RESEARCH ARTICLE   **WWW:IoJet.org**

Trajectories of Teacher Professional Development in Integrating Digital Humanities and Decolonial Multimodal Pedagogy

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Abstract

The paper discusses how digital humanities (DH) and decolonial museum practice may be included in teacher development and training, focusing on their potential to transform education. The issue that is being solved is the fact that educators struggle to adjust to these new methods and continue to instruct using conventional teaching techniques and having limited resources available. The study employs qualitative research design, which includes the use of case study and semi-structured interviews of teachers that have undergone DH and decolonial training programs. Classroom observations and document analysis are also used in the data collection. The results show that, although, in the first training, the basics are offered, continuous support and cooperation are required in the successful implementation of these practices. The problems identified by teachers included the lack of resources to use technology and the unwillingness to alter the traditional pedagogies. Nevertheless, the collaboration among educators, DH experts, and museum professionals can be an effective solution in terms of opportunities. The suggestions are to invest in life-long professional growth, promote peer learning, and emphasize the diversity of opinions during the curriculum design. The paper ends by recommending that future studies should be done to understand the long-term effects of these practices on student achievement and teacher retention, and how DH and decolonial practices can be used to enhance social justice and equity in education. This study proposes the idea of an inclusive and culturally aware system of education, encouraging teachers, administrators and policymakers to work together in developing more creative and equitable learning systems.

INTRODUCTION

Digital humanities (DH) refer to the application of digital technologies to aid cultural and historical object analysis, interpretation, and presentations and transform the conventional methods of interacting with humanities content in education.[15] DH can be used in the classroom to integrate digital technologies like interactive media, digital archives, and data visualization to offer new methods of teaching and learning.[1] Decolonial museum practices, in their turn, are aimed at decolonizing the visualization of cultural heritage by disrupting the colonial histories and generating more inclusive and diverse historical and cultural images. These practices would be designed to make sure the voices that are oppressed are represented and heard.[22] Combining DH, with the decolonial museum practice with the learning process, teachers may establish an inclusive pedagogy that is respectful and reflective of various cultural identities.[2]

Digital humanities and decolonial museum practices as part of teacher professional growth can be important in increasing the capacity of teachers to deliver culturally relevant, inclusive, and innovative education.[13] The practices also allow teachers to instill critical thinking, digital literacy, and social justice in students, and make sure that the learning environment is able to promote respect towards cultural identities of students.[3, 17] This assimilation is especially key when it comes to meeting the demand of inclusive education and a teacher has a chance of serving various student groups and enhancing equality.[16] In this study, the authors examine the challenges and opportunities that teachers have when implementing such concepts in their educational methods in a bid to create strategies that can enable effective implementation of DH and decolonial practices in the teaching curricula.[4]

Key Contribution

1. The paper examines the practice of digital humanities, and decolonial museum through teacher professional development and the implications of such a practice on pedagogical strategies.
2. It outlines the critical issues and prospects experienced by teachers when putting these practices into action with solutions that can be used to solve the barriers.
3. The study offers the understanding of how these practices allow building a more inclusive, culturally responsive, and innovative learning environment, which supports equity and social justice in learning.

The paper starts by providing an introduction about why it is necessary to incorporate digital humanities as well as decolonial museum practices in teaching practice development. It is then followed by a literature review highlighting the development of such practices in education, and the predicament that the educators are experiencing. The methodology section also describes the qualitative research design with case studies, selection of the participants and methods of data collection. The paper then addresses the progressive paths of the teacher professional development where the training at the beginning, the continuous support, and the adoption of new practices in the classroom are addressed. It also deals with finalizing the barriers, opportunities, and recommendations of further development and ends with the call of further exploration and cooperation in this field.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This history of digital humanities (DH) in education could be traced to the 20 th century when technological progress started to influence the interaction of scholars with the data of humanities in a very strong manner [5]. The initial attempts were made regarding the digitalization of texts and the development of digital archives that preconditioned the further establishment of the digital tools into educational environments.[18] With the development of technologies, the field of DH was broadened to incorporate data visualization, digital archives, interactive media, as well as, digital storytelling.[12, 23] These tools have enabled teachers and learners to investigate subjects in the humanities in novel and inventive methods, enabling the establishment of interactive, entertaining, and reachable content that might revolutionize the conventional methods of learning and teaching.[10] The combination of these technologies has presented new possibilities to both

the teacher and the learner to have access to texts, works of art, and historical information and to develop a more comprehensive and complex interpretation of humanities.[6, 24]

