When Business Meets Critical Pedagogy:
Confronting Library Entanglements with Capital through Library Instruction

Kate Adler
Director of Library Services,
Metropolitan College of New York

Kae Bara Kratcha
Entrepreneurship & Social Science Librarian, Columbia University

Eamon Tewell
Head of Research Support & Outreach, Columbia University

LOEX 2021 Conference | May 14, 2021 | #LOEX2021
Today’s Session

01 Framing
02 Institutional Context
03 Instruction Case Studies

04 Attendee Activity
05 Question & Answer
About Us

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Land Acknowledgment

We are settlers on the traditional homelands of the Lenni Lenape and Canarsee people. New York City, and all of the United States, was founded on the overtaking of land through the attempted genocide of Indigenous people.

Native land underpins everything about life in the United States. Our homes, schools, recreation, agriculture, and businesses are all made possible because Native people were displaced from their ancestral lands.

Learn more and donate:

- Manna-hatta Fund: mannahattafund.org
01 Framing
Academic Capitalism

- Defined as “market and market-like behaviors on the part of universities and faculty” (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997)

- “Students have become consumers, colleges have turned into vendors, and research is being commercialized in applied fields marking a new era in higher education as an entrepreneurial institution” (Chait, 2002)

- Encompasses some aspects of neoliberalism, which is the extension of free-market logic (including privatization, deregulation, and eliminating spending on public goods) to all areas of life

- Useful for understanding academic libraries as not functioning separately from or automatically in opposition to the capitalist system, but within and largely in service to it
• Aims to understand how libraries participate in systems of oppression and find ways for librarians and students to act upon these systems

• Applies critical theory and most often the ideas of critical pedagogy to libraries

• More than just instruction; a way of thinking about our work as a whole, from libraries’ educational activities to info lit frameworks to labor

• “Takes into consideration the social, political, economic, and corporate systems that have power and influence over information production, dissemination, access, and consumption” (Lua Gregory and Shana Higgins, Information Literacy and Social Justice: Radical Professional Praxis, 2013)
The Library/Business “Relationship”

Panos Mourdoukoutas
@PMourdoukoutas

Amazon should replace local libraries to save taxpayers money
Institutional Context
Metropolitan College of New York
Columbia University
Instruction Case Studies
- Big Questions for Startups Series
- Challenges
- Future opportunities
Critical Conversations: Library Roundtables

- Monthly roundtable discussions with a reading, a brief presentation, and a facilitated conversation

- Opportunity to discuss economic justice: topics included black wealth, reparations, and the cooperative economy
- Another opportunity to insert critical information literacy into business librarianship

- Useful setting to engage in “critical reference dialog”
04 Attendee Activity
1. Visit the following Padlet link: tinyurl.com/CriticalLibraryPadlet

2. Consider:
   What are some potential instructional approaches you can (or already) take to interrupt library entanglements with capitalism?

3. Add your thoughts and ideas
Recommended Reading and Slide Credits

- Dave Ellenwood, “‘Information Has Value’: The Political Economy of Information Capitalism,” in *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (2020).


Contact Us

Kate Adler: kadler@mcny.edu

Kae Bara Kratcha: kk3344@columbia.edu

Eamon Tewell: ect2160@columbia.edu, @eamontewell

Presentation slides: tinyurl.com/CriticalLibraryBusiness

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