

CONTESTING AND NEGOTIATING SOCIAL SPACE IN THE CLASSROOM: A
CAST STUDY THAT EXAMINES AND EXPLORES POWER IN TWO
COMMUNICATION CLASSROOMS AT ONE UNIVERSITY.

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ABSTRACT

CONTESTING AND NEGOTIATING SOCIAL SPACE IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY THAT EXAMINES AND EXPLORES POWER IN TWO COMMUNICATION CLASSROOMS AT ONE UNIVERSITY

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George Mason University, 2010

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This dissertation examines and explores the negotiation of hegemonic power structures in two Communication classrooms. This project, an exploratory case study, investigates the classrooms of two professors of different marginalized identities. Both educators employed critical and engaged pedagogy in their classrooms that enabled students to engage, and allowed for deep and ethical listening that valued students and the stories they shared. The author engaged in an activist researcher role that contributed to a particular scaffolding of knowledge and learning, broadened the theoretical and experiential canon from which to draw, and worked in partnership and ally-ship contributing to each learning community, taking the necessary risks in order to interrupt status quo narratives that emerge in the classroom and other socio-political structures in U.S. culture.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Education’s role is to challenge inequality and dominant myths rather than socialize students into the status quo. Learning is directed toward social change and transforming the world, and ‘true’ learning empowers students to challenge oppression in their lives.”
– Stage et al. (1998, p. 57) expanding on the critical pedagogy of Paolo Freire.

Introduction

Ways of knowing, learning, and thinking are influenced first and foremost by identities and experiences. Our daily episodes with the world shape how we acquire language and describe our lives. These are questions I have asked myself based on my own experiences, and though I couldn’t name injustice, I knew that I felt it in my own life. These experiences helped shape the educator I am today and the standpoint for why this research project is crucial for me. How does one view the world through the lens of a White, poor, female, first-generation college student who worked as a secretary to put herself through school? How does a child of divorce, mental, economic, and physical abuse find her voice? How does this girl develop a sense of what is fair, just, and right? How does this girl reconcile the contradictions of her mother’s conversational pleasantries thrown the direction of her Black neighbor when in public and the vitriolic racial epithets describing the same neighbor in private? How many scripts does one learn, memorize, and perform for the different, compartmentalized roles in our lives

without giving any sort of critical thought as to how we treat each other? There is one language and way of knowing that is eerily familiar, unfortunate, and insidious, crushing and suffocating – it is the language of domination. One learns, at a very early age, specifically in a White supremacist, capitalist culture, that there is a scarcity model in place. There is a scarcity of praise, power, love, and resources all tied to our identities; this is one of the common senses or ideologies at play. Hegemonic systems of domination become a way of knowing; therefore, power must be examined, critiqued, and illuminated in order to unlearn, destabilize, and share it equitably.

This dissertation is a logical progression in my both my personal and professional life. My particular topic and focus was not simply chosen to get me to the “next level” in my professional life, but rather represents the culmination of my own intellectual and spiritual imperatives and curiosity, shaped by my life and identities, my positions, and my passions and interests. I am the first and only of three children in my immediate family not only to attend but graduate from college with a bachelor’s degree at the age of 27. I am the only one to pursue not only a master’s but a doctoral degree. Knowledge and ideas, for me, are not just mildly interesting; they are a matter of survival. Because I approached higher education as a luxury, something I longed for rather than felt entitled to, I deeply appreciated it but was deeply critical of it due to my background. I entered higher education with ignorance in the power and privilege I held in different aspects of my identities, however, I gravitated toward critical theory and pedagogy, though I didn’t have the language to name it until much later. I was not raised in school or university talk, yet I was acutely aware and intuitive about commonsense ideologies. As Howard

Zinn (1990) poses, “[I]f those in charge of our society can dominate our ideas, they will be secure in their power. We will not need repressive state apparatus (RSAs), we will control ourselves” (p. 2).

Identity as a Way of Knowing

Until I was about 11, most of my friends were Black. Tim Wise (2005) calls this racial separation the weeding out process perpetrated by our families, schools, and other White supremacist institutions. I was raised in a single-mothered home, recipient of public assistance, and lived until my teen years in a housing project with other poor, mostly White and Black folks. I was the victim of severe poverty rage manifested in both physical and mental abuse and grew up hearing racial slurs by my mother most of my life. bell hooks (2000) deconstructs this conflation of White poverty and racism. This is a strategy White folks use to lessen the realities of being poor. Lessons learned: Even though my neighbors were all relatively poor, I am better than Black people. I began to learn the system of internalized dominance of whiteness, though I was unable to name or acknowledge it until much later in my life.

As a female with no prospects of attending college, I enrolled in secretarial classes so that I graduated with a marketable skill. Some of my most profound learning came from being a secretary, especially from powerful White men faculty. At the University of Pittsburgh, the Chair of the History and Philosophy of Science Department slurred obscenities at me as the alcohol from the night before permeated through his pores. Watching the way this married man hurried off daily for happy hour with his young female students and feeling extremely uncomfortable and unsafe, I applied for, and

secured, the first job I was offered. This man was later accused of sexual harassment, and I was contacted to provide testimony in a formal university investigation. Lessons learned: A secretary, in this case, a young, White female, is a human shield so that those with power, in this case primarily White men and women, are not bothered. I learned a lot about space and how often mine was invaded. I learned a great deal about hostile sexism and gender oppression as it becomes the unwritten part of my job description. I began to awaken to elitism and classism, though I was unable to call upon the right language, find my voice, or name my experience. In the workplace, as a female with no college degree, I was a silenced woman (Belenky, 1986). This pattern continued in the next two secretarial/administrative jobs I occupied, and I suffered mistreatment from both White men and women.

My next job opens my eyes to racism, especially, and the ways it intersects with classism, homophobia, Islamophobia, transphobia, ableism, body discrimination, and other systems of oppression. Those in positions of power, primarily White, female faculty, never learned the names of the Muslim women who frequented my office – seeing them as an amalgam of scarves. I witnessed egregious acts of plagiarism as my Black co-worker's ideas were passed off publicly as my White supervisor's. I had a seemingly good title, and yet I had no voice. I mediated another situation in which my supervisor sabotaged my co-worker's performance evaluation, and this time I spoke up. In this particular position, I listened to the stories of students, staff, and faculty who have experienced racial, ethnic, religious, gender and other oppressions. I realized, as Ladson-Billings (1998) and other critical race theorists articulate, that racism is normal in

American society. The common sense ideology of professionalism and power are at play, but devastatingly, in an office that is supposed to be progressive (Gramsci, 1971; Hull, 1982). Professionalism becomes the unmarked narrative that Bruner (1990) identifies, and professionalism goes unnoticed. This unquestioned language of domination keeps angry Blacks, Muslims, White queers, Queers of color, and radicals quiet and civil in the work place. They become bodies from which to extract labor and serve solely economic ends. Lessons learned: There are very powerful narratives and systems of domination in place. I learned, as Bruner (1990) describes, the tropes in the narrative of the workplace. The workplace script is canon – when at university *behave* university. Though this particular space on campus is “political,” the workplace script has higher value than confronting power and privilege.

Women's Ways of Knowing and Agency

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) identify the subjective self, specifically the process of women discovering their inner power. This inner power is deeply connected to intuition, instinct, and what some women call the “infallible gut” (p. 168). These subjectivists imagine the world in a state of flux and can even imagine initiating some of the changes. As children they listened to an inner source of truth and by listening to that inner voice they sought and practiced values different from parents and family members. Children who have suffered abuse and tragedy as action-oriented, often preoccupied with self and survival. This is my former way of knowing. But now, I am constantly interrogating my oppressed and privileged identities - that are greater than

the sum of each part - so that I am not operating in a state of crisis. I am one of these subjectivist children who knew that “words were perceived as weapons, words were used to separate and diminish people, not to connect and empower them” (p. 24). This discourse shaped my own thinking and how I see myself as an educator, determined to challenge scarcity models and to challenge pervasive unquestioned ideologies. I want to share my experience, my knowledge and my resources with others so that my relationships with students, apprentices, and colleagues are based on love and integrity instead of mimicking a capitalist economic model. In fact, quite some time ago, I had a personal “crisis” in teaching. I started examining my own conditioning as a teacher who was trained to convey textbook “facts” rather than question ideologies. This crossroads was my own somatic, physical, and intellectual resistance to teaching in this manner. My exigency required me to take a year away from teaching, re-evaluate my practices, and eventually resurface as a critical educator.

Problem Statement

Although teachers and students contest and negotiate relationships, knowledge, voice, and power marked and unmarked by authority of experience, how is meaning made in the classroom and university space when negotiations are not usually transparent, marked, or named by status quo narratives, internalized dominance, internalized oppression, and power that may surface? What is at stake for the teacher, the student, and the classroom as a community of learners? Further, what is at stake for the researcher?

Framing the Problem

This study sets out to explore how transformative education, engaged pedagogy, and critical progressive pedagogy and multiculturalism contests, designs, and redesigns the classroom and social space at a university. Social space, or the field, according to Bourdieu (1982) is the “site of struggles in which individuals seek to maintain or alter the distribution of the forms of capital specific to it” (p. 14). Transformative education, according to Banks (1994), “changes the canon, paradigms, and basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from different perspectives and points of view” (p. 26). hooks’ (1994) conception of engaged pedagogy borrows on the liberatory scholarship of Paolo Freire, that emphasizes well-being, a commitment to the process of self-actualization, and empowerment of students and teachers. Critical progressive pedagogy signifies “paradigms established in response to restrictive pedagogies and politics of academia that interfere with agency” (Hendrix, Jackson, & Warren, 2003, p. 181). Ira Shor (1992) defines critical pedagogy as follows:

[Critical pedagogy is] habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional cliches, received wisdom and mere opinions to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse. (p. 129)

Critical multiculturalism, according to Keating (2007), challenges and interrupts status-quo stories about race, gender, heterosexuality, and other categories of identity. Critical multiculturalism, unlike melting-pot and separatist multiculturalisms, critiques, exposes, and interrogates the common sense thinking of status quo stories that universalize our experiences (p. 14). The universalizing of experiences serves to essentialize and assert

authority of experience granted by dominant socio-political systems and positions.

Authority of experience, according to hooks (1994), determines whose experiences should be the central focus of the classroom and university social space. For example, authority of experience for White students can shift the focus away from marginalized people and disconnect experience from systemic, historic, and institutional inquiry and realities. As Applebaum articulates (2008) “more and more, systemically privileged students claim that their racist, sexist, or heterosexist expressions are legitimate voices to be heard in the classroom” (p. 406).

This research endeavor explores how teachers and students negotiate relationships marked by internalized dominance, internalized oppression, and unequal distributions of power in the university space. Internalized dominance is marked by a sense of conscious and unconscious superiority and authority, an exercise of power and privilege in pursuit of well-being and development; internalized oppression is marked by a sense of inferiority, powerlessness, and the limited ability to access resources needed for well-being and survival (Rosado & Barreto, 2002). Bourdieu elaborates on dominance and oppression using the terms freedom and constraint that are what he calls the secret codes of symbolic domination that manifest in “modalities of practice, the ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent, or even of speaking” (p. 51). In bureaucratic institutions, internalized dominance and oppression are normalized as hegemonic abstract systems and difficult to challenge. For example, in the state of Virginia, a person--whether gay or straight--can be legally fired or refused a job by an employer on the basis of that person's real or perceived sexual orientation. A person could lose her or his job simply because

s/he is gay, even if s/he is doing excellent work. It also means that a heterosexual person could be fired from his or her job because someone thinks he or she is gay. Twenty-one states have passed laws prohibiting discrimination in the workplace on the basis of sexual orientation to varying degrees, and Virginia is not among these 21 states. According to the Transgender Law and Policy Institute, only 13 states, plus the District of Columbia, have laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity and expression. Further, there are currently no laws in Virginia that are explicitly trans-inclusive with regard to discrimination (April 2006). These policies serve to legitimize heterosexuality and binary gender roles, which are inherently tied to “straightness.”

Heteronormativity, the prevailing legal hegemonic system enacted in policy in the state of Virginia forces lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer faculty, staff, and students in positions of employment to conform to heterosexual standards in educational systems for fear that they can be terminated if their status is known. Thereby, heteronormative and rigid gender standards correlate with and contribute to the internalized oppression of members of the LGBTQ community, internalized dominance in heterosexuals, as well as exacerbate and reinforce a binary relationship between LGBTQ and heterosexuals. Heteronormativity and gender policing mark LGBTQ folks as the “other” and keeps heterosexuality as normal and “unmarked.” Straight people as a privileged class, according to Applebaum (2008) “do not have to take notice of their sexuality because laws, customs, habits assume heterosexual lives as the norm; and in so doing, oppression and systemic injustice are normalized and not understood as something in need of critical questioning” (p. 411).

This study seeks to examine when negotiation of power in the classroom and university space is experienced as othering, as a subordinating experience, and for whom. Othering is a way of defining and securing one's own positive identity through the stigmatization of an "other." When do educators create trustful relationships that foster, as Howard (2006) articulates, "authentic engagement with the other" (p. 39)? According to Howard, "authentic engagement with the reality of those whose stories are significantly different from our own can allow us to transcend, to some degree, the limits of social positionality and help us see dominance in a clearer light" (p. 39).

This research examines when the interruption of power is experienced as supportive and for whom. This exploration seeks to examine when this interruption is experienced as exploitative and for whom. This analysis seeks to examine when this interruption is experienced as liberating and for whom. This investigation explores how power dynamics unfold in the classroom and university space and how these dynamics are negotiated to critically engage students and teachers, challenge assumptions, and yet manage to keep members of learning communities persisting in experiments of deep democracy, especially when students and educators are challenged or experiencing cognitive dissonance. Mindell (2000) defines deep democracy:

[Deep democracy functions] through distribution or balance of power. But power is not something which can be balanced with rules. Democracy requires awareness. Without awareness of hidden signals, no one notices how many individuals and subgroups are marginalized and disenfranchised. Laws are meant to protect the rights of individuals and groups, but they are almost useless for dealing with subtle forms of prejudice and the way powerful people oppress others. (p. 21)

Johnson (2006) discusses power in terms of unearned and unacknowledged advantage or conferred dominance that individuals give over to others because of the systemic nature of institutional power. Gee (1990) refers to “master myths” that seem “natural, inevitable, and unavoidable” (p. 138). Baldwin (1954) illustrates an example of master myths when he discusses the power inherent in discussions of the “rights of minorities” without avowing the undetected power of the majority and what power is obfuscated when only focusing on the “minority” (p. 221).

Cognitive dissonance is a psychological phenomenon that refers to the discomfort felt as a discrepancy between what one already knows or believes and new information or interpretation. It occurs when there is a need to accommodate new ideas, and it may be necessary for it to develop so that one becomes "open" to them. Cognitive dissonance occurs when one's own power and privilege or commonly held beliefs are challenged. How do educators maintain a space that encourages inquiry rather than certainty?

Specifically, this investigation explores strategies that educators employ to negotiate and manage content and the process of learning to examine where it is challenging and successful. This research seeks to identify mega-cognitive strategies that educators consciously or unconsciously employ when learning communities are dealing with contentious issues. How do educators engage in critically reflective teaching methods that invite learners to engage, challenge, and grow in this process while attending to their own well-being in engaged pedagogy?

Finally, I wanted to explore how faculty members negotiate their social identities in the university space. How do they negotiate their unmarked, privileged identities, as

well as marked, marginalized identities, to maintain classroom authority, operationalized as credibility not authoritarianism? Are course evaluations designed and interpreted with respect to content, process, and identity negotiation? Is there a process in which evaluations are mindfully discussed and explored if and when students conflate cognitive dissonance with the identity(ies) of instructors?

As a queer (and out), anti-racist, Euro-heritage, female teacher in the classroom, I regularly receive teaching evaluations with the sentiments, “This is supposed to be a media class not a class on politics” or that the materials are “too feminist” or that the course should focus more on “normal” or “real” women. One of my colleagues, an African heritage female professor in Women’s Studies, regularly receives comments on course evaluations claiming, “She spends too much time talking about race” and “not enough time talking about women.”

Scholarly literature and research demonstrates a correlation between race, gender, sexual orientation, anti-racist standpoint, and negative perceptions on student evaluations. White women, especially if they identify as feminists, or are out as lesbian or queer, and women of color in particular, contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning by chronicling challenges to their leadership in the classroom (Collings, Chrisler, & Quina 1998; Kardia & Wright, 2004; Lee & Bailey 2004; Ludlow, Rodgers, & Wrihten, 2005). This research examines the real implications of power negotiations in the classroom and how social identity is a salient issue for faculty and students in the classroom and university space. Important considerations for classroom practices: Objectivity encourages faculty and students to compromise or hide the invisible aspects of their

identities, such as religion, sexual orientation, or transgressive gender identities. It encourages faculty and students to perform aspects of their marked, visible identities that are incongruent with the ways they live and occupy these identities, such as race, ethnicity, class, and ability. Undemocratic spaces may punish faculty for occupying a part of these identities too strongly in the classroom. Resistance literature demonstrates that students often feel threatened or challenged by internalized dominance and internalized oppression (perceived or otherwise) if they are asked critical questions, therefore, these experiences should be explored in the interest of students and educators. When social justice is a special interest, faculty do not have support systems or dialogues in their departments to address identity management and power negotiations with students and other educators in the university space. When diversity is considered unrelated to holistic learning students may not have outlets and communities for exploring issues of identity and power in the classroom and university space.

Literature Review

Ideologies of authoritarianism, competition, and power are at play in the classroom, mirroring the oppressive systems in our culture, according to Freire (1982). Several scholars (Butin, 2005; Keating, 2007; Ludlow, 2004; Shor, 1992) have made the case that when educators integrate issues of social justice into our college classrooms by encouraging our students to challenge their perceptions and assumptions, they resist. There are several reasons that can explain this resistance.

Social justice issues, issues of difference, including race, privilege, dominance, oppression, equality, and ethics, require a different type of classroom environment so that

students and instructors can discuss issues fraught with volatility and not feel personally threatened (National Research Council, 2000). Butin (2005) states that social justice issues are taught with the zero-sum set up; either the teacher wins or the student wins, and the transaction is complete. Even the well-intentioned liberal teacher can model authoritarianism by forcing their views on what they perceive as students who may *appear* to be resistant, conservative, religious, or all of the above. In that instance, how are educators creating oppressive classroom practices that belie the mission of our institutions of higher learning to foster critical thinking?

Further, the classroom can be a place of intense debate because of performance-centered (rather than learning-centered) orientation, the desire for good grades, the desire to please the teacher, or the misperception, reinforced by classroom practices, that there is always and only one right answer (Jamieson, 2006). When students are anxious and fearful, they will not have the capacity to learn, let alone the ability to challenge misinformation and that learning is enhanced by cognitive challenge and inhibited by threat (National Council of Research, 2000; O'Banion, 1997).

Another obstacle to critical thinking is the binary polarization of issues, encouraging “debate” rather than discussion in critical pedagogy that fosters either/or thinking in the classroom. Societal issues often have many nuances, yet they are framed as having only two sides. If discussions are framed as having only two sides instead of seeking out the complexities, the dynamic sets up a loser and a winner of the argument (Jamieson, 2006). Rhetorically and ideologically, the binary debate fosters fallacy of either/or argument, as well as the codes in our rhetoric, to go unexamined. Liberatory,

transformational education requires a different approach from the traditional lecture format to a discussion and/or praxis-based classroom that fosters and rewards critical thinking over debate (Keating, 2007).

Critical thinking can be the key to understanding how we know what we know, how we come to know it, and how to challenge and question knowledge. For example, media scholar George Gerbner (1990) argues that television is the number one storyteller of our times, yet many students think of media as merely entertainment. Gerbner's research refutes the media as innocent, demonstrating that television provides a "daily ritual that elites share with many other publics" (p. 178). University classrooms are sites that can and should examine these rituals and publics that further hegemonic narratives and how they manifest in the university and classroom space (hooks, 2004). Engaged pedagogy must examine rituals and storytelling to encourage critically examining assumptions, narratives, and images, especially with those issues, groups, or communities of which we have no firsthand experience (Keating, 2007). Our classrooms must interrogate the rituals or our commonsense thinking in order to counter misinformation.

Brookfield (2005) asserts that often times "our assumptions are flawed, distorted, or accurate only within a much narrower range of situations than we had thought" (p. 50). He further argues that critical thinking urges students to "analyze commonly held ideas for the extent to which they perpetuate economic equity, deny compassion, foster a culture of silence, and prevent people from realizing their common interest" (p. 50).

Ways of knowing, learning, and thinking are influenced first and foremost by identities, the publics to which we belong, and our narrow experiences. Our daily

episodes, interactions, and life experiences shape how we acquire our language, describe our lives, and make sense of the world. Critical thinking methods can serve to model democratic, equitable classroom environments, encourage creativity, and encourage students to challenge status quo. Critical thinking methods that challenge assumptions may serve as the first experience of de-centering for students who occupy multiple statuses of privilege. Encountering critical pedagogical methods may also be the first time that students with a lack of awareness about privilege learn to question and examine coded language and systems and learn how argument and debate as the standard classroom narrative keep statuses of privilege unmarked, unexamined, and normal (Bruner, 1990). These methods can also serve to allow the backgrounds, cultures, and lives of students into the classroom, which is particularly crucial for the increasingly diverse student bodies in our colleges and universities, despite the lack of diverse bodies of instructors. These practices privilege learning-centered practices instead of privileging “middle-class, mainstream ways of knowing (of students) who do not come to school already practiced in school-talk” (National Research Council, 2000, p. 135).

Experiential learning can provide students with tangible activities and methods to actively engage with material, theories, and learning. Critical thinking methods can complement and support experiential learning. For example, students might examine a systemic and institutional problem by localizing the issue with personal examples or events happening in their own communities. As National Research Council scholars (2000) articulate, “learners of all ages are more motivated when they can see the usefulness of what they are learning and when they can use that information to do

something that has impact on others – especially for the local community (p. 61). The critical thinker, according to Paul (2006) starts with the assumption that “my thinking, and that of most people is often flawed. The flaws that exist commonly in thinking frequently lead to significant problems in human life” (p. 28). For example in a history class, if students are not encouraged or taught to critically examine historical events, they are learning facts and historical dates, but they are not thinking historically or critically about history. Is it any wonder that students loathe history classes if they are merely being asked to regurgitate dates, figures, and events? How much more exciting could a history class be if students are asked to engage with and to challenge and question historical events. How much more empowered and connected will students be to enact social change? This approach, thinking critically about our disciplines, can contribute to college student enrollment in liberal arts classes, rather than simply become a specialist only in one’s field of study.

Critical race theory, a scholarly outgrowth of Critical Legal Studies (Delgado and Stefancik, 2001), employs the use of storytelling or narrative so that traditionally marginalized groups can name one’s own reality. Narrative allows the “experiential knowledge about the fact that our society is deeply structured by racism” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 13), especially by giving voice to those groups whose voice is absent or silenced. Critical race theory examines power structures, institutions, policies, and privileged and oppressed statuses of various groups in society (Delgado & Stefancik, 2001). Critical race theory can serve as a useful pedagogical tool to examine the plight of women of all races, socioeconomic status, the life of queer and international communities

in the United States, especially for our community college students. Further, while issues can be and are often debated in the classroom environment, people's stories and experiences cannot be debated and should not be absent, excluded, or silenced. The stories of our students can serve as experiential learning episodes to challenge misinformation and assumptions they bring to the classroom.

For example, in a policy or media class, students can explore the ways issues are framed, such as welfare. A careful and critical examination of welfare policy would illuminate the issue, often framed by media as "it will relate to politicians" (Breitbart & Nogueira, 2004, p. 27). However, ordinary women, whose lives are most directly affected by welfare policy, are usually left out of the decision-making process and welfare is usually framed a-historically and apolitically. The pervasive media images of welfare recipients are usually the stereotyped young Black welfare queen who keeps having children to remain on welfare (Collins, 1990).

If students have no direct experience or knowledge about the issue, these assumptions remain unchallenged. Using critical race theory and critical thinking methods, the discussion might instead focus on the effects of poverty, divorce, and lack of child support by absent fathers, among other realities. These issues often are unexplored or unexamined critically, yet these realities disproportionately affect women and children across racial lines. Questions might be asked as to how policymakers and politicians who have no direct experience with poverty can make decisions about poor and working-class families. This strategy can drastically change the classroom discussion, as well as misinformation, about an important social issue. The use of

personal stories in relation to this issue can make it real for students. If a student were to share personal information as to why his or her family was poor enough to receive welfare, what led them to need assistance, and what was their experience like, the discussion about welfare would look very different and critically, while simultaneously change attitudes, myths, and assumptions about what it means to be poor. In Communication 365: Women and Media, a course I taught in the Fall of 2007, several readings that examined the real lives of women on welfare coupled with personal stories of those raised on welfare, changed student's attitudes about welfare. It "humanized" the issue. Several students commented that they learned new information about the history of welfare and debunked the rhetorical myths and stories told of "welfare queens" – a racialized and feminized code that demonizes Black women primarily.

Further, the use of storytelling in a classroom that values critical thinking and the voice of each student can bridge gaps between communities across difference. Critical thinking methods that support the notion that every student matters can allow students to shift in thinking and "make the problem of privilege their problem and do something about it" (Broido & Reason 2005, p. 17). Critical race pedagogy that examines specific populations, such as Latino/as and media (Villalpando, 2004; Yosso, 2002), Blacks in education and law (Ladson-Billings, 1998) women and queers (of all races) in society (Lugg, 2006), exists in many scholarly journals from an interdisciplinary perspective and can be used to supplement classroom curricula and serve as a catalyst to foster critical thinking in the classroom.

Finally, a classroom environment that does not reward competition and debate will provide a different kind of space for students to ask critical questions about their assumptions. The critical thinking environment can allow for new information to be learned and acquired while unlearning misinformation about others.

The statement the personal is political (Hanisch, 1970) reflects a widely held sentiment and tenet of consciousness-raising within the feminist community. The feminist movement made transparent that women are often relegated to the private, domestic sphere, and men occupy the political, public sphere. What the Women's Movement made obvious are issues, such as domestic violence, racism, sexism, classism, patriarchy, heterosexism, and the feminization of poverty (Pearce, 1978). By pushing these issues into the political and public domain, the feminist movement made apparent and conclusive that other women were affected by these systems of domination. These oppressions became public and therefore, made connections to institutional structures that reinforce such oppressions, thereby requiring political solutions (Hanisch, 1970). By keeping issues at the individual or private level, we fail to address institutional racism, sexism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, ableism and poverty, to name but a few injustices that take place on marginalized bodies. The feminist, critical pedagogical classroom serves to keep issues public and interconnected with a focus on social change and action (hooks, 1994).

The issue of body image provides an excellent example of the personal versus political. By examining body image and eating disorders as an individual struggle, as a White woman's problem, as a White gay male problem, as the fault of the individuals

who need to change themselves to fit in better, or as an issue with no visible cause or correlation, one is in a state of hopelessness. There seems to be no way to solve the issue or examine the source of psychological dissonance. If body image is given a broader context, such that the connection is made that many women who have the most severe cases of eating disorders have been victims of sexual assault, rape and/or incest, the issue is attributable to a source. Framing issues of body image, as solely the fault of the individual, does not allow a student to examine the root causes or consider how one might help another heal and connect the issue to a bigger systemic problem. Domestic violence is another example of a systemic, institutional problem that is individualized and the victim is blamed.

This framework, the personal is political, provides a useful framework for examining diversity, multicultural competencies, social justice, and the classroom environment. In this way, teachers can better serve marginalized populations: ethnic and racial minorities, women-identified-women of all races, sexual minorities, gender transgressors, and other groups traditionally on the fringes of society as well as address issues of unearned privilege and power by connecting respective identity construction to larger systemic, institutional issues and structures.

The first dimension of Arredondo's (1996) identity model consists of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic level, and disability. Each person has a status in all of these categories, and each one of these statuses has a different rank in society. Attention to multicultural competency allows people to explore how these

different statuses, shape, inform, outrank, interrogate, and negotiate each of these difference statuses within individuals.

By studying the complexities of the intersections of statuses, teachers and student affairs professionals can attend to the whole of the individual. It is often difficult to isolate the exact places of interplay between statuses of privilege and oppression. It is even more difficult to find the language to express those intersections of multiple privileges and multiple oppressions and how each of them informs experience. Croteau's (2003) study uncovers the intricacy of these complex and confounding intersections, for example, in that participants "began to speak about the interplay of oppressed and privileged statuses, they sometimes slipped into talking about only one dimension after only a brief focus on the interplay of their statuses" (p. 245).

In the United States, there is a long tradition of oppression for non-Whites and as Spring (1994) and Takaki (1993) state, racism and sexism are a central part of our national identity. Even though many Whites in the United States are poor, working- or middle-class, being White becomes an internalized system of dominance. As Melanie Bush points out in her study (2004), working-class Whites often see themselves as having more in common with White, corporate, global elites. Race, then, carries more cultural currency than socio-economic class status. Racial oppression leads to "marginalization, making it difficult for minorities to have a positive sense of their cultural identity, which is linked to self-esteem and other psychological variables" (Birman, 1994, p. 274).

Paolo Freire (1982), liberationist educator and scholar, states that too often our institutions assimilate and socialize people into the status quo. In this socialization

process, assimilation of people of color is at the cost of their voice, political and economic power. Althusser (cited in Kaufman, 2004), in his examination of the state apparatus, contends that when one is at a loss in the political and economic domain, the only domain left is ideological, such as religious, educational, the press, and culture. For example, in the U.S. educational systems, inclusion of multicultural perspectives are often characterized as “culture wars,” meaning that there are ideological contestations of who is included in the canon of the academy. In this way, marginalized people become historical subjects, without agency or historical context since most of the administrative educational bureaucracies reflect dominant perspectives of the state. Freire (1982) contends that education as banking, a system where those in power deposit information, and the oppressed are passive receivers of information. Actions are determined by history, marginalized groups do not make history. Freire (1970, 1982) defines education as banking as “the act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (p. 53). This absence in making history is reflected in the colonized curriculum at many higher education institutions.

Internalized dominance and oppression need not take place in violent, obvious, and overtly discriminatory ways. Hardiman and Jackson (1997), scholars of social identity development, social justice, and multicultural education, contend:

Four elements take place when social oppression occurs: 1) The dominant group gets to name and define reality (normal); 2) Oppression is systematically, and subtly embedded into institutions; 3) The oppressed are psychologically colonized and asked to collude with the oppressive ideology; and 4) The dominant group’s culture is imposed while the oppressed group’s culture is discounted, misrepresented or eradicated. (p. 17)

Goodman (2001) states that the psychological cost of oppression is the loss of authentic sense of self and of mental health. D'Andrea (2005) refers to this phenomenon as *soul wounds* that are transmitted physically and psychologically from generation to generation among oppressed groups, especially among Jewish populations that survived the genocide of the Holocaust and African Americans that survived the violent brutality of slavery.

The pervasive institutions of law and higher education exacerbate internalized dominance and oppression. For example, while the law legislates equal access to higher education, it cannot legislate equity in higher education (Delgado, 2001). Statistics that measure resistance, persistence, attrition, and graduation rates do not measure the extent that oppressed groups are forced to assimilate into the existing structure in higher education institutions. Assimilation, conversely, leads to low self-esteem and isolation (Do, 1996) and disconnection from self (Brilliant, 2000). Harbour et al. (2003) posit that student success is measured using hierarchal and biased comparisons. Privilege and assimilation and cultural unresponsiveness (National Research Council, 2000) are the way many college classrooms are facilitated when identity is compartmentalized from the curriculum. Faculty who are not culturally responsive, may not only alienate oppressed groups but undermine their success, according to Harbour et al., and deny them educational equity.

Connecting multicultural competencies with actions rooted in social justice completes the taxonomy of practice as social justice, according to Miller (1999) “has to do with how advantages and disadvantages are distributed to individuals in society” (p.

11). Utilizing some of the cultural competencies described by Vera and Speight (2003), I created the following taxonomy of multicultural competencies guided by questions and practices rooted in social justice:

Table 1: Taxonomy of Practice

Dimensions of Characteristics	Dimensions of Competencies
Beliefs and Attitudes	What are my values and biases? What is my heritage? How do oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affect me? What are my privileges and can I verbalize them?
Knowledge	How do sociopolitical influences affect the self-concept of my students, specifically, my ethnic and racial minority students?
Skills	How can I challenge the status quo and institutions rather than focus on the individual?

(Vera & Speight, 2003)

As Vera and Speight (2003) articulate, multicultural competencies must be grounded in a commitment to social justice that expands professional activities beyond the individual. Rather than changing the individual, social justice joins the forces that perpetuate social injustice (Albee, 2000a). hooks (2000) makes similar claims within the feminist movement by making distinctions between reformist feminists and radical feminists, and claims that reformist feminists focus on a remedial framework rooted in one-on-one interactions as opposed to a radical feminists whose work is rooted in a broad systemic framework connected to social justice. Reformist feminists work within the social order, often seduced by issues of equal pay and equal rights. While this approach is not inherently corrupt, reformists, once granted equal pay, for example, often left the

most marginalized women out of the movement. Once granted access to a White, supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal system, reformists often focused on their individual careers at the expense of the movement at large. The radical approach sought an approach grounded in communalism and social democracy. This distinction serves as an example than can illuminate the individual versus systems approach in teaching and learning for social justice.

