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The inaugural *Hashtags for Justice* international summit will be a meeting made up of hundreds of Cisco Networking Academy instructors and their Community of Practice (CoP) leaders around the globe during the Instructor Professional Development (IPD) week in February of 2021 (Cisco Networking Academy, n.d.). The summit learners are highly motivated, college-educated, Cisco Networking Academy instructors representing a diverse collection of races, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds who interface with thousands of students every semester. The goal of the summit is simple: transform the keynote address into an educational session that details the inclusion of a “racially liberatory pedagogy” (Castillo-Montoya, Abreu & Abad, 2019), leveraging constructivist methodology and principles (Gronseth, 2016; McDowell, 2017; Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020), centered on problem-based learning (PBL) (McDowell, 2017), and focused on training the trainer to utilize all social media platforms to bring about social change and action. In other words, instructors will complete the session with a clear series of next steps and tangible ideas for projects that can be integrated into their classroom assignments to focus on leveraging social media technology for social action. Action to specifically combat systemic racism, the marginalization of people of color, social injustice, police brutality, and to once and for all rip the veil off the system of oppression that has been used to control the dominant discourse for centuries in our society.

Just over 52 years ago, in May of 1968, when a group of 115 mostly poor people of color traveled in wagons pulled by mules from the “poorest town in the poorest state in America”

(Hamilton, 2016, p. 39), Marks, Mississippi, to the nation's capital in Washington, D. C., in a grassroots social movement to bring awareness to the plight of poor and marginalized people of color. In 1968, the organization of social movements looked very different than it does today. Social media giants like Twitter, Facebook, and Google did not exist as communication mediums and the hashtag was recognized as nothing more than a character on a typewriter keyboard. As a result, the organization of the Mule Train started with a meeting in September 1967, not through a tweet, Facebook post, YouTube video, or Zoom meeting. Meeting organizers needed just over nine months before the social movement materialized due in large part to an inability to quickly rally and organize participants. (Hamilton, 2016, p. 40). Contrast this with how the organization of social movements around the globe can occur today through social media use. It is estimated that by 2023 there will be over 5 billion Internet users (Cisco, 2020) and it is undeniable that the presence of social media platforms, and the social justice movements that leverage them, can result in wide-spread social movements in a matter of minutes as opposed to months.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement has had overwhelming success leveraging social media to organize and galvanize its members and coordinated actions (Carney, 2016; Castillo-Montoya, Abreu & Abad, 2019; Mundt, Ross & Burnett, 2018). For example, as Carney (2016) pointed out after the tragic deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, Twitter erupted in tweets of outrage and the hashtag “#BlackLivesMatter became the rallying call for protesters” (p. 181). These tweets led to wide ranging social movements and supporting marches to bring further awareness to the miscarriage of justice that had taken place. Mundt, Ross, and Burnett (2018) have also pointed out that the “obvious and intuitive link between social media and scaling is its potential for mobilizing new activists” (p. 1). In other words, individuals who might have been on the sidelines of the social justice movement due to lack of information or

awareness are now being brought into the fold at record numbers and at a record pace. In addition, not only are the voices of people of color no longer being silenced, they are amplified by the ubiquity and reach of social media platforms. The platforms of social media have become indispensable as tools of learning when it comes to social injustice and police brutality (Carney, 2016; Castillo-Montoya, Abreu & Abad, 2019; Mundt, Ross & Burnett, 2018). This was also brilliantly summarized by actor Will Smith when he stated, “racism is not getting worse, it’s getting filmed” (Thomas, 2020). Smith was referring to the fact that individuals are now capturing these events on their mobile devices, posting them on social media, and they are going viral. Users of social media are now faced with the undeniable and brutal proof that racial oppression and injustice are, regrettably, alive and well. That said, more voices are still needed to ensure the delivery, scope, and frequency of the message.

The *Hashtags for Justice* summit will introduce instructors to social justice projects, which leverage a constructivist hands-on approach, focused on creating meaningful learner experiences. These same projects will then be integrated into the classroom for learners in the upcoming semesters. Gronseth (2015), for example, postulates that constructivism is best applied by instructors who can engage with learners and involve them in the learning process, help to be a facilitator as opposed to a sage, and to make the learning relevant to the learner. In other words, just like social media facilitates the organization of social justice movements, instructors will facilitate the prominent inclusion of projects for social justice and equality. It is within the constructivist approach that you find the underpinnings of social media elements that are making the BLM movement so dynamic and effective (Carney, 2016; Castillo-Montoya, Abreu & Abad, 2019; Mundt, Ross & Burnett, 2018).

Instructors will be provided with the following specific learner project idea, similar to the work of BLM and their use of Twitter (Carney, 2016), and shown how to integrate this project into their courses as a multi-part project using problem-based learning (PBL) (McDowell, 2017). Through the use of the Python programming language, learners will create automation scripts that can scan social media sites for BLM, the Poor People's Campaign (PPC) (Hamilton, 2016) and other social justice movement accounts. When information matching user-defined keywords or hashtags is found in tweets, the post is then re-tweeted and posted to a learner blog and other social media platforms like Facebook. This amplification of social justice messages embraces what Critical Race Theory (CRT) describes as the war against subtle forms of racism (Castillo-Montoya, Abreu & Abad, 2019; Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). According to Castillo-Montoya, Abreu & Abad (2019), this type of hands-on activism, and racially liberatory pedagogy, can actually "raise its followers' intersectional critical consciousness" (p. 1125).

Critical Race Theory (CRT), originally conceptualized in the early 70s, has its focus on addressing the subtle forms of racism that are rampant in society (Castillo-Montoya, Abreu & Abad, 2019; Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 2016; Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020). Ladson-Billings & Tate IV (2016) describe CRT in terms of fiscal inequity because "race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States" (p. 48). Statistically speaking, it is a proven fact that people of color are at the bottom of the property and financial totem pole (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 2016) in the United States and many other parts of the world. By educating learners about the many ways they can contribute to the movement for social justice through technology this summit "champions activism" (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020, p. 294) which is at the core of CRT. It is this same activism that learners will be encouraged to embrace in the name of social justice and equality.

The *Hashtags for Justice* summit aims to transform the Cisco Networking Academy (Cisco Networking Academy, n.d.) IPD session and course curriculum towards an instructor- and learner-as-activist pedagogy where instructors and learners alike become digital warriors in the battle against systemic racism, the marginalization of people of color, social injustice, police brutality, and the system of oppression that has been used to control the dominant discourse for centuries in our society. [1309]

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