



Fall 2024 Research Speaker Series: Centring Digital Accessibility in Research Praxis

Presenter: Kim Ashbourne

Hosts: Leva Lee and Gwen Nguyen

BCcampus

October 29, 2024



Playground of the Gods Kamui Mintara



BCcampus offices are situated on the unceded territories of the sə́lilwətaʔt təməxʷ (Tseil-Waututh), Skwxwú7mesh-uhl Temíxw (Squamish), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), W̱SÁNEĆ (Saanich), and the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations of the Ləkʷəŋən (Lekwungen) Peoples. As both individuals and an organization, we continue to learn and build relationships as we actively respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.



Kim Ashbourne

Kim is a Learning Experience Designer focussing on Accessibility, a Digital Project Manager and Digital Writer. She is a graduate student in educational technology in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria.

Centring Digital Accessibility in Research Praxis

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Michael Paskevicious Supervisor

Presented for the BCcampus Research Speaker Series
Oct 29, 2024

Acknowledgment

I live, work and imagine on lands that have historically been stewarded by the W̱SÁNEC (pronounced Wh-say-nech) and the Lək̓ʷəŋən (pronounced L-kwun-en) speaking peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt peoples. It is now known as Victoria, BC. I am an uninvited settler.

“As language revitalization continues, and technology is developed to accommodate First Nations orthographies in print and computer fonts and keyboards, we can look forward to the emergence of a standard orthography for each of B.C.’s diverse languages.”

Decolonizing, anti-racist and anti-oppression practices.

What Are We Going To Do?

10 min **Group annotate: What are digital accessibility considerations in research?**

The people behind the considerations

20 min How might transformative inquiry help us dig into this

Awkwardly Able reading

Quiet Reflection

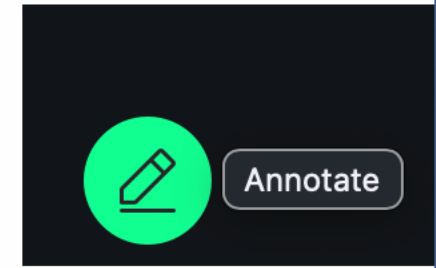
Look at a few ways we bump into digital accessibility in research

10 min **Group discussion using transformative inquiry**

10 min Share out

- Slides available
- Co-create a Google Doc for ideas, resources, and contact information to keep the conversation going

Group Think: When you think about digital accessibility issues in research, what do you think about?



Accessibility of published research and databases

Accessibility of digital research tools (i.e., surveys)

Library licensing and agreements with big, expensive publishers

accessibility differences in library search vs. database platforms.

knowledge mobilization efforts and whether they are accessible or not

connectivity issues of internet in the north/remote areas

Overwhelming amount of information, hard to navigate the language

people giving up and not participating

How REBs do not have folk who are part of disability community so they do not have digital accessibility awareness

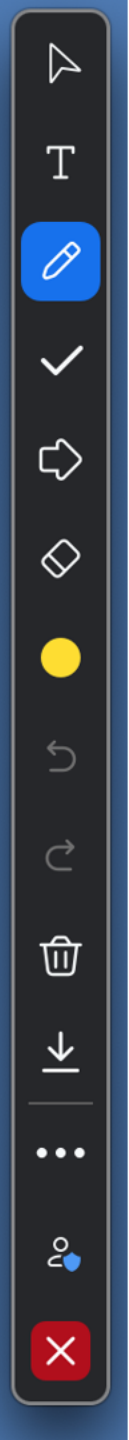
ethical responsibilities

whether our library research databases are accessible to our users; what obstacles do people encounter?

dissimination of research - free? behind paywall? plain language?