Teaching and learning scholar Theodor Marchese's (2002) attention to cognitive psychology, in that humans have an innate need to make meaning out of our experiences of the world, resonates with the Italian Communist and revolutionary philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1973), specifically, his essay "The Study of Philosophy" that he wrote from prison. Gramsci claims that all people are philosophers who create meaning and have ways of making sense of the world (Kaufman, 2004). Marchese cautions, however, that much of the meanings, beliefs, or knowledge we learn in childhood may be wrong or bigoted. It is difficult to change these versions of reality, the realities our students bring into the classroom, unless we engage in critical inquiry as to how we came to know what we know. First and foremost, students must confront internalized oppressions and dominance in order to break the "records" that are ingrained in thinking and behaviors. Otherwise, students will simply revert to their first thoughts about others after the classroom experience.

Lerner's (2007) research, for example, posits that the further we explore students' comments about race, the more evident it becomes that the diversity they value is limited to the pleasurable and non-threatening aspects of racial difference. Further, students fear

or reject most consideration of race issues as questions of inequality, injustice, or even debate. It is the students' approval of diverse encounters that the advocates of diversity value, and the students' rejection of questions of power and inequality that the opponents of diversity emphasize. To understand the impact and status of diversity in higher education, we must examine both of these impulses at the same time, rather than considering only one part or the other.

Moral Imperatives, Assumptions, and Purpose: An Inquiry

At the beginning of this chapter I discuss my own transformation and moral imperatives for becoming a critical educator. There have been personal costs for this shift that manifested in many ways. My teaching evaluations scores decreased as I increased my commitment to challenging power, privilege, and institutional racism, classism, heterosexism, ableism, and other forms of socio-political power structures. Students have gone “over my head” to departmental chairs and directors because I made them feel “uncomfortable” as expressed to me by teaching supervisors. This discomfort was directly related to my politics, and the challenges of being a White, queer (and out) female instructor. In third wave feminisms, a class I taught twice, several White, straight, female students said that the curriculum focused too much on deviant women (relating to transsexual and transgendered, queer women, and drag kings). I take the position that this relates to my performance of White womanhood. As Sarah Brazaitis posits (2003), “White women are uniquely placed to protect or disrupt White male privilege and power” (p. 100). I wanted to examine this further.

Further, I entered this research project holding several assumptions that I concluded from an independent study on ideology and power as it manifests in institutions of higher learning. My goal for the independent study was to examine education in light of Althusser's (1971) work on Ideological State Apparata (ISA). I wrote two papers that explore this issue. One paper questions ideology in the classroom and curriculum and offers a critical, multicultural curriculum perspective and an apprentice model of teaching that models power sharing. The other paper documents a best practice program on White privilege (Keynote speaker: Dr. Melanie Bush "Breaking the Code of Good Intentions: Everyday Forms of Whiteness") that brought faculty, staff, students, and administrators together to critically examine whiteness as well as support and provide additional resource to some of the work already being done at University Y related to cultural competencies and diversity by courageous faculty, staff, and students on privilege. This article was published in *Mosaic*, Summer 2008.

I asked the following questions before beginning this independent study, which directly relate to the purpose and focus of this dissertation. How does transformative education counter Althusser's contention that education serves as an ideological state apparatus, thereby ensuring that inequities are replicated to serve ruling class interests? How does transformative education redesign social space? According to Zinn (1990), "[I]f those in charge of our society can dominate our ideas, they will be secure in their power. They will not need RSA's (repressive state apparatus). We will control ourselves. The vast majority of (good) subjects work all right all by themselves and by ideology" (p. 2).

In addition to the two papers noted above, these were my own recommendations for transformative education and hence, some of the predispositions I brought to this dissertation and research interests. Radical/transformative educators need to find each other, ally with each other, learn from each other, and support each other. In isolation, teachers are more likely to replicate inequalities because they too, will feel oppressed (Apple, 1997). As Bernice Johnson Reagon (1995) argues, “[Y]ou cannot be fighting oppression and be oppressed yourself and not feel it” (p. 363). My advisor, Dr. Rader beautifully illustrated the importance and benefits of educators working in a team, at a University Life meeting Wednesday, August 16, 2006, when she presented on teaching strategies and ally-building in the classroom.

Educators, especially White teachers, will need to unlearn their whiteness, re-learn their European cultural heritage and claim it with pride. When this happens, White teachers will begin the healing process toward finding their own humanity and will be better equipped and able to hear about the pain and mistreatment of others of which they may have no direct experience. National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) principles, that focus on concepts found in critical race theory (the use of the personal narrative as it connects to institutional power, privilege, and oppression), the prejudice reduction and controversial issues models coupled with teaching pedagogy, will assist teachers in their own self-reflection, personal development, and teaching practices. Teachers must continue to stay in relationship with and be in full partnership with their fellow White educators so that the burden does not fall on people of marginalized statuses to do the educating about privilege. Whiteness is often an unexplored area in which people of

color are the experts. This is why, I believe, that White people in their defensiveness, are only too glad to change the subject back to race – thereby putting the person of color back on focus.

Educators need to examine with a microscope the ideologies, points-of-view, and perspectives in everything they read and in every piece of information they are giving to their students. Too often teachers are taught to seek out and exploit the “other” as a voice for providing cultural perspectives for our curricula (hooks, 1994). This bias left unchallenged, allows a White, U.S. western, middle class perspective to dominate, unmarked and normal, as the cultural lens from which educational institutions operate. Althusser (1971) states “ideology is a representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to the real conditions of existence” (p. 241a). If educators do not question ideology in the classroom imaginary relationships are reproduced and transmitted to our students. Educators must avoid passing along “common sense” ideologies that set up our students to fail. When unexamined, educators continue to mask imaginary relationships, including the myths that we all have access to the same resources; if we work hard enough we can achieve success – and if we don’t achieve success, clearly it is our own fault; if we are good, nice, and polite, we will be rewarded; socio-political systems affect us equally, and that dominant ideologies protect some but at the expense of others.

Educators (kindergarten through higher education) will need to learn critical race theory and critical race theory’s historical ties to critical legal studies, and the importance of the critical race narrative as an example of experiential learning. These scholars integrate critical multiculturalism and personal stories with systemic and institutional

critiques of issues of racism, privilege and power. Moral anger, as Berlak and Moyenda (2001) identify, directed at social injustices enables marginalized voices to be the experts of their own lives whereby their experiences are valued. We must not only allow, but encourage, moral outrage as a valued expression of emotion.

Educators need to claim expertise over their disciplines, their experiences, their lives, and invite students to have a vested interest in making the discipline even stronger. We need to have the generosity to invite tough questions about our disciplines and subjects, issues, methods of study, and teaching pedagogy. These questions will make us better scholars as we learn to unpack what we know, how we came to know it, whose knowledge do we know, and whose is missing from the creation of knowledge as intellectual property.

Educators will need to interrogate the entrenched patriarchy in the field of teaching. Apple (1997) states, because teaching is dominated by women, especially K-12, it is controlled more with less autonomy. Educators must interrupt patriarchal, top-down, assessment models that separate women from their ways of knowing (Belenky et al, 1986). Educators must question the methods women are asked to execute, to determine if they are good for our schools, for our communities, our children. Administrators must avoid blaming women for the failure of children or things that are out of their control (Apple, 1997). Teachers must be provided adequate resources to do their jobs well. Women of all races and other invisible and marginalized groups must be invited to the table to creatively make decisions that impact their classrooms, their students, and the quality of learning.

Educators need to remember that dominant, racist ideologies keep us from having accurate information about the children, parents and families we serve. Teachers blame parents when children are “discipline” problems. Educators must examine the institutional racism in the student’s lives, in the schools, in the curriculum, and in the tracking of students.

It is in the interest of students and student learning to counter “education as banking” models (Freire, 1992, p. 239). In the college classroom, the burden of interrupting conversations that continue to replicate mistreatment and misinformation falls solely to the teacher in the banking model. If teachers are encouraged and given the time, tools, and resources, to create learning communities, in which every student is empowered with a valued voice, everyone can share in this educational endeavor. Students, being the experts of their own experiences, can share information that may counter racist, ethnocentric, classist, privileged, dogmatic answers, or discussions in class.

Finally, liberal and/or radical educators must examine and re-evaluate how we may be complicit in devaluing the voices and needs of our students and parents who may be “conservative” (Republican, Christian, or others we deem as resistant). Educators must avoid playing Butin’s (2005) zero-sum set up whereas either the teacher wins or the student wins and the transaction is over. Educators must not replicate classist, elitist, and perhaps racist and oppressive systems by not making decisions transparent. As Apple (1998) asks in “Becoming Right” how do we as educators participate in creating the conditions in which ordinary citizens become “right”? Educators must be more

responsive to our students and parents by addressing their needs with more inclusive practices that value them. Perhaps the NCBI controversial issues model serve as a tool to slow down a divisive process, thereby reframing issues for a better understanding of commonalities.

For example, at the NCBI Leadership Clinic on August 12-13 of 2006, 50 or so participants chose an issue that was controversial for the group: Should religious symbols be allowed in public schools? The room was equally divided. The group went through the process of hearing two people represent each side. Before we, as a large group came together to find our similarities between the two polarized sides of the issue, each participant had to sit and listen to someone with whom we disagreed. We had to listen to the reasons they voted yes or no and then repeat back what we heard. We then switched roles. When the entire group came back together, we realized each side of the issue shared many of our concerns. The process not only helped us see our commonalities but made us realize that issues, when framed badly, polarize groups, shut down our ability to think critically, and emotionally charge the issues so that people will be less inclined to sit and discuss the issue. This example clearly illustrates Apple's (1998) conclusion: the construction of binary opposition creates situations in which the only ways that parents and other community members could be heard was to occupy the spaces provided by the state.

Hence, this research project was serving another purpose and that was to see if other educators experienced the same challenges I had and if they had some of the same conclusions about education that I had drawn in my independent study. I wanted to

determine how other educators managed such challenges, how they stayed grounded intellectually and personally, and what strategies they employed to manage classroom dynamics effectively. I was especially interested in corroborating my own experiences, while at the same time, wanting to learn from two highly skilled and effective teachers who both regularly receive excellent teaching evaluations, both formally and informally.

Structure of the Dissertation

In the next four chapters, I will analyze my observational and interview data with a focus on questions of meaning-making, identity, emerging themes, valuing, perspective, and dominance and oppression. The argument I will present is that critical pedagogy reflects standpoint, intuition, skillful teaching, and critical consciousness. Resistance is not an adequate term to describe the levels of consciousness, scaffolding of knowledge, and meaning making in a community of learners in a social space in that learning evolves over time. The value of risk-taking and sharing personal stories elicits emotional aspects of sense-making and challenges entrenched ideology, identity, privilege, and power. Accountability rather than objectivity requires all students to take ownership of the learning community.

In Chapter 2, I set the stage for this argument by examining the current research literature from a vast and interdisciplinary perspective on students in engaged and critical curricular classrooms. I will examine critical pedagogy as necessarily a political endeavor because all institutions are connected to and informed by other socio-political structures, student resistance, definitions, and notions of the safe space, authorities of

experience both of students and instructors, and the notion of spending likeability by way of self as text to further engage students in the critical curriculum (Keating, 2007).

In Chapter 3, I will describe and explain the methodology and the qualitative approach of the illustrative or exploratory case study, to examine how students make sense cognitively of the critical curriculum. I will examine the strengths and limitations of my methodology, my role as an activist researcher, a detailed overview of the setting and data sites, as well as illuminate the value of my activist researcher role as being integral to capturing the data and findings that inform my pedagogical theories in the concluding chapter. It is of the utmost importance to situate these two critical classrooms into the larger bureaucratic systemic institutions of which they are a part.

In Chapter 4, I will consider key component of sense-making such as habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, traditional clichés, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of actions, events, objects, processes, organization, experiences, texts, subject matter, discourses, and emotions. I will argue that ideology and socio-political structures must be incorporated into the analysis here, too, and will examine common thematic strategies, responses, and dialogues that emerged in the critical curriculum.

Finally, in Chapter 5 I will conclude by considering some implications of my arguments and empirical observations for sociological theory and for pedagogy.

CHAPTER 2

THE RACIAL CONTRACT:

WHY CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IS INHERENTLY POLITICAL

In short White supremacy and economic power were born together. The United States is the first nation in the world to be born racist (South Africa came later) and also the first to be born capitalist. That is not a coincidence. In this country, as history shows, capitalism and racism go hand in hand.” (Martinez. 1989, p. 3)

Literature Review

In this chapter I will set the stage for my argument by examining the current, historical and extensive research literature from a vast and interdisciplinary perspective on students in engaged and critical curricular classrooms. I will examine critical pedagogy as necessarily a political endeavor because all institutions are connected to and informed by other socio-political structures, student resistance, definitions, and notions of the safe space, authorities of experience both of students and instructors, and the notion of spending likeability.

But some of my best friends are...

- We all have free will to make choices. Therefore, people who are poor have made the choice to be lazy. They just don't want to work.
- I just don't see color. I treat everyone equally. In fact, one of my best friends is Black, gay, Muslim, etc.
- Why is there such a backlash against White men? Everything is equal now. Racism is a thing of the past. We elected a Black President.
- They (Blacks, gays, Asians, Latinos, immigrants) all want special rights. They complain about everything.
- I had nothing to do with slavery. Blacks just need to get over it.

- I'm sick of political correctness. They are just too sensitive. No one can take a joke anymore.
- The media and the universities are so liberally biased.
- They blame White people for all their problems. White people are just as discriminated against these days. In fact, I've experienced reverse racism because they gave the scholarship (or job) to someone because of the minority quotas.
- If you don't like America, then you should leave and move somewhere else.
- Immigrants are taking our jobs. We have to keep them out and secure our borders.

If you are a teacher or educator or merely socially conscious, you have heard many of these sentiments expressed in your classroom, in your trainings, in your meetings, or casual conversations. If you are an educator committed to a principled, caring, and just classroom and to ensuring the equity of all of your students, and colleagues, these sentiments should make you angry, and confused, and consequently, stuck as to how to respond effectively and epistemologically.

In Chapter 1, I briefly discussed the existing literature on critical pedagogy, transformational classroom practices, and critical multiculturalisms and how they provide opportunities for transformational education, countering status quo ideologies. As I pointed out there, this literature has many merits but some limitations. First, educational institutions must be examined in relationship to other socio-political structures such as the legal system on which the U.S. was founded, including the capitalist structures that they support. Educational institutions must be examined in historical context. In other words, critical pedagogy must challenge the epistemologies of ignorance that created and sustain the status quo. Critical pedagogy is and must be a political endeavor. Critical pedagogy is not the same as intergroup dialogue. As Gorski (2007) illustrates, "I must acknowledge the power imbalances, both individual and systemic, in play; I must avoid

facilitating dialogic experiences in which the least powerful participants are expected to teach the most powerful participants about bias and oppression” (p. 10).

Secondly, educational process is not a zero sum set up despite literature that portrays student responses too dichotomously (students either “get it” or are “resistant”), further creating a dichotomous binary of “winners and losers” of argument. Thirdly, much literature on classroom space focuses on the notion of maintaining and creating a “safe space” for students to learn. Not only is the concept safe space used repeatedly in the academy and by many faculty and student affairs professionals, rarely are criteria given to support what exactly safe space is and for whom. I will utilize Ludlow, hooks and other scholars who challenge the notion of safe space as a concept not to challenge status quo, but rather to enforce and further privilege the status quo, and specifically whiteness. Fourth, examining final outcomes like attitudinal shifts without attention to how and why they occur, is another important element for study, especially as not all students have specific language to name their own authority of experience and how their own identities shape their own ways of knowing and meaning-making. Finally, I will explore the notion of spending one’s likeability to challenge institutional inequality (Gorski, 2007). I contend that the competing goals of wanting to be liked and challenging power structures cannot co-exist in the endeavor of critical pedagogy. This concept is especially important for White women who are entering the field at the highest levels compared to other populations. I draw on the works of Cornel West, Paulo Freire, Ira Shor, AnaLouise Keating, and bell hooks who operate from a “love is accountability model” that is contrary to the notion of likeability, paternalism, and deficit models.

These two classroom cases will illustrate the challenges of the learning experience that students face in the critical curricular classroom and the problems with calling much student behavior resistance, without studying the complexities of mediated classroom interactions, the authorities of experiences of students, and they will provide context for the methodology and data I will present in Chapters 3 and 4.

Do as I say, not as I do: Tracking Our Hypocrisies

As I stated in Chapter 1, critical pedagogy, transformational classroom practices, and critical multiculturalisms provide opportunities for transformational education by countering status quo ideologies and narratives. Educational institutions must be examined in light of their relationship to other socio-political structures, including the capitalist structures that they support or that fund them, especially research institutions that are increasingly competitive and less concerned about social justice, in this case, the large public institution examined for this dissertation.

In CTCH 622: Organization and Administration in Higher Education, a course I took in the Spring of 2005, some of my classmates described students and their behavior with bewilderment and disdain, in that cheating is on the rise, plagiarism is on the rise, and more students would opt for purchasing their degree than going to school for the sake of learning. Ironically, many of my classmates were pursuing their doctoral degree only for the “Dr.” so they could advance in the academy. The outrage my classmates expressed astounded me. Decision makers and those of us who execute and uphold these decisions in the corporation, the institution of higher learning, those at the top of the hierarchy or bureaucracy are modeling these very values that we say we despise in our

students. Any time a supervisor feels entitled to take credit for a colleague or subordinate's ideas and/or work reinforces and models plagiarism. Any time a resume is reviewed, examined, and selected for the number of credentials a person has or which Ivy League school they attended, rather than looking at the quality, the integrity of the work, and the service a person has given to their respective communities and the wealth of cultural capital they may bring to our institution, we are perpetuating these values we say we despise in our students. For example, Tara Yosso (2005) challenges traditional notions of cultural capital and focuses on "forms of capital nurtured through cultural wealth that include aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital" (p. 69). By excluding these forms of capital, institutions continually operate in the deficit model by "helping the disadvantaged" rather than valuing what, particularly students of color, bring to the classroom and school system.

Students learn from the behaviors, the values, actions, and the leadership of those they admire or from whom they seek approval. They listen to us as educators. They watch to see if our principles and practices are aligned. They listen to our lectures about respecting diversity and challenging oppression and then hear our deafening silences when we remain professional instead of taking action against various acts of discrimination and unearned privilege and power. I am perplexed when educators expect more from students than they are willing to give of themselves. Why are teachers surprised then that students cheat or compete with each other for the best grades? Why do educators wonder that students do not want to occupy leadership positions for a

greater good, but because the more extracurricular activities a student can boast about on the resume, the better chance they will get into a prestigious graduate school?

Educators need to, as Cornel West (1993) states, track our own hypocrisies, and for the purposes of this research project, track the hypocrisies of the very laws that created the United States and its institutions. West (1993) discusses elements of prophetic thought. He defines prophetic thought as having four elements: discernment (a nuanced historical sense), connection (human, empathy), tracking hypocrisy (self-critical, not self-righteous), and hope (to inspire and invigorate). How can educators ask students to make the community a better place if they are not willing to do this in the classroom, in co-curricular programs, and in our own leadership? How can teachers ask students to be more engaged citizens and respect “diversity” if we are not willing to look at the curriculum, hiring practices, distribution of campus resources, reward systems, and the ways in which we act or “behave university” in our own professional communities within our institutions. Jerome Bruner (1990) refers to the notion that “people are expected to behave situationally whatever their roles” or that in the culture we simply “take for granted that people behave in a manner appropriate to the setting in which they find themselves” (p. 48). But, what is appropriate and who deems it so? Bush (2004) argues for example that “resistance is stigmatized, marginalized, and racialized with the ultimate message that things are the way they are because that’s the way they should be and they won’t and can’t change” (p. 231) because resistance is a challenge to the status quo or the situationally expected behavior.

Tricia Rose, feminist scholar and cultural critic, stated in her welcoming remarks during a campus program that social justice is something we ask for in the public sphere, but we must ask for social justice in our relationships with each other. She also asks that in our quest for unity, if another's oppression is the cost of unity, is that social justice? Bush (2004) contends that "it is deemed acceptable for Whites to acknowledge racial injustice and inequality on a macro level, but less acceptable to acknowledge it in every day living" (p. 231). West's (1993) third main point, tracking hypocrisy in a self-critical not self-righteous way, is a crucial concept. In my own life, because my sense of purpose is so strong, I run the risk of performing self-righteously, and that is contrary to a critical pedagogy based on love, which will be explored later. As a White educator, I can lose sight of the fact that I am acting out of the racial contract at all times. As a White educator, at any moment, I can decide that I am tired of critical pedagogy or resistance and that it is too difficult. I can decide that I am too weary and move on to some other project or profession. I have that luxury. That is the racial contract. Just as I was indoctrinated into a capitalist culture, no matter how much I loathe the capitalist system and its connection to western imperialism, domination, and destruction, I am a product of the capitalist system and its ideology. This is the analogy I use to explain my own placement in White supremacy ideology. In this culture, these are two systems to which I was born, raised, and schooled, and I must acknowledge it. This awareness and self-reflexiveness allows me to, as Marty (cited in Martin & Nakayama, 1999) illustrates, avoid protecting "our (Whites') moral reputations and our versions of progressive politics rather than recognize and change our unfair and unearned racially based advantages" (p.

52). And by acknowledging it, I can interrupt rather than stay entrenched in useless, unproductive guilt or what others call “learned helplessness” (Marty, 1999, p. 51).

Rather, I think of an effective use of guilt as Pritchey (1999) describes a constructive guilt rather than neurotic guilt “that is experienced when one feels remorseful about personal shortcomings related to humankind’s inhumanity to each other” (p. 174). I share this as a standpoint as a White critical educator. This gives me hope as acknowledging a truth, as painful as it is, enables me to name reality and serve as an agent of change.

Law Versus Justice and the Racial Contract in the U.S.: Discernment and Connection

In order for us to maintain our way of living, we must, in a broad sense, tell lies to each other, and especially to ourselves. It is not necessary that the lies be particularly believable. The lies act as barriers to truth. These barriers to truth are necessary because without them many deplorable acts would become impossibilities. Truth must at all costs be avoided. When we do allow self-evident truths to percolate past our defenses and into our consciousness, they are treated like so many hand grenades rolling across the dance floor of an improbably macabre party. We try to stay out of harm’s way, afraid they will go off, shatter our delusions, and leave us exposed to what we have done to the world and to ourselves, exposed as the hollow people we have become. And so we avoid these truths, these self-evident truths, and continue the dance of world destruction. -- (Jensen, 2000, p. 2)

Law – “a rule of action or conduct established by authority, society, or custom; a body of such rules; the control that ensues when such rules are enforced” (Webster’s II, 1984, p. 397). *Justice* – the principle of ideal or moral rightness; the upholding of what is right; fairness; the administration of law; a judge” (Webster’s II, 1984, p. 383). From a social justice perspective, in that the dignity of every individual matters, it would seem

humane that the administration of a law, rendered judgment or judge and/or jury would incorporate an ideal principle of moral rightness, and fairness into the practice of law.

Legal Terminology and History of Terms

Natural law or the law of nature is a body of legal theory asserting that there is an essential connection between law and justice (Osterfeld, 1989). Natural law is the foundation of radical principles and runs contrary to the nonsequitur fallacy in argument or proof, “without government, there is no law” (Osterfeld, 1989, p. 51). Radicals are not opposed to natural law, but they are opposed to unjust legislation, unjust establishments of government, and especially the unjust legislation of the state, because they are inherently based on contracts of domination (Osterfeld, 1989). Legal positivism, on the other hand, stands in opposition to various contrary ideas in the tradition of natural law, and most importantly for the purposes of this paper, that is, that law, legislation, and the administration of law are by no means neutral endeavors, legal positivism incorporates the *separation thesis*: that is, it supports the idea that legal validity has no essential connection with morality or justice (Morauta, 2004).

Legal positivism begins with the work of Jeremy Bentham (Bentham, 1962). Bentham drew a sharp distinction between people he called "expositors," whose task it was to explain what the law in practice was; and "censors," those who criticized the law in practice and compared it to their notions of what it ought to be. The philosophy of law, strictly considered, was to explain the real laws of the expositors, rather than the criticisms of the censors (Bentham, 1962). Legal positivism fails to recognize the inadequacy in unjust laws, whereas natural law jurisprudence would recognize deficiency

in an unjust law (Bentham, 1962). Bentham, the creator of the concept the *panopticon*, is an imagined, ideal prison whose purpose is to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power (Foucault, 1977) provides insight as to Bentham's concept of legal positivism and its relation to systems of power and control. In other words, the inadequacies or injustices in the laws and those practicing the laws are irrelevant, according to Bentham (Bentham, 1962).

Government is the body that makes and enforces laws, and there are four main theories for establishing governments: 1) greed and oppression – that is, governments exist to enforce the privileges of the privileged, that is, private property and land that was seized by force from others; 2) order and tradition – ordained by higher power (King or God); 3) natural rights; 4) social contract that promises to protect individual citizens from crime and violence (Zinn, 1990). The greed and oppression theory (Kaufman, 2004) is illustrated in Adam Smith's 1776 *Wealth of Nations*, at which time Smith alludes to man acting only in self-interest.

The *social contract*, as a political theory, explains the origin and purpose of the state and of human rights (Zinn, 1990). Members within a society are assumed to agree to the terms of the social contract by their choice to stay within the society or by not violating the contract. The essence of the theory, articulated by French political philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Mills, 1997) is as follows: In order to live in society, human beings agree to an implicit social contract that gives them certain rights in return for giving up certain freedoms they would have in a state of nature. Thus, the rights (and responsibilities) of individuals are the terms of the social contract, and the

state is created for the purpose of enforcing that contract. Also, the people may change the terms of the contract if they so desire; rights and responsibilities are not fixed or "natural." More rights always entail more responsibilities, and fewer responsibilities always entail fewer rights.

Thomas Hobbes (Mills, 1997) contended that people in a state of nature ceded their natural or individual rights to a strong sovereign in return for his protection, so social contract evolves out of pragmatic self-interest similar to Adam Smith's assertion. John Locke (Kaufman, 2004) also posited a contract theory; however, unlike Hobbes, Locke believed that people contracted with one another for a particular kind of government. According to Locke, government has no other end but the preservation of property (Jensen, 2000). Locke threw poor people off their land vis-à-vis fenced enclosures that kept the poor from farming and gaming on common lands, and advocated for expropriation of the land of indigenous people (Kaufman, 2004). The establishment of the sacred rights of property and common law became infused with a Protestant work ethic in the development of capitalism (Weber, 1925). If protecting property is the sole purpose of government or the state, one can begin to look at why the separation of justice from law is important.

Anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1970) argues that the social contract is not between individuals and the state but between individuals themselves to refrain from governing each other using the law of commerce.

Justice is the central star that governs societies, the pole around which the political world revolves, the principle and the regulator of all transactions. Nothing takes place between men save in the name of *right*; nothing without the invocation of justice. Justice is not the work of the law; on the contrary, the law is

only a declaration and application of *justice* in all circumstances where men are liable to come in contact. If, then, the idea that we form of justice and right were ill-defined, if it were imperfect or even false, it is clear that all our legislative applications would be wrong, our institutions vicious, our politics erroneous: consequently there would be disorder and social chaos. (p. 26-27).

The Fallacy of Stare Decisis

U.S. common law, based on English law, is law based on traditions and patterns. All of the states practice common law, except for the state of Louisiana. *Stare decisis*, meaning to stand by things decided, is the principle and most important element in common law (Osterfeld, 1989). *Stare decisis* ensures certainty, consistency, stability, and establishes precedent. In other words, *stare decisis*, in common law, occurs to justify a court decision on the basis of previous case law as well as to make it easier to use the decision as a precedent in future cases. In evaluating both reasoning and argument, *stare decisis*, is a fallacy in logic, in that it uses flawed and faulty reasoning (Osterfeld, 1989).

Appeals to support precedent because “this is the way we’ve always done it” or because “this is the precedent set by X case law” are *ad populem* arguments. Appeal to widespread belief (bandwagon argument, peer pressure, appeal to common practice) is a fallacy of *stare decisis* that upholds the following: even though judges are independent, they should rule in a predictable and non-chaotic manner (Osterfeld, 1989). Further, is common law merely a hegemonic system of unquestioned ideology likened to common sense? Italian communist, Antonio Gramsci, describes common sense, entrenched in ideology and hegemony, as “the way that idea systems come to legitimize or support the interests of the ruling groups in society” (Kaufman, 2004, p. 21). Might one ask critically, is common law the same as a good or just law? Is common law another

instance of “expecting people to behave situationally whatever their roles or taking for granted that people behave in a manner appropriate to the setting in which they find themselves”? (Bruner, 1990, p. 48).

Queer Legal Theory and Educational Policy: Difficulties in Challenging Stare Decisis

Catherine Lugg was asked to develop a manuscript examining issues of gender, sex, sexuality, and the politics of United States education for a special edition of *Educational Administration Quarterly* (Lugg, 2006). Lugg demonstrates extensive background in law, social work, historical perspectives on queer issues, as well as Critical Legal Studies, Critical Race Theory, Queer Legal Studies, and Critical Race Feminism. Lugg contends that educational policy and administration was lacking or silent with regards to queer rights, education, and policy. I infer she uses the term “silent” deliberately to describe the absence of queer issues in these fields. Queer people are often asked to keep silent about their identity.

Lugg’s (2006) purpose is based on two agendas that informed this project. The imposed agenda is to craft implications for U.S. educational policy with regard to sex, sexuality, and gender. The researcher’s personal agenda is to demonstrate that anti-queer prejudice is not only normal (one of the major tenets of critical political theories) in education, but that this prejudice is damaging to queers and non-queers.

Lugg (2006) uses queer legal theory (QLT) as her theoretical framework. QLT can be traced to Critical Legal Studies that is linked to pioneering legal scholars such as Kimberly Crenshaw, Derrick Bell, and Richard Delgado. Critical Legal Studies has its roots in social justice. Queer Legal Studies, like CLS, does not assume a researcher or

scholar to be neutral on issues of social justice and queer Americans. In fact, QLT is explicitly activist. Lugg (2006) also uses this framework because as she states “her status as an OUT Queer American academic working in a professional field that has been defined by homophobia means that whatever research I do, it will be seen as inherently political” (p. 176).

QLT is at the intersection of progressive legal theory: Feminist Legal Theory (FLT), critical race theory (CRT), Critical Legal Studies (CLS), and gay and lesbian legal theory (GLLT). This theoretical framework informs Lugg’s (2006) study because of its standpoint and because she deemed it appropriate for educational policy and politics and its relationship and influence to and by law. QLT enables Lugg to make the information understandable to those readers who might not be versed in queer issues, history, and politics. Specifically, gay and lesbian theory examines how heteronormativity is reproduced in the world, including policy, education, and scholarship, while queer identities and individuals are eliminated, absent, or silent.

Where QLT moves beyond GLLT is its rejection of gender essentialism, heteronormativity, over-reliance on class, and racist and classist assumptions that underpin the legal theories mentioned earlier (Lugg, 2006). QLT is very much interested in the social liberation of sexual minorities, acknowledges there are many different ways to perform those identities, and that orientation, identity, sex, and gender are highly variable (Lugg, 2006). QLT is anti-essentialist in that it “asserts that there is no one single way to be female, male, or queer” (Lugg, 2006, p. 179). In this anti-essentialist standpoint are the concepts of intersectionality and multidimensionality. Intersectionality theorists

argue that disentangling sex from race becomes essentialist. A White, queer woman experiences the world as a White queer woman, living at the intersections of these identities (Lugg, 2006). One does not experience the world solely as a White, a queer, or a woman, but rather these identities are complex and lived in at once. For example, a White, queer woman who is asked to participate in a women's group as a woman only, is essentialized: her other identities simply cannot be checked at the door to accommodate the category "woman." From the QLT standpoint, multidimensionality acknowledges queer can hold multiple meanings and can be experienced quite differently from person to person (Lugg, 2006). There is no one right way to be queer because race, class, gender, position, religion, or life experience, complicates the category.

Finally, QLT questions the cultural and legal demands that members of a minority group, or those who hold multiple identities, assimilate, convert, cover, or pass, particularly those who hold a queer identity (Lugg, 2006). There is a history of passing in the United States due to race (Blacks passing as White), religion (Jews or Muslims passing as Christian), or sexual orientation (queers passing as straight). One need only examine the controversy and impending bills and laws that are currently driving the dismantling of gay/straight alliances in public schools. From Lugg's (2006) standpoint, this is as an example of essentializing both heterosexual students and queers with a regulatory system.

