/A	Algorithms/ altmetrics
Thomas, 2021	Chapter 2: Senior Citizens, Digital Citizens: Improving Information Consumption in Older Adults	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences	Underserved (1)	Social Cognitive Theory	Algorithms/ altmetrics
MacDonald & Miles, 2021	Chapter 3: Teaching Undergraduates to Collate and Evaluate News Sources with Altmetrics	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences	Diversity (1) Inclusion (2)	Experiential Learning Theory	Algorithms/ altmetrics
Morris, 2021	Chapter 4: It's a Conspiracy! How, Why, and Where Conspiracy Theories Endure and Thrive	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Media literacy
Newgren, 2021	Chapter 5: Revelatory Reading: Understanding, Critiquing, and Unveiling Religious News Stories	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences	Lived Experience (3) Marginalized (2) Underrepresented (1) Liberation (41)	Liberation Theology and Critical Consciousness	Media literacy
Kim, 2021	Chapter 6: From Rooftop to Laptop: Photographic Art(ifice)	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Visual literacy
Johns & Chasmar Stauffer, 2021	Chapter 7: What you See is What you Get... or Not? Fake News Through the Visual Manipulation of Data	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences	Inclusion (1) Social Justice (4) Neoliberal (1) Social Constructs (1) Universal Design (1)	N/A	Visual literacy
Helregel, 2021	Chapter 8: Evaluating Data Visualization for Misinformation	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Visual literacy
Barham, 2021	Chapter 9: The Power of Images: From Postmodern Art to Memes	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Memes
Frawley, 2021	Chapter 10: The Birth of the Meme: Political Cartoons, Media, and the Election of 1800	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Memes
Tedford & Womack, 2021	Chapter 11: Memes are not Fact: Thinking Critically about Memes in a World of Misinformation	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Memes
Downey, 2021	Chapter 12: Fact-Checking Viral Trends for News Writers	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences	Racism (1) Neutrality (1) White Supremacist (1)	Innovations Theory	Memes
Cantwell & Wells, 2021	Chapter 13: Bad Influence: Disinformation and Ethical Considerations of Influencer Marketing Campaigns on Social Media Platforms	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		Exclusivity Theory	Business
Bogomoletc & Eng, 2021	Chapter 14: Battling Fake Science News: the Power of Framing	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences	Inclusion (1)	Framing Theory	Science communication
Quinn, 2021	Chapter 15: Establishing the Fake News Pseudoscience Connection in a Workshop for Graduate Students	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Science communication
Willford & Ford, 2021	Chapter 16: Sound Science or Fake News? Evaluating and Interpreting Scientific Sources Using the ACRL Framework	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Science communication
Carlton & Leininger, 2021	Chapter 17: How the Scientific Method Invalidates "Fake News"	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Science communication
Phillips & Burkholder, 2021	Chapter 18: "Fake News", Real Policies: How the Blurring of Information Genres May Affect the Creation of Health Care Policies	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		Rhetorical Theory	Financial/ political impact

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Table 1 (continued)

Citation	Chapter title/lesson plan name	Lesson plan located in	EDISJ term used	Theory	Theme
Gallaspy, 2021	Chapter 19: Alternative Facts and Actual Profits: Teaching Fake News in a Business Context	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences	Social Justice (1)	N/A	Financial/ political impact
Hermann, 2021	Chapter 20: Mediated Lives: a Cultural Studies Perspective to Discussing “Fake News” with First-Year College Students	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		Mediation Theory	Financial/ political impact
Bush, Cheng, & McManus, 2021	Chapter 21: Teaching Students how to Analyze and Interpret Historical Propaganda	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences	Racism (1)	N/A	Financial/ political impact
Jacobson, 2021	Chapter 22: Countering Fake News with Collaborative Learning: Engaging Writing Center Tutors in Information Literacy Instruction	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Partnerships
Oehrli, 2021	Chapter 23: Faculty Conversations: Bringing the Next Level of “Fake News” Library Instruction into the Classroom	Teaching about Fake News: Lesson Plans for Different Disciplines and Audiences		N/A	Partnerships
Acosta, 2017	Keepin It Real: Tips and Strategies for Evaluating Fake News	Project CORA		N/A	Media literacy
Keba Knecht, 2018	Fake News: Harmless or Disruptive?	Project CORA		N/A	Media literacy
Kiczenski, 2020	Who Can I Trust? – Questions to Ask When Evaluating Information Sources	Project CORA		N/A	Media literacy

Table 2
List of all EDISJ terms as defined by [Bussmann et al. \(2020\)](#).

Equity diversity inclusion social justice term	Level
Ableism	Foundational
Diversity	Foundational
Dominant Culture	Foundational
Equality	Foundational
Equity	Foundational
Feminism	Foundational
Gender Binary	Foundational
Inclusion	Foundational
Lived Experience	Foundational
Marginalized	Foundational
Misogyny	Foundational
Patriarchy	Foundational
Racism	Foundational
Sexism	Foundational
Social Justice	Foundational
Systemic Injustice	Foundational
Accessibility	Intermediate
Ageism	Intermediate
Antiracist	Intermediate
BIPOC	Intermediate
Cisgender	Intermediate
Color Blind	Intermediate
Heteronormative	Intermediate
Cisnormative	Intermediate
Imposter Syndrome	Intermediate
Microaggressions	Intermediate
Model Minority	Intermediate
Neutrality	Intermediate
Positionality	Intermediate
Personal Pronouns	Intermediate
Unconscious Bias	Intermediate
Implicit Bias	Intermediate
Underrepresented	Intermediate
Underserved	Intermediate
Accommodation	Advanced
Allyship	Advanced
Code Switching	Advanced
Critical Pedagogy	Advanced
Cultural Appropriation	Advanced
Cultural Humility	Advanced
Deadname	Advanced

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Equity diversity inclusion social justice term	Level
Environmental Justice	Advanced
Intersectionality	Advanced
Restorative Justice	Advanced
Stereotype Threat	Advanced
Sustainability	Advanced
Tokenism	Advanced
Whiteness	Advanced
Change Theories	Capstone
Critical Race Theory	Capstone
Cultural Wealth	Capstone
Cultural Taxation	Capstone
Decolonization	Capstone
Epistemic Violence	Capstone
Epistemic Injustice	Capstone
Healing-Centered and Trauma-Informed Approaches and Practices	Capstone
Liberation	Capstone
Neoliberalism	Capstone
Social Constructs	Capstone
Social Justice Pedagogies	Capstone
Universal Design	Capstone
White Supremacy	Capstone

Table 3

List of all EDISJ terms in corpus and number of times used.

EDISJ term	Word count	Level
Diversity	1	Foundational
Inclusion	4	Foundational
Lived Experience	3	Foundational
Marginalized	3	Foundational
Racism	13	Foundational
Social Justice	5	Foundational
Color Blind	2	Intermediate
Neutrality	2	Intermediate
Underrepresented	1	Intermediate
Underserved	1	Intermediate
Liberation	41	Capstone
Neoliberalism	1	Capstone
Social Constructs	1	Capstone
Universal Design	1	Capstone
White Supremacist	2	Capstone

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