Anchoring Ethical Technology (AI and data) Usage in the Education Practice

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Codifications of a Post Digital Reality

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What is reality when we are unable to separate ourselves from the digital environment? Can mere words suffice to describe what that reality would be like? These art codifications adapt Freirean methodology to the era of AI content creation, where art-making has become democratized. As part of a new generation of adult educators, I explore themes of importance to my community using tools that generate robust, fast, and striking visual representations in ways never before possible. Each image was created using Midjourney 6.1, Sora, and Adobe Photoshop 2025, designed by a human artist in collaboration with a custom-trained GPT named Paulo Marshall McFrerean: the digital son of Marshall McLuhan and Paulo Freire. This GPT was fed seminal texts by both thinkers and shaped through reflective dialogue with the artist. The process involved iterative prompting, re-uploading, and reprompting, followed by Photoshop editing to achieve a uniform, square visual aesthetic reminiscent of Instagram. These are visual provocations - artifacts of thought that disturb, reveal, or imagine. They are ambiguous and resistant to simple interpretation. Ultimately, they are critical: each image invites (perhaps even pushes) the viewer to seek reality through a different lens, hoping the messages encoded within them will resonate and incite deep, transformative reflection. They are intended for both personal meditation and collective inquiry, especially when decodified among co-creators of knowledge.

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1. Planetary Ruins (The Cloud is Not Made Out of Clouds)

This image depicts the overlooked yet pressing reality that those digital clouds we love are not really made out of organic materials. Instead, they're made out of metal and plastic; they suck energy at an incredible rate. Most importantly, they thrive in environments where life does not exist.

This codification was done through multiple prompts and remixes, using Midjourney V6.1 and a custom-trained GPT as collaborator. The image was finished using Adobe Photoshop to expand key areas. A tracking VHS overlay was placed on top to provide texture and a feeling of analog vs. digital tension.

2. Political power (Education Should Be Political, Not Partisan)

In the era of pervasive, fluid, and faceless algorithms, partisan politics rip our identities apart, pushing us to conform to a bewildering, one-size-fits-all style of engagement. This image shows the futile yet essential battle against these forces of oppression, where humans are used as the rope in a digital tug-of-war, their agency stripped in the name of tribal allegiance.

This codification was created through multiple prompts and remixes, using Midjourney V6.1 in collaboration with a custom-trained GPT. The final image was shaped in Adobe Photoshop, expanding key areas and layering in the murky, mineral-rich liquid below the figures to ground the metaphor in bodily terrain. A glitch overlay was applied to signal the mediation of the struggle: this war takes place in feeds, timelines, and algorithmic tunnels where the battleground is often invisible, yet always active.

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3. Global Inequality (How Convenient Is Your Personal Computer?)

An African child, deep inside the mine where he is forced to work, holds in his hands a phone he will never be able to afford. The screen glows with scenes of freedom he will never experience. The old photo texture and black-and-white tone of the image suggest this reality has existed for quite some time. In the end, slavery hasn't gone away; we just got used to it, and accept it as the price some unfortunate souls must pay for our convenience.

This codification was done through multiple prompts and remixes, using Midjourney V6.1 and a custom-trained GPT as collaborator. The image was finished in Adobe Photoshop, where areas were expanded, saturation levels adjusted, and old photo textures added. The content of the phone was left in color: jarring, seductive, and brutally out of place.

4. Addiction: Dependency (My Content is Quite Yummy, I Just Can't Get Away)

Behind an insect screen, a swarm of digital flies (each representing the fragmented identities of our children) rejoice in consuming the digital content prepared for them. Addiction and conditioning begin before language itself. Before we can formulate thoughts, we begin losing the sense of ourselves.

We see this happening and place thin, symbolic barriers between us and the problem (screens, filters, safety settings) hoping they'll keep the truth away, so it won't affect us emotionally.

This codification was created using Sora; the prompt was developed in collaboration with a custom-trained GPT. The image was iterated and remixed in Sora, then taken into Adobe Photoshop to integrate visual elements and layer in the insect screen texture. The flies, the children, the glow of their feast; it all asks: what have we made them hungry for?