Lugg (2006) draws heavily on law review literature, case law, scholarship in education, gender studies, history media studies, psychology, political science, and selected materials by queer activists. QLT, for Lugg, specifically addresses educational

policy, and politics because both are influenced by the court decisions in the legal system. Lugg notes that U.S. law distributes very real benefits and punishments to different identity groups. Further, QLT, as with the other critical theories mentioned earlier, employs the use of narratives to ground legal theory with the realities and experiences of those suffering discrimination. In this manner, the narrative holds the law accountable to its citizens and their lived lives.

Lugg's (2006) methodology is a complicated process: she sorted through topics of U.S. public education, gender, sex, and sexuality (her 10 years of knowledge and expertise on this subject informed her sources); she used LexisNexis (and academic search engines) to find law review literature on common QLT terms; she searched specific court cases (her primary sources); finally, she sorted by materials that took a liberationist or social justice approach to the topics.

This method is appropriate for the political nature of Lugg's two agendas, to examine issues of gender, sex, sexuality, and to examine the politics of United States education, because it has very real implications on policy, law, and queer people's lives. There are limitations that are inherent in this work because of its highly political nature. For example, some of Lugg's email correspondence and research inquiries were censored because of language related to queerness, such as homosexuality or sodomy.

The use of storytelling or narrative, a tenet of all critical theories, is viewed by traditional scholars as a weakness in research (Lugg, 2006). However, to qualitative researchers, the use of narrative is central to ethnography and interviewing. Some of the postmodern theory informing this study, such as the use of identity performance, is often

difficult to explain to those outside of the identity community named by critical theorists. Coding data, or looking for patterns, is difficult in case law, because in Lugg's case, she had so few in which to draw upon in her study. Further, court cases, predicated on stare decisis based on precedent "ultimately come down to a matter of votes" (Lugg, 2006, p. 183). Complicating matters, legal research and policy can be based on a solitary court case. Laws are made in particular historical political and cultural climates that may be in conflict with the realities of today. Finally, judicial independence, another judicial system in U.S. law, is based on the decisions of judges. Judges, unfortunately, come with their own biases and assumptions while purporting neutrality and objectivity.

With the recent controversy over appointee Sonia Sotomayer to the Supreme Court, we witnessed a potential threat to the status quo and interpretation of the law. There was a political uproar over Sotomayer's 2001 statement "I would hope," she said, "that a wise Latina woman with the richness of her experiences would more often than not reach a better conclusion than a White male who hasn't lived that life" (Richey, 2009). According to Barr (2009) former House Speaker Newt Gingrich charged that Sotomayer is a "racist". Senator Patrick Leahy retorted, "there's only one law. And she said 'ultimately and completely,' a judge has to follow the law no matter what their upbringing has been" (Badger, 2009, para. 3). In both instances, Gingrich and Leahy are implying a neutrality of the legal system and in both instances the racial contract is implicated in this debate, as well as a separation of law and justice. In other words, Sotomayer had better "pass" and assimilate to uphold the neutrality of law.

Legal Murder and Theft: Whitewashed Stories, Absent Voices

The rule of law replaces the rule of men. The rule of law claims to be neutral, fair, equitable, and democratic (Zinn, 1990, p. 110). However, as Zinn states, while this new law hinted at political democracy, it is certainly not interested in economic democracy. Using the law, exploitation of the poor is a truth the United States holds to be self-evident. Our new common laws legislate protection of our kings and rulers in government, the theft of property, and the protection of a corporation as though it were a person. Bakan (2004) documents that “conceived as natural entities analogous to human beings, corporations should be created as free individuals” and that “because they were persons corporations should be protected by the Fourteenth Amendment’s rights to due process of law and equal protection of the laws” (p. 16). What is particularly grotesque, argues Mary Zepernick of the Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy (POCLAD), is that “the fourteenth amendment, created to protect newly free slaves was co-opted by corporations” (Bakan, 2003). According to Zepernick, between 1890 and 1910, there were 307 cases brought before the courts under the fourteenth amendment; of those cases, 288 were brought before the courts by corporations, and only 19 by African Americans.

Common lands are now private property on which the poor and working class are expected to sell their labor in order to pay taxes. Bakan (2004) argues that it is a mistake to believe that because corporations are strong, the state is weak; rather, “the state’s power has not been reduced, it has been redistributed, more tightly connected to the needs and interests of corporations and less so on the public interest” (p. 154). Indigenous

people were and are killed, colonized, and forcibly removed from the land. According to Locke, the land belongs to those who know how to turn a profit from it (Kaufman, 2004). These systems of domination are enforced using legislation. Apartheid in South Africa was so that profits can be made from the diamond and gold trade (Mills, 1997). The segregation of Jews into ghettos was legal (Zinn, 1990). The confiscation of Japanese property and then being forced into internment camps was legal. Slavery was legal in the United States so that elites could accumulate capital on the backs of people of color and poor Whites (Zinn, 1990). Blacks were written into the constitution as three-fifths a person (Zinn, 1990). Lynching was legal to keep Blacks and White women in their place (Kaufman, 2004). The denial of veteran benefits to people of color is legal (Kivel, 2002, p. 28). Declaring war and using chemical weapons on innocent women and children is legal (1990). Spending wasted time haggling over the legal definitions of war and hate crimes, or spending time deciding what constitutes genocide, seems unjust.

The North American Free Trade Agreement protects the invisible hand of the market by enforcing legislation that cuts into profits (Kaufman, 2004). For example, NAFTA enables the United States to sue Mexico for unfairly taking private property (Kaufman, 2004, p. 84). U.S. waste disposal company, Metalclad, was awarded \$1.6 million in damages after the (Mexican) state of San Luis Potosi blocked its waste site in the village of Guadalcazar (p. 85). The Free Trade Area of the Americas and Plan Colombia are similarly unfair shams – systems of domination that benefit mainly U.S. and other global elites in the name of development (Spotts, 2005). When the governments of countries stand up to these trade agreements, such as Hugo Chavez of

Venezuela or Jacobo Arbenz of Guatemala, leaders seeking to give unused land to the poor, U.S. backed operations seek to overthrow the governments in covert ways such as the militia death-squads trained at the School of the Americas or by interfering with their democratic elections by way of a recount (Zinn, 1980). Damage to property is considered illegal violence (such as burning draft cards, considered to be military property), but damage to people is difficult to prove such as the atrocities in Abu Ghraib and the systematic rape of women and children as a weapon of war or the traumatic stress of racism or sexual harassment in the academy. Carter and Pieterse's (2007) findings illustrate, for example, that there is a correlation between "general life stress, racism-related stress, and psychological health among Black men" (p. 101).

So What? How Does This All Relate to Higher Education?

Charles Mills (1997), in his critique of the social contract, gives a new perspective in that he frames the social contract as one of racial domination. His concept of the racial contract (1997) rests on three claims: 1) existentially, "White supremacy, both local and global, exists and has existed for many years"; 2) conceptually, "White supremacy should be thought of as itself a political system"; methodologically, and 3) "as a political system, White supremacy can be illuminatingly be theorized as based on a contract between Whites" (p. 7). Even though many Whites in the United States are poor, working-, or middle-class, being White becomes an internalized system of dominance. Melanie Bush (2004) documents that working-class Whites often see themselves as having more in common with White, corporate, global elites and the narratives of her interviewees of

ordinary working-class Whites express validation and acceptance that more privileged populations as “the main beneficiaries of public higher education” is normal and okay (p. 10). Race, then, carries more cultural currency than socio-economic class status. In the United States, there is a long tradition of oppression for non-Whites and as Spring (1994) and Takaki (1993) state, racism and sexism are a central part of our national identity. For example, of the 17 southern states that mandated racially segregated education during the Jim Crow era, 14 simply refused to establish land-grant colleges for African American students until Congress required them to do so (Hill, 1994).

Racial oppression, according to Birman (1994), leads to “marginalization, making it difficult for minorities to have a positive sense of their cultural identity, which is linked to self-esteem and other psychological variables” (p. 274). Internalized dominance and oppression need not take place in violent, obvious, and overtly discriminatory ways. Hardiman and Jackson (1997) contend that “four elements take place when social oppression occurs, or the racial contract is in place:

- 1) The dominant group gets to name and define reality (normal); 2) Oppression is systematically, and subtly embedded into institutions (law and higher education); 3) The oppressed are psychologically colonized and asked to collude with the oppressive ideology (such as curriculum); and 4) The dominant group’s culture is imposed while the oppressed group’s culture is discounted, misrepresented or eradicated (history and the law) (p. 17).

The pervasive institutions of law and higher education exacerbate internalized dominance and oppression. For example, while the law grants equal access to higher education, it cannot guarantee equity in higher education (Feagin, 2001). Statistics that measure resistance, persistence, attrition, and graduation rates, do not adequately measure the extent that oppressed groups are forced to assimilate into the existing structure in

higher education institutions (Harbour et al, 2003). Access without systems of support, including funding and resources to achieve equity essentially neutralizes the power of the legislation (Hurtado, 1992). Further, though there are significant demographic shifts in the United States that specific measures are not in place to ensure a teaching class representative of the student body is questionable.

A Nation at Risk: Gutting Education for Business Elites

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education issued *A Nation at Risk*, focusing on the failure of high schools, and in 1993 “An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education” (O’Banion, 1997, p. 3) was published, focusing on the failure of higher education. An American Imperative was supported by the 4 leading private foundations that include Lilly Endowment, Pew Charitable Trusts The Johnson Foundation, Inc. and The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (O’Banion, p. 3) Both of these reports, rife with the hyperbole of crisis and fear, served to gut education’s public funding, standardize the curriculum, and privatize education (O’Banion, 1997). In sum, these reform efforts served to keep education functioning like efficient factories, not to provide transformative, critical pedagogy (O’Banion, 1997). We must insist as Barr and Tagg (1995) that college should be institutions that produce learning rather than provide instruction. As Apple (1997) articulates, “[W]e need to ask whether the recent calls for more rigorous teacher assessment are ways in which dominant groups export the blame onto teachers and schools for the results of their own selfish and misguided economic and social decisions” (p. 2).

New Affronts to Multiculturalism and Critical Pedagogy: The Academic Bill of Rights

The Academic Bill of Rights, proposed by former intellectual-radical-turned-conservative, David Horowitz, was up for debate in approximately 19 states back in October 2005 (Bush, 2005). The bill is an attempt to stamp out “liberal professor biases” in U.S. colleges and universities (Bush, 2005). According to Republican Dennis Baxley, who proposed the bill to the Florida House Choice and Innovation Committee, the bill will keep professors from indoctrinating the next generation and give students legal standing to sue professors and universities (Vanlandingham, 2005). Some of the arguments that are being used to fuel the bill of rights movement are that Democrats outnumber Republicans on college campuses and, according to Horowitz, “professors are a privileged elite that work between six to nine hours a week, eight months a year for an annual salary of about \$150,000” (Mattson, 2005, p. 2). According to Sweet of *Intervention Magazine* (Sweet, 2005), just one of Horowitz’s grants provides him with a salary of \$179,918 plus \$11,838 in benefits.

In the February 13, 2004 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Horowitz elaborates on his quest for neutrality, claiming that universities using Barbara Ehrenreich's (2001) *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* are employing a single, partisan, socialist, text “entirely inappropriate for an academic institution” because of its potential to indoctrinate poor unsuspecting students. Melanie Bush (2005) examines and responds to seven of the main concerns of the academic freedom movement. They are: 1) Democrats are an overrepresented majority of faculty in the United States; 2) The imbalance in political affiliation creates a hostile environment for

conservatives; 3) The imbalance in political affiliation skews what students learn in the classroom; 4) Conservative faculty are at a hiring disadvantage and conservative students receive lower grades; 5) Forum and commencement speakers should represent a range of political views and offer an intentional balance of presentations; 6) The emphasis on multiculturalism in curricula reduces the quality of academic standards because the focus is no longer on the truth but private interests of Blacks, Latinos, Asians, women, and other groups; and 7) Conservatives are the new underrepresented minority with no voice (p. 17-18). Assertions 6 and 7 essentially negate the experiences of poor and working class racial, ethnic, and gender minorities and Whites in the United States. Assertion 6, that Horowitz and the students for academic freedom have a stranglehold on the truth, maintains White supremacist and heterosexual patriarchy and ignores both internalized dominance and historic institutional racism and oppression.

To equate a particular political orientation that is being represented by a few rich, powerful elites, with groups that have experienced repeated brutality, inequity, hostility, and colonization with little access to fair *substantive* legal due process is blatantly false, arrogant, and repulsive. Further, Horowitz' academic bill of rights aligns with assertions that colleges and universities are becoming too politically correct (PC) in which its objective "isn't to communicate a substantive idea, but simply to sneer and snivel about the linguistic and cultural burdens of treating all people with the respect and sensitivity with which they wish to be treated" (Kai Chang, 2006, para.4). This exemplifies Althusser's (1971) articulation of the ideological state apparatus whereby the contestation of canon manifests as another set of culture wars.

Professionalism: A Code for Protecting Status Quo

I have served in two mid-level “professional” positions in a higher education institution spanning over 10 years, and have served as an adjunct faculty also for 15 years at the same public state institution. This is the experience from which I will draw my analysis and borrow from others who have developed similar theories and conclusions about higher education and the notion of professionalism. I will examine the ways in which the higher education institution functions much in the same way the corporation functions, especially when an institution’s main focus is to be known as a research university. I will examine how higher education fosters the myth of meritocracy, one of the status quo ideologies that transformational education challenges (which is inherently racist since this myth assumes that we all have access to the same resources), undermines self-esteem among its students, and reinforces destructive systems of patriarchy and competition vis-à-vis professionalism and expert status. These two concepts (expert status and professionalism) can foster inaction, student apathy, self-doubt, and mistrust of students taking their own responsibilities in decision-making (Yosso, 2005). Students learn one acceptable way to be professional, by protecting status quo, and they look solely to experts instead of relying on their own expertise (Hull, 1982). In the educational environment, it is a disservice for educators to teach that texts, facts, numbers, statistics, histories, and information are unbiased and that information is neutral or professionally credentialed. Information is always created, interpreted, and written by individual; and as human beings, we all have biases, perspectives, and standpoints.

By hiding behind the mask of neutrality and keeping expert status mysterious and beyond critique, educators invalidate the individual experiences that students bring to the institution, thereby disabling their power, especially those who critique the information. For example, critical intercultural educator Paul Gorski is often asked why he is so political and he is asked to be more balanced and neutral, appreciative of all opinions and worldviews. In response to this critique Gorski (2007) illustrates, “the very act of claiming neutrality is, in and of itself, politically value-laden and supportive of the status quo” (p. 11). The entrenched elites always tend to rule out the dissenters as “unprofessional” or for being too political.

I will examine how the rise of professionalism and elitism serve to keep knowledge as individual property, as a form of real estate for the individual and as a reservoir of credibility for the institution. These ideologies create distrust of the intellectual often referred to as “anti-intellectualism” among the general population, especially working class folks who cannot afford college. I will examine how the “stories we tell” in our various disciplines in higher education serve to foster the colonization of the minds, as stated by Sylvia Hurtado (1992) of our students, staff, and faculty and serve not only to focus misplaced energy on identity politics and diversity issues “inward” rather than examining privilege “outward” but also to create apathy, victim-hood, and helplessness in our students to make changes in themselves and to their respective communities.

The higher education institution in its current form (and the institution at which this study takes place is no exception) colludes with big business by instilling value in the

marketplace in the form of knowledge, competition, technology, and human capital rather than in values, such as integrity, humanity, relationships, dignity, and compassion. The latter values are not marketable. The assault to injury in the higher education institution as corporation is its current and rampant use of “outsourcing.” Outsourcing is really a euphemism for sweatshop (Louie, 2002) and that is the subcontracting system of labor. Most of these outsourced service jobs are occupied by immigrant men and women “who toil at the bottom of a pyramid of labor exploitation and profit generation” (Louie, 2002, 4). Even more disturbing in the notion of the sweatshop is that there are usually full-time workers of one race and the other jobs are subcontracted out to another race (Louie, 2002). This fosters mistrust and competition among the workers. Outsourcing is an economic strategy referred to by economists as “externalities” to maximize profits and at the same time alleviate accountability. Essentially externality means, according to Bakan (2004) “someone else’s problem” (p. 61). The site of study, in its list of achievement “firsts” boasts it is the first institution to “outsource on-campus housing management” (Executive Summary 2008-9 p.1). What you will not see on the boasting list is that recently, the university had to create a position in housing that reports directly to the University Life division because the relationship between co-curricular programming and housing and residential life had become so fractured and compartmentalized, it was to the detriment of its residential population (personal communication). Further, according to Jaschik (2009), the American Federation of Teachers is releasing a report that from 1997 to 2007, while the number of faculty and instructor slots grew, “nearly two-thirds of that

growth was in contingent positions – meaning those off the tenure track.” At the public four-year colleges and universities in 2007, 43.9% of instructors are part-time.

The issues of professionalism, expert status and diversity are not new issues or concepts. W.E.B. Du Bois discussed issues of race, wealth, work and diversity as early as 1910. Du Bois poetically articulates that the clustered cunning of the modern workman, skilled as artificer and skilled in the rhythm of the habit of work, tasting the world’s good and “panting for more” and he painfully states “justice lies with the lowest... the Black man deserves the first answer, and the plight of the giants of industry, the last” (p. 91). He asks how we might justly distribute the world’s goods to satisfy the needs of the mass of men, and further argues that work where spiritual values are worth more than social distinctions are valued we will have a world of service without servants. Finally, he states “the theory of exclusiveness, a feeling that the world progresses by a process of excluding from the benefits of culture the majority of men, so that a gifted minority may blossom” (p. 120). W.E.B. Du Bois is talking about the bridge that the White professional has constructed on the backs of communities of color with historic roots in slavery. One can find an immediate, disturbing, and very local community example in the Virginia state universities’ compliance and collusion with this system by its purchasing of goods and services from state correctional facilities. Primarily, incarcerated men and women, disproportionately of color, produce these goods. Interestingly, California for example had 12 prisons as of 1980 but by 1998 was home to 33 prisons. It had constructed one new state university in that same time period (Templeton, 2004).

Smith (1982) discusses professionalism and its negative effects on women of color in the 1970s and 1980s and also at a National Women's Studies Conference in which women of color challenged White women on their racism. She elaborates that professionalism is "a concept we don't need, because it is ultimately a way of dividing ourselves from others and escaping from reality" (p. 50) and that the pernicious ideology of professionalism covers a multitude of sins including an excuse for inaction, an excuse for ethical responsibility. She sharply and rightfully critiques the discipline of women's studies, for example, for writing, researching, and publishing about women, but in an exploitative way. More importantly, she states that "the grassroots/community women's movement has given women's studies its life" (p. 50) but then asks how academic feminism is bringing its educational privilege back to these communities. While women's studies, in this case is being singled out, this form of exploitation may exist in other disciplines. How does professing to be an expert give back to the local community? How does the scholar give back to the community of learners in the institution? David Orr (1991) indicts the entire educational system for its disconnection of theory from people. His work follows later in this paper.

At a Women's Music Conference in 1981, Bernice Johnson Reagon, civil rights activist and founder of the activist singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock gave a speech entitled *Coalition Politics* that posed the contradiction between authentic diversity versus the expertise of single-issue politics. Her landmark and especially relevant speech asserts that building coalitions across race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation requires complete discomfort. She discerns between a "home" and a coalition stating that the

home is where we want to be comfortable but a coalition is where true learning happens. One can infer that we cannot have true learning without the discomfort of confronting our privilege. I argue that educators cannot have honest democratic conversations by being “professional” for that requires one to refrain from all emotion, and it keeps those in power from being challenged.

A concept that is unheard of in the era of “intellectual property” is also found in Reagon’s *Coalition Politics* (1995) when she urges educators and community leaders to give information away, not just up the ladder of hierarchy, but down and horizontally. One can infer from this imperative that we need to be giving our information, our education, our privilege, our resources, not only upward to publish, to impress, and to complete our year-end reports, but to our colleagues in the form of best practices, to our students in the form of leadership models, and to our respective communities. Anti-racist activist and writer, Paul Kivel (2002) discusses the notion of both the economic and structural buffer zone. White people of all classes and professions collude with those at the top of the buffer zone by keeping valuable information and resources out of reach for people of color. Any time, he argues, that a White person enjoys status and privilege simply for being White and makes excuses for racism by saying, “I’m just trying to raise my family,” one is collaborating with those at the top of the buffer zone. Educators are in a strange predicament as we are in the middle of the buffer zone and function to keep hope alive, according to Kivel. Educators must constantly ask themselves if they are working with those at the bottom of the structural and economic buffer zone or are they being professional, colluding with those at the top of the buffer zone. They must ask

themselves whether or not they are fostering racism, tokenism, and meritocracy and squelching dissent at the bottom of the buffer zone. Are they keeping people in their place?

Educational leader Thomas Sergiovanni (2001), argues for the university to model sharing resources as the community partner, as the community school. This means that the university community must give information away to and build community with local high schools, middle schools, and community centers. Reagon (1995) also implies that our teachable moments in the classroom, in the boardrooms, and in our meetings are often compromised at the expense of covering the agenda or task or sticking to the neutrality of facts. Being professional often means staying on task rather than relationally focused.

Many of these authors, writers, activists, and leaders mentioned in this section are persons of color and each has spoken truth to the codes of professionalism. Hidden and rarely discussed among those with power are codes of racism, classism, power, and elitism that are concealed in the performance of professionalism. Educators must avoid hiding behind professional titles and professional positions and risk speaking up and speaking out against injustice. That is how professionalism works and keeps “the system” functioning. Professionalism is insidious, and it is individual behavior that becomes collective behavior. *That* is “the system.”

The United States currently struggles with issues of democracy and diversity right this very minute as vigilantes calling themselves minutemen carry out acts of violent racism against illegal immigrants (Zahka, 2006). Do educators theorize about it or do

they respond as a caring community, rather than a community of “experts”? Democracy is certainly not being practiced much these days in the United States, as lawmakers passed laws that are not discussed in the general population, such as the Patriot Act (Roy, 2004) or the proposed Bill of Rights (Bush, 2005) for academic freedom, even though the United States is the supposed “expert” in the business of exporting “democracy” abroad. Our institutions train professionals to solve these complex issues but all of us have a stake in such endeavors. The professionals our institutions groom become an overly credentialed class of experts of which this chapter addresses.

Cornel West who talked about the erosion of democracy in the Fall of 2007 at University Y experienced the aftermath of not performing the role of the professional when he reluctantly left Harvard University. West had recently put out a hip-hop record and was accused of bringing embarrassment to the university, for participating in too many extra activities, for doing research and writing that wasn’t “scholarly enough” and *for not being professional*. What is the underlying code of professional in this example? West was, in fact, being too Black, too political, too resistant, and too authentic. Hip-hop music has been for years and is still a form of Black resistance and Black nationalism and “is tied to the everyday struggles of working-class Blacks and the urban poor” according to Decker (cited in Ross & Rose, 1994, p. 99).

Credentialing and Intellectual Property as Rugged Individualism

Information and ideas, in my opinion, simply resurface year after year in different disciplines and in different conversations. The theories are the same. The conversations are the same. The issues are the same and the ideas are the same. Emma Goldman, for

example, documented and chronicled her work with unions and struggles for worker's rights back in the early 1900s and we are still fighting for worker's rights today (Kaufman, 2004). The corporations are different but the issues are the same. In the 1900s workers fought against unfair labor practices and mistreatment and today workers are fighting against unethical practices and mistreatment of workers by multinationals (Kaufman, 2004). With the advent of the era of the professional, however, theories, conversations, and issues are all copyrighted and owned by individuals as personal property in order to bolster status, prestige and power. In this way, upper middle class scholars seem to be writing exclusively for themselves. This information rarely reaches the masses or as Agger states, "[E]veryone writes, no one reads" (1990, p. 78). Many of these ideas, concepts, theories, notions, and movements existed prior to being copyrighted, much as the United States existed prior to being discovered.

Sojourner Truth, for example, questioned the notion of *woman* is and its categorical intersection to race back in 1860 as a free Black woman out of slavery when White women were asking for the "rights" of White women (Collins, 1990). Sojourner Truth asked if indeed she is not also a woman (Collins, 1990, p. 14). Yet it is the expert female of the professional class who receives the credit, prestige, and right to publish these intersections of race, class and gender in a more sophisticated manner as articulated by Friedan (1963). The difference is that Sojourner Truth was a Black, ex-slave woman who spoke her truth because of the conditions of her life. Friedan made a handsome living by philosophizing about the conditions of women's lives using academic language,

for a White academic audience and her text continues to be used in women's studies classes. One might casually hear Sojourner Truth's name mentioned.

The discipline of Communication and Rhetoric (my own area of expertise in college) taught me always to ask "so what" when posing research questions and hypotheses. I answer the so what with the following illustration and sentiment. A banner used during a 1970s march for women of color states: *Third world women cannot live without their lives* (Hull, 1982). The issues that we theorize about in higher education, represented in this banner, often times *ad nauseum*, affect real people's lives in very real ways. How can we pride ourselves on being experts on other people's lives? How can we exploit community in this manner for our own individual and personal gain? How can we become experts in disciplines if we are disconnecting them from real people?

Environmental Professor David Orr (1991) posits that learning for the sake of learning without attention to development and attention of the self is not learning at all. To illustrate this point dramatically, Orr quotes Holocaust survivor and Nobel prize winner Elie Wiesel who states that the Germans during the time of the Holocaust were among the best educated in the world, but their education "focused on theory instead of values, concepts rather than human beings, abstraction rather than consciousness, answers instead of questions, ideology and efficiency rather than conscience" (p. 2). Orr states that education does not guarantee human dignity and decency or wisdom and that more of the same kind of education will only further compound our problems. He examines six myths that are the foundations of modern education: 1) ignorance as a solvable problem, 2) with enough knowledge and technology we can manage planet

earth, 3) knowledge is increasing and by implication so is human goodness, 4) we can adequately restore that which we have dismantled, 5) the purpose of education is that of giving you the means for upward mobility and success, and 6) our culture represents the pinnacle of human achievement.

These myths, according to Orr (1991) are not making us better people, but rather these myths are creating arrogance, destruction, and poverty. He examines each of these myths individually, illustrating the first, for example, by stating that many of the technologies that are ravaging the planet were done by some of our most credentialed Ph.D.s. He states that the only people who lived on the planet for any great length of time did not know how to read or write. Finally, he posits that the planet does not need more “successful” or what I call “professional” people, but it does need more peacemakers, healers, and people of moral courage to make the world more humane. Schmidt (2009) argues that elite institutions “bear a share of the blame for the economic crisis that now plagues them” (para. 3) in that Yale, Harvard, Princeton, and Stanford have watched their endowments shrink because of investment losses. He argues that “in determining which applicants they will admit and put on the fast track, most elite higher-education institutions systematically favor people from privileged backgrounds who display selfish, cutthroat behavior; the results are campus environments where disregard for society is socially accepted” (Schmidt, 2009, para. 5).

If we examine Orr’s (1991) myth number five that *the purpose of education is that of giving you the means for upward mobility and success*, it will serve as a lens for examining much of the other literature that will be used for this paper. Upward mobility

and success or “professionalism” is often at the expense of marginalized groups or rather serves to exacerbate disparities of income manifested clearly across race and gender lines. Orr’s myth serves also as the myth of meritocracy by giving people the impression that all they have to do is work hard, get an education, and they will be granted success. If they do not achieve success, it is clearly the fault of the individual.

The myth of meritocracy concept is explored by Pfeffer (1977). He states that leaders, in fact, often hire people who think and look like them. The selection process is not based on merit at all, but rather the candidates’ mastery of their respective discipline manifested in grades or graduation from the elite school and not the potential for leadership. Further Pfeffer states that access to a particular institution is based on social status in the first place and the status of attending that institution directly affects success and career outcome. As long as there is the belief in meritocracy, individuals will not express dissatisfaction with the social order.

Sarfatti Larson (1977) reinforces this assertion when she states that the socioeconomic status of the “client” not only influences the quality of service but also influences the status and ranking of the professionals, which might explain the state of poverty-stricken rural and inner-city schools. Larson refers to the ideologies of expertise that are crucial to maintaining control over actions and knowledge. Historian Howard Zinn (1990) defines ideology as more than simply a dominant pattern of ideas. He contends that ideology is “not just mildly interesting, not just a subject for intellectual debate, but a matter of life and death” (p. 2). The ideology of professions is used by the

leaders of professionalization projects and shared by the members of various occupations. It is also shared and sustained by the whole society.

The modern day professional or expert began taking shape about 150 years ago according to historian Burton Bledstein (Derber, 1990), p. 155). Bledstein chronicles this development as the “vertical vision” (p. 171) of life in which individualism was infused with career in order to climb the social ladder. The word “career,” prior to this time period did not include one’s lifework in the definition. As Bledstein (1976) discusses

An individual’s first concern was his present position and future prospects in the vertically oriented society. . . Looking vertically, middle-class Americans lacked a . . . sense of community, and nowhere was this more evident than in the emerging professions which were instrumental in institutionalizing the ground rules for individual ambition. (p. 171)

The concept of the career originated with the concept of the calling, such as with the church or teaching. However, unlike the new form of professional that is motivated by self-interest and tied to capitalism, the calling was based on three anti-market principles as explained by Larson (1977). These three principles are: 1) the work ethic—in that there is intrinsic value in the work, vocation, or calling; 2) a universal service—in that one’s calling establishes community bonds and responsibility to the community; and 3) that high rank imposes duties and confers rights, therefore, high rank is not a value in the calling. Sullivan (2005) focuses on the tension between calling or career, stating that an “authentic professionalism can impart a strong sense of identity...it is a way of life with public value” (p. 39). But with the rise of the new professionalism, Larson asserts that the ideology of professionalism now serves to legitimize social inequalities by stressing apparent fusion between educational and occupational hierarchies. We might

infer that Cornel West's departure from Harvard is a result of the institution's inability to "harness" West's actions and knowledge that are deemed the property of Harvard.

Another interpretation is that of Mac Pherson (1962) in his statement that the middle-class theory of democratic liberalism contends "the individual is essentially the proprietor of his own person and capacities, for which he owes nothing to society" (p. 263). This sort of thinking is right in line with John Locke's vision of individual property in America. Locke "believed that labor, the willingness and ability to turn nature to productive use, established a right in property for the industrious and able" (cited in Sullivan, 2005). The able did not include Black people but White Christians. And Locke is credited with equating owning property with life, liberty, and the right to pursue property. Locke's equates owning property with happiness.

Collins contends that academic credentials are the key to modern stratification and that the ideology of the profession requires a real technical skill that can be monopolized by controlling who will be trained and taught (cited in Derber, p. 220). Finally, the career of professionals have "a structured means of proving their worth, mastering their emotions and triumphing over others" (p. 156). This has profound implications related to how people behave and socialize in the immediate workplace, how people operationalize and maintain rigid divisions of labor, and how professionals relate to the respective local communities surrounding the institutions of higher education and to the students, staff, faculty, and administrative collegia of their respective institutions of higher learning.

Are Students Really Learning to Think Critically?

Paul's (2006) study of community college faculty and textbooks reveals a deep disconnect between faculty perception of critical thinking and the way it is practiced in the classroom. In Paul's study involving "random faculty from 66 colleges and universities, only 9% of respondents teach critical thinking in their classes and only 8% of the respondents can identify criteria for measuring critical thinking" (p. 35). What is even more disheartening is that "78% of faculty respondents say their students lack appropriate intellectual standards of critical thinking" (p. 34). This study illustrates the misplaced blame on students for their inability to think critically, despite the large number of teachers who could not define, let alone articulate, what teaching methods they employ to encourage and assess critical thinking in their classrooms. Further, Gerald Nosich's (2006) survey of 24 major texts used by community college professors "relied heavily on rote learning, key concepts for memorization, and questions to answer by recall" (p. 60). These texts spanned 17 disciplines, including those in the social sciences and humanities. If teachers are utilizing texts and methods that discourage critical thinking, how is it that teachers expect students to become active, engaged, informed citizens and leaders, if they are not given the tools to think critically?

Further, if one textbook serves as the sole curriculum, rather than merely a tool for learning, whose perspectives are represented in the text? For example, Jamieson (2006) discusses the inability of students to grapple with issues because they are too often polarized in privileged opposites, binary ideas which are "artifacts of purely Western thought" (p. 3). In this ideology of thinking, Jamieson suggests, "students don't learn to

research, they learn to find support.” The critical thinker, according to Paul (2006), starts with the assumption that “my thinking, and that of most people is often flawed; the flaws that exist commonly in thinking, frequently lead to significant problems in human life” (p. 28), which is a perfect segue into critical pedagogy and its importance.

Critical Pedagogy: A Pedagogy of Love and Accountability

I return to the taxonomy of practice, which I raised in Chapter 1 in light of critical thinking and critical pedagogy as well as West’s (1993) four elements of prophetic thought that require discernment, connection, self-reflection, and hope. Chow et al. (2003) articulate that dialogue goes beyond speaking and giving information and that it encourages participants “to be open to multiple viewpoints through communication and interaction” since knowledge is “situated and that different standpoints, as the basis of knowledge, reflect different life experiences of an individual in specific locations” (p. 263). Beliefs and Attitudes: What are my values and biases? What is my heritage? How do oppression, racism, discrimination, and stereotyping affect me? What are my privileges, and can I verbalize them? Knowledge: How do I know what I know? From whom and what sources do I know? How do sociopolitical influences affect the self-concept of me as an educator, my students, specifically, my ethnic and racial minority students? Skills: How can I challenge the status quo and institutions rather than focus on the individual without agency? How can I teach these skills to my students effectively?