Reduces geographic barriers as well as other barriers

instructors wanting colour in text and students wanting accessibility colours that override instructor colour choices



People and Digital Accessibility Considerations in Research

Primary Researchers Collecting Data	Participants in Research	Knowledge-sharers	Members of a Research Community
Equitable, timely access to research source materials	Can people who use assistive tech complete your surveys (online and print)? Participate in studies?	Accessible presentation-formats, accessible slide decks, sharing materials in advance at conferences	Inclusive social media / back channels at conferences
Perceivable data: tables and figures, audio recordings, video recordings, text	Ed Tech – did the study include assistive tech users? If not, is that stated in limitations? E.g. (Morales et al., 2022)	Time/money built into research plans for creating accessible data, reports, videos, websites, etc. and testing them with people and assistive tech	Sense that the research community is working to understand digital accessibility + not all on us!
Access and agency with collaboration platforms, and digital practices	Is time and money built into the research plans to recruit assistive tech users	Technical support at conferences and other venues	Model accessible digital praxis with researchers regardless of who's in the room.

Transformative Inquiry: The 4 Spheres Model

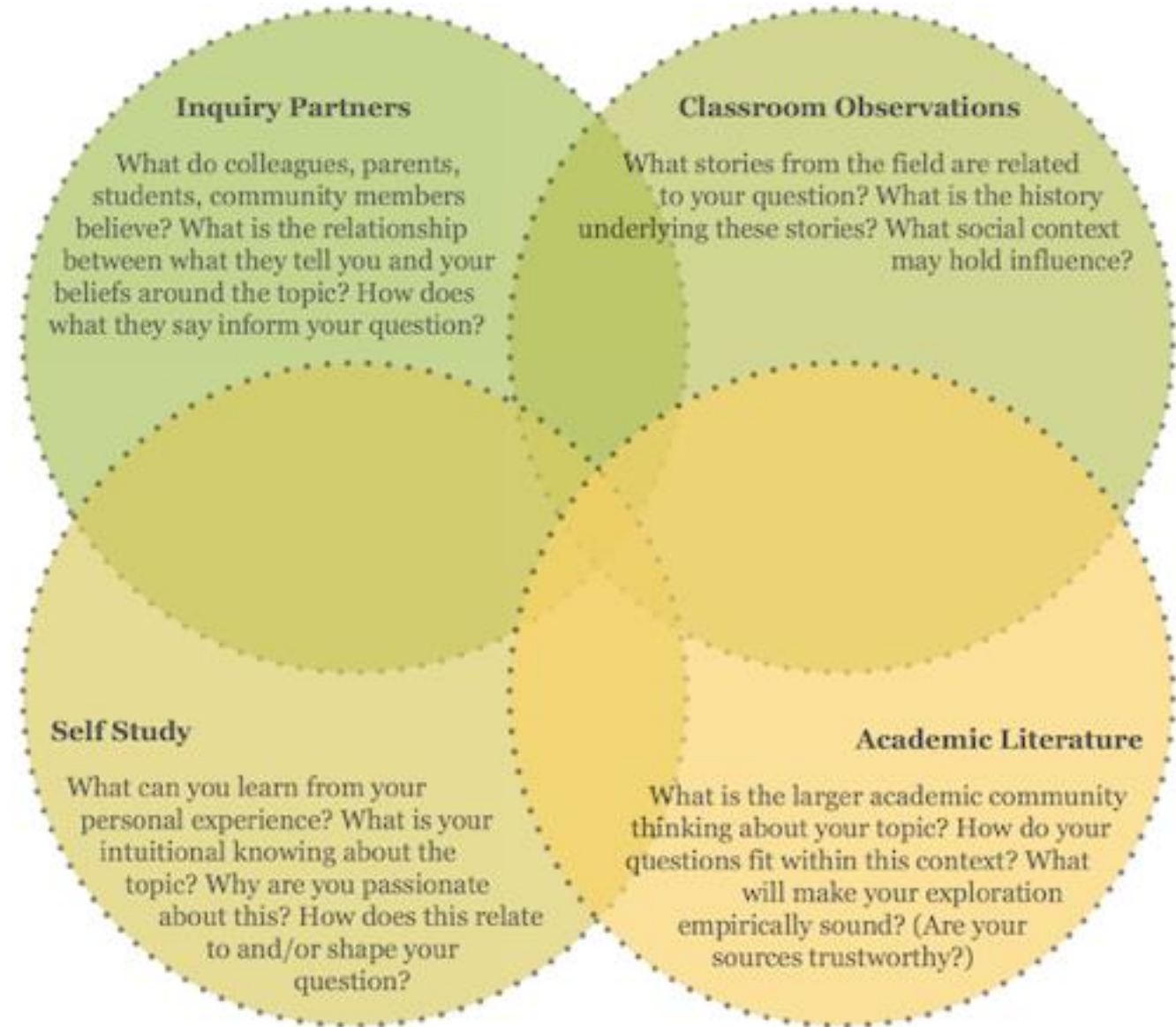
Model as presented by Dr Jennifer Thom (J. Thom, personal correspondence, September 27, 2023)