Another important dimension of education is decolonial museum practices, or the efforts to reclaim and reframe history by considering the standpoint of the marginalized groups. These practices also question the colonial histories of the traditional museum narratives by enhancing the voices of the indigenous, Afro-descendant, and other oppressed peoples.[7] Incorporating decolonial practices into the education systems, students will be able to represent a broader spectrum of views on the history and identity, and they will be able to have a comprehensive and fair vision of the culture and history. In this respect museums are those places where educators can train students on critical thinking and intercultural competence.[19, 21] The teachers are urged to use these spaces in order to make students challenge dominant ways of telling history and to make them think about other possible perspectives and build a more comprehensive picture of the complexity of the history and culture.[11]

Although the role of digital humanities and decolonial museum practices in teaching is becoming increasingly acknowledged, studies of teacher professional development in the fields remain in their developing stages.[20] Teachers are in most cases struggling to adjust to the new digital technologies and integrate decolonial modes in their teaching syllabus. Research indicates that constant support and establishment of professional learning communities are essential in assisting teachers to engage in such practices effectively in their teaching.[9, 14] Nevertheless, further studies that would provide information about the long-term effects of such professional development programs are still required, especially in how they influence the outcomes of teaching and engagement by students.[8]

The literature review indicates that digital humanities and decolonial museum practices have much potential to remake education by facilitating inclusive, critical, and culturally relevant learning. Although digital humanities tools can be used to improve teaching by introducing the use of innovative technologies, such as digital archives and data visualization, decolonial practices can refute the mainstream narrative and emphasize marginalized voices. Nevertheless, the task of educators is to incorporate such practices, especially to fit the digital tools and decolonial viewpoint into the curriculum. The necessity of continuing assistance and professional learning community is paramount, and the future research must be aimed at considering the overall impacts of the professional development program in those regions, assessing how it affects the practice and student performance.

METHODOLOGY

Description of Research Design and Approach

The research design adopted in the study is a qualitative one to understand the paths of teacher professional development in applying digital humanities (DH) and decolonial museum practices in their teaching practices. The case study approach will be used with the experiences and the teachers who have been subjected to the professional development programs concerning DH and museum decolonization practices. The study will be grounded theory in the sense that information will be gathered inductively, and the process will enable the identification of major themes and trends that could be outlined through the stories and experiences of the teachers. This method will assist in building a theoretical framework of the factors that determine the formation of the skills and strategies of the teachers in introducing the practices in their classes. Through the experiences of teacher, the study will seek to generate knowledge on how these concepts can be incorporated in the educational environment and the eventual influence on the teaching practices.

Case Study: Decolonizing Museums by Incorporating Digital Humanities

Ms. A is a 10 th -grade history educator in a city public school who was involved in a professional development training on digital humanities (DH) and decolonial museum practices. She also incorporated the use of DH tools in her lessons including digital archives and data visualization software including having students analyze primary sources published during the Civil Rights Movement and create a digital

timeline. She also applied decolonial practices in providing other historical approaches as indigenous attitudes toward colonization and employing virtual tours of museums as supplementary teaching materials on African history. Although the method greatly led to student involvement and critical thinking, some of the challenges were the limited access to technology and the inability of the students to understand decolonial theory. Ms. A solved such problems through the provision of more resources and discussions. These practices have enhanced the digital literacy and comprehension of history by the students through various perspectives, but the use of technology remained restricted. The case study sheds some light on the possibilities of DH and decolonial practices integration in order to establish a more inclusive and engaging learning environment, with in-service support and resources being necessary.

This figure 1 shows the major steps of the process of professional growth of teachers in the field of introducing digital humanities (DH) and decolonial multimodal pedagogy. It presents the fundamental aspects, such as the research design, selection of the participants, data collection procedures, data analysis, and expected results. Other aspects that have been identified in the chart include the initial training in DH and decolonial practices, continuous support and mentoring, and including the practices in the classroom curriculum. The conclusion is devoted to the perception of the development paths of teachers, which will help provide a clear picture of the study framework.

