Key Points

Think about a time when you had a meaningful learning experience.

- Were there any critical elements?
- Keep experience in mind.

Goals for Today

Who knows what “critical” librarianship is?
Who is using it with students?

1. Quick theory
2. Putting theory into practice
3. Resources
4. Group discussion

Sam’s explanation

- Critical Theory
- Critical Pedagogy
- Critical Librarianship
- Critical Information Literacy Instruction

Critical Theory

- Critique drives growth
- Values human concern
- Values are human construct
Critical Pedagogy

- Critiques relationship between education & social values
- Knowledge is not neutral

Critical Librarianship

- Historical, social, & political influences on information
- Creation, storage, retrieval, access, etc.
- Systems of oppression & power

Critical Information Literacy

- How do we educate our communities to be critical of information?
- Critical content AND methods

Examples of Critical Issues & Methods

**Issues**

- Bias in info. creation
- Bias in info. organization
- Missing perspectives
- Control over info.
- Access and barriers

**Methods**

- Student-focused dialogue
- Inquiry-based
- Less instructor authority
- Problem-solving
- Self-reflection

Theory to Practice

**INSTRUCTION**

1. Read "The Lopsided Geography of Wikipedia" (Friedman, 2016)
2. Three groups discuss & share access issues related to:
   a. Technology
   b. Language
   c. Government

**CRITICAL ISSUE & METHOD**

Issue: Internet does not equal access
Method: Dialogue

**INSTRUCTION**

1. What has gotten your attention today?
2. Discuss FB & IG algorithms.
3. Google Image Search professional vs. unprofessional hair.

**CRITICAL ISSUE & METHOD**

Issue: Information control & problematic algorithms
Methods: Dialogue, self-reflection
### Theory to Practice

#### INSTRUCTION
- 1. What are your college’s values?
- 2. What does your favorite professor care about?
- 3. Describe a neutral institution.
- 4. Can we be neutral in our work/research?

#### CRITICAL ISSUE & METHOD
- **Issue:** Bias in academic sources
- **Methods:** Dialogue, inquiry, less instructor authority

#### Theory to Practice

#### INSTRUCTION
- 1. Are you an author?
- 2. What qualifies somebody as an author?
- 3. Discuss author vs. authority.
- 4. Who is authority on your topic?

#### CRITICAL ISSUE & METHOD
- **Issue:** Author vs. authority
- **Methods:** Dialogue, self-reflection

#### Theory to Practice

#### INSTRUCTION
- 1. Make list of words for marijuana.
- 2. Put star by words scholars might use.

#### CRITICAL ISSUE & METHOD
- **Issue:** Language is a product of culture
- **Methods:** Dialogue, less instructor authority

#### Theory to Practice

#### INSTRUCTION
- 1. Research “climate change” at current EPA site vs. archived site.
- 2. Discuss impact on:
  - a. Research & science
  - b. Lives of scientists
  - c. Education

#### CRITICAL ISSUE & METHOD
- **Issue:** Public research & power dynamics
- **Method:** Inquiry
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory to Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTION</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| How could these things influence the study? | Issue: Bias in research studies  
Methods: Dialogue, inquiry |
| a. Grant funding | |
| b. Institution values & resources | |
| c. Discipline’s trends | |
| d. Author’s interests | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory to Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTION</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Find paper with writing on it.  
2. Exchange, analyze, & share.  
a. What did you learn about person?  
b. Is writing style different for different audiences? Self vs. prof?  
c. Time or location specific language? | Issue: Historical context of our primary sources  
Methods: Dialogue, inquiry, less instructor authority |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory to Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTION</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Discuss Dewey Decimal System & Library of Congress.  
2. Be anthropologist from 500 years from today.  
3. What are this society’s values? | Issue: Bias in organizational systems  
Method: Dialogue, inquiry |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory to Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTION</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Create your own quality control process.  
2. Discuss strengths & weaknesses of peer-review. | Issue: Peer-review is not perfect  
Methods: Problem-solving, inquiry |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory to Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTION</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. Pull out minimal background info. & raw data from study.  
2. Have students analyze data.  
3. Have students compare their analysis to study’s conclusion. | Issue: Data has constructed meaning  
Methods: Inquiry, less instructor authority |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory to Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTION</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. How do you feel?  
2. What do you know?  
3. How can you research? | Issue: Images have context (visual literacy)  
Methods: Dialogue, inquiry |
Why is it important?

1. Annotate lyrics from hip hop song.
2. Discuss language as a cultural identity.
3. Discuss ways academic language can be challenging without context.

CRITICAL ISSUE & METHOD

Issue: Language & jargon as a barrier
Method: Self-reflection

Activity inspired by Ellenwood & Berger (2016, pp. 197-205)

“Diamonds weigh, my teeths is sore. I got homies…My money thick, won’t ever fold. She said, “Can I have some to hold?” And I can’t ever tell you no.” – Psycho, by Post Malone & Ty Dolla $ign (2018)

Theory to Practice

Austin Post and Tyrone Griffin Jr., professionally known as Post Malone and Ty Dolla $ign, wrote and released the song Psycho with the help of songwriter, Louis Bell. Psycho, released in digital format in 2018 on the album titled Beerbongs and Bentleys, aligns with most of Post’s work in rap and hip-hop. In the final lines of the first verse, Post Malone, Ty Dolla $ign, and Bell discuss diamonds so heavy in weight that their teeth are in pain, implying that they have so much money they can afford to put large diamonds on their teeth; these are often referred to as grillz, teeth gems, or teeth jewelry in other songs in this genre. The authors of the song go on to say that their money is stacked so thick they are unable to fold their piles of dollar bills, providing more evidence that they have large amounts of wealth. They quote a female asking to have some money to hold. In the song, Post Malone responds by stating that he could never tell her no, implying that this female has some type of unstated control over his will. These lyrics make two points well. Firstly, the authors appear to have large amounts of money. Secondly, there is a female who Post Malone is willing to give some of his money to. Although no hard evidence has been given to support these claims, the approach and language used is appropriate for this source type.
Group Discussion

1. Raise your hand if you have used critical methods or topics before.

2. Did the learning experience you thought of in the beginning have any critical elements? How so?

3. How have you implemented critical approaches to your own library work?

4. What critical methods or topics are you considering introducing into your work and how?

5. What else can library workers do to challenge power dynamics in information and educate our communities?

References


N. Pagowsky, & K. McElroy (Eds.), (2016). Information is personal: Critical information literacy and personal epistemology.