West (2004), hooks (2003), Freire (1970), Keating (2007), and other scholars contend that dialogue is central to the taxonomy of practice that knowledge and theory are constructed through dialogue. But more importantly, this dialogue must be based on

love and accountability. West (2004) states that the “Black American interpretation of tragicomic hope is rooted in a love of freedom” that yields “a courage to hope for betterment against the odds without a sense of revenge or resentment” (p. 216). hooks’ (1994) describes her ongoing commitment to an engaged, critical pedagogy is based on hope, love, and accountability and contends that “love can bridge the sense of otherness” (p. 162). Transformative education, engaged pedagogy, and critical progressive pedagogy and multiculturalism contests, designs, and redesigns the classroom and social space at a university. As mentioned in Chapter 1, according to Bourdieu (1982) social space or the field is the “site of struggles in which individuals seek to maintain or alter the distribution of the forms of capital specific to it” (p. 14). Chow (2003) et al. discuss the difficulties of dialogue when they discuss one of the obstacles they faced is that “both students and teacher came to class with societal and normative expectations about how the other students should behave” (p. 264). For example, sharing authority and requiring greater responsibility on the part of the students who rely so heavily on the banking model of education are often uncomfortable. Further, Chow et al. contend that students are taught passivity, the hidden curriculum “in which students are implicitly taught to be reserved in their learning, and by extension, to preserve the status quo” (p. 265).

Transformative education, according to Banks (1994), “changes the canon, paradigms, and basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from different perspectives and points of view” (p. 26) hooks’ (1994) conception of engaged pedagogy borrows on the liberatory scholarship of Paolo Freire, that emphasizes well-being, a commitment to the process of

self-actualization, and empowerment of students and teachers. It is not one of arrogance, argues Freire (1998), for arrogance is “a denial of generosity and of humility, for neither of these qualities rejoices in giving offense or in seeing someone humiliated” (p. 86). This is a tricky balance in a culture of competition, for it requires the balance of invoking curiosity, while speaking truth to oppressive socio-economic systems.

Critical progressive pedagogy (Hendrix, Jackson, & Warren, 2003) signifies “paradigms established in response to restrictive pedagogies and politics of academia that interfere with agency” (p. 181). Shor (1992) argues that change-agency is required so that “students rethink disabling ideologies and behaviors, such as self-reliance, classroom silence, getting by, playing dumb, political cynicism, anti-intellectualism, White supremacy, male dominance, excessive consumerism, dependence on authority, and so on” (p. 190). Critical multiculturalism, according to Keating (2007), challenges and interrupts status-quo stories about race, gender, heterosexuality, and other categories of identity. Keating’s focus is related to agency, the taxonomy of practice, and West’s (1993) four elements of prophetic thought. She argues for a self-reflective process in which we “become partially aware of our unconsciously held beliefs; explores these beliefs’ connections with messages from the external world; investigate the implications of these beliefs; and choose whether to keep them, modify them, or attempt to reject them entirely” (p. 14-15).

Critical multiculturalism, unlike melting-pot and separatist multiculturalisms, critiques, exposes and interrogates the common sense thinking of status quo stories that universalize our experiences (Keating, 2007). Exposure to critical pedagogical methods

may also be the first time that students with a lack of awareness about privilege learn to question and examine coded language and systems and learn how argument and debate as the standard classroom narrative, keep statuses of privilege unmarked, unexamined, and normal (Bruner, 1990). Critical pedagogy, for Keating (2007), contends that “transformational multiculturalism begins with the premise that the United States has always been multicultural” (p. 15). These methods can also serve to allow the backgrounds, cultures, and lives of students into the classroom, which is particularly crucial for the increasingly diverse student bodies in our colleges and universities, despite the lack of diverse bodies of instructors. Further, transformative multiculturalism enables us, according to Keating (2007), to “redefine and reconfigure dualistic relationships – whether between self/other, us/them, or oppressor/oppressed – in nonbinary forms” (p. 14). These practices privilege learning-centered practices instead of privileging “middle-class, mainstream ways of knowing (of students) who do not come to school already practiced in school-talk” (National Research Council, 2001, p. 135).

Moral anger, as Berlak and Moyenda (2001) identify, directed at social injustices enables marginalized voices to be the experts of their own lives, whereby their experiences are valued. We must not only allow, but encourage, moral outrage as a valued expression of emotion. Critical theory, according to Callahan (2004), invokes emotions “that have the capacity to move us to action” (p 76). In the classroom, with competing ways of knowing and standpoints, dialogue is often rife with emotion. hooks (1994) contends that “the unwillingness to approach teaching from a standpoint that includes awareness of race, sex, and class is often rooted in the fear that classrooms will

be uncontrollable, that emotions and passions will not be contained” (p. 39). However, “emotions can also be a tool to break the cycle of reproducing structures of domination” (Callahan, 2004, p. 76).

The Safe Space as the Privileged Space

When I entered the discipline of Women’s Studies as an administrative faculty of a Women’s Center, I learned a concept that was one of the central tenets of both the Center and Women’s Studies classrooms, that is, the notion of the safe space. Women’s Centers were often the first location that a survivor of sexual assault would turn or to address sexism in the academy by way of media representations on campus, harassment in the classroom, or by male faculty, administrators or students (Fisher, 2001). Women’s studies classrooms were supposed to be safe spaces where women could find their voices (Ludlow, 2004). On one level, I understood this principle, as I benefited from this “safe space” as a White woman. However, what I experienced personally in the classroom, which then transferred to my role in the Center, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, being an out, queer, White woman, I rarely felt safe. The only Black woman in the faculty, every semester, would read aloud her teaching evaluation qualitative comments to those of us who worked at the Center. She wanted us to bear witness to what the classroom space felt like for her and the repeated charges that she focused too much on race and not enough about women. These comments routinely appeared semester after semester for the five years I worked with her. Safety was not something this faculty member could rely on in the classroom.

The first semester I taught Third Wave Feminisms with an undergraduate teaching apprentice, who was also queer and out as well as bi-racial (White and Taiwanese), was an excruciating exercise in challenging dominant White feminist pedagogy. My teaching apprentice decided she would never teach again because of the mistreatment she experienced by several of the White, straight women in our class. Further, one of the White, lesbian women in the class expressed how our multidimensional pedagogy was merely causing divisions within feminism. For her, the inclusion of race was divisive, specifically referring to the works of bell hooks. Several students went to our respective supervisor, a White, straight, female faculty member, who did not support us, but rather asked us to “tone down” our politics because we were making students uncomfortable. This happened again the second time I taught the course two years later. Further, as the faculty advisor of the feminist student group on campus, I offered a workshop to address some of the issues surfacing in the group. Members of the group were supportive of the White, female co-chair of the group but were dismissive of the Black, female co-chair’s leadership. I utilized the work of Kivel (2002) who argues that Whites are taught to protect and control the distribution of resources. I also utilized the work of Bernice Johnson Reagon (1995) to argue that that building coalitions across race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation, requires complete discomfort. I wanted the group to discern between the home and the coalition, where true learning happens, despite our differences. Further, I examined and named the unequal leadership appreciation and support for each of the co-chairs. Upset students went to my supervisor, and I was told to “fix it.” This is the exact directive I was given, and I felt anything but

safe. This took a toll on me professionally, spiritually, mentally, and physically in a space where I was supposed to feel safe.

In every one of my examples, safe space meant upholding the racial contract. Further, to re-invoke Lugg's (2006) work on Queer Legal Theory, I was essentialized as a White woman, asked to ignore both intersectionality and multidimensionality of identities. It was also demanded that as a White, queer woman, I was to assimilate, convert, cover or pass, particularly my queer identity. From Lugg's standpoint, this is as an example of essentializing both heterosexuality and queers with a regulatory system. As Barnard (2004) in his examination of queer race articulates, discourses that speak of oppression directed against one's gender, race, or sexual orientation denies the specificity of identity and the inseparability of the supposed constituents of a particular identity. In other words, the "safe space" afforded me safety but only against sexism from a White, heterosexual femaleness standpoint of material power. It failed to take into account the inseparability of my multiple identities, in this case my White, queer femaleness.

While doing extensive research on feminist pedagogy and classrooms, I discovered a piece by Ludlow (2004). This article combined critical pedagogy and critical race feminism and changed my entire outlook on the privileges inherent in the notion of the safe space. Ludlow had also deemed her classrooms "safe spaces" and but then shifted to contested space because of her realization that there were two coded meanings inherent in the safe space: free to self-explore, self-regulate, and self-express, which disempowered students are free from persecution or harassment, free from the assumptions of armored and concluded minds. It was code number two that her

privileged students resisted, who asserted their authority of experience. Authority of experience, according to hooks (1994), determines whose experiences should be the central focus of the classroom and university social space. For example, authority of experience for White students can shift the focus away from marginalized people and disconnect experience from systemic, historic, and institutional inquiry and realities. As Applebaum (2008) articulates, “[M]ore and more, systemically privileged students claim that their racist, sexist, or heterosexist expressions are legitimate voices to be heard in the classroom” (p. 406).

Ludlow, instead, calls for the classroom as a contested space, a collaborative and disputed space, for as she contends, “to the degree that safety is a privilege and a safe space is a privileged space, a safe space is counter to the goals of feminist pedagogy (p. 46).

Likeability in the Academy: Antithetical to a Critical Pedagogy

“Racism has nothing to do with our inherent goodness” (Shabazz, 2008)

Brazaitis (2003) describes a scenario at an experiential Group Relations conference. A White woman describes her experience “that she wanted to do deeper work in the conference, and reach out to others who did not look like her but did not feel safe” (p. 99). An African-American woman replied, “White woman always want it to be safe before they act, White women always want the conditions to be just right before they will take a risk, but then it is not any risk at all” (p. 99).

I am a White race identity female body in the United States. Here are some of the things that being a White race identity female body encompasses: White women = womanhood. The term woman, when not unpacked can convey this unspoken assumption as well. Being a White woman in the United States means that you are policed into the following roles and actions: passive, perfect, heterosexual, pure, silent, feminine, efficient, always busy, the ideal. Even more important is that White women are taught always to be nice, good - a good person, and most importantly to be liked. The script, or performance of niceness is in line with Bruner's (1990) assertions that one is to behave in a manner appropriate to the setting in which they find themselves, the unwritten code of the things you are supposed to say and do as a White woman. And really, what this likeability amounts to is that you are liked by other White people for towing the company line, keeping the system of domination in place – that is the true litmus test of niceness. That is the measurable outcome.

I think about the people closest to me in my life, those people who accept me for my flaws, my imperfections, my contradictions, my honesty, my fierceness, my mistakes, all of my identities, and for my willingness to stand for issues that matter to all of us. Why is it then, when I am true to myself, I stand up for what is right, my allies are not my first cognitive measuring stick of my likeability? If likeability means compromising integrity, silencing myself, passing as heterosexual, focusing on urgency at the expense of relationships, and protecting power and privilege, this is certainly not likeability – likeability is the code for remaining neutral, a bystander, a complicit oppressor. I remember many times speaking out on issues of power and privilege in meetings and

then immediately trying to find someone to process the experience with because I would feel unsettled and “off” – *less likeable*? But again, the implicit code in this likeability is that I was questioning whether or not I was too off-putting to other White people for speaking out or raising issues that folks in power might find unpalatable.

I’ll share two scenarios about my life and about whiteness that are truly painful and embarrassing for me to admit. These two examples illustrate how strong the racial contract is and how it played out in my own life. I grew up in a housing project in Altoona, Pennsylvania. Most of my neighbors were poor White and Black families who received some level of government assistance – my family that included my single mother and us three children (My father had the luxury of not paying child support while my mother’s sex life was frequently investigated – if you had a boyfriend who the welfare agents perceived as staying over too often, they could take your assistance away.) lived solely on welfare. I remember when I was about 11, I said, “Hi,” to my friend’s father (a Black male), Mr. Piner, as he walked by our housing unit – I was outside. My mother mocked me from inside the house. I questioned her. Without hesitation, my mother came outside, dragged me into the house and beat me for about 15 minutes. The lesson was clear...Whiteness is something that must be protected at all costs and the mechanisms for protecting it included violence and the realization that relationships were not unconditional.

The second scenario is a realization that came to me very recently – I simply answered a very complicated question. McRae (2004) asks White women a fundamental question. She asks, “when talking about oppression, how did White women deal with the

fact that they were the daughters, lovers, wives, sisters, and mothers of the White men that were identified as the oppressors?” (p. 1). Why is this question so fundamental? For me, it is the question that gave me the answer to how racism and sexism has enabled me to protect White men since I was a child. Every time I told my “story,” I kept my White father unmarked. I continued to reference “my single mother, my welfare mother, my poor mother, my angry mother, my abusive mother” without ever avowing my father’s existence, further leaving him unaccountable to the direct violence he caused in my life. I use the word violence because he used his power as an individual, White male to benefit from a hegemonic White supremacist, patriarchal¹, legal and economic system to escape having to take responsibility for his “family.” He refused to pay child support to my mother, and he stopped communicating with us when I was about 12 years old. The legal system allowed him to remain unaccountable until I had left home at 18. These significant life events have impacted me in ways that I am just beginning to explore in great depth. How has my silence continued to protect my oppressor? When I tell my story accurately, I hold my father accountable.

For three consecutive semesters, Professor Kay has asked me to talk to his MGMT 412 students about gender and gender in the workplace. What has been liberating for me in these trainings is that I am destabilizing gender norms for his students. My presentation is juxtaposed with another White woman who is in the Army but who very much reinforces a gender binary in the workplace and in her home. I approach my part of the presentation by asking students, “what are the first words that

¹ This grouping of terms: hegemonic White supremacist, capitalist patriarchy, I learned from bell hooks (1984).

come to mind when I say the word gender?” Invariably students say male and female, and it is then I get to define the difference between sex and gender, gender roles, and talk about gender as being thought, lived, and performed. I ask students if they have ever policed themselves from doing something because they would be perceived as either too masculine or too feminine. Students usually smile and nod, “Yes.” I talk about multidimensionality and intersectionality and tell students I cannot think about my gender performance without considering my class status, my race, my sexuality, my birth order, where I grew up – because all of these identities converge and influence my gender. I tell students that in a patriarchal culture, the internalized sexism of women helps keep this binary system in place. I tell students that I strive to be an ally to all men and women who are being policed by others to fit into a particular gender performance. I tell students I feel a real tension between women’s expectations of me and men’s expectations of me and how I manage this very confusing process. For example, White women, especially, expect me to relate to them superficially, as if by virtue of us being women we experience the world similarly. Many White women expect me to engage in small talk, uninteresting conversations and pleasantries, like shopping or dieting. I hate these conversations. And most men, I feel, seem thrown by my strong opinions, my knowledge, and my refusal to make them the center of my world. Even with men I am close to, I constantly struggle against the subtleties of sexism.

I tell students that when I came out as queer (my sexual orientation), my gender performance felt less confined and constrained, but it wasn’t until much more recently that I figured out just why. When I came out as queer, it was the beginning of the

journey of, at the very best, becoming consciously competent about how I live and enact (on others) my identities. As a queer woman, I was no longer the ideal in femininity or womanhood. As a queer, White woman, I pose a threat to straight, White women and straight, White men. I am spending, as Gorski (2007) articulates, my likeability as the nice, White woman just by virtue of performing as a White queer. This personal example illustrates the potential to disrupt my access to White, male power and puts my likeability “at risk.” I say that I pose a threat because when I keep marking whiteness and patriarchy as central tenets of my leadership, this threatens to expose what we Whites have been taught to protect. It exposes our complicity, our accountability, and unmask the “epistemologies of ignorance” (Mills, 1997, p. 18). I pose a minor threat to Black men; I say minor because when I stay in the guilt of whiteness, I am passive and reinforce my whiteness and therefore femaleness, whether intended or not. My White guilt reinforces male power. As a queer, White woman, when I reinforce my queerness, and interrupt the ideal of femininity, when I have voice, when I am assertive, when I interrupt the silence, I deconstruct the notion of the pure, ideal, good, White woman. Therefore, I interrupt both whiteness and masculinity. I make space for a new White womanhood that is not an ideal in whiteness, purity, goodness, or femininity. Spending likeability, therefore, privilege and whiteness is crucial for White educators in countering oppression, interrupting White supremacy, and challenging status quo ideology in the academy and classroom social space.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Although teachers and students contest and negotiate relationships, knowledge, voice, and power marked and unmarked by authority of experience, this study explores how meaning is made in the classroom and university space when negotiations are not usually transparent, marked, or named by status quo narratives, internalized dominance, internalized oppression, and power that may surface. I examined what is at stake for the teacher, the student, and the classroom as a community of learners. Further, I examined what is at stake for the researcher and how my role and active participation contributed to each learning community observed. This study set out to explore how transformative education, engaged pedagogy, and critical progressive pedagogy and multiculturalism contests, designs, and redesigns the classroom and social space at a university.

The Setting

The space, or field, includes a description of the setting, site, population, and phenomenon according to Marshall and Rossman (2006). This explanation includes a description of the University, its demographics, political landscape, and descriptive information about the academic department in subsequent chapters.

The University in which the study took place is a large, public university, founded in 1972 with distributed campuses. Each campus has a distinctive academic focus. The

university boasts several “firsts,” such as the first graduate degree in bio-defense, first university to outsource on-campus housing management, and the first engineering school based on computer-related programs (University Factbook, 2008, p. 1). In the Fall of 2008, this university enrolled 30,714 students, with 18,809 undergraduates and 11,224 graduate students in 177 degree programs at the bachelor’s (71), master’s (74), doctoral (31) and professional levels (University Factbook, 2008, p. 7).

Some demographic information about this University compiled by the Office of Institutional Research & Reporting includes a residential population of 4,725, an estimated annual FTE of 22,4320, and a Fall 2008 freshmen class of 2,558. The largest undergraduate program by enrollment is Biology, the largest graduate by enrollment is Curriculum & Instruction, and the largest enrollment by academic division is the College of Humanities & Social Sciences at 8,208. There are 1,328 full-time instructional and research faculty, 1,005 part-time instructional faculty, and 903 graduate students (Quick Facts, 2008-9).

Student demographics by gender: 16,999 female, 13,513 male, and 202 not reported. Demographics by ethnicity: 14,014 White, 3,612 Asian, 2,105 Black, 1,589 Hispanic, 87 American Indian, 7,576 unreported, and 1,731 NRA (non-resident alien, or International) students (Quick Facts, 2008-9). Demographics for full-time instructional faculty: 542 female and 786 male; 927 White and 208 are in the broad category “minority”. Part-time faculty demographics: 478 female; 527 male; 787 White and 153 “minority.”

Why Qualitative Design? The Illustrative or Exploratory Case Study

The methodology selected for this project was qualitative, specifically, the illustrative or exploratory case study in that this method answers *how* or *why* questions, particularly when the researcher has, according to Yin (1994), “little control over events” (p. 1). Miles and Huberman (1994) define the case as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (p. 25). The case study is defined by Anfara and Mertz (2006) as an “investigation of a contemporary social phenomenon within its real-life context, using multiple data sources” (p. 40). For example, if this research project were studying who faculty and students are in a particular classroom, a survey instrument might be appropriate. Because this particular research examined how students and faculty engage in the classroom, the illustrative or exploratory case study was an appropriate method. Further, case study method looks intensely at an individual or small participant pool and does not focus on a universal truth. With the exploratory case study, the background, development, current conditions, and environmental interactions of one or more individuals, groups, communities, businesses, or institutions are observed, recorded, and analyzed for stages or patterns in relation to internal and external influences. In other words, the context of the particular classroom community and the real-life experiences and identities participants bring into the classroom community influence the meaning-making experience and were considered and explored in the data collection.

These two communication classrooms were observed in the Fall 2008 semester. These are descriptive studies, as this project utilizes one or two instances of an event, in

this case, two specific communication classrooms to show what a situation is like (Palmquist, 1993). Thus, illustrative or exploratory case studies serve primarily to make the unfamiliar familiar and to give readers a common language about the topic in question, and seek a holistic understanding of the event(s) or situation(s). For example, the unfamiliar may include classroom norms, discussions, protocol, theories of the communication discipline and student engagement, nuances of each particular classroom and the unique personalities of each participant contribute to each field or social space. The exploratory or illustrative case study seeks to make these components familiar to the scholarly audience.

This study is exploratory, the individual experiences of the sample subjects are at least partly the product of individual interpretation, and the context of an experience is a major element of its nature; the task is to identify the conditions under which a certain relationship or condition or response holds true, according to Yin (1994) since the context cannot be controlled. As Martin and Rossman (2006) argue for the justification of qualitative research, “thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values and assumptive worlds are involved” (p. 53). Further, they suggest, the illustrative or exploratory case study “accepts the value of context and setting, and searches for a deeper understanding of the participants’ lived experiences of the phenomenon under study” (p. 55).

Research Purposes

The purpose of my participant and classroom observations was to have a complete record of the curriculum as students encounter and process it. I wanted to observe and document: what was presented in lecture or other class activities and *how* it was

presented; what was said during class discussions and how students and professor responded to it; what was the overall tenor or perceived classroom climate of the classroom and how understanding of the material may have been affected by the context; how diverse was the class and how was student interaction influenced by multidimensionality. I needed to observe all of these things in order to understand the context of students' responses and to be able to ask direct questions about the ideas that the course presents to them. I attended all class meetings of the two classes I studied except for days that midterms and final exams were administered, totaling 25 site visits for Communication 305, and 27 site visits for Communication 101.

In bureaucratic institutions, internalized dominance and oppression are normalized as hegemonic abstract systems and difficult to challenge. This research endeavor explored how teachers and students negotiated relationships marked by internalized dominance, internalized oppression, and unequal distributions of power in the university space or field. Internalized dominance is marked by a sense of conscious and unconscious superiority and authority, an exercise of power and privilege in pursuit of one's own well-being and development; internalized oppression is marked by inferiority, powerlessness, and the limited ability to access resources needed for well-being and survival (Rosado & Barreto, 2002). Bourdieu (1984) elaborates on dominance and oppression using the terms freedom and constraint that are what he calls the secret codes of symbolic domination that manifest in "modalities of practice, the ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent, or even of speaking" (p. 51). What are the modalities operating in these two social spaces or fields? Anfara and Mertz (2006) define

the social field as having a “temporal boundary, a particular purpose to be achieved in that time frame, and a recognizable set of players” (p. 156).

When do educators create trustful relationships that foster, as Howard (2006) articulates, “authentic engagement with the other” (p. 39)? This investigation explored how power dynamics unfolded in the classroom and university space and how these dynamics were negotiated to critically engage students and teachers, challenge assumptions, and yet manage to keep members of learning communities persisting in experiments of deep democracy, especially when students and educators are challenged or experienced cognitive dissonance.

Another goal of this research project was to connect tacit theory (my personal understanding of theory, experience, phenomenon, identities, and the negotiation of power in social spaces), with formal theory from the extensive interdisciplinary literature review as well as other theoretical bodies of communication teaching and learning theory, as well as Berger and Luckmann’s (1990) research on the social construction of reality to help make sense and meaning, generate themes, and to perhaps as Marshall and Rossman (2006) argue “raise this work to generalize about it” (p. 31). Finally, another purpose of this research was emancipatory, according to Willis (2007) in that this research is “an effort to acquire emancipatory knowledge” (p. 275) and Marshall and Rossman (2006) in that these two educators created circumstances to encourage others “to engage in social action” (p. 34).

Some of the guiding meta-questions that culminated in my final research questions included: Can transformative education counter Althusser’s (1971) contention

that education serves as an ideological state apparatus, thereby ensuring that inequities are replicated to serve ruling class interests? Can transformative education redesign social space? What are the invisible relationships educators are reproducing or interrupting in the classroom space? Are educators countering or passing along “common sense” ideologies and what are those common sense ideologies? Which socio-political structures are educators interrupting, reinforcing, or countering? How is identity and multidimensionality of identity managed and respected in the classroom space? What and who are these dominant ideologies protecting and at whose expense? How do educators maintain a space that encourages inquiry rather than certainty?

What strategies do educators employ to negotiate and manage content and the process of learning to examine where it is challenging and successful? How do educators engage in critically reflective teaching methods that invite learners to engage, challenge, and grow in this process while attending to their own well-being in engaged pedagogy? What particular classroom exercises do educators use to engage in critical thinking, reflective learning and inquiry, rather than replicating binary oppositions? How do educators encourage and engage students who remain silent in the classroom space? How do educators negotiate their unmarked, privileged identities, as well as marked, marginalized identities, to maintain classroom authority, operationalized as credibility not authoritarianism? What are the personal risks involved for educators when using authority of experience or self as text? How are course evaluations designed and interpreted with respect to content, process, and identity negotiation?

The Research Questions

This study examined when negotiation of power in the classroom and university space is experienced as othering as a subordinating experience, and for whom; when the interruption of power was experienced as supportive and for whom; when this interruption was experienced as exploitative and for whom; when this interruption was experienced as liberating and for whom; how power dynamics unfolded in the classroom and university space, and how these dynamics were negotiated to critically engage students and teachers, challenge assumptions, and yet manage to keep members of learning communities persisting. How do educators maintain a space that encourages inquiry rather than certainty?

Specifically, this investigation explored classroom and pedagogical strategies that educators employed to negotiate and manage content and the process of learning to examine where it is both challenging and successful. In particular, this research sought to identify meta-cognitive strategies that educators consciously or unconsciously employed when learning communities were dealing with contentious issues. How do educators engage in critically reflective teaching methods that invite learners to engage, challenge, and grow in this process while attending to their own well-being in engaged pedagogy?

Finally, I wanted to explore how faculty members negotiate their social identities in the university space. How do they negotiate their unmarked, privileged identities, as well as marked and unmarked marginalized identities, to maintain classroom authority, operationalized as credibility not authoritarianism. Are course evaluations designed and interpreted with respect to content, process, and identity negotiation, but more

importantly, is there a process in which evaluations are mindfully discussed and explored if and when students conflate cognitive dissonance with the identity(ies) of instructors?

Role of the Researcher

My role in each site was participant, as Marshall and Rossman (2006) describe, in that I went about “ordinary life in a role or set of roles constructed in the setting” (p. 72). However, my level of participation emerged as a natural part of the classroom situation. As a communication educator committed to social justice, it would have been unethical for me to remain silent, passive, or “neutral” if and when critical opportunities arose that allowed me to contribute to the overall classroom experience and learning endeavor. As the lens for this research project is critical, an emancipatory role was both mandatory and ethical. Ellis (2008) describes situational ethics, or ethics in practice “deal with the unpredictable, often subtle, yet ethically important moments that come up in the field” (p. 4). To illustrate the significance of emancipatory participation implications, for example, I invoke the work of Kivel (2002) who states that, “people tell jokes and make comments sometimes out of ignorance, but usually knowing at some level that the comment puts down someone else and creates collusion between the speaker and the listener” (p. 107). If and when I witnessed such an act of ignorance in the classroom by students or instructors, I would not simply be a bystander or witness since I was both a participant and a researcher. It was my ethical and moral obligation as a critical educator to notice, interrupt, and make meaning from such acts of ignorance, whether or not they are intentional or unconscious, with members of the learning community. As Ravitch and Wirth (2007) articulate “[T]he insider action researcher, then, is an ongoing state of

negotiating his or her research objectives, professional identity/ies, and relationships that are embedded in the site” (p. 77). I would argue, however, that I straddled the dichotomous position of insider versus outsider. Members of the learning community did know I was observing for the purposes of research, however, I made no claims of objectivity or that I was, as Manning posits (2008), “removed from all social, cultural and political influences” (p. 3). Rather, my direct observations, classroom participation, personal interviews, and one-on-one conversations with students and faculty contributed to a subjectivity that “allows for multiplicity and complexity to be within the research” (Manning, 2008, p. 4).

Further, when instructors invoked my research and theoretical expertise, teaching and personal experience, or asked for my contributions to a particular classroom discussion or subject, it was my obligation to participate, while needing to critically navigate the amount of power and space I took up as a participant and researcher. As a both a scholar and facilitator I have many years of experience in the inquiry, study, and praxis of multicultural issues, including the National Coalition Building Institute models: welcoming diversity, moving beyond dichotomous positions (controversial issues), interrupting prejudicial jokes, slurs, and remarks, examining our multiple (multidimensional and intersectional) identities, ally behavior, White privilege, power and dominance, and gender as performance. I am a co-founder and trainer of the university’s Safe Zone Ally program with attention on the intersectionalities of oppression, homophobia, and heterosexism. Both instructors in each communication course were familiar with my areas of research and practice. My participation allowed

reciprocity in each learning community in that “many people will not respond to or trust someone who will not take a stand” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 79). Further, I was positioned to offer academic and co-curricular resources to all members of each social space studied. For example, in Dr. May’s class, I discussed the importance of attending Hispanic Heritage Month activities offered in September and October and how these programs bridged the academic curriculum with co-curricular learning opportunities. Dr. May also called upon me to provide information on two programs featuring Professor Robert Jensen. He gave a talk during *Fall for the Book* programming related to masculinity and pornography and a program I co-designed with the Associate Director of African American Studies on social justice and sustainability. Dr. May asked me to provide descriptive information on these programs at least three times during the semester.

Whyte (1984), when describing the active collaborator researcher, states that the “most effective field workers don’t treat people in the field study as passive respondents” (p. 74). According to Heron, participatory research is “best achieved by interactions that involve fully reciprocal human relationships in which we learn and change by democratically interacting with others” (Willis, 2007, p. 263). According to Reid (2004), feminist action research is a conceptual and methodological research framework that is fundamentally about exploring and pursuing opportunities for social justice. O’Brien (2001) argues that the radical stream of action research “has its roots in Marxian ‘dialectical materialism’ and the praxis orientations of Antonio Gramsci, has a strong focus on emancipation and the overcoming of power imbalances” and strives for social

transformation via an advocacy process to strengthen peripheral groups in society (p. 3). Finally, as Harding (1989) argues, “[The researcher] appears in these analyses not as an invisible, anonymous, disembodied voice of authority, but as a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests – and ones that are sometimes in tension with each other” (p. 29). In response to these issues, according to Reid (2004), participant research is both value-driven and self-consciously not value-neutral.

I revealed my intentions of the study to the class publicly, as each instructor afforded me the time and support to do so. In-depth interviews with students were voluntary, therefore, students had the ultimate decision as to whether or not they chose to participate in a personal interview with me. Students who agreed to be interviewed received a full explanation and description of the study, affording them another opportunity to participate or decline if they felt comfortable or uncomfortable. Two students in Communication 305 did not respond to my request for an interview. On the other hand, in Communication 101, two students asked if they could do personal interviews with me, but time did not permit those two interviews to take place.

Researcher Biases

The particular biases I carried with me into this project were numerous. The first is that I am a White, female educator committed to social justice both at the macro-level and individual interactive level. My background as a first-generation college student who is female, queer, raised poor, able-bodied, non-religious, English speaking, and U.S. born provide particular lenses and biases that I bring. I am acutely attuned to White privilege and power, racism, sexism, and heterosexism because of my particular standpoint and

location in social spaces. I am the first and only of three children in my immediate family not only to attend but to graduate from college with a bachelor's degree at the age of 27. I am the only one to pursue not only a master's but a doctoral degree. Knowledge and ideas, for me, are a matter of survival. Because I approached higher education as a luxury, something I longed for rather than felt entitled to, I deeply appreciated it, but was deeply critical of it due to my background. I entered higher education with ignorance in the power and privilege I held in different aspects of my identities, however, I gravitated toward critical theory and pedagogy, though I didn't have the language to name it until much later. According to Brayton (1998), the social location of the researcher (e.g., age, race, orientation, and class) plays a role in shaping the research process. It is important for the researcher to identify their own location in order to address biases that may result from their own location in the social world.

I am aware of my own White racial and queer identity development and as much as possible, maintained a high level of critical consciousness about my own judgments and expectations about these two social spaces. Looking back and reflecting on my own White and queer identity development, for example, I realized I was not so generous with other Whites, and especially White queers who are unaware of their own privileges or who replicated oppressive practices, and I tended to distance myself from other Whites. In other words, as I continue along the White identity development continuum, reconciling my own positive European heritage, I have become more generous toward and more willing to ally with, other Whites who are committed to more democratic and just institutions and classrooms while being more able to recognize that I live in a racist

culture and will always benefit from the privileges of being White. I have come to realize that distancing from other Whites is upholding racism. Borrowing the words of Melanie Bush (2004) who posits that there are cracks in the walls of dominance, I wish to illuminate some of those “cracks” in these two particular classrooms by virtue of my own positionalities, locations, identities, and standpoints.

