



Case Study 2: Mural, Mural on the Wall: The Fight's Not Over

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Synopsis

- Explores ideologies about retention or removal of offensive artwork artifacts.
- Viewpoint 1: negative symbolism requires removal or destruction.
- Viewpoint 2: retention ensures ongoing reflection and freedom of speech.
- Setting: San Francisco, United States
- Dilemma: 13 panel mural negatively portrays George Washington at secondary school including slavery and Indigenous mistreatment.
- Although plan was to paint over panels, the school board will now cover the images and plan to digitize the artifact which has not generated consensus.

Considerations

- Visible and invisible identities shape the sense-making process.
- Constructive dialogue can generate awareness if respect is maintained.
- Community council could be organized with co-constructed conduct code.
- Psychological safety must be prioritized for all community members.
- Stories can change over time, so viewers must reflect on context.
- Retention conveys intrinsic value, but positionality must be considered.

Decision-Making Formats

The Five “I” Format

- **Identify** the problem and set goals for the decision-making process.
- **Investigate** the problem by analyzing it and collecting additional information; develop criteria for judging solutions.
- **Innovate** by generating a variety of solutions.
- **Isolate** a solution using criteria developed in the investigate stage.
- **Implement** the solution.

Rawls Justice and Fairness

“Balancing Freedom and Equality”

- Theorist: John Rawls
- Two principles of justice
 - **Principle 1:** Equal liberty
 - **Principle 2:** Equal opportunity principle and difference principle
- Step behind a *veil of ignorance* when making decisions.
- Base decisions on the *maximin rule* – best choice guarantees minimum level of benefits.

Questions

Do you think the meaning of the story told by the mural has changed over time? If so, how?

Do you think the panels make it difficult for some students to live out their part of the collective story of Washington High School?

Should the stories told by art make us uncomfortable?