Thom:

- Uvic Curriculum and Instruction
- takes a poetic, ecological and relational approach
- Influenced by work with Dr Joanne

Since published by Dr. Michele Tanaka, Dr. Nicholas Stanger, Vanessa Tse, and Maureen Farish at the University of Victoria

[Transformativeinquiry.ca](https://transformativeinquiry.ca)
accessed July 2024



Writing my Lived Experience of Digital Access into Research

Connecting digital accessibility to the body and sensory ways of knowing

LEARNER EXPERIENCES

Awkwardly Able

SEPTEMBER 15, 2024



Can you Connect Digital Accessibility Practices to the Body or to People in Your Life?

Reflective Practice

- Think of a digital accessibility practice
- Think about how that practice relates to the body
- If it isn't done, or isn't done well, what happens in the body of the person who needs that practice?
- What can they or can they not do if that practice is or is not done.
- What is the knock-on effect of that?

Reading for Lived Experience of Disabling Digital Practices

Disabling Practices in digital environments

- Das, M., Gergle, D., & Piper, A. M. (2019). [“It doesn’t win you friends”:
Understanding Accessibility in Collaborative Writing for People with Vision
Impairments.](#) *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 3(CSCW),
191:1-191:26.
- Keast, Q. (2020, October 26). [I’m deaf, and this is what happens when I get on a
Zoom call.](#) Fast Company.

Ableist technology inconveniences

- Weber, J. (2021). [Cyborgs and Fox Wives: Interrogating Sign Language
Ideologies and Moving Toward Survival, Resistance and
Resilience.](#) *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 10.1. para 11

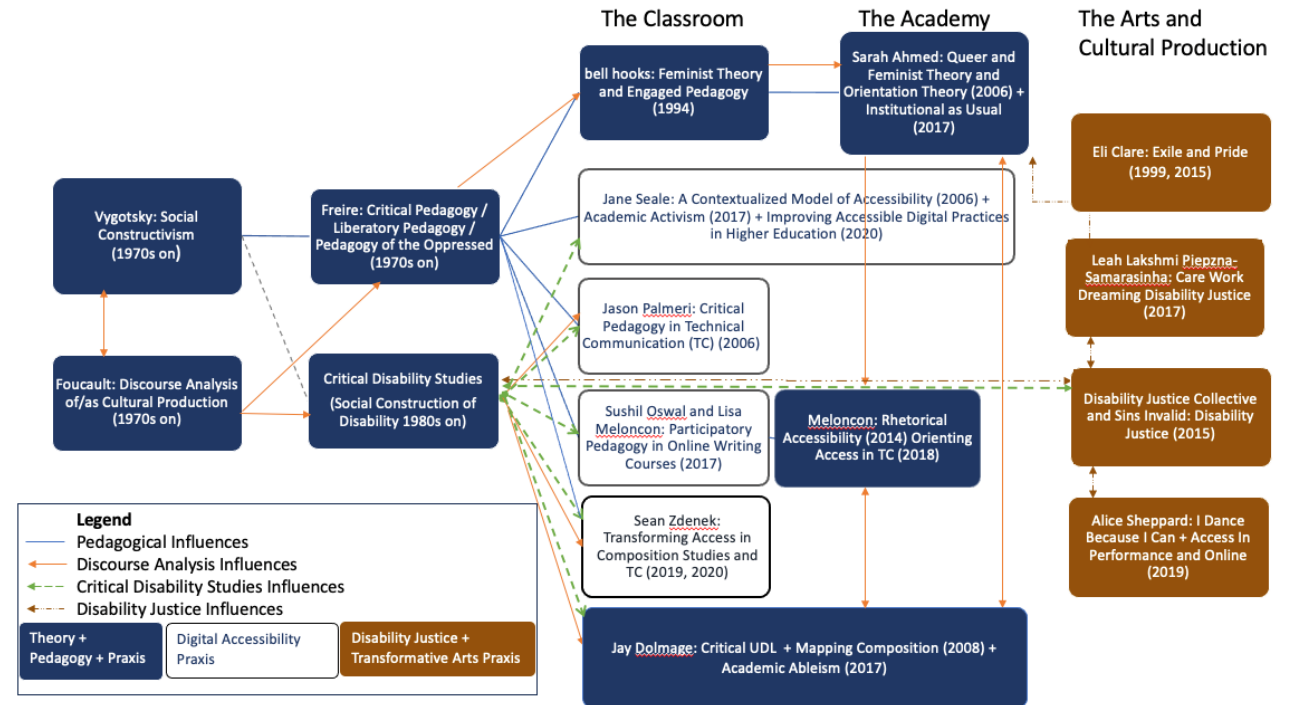
“You could point,
mime, gesture dance,
or scribble a few words
on a notepad.
Whatever I get from
that
will be good enough,
won’t it?”

