Using Media to Address Difficult Topics in the Classroom

Dr. Shelly Clevenger
Department of Criminal Justice Sciences

Dr. Leandra Parris
Department of Psychology

Dr. Eric Wesselmann
Department of Psychology

Dr. Scott Jordan
Department of Psychology
Using media to teach about sexual assault and intimate partner violence

Dr. Shelly Clevenger
Department of Criminal Justice Sciences
Course that I teach:

Sex Offenders

Victimology

Crime & Behavior

Criminological Theory
Use media as a tool in reading and creating

- Read comic books that deal with issue, discussion and assignments

- Students create media items as part of civic engagement project
Walking Dead comic issue #29 and #33
Use comic as form of media to read to discuss rape

Avengers #213

Intimate partner violence committed by Hank (Ant Man) against Janet (Wasp)
MEDIA ASSIGNMENT

First version
- Students pick their own media
- Analyze the portrayal of crime
- Use supporting research
- Discussion

Second version
- Students pick media
- Content analysis of media
- Poster presentation
Students create media for civic engagement of rape and IPV

-Past created comic books, children’s books, brochures and art
SPRING 2019
Media based civic engagement projects for Sexual Assault Awareness Month

- “What were you wearing?” exhibit on display at WGS Symposium, WGS offices and event on survivors at Bone Student Center
SPRING 2019

Media based civic engagement projects for Sexual Assault Awareness Month

- Partnership with YWCA Stepping Stones

- Creating art with survivors of sexual assault for display

- Children’s books for Bloomington Police Department
Dr. Leandra Parris
School Psychology

Nonphysical Aggression
Micro to Macro Aggressions

Micro
- Invalidation
- Insult
- Not Intentional

Ostracism
- Ignoring
- Leaving Out
- Can be intentional

Rejection
- Isolation
- Intentional

Bullying
- Verbal, Relational, Electronic
- Intentional
- Repeated
Micro
Ostracism
Rejection

I understand your frustration in dealing with a black man who can't be bought with a truck full of guns, a plane load of blondes, and a Swiss bank account, but hold on to what little class you have.

Your Majesty, I truly apologize...

This meeting is over.
Bullying
Other Examples

• Trauma
  • Fisher King
  • Monster
  • A Time to Kill
  • Stranger Things

• Microaggression
  • This is Us
  • Mean Girls
  • Get Out

• Bullying
  • Bullying Documentary
  • Reject
  • Mean Girls
  • Freaks and Geeks
  • Stranger Things
Prejudice, Dehumanization, and Genocide

Eric D. Wesselmann
Department of Psychology
Art Spiegelman

- Beaty (2009)
- Chute (2009)
- Tabachnick (1993)
- Witek (1989)
- Wolk (2007)
They took us to a place near Nuremberg where it was many war prisoners. The Jews they made to stand separate.

"It's all your fault, this war!"

"We should hang you right here on this spot!"

"Of course, nobody of us said a word."

We thought Hitler finished you off!

I approached to the train man, a Pole...

"May I talk to you for a moment?"

"Sure, soldier."

"I still had on my army uniform, and I didn't let them know I was a Jew."
REWARD

FOR EVERY UNREGISTERED JEW YOU FIND:
1 KILO OF SUGAR

WILL I WALK SLOWLY, THEY WILL TAKE ME...

WILL I RUN, THEY CAN SHOOT ME!

WE WALKED IN THE DIRECTION OF SOKÓŁOWIEC—BUT WHERE TO GO?
Student Reactions

• Interdisciplinary Honors Seminar (N=9)
  
  • Added knowledge
  
  • Strength of visual medium
  
  • Personal detail → emotional involvement
  
  • Authenticity
    • “This novel seemed more personal than other holocaust books I’ve read. Other books are simply descriptions, or fiction, but this was real, this happened. It seems more real when it comes directly from a source – and with pictures.”
Student Reactions

• “...heart wrenching...This image made my stomach turn.”

• “...strikingly cruel and graphic...extremely unsettling...”

• “This page is intensely graphic, so much so that I had to pause for a bit before I continued reading.”

• “Maus caused me the most difficulty. Its surprisingly intimate account of Holocaust events drove me into intense introspection; my experience with this text definitely enabled new levels of personal growth in my life.”
X-Men, Diversity, Prejudice
X-Men, Diversity, Prejudice
X-Men, Diversity, Prejudice
Wild Narratives:
Science, Systems, and the Stories Live In

J. Scott Jordan
Professor and Chair
Department of Psychology
Illinois State University
What is Science in the Wild Narratives Framework?

• By describing persons as being nested within reality, versus on the other side of it, the Wild Narratives perspective conceptualizes organisms as *embodiments of context*.

• Such *embodiments of context* are naturally and necessarily about the contexts they embody.

• They do not need to process or detect information to be meaningful. Rather, they are inherently meaningful, and they modulate context, while context modulates them.
What is Science in the Wild Narratives Framework?

• The Science of Consciousness converts to the Science of Embodied Contexts.

• This science has actually been done by a host of different scholars, in a host of diverse disciplines over the past few centuries.
What is the Science of Embodied Contexts?

- Self-organizing
- Hierarchy
- Energy-transformers, not physical/mental systems
What is the Science of Embodied Contexts?
Autocatalysis
Sustainment Within a Transformation Hierarchy

- Chemical interactions produce their own catalysts
- Living systems are self metabolizing systems
- The work produces products that actually sustain the work
- (self-sustaining work)

From Kauffman, 1995
What is the Science of Embodied Contexts?

Emergent Systems are also Autocatalytic

- Neurons (Hebb, 1949)
- Brains (Edelman, 1989)
- Behaviors (Skinner, 1954)
- Recursion (Bickhard, 2001)
- Wild Systems Theory (Jordan, 2013)
Are there other narratives that are consistent with Wild Systems Theory and the idea we are Embodiments of Context?

• From the first smouldering taper to the elegant lanterns whose light reverberated around eighteenth-century courtyards and from the mild radiance of those lanterns to the unearthly glow of the sodium lamps that line the Belgian motorways, it has all been combustion. Combustion is the hidden principle behind every artefact we create. The making of a fish-hook, manufacture of a china cup, or production of a television programme, all depend on the same process of combustion. Like our bodies and like our desires, the machines we have devised are possessed of a heart which is slowly reduced to embers.
Are there other narratives that are consistent with Wild Systems Theory and the idea we are Embodiments of Context?

- The Inescapability of Nested Context
- The act of caring and working for change is cursed by infinite unintended consequences.
- These days, there are angry ghosts all around us - dead from wars, sickness, starvation - and nobody cares. So you say you're under a curse? So what? So's the whole damn world.
Are there other narratives that are consistent with Wild Systems Theory and the idea we are Embodiments of Context?

- **Sustainment in Conflicting Contexts**

- Navigating cultural transition from identity sustainment through eminence versus representation.

- In life you have to do a lot of things you don't **** want to do. Many times, that's what the **** life is... one vile **** task after another.
Examples from Pop Culture

What are we?
If you were an android, would you dream of freedom?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjuQRCG_sUw
Conclusions

Perhaps we are witnessing a cultural-level resurgence of holism, in science, art, and culture in general. Cultural narratives, including those in popular culture, breath lived life into our scientific narratives about what we are. By presenting my students examples of the dynamic, narrative-like structure of the lived-life portrayed in cultural narratives, they are able to transfer this understanding to the scientific narrative of Wild Systems theory. As our lives become increasingly interconnected via the internet and media, the wild narrative of our status as embodied context becomes increasingly integrative.

As embodiments of context, we are inherently meaningful