Finally, as a White, queer woman interested in the rhetorical strategies and implications of whiteness in the classroom, I was consciously avoiding as Cooks (2003) articulates, “centering primarily on the experiences of the White students in each class” (p. 246) while remaining aware that “structures of racial categorization always point away from White as a referent” are much needed and “often subsumed under the auspices of intercultural and interpersonal communication” (p. 246).

Queering the Space, Queering the Methodology

As I mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, the universalizing of experiences serves to essentialize and assert authority of experience granted by dominant socio-political systems and positions. In Chapter 1, I discussed the emancipatory role that critical race theory (CRT) can serve in the critical classroom and curriculum. CRT as a movement, according to Delgado and Stefancic (2001) “considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, context, group- and self-interest, and even feelings and the unconscious” (p. 3). Further, CRT “contains an activist dimension” (p. 3). In sum, many CRT scholars agree on the following tenets: 1) racism is ordinary and common; 2) there is an interest convergence, meaning that “the majority

group tolerates advances for racial justice only when it suits its interest to do so” (p. 149); and 3) race and races are products of social thought and relations.

In Chapter 2, I discussed the systemic nature of heterosexism, and utilized Lugg’s (2006) work on queer legal theory (QLT). QLT is a “spin off” body of Critical Race Theory, interested in the social liberation of sexual minorities, acknowledges there are many different ways to perform those identities, and that orientation, identity, sex, and gender are highly variable. QLT asserts that there is no one single way to be female, male, or queer (anti-essentialist). In this anti-essentialist standpoint are the concepts of intersectionality and multidimensionality. Intersectionality theorists argue that disentangling sex from race becomes essentialist. A White, queer woman experiences the world as a White, queer woman, living at the intersections of these identities. One does not experience the world solely as a White, a queer, or a woman, but rather these identities are complex and lived in at once. As Barnard (2004) argues, disentangling and essentializing any one of these identities does not even allow the space for the White, queer woman to exist. I argued, for example, that a White queer woman who is asked to participate in a women’s group as a woman only, is essentialized: her other identities simply cannot be checked at the door to accommodate the category “woman.” From the QLT standpoint, multidimensionality acknowledges that queer can hold multiple meanings and can be experienced quite differently from person to person. There is no one right way to be queer because race, class, gender, position, religion, or life experience complicates the category.

Heteronormativity, the prevailing legal hegemonic system enacted in policy in the state of Virginia forces lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer faculty, staff, and students in positions of employment to conform to heterosexual standards in educational systems for fear that they can be terminated if their status is known. Thereby, heteronormative and rigid gender standards correlate with and contribute to the internalized oppression of members of the LGBTQ community, internalized dominance in heterosexuals, as well as exacerbate and reinforce a binary relationship between LGBTQ and heterosexuals. Heteronormativity and gender policing mark LGBTQ folks as the “other” and keeps heterosexuality as normal, unmarked, and a privileged class not to be questioned. Further, heteronormativity as a system deems what is normal and acceptable, especially with regard to sex, gender, and sexuality.

As an activist researcher in the Communication classrooms, I asserted and avowed my White, queer femaleness from an anti-essentialist standpoint. In other words, I queered my race, my gender, and my sexuality. I named and marked the ways that whiteness is performative and as Cooks argues (2003), to “make visible the constraints of whiteness” (248). Utilizing my White, queer femaleness as an asset, I refused to compartmentalize or perform any of these identities as singular for as Barnard (2004) argues,

[T]hose who think of their own identity as singular, those who are unable to imagine multiple subjectivities in others, and those who experience only one site of oppression against themselves, tend to universalize their limited understanding by colonizing other subjects. (p. 3)

In this way, I called into question the work posed by Berube (2001) who examined “how gay stays White and what kind of White it stays” (p. 249). In this

seminal piece, Berube deconstructs the racism and sexism of mainstream “gay” politics and identifies several mechanisms that serve to keep LGBTQ politics White and male. In positioning myself as a White, queer female, I refused to privilege neither White nor male supremacy, keeping these identities interlocked, and aligned myself as a White queer who is “irrevocably committed to antiracist work” (Barnard, 2004, p. 5). I “raced” myself first, making whiteness visible. As Jindal (2004) states in her article on American militarization after September 11, “the gay community’s emphasis on the similarities of experience between (White) heterosexuality and lesbian and gay homosexuality, through a shared racism against brown folk, has helped White gays and lesbians to assimilate and become part of the White heterosexual nation” (p. 24).

Further, in the learning communities, I refused to define queer, interrupted heteronormativity as a prevailing system, and consciously interrupted and named whiteness in these classroom spaces in order to keep possibilities open rather than constrain them, thereby employing a queer and critical race methodology. Further, the learning communities allowed for this interruption to occur and the faculty supported this interruption through the interest convergence tenet of CRT by way of critical allyship.

Though there are many queer methods, I utilize Warner’s (2004). Warner examines psychological research that serves to make homo-normative the lives and experiences of lesbians, gays, bisexual, and transgender people by employing the seminal work of Judith Butler. As Warner states “quite simply, for Butler, categories such as boy, girl, gay and straight are not givens, but social constructions we constantly perform and reperform in order to naturalize them” (p. 322). In other words, I was not at all interested

in making queer monolithic, but very much committed to not “converting it to something ‘normal’” (p. 321). In this way, I made myself and my identities unintelligible, unknowable, and less likely to have assumptions placed on me that are associated with lesbian and gay identities. To elaborate, I borrow an analogy from Warner by arguing that students could not place expectations of being queer because I refused to make explicit a particular queer identity. As I queered race, I also complicated gender by not adhering to the constructions of White womanhood that I articulated in Chapter 2. Lee et al. (2010) posit that “hostile attitudes are reserved for women who challenge their prescribed roles and threaten male dominance” (p. 398). Therefore, in my standpoints, which were assets in challenging stable identities, I put myself up against expectations of whiteness, homo-normativity, sexism, and heterosexism. Warner argues

[Q]ueerness means misperforming in such a way that ‘natural’ assumptions are called into question; mixing and matching in ways that are not allowed and not called for; living (or researching) as a series of nonsequiturs which highlight that the supposed ‘natural’ relations in the matrix are merely constructions. (p. 325)

Using this particular standpoint allowed for an openness of possibilities and anti-essentialism that I, in turn, afforded the members of each learning community. For example, though I collected demographic data from students, they were not asked to check “boxes,” but rather, they were asked to describe various aspects of their identities. In this way, I allowed them to self-identify on their terms. In my personal interviews with students, I deliberately did not ask them questions about their identity(ies), but rather allowed them to disclose that information in ways that were not predetermined or driven by my own agenda. In my interviews with the two faculty members, I did ask them what identities are especially important for them when they enter the classroom and

interestingly, found that both Dr. Jay and Dr. May named their roles as educators or teachers first before any other social identity marker. The identities of which they are marginalized in the socio-political hierarchies were named second.

Data Sites

The data I drew upon in this study came from my study of power in two communication classes at one university. The courses I observed utilized elements of both engaged pedagogy, according to hooks (1994), and critical pedagogy according to Shor (1992). Specifically, these elements included: 1) a commitment to the process of self-actualization, and empowerment of students and teachers; 2) the habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning; 3) personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse; and 4) the instructors' use of marginalized identity or identities as text to illustrate the realities of social inequities. For operationalization purposes, I decided that I would observe classes in which at least two-thirds of the course material and/or teaching strategies are engaged and critical. Further, power negotiation in these two classrooms differed from each other and from other communication courses because of the multidimensional and intersection of both privileged and marginalized identities each of these instructors occupy at the state institution of which the study took place.

The two classes I observed differed from each other in key ways. First, they were two very different types of courses. Communication 101: Introduction to Interpersonal and Small Group Communication meets the oral communication general education

requirement for all students at University Y while Communication 305: Intercultural Communication is a requirement for the Communication major and has a prerequisite of 3 credits in a 100 or 200 level communication course or 60 credits with a grade of C or better in Communication 200 (Introduction to Communication). In addition to satisfying the university-wide general education requirements and requirements for the BA degree in CHSS, students majoring in communication must complete 36 credits in communication: Five required courses (15 credits): COMM 250, 300, 301, 302, of which COMM 305 is one, according to the 2007-2008 course catalog. Hence, these two courses were different in size, scope, and target audience. Communication 101 is capped at 26 students as there are between 37 and 40 sections offered respectively every Fall and Spring semester. Communication 305, a core course in the Communication major for the Bachelor of Arts, seats 40 students. Third, they differed in pedagogical approach because of the nature and function of each course. Finally, the identities and academic status of each respective instructor positioned them in very different ways. For example, race, gender, sexual orientation, and academic class, tenure track versus term faculty, played important roles for each instructor but in different ways. Table 2 provides a basic summary of the two courses, and further descriptions follow.

Table 2: Overview of Field Sites

Course Nickname	Professor	Number of Students	Class Demographics
Comm. 101	Jay	26	All academic levels mostly freshmen, and sophomores; 15 of 26 are female.
Comm. 305	May	40	All Bachelors of Arts in Communication majors, 50% are juniors; 25% are seniors; the rest, save one, are sophomores.

My sample included two educators by way of informal and formal nomination. The data collection sites were chosen by formal and informal means. Instructor Jay was one of approximately 50 scholars formally submitted to the Center for Teaching Excellence as an educator who demonstrates teaching excellence by faculty peers and respective students. This particular educator was selected to receive a Teaching Excellence Award, 2007-2008 and formally recognized by the Provost's Office. I ultimately chose this educator because she is in the Communication discipline and because I have a working relationship with her. Further, as the primary person who provides curriculum support to all sections of Communication 101 vis-à-vis the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) welcoming and affirming diversity model, more than 10 of our facilitators during the course of nearly two years, reported to me the high level of engagement, facilitator support, and participation of Dr. Jay during these trainings. Anecdotally, a few of our student facilitators had class with Dr. Jay and expressed how enjoyable she made a general education requirement such as Communication 101.

Instructor May is an educator who was recognized by at least 5-10 students in Communication 365: Women and Media, a course I taught in the Fall of 2007 semester, who directly referred to the educator as an excellent teacher who transformed their educational experience at University Y by employing critical curriculum strategies. Of these 5-10 students who directly referred to this educator by name, at least 5 directly and repeatedly named this educator on a regular basis (at least five times during the course of the 15-week semester). These five students (will not name these students to protect anonymity) repeatedly referred to Dr. May's ability to develop deep critical thinking skills on concepts they learned from the instructor's course and would use the knowledge gained in Communication 305 to enhance the discussion in our Communication 365 learning community. Very often, these students would scaffold the knowledge learned in Professor May's course and relate it to different ideas, concepts, and theories discussed in the Women in Media course. Further, these students recommended publicly that other students should take any course that Dr. May taught.

I narrowed my study to no more than two educators in order to be able to observe every class session. These two teachers not only demonstrated teaching excellence but they are both Communication instructors, the discipline for which I was trained in both my bachelors and master's studies. Because I am familiar with the learning objectives, and discourse community of the Communication discipline, the selection of these two professors enhanced the reliability and contributed to my field and discipline.

My sites included the classroom spaces of two educators, one White, female lesbian (who is out in the classroom) and one African-American, heterosexual male. The

female educator is a Term Faculty (her contract is renewed annually based on teaching evaluations, committee work, and service) who teaches many sections of Communication 101: Introduction to Small Group and Interpersonal Communication at University Y. She also teaches Communication courses at the Northern Virginia Community College. The male educator is a tenure-track, Assistant Professor (has not received tenure as of yet) who teaches Communication 305: Intercultural Communication and Communication 326: Rhetoric of Social Movements. I have prior professional working relationships with both participating faculty and informed them entirely of my project and its purpose by way of an email of inquiry in April of 2008 (pre-HSRB approval) followed by a formal, lengthy detailed letter (post-HSRB) approval so that all processes were transparent. My working relationships with each professor enabled me to gain more nuanced data because these two educators allowed me to attend every class session as well as “capture the deep meaning of experience in the educator’s own words” because in-depth interviews “require close, personal interactions between researcher and participant, often over long periods of time” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, pp. 54-55). Because of my own commitment to teaching excellence, in that important classroom dialogue surfaces in a generative way, like Freire’s methods suggest, this research experience was and will continue to be valuable and useful for me as an educator, a teacher, and a student affairs practitioner.

Gaining Access to the Site(s)

To gain access to each site, I sent a formal request via email (see Appendix A), describing in detail the specifics of my study, to both Drs. Jay and May on April 21,

2008. By April 23, 2008, both instructors agreed to participate. Dr. Jay was even willing to allow me to start collecting data in her Summer 2008 Communication 101 courses. I declined because I had not yet applied to the Human Subjects Review Board, and because the validity of my data would be compromised given that Summer class sessions are very different from Fall and Spring semesters and because it would compromise the uniformity of data collection in general. By August 2008, both faculty members afforded me their syllabi and welcoming materials prior to the start of data collection. Dr. May gave me a copy of the Communication 305 reader “Our Voice: Essays in Culture, Ethnicity, and Communication” as well as all supplemental reading materials for the course. Dr. Jay sent me several exercises via email that would she would be utilizing during the Fall 2008 semester.

Sample

The two illustrative or exploratory case studies included one faculty and students in two undergraduate communication courses. Communication 101 includes 28 (two above the cap of 26) student participants. All academic levels were represented, mostly freshmen, and sophomores; 15 were female, 13 were male; students represented various ethnic backgrounds (Asian heritage, African heritage, and White/European heritage primarily) including students born outside the United States from the following countries: Nepal, Jamaica, China, and India. Communication 305 included 33 enrolled students. All but about five participants were Bachelors of Arts in Communication majors, 50% are juniors; 25% are seniors; the rest, save one, were sophomores. There were very few communication minors and three students who were taking this course to fulfill

requirements of the Conflict Resolution major. There were 14 males and 19 females in the course. Students were from various ethnic groups (Latina/o heritage, Asian heritage, Middle Eastern heritage, White/European heritage, and only one African heritage student, who is male) and varying religious belief systems (Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, and Catholic). Along with informed consent forms, I collected demographic information from the students in each specific classroom space that includes: birth order, place of birth, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and private identities. This information was collected anonymously in that names would not be attached. Table 3 is a summary of the course texts, films, guest speakers, and some of the exercises utilized by each instructor.

Table 3: Summary of Course Texts and Activities

	COMM 101: Interpersonal	COMM 305: Intercultural
Concept-Focused Texts	Comm. 101: Interpersonal Communication Media Pkg. that includes text, supplemental materials	Experiencing Intercultural Communication (Martin & Nakayama)
Readers	None	Our Voices: Essays in Culture (Gonzales); supplemental readings specifically on different identity groups (e.g., gay and Irish).
Films	None shown by instructor; students show film clips for a particular group project.	<i>Crash</i> ; <i>Obsession</i> ; Jay Z clip; Robert DuVall film; 9/11 shorts; <i>Do the Right Thing</i> clip;
Other (Guest Speakers)	NCBI Presentation: Welcoming Diversity	Mock hiring practices; Where do you stand on the issue? One word you never want to hear about your group (taken from the caucus section of the National Coalition Building Institute's welcoming diversity & identity curriculum).

Data Collection Methods

To enhance the reliability of my research, I followed a corroborating model that included collecting data from the following sources: 1) audio taped in-depth interviews with each faculty member; 2) audio taped focus groups or individual in-depth interviews and follow up with students who agreed to participate; 3) participant and direct observations that included micro-analysis of classroom dialogues, exchanges, and conversations (each classroom session was audio-taped and transcribed verbatim); 4) classroom assessments; and 5) journals or writing samples related to course content and process when possible. The classroom assessment techniques followed the protocol of Angelo and Cross (1993), Cross and Steadman (1996), and Brookfield (1995). Classroom assessments, according to Angelo and Cross (1993), are “practical questions that the teacher faces in teaching the class that deepen personal understandings” (p. 3). For example, the question “What is one unanswered question you have after today’s discussion?” is an assessment question that can provide deep insight about further inquiry, meaning-making, and confusion about readings or discussions. This kind of assessment allowed the instructor to use this information to address the questions in the following class period and to assess what impacted students the most, what information may be needed to guide students, gauge the impact versus intent of the lesson plan, and to determine patterns of understanding or misunderstandings.

The delimitations (things within my control) for this project included: Two Communication classes, students and instructors, Fall 2008: Dr. Jay, Communication 101: Introduction to Interpersonal and Small Group Communication, and Dr. May,

Communication 305: Intercultural Communication. Originally, I had set out to do focus groups in addition to personal interviews. Based on the relationships I established with students, I delimited my research to only include personal interviews rather than focus groups. This decision was both intuitive and intentional and proved to be an invaluable crucial decision in building trust, reciprocity, and generosity with the students that came as a result of my participation in the classroom and because of the attentiveness in the interviewing process.

The limitations (things out of my control) included the willingness of my participants to respond as demonstrated by student willingness to participate in follow up interviews or focus groups; student willingness to speak or not to speak or to participate or not participate in class discussions; students who were a no-show for classes, or any unforeseen illnesses or absences on the part of the researcher. For example, in November I missed a Thursday class for both Communication 101 and 305 because I attended a conference held out of state.

In-depth interviews were crucial for this project. I wanted to examine the teachers' and students' own words, eliciting their "stories" rather than having an imposed agenda. Yin (1994) states that "one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview" (p. 84), therefore, I chose this as one of my methods for gathering information. First, in-depth interviews with students revealed the instructor's practices and actions through the students' eyes. I chose open-ended questions to elicit information from each student to allow for their interpretations and opinions regarding the course, the instructor, the environment, and their participation in the course. I

interviewed four students from each class to have a purposeful sample. Students varied by race or ethnicity, gender, as well as other characteristics, such as class standing (sophomore, junior, or senior). Each interview was audio taped and transcribed verbatim so that I was able to maintain authentic presence with the student, observe body language, maintain eye contact, and communicate genuine interest in their answers to the questions. As Yin states, audio tapes provide “a more accurate rendition of any interview than any other method” (p. 86). These specific in-depth questions were directly informed by my 15 years of teaching experience in the classroom, the research questions, and Spradley’s (1979) interviewing strategies that focus on rapport building and moves through the stages of apprehension, exploration, cooperation, and participation. The interview questions for both students and instructors solicited responses related to classroom incidents and discussions, classroom climate and tenor, challenges, biases, teaching strategies and exercises, classroom content, and overall engagement with the material, dialogue, instructor, other students and the course in general. See Appendix B for the student interview questions.

I hoped to interview each instructor twice, but due to time constraints, scheduling, and the time needed to build rapport and trust with each instructor allowed for only one interview during the Fall 2008 semester. See Appendix C for the faculty interview questions.

Though tedious and grueling, each week I personally transcribed each classroom session verbatim rather than outsourcing the audio tapes for expediency. I am proficient in transcription and typing based on former training and years of experience as an

administrative assistant. Because I was present and observed each classroom session, I was familiar with the students who were speaking on tape. Further, I had valuable insight into the content, context, and discussions, especially as a communication scholar. I made this choice was for the integrity of the data as well as to provide ultimate confidentiality. Transcribing verbatim allowed a breadth of information to surface rather than merely extract relevant information which may have predetermined themes in the data and compromise the themes that emerged.

Data Analysis

Because this study was exploratory, there was little prior instrumentation. Miles and Huberman (1994) list the argumentation for this type of approach, stating that “predesigned and structured instruments blind the researcher to the site” and that “qualitative research lives and breathes through seeing the context; it is the particularities that produce the generalities, not the reverse” (p. 35). To reduce and interpret the data for categories and themes, an open coding method was used in a line-by-line analysis of all transcripts, as Strauss and Corbin (1990) assert, to “ask questions about the data; and to make comparisons for similarities and differences between incidents, events, and other instances of phenomena; labeled and grouped to form categories” (p. 74). Emergent themes included: tenor and classroom climate, key critical classroom exercises and student reflections, student empowerment, valuing, emotion, vulnerability, and contentious issues and dialogues, rapport building, interruption of status quo ideologies, classroom interactions and processes, and student reflections and learning outcomes. These key emergent themes, or *story lines or thought units*, that is, the core categories or

conceptualizations of the data reflect the core categories of the research questions and their dimensions, according to Strauss and Corbin.

I triangulated and corroborated the following data sources: 1) audio taped in-depth, one-hour interviews with each faculty member (transcribed verbatim); 2) audio taped individual, in-depth interviews and follow up with students who agree to participate (transcribed verbatim); 3) participant and direct observations that included micro-analysis of classroom dialogues, exchanges, and conversations (each classroom session was audio taped and transcribed verbatim); and 4) classroom assessment techniques or questions (CATs) albeit limited in that these will occur infrequently, due to time constraints. I must also be prepared, according to Miles and Huberman (1994) for “inconsistent and conflicting data that may help elaborate or even initiate a whole new line of thinking” (p. 267).

I invited all student interviewees to review the transcribed, verbatim conversation to enhance construct validity (Yin, 1994) and accuracy of the transcripts. In addition, I invited students to re-answer some of the questions posed in the CATs in light of new thoughts, revelations, ideas, and reflections in relation the course both in content and process. Students who agreed to participate were invited to lunch or coffee for their time and generosity. I extended the same invitation to each faculty to review the transcribed, verbatim conversation to verify accuracy, and invited the two faculty members to answer the interview questions in light of new thoughts, revelations, ideas, and reflections in terms of the content, process, and my role in their respective classroom.

Chapter 4 will begin with an introduction to the classroom participants, description of the goals of each course, description of the setting, and explorations utilizing the data sources. The participants' own words will be reflected in a narrative illustration in light of the research questions and literature review provided in Chapters 1, 2, and 3. Chapter 4 will, according to Marshall and Rossman (2006) tell the story, offer interpretations, and seek alternative understandings because alternative explanations "always exist" (p. 162).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The function of the story is to find an intentional state that mitigates or at least makes comprehensible a deviation from a canonical cultural pattern. (Bruner, 1990, p. 49-50)

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to relate findings from classroom observations, personal interviews, field notes, personal conversations, and direct action research from the two classrooms observed for this project. The goal of this chapter is not to contrast and compare the two classrooms because the mission is quite different for each course as explained in Chapters 1 and 3, but rather, to make meaning of the negotiation of the classroom space and field for Communication 101 and 305, respectively.

Berger and Luckman (1990) assert that “institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors” and that “institutions further imply historicity and control” (p. 54). I contend that the location of the large state university in which these two classrooms exist claims a particular historicity and control of diversity discourse. This particular institution claims it is one of the most diverse institutions in the United States (see message from the President). Further, diversity is a frequently used buzzword and slogan by many constituency groups at the University, for example, “University Y is a very diverse campus.” Without critical examination or deconstruction, diversity has meaning only in the numbers game rather than how it is actualized, measured, or institutionalized in the form of outcomes in relation to socio-political and power structures.

I have been an active trainer of multicultural issues that include welcoming diversity, exploring multiple identities, ally behavior, White privilege, and gender as performance for nearly 10 years at University Y. I personally facilitated at least 40 trainings during the academic year spanning 2008-2009. In every classroom in which I provide classroom trainings on identity and diversity, nearly every student raises her hand when I ask the following question: *How many of you have heard that University Y is the most diverse institution?* I reiterate, nearly every student raises his hand (with perhaps as few as one or two exceptions during an entire semester) that they know this slogan or what I call, the institutional branding of diversity. However, the denotative definition of the word diversity, which is rarely explained except in the university's fact book, refers to the number of countries from which international students originate. In such usage, diversity means representation, not action, not cultural competencies, not racial consciousness, or the level to which students actually connect with each other in meaningful ways to learn about their identities at the intra-personal and interpersonal levels. Diversity means numbers, not engagement or discourse across difference, not outcomes of development, competence, or what I deem to be the connotative definitions of diversity important and necessary for critical and transformative pedagogy. When I use the term diversity, I mean cultural competence, self-awareness, self-inventory, critical consciousness, and critical engagement across difference. While celebration of diversity in numbers may highlight the importance of access of underrepresented groups, the focus on diversity (as manifested in representation) may also obfuscate institutional responsibility for taking on power and privilege by focusing on the "other" without ever

naming or marking privilege (White privilege, heterosexism, gender normative privilege, Christian privilege, ability privilege, class, rank and status privilege, male privilege, language and accent privilege, etc.). In other words, University Y is a predominantly White institution. As Sheets (2000) articulates, “the control of the educational scholarship, mainly in the hands of White scholars from research-one institutions, needs to be balanced with accountability to improve student outcomes” (p. 117). I contend that not only is educational scholarship in the hands of White, heterosexual, male scholars of particular rank and status within the institution, but that most institutional administration and Boards of Regents reflect this bias of control.

Why this is important to note is that throughout the data collection process, I had the benefit of data collection for an entire semester – 15 weeks of participation in these two learning communities. This afforded me numerous chances to witness diversity in action in classroom engagement and dialogues, and the impact of critical pedagogy on student learning, and simultaneously I was reminded of the bias of control operating in both social spaces.

First, I will explore the notion of the classroom climate, tenor, and environment for both classrooms, and different strategies each instructor employed for creating a welcoming and engaging learning environment despite the personal risks associated with having marginalized identities at a campus with hegemonic whiteness, patriarchy and sexism, heterosexism and homophobia, and Christian privilege operating at all times. In addition, I witnessed and documented several unexpected critical moments in which students were challenged to reflect as to what diversity looks like in their own lives and

in the classroom as it relates to my research questions at the macro level and the tactics employed by each instructor in Communication 101 and 305 respectively. These exciting and unexpected critical moments challenged me as well, both as a critical and reflective educator, activist, and researcher.

Tenor and Classroom Climate/Culture

Communication 101

“Sometimes informally and sometimes not, standards of higher education often suggest that being a professor who focuses on challenging different forms of oppression is a pretty queer way to be.” (Kumashiro, 2003, p. 366)

Dr. Jay set the tone for her class by sending all students registered for her course a *welcome to the class* email two weeks prior to the first day of class. This email included a letter welcoming students to the course, the correct pronunciation of her name, information about the course texts, and a brief paragraph about her teaching experience. She stated in this letter, “This will be a great class.” Further, she asked students to arrive 10-15 minutes early so that she could go around the classroom and meet each student prior to the start of class. This particular section of Communication 101 (the section I observed) met in one of the older buildings on campus. The traditional desk chairs were crammed in with a long desk and podium at the front. There were no windows, only fluorescent lighting, a bulletin board on one side of the room, a blue accent wall on the other, an older television set with video cassette recorder and digital viewing device equipment and a Whiteboard that included “Welcome” and the day’s agenda. She began the first class with a series of questions to get students involved: How many come from a large family? How many of you have had at least one good class in your life? How

many of you have 9 hours of classes? How many of you have 12 hours of classes? How many of 15 hours of classes? How many of you have been involved in conflict? How many of you regularly get like 8 hours of sleep a night? She went over the syllabus in detail, discussed the goals for the course and instructions for the on-line resources, and went into detail about some of the in-class activities. She talked about her family, her mother especially, and shared that she comes from a family of teachers.

Each class day, beginning with the first, she employed a game called “the name zoom”, which she credits to a fellow teacher. Crediting another colleague is an important strategy of interrupting intellectual property theft and individualism that occurs frequently in academia as the literature review in Chapter 2 demonstrates. At a meta-level, publicly crediting another models the importance of sharing resources, collegiality, and the appreciation of another’s good work and ideas. One of the characteristics of individualism operating in White supremacist culture, according to Okun (2000), is the “desire for individual recognition and credit” (p. 7).

The purpose and outcome of the name zoom activity is that students have assigned seats, with the intended goal that everyone will learn each other’s names. Every class each student says their name, everyone repeats it in unison, and each student follows suit until all names are called. Further, after the final add/drop date, Dr. Jay provided each student a seating chart with everyone’s names and the correct way to pronounce each. While this exercise may seem, on the surface, simple or trivial, this exercise at a deeper level is about valuing, welcoming, and cultural competency, even if at a basic level of development. In the U.S. culture, it is common that students change

their names to accommodate U.S. institutions whose members find it difficult to pronounce their names. For example, Mi Kyung (Korean heritage) acquiesces to Jeannie, Rahul (Indian heritage) acquiesces to Hal, or students simply acquiesce, accommodate and withstand the constant mispronunciation of their names because it gets tiring constantly correcting people. Dr. Jay's class encouraged correct pronunciation, beginning the first day of class. During the final month of the semester, Dr. Jay gave a name zoom quiz that included giving each student a seating chart and students filling in all of the names. Students were given extra credit for knowing my name. I personally knew all 28 students by name in Communication 101 and still remember their names because of this activity.

"Good news". The second community building activity she used is "good news." Every class period students paired or partnered with another student and shared some good news that had happened for them recently. This exercise got the students talking beyond pleasantries. After a few minutes, Dr. Jay called on 3 or 4 students each class period and asked them to share the good news that they heard from their partner.

During day one of the course, Dr. Jay asked students to complete "honesty statements" that included the following three questions: What is a good class for you? What is it going to take for you to get your money's worth from this class? How are you feeling about the class? She asked the same set of questions at the end of the semester. The answers to this classroom assessment technique (CAT) will be explored later. In personal interviews with four students, between the last week of October and the first two

weeks of November, each discussed how they experience the classroom environment in Dr. Jay's section of Communication 101.

Student views on classroom climate/tenor.

JF (White gay male): I think it's pretty... it's different. It's like um, we have a good mix of people but then it's like everyone is accepting, like everyone's just like, like when she talked about that angry kid the first day, the no coke here and push a button, and we don't have anything like that. It's like a calm accepting environment. I mean we have a lot of commuter students and a lot of on campus students so it's a good mix...

DW (Jamaican heritage male): Oh. Our class has a very diverse culture. I really like it. I feel comfortable in the class. Cuz of all the students in the class. I just, like they show up more and they talk more to each other. They communicate more like, I know it's a communication class but yeah, I just feel comfortable because of the way they act and the students I like. They speak about themselves and their personal experience and their culture, they're not afraid to talk, and that gives me like the boost to talk about myself and my personal stuff. More than other classes, discloses more information about the person that gives me like the urge to like talk about myself and my culture and my background and where I come from... I feel cared for because of the way that the teacher acts. She's really nice and she's, she's really nice. I think she's... Because of the way the teacher and the students acts and like when you like make speeches and you get applauses, and appreciated. The class is very appreciative of what you do, no matter how you do it. Like the presentations that we got. The welcoming for everything that we do. You just feel loved in class. Feel loved in class.

ED (African heritage female): [The classroom climate is] very relaxed and friendly. I just, it is a carefree environment, like, we can get across the point that we need to, like we interact well with each other obviously. Anything like, our opinions can be said and no one will like go crazy over it. I don't feel that that's the type of environment that it is. I just think it is carefree.

DL (Asian heritage female): I feel valued and welcomed. You know Dr. Bedore is very warm you know she always does that name thing so people can get to know each other so people can like relate, you know. She's a very fervent and enthusiastic person and that's really important for teaching comm. Cuz you're supposed to have those qualities in order to engage in communication itself. So I feel she's very welcoming. She accepts everyone cuz she's different and so she accepts everyone else's difference, you know.

One unanswered question for further research: if females are expected to mother, nurture, care take, and comfort others, might Dr. Jay's pre-semester welcoming strategies be perceived as gendered strategies? For example, a study on women's perceptions of womanhood by Settles et Al. (2008) found that "women described caretaking as a positive, desirable aspect of their womanhood" but especially for White women (p. 461). Lester's study (2008) of gender in the workplace examines social practices and roles of women that include "nurturing, caretaking, and exhibiting additional interest in the emotional health of students and fellow faculty members" (p. 278). As I mentioned earlier in Chapter 1, White women, especially if they identify as feminists, or are out as lesbian or queer, and women of color in particular, contribute to the scholarship of teaching and learning by chronicling challenges to their leadership in the classroom (Collings, Chrisler & Quina 1998; Kardia & Wright, 2004; Lee & Bailey 2004; Ludlow, Rodgers & Wrihten, 2005).

Communication 305

Dr. May's Communication 305 class met in a newer building on campus. This particular room had 6 tiers of long tables with fixed seats stretching across the room. The professor is on a "stage" because of the construction of the room. There were two aisles with a wheelchair accessible ramp on one side, and there were windows in the back, with a good deal of natural light. There was a whiteboard up front, and this was a smart classroom, meaning that there was a built-in computer, and a projector for power point, film, and video. The word "welcome" was written on the board with the days' agenda.

On the first day of class, Dr. May welcomed everyone to the class, talked about his teaching credentials, talked about his interest in the discipline of communication, including various fields he has worked and researched, talked a little bit about himself, outlined key concepts for the course, and then talked about two concepts that set the tone for his course: mutual respect for the instructor and mutual respect for peers. He asked how many were communication majors, and nearly all but a few students raised their hand. He then introduced the concept of agape love, for those who are not communication majors. He then defined the concept as “loving for the sake of loving, it’s spiritual love.” Very recently my supervisor, an African heritage woman, used the word agape love. I told her that Dr. May uses this in his classroom. She said it is a term used in African heritage communities. Upon further research I discovered that Martin Luther King and other African American Christians have interpreted agape love as referring to the creative and redemptive love – an unconditional positive regard that one nurtures for all of humanity, even one’s enemies. Dr. May referred to the concept of agape love throughout the semester. When asked about classroom climate, two of the four students I interviewed during the last week of October and first two weeks of November directly referred to agape love in their responses:

JL (Korean heritage female): Yeah, it’s very, even on the first day of class me and SP, we were talking about it after class, and we were like, we’re really going to enjoy this class. Cuz everything about this class, the first second he walked in and it’s not, it wasn’t boring, there was nothing, he was very engaging, um, you know, he introduced us to agape love the first day and it was just like, I’m very happy to be there. And I guess that’s the best way that I can put it because I cannot think of the word I’m looking for right now...

