

The Interpretive Imagination Forum: A Hermeneutic Tagging Technique and Instructional Tool for Conducting Collaborative Video Research across the Social Sciences and Humanities

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ABSTRACT

This article reports on a study that engaged graduate students from one Canadian university in a knowledge creation project, which produced new evidence and insights regarding pressing socio-political issues of our time. This study resulted in the creation of an instructional application known as the IIF (the Interpretive Imagination Forum), a collaborative video research application for use in higher education courses across the disciplines (e.g., anthropology, history, media studies, philosophy, queer studies, sociology, women's studies). Further, this study resulted in the development of a technology-mediated, hermeneutic tagging technique. IIF was developed as an open-source platform for conducting video research. In keeping with open-source curriculum objectives (OSC), a curriculum framework was developed, which can be used in graduate-level courses (e.g., curriculum foundations, qualitative methodology, critical inquiry). Student participants were invited to add, delete, and modify text annotations or tags, which not only resulted in broader understandings of the themes, theories, and concepts that existed within the videotaped content, but also resulted in the development of a creative and innovative instructional and learning tool. The overarching objective of this study was to circumvent linear or normative qualitative analysis and instead facilitate non-linear, creative, and organic approaches to understanding, analyzing, representing, and disseminating theories and concepts derived from video scholarship.

KEYWORDS

Critical Scholarship, Dialogical Hermeneutics, Digital Hermeneutics, Interpretive Tagging, Social Justice Theory, Video Analysis, Video Scholarship

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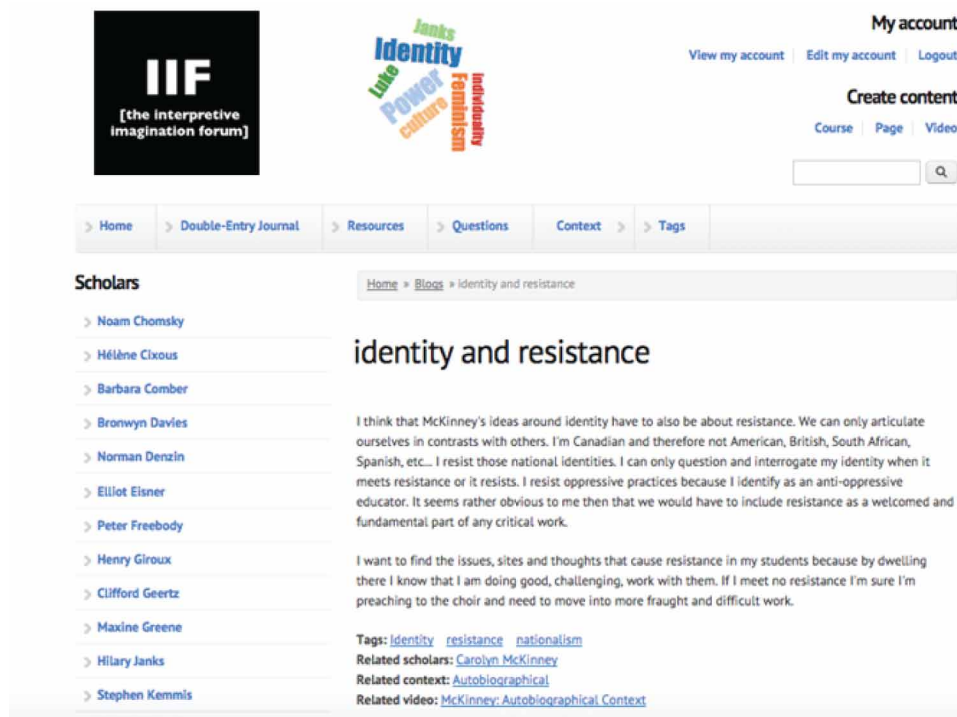
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BACKGROUND

At the heart of this project is the belief that critical scholarship may support and enhance inclusion, equity, and democratic praxis. Through the development of a collaborative peer-to-peer video sharing application (the Interpretive Imagination Forum) (see Figure 1), student participants were asked to explore, analyze, and interpret the sociological and philosophical lessons of the past. In doing so, they gained increased understandings of current sociopolitical issues that shape the present. This research study invited 35 graduate students to co-explore the concepts and theories that have underpinned critical, social justice theory over the past century. Students learned about critical and historical events of the past (Holocaust, Vietnam War, 1960s civil rights movements).

Over the past eight years, over 60 hours of documentary footage was accrued from interviews with international scholars in the field of the humanities and social sciences. This interview collection not only reflected the interdisciplinary development of qualitative research over recent decades, but it also illuminated the collective democratic consciousness of some of the most influential thinkers of the past century. This project resulted in the creation of a learning application that enabled graduate students across the disciplines to access and interpret this extensive video dataset. The 18 scholars included: Zygmunt Bauman (Holocaust historian), Noam Chomsky (political economist), Helene Cixous (feminist), Raewyn Connell (feminist), Norman Denzin (sociologist), the late Elliot Eisner (educational theorist), Peter Freebody (activist), the late Clifford Geertz (social anthropologist), Henry Giroux (cultural critic), the late Maxine Greene (philosopher), Hilary Janks (critical scholar), Valerie Kinloch (critical scholar), Allan Luke (critical scholar), William Pinar (curriculum theorist), David G. Smith (hermeneutic scholar), Robert Stake (case study methodologist), Max van Manen (phenomenologist), and John Willinsky (activist). This content engaged graduate students in democratic and interdisciplinary dialogue regarding citizen participation, political engagement, and

Figure 1. The Interpretive Imagination Forum (IIF)



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