3.2 Participants and Data Collection Methods

The participants will be sampled purposively in diverse learning institutions such as primary, secondary, and higher learning institutions. The criteria of the choices will be based on the teachers who participated in professional development courses that underline the idea of digital humanities and decolonial practices of museums. Such teachers will offer different views depending on their different experiences that they have had in applying such practices in their classes. Semi-structured interviews will be used to conduct data collection, and the participants will be encouraged to share their opinion in their own words and answer the research questions in a free manner. Also, the classroom practice observation and the document analysis (professional development material, curriculum outline, and the lesson resource) will also be performed to give a holistic picture on how these practices are applied and maintained in the classroom. The multi-method approach will make the research to have a holistic picture of the experience of the teachers and the contextual issues that affect the development of their professional lives.
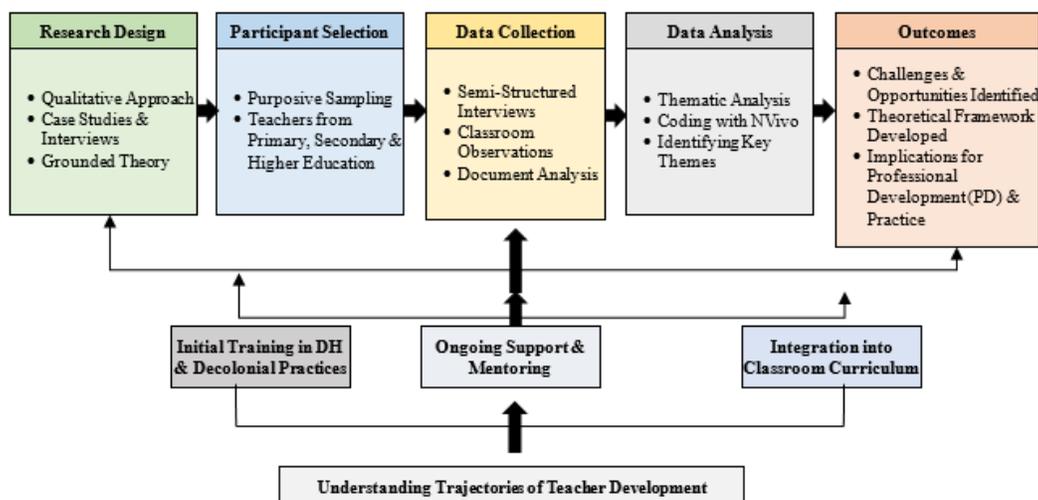

Fig. 1: Trajectories of Teacher Professional Development in Integrating Digital Humanities and Decolonial Multimodal Pedagogy

Table 1: Semi-Structured Interview Questionnaire on Teacher Professional Development

Question	1 (Strongly Disagree)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neutral)	4 (Agree)	5 (Strongly Agree)
General Experience with Professional Development					
1. The professional development program helped me understand the importance of digital humanities in education.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The program effectively introduced me to decolonial museum practices.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. I found the program content relevant to my teaching needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Experience with Digital Tools					
4. The training provided me with sufficient knowledge of digital tools used in digital humanities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. I feel confident using digital tools such as data visualization software and digital storytelling platforms in my teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. I have successfully integrated digital humanities tools into my classroom teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Experience with Decolonial Practices					
7. The training provided me with a clear understanding of decolonial theory and its application in education.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I feel more equipped to challenge colonial narratives in my teaching after participating in the professional development program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. I have been able to integrate decolonial museum practices into my curriculum effectively.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ongoing Support and Resources					
10. I have received adequate ongoing support to continue integrating digital humanities and decolonial practices into my teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. I have access to useful resources (e.g., digital archives, lesson plans) that support the integration of these practices in my classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Professional learning communities have helped me refine my approach to using digital humanities and decolonial practices.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall Impact					
13. The professional development program has positively influenced my teaching effectiveness.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. I feel more confident in my ability to use digital humanities tools and decolonial practices in my teaching after completing the program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. I would recommend this professional development program to other educators.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

This table 1 shows a Likert-scale questionnaire that will be applied during semi-structured interviews to collect the feedback of the teachers regarding their experiences in the professional development programs aimed at digital humanities and decolonial museum practices. The questions address many areas such as the assimilation of digital means, decolonization, continuous support, and the overall significant influence on the effectiveness of teaching. The answer to the questions aids in determining the success of the program as well as issues that the teachers encounter when implementing the concepts in their classrooms.