MF (White, Jewish male): Very warm and welcoming. And that’s, and that’s all because of Dr. May. Um, it’s that whole agape love thing. I’m one of those

people, I'm just like, I really jive with that kind of stuff, especially not being a Communications person. Like to walk in on the first day and for him to say how many people in here are Comm. Majors and nearly the entire class raises their hand, and I'm sitting there, I sat in the back of the room on the first day and I'm like, okay. And then he goes, well for those of you that aren't Comm. Majors, I have agape love for you all, welcome, welcome, the fact that he always says, always says good morning, or he'll stop himself and be like, well, wait a minute did I say good morning. I have a friend who's in, um, one of my closest friends is in another one of his classes... And her and I just talk all the time about how much we love his class and how much we love him, just because of how warm and welcoming he is. And I mean, he's not the sole reason why the class is like that. I mean, he set the mood on that first day, but the people, it wouldn't be that way, it would be more tepid if he were that way and the class weren't that way. But our class jives with him.

MJ (African heritage male): I kind of see the classroom climate is really warm. I feel like everybody feels really comfortable in this class where they can kind of voice their opinion and say what they want to say without having to worry about somebody jumping down their throat about what they said. You know even though people do I guess jump to get their opinion out and why they view it that way, I think it's really warm because everybody feels comfortable and they don't feel like they have to hold back what they want to say.

AF (White female): I love that class. I feel like everybody can just, you know it's open, everybody can express their belief, their opinion, everybody can kind of like take their own little personal story and like put it out for everyone to see and talk about. I think it's awesome and I think it's really, it does push for like more acceptance and like tolerance, like, I don't know, I love it, I love the environment, I think it's one of the best classes I've had in my entire college career. Like open debate, open discussion, and then I think [Dr. May's] like really really respectful and he makes sure that nobody is disrespectful. If somebody starts going off, you know what I mean. I love that class. I think, in 305 everybody gets into it. It's really cool. I think most classes should be like that. And how do you learn? You learn from others and other people's experiences. And then you kind of like get out and leave the class like I've never thought of that before. And you start thinking more, you know what I mean? I like that.

Some questions for further research might consider how May's use of agape love might be particularly racialized and gendered. Did Dr. May's use of agape love challenge the students' training as to what they can expect from male teachers? Further, did May utilize agape love to mitigate and perform gender as a Black male to counter the

prevailing stereotypes and perceptions that he should be feared or that he is threatening because of what Rome (2006) refers to as the “African American male criminal stereotype” (p. 78).

Dr. May also made it a point to intentionally welcome and greet everyone during every class period, something that is very important for him. On the second day of class, he paused, and asked the class if he had said good morning. He talked about a supervisor with whom he used to work who would never say good morning; rather, she got straight to business and what needed be done. And he said to the class,

I thought, ‘My goodness, when I’m in a position of authority, the first thing I want to do is greet somebody and welcome them,’ I want to be humane about it. And so I always try to begin in that way. If I’m remiss, if I miss it, then remind me. Hey good morning, May, and I’ll return it.

This is also mentioned in student MF’s (above) reply. Dr. May’s “humaneness” interrupts the bureaucratic prevailing task focus or sense of urgency that is rampant in White supremacist culture. According to Okun (2000), a continued focus on urgency makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, and I would add welcoming, to encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, and to consider the consequences.

At the very end of the very first day of class Dr. May closed by stating, “When you leave here today, do something positive to change the world for the good. I don’t care what it is, a kind word, a kind deed. Do something that lends to the world.” He proceeded to conclude every Thursday (Communication 305 met every Tuesday and Thursday) class with this statement. Though only one of four students mentioned the “do

something good in the world” statement in the personal interviews, this student was impacted enough to immediately act:

MF: I really like on Thursdays being told to go out and do something to better the world. I think it’s so great. I think it was the first week of class when he said that, that first Thursday. I went hmm... I walked out of class, I called one of my good friends I was just like I just want to tell you you’re such a great friend and I’m very lucky to have you in my life. And they’re like okay, why on earth did you just tell me that. And I was like you know what I just felt like it. I felt like it would brighten your day. So there you go.

Both instructors introduced me the first day and allowed me time to talk about the purpose of my research. They welcomed me into the fold and into the community. This helped me build trusting relationships at the very beginning of the semester. I told the students I am interested in exploring how students and teachers negotiate the classroom space and that I am studying pedagogy (which I defined) for the betterment of teaching and learning. Dr. Jay validated the importance of my research and then stated, “Don’t worry, your name is never going to get attached or anything. She’s basically seeing if I am doing my job. But more importantly, how we do what we do.” Dr. May introduced me in a different manner: “I’d like to make a formal introduction. We have a scholar like no other, like none other in our midst. This person will bring something that you don’t just find in any class. You don’t get this combination often, do you? She brings an energy that I appreciate so much. Welcome. I’ll let her speak for herself.” Dr. May subsequently referred to me as future Dr. Walter and the students referred to me as future Dr. Walter or Dr. Rebecca for the entire semester. Further, and important in the context of the Intercultural Communication classroom space, I introduced myself that first day by stating my research interests, my interest in pedagogy, and deliberately naming, marking,

and avowing my whiteness to make sure students are conscious of my White race identity. As Cooks (2003) describes a similar pedagogical decision, she states, “I felt that rhetorical strategies that maintained interracial communication as about the non-White other needed to be deconstructed, while strategies that maintained (White) invisibility and normalcy needed to be highlighted” (p. 246). This also fits into the next section on risk and storytelling but needs to be put in the context of day one of Communication 305. I stated:

I’m going to watch how much space I take up. But I want to also honor that in 1992 I actually took this class, because I was a Communication major as an undergrad. I’m now, I’m studying communication through my doctoral work. And so, I’ll say something about my self-interest in this work. I was taught I had no culture as a White woman in this [U.S.] culture. So that whole exploration has been wonderful for my own self-exploration. We owe a lot of our stuff to the Greeks. You hear about the Greeks all the time in communication. Pedagogy. Anyone know the term pedagogy? The art of teaching; the art and science of teaching. Good teachers don’t just happen. And so I am interested in studying how classrooms are negotiated between students and teachers. So that’s really what I’m going to be looking at.

As Fuller (2000) argues, “the meanings of the performances of whiteness can change and be disrupted by making it visible...in hopes that ‘White women’ will understand how whiteness constrains their womanhood, just as masculinity constrains men” (p. 78-79).

Risk and Storytelling: Self as Text, Critical Moments

Communication 101

Both instructors utilized their personal experiences, therefore themselves, as text to establish different levels of credibility, to demonstrate risk, to build trust, and to challenge and interrupt status quo authorities of experience. Dr. Jay had students keep a “story journal” as she routinely told stories each week that cover key concepts related to the weekly topics and to better prepare students for the tests. She structured the stories vividly so that students remember the concepts. The stories were usually loosely based on some experience from her own life, sometimes exaggerated for humor. She would often wink at me when she was “fibbing,” but it always made the stories enjoyable and particularly memorable so that students would remember them on the tests. In one class specifically, on day 5, she told the story called “Woke Up Green.” One of the key concepts and themes for that particular class was self-disclosure and the risks and vulnerabilities associated with self-disclosure. When telling the Woke Up Green story, she asked students to imagine that one morning they woke up green and the how important it would be to find others like you. She then disclosed that this analogy symbolizes how she came to a new realization about her sexuality – that she realized she was gay. She told the students she was married at the time. She shared that her husband not only had “outed” her at the school where she taught, but he told her immediate family members. She lost contact with her mother for five years because of his actions. Her husband was very abusive to her after she came out as lesbian. She told the class:

I decided to tell my husband. I figured it out. I understand why the relationship wasn’t working and I went to him and I told him and he was absolutely furious and so my self-disclosure darned near cost me my life. So he said to me I’ll kill you. Pretty clear. He said to me, you’re going to have to get out of the state of Florida. He said I’ll buy you a car. And I thought, well, he had a bad temper anyway and didn’t like the sound of it. So he did buy me a car but I took it to a

mechanic because I didn't trust him. The mechanic put it up on a lift and said Mrs. Mxxxxx come over here. He tapped all 4 of the wheels off. He said, "he was trying to kill you. If you would have gone on the interstate which is right by this gas station, your wheels would have fallen off and you probably would have gotten smashed."

She further explained to the students why it is so important for her to be out as gay/lesbian and that it is important for her that she comes out in all of her classes so that students will have an identifiable faculty ally on campus. She referred to me as a fellow Safe Zone trainer to establish credibility (I am a co-founding member and have been an active Safe Zone trainer for over 6+ years in the Safe Zone program) and stressed that if students knew anyone who needed an ally to please send them to either one of us. In a personal interview with her I asked her if or when she feels vulnerable in class. She described:

Dr. Jay: But in terms of scary, risky kinds of things, being part of the NCBI National Coalition Building Institute, being part of that Safe Zone instructor, I have to come out pretty much in all my classes, and self-identify as a lesbian. So that's difficult sometimes because there's always the fear that a student who really liked me now suddenly turns away and suddenly doesn't get the message and suddenly is angry and suddenly thinks this is inappropriate or whatever. And while my happiness absolutely does not depend on how somebody really thinks, there's another level where I want them to get the information and I don't want the message to stand in the way of the information, the coming out message I don't want that standing in the way. We did use to have that same coming out lesson in a later chapter where students were more comfortable with me, but in this book it comes up in Chapter 3. This is plenty of time for them to drop, so there's a real fear that just by coming out I may knock them out of the door and then they end up with someone else who may or may not be as interested in their growth. So, that's vulnerable, that's scary a little bit. I always worry about how to say it, because I want them to succeed and I don't want that message to stand in the way of that by them just saying goodbye. That's a scary thing. And the way I deal with it is that I just say to them, this is scary. I let them know its coming and all the way through that whole lesson I keep saying here comes the scary part, so that by the time that I do disclose they already know that it's significant for me. And as I disclose they can watch my demeanor change and they can watch me feeling, a little extra excited about having to go through that again. And they can

sort of watch how it all plays out and then they can see sort of the feeling of relief that sort of settles in the room after the story is told. And they can actually, in that particular critical moment, they can actually see the whole thing happen. The fear, and then the disclosure and then the relief that the disclosure is over and then we sort of settle back into you know how we were before that happened. So... but it is scary. And the way I deal with it is I just say, hey I'm scared here, you know, and afterward, there's usually one or two students, sometimes more, will come up and say, wow, that was really brave or something like that, or they'll say, I'm so glad you did that. Or wow, I had no idea, or yeah, we knew all along, or something. And so frequently students will dribble in the next week or so and they'll continually mention that moment, which is helpful because it means they're still in class. It's a good thing, but it's really scary.

In her disclosure to me, she kept reiterating the word scary. Though University Y includes sexual orientation in the categories of protection, the state of Virginia does not. Therefore, the state policy is at odds with the university's policy. Therefore, Dr. Jay's fear is valid. As a non-tenured, term, faculty member, coming out is a deliberate choice that could cost her job if a large number of students complained. Dr. Jay's decision to come out is an ethical and moral one for her: she calls it a critical moment. This is more than a critical moment as she does this at least 6 times in all 6 classes she teaches during the academic year at University Y. Dr. Jay's story resonated with me as an instructor. When I am facilitating diversity trainings, I am only in the classroom for one session, hence, even though I always experience fear in coming out in the presentations, I am only with the students for that one class particular session. That is not to lessen the experience of fear. However, when I teach a semester-long course, the fear is with me during each class period for the entire semester because I never know what the personal cost will be until the 15-week-long semester unfolds and concludes.

One of the White male students in particular in Dr. Jay's Communication 101 class visited Dr. Jay's office immediately after he heard the Woke Up Green story. In my

personal interviews with students, I asked them if they ever visited the instructor during office hours. This student said:

JF: After the first day of, no not the first day, but the story that she told of the lady being green, of her coming out, I went to visit her then. Because her office hours are right exactly when my statistics is and I was like, not so good, but my statistics class got out like 30 minutes early so I was like oh, I'll just go visit Dr. Jay. So, I went in and said, hey Dr. Jay that was the best class I've ever had at University Y and thank you.

This particular student came out day 7 of her course in a classroom exercise called “the teddy bear” exercise in which students were asked to bring in a stuffed animal and talk about its significance in their lives. This student talked about his gay dog and the rainbow handkerchief around his neck and the meaning behind it – what the rainbow means to the gay community. I ran into him later that particular day and told him that I appreciated his “teddy bear story.” I “outed” and identified myself as queer and told him I was an ally. I wanted him to know I was a safe person with whom he could be out, and I wanted him to know he had resources and that he was not alone. I told him we would connect. He “friended” me on Facebook immediately after this interaction. He continually and routinely checks in with me to this day as result of this interaction.

Another student, a White female, subsequently came out as bisexual during the NCBI Welcoming Diversity presentation (which will be explored later in this chapter in a section entitled classroom exercises). Though I can only speculate a correlation, the possibility exists that because Dr. Jay came out in class, which then allowed the above White, gay, male student mentioned above to come out in class, this student may have also felt less isolated to share her sexual orientation as well. That JF told Dr. Jay “that

was the best class I've ever had at University Y" can be read that he felt validated by Dr. Jay and that he checks his gayness at the door in most other classes.

Because there are so few out faculty and staff at University Y, my being a visible and out queer faculty/staff member was obviously important to the above mentioned student to whom I outed myself. I routinely attend the special LGBTQ tea with the University Y administration, Pride Week activities, Safe Zone trainings, LGBTQ faculty/staff/student mixers, LGBTQ luncheons every year, and there are usually no more than 5-10 (I am being generous in most instances) "out" faculty and staff (predominantly White) at these events, especially if they are public events. The luncheon yields more because it is for LGBTQ faculty and staff only. Some faculty members I know are fearful to be out in the classroom and out to students because they perceive that their teaching evaluations will be affected by homophobia and heterosexism. This was communicated to me over the years by several faculty members in personal, private conversations.

Another student during a personal interview described shock at Dr. Jay's honesty for telling this story. She said:

DL: I was pretty shocked, I mean, I think everyone else was shocked too when she said, one of her stories was about how she woke up green one day and she said she was a lesbian. I thought, I think everyone kind of was shocked cuz I saw looks on people's faces and the look on my face, cuz I was really shocked. I was like, I was like, I think should ease more into it maybe in the middle of the class like maybe right now. After the midterm or during the midterm, right now. She shouldn't just you know out of nowhere bam you know disclose that she's a lesbian, because I think people feel, I think some people feel uncomfortable, like I know that some people definitely felt uncomfortable. I mean you can just tell basically. I mean you know, I'm not, you know I have nothing against lesbians, I'm just saying like you know I was really shocked, cuz I thought she would never

disclose something so personal on like the 3rd or 4th class, you know I was really shocked, so maybe she could have eased into it more that's what I felt.

Communication scholars Johnson and Bhatt (2003) similarly describe the importance of coming out in courses because “by coming out in the classroom, I challenged the heteronormative assumptions of my students and many members of particular lesbian/bisexual/gay/transgendered communities (although I often doubted my legitimacy in so doing, a manifestation of internalized oppression)” (p. 237). By coming out, Dr. Jay acknowledged her identity as a lesbian and brought that identity into the classroom. She made diversity active and modeled the importance of respecting differences. One of the learning objectives for Communication 101 is to recognize the importance that culture plays in communication; her coming out is theory in action, making the personal political, for this particular learning objective. As a direct action researcher and participant, my coming out further assisted in modeling risk-taking, building community with “out” LGBTQ students as well as the instructor, and disrupting heteronormativity.

That DL felt “shocked” by Dr. Jay’s story and that she “should ease more into it maybe in the middle of the class” confirmed some of Dr. Jay’s own concerns that she expressed in her personal interview with me and to the class after telling the Woke Up Green story. She informed the class she used to tell that story later in the semester, but the new text situated the chapter on self-disclosure a few weeks earlier so it made her feel more vulnerable. DL also used the phrase “I have nothing against lesbians” which in my experience is usually code for discomfort at least in the moment that she witnessed the story, because by telling this story, Dr. Jay queered the Communication 101 classroom that was presumed to be a “straight” classroom until the disruption. DW, in his personal

interview with me, said that he was proud of both JF and Dr. Jay for coming out in class because in his words “not a lot of people could do that.”

Communication 305

Dr. May told a story on Day 5, during the third week of class, to illustrate hegemony, power and dominance and their impact on his own life experience while driving in Michigan, an example he uses often. He lived on the Southeast side of town whereas President Ford is from, the East Side Grand Rapids, the wealthy area. He said it was dangerous and risky as a young Black man to drive through a wealthy area to visit friends because of “DWB” (or driving while Black). He told the class it was difficult for him not to drive while Black as a young Black man driving his little beater car over to a rich area to visit friends. He told the class:

After I got stopped a few times, I realized that DWB was in full effect. There’s no sign that said young Black men will be stopped, but I realized it. So I thought to myself, within my own plan or my own theory, and I thought maybe I can become less Black. So how do I become less Black? I behave like I think other people behave or the dominant culture behaves. I straightened up, I turned my music down, I took off my hat, no way do I keep it backwards. Maybe take Mom’s car. I do everything that I think is the right way. Again, there’s no sign telling me to do this, but I am learning because I’m being taught. I’m being taught through a system and in a system are all the rules that are in place that are obvious but are sometimes covert as well. A system works to teach you whether or not you want to learn.

Two students directly mentioned the power of this disclosure and the story in their own learning and the impact of Dr. May’s stories in general as they brought all of the classroom concepts and theories to life. During my interview, the two female students in particular, said that Dr. May’s use of story encouraged others to do the same and share their own experiences:

AF: And, I feel like, I connect, and he kind of opens up and talks about his life experience, like the story when he was talking about when he was in Detroit and he had to drive on the other side, the White side of the town or whatever and he was afraid, he was going to be discriminated or DWB, you know, like what's going to happen. And I feel like that was like another, it just prompted more people to be like more open and talk about what happened to them. And like what they've gone through and like what really made an impact on them. You know what I mean? He opens it up and says a little piece about what he thinks about like the issue or something like that, cuz that's like a strategy to get everybody else to open up and get everyone else involved in the discussion.

JL: I think, cuz he tells, sometimes he tells personal stories, not too personal but you know he told us about DWB and things like that, and so I think he tries to relate to us by putting himself in situations that we could possibly be in and try to be on our level more so than professor and student, it's, he's more like professor and we're the students and he tries to make it equal and I can feel that, and it makes um, it makes us want to be part of it more because he's just a part of the group too, it's not like we're separated on a different level of power.

Further, one student chose to do his final project of the class, the Intercultural Contact paper, that examined three specific intercultural experiences he had in Communication 305. In his paper he stated,

It is important to note three distinct characteristics about me: I am White; I am Christian; and I am heterosexual. Therefore, I have always experienced the world from a dominant racial, religious, and sexual perspective. However, I had no idea of the significance of that fact.

His paper chronicled three particular relationships he developed that influenced his research paper. His challenges and learning came from a Palestinian-Muslim heritage female, from me (an out, White, queer woman – I will describe this outcome later in the Classroom Exercises in Communication 305 section), and from the instructor, Dr. May, an African heritage male. While exploring the course concepts of ethno-centricity, ethno-relativity, and White privilege, his relationships with the three of us challenged his thinking. As he processed his lack of consciousness about privilege, he stated:

MM: Dr. May's personal narrative made this concept completely tangible for me. Until that moment, I had believed driving while Black was only something that Will Smith joked about on television, not part of someone's everyday experience. I began to integrate Dr. May's experience into my own worldview, which had incredible implications for my intercultural sensitivity. I began "naturally and intuitively" recognizing issues of racial prejudice around me, essentially becoming unconsciously competent in my own intercultural sensitivity.

For example, one student told me a story about a conversation about a certain professor at X University. Specifically, one said, "Yeah, he seems really intelligent...especially for a Black guy." When I heard this, I truly felt offended. I described the feeling as a slight pang in my chest area, an actual physiological response that told me, that's not right. What does race have to do with intelligence? Does Blackness require that we grade intelligence on a curve? Of course not. However, several months ago, before I was pulled across the spectrums of both awareness and sensitivity, I would not have responded in the same way.

In a personal interview with Dr. May, I asked if or when he felt vulnerable as a teacher and he responded:

Um, vulnerability I think is always at bay because I use myself as an example so often, you know, I have to share not only my strengths but share weaknesses as well and so, of course, I think in gaining trust you have to commit something, you have to give, that's what discussion is all about, you know you have to always be ready to offer something about yourself so that others are comfortable in offering something about themselves. In terms of specific examples, um, as of late I would probably say that the 2008 Presidential elections might have been one of those times where I might not have been scared, but maybe a tad bit hesitant, or very overly cautious, um, about sharing you know my personal and political views simply because you understand the dynamics of a university setting and how free speech is often lauded but it's not often respected when it goes against a dominant viewpoint. Of course, Barack Obama this particular election, and so maybe many would consider that to be the dominant viewpoint, but it was very interesting for me to note that even though this man who self-identifies as an African American or bi-racial candidate, um, was somehow associated or connected to very critical views on race in America. And for me to take a position as a Black man in some cases puts me in a place of vulnerability because the connection then becomes well, he's only talking about the President-elect because he's a Black man himself. And so he's pushing his judgment, pushing his viewpoint, but it's interesting that people don't often times, or at least I haven't heard people critique you know the last Presidential election or the Presidential elections before that in ways that associate individuals with a

particular candidate. It always seemed to be more of an ideology or more of a perspective, but in this particular case it seems to me that when individuals spoke up it was more of a - it's a Black thing. And so for me it was always you know on the cusp of how I interpreted that interaction. And so I always push, or at least this particular time I tried to push the issue of being involved you know through citizenship and not necessarily speaking on behalf of any particular candidate. Although I think they understood too that I had my own perspective and I think that kind of shined through at different points. So the election might have been the one time in the last little while in where I've actually said be very conscious, be very cautious of what you say and do.

Dr. May directly addressed the impact of racism that happens with people of color or rather that does not happen for White people, according to Peggy McIntosh (2002), and that is, Dr. May is asked to speak for his race. More indirectly, there is an inference that Dr. May is talking about himself as a Black male and the perceived risk in talking about the election of a Black male, at a predominantly White institution. White people were not asked to talk about George W. Bush as a White candidate, for example. Although the state of Virginia voted democratic, therefore, the dominant Virginia perspective elected Obama, Dr. May views his perspective as one that deviates from the "dominant" viewpoint. While May is being very direct about being a Black male discussing the election of a Black (bi-racial) male, he is indirectly implicating the power operating in a predominantly White institution. He implicates the university setting, the ideology of free speech being protected, and his going against a dominant viewpoint. As he stated previously about DWB (driving while Black), "I'm being taught through a system and in a system are all the rules that are in place that are obvious but sometimes covert as well".

In this interaction, Dr. May mentioned having to commit in order to build trust with the learning community. This concept will be explored in more detail in the

concluding chapter in that it is one of the important theoretical implications for the critical classroom, for it directly challenges liberalism, Althusser's (1971) imaginary relationships of social justice and equality, and it also challenges positivism, the mind and body split. Further, that during the election was one time Dr. May reminded himself to watch what he said and did, can be examined in light of a critical incident that implicated the entire Communication Department with respect to the 2008 election, but more importantly it implicated whiteness and dominance.

The Communication Department and the Presidential Election:

A Critical Incident and Crash Moment

A critical incident occurred during the semester I observed the two classes that triangulated me and the two instructors of observation. After Obama was elected President of the United States in November of 2008, the Communication 101 Instructor, Dr. Jay, a White female, issued a post-election statement to the Department of Communication. This statement was on the White-board the Thursday following the election, and circulated by email with the subject line "Dr. Jay's sample in-class post election statement." The email was circulated via the Communication Departmental list-serve and instructors were encouraged to make the statement in their classes. As a member of the list-serve, we received a couple of reminders to the entire Department. Dr. Jay read the statement in her Communication 101, the class following the election results, verbatim:

I just want to go through this post-election request, and basically, "now that we know who our next president's going to be, I really do ask you to be considerate, generous and

respectful, for those people whose views are different from your own. Specifically, try to find a way to look for the best in this new result. Remember that we are shaping the future of this country. I am very proud of you for your involvement in this historic election. I know here at [University], with respect for all our diverse viewpoints, we can work together to make this country great. Bottom line is I really feel like we're strong enough to work together regardless of the result, and create something really great. I want you to be as respectful as you can."

Another faculty member, Dr. Gee, an African heritage male, posed the following question to the list-serve: *I certainly hope that the same post-election statement was extended to our students in the previous two elections – if not, why?*

Another White, female faculty responded to this email in what I interpreted as a Eurocentric and condescending tone and voice. I will not quote the entire email, but Dr. Bee asked, for example,

Any time there is a significant challenge to civility on campus I think it behooves our department to be at the front edge of discussing how communication can make it better. Why is it you are only concerned with the previous two elections? Should we stop and question why every good new idea wasn't thought of earlier? This seems very anti-innovation, anti-change, and anti-entrepreneurial, Dr. Gee.... last time I checked, there weren't troops rolling through the streets. No other country on earth can say that they have had a successful and peaceful change of power 43 times.

Dr. Gee, the faculty member who posed the initial question replied with critical points and questions. In summary, those include: "The last two presidential elections were highly contentious and controversial to say the least, which partly explains the massive voting spike. I am questioning what topics, methods, and or ideas are worthy of discussion and how they are framed to be discussed." He further asked why no one in the department raised serious concern about the Jena 6 incident in Louisiana (and how nooses were drawn on our own campus) and another incident in which someone penned

“Black men stink” in one of the campus bathrooms. He concluded by stating that [Black] students had come to him because they felt unsafe because of these two incidences.

Another White female replied with this response to the list-serve that “Obama’s race was not so much an issue in the results.” Two other White females replied, one stating, “LEAVE ME OFF THE DISTRIBUTION LIST,” and another with the very same and also “I highly suggest a faculty to faculty meeting as opposed to this venue” meaning the email list-serve.

At this time, I felt ethically obligated to reply and to strategically interrupt the racism occurring on the list-serve. I personally felt that the African heritage male’s perspective was being attacked – all by White females, interestingly enough. My reply was brief: “In a country founded on racism, I feel that Dr. Gee’s question about the election statement is fair. I also note that as a Communication colleague points out [that] sometimes we receive upwards of 10 “reply all” emails regarding the birth of a child with no complaints. A faculty forum to discuss the election would be a great idea.”

Within five hours, I received an email from a White, male faculty member stating

[B]etween us, please... I thought Dr. Gee’s note was inappropriately personal and not collegial. Certainly you must have noted that. Public email is an inappropriate forum for personal attacks within a department or any business for that matter. Also, this country was founded on a genocide, followed by the institutionalization of slavery/racism and sexism. I thought the late Kurt Vonnegut expressed that better than I just did, though.

The rest of the email was cordial pleasantries.

I replied by asking

Which of Dr. Gee’s emails did you find inappropriate the first or the second? I thought that Dr. Bee’s email was completely inappropriate and quite condescending toward Dr. Gee, as well as ethnocentric. He simply asked a

question about the consistency with the election statement. Whether email is the “right” forum or not, who decides that? Perhaps Dr. Gee merely opened the door for the nation’s undiscussables to become discussable.

I signed with a cordial closing. He chose not reply to me. His email served to dissuade or cast doubt in my perception of my challenging the dominance operating in the series of email exchanges. According to Lee et Al. (2010), “[G]ender stereotypes assign agentic and competent attributes to men, and characterize women as weak, consequently viewing men as better fit and women as not fully competent to wield power or take structural control” (p. 396). A White male emailed me, a White female in a White supremacist, patriarchal culture, privately, rather than publicly. The fact that a White, male faculty felt the need to correct me resounds with the dominance and control of gender stereotypes.

His email uses persuasive language: *certainly* you must have noted that. He also attempts to minimize the impact of slavery and racism by redirecting my attention to the fact that “this country was founded on genocide.” I have to wonder why was this correspondence addressed to me as “between us” (between us White people?) seeing that our relationship is one of minimal contact, and why is there the need to deflect from slavery and racism to genocide? Finally, his email could be read as a personal attack toward Dr. Gee, but sent privately. Is that appropriate? This could be read as a case of the racial contract at play.

The next time I entered Dr. Jay’s class for observation, she approached me saying: “I completely agree with your email Rebecca. I talked to a colleague in the Department and she assured me I wasn’t being racist.” I told her I felt like Dr. Gee was personally attacked for merely asking a question of consistency.

The next time I entered Dr. May's class, he said publicly, "Nice email Dr. Walter. Welcome to the real world." I told him that a faculty emailed me privately with a sidebar conversation. Dr. May replied "side bars are power at work." About a week later, Dr. May confided in me how much he appreciated my email, told his wife about it, and said that because I had done that, he knew he had an ally. It was shortly after that, Dr. May agreed to a personal interview with me. I had asked him several times earlier in the semester. He suggested his preference that he wanted to come to my office for our interview. Subsequently, Dr. May submitted a scholarly paper he had written on using Crash as a pedagogical tool for teaching and learning to me for feedback and submitted it to the Multicultural Research and Resource Center's scholarly journal, *Mosaic*, that focuses on the scholarship of teaching and learning.

To conclude the critical "crash" incident in the Communication Department, Dr. Gee was informed in March of 2009 that his term contract, renewable yearly, would not be renewed. He was informed by the Departmental Chair that due to budget cuts, he would not be renewed for the next academic (2009-2010) year. As Dr. May stated earlier, that sidebar conversations are power at work, Dr. Gee was never privy to any further conversations regarding the crash incident, and a faculty forum to discuss the incident never occurred. At the end of the semester, during the January winter break, I had coffee with Dr. Gee, and at that time he thanked me for sending the email to the Communication list-serve. He informed me that he already had another teaching job and he also told me that he always has a back up plan, just in case. The way the racial contract operationalizes its dominance is that as a faculty of color, Dr. Gee had no

currency in this contract since it is about him not for him, and therefore cannot be proven or invoked. And as Mills (1997) powerfully argues,

[Whites] will experience genuine cognitive difficulties in recognizing certain behavior patterns *as* racist, so that quite apart from questions of motivation and bad faith they will be morally handicapped simply from the conceptual point of view in seeing and doing the right thing. (p. 93)

As a faculty of marginalized status, in this case an African heritage male without tenure, the racial contract was being negotiated, between Whites.

Sample Exercises and Strategies for Engaging in Critical Pedagogy

Communication 101

“50/50 rule”. On day one of Communication 101 Dr. Jay introduced a concept that students would use throughout the semester called the “50/50 rule”. The 50/50 rule is about looking beyond what you see, questioning what you see, digging deeper, and judging others too hastily with too little information. She introduced the 50/50 rule to the class in this way:

Basically what it says is that about half the time when you’re looking right at someone and you think you know what’s going on and you’re just making a guess about half the time you get that right. Anyone a math major? Good. I’ll just tell you this also means that about half the time when you’re looking right at somebody and you’re making a good guess here, you’re wrong, even with a PhD in Communication. So you might say, that seems kind of simple. But I gotta tell you most movies, most conflicts, most wars, and most things that kind of knock people up, most of things really wouldn’t happen. Most of these things actually wouldn’t happen if people knew the 50/50 rule. Okay, so, if you only get a half a chance at getting it right and if you just guess, what are you going to have to do? You’re going to have to ask questions. So that’s what I want you to say to yourself, I’ve got to ask people I can’t guess all the time cuz I’m going to guess half right and half wrong.

At the outset the 50/50 rule may seem like a simple concept. However, in interpersonal and small group relationships, the title and theme of the course, judging, guessing, and assigning attributes to people and groups with whom you have had little contact does not lead to cultural competency or competent communication. Asking questions is the key to engaging critically across difference and engaging pedagogy that, according to hooks (1994) emphasizes well-being, a commitment to the process of self-actualization, and empowerment of students and teachers” (p. 15). Further this is an example of critical thinking at a fundamental level, much like Paul (2006) who states that critical thinking starts with the assumption that “my thinking, and that of most people is often flawed” (p. 28).

“*Peace journal*”. Dr. Jay also utilized a semester-long exercise called the “peace” journal. She introduced this exercise in the following way:

Basically, when you’re communicating well with people, you are creating peace when you’re communicating badly you’re not. So this is going to be called the peace journal. Okay. Make yourself a note on here for the peace journal, first of all, how many of you think you do nice things for people roughly every day, you don’t mean to do them, but you do? Okay. So every single day including Sundays and Saturdays and Wednesday, every single day, I want you to do four nice things for people and put them in the journal.