Weber, J. (2007). *The Pear Orchard*. Hagios Press. (p. 82).

OMG Figures

Is a one sentence alt-text or caption description going to make this meaningful?

But really, who can perceive this sufficiently for comprehension?

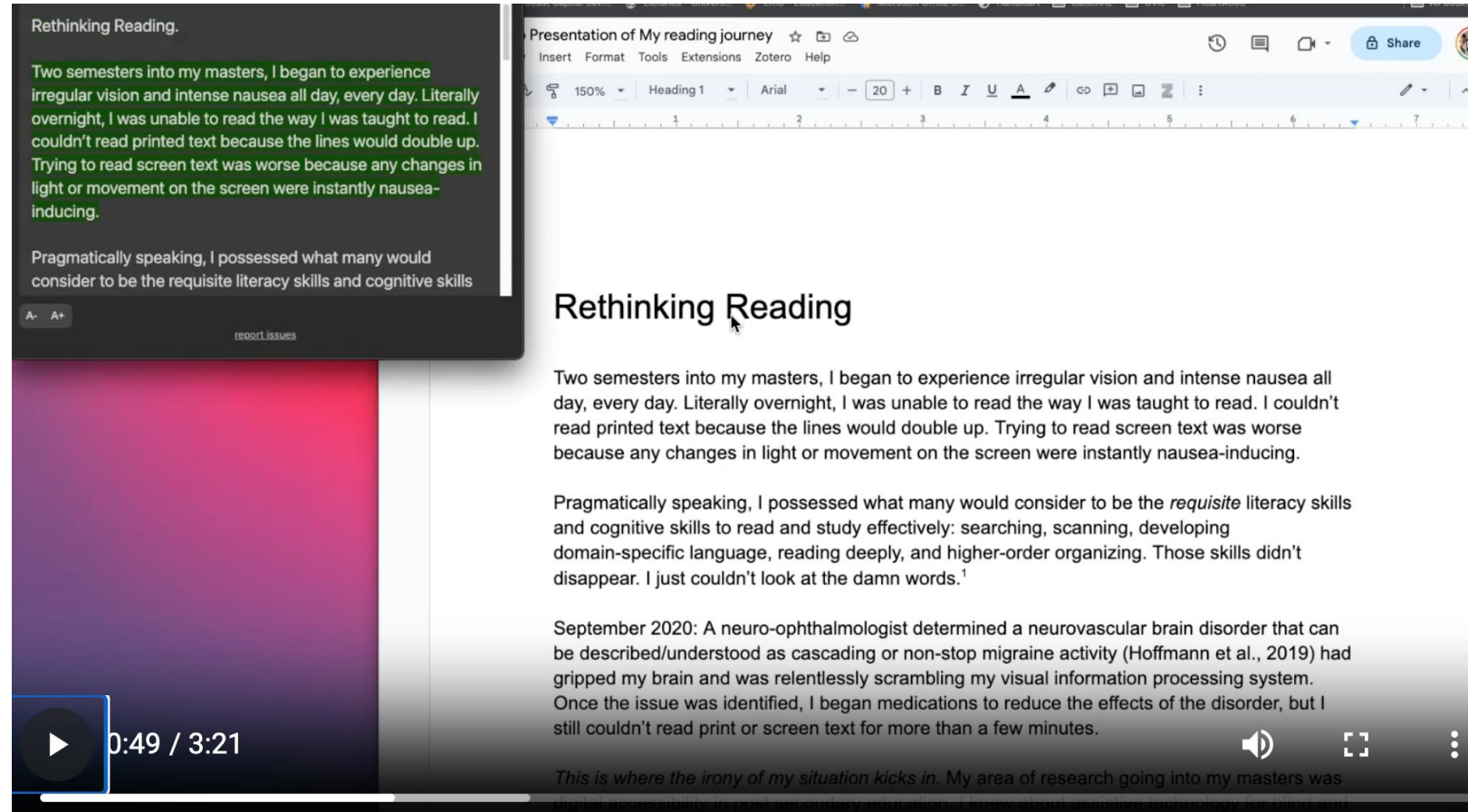


This is a complex figure I authored for my research. It is used here as an example of a complex figure. It is too small to be visually perceived to make the point that we often publish figures that can't be perceived by many people.

Bumping into Digital Accessibility Quandaries

[Video : What I Didn't
Know About Text-to-
speech When I Started
Using it in University.](#)

3-minute video



The image shows a video player interface. The video content is a document titled "Rethinking Reading" by report_issues. The document text is as follows:

Rethinking Reading.

Two semesters into my masters, I began to experience irregular vision and intense nausea all day, every day. Literally overnight, I was unable to read the way I was taught to read. I couldn't read printed text because the lines would double up. Trying to read screen text was worse because any changes in light or movement on the screen were instantly nausea-inducing.

Pragmatically speaking, I possessed what many would consider to be the requisite literacy skills and cognitive skills

Rethinking Reading

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Pragmatically speaking, I possessed what many would consider to be the *requisite* literacy skills and cognitive skills to read and study effectively: searching, scanning, developing domain-specific language, reading deeply, and higher-order organizing. Those skills didn't disappear. I just couldn't look at the damn words.¹

September 2020: A neuro-ophthalmologist determined a neurovascular brain disorder that can be described/understood as cascading or non-stop migraine activity (Hoffmann et al., 2019) had gripped my brain and was relentlessly scrambling my visual information processing system. Once the issue was identified, I began medications to reduce the effects of the disorder, but I still couldn't read print or screen text for more than a few minutes.

This is where the irony of my situation kicks in. My area of research going into my masters was

The video player interface includes a play button, a progress bar showing 0:49 / 3:21, and a volume icon.

Documenting: Labour to get a Book

of emails 32

words typed 4,000+

days 24 to resolution

of paid personnel involved 8

of unpaid friends with disabilities helping 2

to get a digitally accessible copy of 1 book

Transformative Digital Accessibility Praxis Candare.ca



CanDARE (Digital Accessibility Research in Education)

Digital accessibility isn't pass/fail. It's praxis.

Contact



CANDARE

ABOUT

PRAXIS ▾

LEARNING FROM LEARNERS ▾

POST-SECONDARY LIBRARY ▾

LATEST



Digital accessibility and inclusion are not tech issues for disabled learners.

Digital inaccessibility and marginalization in education are visceral, chronic symptoms of systemic ableism and unexamined oppression in the Academy.