Data Analysis Techniques

The thematic analysis will be used to analyze the data collected in the form of interviews, observations, and study of documents. This method implies the detection and examination of patterns or themes in the data to get a clearer picture of the way teachers incorporate digital humanities and decolonial museum pedagogy into their instruction. NVivo software will be employed to help with coding and structuring of the data and this will enable systematic approach to emergence of common themes. Thematic analysis will be based on such aspects of the experiences of teachers, including the problems they have to address, the assistance they get, and the way they implement new knowledge in the classroom. The analysis will contribute to finding out the professional development trends of the teacher, specifically

in terms of the adoption of digital technologies and the decolonizing approach to the educational process. The identification of common themes will help the study subsequently to develop a theoretical framework that allows the understanding of the process of professional growth in these areas.

TRAJECTORIES OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Preliminary Education in Digital Humanities and Decolonial Museum Practices

The first stage of teacher training in digital humanities (DH) and decolonial museum practices is aimed at equipping teachers with the background and necessary expertise to apply the concepts of these processes in their classes. This training normally includes the introduction to the digital tools, including data visualization software, digital storytelling tools, and digital archives. Another tool that is presented to teachers is the decolonial theory that questions the prevailing historical discourse and provides alternative views of cultural and historical images. These training is mostly practical and teachers are motivated to interact directly with online materials and problematic museum activities. As an illustration, educators can use e-archives which prove different point of view on historical events and this enables teachers to learn new ways of teaching history and culture. This phase is actually an important point of entry, as it makes sure that not only the teachers are

Table 2: Key Components of Initial Training in Digital Humanities and Decolonial Museum Practices

Component	Description
Introduction to Digital Tools	Teachers are introduced to software for data visualization, digital storytelling platforms, and digital archives.
Understanding Decolonial Theory	Educators learn the principles of decolonial theory, focusing on challenging colonial historical narratives.
Hands-On Training	Practical, hands-on experience with digital tools and resources, including exploring digital archives.
Critical Museum Practices	Exposure to museum practices that decolonize cultural heritage, emphasizing alternative perspectives on history.
Pedagogical Strategies	Focus on integrating digital tools and decolonial practices into teaching strategies for various subjects.
Collaborative Learning	Opportunities for collaborative learning, where teachers share experiences and strategies with peers.

conversant with the tools and principles, but also do they have the knowledge that they need to blend the practices in their teaching practices.

Table 2 indicates the first training of the teachers in digital humanities and decolonial museum practice provides an introduction to the use of digital tools data visualization and digital archives and introduces the principles of the decolonial theory that can be used to interfere with the colonial discourse. The teachers get the practical experience using these tools and visit different practices in the museums that provide alternative historical views. The training is aimed at the inclusion of such ideas into different subjects and provides the possibility of collaborative learning, which enables the educators to exchange the ideas and upgrade their approaches.

Continuous Teacher Support and Resources

After the teachers are fully trained, it is necessary to provide continuous support that will help to ensure the effective implementation of digital humanities and decolonial museum practices. This assistance is usually in the form of mentorship with experienced teachers or people in the profession guiding and assisting as the teachers wipe up on their new competencies. Moreover, educators are also able to have access to numerous digital archives, lesson planning and teaching materials, which assist them with the process of integrating these practices into the classrooms. Professional learning communities (PLCs) are also important as they help teachers. Such communities enable the exchange of experiences, challenges and strategies by the educators and provide an environment of collaboration in which teachers could learn among themselves. The opportunities of continuing professional development, workshops, and webinars contribute to the fact that teachers are informed about the latest changes in the areas of both digital humanities and decolonial studies, and therefore they keep advancing their approaches to teaching.

Applying New Knowledge and practices into Classroom curriculum

The last phase of professional development of teachers is implementation of the newly developed knowledge and practices in the classroom curriculum. The tools and concepts learned by teachers during the professional development training are adjusted by them to their teaching strategies. This involves the alignment of the digital humanities tools and the decolonial museum practices with the current curriculum goals and standards. As an example, educators can take advantage of digital archives to teach history, and students could learn using primary sources on the digital format. On the same note, decolonial museum practices can be incorporated into the lesson of social studies or humanities, and students can critically approach historical accounts and develop different viewpoints. The whole process of integration is to be planned and collaborative, since the teachers should be able to make sure that the new practices should augment the prevailing curricula and reach the educational goals. Adaptation and integration of such practices into classroom is a continuous process and the teachers keep on correcting their approach with regards to feedbacks given by the students, their colleagues, and with the continuous development in profession.