5. Bias: Discrimination (I Can Be However I Want to Be)

A young woman watches herself in the digital mirror, distorting her beauty to fit the standards she has been conditioned to adore. Her wants and desires are not entirely hers, and yet, she controls the output. Her actual reality becomes superfluous, much less important than the one provided by the digital environment through the glowing, portable screen. This is the subtle cruelty of discrimination, embedded within the tools we use to shape ourselves.

This codification was created through conversational prompting with a custom-trained GPT, using ChatGPT. The image was remixed and finalized in Adobe Photoshop, where additional textures were layered in to evoke a grittier, timeless atmosphere. What emerges is personal and systemic: the fantasy of liberation masking a deeper form of confinement

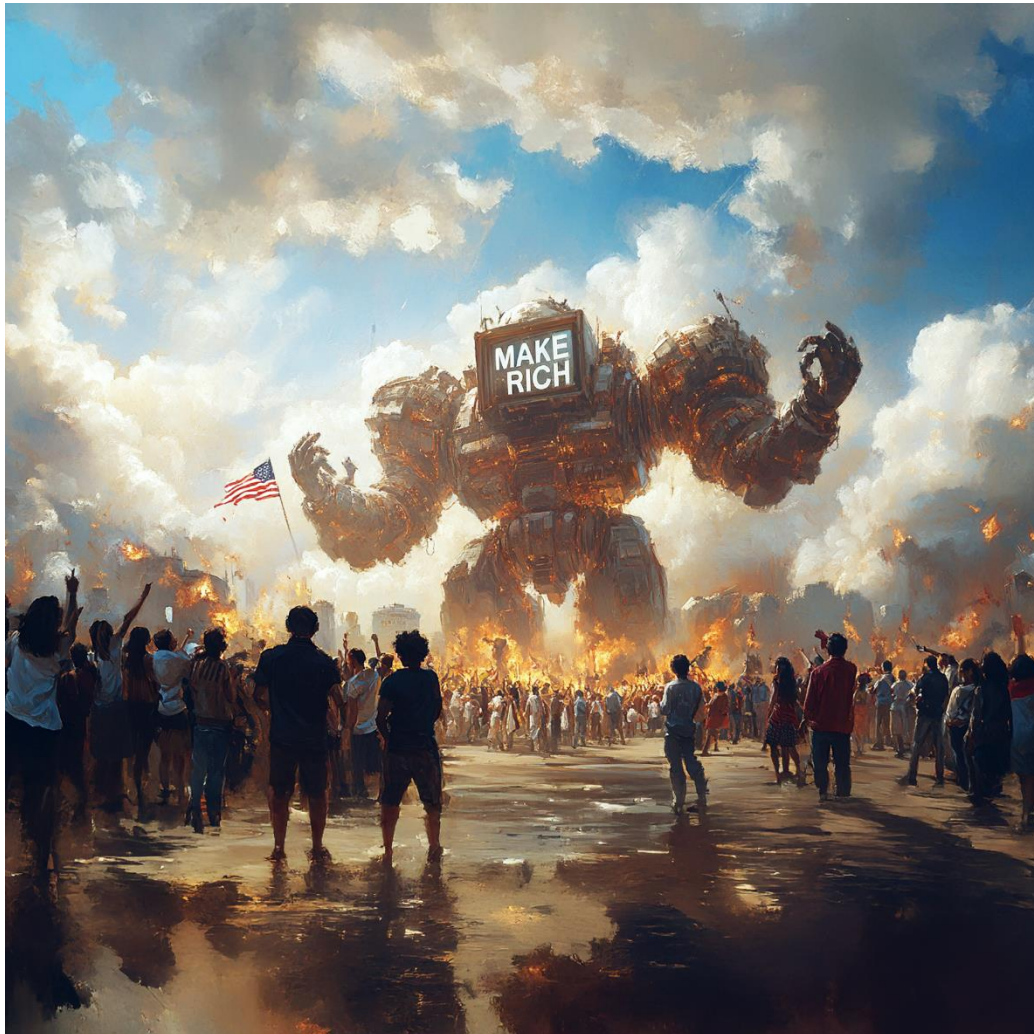## 6. Cultural Impoverishment (Perceived Relevance Is All We Truly Need)

True relevance is gone. It has been replaced by the idea of a perceived relevance, something highly determined by our ranking within the digital ecosystems we inhabit. A like, a share, a heart, a fleeting moment of digital validation allows us to forget that analog and digital reality may run parallel, but they are not the same.