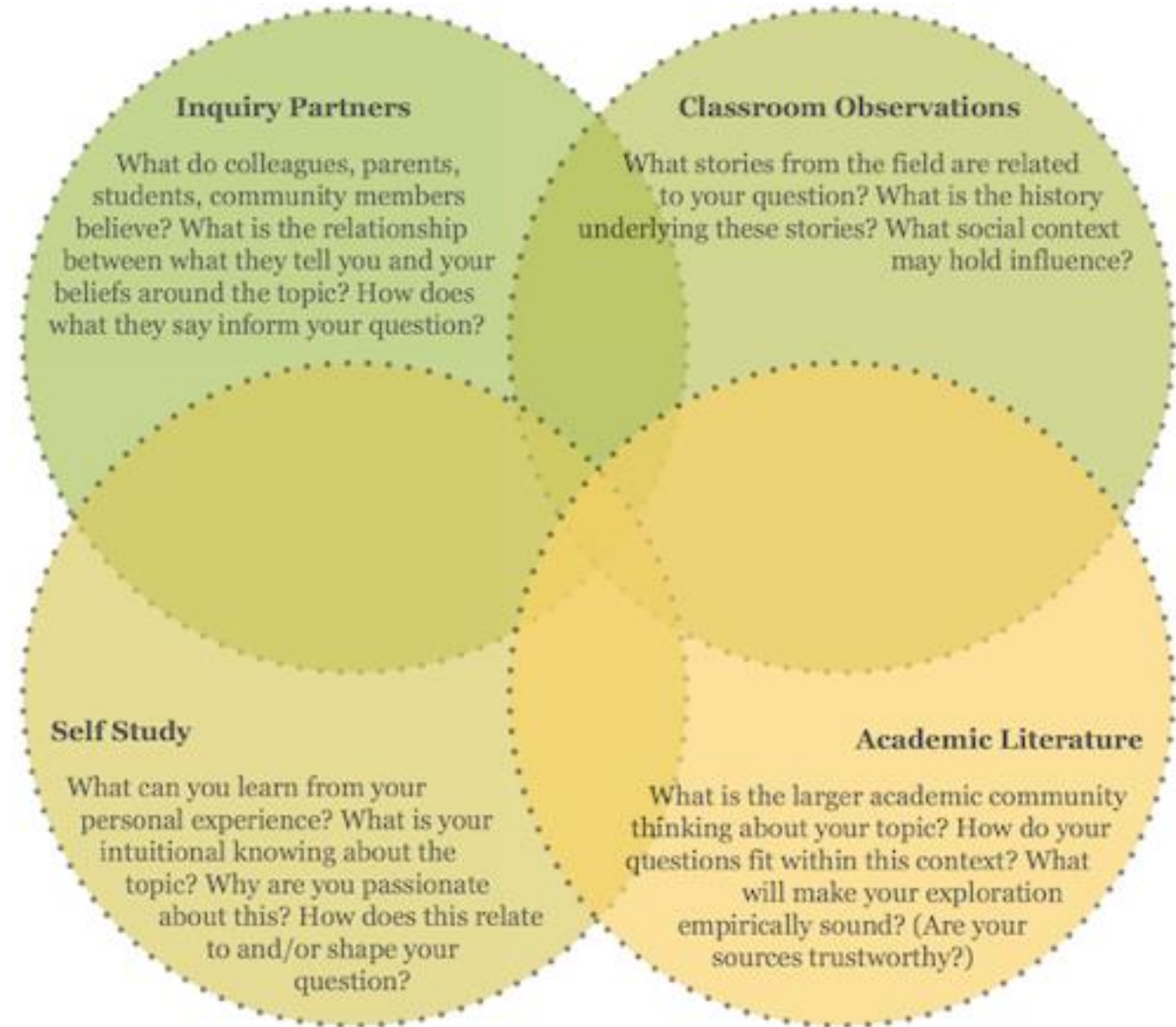


Discussion

As a group, discuss some digital research praxis issues.