DISCUSSION

Obstacles to Adopting Digital Humanities and Decolonial Museums in Teacher Training

The absence of resources is one of the major obstacles to the application of digital humanities (DH) and decolonial museum practice to teacher professional development. Most learning institutions have issues with availing the necessary technology, including computers, digital archives, and interactive platforms required in DH initiatives. Moreover, there is a risk that some educators will face the opposition to the implementation of these new practices, especially in those areas where decolonial methodologies are not popular and accepted. Such opposition can be as a result of the conservative teaching practice that favors conventional and linear approach to history and culture. The other important complication has been the dual requirement of the educators to be not only digitally capable but also culturally competent. The problem of balancing the mastery of digital tools with the possibility of incorporating culturally

sensitive views into the teaching process is exclusively a matter of constant learning and adapting, which can seem overwhelming to the teachers who already have to work with heavy loads and little opportunities to develop, professionally.

Collaboration and Innovation Opportunities in this Region

Nevertheless, these difficulties do not mean that there are no viable opportunities in cooperation and innovation among educators, experts in digital humanities, and museum professionals. Together, these groups will be able to develop new educational material including digital exhibitions, virtual museum tours, and multimedia projects to help make decolonial views a reality in the classroom. Such collaborations do not only enhance historical and cultural education but also make the learning process more interactive to the learners as they interact with the state of art technologies. Furthermore, the digital humanities and decolonial museum practice create a possibility of interdisciplinary teaching, making cross-curricular projects based on the combination of history, art, technology, and social studies a possibility. This strategy can help students to approach tricky historical, ethnic, and cultural matters creatively and actively and contributes to the learning process being more inclusive, participatory, and contributing to multiple perspectives.

Recommendations on How to Overcome the Obstacles and Capitalize on the Opportunities

In order to overcome the obstacles to introducing DH and decolonial museum practice, learning organizations should invest in professional development courses that will offer long-term assistance and access to needed digital resources. Provision of continuous training and support will see that teachers are made to feel ready to implement such practices in their teaching. In addition, collaborative places in which teachers have the opportunity to learn together and share their thoughts will increase the possibility of using digital humanities and decolonial lenses in the classroom. Educational leaders and policymakers should also emphasize on the inclusion of the different viewpoint in the curriculum development

and in the teacher training programs. It will not only enhance cultural competence of the teachers but will also be able to make certain that the curricula will be based on the different histories and experiences of all students. Through these recommendations, the learning environments in educational systems may become more inclusive, innovative, and engaging by considering the digital and decolonial perspectives.

CONCLUSION

This paper highlights the importance of the combined use of digital humanities, as well as decolonial museum practices, in teacher professional development programs. Introductory training will provide the educators with a background knowledge and tools, but the continuous assistance is the key to the successful implementation of these practices in the classroom. Teachers should be able to engage in continuous professional growth and to have access to resources in order to incorporate digital tools in the most proficient manner and to contest conservative, colonial narratives by decolonizing the museum. The research indicates a number of challenges experienced by teachers, such as the lack of resources and change resistance especially in the areas where decolonial methods are not popular. In order to address these issues, more specific forms of intervention, including mentorship, collaboration with peers, and long-term training and resource access, are required. These barriers should be dealt with to enable the teachers to gain confidence and competence in the use of these innovative practices during their teaching.

In future studies, it would be important to conduct an analysis of the long-term effects of digital humanities and decolonial museum practice on the student outcomes, teacher retention, and effectiveness. This is important in informing policy changes and curriculum reform as it will help understand what role these practices have in advancing a just social and inclusive education. Moreover, the discussion of how these strategies can be utilized to develop critical thinking, digital literacy, and cultural competence in students might offer useful information on how the education system can be changed. It is strongly recommended that further research should be conducted on how these practices

can be refined to transform teaching and learning into making education more inclusive and representative of different views. Educational leaders, teachers, and policymakers should cooperate in order to establish more equitable, innovative, and culturally responsive educational settings so that such transformative practices can be realized to their fullest potential in the classroom.

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