After students shared their good news at the beginning of every class, Dr. Jay called on 3 or 4 different students and asked them to share from the peace journal what good things they did for others over the past few days. Answers ranged from helping a friend move, spending more time with their mom, making more calls to their younger siblings at home, helping a friend study, or helping friends edit their wedding video. There seemed always to be a rich supply of answers during the peace journal sharing. Dr. Jay’s explanation for

incorporating the peace journal into her classroom surfaced during my interview with her when I asked about implicit goals or hidden curriculum in her classrooms. She stated:

[My] second goal would be a move toward kindness. And that's specifically why we do the peace journal so that students get to see how often they're kind to other people and get to see how often people are kind to each other and they get to look at their world with new lenses. A lens that says, you know, this is a good place. And we are good people. Sometimes we act in bad in ways, but we are good people. And so sort of a fundamental shift in attitude from everyone's out to get me, life is so tough, to oh, this is a good place and I can contribute to the better good of everybody just by the simple kindnesses that I do. So, joy would be one, kindness would be a second one. Third would be some confidence in self.

In my interview with Dr. Jay, I asked her when she started incorporating the peace journals into her class to which she stated that keeping a gratitude journal is a practice she has engaged in for the past 11 or 12 years in her own life. Every night she writes down four things she is grateful for and one thing she learned that day. When I asked students some of the best teaching methods that Dr. Jay employed, the peace journal was named specifically by all four students I interviewed, and these students eventually did see and experienced the value and impact, even if they did not initially:

JF: [The peace journals] they actually make you think of like what you do throughout the day. And like the first day we actually did them, I was like, oh what did I do, and I was kind of thinking about it but then I'm like oh, I actually do kind of stuff for people and it makes you aware of your actions towards other people, I guess that's kind of communications but like physical actions.

DL: Although the peace journals are tedious and some people make up them, make up things, they're actually very helpful because people actually take the time to think what should I you know do to make other people welcomed? What nice things should I do? Cuz people don't think about that normally. People, every day normal people, they just do it they don't even think about it they're doing it. But she makes us realize the importance of these little acts by doing the peace journal. And then that's very important to make us appreciate ourselves more.

DW: I think it's great so she can know what's going on in other people's lives so you know like when someone's having a bad day or what people do to have fun, and everything. I think it's really interesting. I like it. I think it's really helpful for a class.

ED: I feel that that's stimulating, like when you first think about it, it's like what are we doing this for, and it's, but after you think about it, okay, if I'm doing 4 nice things for somebody everyday with some peace journal and you think about, you do that like every day and you don't notice it but the fact that you write it down it's like you know that you have to get those in there so you're like what can I do extra nice to write down you know.

In addition to the four students who I personally interviewed, each student had the opportunity to talk about the peace journal with the entire class. On the next to last day of the semester, Dr. Jay had each student come to the front of the room and in her words "share a little bit about how this project [peace journal] was for you." From my recorded transcript (verbatim) of class that day, some of the direct responses from students (a random sample of 7) other than those that surfaced in the personal interviews are:

I realize that I am a very happy person, I help everyone, like each and every one of my friends throughout the semester and in the homework, so, yeah, it actually helped me realize that how helpful I am with others.

I think what I have learned from this journal topic is that the more good things I do, the little things I do, the more positive I become, the more positive I become, the more happier I am and all is good.

I realized that helping others has made me a more positive person.

The nice things that I did or whatever they were kind of beneficial - they kind of made me feel better about myself.

Just to learn that a couple of times, I just need to bite my tongue because there are some things I don't know if I should say or not, but I think overall, I think I'm a nice person and I do a lot of stuff, I make people feel a little bit better, and makes you feel good to know that people actually benefit from being around each other.

The peace journal actually helped me become a better person, I never really helped a lot of people before but with the peace journal, it kind of let me help

friends that I never realized, that were really good friends, like family members that I really want to help out before.

The peace journal helped me realize that I was kind of a little bit self-centered, and I would only really kind of worry about things that only involved me.

“Welcoming diversity and identities”. The “Welcoming Diversity and Identities” presentation is facilitated and coordinated by the Multicultural Research and Resource Center and the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) Mason Affiliate. This particular training has been integrated into every section (approximately 40 each semester) of Communication 101. As an adjunct in Communication for 15 years, having taught Communication 101 in past years, and having worked at the Multicultural Research and Resource Center for a little over a year, my leadership was the catalyst for establishing this curriculum project. I contacted the basic course coordinator who agreed to pilot the training in her two sections of Communication 101 in November 2006. She believed in the value of the training and its outcomes and subsequently integrated the training into the Communication 101 course as a whole. The basic course coordinator then participated in a two-day training offered in January 2007. Since the spring semester of 2007, the training has been integrated into all 40 sections of Communication 101. However, Dr. Jay’s support, enthusiasm, and integration of the training into the semester’s coursework allows it to rise beyond a one-shot diversity program. While all instructors participate on a continuum from very little to high involvement, Dr. Jay’s participation is on the high end of the spectrum, and she engages in a high level of self-disclosure during the classroom presentation. Further, she refers to her support of NCBI regularly during class and offers other NCBI methodology, such as the Controversial

Issues community training, as extra credit for her students. She announced the training at least three times during the semester, passed flyers around the classroom promoting the event, and encouraged students to participate. The following semester, she attended the Controversial Issues training offered by the MRRC and approximately 20 of her students participated as well.

Each exercise of Welcoming Diversity and Identities supports several of Communication 101 learning objectives, such as the importance of ethical listening, the importance of culture in the communication process, and knowing oneself at the intra-personal level and how that influences communication both interpersonally and in small groups. The Welcoming Diversity and Identities training in the Communication 101 systematically utilizes a few different experiential exercises and in this particular section, the class participated in: up/downs, pairs, and caucuses.

“Up/down”. The up/down exercise allows students to explore various identities they have: birth and family order, where they were born, ethnic/racial identities, religion, socio-economic status, gender, first-generation college students, artists and musicians, sexual orientation, ability challenges, and private identities, such as alcoholism, abuse, death of a family member, or whatever else students wish to share. Sharing is never forced, as it is the student’s choice for this particular identity. Further, the presentation goes deeper into each of these different identities to link identities to socio-political structures rather than individualize experiences. For example, during the socio-economic status identity, participants examine how class status may have changed during their lives and how divorce, gender disparities, or forced immigration may have affected those

outcomes. Further, this presentation shatters the myth that students have around the word diversity in that it means race only. In many of the sessions I co-facilitate in the classroom, students are surprised to learn how vast and how much diversity they each bring to the communication interaction and experience. For White students, it is particularly helpful that they recognize diversity work as their work.

“Pairs”. The pairs exercise examines what core identities students deem significant in their lives, also naming that multidimensionality of identities that may complicate and find it difficult to separate identities (African heritage male, African heritage female, White female, White male, Asian heritage, Latina/o heritage, etc.) and how these particular identities pose both strengths and challenges to them and their leadership as students on campus.

Caucus reports. The final exercise is the caucus reports in which students cluster in different identity groups and report out to the class things they “never again want thought, said, or done to their respective groups.” This exercise is designed to allow each group to be the authority of experience, name specific stereotypes about their particular group that they never want to experience again, and empowers each group to unapologetically name their own experience(s).

Students in Dr. Jay’s Communication 101 course had strong reactions to this classroom exercise. In personal interviews, four students explained:

JF: It was like amazing. I really enjoyed that. Um, I ran into JF in the Johnson Center, she’s like in the next, in Dr. Jay’s next class, and she’s friends with SL, and I was like, I ran into her and she’s like SN was going to come but he’s skipping class, and I was like well you need to call him and get him here because

that was amazing. And um, I don't know if he went or not, but I was just telling her he needs to call him and wake him up. I don't know for some reason though I, I never looked at it that way, like celebrating our differences and our struggles of like, you know there was like another positive spin to it, I would never have done that, I'm just like a negative nancy about it...Okay, like hmmm, I'm trying to think, like when she was like you're economic class, if you have ever been like poor, and then like people stand up, and people clap for them and then if you're like middle class, and then she was like it doesn't matter they're still people and she was like just like they're the same as us but just different but they're not. It was really like, it really put things in perspective like how things really don't matter at all and how we're just all in life together. It really did impact me. It was really an impacting experience. I mean she was like it's an 8 hour long course and I was like wow, I don't know, it was just really, it made me think about like how I view other people and it's like there's not a reason to do that, I think it made me more positive like all the time. Sometimes people are just pure hateful I don't want to say they're ignorant because they're not when they're like hating people, I mean that's where I'm from but not so much here, I just know they're being ignorant and hateful and how do you change that? I mean sometimes you can't change people. But I have an open mind. Yeah, I mean the fact that you actually stood up, and then they called on you, where you from, where you from, and then um, like I guess the thing for me is standing up in front of the class, who are not gay, oh, hey everyone... but that was kind of nice and learning for her to go to gender, class, age, and those things. I guess I kind of felt special. And it was kind of everyone should feel special and everyone should be like celebrated for their uniqueness. I don't know, it was just like, and she was so lively about it. I really just liked that...I mean I pretty much knew all those stereotypes because people just reinforce them and stuff but um everyone knows they're wrong but they still think about it and it's like one of those things to reinforce to try to get out of your mind and see them as an actual person. It was just like a refresher.

DW: I think it was a great workshop because it gives a lot, I love the part with culture and what we like and what we don't like about what people say about us, I love that part because we get everybody to know what exactly they don't like, even though you may not do it intentionally or say stuff intentionally you get to realize that people hate those stuffs like even though you didn't mean it in a bad way I think it was good based on that. I loved that part. The culture part people...I just think the disclosure part that people don't like saying stuff about them I think that's really important, that's really good cuz a lot of people do it and don't realize that they've been doing it unintentionally and they do it really often, and if you are that culture that was like looked down on or said stuffs about you get really mad but to see that people understand more, understand where you're coming from, understand what you're going through and not doing stuff as often, like talk about talk about your culture and talk down on it, I think that was really

good. I loved that part that day. Cuz some of it, I didn't know some of it. I personally used to say stuff but after that I don't ever say it again. Like the Asian group, they were saying like everybody calls them Chinese and like calls all of them Chinese and some of them are Japanese and some of them are other cultures, I don't even know. But they call all of them Chinese and they say all of them are like brilliant and they're not actually. I liked that part.

ED: I feel that my opinion does matter in this class. The class is a very stimulating class. So what I know, especially after we did that workshop, with the different, the diversity and everything, I know that my opinion is valued and that we can get along together.

DL: [A member of the Asian group and of which she was a part] was like okay, we're not all geniuses, we're not. Just because we're Asian doesn't mean we're all geniuses. You know I hate that cuz people are like you're Asian you're good at math. Yeah, that's true if you were born in China because they do calculus in like middle school, but in here, if you're born in America unless you go to a Chinese school on Sundays you maybe just as everyone else. And some Asians are Americanized, especially the mixes, they're very Americanized, they don't know anything about Chinese culture, which I love, I mean. Chinese culture is great, it's vast, it's awesome, but just the traditions, the rules... And you know I think there are a lot of Christians in our class and I see lots of them are also maybe gay, so they're breaking against that Christian norm you know, so I love that. Like, I love when you break rules.

However, this student (DL) offered some criticism toward this particular presentation in that she felt that the level of self-disclosure may have made "a lot" of students probably felt uncomfortable but then attributed it to her own experience and discomfort. She also wished that the different categories would have been explored in greater depth, specifically referring to socio-economic status. She wanted to ask follow up questions. The leadership of the facilitating team did not explore the up/down section as much as she would have liked; (most teams do explore each category in depth and tie it to socio-political structures for context, but this particular team did not).

Based on these four students' responses about the Welcoming Diversity exercise, I clustered and interpreted these responses to relate to valuing, mattering,

acknowledgement, and respect. ED's response is very brief, but she states that she "feels her opinion matters in the class." Her response is to the question, "Do you feel valued in class?" That she linked her opinion mattering and especially after the workshop, though a direct causal relationship cannot be certain, a correlation is plausible. Themes of these four students include culture, open-mindedness, getting along, and valuing. Three of these students referred to perceptions, stereotypes, and misinformation about other groups and how they were challenged and affected by the exercise.

Further, 31 evaluations from this particular training and classroom were collected and entered into student voice, an on-line assessment portal. Some significant quantitative responses from 26 questions on a likert-scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) include: 97% of the students have a greater knowledge and understanding of the differences between people; 86% have a better understanding of who they are; 97% see the importance of listening to others even if they don't share their experience; 91% are personally committed to learning more about their own prejudices; 97% leave the training with a more open mind; 84% have more tools to investigate their prejudices now than before the training; 55% are afraid of making mistakes with regard to diversity, 27% were neutral on that particular question; and 74% believe that some groups are discriminated against more often than they had thought. For the qualitative questions (only three are asked), 30 out of 31 responses to the question, "What was the most useful part of this workshop? How do you see yourself using this information at University Y?" identified new knowledge, had a shift in attitude or will implement a behavioral change. One respondent wrote, "I did not have to do any comm. material. I

don't interact with others anyway so I have no use for it.” This is the only neutral or “negative impact” response. For the question, “What is one thing you will do differently as result of this workshop?” 27 answers were grouped into the following themes that include: 9 will not judge; 5 will be more open; 3 will listen better to others/be more understanding; 2 will ask more questions of others; 2 will take more pride in their own identity; one will be more appreciative of others' differences; one student needed more time to think; and one student criticized social class as an identity category.

Both Dr. Jay and Dr. May empowered and valued students in different ways utilizing various classroom experiential exercises and activities. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Jay required students to get up in front of the class each session to allow students practice before presenting graded speeches. This allowed students to get to know each other better, reduce performance anxiety, and to help them achieve better marks on their graded speeches. As mentioned in the Assessment section, the majority of students stated they had more confidence as a result of her “on stage” activities. On one particular class session, day 25, the last week in November, she had laryngitis and could not speak at all. Instead of cancelling the class, she empowered several students to take over teaching the class. That particular session was quite remarkable. In my field notes, I wrote: Dr. Jay has asked for different students to facilitate different parts of the class today. It is a powerful modeling of trust in student's capabilities... They take it very seriously and do a fantastic job. E is facilitating the process of collecting the forms for the group projects. J is stapling. D is taking roll. Students are playful, laughing because D is extremely playful and showing leadership and confidence. Nineteen students are here. J led the

name zoom, good news, and peace journals. S is leading students through a game called Connect Them.

“Connect them”. Students get two words (unrelated) and use them in a sentence. E is leading students through an exercise of reading quotes then adding to them. D is leading students through answering honesty statements from the first week of class. A is handing out the peace journal form (the summaries) that are due at the beginning of class on Tuesday. She gives students instructions and is humorous, that “bubble, do not write in that bubble, it’s Dr. Jay’s bubble...” Students are laughing. She’s very confident and playful as well... Each student confidently rose to the occasion and class went as scheduled.

Communication 305

Every day of class Dr. May engaged in critical pedagogy, but I will only highlight a few key exercises.

[Critical pedagogy is defined as] habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional cliches, received wisdom and mere opinions to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse. (Shor, 1992, p. 129)

“Agree or disagree”. On day 5 of Communication 305, Dr. May engaged the class in an exercise called “Agree or Disagree” that determined where students stood on issues based on questions asked. He asked a series of questions and students would go to

one side of the class if they agree, the opposite side if they disagreed, and the middle if they were undecided. The exercise was set up by in this manner:

Dr. May: This is an exploration of values, perceptions, beliefs, it is an opportunity for you to do what we talked about last week in terms of listening and sharing as a valuable part of intercultural communication and as we listen and share we listen and we grow. We become a little more transparent, which can be dangerous at times because we often times don't want people to know who and what we are.

Dr. May posed a few contentious claims. After he called out each claim, students went to their respective aisles and then discussed why they chose that particular aisle. Nuanced discussion came out of this exercise because students paid close attention to the language and rhetoric in each question. They talked out the complexities, the gray areas inherent in each question. They talked about why they stood in the middle, and they gave hypothetical examples as to why they felt compelled to side either way or in the middle.

The first claim is that *men and women are more alike than different*. I offer excerpts of some of the main points to highlight the complexities of this classroom exercise and the discussion that ensues rather than the verbatim transcript that includes extraneous dialogue. The majority of students went to the disagree aisle, a few that went to the agree aisle, and a few went in the middle or were undecided. A key question Dr. May asked that examines hegemony, dominance, and power: "Where would the dominant group be in this situation? Why are they dominant?"

Ten students offer responses as to why they choose their respective aisles. Three students, two males and one female, respond thematically addressing values. They believe that men and women share the same values, and they also addressed the stereotypes that polarize men and women. Three other (White) men respond that they

exhibit more feminine characteristics and how difficult it is for them to avoid and resist stereotypes imposed on them by the dominant patriarchal culture. One final student comment, by a White male, discusses the cultural training to behave in dominant stereotypical ways that is learned at a very early age.

Dr. May responded by addressing a continuum that examines a range and grounds the discussion in intercultural theory to make the discussion meaningful and then he asked the class to define stereotypes according to what they have read in the text:

Anybody recall the Hofstede dimensions of culture. Hofstede said there were four ways we identify and one was masculinity versus femininity. So often times fall closer to one or the other depending where we want to be culturally. What is a stereotype again?

hooks (1994) describes the importance of grounded classroom dialogues

[O]nce the space for dialogue is open in the classroom, that moment must be orchestrated so that you don't get bogged down with people who just like to hear themselves talk, or with people who are unable to relate experience to the academic subject matter. (p. 151)

The second claim Dr. May made is that *there are some things that women are naturally good at and the same is true for men*. "I want to start with statements about sex and gender to get you thinking, but we'll move into some other realms."

Five students respond to this claim, with four of those five students arguing against gender and "natural" proclivities. Two students, a White male and White female, argued that from their perspectives, there are too many men and women in their own lives who defy the stereotypes of what men and women are supposed to be naturally good at doing. The male student argued that in his group of friends, several of his female friends are good at building theater sets, for example, and several of his male friends are

excellent cooks. In my field notes on Day 10, I took note that this male student, shared that he has been bullied for being gay or rather for the perception that he is gay because he is in theater. He has been bullied repeatedly for his gender performance or not performing masculinity in a way that is acceptable in a patriarchal culture. Two other students argued that gender is not the issue at all but that it has everything to do with the individual person and the talents they possess. One White woman argues that there are definite stereotypical talents for men and women and that the claim holds true.

The third claim Dr. May made is that *people should accept other cultural beliefs, values and practices at all times*. Because of the potential for this claim to generate contentious dialogue, May re-invoked the theme of mutual respect he outlined on the first day of class:

So what this does is put a little bit of pressure on you because you have to take a stand, and what happens is that people think about what will I look tomorrow, what will I look like next week if I take this stand? And again, this is based on respect. So hopefully that we do remains in the confines of the classroom, first and foremost, but then second, we don't use it to judge or belittle someone, we share for the sake of sharing and hopefully we can grow from the sharing.

Seven students respond to this claim, four of whom (two White male, one White female, and a Latino, Jewish male) responded that you at least have to learn or know about another's culture but not necessarily accept it. One student among these four (the Latino Jewish male) argued that before you can reject or accept another's culture, you must at least learn about it, understand it, and ask questions before you can make a definitive decision. Three students, two White men and one White woman argued that if human rights violations are involved, then the phrase "at all times" required them to disagree with the statement. Finally, one White male student moved from the agree aisle

to the middle (or undecided). Dr. May addressed his move and asked him why. This student changed his mind because the discussion of human rights violations complicated the claim for him. He could no longer take a definitive stand, though he agrees that one must understand another's standpoint and perspective. One critical rhetorical question May posed to the class is: are there, in fact, universal values?

The fourth and final claim Dr. May made is that *a person should be able to love and marry anyone of any race, religion, or sex*. During this particular claim, May introduced the class to the term hegemony:

Just take your place and remember, this is an opportunity to share and to learn. And you know what intrigues me with that particular question is that there are some folks who are going to move because that hegemony is so tough. Some folks are going to move in a direction opposite from what they feel because of that hegemony. And some people have created their own spaces which is cool to me because undecided came about through a similar activity. I didn't have an undecided last year. Somebody insisted on it. Okay, I'm going to ask you where you're standing and what you think.

Five students responded to and discussed their decisions for their responses to this claim. Two students disagreed, but for different reasons. One student, a White, Jewish male was leaning toward undecided, but disagreed because of the term marriage. He stated that he is a firm believer in equal rights, but for him, marriage is an inherently religious term, and so he had to disagree because that term was in the claim. He did, however, state that he is in favor of civil unions. The other student who disagreed, a Palestinian, Muslim woman, believes that one can marry anyone of any race or culture, but disagreed with same-sex relationships and marriage. She believes that you can respect a person but not agree with them. However, she went further to state that being gay or lesbian is a test in life, and she will not judge the person. Three students felt

strongly that marriage is about love and no one should stop anyone from loving anyone of any race, sex, or gender. The first, a Korean heritage woman, believes that people should get married because they love each other. The second, a White female, talks about her female co-worker who is in a same-sex relationship and how her friendship with this woman had impacted her. Third, a White, Jewish female argues that no one should decide for another what commitment should mean and with whom they should be in relationship.

“Where do you stand?” Dr. May debriefed the exercise near the end of class by referring to a few key intercultural communication theories and terms that students had read prior to their participation in the “Where Do You Stand?” exercise and brought the theories and terms to life with practical applications of both theory and practice (or praxis):

Okay, so quickly, we have about one minute. One thing I wanted to do is to understand the purpose of this particular activity. If you remember the iceberg, you remember the surface, the midlevel and the deep values. Surface would be those things that we see as obvious everyday it might be the performed, we might use stereotypes and terms identifying those aspects of culture. But you don’t begin to really understand and appreciate other people until you can see beyond the surface. This is an activity that gives you the opportunity to share the midlevel and even go deep with it if you want to. In the process of doing so I’m hoping that we identify terms from the readings. We understand that culture takes place across space, across context, through different channels. We understand that values play an important part in how we think, how we perceive, how we interpret communication. Understand that power whether it is the issue itself or the ways we discuss the issue because I honestly feel I’ve done this thing a little while now, I honestly feel that somebody under any other circumstances would have chosen to stand against this wall. But I think you all are being a little hesitant because of the power of being stereotyped or being judged or being placed as somebody who is not open to understanding or respecting or accepting difference. But that doesn’t bother me, I just want you to think about it. Other terms that we may include, personal prejudices, I’m sure there are some personal

prejudices in this particular activity and of course there are the stereotypes. We use stereotypes when we actually don't have the actual information, right? We draw from stereotypes in order to gain an understanding. So with that I say, leave out of here in peace, with respect for one another, and on Thursday the conversation goes a little farther. I need for you to be open and willing to share and to listen. If you don't do anything else today make the world a bit better.

This exercise challenged students and encouraged them to deepen their understanding of course concepts and to experientially engage. When asked about topics and concepts that excited them in Communication 305, two students (a White, Jewish male, and a Korean heritage female) in personal interviews referred specifically to this classroom exercise:

MF: [Liked this exercise]. Because everybody has to participate and even though people might not necessarily be truthful, they might be afraid to not be in the hegemony, you really get a sense of what people are thinking, where the divide in thought is. And especially the people who were in that middle ground. Um, why I didn't go, you know when we did the stuff about same-sex marriage and a lot of people, and basically everybody in the class went to agree, and then there were a couple of people who stayed in the other side because they had issues with the way the statement was phrased about you know what marriage is, what all that, I think stuff like that is so interesting, it's so interesting to hear people's sides of different issues. I think stuff like that is so interesting, it's so interesting to hear people's sides of different issues.

JL: I enjoy the fact that he makes everyone participate. And then we talk about, when we talk about I guess the last thing I can remember him, okay, remember that activity, I don't know if you were there, oh yes you were. We had to, there was like, agree, disagree, and undecided. That was really fun because like we got to state our opinions. I like to state my opinions a lot.

Though a relatively brief exercise, the claims, dialogue, and follow up questions required students to begin the process of critically evaluating their own knowledge by understanding their own standpoints, attitudes, values, and beliefs (Understanding and Analyzing Stages of Bloom's Taxonomy)(See Figure 1), and to examine why their own worldviews compelled them to answer definitely or to ponder their own worldviews, their

own cultural biases, in order to take a stand on each claim (Evaluation stage of Bloom's Taxonomy).

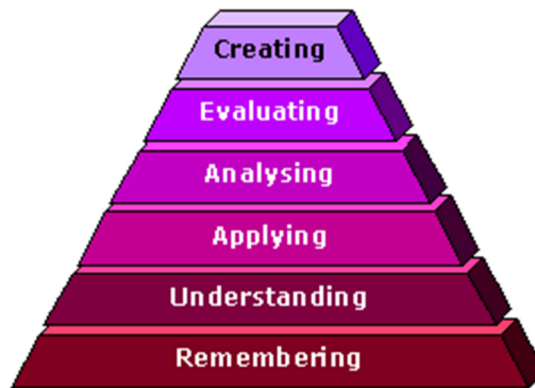


Figure 1: Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001)

Students grappled with gray areas and how adding one word or phrase (marriage, at all times, naturally) to a claim could impact their decisions to agree, disagree, or stand in the middle because they needed to critically reflect on each claim. Because this exercise occurred so early in the semester, during the third week of class, Dr. May's comment about hegemony might very well have impacted the comfort level of students taking a public stand on such contentious issues. Further, Dr. May's critical thinking questions that probed students to explain their choices may have impacted students' decisions to stand in the middle for a few of the claims.

"Never again". Another exercise Dr. May employed is an experiential activity he borrowed from the caucus section of the welcoming diversity model from the Multicultural Research and Resource Center and the National Coalition Building Institute

(NCBI) Campus Affiliate co-curricular classroom trainings. On day 16, during week 8 of the course, he asked members of the class to come prepared with a word they:

Never want to hear again used in reference to you and when I say to you, towards your group, whatever group you choose to identify with. So one word that you don't ever want to hear again when it's used in reference to you and your cultural group and however you want to define that. Culture can be your ethnicity if you want, it can be interns of race, it can be in terms of age, it can be in terms of gender, sexuality, economic class, standing within the university hierarchy.

Before delving into this exercise, Dr. May showed a clip of Spike Lee's film *Do the Right Thing* (1989) to lay the foundation for the exercise. Specifically, he chose to display a clip of several different characters of different ethnicities saying ethnic slurs against another group (Italians, African heritage, Asian heritage, Latino heritage, and Jewish heritage are all targets of ethnic and/or racial slurs). After May asked students for their reactions to the film, he then began the classroom exercise. Some of the words and explanations of those words and the transactions that ensued after each word, I transcribed directly from class. Folks came to class to explore the following words they never again want to hear about their group:

DF: JAP. Jewish American Princess. I would be happy if I never heard that again. Even like other Jewish people using it. I don't understand, I don't understand why other Jewish people say it. Basically it means you're spoiled, you get what you want, and you always get what you want. I had friend in high school and her brother went to Syracuse and she would say, yeah, he always talks about all those JAPs up there, JAPs, blah blah blah, and it was actually her mom who was like you know that's actually a really offensive term. She looked at me, and I was like, yeah, pretty much. But it's just, people don't even, it's become so common that they don't even recognize it as derogatory anymore. The first time I heard that term, I thought it was derogatory in a whole different way, the first time I ever heard it, I thought they're Jewish, why would you call them JAPs, like that's derogatory anyway, and then someone was like, no Jewish American Princess. And I was like, that's horrible.

SP: [I have two which I will explain briefly.] The first is actually too, as in too much, too nice, too fat, too anything...It says you can't be excessive, you can't be yourself, and that marginalizes you to what we're supposed to be, you know we're supposed to be cosmopolitan, what you see in these magazines, Abercrombie models, skinny, supposed to be built. [And the second example is] Pussy. It harms at a very gendered way on both sides. It polices them, that men can't be sensitive or open, or speak from their heart, they have to be masculine. And then also it marginalizes women because then it's objectifying, it's saying that women are this one thing, and people are more than what's in their crotch. And by using that word it implies that a person can only be this one thing.

Dr. May: Think about this word and other words that have been used in regards to masculinity, it creates a man using what? Makes you a man?

SP: And when you're using this, it's implying it's a negative thing and it's not.

Dr. May: Excellent way to end on that. Okay, who's next? Oh! You're next, but I've been trying to get this person involved...

ME [Rebecca Walter]: So, I had my word last week. Mine is lifestyle.

Dr. May: Lifestyle, well, that's not a bad word is it...

ME: Well, when you're queer and your life is called a lifestyle...golfing is a lifestyle, yachting is a lifestyle, playing sports is a lifestyle, but one's committed relationship does not get to be defined as a lifestyle. So I will name this for myself, for queer folks, don't call their [our] lives lifestyles, don't call their [our] relationships lifestyles...

Dr. May: So what word would you use?

DB: Well, I just have to say it's not a lifestyle it's your life.

ME: That's exactly my point.

Dr. May: I've got a chance to ask you a question though, well, actually you've answered it, though, you've answered it, I was going to ask you just a question for you. Who uses the word and how is it used?

ME: Wow. So I hear it a lot in the media, so it's like, so I hear the gay agenda coupled with that lifestyle.

Dr. May: So what does it do when that word is used?

ME: So it denies, minimizes, peoples being. (I deliberately used the terms denies and minimize because they are two intercultural communication concepts associated with ethnocentrism, ethno-sensitivity, and ethno-relativity that Dr. May introduced during week three of the course.)

MH: Wow. Good example. Wow, and I was supposed to defend because now I am representing this group, I'm talking about the group, this group is not invisible. I am re-presenting the group in a newspaper article, you know on the news, on television, in a magazine. So, what am I doing wrong?

MM: I think that word is also often coupled with the term alternative. Which that word alone also says that not the norm. It marginalizes like that.

AM: I really hate the term bitch, too. I dislike when it's used in terms of all my bitches. I really really really hate it primarily because it genders anger. And that really upsets me. For some reason if I'm emotional or I'm upset about something, I'm not entitled to that or that's not a right that I have anymore because now I'm a bitch. And that upsets me. So, I don't have the right to be angry.

Dr. May: Okay, how does it gender?

AM: The way the term's used, men aren't generally described as bitches, unless they're gay...

Dr. May: So when you call a guy a little bitch, you insinuate that he's less than masculine, or maybe gay, and that's the insult. Wow.

AF: What makes someone call a girl a bitch? Is she acting or talking loud?

Dr. May: Wow. So men refer to a woman as a bitch?

AF: Because she's not acting normal, she's not being quiet or ladylike, she's speaking her mind.

Dr. May: So, calling a woman the b word, insinuates, or connotes masculinity. Wow.

AM: The other problem I have with it is, when a woman is upset and that word is used it signifies a lack of emotional control. Like, oh, she's just being moody. If a man does it he's being assertive.

Dr. May: I wrote an article about an organizational experience and I talked about discussing race in the classroom and how I felt doing it, and another person with me at the time I was putting the article together and she said, well, as a woman I

feel similar to the way that you've describe your experience because of this word. She says that when I'm assertive in the classroom or assertive in the boardroom then I'm referred to as the B word. So language is very important.

AF: Not to make it political or anything but like Hilary Clinton has this problem where she's tough, she's perceived as such, but if she showed emotions she's perceived as weak or as a victim. So I feel like it's very hard for females to be leaders because they are assigned these labels.

LG: I don't like the term illegal alien. I don't even know which word to focus on, but alien is like you're from some other planet.

Dr. May: Illegal alien. All right. Illegal is a term in itself. What does it do against a group and what does it do for a group.

LG: I don't even know which word to focus on, but alien is like you're from some other planet.

Dr. May: Let's make that it's own word. Alien and Illegal. Because I think you have a point. So alien is from another world, all right? And then illegal implies what? Against the law. Unlawful, you're very being, your presence is unlawful. How do you take that?

MT: When I was in elementary school, I first heard that word, I was in class, and she asked me if I was an alien too, and I didn't understand what she meant. She said, my parents told me I was so I went home and asked my parents and they were pissed. I thought it was funny because I was like, no, I'm not an alien, I don't understand what you mean. But now when I think about it, it's kind of like sad to tell your child you're an illegal alien. I don't know I just thought it was really really weird, but that was my first experience hearing that word.

Dr. May: So let's think a little bit, we can recall certain situations and in some situations we might be able to even laugh, but think about the reality that people are facing every day. So if a child, for example, is born with the U.S., the child is not an alien or illegal, isn't that the way it goes, lawfully. But if one parent was not born within the U.S., then a child has to hear or see or experience the idea that his or her parent is illegal, and what's the threat there? Well, one of the Gonzales' twins gave us an example a few weeks ago. Being stopped by the police for something as simple as a tail light, could get you separated from your family... So a word is not only insulting and rhetorically demeaning, but it has some very real implications as well. I mean you can literally be separated from your child or your wife or your loved one. So, DF?