Use the model to draw on a variety of sources to think about:

- Why this issue?
- What beliefs or misunderstandings are attached to it?
- What are the social implications?
- Does the issue have a champion? Who?



References:

- Morales, E., Kalir, J. H., Fleerackers, A., & Alperin, J. P. (2022). [Using social annotation to construct knowledge with others: A case study across undergraduate courses](#). *F1000Research*, 11, 235.
- Mertens, D. M. (2017). [Transformative research: Personal and societal](#). *International Journal for Transformative Research*, 4(1), 18–24
- Nicol, C., Thom, J. S., Doolittle, E., Glanfield, F., & Ghostkeeper, E. (2023). [Mathematics education for STEM as place](#). *ZDM – Mathematics Education*.
- Oswal, S. K. (2018). [Can Workplaces, Classrooms, and Pedagogies Be Disabling?](#) *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 81(1), 3–19.
- Seale, J. (Ed.). (2020). [Improving Accessible Digital Practices in Higher Education: Challenges and New Practices for Inclusion](#). Springer International Publishing.
- SILR Info (Director). (2023, June 12). [Elder Dr. Elmer Ghostkeeper—Sounds Create your Worldview](#) [Video recording].

Resources 1

In the video recording, Kim mentions a Google doc to collect resources for participants to share digital accessibility topics. Instead of a Google doc, those links are add here:

You can see the [Transformational Digital Accessibility Praxis](#) resources Kim is developing for educators here (the site is in development)

Do you want to build community around this? Email kim at kim@candare.ca to follow up.

Resources 2

BCcampus Accessibility Bites series offers solid how-to instruction on digital accessibility topics:

- [Assistive Technology](#)
- [Accessible PowerPoint Decks](#)
- [Alternative Format Creation](#)
- [Image Descriptions](#)

Resources 3

Libraries have been activists in digital accessibility for years, check out:

Wood, L. C., Axelrod, J., Downie, J. S., Furlough, M., Unsworth, J., & Wedaman, D. (2017). *Libraries: Take AIM! Accessible Instructional Materials and Higher Education*. 44.

Any current library activism literature to share? I want to know
kim@candare.ca

Librarian contributors and research software info in

Yesilada, Y., & Harper, S. (Eds.). (2019). *Web Accessibility: A Foundation for Research (2nd ed.)*. Springer-Verlag.

Full Text from Four Spheres Model Image

- **Alt-Text Described:**

- Four overlapping circles form the model. The circles are titled, Inquiry Partners, Classroom Observations, Self Study and Academic Literature. See the Slide at the end for the fill text of the model.

- **Text on the image reads:**

- Academic literature: What is the larger community asking about your topic? How do your questions fit within this context? What will make your exploration empirically sound? (Are your sources trustworthy?)
- Classroom observations: What stories from the field are related to your question? What is the history underlying these stories? What social context may hold influence?
- Inquiry Partners: What do colleagues, parents, students and community members believe? What is the relationship between what they tell you and your beliefs around the topic? How does what they say inform your question?
- Self Study: What can you learn from personal experience? What is your intuitional knowing about the topic? Why are you passionate about this? How does this relate to and shape your question?

Thank you

- [Dr. Michael Paskevicius](#) my supervisor at UVic
- Dr. Ann Gange at Brock and host of the [Accessagogy Podcast](#)
- [Fizza Haida](#) at UFV

BCcampus Research Fellows Program.

This program provides B.C. post-secondary educators and students with funding to conduct small-scale research on teaching and learning, as well as explore evidence-based teaching practices that focus on student success and learning.



**Arts-based
research for
volatile times**

SEPT. 10



Dr. Geo Takach

**Centring digital
accessibility in
research praxis**

OCT. 29



Kim Ashbourne

**Using the 5Rs as
an Indigenous
research framework**

NOV. 26



Dr. Jean-Paul Restoule

**Creating communities
of care for academic
spaces**

DEC. 10



Dr. Petra Boynton

Thank You!

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Gwen Nguyen Gnguyen@bccampus.ca