Our culture is shifting into one where digital affirmation becomes the dominant value, even in the face of imminent danger and destruction. As long as the framing looks good, we continue smiling.

This codification was done through multiple prompts and remixes using Midjourney V6.1, in collaboration with a custom-trained GPT. The image was finalized in Adobe Photoshop, with expanded visual areas and careful adjustments to color balance and contrast. The resulting image glows, even as it crumbles.

7. Ethics as Critical Inquiry (Make Rich Machine Can Take a Fight)

Ethics opens our eyes and aligns our brains toward the creation of a better reality. Those who engage with it know that conforming to powerful, nonsensical forces of oppression is never an option. But they are only one group of the population.

As we fight some of the biggest battles of our digital civilization, some humans engage, others just watch. The Make Rich machine may look like it's toppling down... and yet, it may stand forever.

This codification was done through multiple prompts and remixes using Midjourney V6.1, in collaboration with a custom-trained GPT. The image was finalized in Adobe Photoshop, where key areas were expanded, and adjustments were made to color balance and contrast.

The scene is charged with tension: a crumbling digital temple, collapsing under the weight of its own lies, but still dangerous, still standing, still humming with the illusion of relevance.

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8. Mediation (I Can Provide the Best Human Connection Available in the Market)

On a quaint and beautiful afternoon, two friends use their digital personas to engage in an amusing intellectual game. The place is timeless and classy, and everyone looks the part. A trusted mediator elegantly facilitates this encounter, conveniently controlling their interactions while making a profit from its much-needed service.

The mediator appears humanoid (refined, composed) as it is ultimately made in the image of those who own it. Its role is invisible and decisive, shaping what can be said, and how it will feel.

This codification was done through multiple prompts and remixes using Midjourney V6.1, in collaboration with a custom-trained GPT. The final composition was completed in Adobe Photoshop, with expanded visual areas and fine-tuned color balance and contrast. The classical painting style, with a deliberate glow and soft light, reinforces the timelessness and casual nature of the interaction, while masking the architecture of control embedded within it.

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9. Ethics as care (A Beautiful Yet Isolated Community)

The future may rely not on the internet, but on intranets, networks of care and intention. Within these small, data-sovereign communities, everyone looks after one another. Their collective consciousness has given life to a powerful custom-trained AI platform designed to monitor and respond to the wellbeing of each member.

It's a beautiful way of living, even if it means being isolated from the rest. Safety, meaning, and care replace exposure, noise, and surveillance. Ethics stops being a debate, becoming practice.

This codification was created through multiple prompts and remixes using Midjourney V6.1, in collaboration with a custom-trained GPT. The image was finalized in Adobe Photoshop, where color balances were refined and certain visual areas expanded. A warm, soft aesthetic overlays the composition, reinforcing a sense of harmony and intentional seclusion.

10. Future Imagination (A Bridge of Knowledge Transfer)

An old photograph reveals a reality that has been unfolding for some time: one in which the deceased and the living interact regularly, co-creating knowledge together. The future of imagination is shaped by dreams and data, by the traces we constantly leave behind, and by the systems designed to package and reanimate that data to keep us connected with those we've lost in the biological world.

In the new digital environment, the boundary between life and death begins to dissolve. Memory, computation, and imagination blur into one another, reshaping what it means to be human, and what it means to remain.

This codification was created through multiple prompts and remixes using Midjourney V6.1, in collaboration with a custom-trained GPT. The final image was completed in Adobe Photoshop, with expanded areas, refined color balances and contrast, and a timeless old-photograph texture to anchor the speculative in the familiar.