DF: Well, I just think, one of the worst parts for me is that it dehumanizes the situation. Because when you use that term, it just takes away the fact, we're not talking about, we're talking about human beings and I think that this may be a little out there, but I some politicians purposely uses that term because it dehumanizes the situation. And people who get caught up in it quickly forget that we are discussing human beings, lives, families and it's really not as simple as illegal alien, it's people, that's why I hate that term.

Dr. May: And what's so interesting about the word is that they can both be playing negative, but on the flipside you would claim them to be, not positive, but at least acceptable representations, so these are not words that you automatically will hear in somebody's attempt to hurt you or harm you, these are casual conversation words... that's my B****, I'm such a *****.... And it's just casual conversation. You don't have to say anything.

The conversation then turned to the use of the N-word. As an educator, I am always waiting for **it** to happen and that is for a student who is not Black or African heritage to take the liberty, power and privilege of using the N-word. It is like waiting for a grenade to go off, and I can only imagine how often Dr. May has to contend with this "impending event" as an educator of African heritage. The end of class was a student abstract presentation by MM (a White, male student) from an article by E.K. Watts entitled *Confessions of a Thirty-Something Hip-Hop (Old) Head* on generational perspectives of the use of the N-word that illuminated and provided context for the concluding conversation about "words people never want to hear again":

HSS: [Asks MH about his thoughts on the word Negro.] On Oprah Winfrey she had I don't know the name of the actor, but he's good looking, Black, very light skin, light eyes, he was in Crash, Iron man. He's a beauty.

Dr. May: What? Beauty... is he a pet?

HSS: Oprah was talking about there's no way that she would let anyone use this word or even say it in her presence and then Terrence Howard says he uses it what's up my N***a....

Dr. May: Ouch.

HSS: My brother... She uses the N-word....

Dr. May: Well, MM is on his way up. I will say that I would add that to this list. And what's so interesting about the word in my opinion is that we talked about verbal communication. What are the 4 components of verbal communication? Phonetics, semantics, syntactics, pragmatics... The word, we'll learn from Mike has multiple and dialectical meanings. Phonetically, I've heard the younger generation and this is crazy to me but I've heard the two words, makes no sense, but I've heard that when you pronounce it with a GA it's supposed to be in love, and acceptance, and camaraderie, but when it's pronounced with the ER it's supposed to be harmful and negative and destructive. So phonetically, it's distinguished between the GA and the ER, supposedly, now this is all crap, but I'm telling you what I've heard.

HSS: What do you believe Professor May?

MH: Well, I'm not done yet. Syntactics, rules. The rules. The ways in which you put the words together. I think syntactics and pragmatics. Both deal with context and situation. So what are the rules for using the word? Well, we can use the word in this classroom because we're studying language, right? But if HSS came up to me and just said what do you think about this word, n-word. I'd say ouch. Because they I'm going to wonder where else does she use the word and does she use the word often. She pronounced it too clearly, right? So syntactics and pragmatics... What is the practical use? Where are you, all right? And then semantics, meaning. Is she really saying this because she wants to know, or is she really trying to stab me, is she trying to insult me, right? So I'm at this class with this young man and the young man says, you know I hope this doesn't offend you, and I knew it was coming, I knew it was coming, he said, when I lived in Florida, we had these cars and we had these tires, and we called these tires, N-word tires. Ah... I'm like okay. Keep in mind it wasn't in this particular class situation. Remember, I think told you I also work with, I run a reading group with some guys on parole. So, I'm working with guys who've recently been released. So some of them have had hard lives, right, some of them it's just the language they use. So I take that into account. I think about the rules, the situation, right? I think about where we are and what he's really trying to say. Meaning. I even think about did he say, GA or did he say GER, all right? So what do I say? I think I heard the word when I was about maybe 5 years old for the first time. I heard the word when somebody said I couldn't come into a birthday party and since then for years and years and years I've heard the word in other contexts not only in my own experience but from family and friends as well. And I think as is the case with intercultural communication when all else fails use respect. And that's not a word of great respect. Even if it's accepted within a particular culture or community, it doesn't necessarily imply great respect. There

are other words that would imply a greater respect. To be my N word is about the same as to be my B word. Okay well, you might be trying to acknowledge the relationship but it doesn't put me on any pedestal at any time. So that's what I think. LG? MM will you come down and set up.

LG talks about using the word Negra, in Spanish...

Dr. May: It's supposed to be a term of endearment, but can you really define the word. Until we are all of the same mindset as a Gloria Steinem or Cornell West or Michael Dyson can we use the word assuming that other people have the same understanding or because we hear it within a larger population or a larger context does it become permission for other people to drop it as well? You know what I mean?

JL: Never Ignorant Getting Goals Accomplished... She told the class that she learned it was an acronym she learned in a hip hop class.

Dr. May: I don't think when the word was used in the early 20th century, late ninth century, I don't think somebody said, never ignorant getting goals accomplished, now go get my shoes.

FA: I hate the word Jew. Hold on now let me tell you why. I'm Jewish. I hate when people use the word in the context of don't be a Jew. Not that I hate my own religion, but I hate don't be a Jew. But what I did, and it's funny, and I found when I started to do this people would stop using it. I started making fun of myself. I actually agree, to them, and I'm like you know we go out and say, and I don't want to drink anymore, yeah, I'm Jewish, I don't want to pay for it. And they start laughing, but I swear to god they never ever used it against me again, but not against me, but as a joke.

Dr. May: What does not be a Jew mean?

DB: But it's not just used in that context though. I was sitting around at a party once and someone was like, yeah, I wanted to wear his hat but he was being such a Jew he wouldn't let me. And then he looked at me and said, I didn't mean that offensively. And I was like, how is that not offensive.

FA: Cheap.

DF: Jew you down...

MH: SP and then we move to MM [for the abstract presentation on the use of the N-word].

SP: I am totally against the phrase, no offense, because when you hear that an offense is totally going to follow. That should totally be eliminated from our language.

Dr. May: When you preface with no offense, I think is an example that you know the potential is there to offend, right?

Dr. May modifies the exercise in order to engage in critical dialogue. During the traditional version of this exercise, groups simply put out what they never again want people to say, think, or do toward their group and there are no questions asked and no follow up, no explaining, because in large groups, the process can get derailed. However, Dr. May's framing of the NCBI caucus in Communication 305 allows for critical thinking, questioning, elaboration, explicit narrative and follow up. The exercise allows members of a particular group to be the authority of experience, name specific stereotypes about their particular group, and empowers each group to name their own experience(s). Further, one of the principles of the NCBI methodology is that "stories change people's hearts." Rather than argue with the records of misinformation that we each acquire about different groups of which we have no firsthand information, the NCBI methodology has a deep commitment to eliciting the personal story so as not to make people defensive and to make the personal political. Personal stories can shift students from the rhetoric of colorblindness into a more holistic perspective that contextualizes and historicizes hegemonic systems of domination. Further, the narrative can serve the purpose of seeing the ways our stories and experiences are similar as well as very different depending on each of individual social locations and identities.

A couple of other important points about this particular classroom exercise, dialogue and the conversation that unfolded must be contextualized. On Day 9 of the

course, the subject, themes, and discussions centered primarily on avowing and ascribing identities, labels, stereotypes, generalizations, and minority and majority identity development. After the student abstract presentation on minority and majority identity development, a general discussion ensued. One of the male students who co-presented that day posed a question to Dr. May (I transcribed the interaction verbatim):

MF: Is it possible for labels to inform stereotypes?

Dr. May: Is it? I just had a big discussion with somebody in our office. And I want to use an article that includes the B word. But what it is, you know the B-word, B-I-T. I don't even say it. I know look at Dr. Walter, Oh, what kind of teacher are you, you're scared to say that word. But what happened is that the author is trying to redefine the word and she says I'm going to empower myself by calling myself this word. It was a consciousness-raising movement, group. It was an organization.

A: It's a magazine too.

Dr. May: It's a magazine, too. So what happens is that there's an argument that we can use this word for a positive identity. In the same way that the n-word has been used a lot of hip hop culture. You know if you're going to call me this anyway, then I'm going to take this word and redefine it and I'm going to throw it back at you. But the question that I posed to my colleague was, does it work? You know, does it really work? Am I really ready for someone to say "Hey, N, that's my N". Nah. This is my N. What do you think Dr. Walter, can we do it?

Walter: It's negotiated. So, I take on the term queer, but if someone outside of my group out of a context who is not affiliated with me, and I do not have affinity for and with, and I'm not in community with them, No.

Dr. May: You take offense?

Walter: Yeah.

Dr. May: Because you think they mean it in a derogatory way? So MF?

Walter: Or they don't get the political history behind it.

Dr. May: Same with the n-word. You're just saying it. You have no respect for it. You have no respect for the oppression, the history. Great example. So Matthew what was your question again?

MF: Do labels inform stereotypes?

Dr. May: Well, you used the word White earlier, and you got at least 3 perspectives on what that word means. Somebody said it meant power, inside there must be an international, someone else said hegemonic? I wonder. Didn't Martin & Nakayama use White and Black examples throughout chapter 4. I'm like use something else. You know. Because I really want them to get it I don't want them to be limited by Black and White.

Walter: So I would say, just by me outing myself with the term queer, who knows what's going to accompany the way folks view me in this room? Right? So, maybe I'm a man-hater now, maybe I'm some raging whatever, or a freak, I'm just saying there could be a lot of stereotypes that follow that label.

Dr. May: And even me choosing not to use the b-word or the n-word because I understand Dr. Walter's point. Because she's saying you know there are repercussions after you kind of step out of that safe zone. Sometimes I will use it, sometimes I won't. But I think, I take a political stance on the n-word. I figure if I don't use it, then you won't. I figure if I show you I won't use it, then maybe you'll at least respect the fact that I didn't use it. But I can't say I'm not around people when they sometimes use it and use it quite freely. Right?

On this particular day (day 9) I made an intentional and strategic decision to avow my identity as queer. Using queer as an example for the topic on that particular day was extremely relevant to the main points of the lesson, but further, I wanted to parallel Dr. May's example of the implications of the power of language, specifically his reference to the impact of the N-word. The terms queer and the N-word are not equal by any means, the analogy is certainly not the same, but the similarities that do exist were enough for me to use queer as an example to underscore the impact of how words can impact our groups, especially when used by members outside of our groups. Even after this important discussion surfaced, especially with regard to the Dr. May's statement about

the N-word, “I take a political stance on the N-word. I figure if I don’t use it, then you won’t” on day 16, the N-word was still used by a non-African heritage student in the class. On day 16, one White, male student did tell me in class he did not like the word queer, and I responded by telling him we could talk about that word one-on-one. I made a personal decision not to spend class time justifying avowing myself with that term. The following class period, we connected at the beginning of the class, and I explained the significance of the term queer for me. He came out to me as gay.

As I referenced student, MM, and his Intercultural Contact paper earlier in the Risk and Storytelling section, this student names his interactions with me as one of the influences for his final project. As I stated earlier, his learning came from a Palestinian, Muslim heritage female who he befriended in the class, me (an out, White, queer woman), and Dr. May’s story of driving while Black (DWB). My influence on his Intercultural Contact directly refers to the “word we never again want to hear about our group” named above on day 16:

MM: At first I was confused; I didn’t get it. I had always been under the impression that the word “lifestyle” was the respectable label for anyone who shared a sexual orientation different from my own. As I sat and listened to Rebecca explain why she didn’t feel edified by that term it began to make sense to me: lifestyle denotes something that you choose and can change at a moments notice, like a jacket or something. I have never had to think about what word people use to describe my sexual orientation. In fact, most cases people in my circles have probably just labeled it “normal” which is another way of “othering” Rebecca’s community. In fact, I have been so privileged that I didn’t even have a word that day that I never wanted to hear again. I am almost ashamed to admit that. Later that day I was in another class discussing the rhetoric of the LGBT movement. A student was commenting and began talking about people with “alternative lifestyles.” Again, came that pang in my chest. I actually cringed. Now, I know the student did not intend on being disrespectful, yet I could not let it go unnoticed. Rebecca’s story had been so integrated into my own perspective that even though she was not anywhere within earshot, it bothered me. Without

even having to think about it, I felt offended. So, there I was with no excuses. I raised my hand and politely informed my fellow student about the power of the words he was using to describe people. I hope I brought him into conscious competence.

I believe that I should not enjoy any cultural, social, or economic privileges because of my race, religion, or sexual identity. Instead, I ought to reject unearned privilege based on these things.

MM's paper reflects a shift in what Sullivan (2006) calls the psychosomatic state.

This student recognized that people have not "forfeited" advantages but that he, as a White male, has benefited from privilege. As Sullivan states,

The so-called advances of civilization over the last century have produced the transformation of White supremacy into White privilege for many White people. As a result, the social, political, economic, psychological, and other benefits that continue to accrue to White people because they are White often are not seen by White people today. (p. 51)

Further, she argues that White privilege is "a psychosomatic state not automatically available to everyone, but rather disproportionately available to White people because of their race" (p. 51). The classroom exercises, but personal narratives specifically, had allowed this student to hear the impact of denied privilege.

"Who would you hire?" Two other experiential exercises from Communication 305 mentioned briefly include "Who Would You Hire?" and Crash moments. For the "who would you hire" exercise (developed by Constance A. Shorter in 1980), Dr. May asked students to work in groups with a handout describing 15 different applicants for 5 open teaching slots. I sat and worked with one group of five students as a participant. This particular group engaged in groupthink, meaning that none of the students really

challenged or questioned each other or their criteria in their hiring choices. Rather, they seemed to go along to get along. From my field notes that day I wrote:

Today is the exercise: Who should be hired. I am triggered by the group I work with because of how the [former] Black panther is being labeled an extremist but other religious folks are not being viewed in that way. One of the White females in the group, TG, shuts down and stops speaking when I bring up the criteria.

One of the candidates was listed as: Mary Weaver, 38, White, Pentecostal minister.

Mary has a B.A. degree and has 15 years of experience. She has taught in church schools and in public schools. She feels strongly that a child's education should include a focus on moral things as well as academic. The group I observed enthusiastically chose this person for a position.

The candidate the group immediately discarded was listed as: Herbert Brown, 49, Black, Baptist, M.S. degree. Herbert was an active member of the Black Panther organization of the 1960s and has taught for 4 years. His experience included Afrocentric freedom schools in the United States and Africa. As an active participant, I attempted not to sway the group to hire Mr. Brown, but I did assert my opinion about how quickly they dismissed him as an extremist. When I asked the students about their knowledge of the group, none of the group members knew anything substantial about the Black Panthers, had read any literature, or knew anything of the programs the group had fought for such as education or the breakfast and lunch programs for poor people. This was not mere inference. My perception was that the students labeled the Black Panthers extremist because the term Afro-centric was used to describe Mr. Brown's teaching experience and because they had no knowledge of the Black Panthers outside of a mass

media context. Mainstream media has portrayed the Black Panthers as extremists, militant, criminal, and violent. For example, Kelley (2000) notes,

FBI agents on numerous occasions used fake press releases to spread false rumors about movement leaders, hired undercover agents to provoke violence and/or commit crimes in the name of militant organizations, violently attacked competing organizations, and created an atmosphere of tension, confusion, and division within the organizations under surveillance. (p. 41)

In a White supremacist culture, the term Afro-centric has often been confused synonymous and interchangeable with terms, such as anti-White or defined by conservatives as reverse racism. I inferred that perhaps that was the perception members of this student group in Communication 305 had of the Black Panthers.

In media literacy, a course I regularly taught for the Communication Department, my undergraduate students had very minimal knowledge of the Black Panther party except for name recognition. They had no knowledge of COINTELPRO, an FBI counter-intelligence program that, according to Zinn (1990), “when the FBI was trying to break up the Black Panther organization, nineteen Black Panthers across the nation were killed by law-enforcement officials or by one another in internal feuds, some of which were provoked by the FBI” (p. 207). Though I merely asked the group what knowledge they had about the Panthers, this may have put them on the defensive. Though from my perspective I was merely being inquisitive, they may have felt argumentatively challenged or threatened, especially the White female who shut down during my participation with the group. The power that I held as both a researcher and instructor may have also made students less inclined to participate more fully.

“*Crash* moments.” Another activity Dr. May utilized was called “*Crash Moments*.” This activity included a class viewing of the controversial mainstream film, *Crash*, during two full class sessions. In summary, the film is set in Los Angeles and is about a collection of strangers, who are, by virtue of “crashing” into each other, forced to confront issues of race, gender, class, and ethnicity. Students were asked to set aside thoughts about *Crash* if they had seen the film prior to the shared class viewing via a brief writing assignment. In class, students were to take out a sheet of paper, and in a few minutes (Dr. May’s instructions verbatim from recorded audio):

And all I want you to do is to describe in a few sentences, any knowledge you have about the movie. That’s what we call setting aside prior ideas, thoughts and observations, because the theory is if you can describe it and set it aside it no longer hinders the group viewing process. I know you’re probably saying, oh, that’s a farce, but believe me, it’s true. You acknowledge what you know and you set it aside, and then you get to open yourself up to new experiences and new knowledge.

Students were asked to take notes, think critically about, and answer questions about the film that include: *Describe your first thoughts after viewing the first segment of Crash. Please identify any examples of Intercultural Communication theory at work. What terms and ideas from the book or our readings would apply?* Following the two viewing sessions was a debriefing of the film that included Dr. May’s original research on a specific *Crash* moment that happened at University Y a couple of years ago. Dr. May grounded the activity theoretically:

Dr. May: This project, crash moments, came from an article I read by a friend and mentor of mine, Dr. BA, she’s out in Colorado and she looks at ways of

developing critical thinking among students, and so she's got this, she says that if you use media in correct ways you can begin to help students to become independent thinkers, develop skills of inquiry, discern their reasoning process, draw reasonable conclusions, recognize multiple viewpoints exist and respect the value of alternative perspectives. Also, Dr. A says, viewing media in this way can help students to connect their emotions and their rationality to understand relationships between feeling and thought and to address egocentrism and ethnocentrism. So, the idea is that if we begin to look at film through this intercultural lens we begin to how power plays out, how culture plays out, how race, gender, difference as a whole plays out. And really, the idea of collective viewing means that you see it through your lens but you're also privy to the lens or lenses of others. You're able to hear somebody else's take on it. And you begin to see that image and that scenario in ways that you wouldn't normally, right, in any other circumstance. So, the mere fact that you're sharing this experience means that you take something away, that is very very different from what you would normally take away.

Dr. May's pedagogical strategy for this assignment models Vygotsky's (1978)

Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory. Russian-born, Jewish scholar, Vygotsky (1896-1934) is widely known for his prolific work in the fields of child development, education, psychology, and language development. For Vygotsky, ZPD provides a fuller picture of how learners can develop based on their mental developmental pace. Different individual learners are shaped with different mental or intellectual ability due to social, cultural, and historical influences. Taking socio-cultural and historical factors into consideration helps to actually measure the complexity of the whole context playing a pivotal role in learning and development whereas the hard-science neglects the real whole situation in our context (Dunn & Lantolf, 1998). Second, language is a semiotic tool and mediational artifact that is socio-culturally and historically constructed. ZPD provides a model for how "learners can develop based on their mental developmental pace" with the guidance of a mentor (Vygotsky, 1987, 57). This particular exercise constructed by Dr.

May allows students and teacher to “scaffold” or communally share the learning load together (Orlofsky, 2001, p. 98).

(ZPD) is a term Vygotsky (1971) developed to explain a process of incremental or developmental stages of learning achieved by the guidance from a facilitator and other students who are at higher order levels of thinking. For example, one student working alone possesses a particular knowledge-base, but when pushed by the instructor, in this case, Dr. May’s intellectual body of knowledge and expertise, coupled with the socio-political and cultural currency he brings to the classroom along with more high-level thinking classmates, a higher level of developmental achievement is attained. Further, in this case, the intellectual knowledge base and expertise and my experience as a trainer of multicultural issues I brought into the classroom as an activist, participant-observer researcher had the potential to achieve an even higher level of ZPD for the learning community. Even more specifically, that I named and marked whiteness beginning the first day of the class allowed it to stay marked, named, and interrupted throughout the entire semester; therefore, whiteness though always normative, was unable to function invisibly. Dialogue is crucial for this process in the zone of proximal development (Dunn & Lantolf, 1998). In a dialogue unsystematic, disorganized, and spontaneous concepts are met with more systematic, logical and rational concepts of skilled instructors that mirror hooks’ (1994) concept of grounded classroom dialogue mentioned earlier in this chapter.

When May sets up the *Crash* assignment he theoretically situates the exercise:

I suggest that incorporating media assists students in three primary ways: First, when included in structured classroom activities, media enhances greater perspectives about the influence of culture on the sending and interpreting of messages. Second, collective viewings help students discover complexities

surrounding the intercultural and interracial communication exchange. Third, collective viewings of media inform and improve reflection processes for analyses of the communication exchange. I seek to employ creative, powerful teaching tools. Yet I am cautious about over-relying on film and video. Consequently, I do not rely on media to *do* the teaching, but I use media as a teaching tool.

In my field notes that day, I too, participate actively in the assignment and wrote:

What I remember most about the film is how I kept thinking it's a luxury to have "crash" moments. Privilege can protect us from having crash moments. For example, if you are White, privilege can keep you from having crash moments until a system of dominance is interrupted. If you are queer, the heterosexist culture assumes you are straight until you interrupt that system of dominance. I took meticulous notes while viewing the film as a participant observer. My notes are very thorough from that classroom session. A few brief highlights that I utilize during the classroom discussion include:

Now that I am watching the film again, I realize that many of the interactions are really our "first thoughts" – the ones that are right on the surface that reflect conscious incompetence, conscious competence. Ryan Phillippe's character is a coward – he doesn't step in when he could have. Terrence Howard's character is caught between racism and patriarchy – when his wife is assaulted. Phillippe + Dillon; how different? Everyone is [presumed] straight; male dominance in the film; reflect a patriarchal culture; women are hyper-bitchy.

"First thoughts." "First Thoughts" is one of the experiential exercises of NCBI methodology (Brown & Mazza, 2005). We choose groups and examine what our immediate "first thoughts" or "records" are about members of a particular group. After viewing the film, students took turns offering the particular theory they chose to analyze the film, such as dialectic, conflict, ethno-relativity, prejudice, bias, racism, discrimination, systemic racism, stereotypes, denied privilege, and so on. Students are asked to define the concept and use critical thinking skills to apply the concept to a

specific example. Dr. May asks the class: What is a crash moment? Why is the film called crash? What is a crash moment? Is it physical? Is it psychological? Is it emotional?

During the last remaining minutes of class after the first segment of Crash, a powerful exchange between Dr. May and me illuminated how silence contributes to oppression and dominance:

ME: Well, I just wanted to.... I like what MJ said about extremes [in the film] because I looked at how it's easy to demonize Matt Dillon's character when Ryan Phillippe's character had an opportunity to really to interrupt some crashes...and he didn't, and so it's so, it's, we can really heap all of our hatred onto Matt Dillon's character but Ryan Phillippe's character... didn't interrupt, he's a bystander...

MH: Wow... Did you all get that?

Me: Bystander...

MH: Bystander... or you know I grew up on this mantra that if you don't interrupt racism you support it, especially, when you see it going on... right? If you don't condemn it, you condone it through your silence, right? You actually empower it, because... I don't see it, so the rest of us say well, if you don't see it, we don't see it either, and there it goes...

Following the second segment of Crash, Dr. May asks other students to share their intercultural concepts in relation to the film, and then the conversation turned to University Y's crash moment. The last time Dr. May taught Communication 305, one of his students said after viewing the film that it was too stereotypical to believe. She offered the comment that people just don't behave this way. The day after she made this comment, there was an incident on campus. At an off-campus Halloween party, a White student dressed in costume as a runaway slave in blackface. Dr. May subsequently wrote

an article about Crash as a pedagogical tool and the impact of the Halloween incident as a crash moment. In the class I observed he told the students:

Dr. May: The newspaper did not publish the actual photos, but images were downloaded from a facebook website and those photos spread quickly across the campus. One photo appears to be a European American man wearing blackface. And blackface is another form of media used to represent African Americans, right. African American entertainers sometime ago, 1900's... late 1800's... if you ever want to get a better understanding of blackface see Spike Lee's Bamboozled. Okay. So in the photo this man is hugging a European American woman who has red horns on her head, she appears to be dressed in a devil costume, and underneath the photo the caption is, "the runaway slave and I...looooooooooove it." And then there's a second photo that shows a chain around the man's wrist, all right? A few weeks earlier another university in this area had a similar incident, a few weeks later there would be a third. At this time, in this particular year, there was a, there were many citings of nooses across the country and it was becoming a big deal people were beginning to have that discussion.... Now our university, which is purportedly one of the most diverse campuses in the nation was in the spotlight for a similar thing, all right. So needless to say, the photos provided an impetus for discourse about diversity. Some students staged a sit in style protest, others said it was no big deal. And upon returning to our intercultural communication, I projected the photo onto a large overhead screen and posed the question, what does this photo have to do with our current discussion on Crash? I just want to pose, a European American White male in blackface at a Halloween party. He's got this chain around his hand, and apparently, all right?

The conversation that followed was nuanced and rich and simultaneously superficial and protectionist. For example, Dr. May and I, and a few students discussed the number of death threats that Obama received after winning the 2008 election, and I labeled them as "crash" moments. Dr. May offered a very direct, honest, and powerful personal statement as to how the blackface incident felt for him as person of African heritage:

For me, it's a crash moment. And it's a privilege for somebody to say, I'm going to just dress up, and I'm going to ridicule or mock somebody else's pain, somebody else's oppression. To me, slavery wasn't funny. Right, because I cannot go past, on one side of my family I can't go past my great grandparents

and know where I'm from... I can't locate those people because for such a long time the ideology or the strategy behind slavery was to separate individuals and groups so that they couldn't form any unity. And if you can't form unity, you can't form strength. And so there's a method to creating a slave in the same way I would argue, there's a method to dominating your significant other in an abusive relationship, okay? There are ways of gaining a psychological foothold on people and in my opinion, this is a way to snatch individuals and groups back to a time that's very painful.

Some of the more superficial or lower level comments, manifested in questions and statements that linked the student's choice of costume to his lack of education. For example, a Latino, Jewish male insisted that some people are just ignorant and needed to be educated and that maybe this White guy had no idea about slavery. He also asked Dr. May if getting angry about the incident is putting him on the same level with the perpetrator. One White female said that there are ignorant people of all races, and we need to be careful about generalizing about White people. I spoke up and said by discussing the incident now, we are accountable to it and also offered, "You cannot be born in the United States and have no knowledge about slavery – to the degree yes, but that it is a cop-out to say that the guy had no knowledge." This is rhetoric used to minimize the impact of racism and ignore the systemic, socio-political structures that even affords a White student the privilege, power, and internalized dominance to dress as a runaway slave in Blackface and think there is nothing wrong with it. The two students' comments are serving to individualize the experience rather than systemically connecting this incident to power and hegemony. This is also a strategy that Whites use to distance themselves from other Whites: I'm not like that uneducated person, I would never dress like that – therefore, I am not racist. By doing this, states Applebaum (2008), "systemically privileged students can avoid having the status quo challenged and can

avert attention away from them having to consider their complicity in systemic racism”

(p. 405). Further, as Tappan (2001) argues,

[I]t is very easy, from a dominant point of view, to see racism, sexism, homophobia, etc., as personal, psychological shortcomings that are too easily interpreted, and thus dismissed or minimized, as the result of prejudice, bias, ignorance, etc. (“I’m not a racist!” or “I didn’t mean anything by that remark”). This view, moreover, leads to a solution to prejudice and bias that stresses the need for individual attitude change, via education, training, therapy, and interventions at the individual level. (p. 10)

Cooks (2003) calls this type of response, the distancing of self, or the “positioning of other/object of discourse” employed in order to move “away from the subject position in the whiteness narrative to focus on others – either as objects in need of enlightenment, or as others who are racialized” (p. 253).

In my interview with Dr. May, I asked what are the implicit messages and lessons he hopes to get across in his classrooms. He very specifically addressed many of the issues of power and the negotiation of social space of my research questions such as: how is meaning made in the classroom and university space when negotiations are not usually transparent, marked or named by status quo narratives, internalized dominance, internalized oppression, and power that may surface? As this study seeks to examine pedagogical strategies used to contest social space, Dr. May was very explicit in our interview about moving students from knowledge, a lower order level of classroom engagement and intellectual development, to action, a higher order level of classroom engagement and intellectual development. He articulated specific strategies as to how classroom dynamics are negotiated to critically engage students and teachers, challenge assumptions, and yet manage to keep members of learning communities persisting even

when dialogue is contested and dissonant. Further, he distinguished his pedagogical strategies in teaching Intercultural Communication with other IC courses at University Y that take a more comparative (this is what country X does as opposed to the U.S.) or celebratory approach, or what Gorski (2007) jokingly refers to as the taco night approach to studying the topic and concepts in intercultural communication courses. Gorski states that “most of what passes for intercultural education practice, particularly in the U.S., accentuates rather than undermining existing social and political hierarchies” (p. 3). Dr. May professed that:

Dr. May: I think that one of the main goals for me is to find ways of talking about culture and race as a form of oppression and domination. Um, and let me back up, to find ways to have people recognize how culture and power work in their lives and in our lives. I find that you can't necessarily tell people that you know we all contribute to a racist society without some sort of ramifications, without some defense mode going up. So the implicit message is if I give you the tools, if I help you understand how some of the terms and theories work that you will begin to fit yourself into this discussion and to begin to understand how you contribute to or work against, disrupt um, oppression, and marginalization. It's an implicit message, but you know it's awfully interesting that many students pick up on it right away, and they begin to work on themselves and actually work on the class in the process. Um, it's nothing that I try to force on anybody but I think that in the end, you know, the major goal is for people to accept action. I don't give anybody rules for action, I don't give any necessarily hardcore guidelines, but I ask that you take on some accountability, some responsibility, and act in ways that you find appropriate as a student or as a participant in this particular class. I see it as a journey and within that journey we're going to have some bumps and bruises, you know. Intercultural communication is not always happy, it's not always giddy, it's not always fun, but in the end when we realize that it's a journey, it's a dance and it's full of bumps and bruises I think we're enabled to contribute to the journey in ways that maybe we would not have contributed before. I hope I answered your question. Let me add this then. I take a critical approach then to intercultural communication, and you'll find some people who don't.

So within our time together the implicit message is hey, power is always at work, you know, and so you either have to understand it and work with it or against it,

or you can be unconscious or disconscious to it and power, oppression, hegemonically, via not taking a stand, not disrupting, choosing to ignore.

Dr. May also empowered students by treating students as graduate student potentials, very capable and critical thinkers. Every week, students presented abstracts on the readings. Students were allowed to work in pairs or present alone on the particular reading for the week. Abstract presentations were approximately 10 minutes in length that included a summary of the reading, insights, relevant intercultural communication theory, and three discussion questions posed at the end to invite participation from all students. Dr. May offered critical feedback, pulled together theoretical threads, asked deep probing and thoughtful questions to get students to delve deeper into the material, into the readings, and reflecting on their own opinions, thoughts, or knowledge. Dr. May also pointed out where students made outstanding contributions and where they could dig a little deeper. Dr. May also empowered White students in the class in such a way that encouraged them to own the material and content and that their contributions were useful and valued. For example, on day 10 of Communication 305, White privilege was the main topic for that particular class. Dr. May utilized Peggy McIntosh's (2007) "Invisible Knapsack" piece in which McIntosh owns up to all of the unearned advantages she has as a White person. Dr. May used her model and asks students to check off their own unearned privileges and advantages. He then reversed the approach, discussing the ways that he is targeted as a Black male educator when discussing issues of race. One White male student spoke up and offered:

TR: To play devil's advocate. Have you ever thought that maybe people are predisposing themselves to find something [racism] that wouldn't be there. But I

mean you also have the unconscious so at that point you're looking for that at some level.

MH: I like that predisposed. We're thinking about it before we even enter...

TR: Right. I mean you're almost going into a situation saying I know I'm going to be discriminated against where is it at? I'm looking at the sheet here that I filled out and I've always known to some extent because I'm a White male I've been privileged in many things. And I can acknowledge that. But at the same time I also feel marginalized in some groups so I feel like I don't have a voice when it comes to certain issues. I shouldn't have the right to have a voice.

MH: That's like AM's point.

TR: Right. And I think Dr. Rebecca also mentioned that she was a taught as you know as a White, you know, she didn't have a culture or a certain. I don't feel like I have a right to talk about racial issues because I've never had to experience because of my privilege what anyone other groups have had to experience. So I mean, I'm just throwing some ideas out there.

MH: Those are excellent ideas. All right. I applaud you on those ideas. Don't think that I'm not open to listen. I'm giving you mine. Hopefully you're giving me yours. I don't want you to walk out of here saying, okay, this is May's doctrine and I've got to take it or leave it. You can add to it, you can take away from it, you can refute it. You don't have to like it. This is what I experience, and I can't tell you that you don't have the right to talk about racial issues. After all, when did you not become, when did you become, or when were you removed from a system that has always used race in categorizing people? I mean you're there, I'm there, we're in this thing together.

Dr. May has invited this White male to share his story. By inviting him to be part of the discussion and using the inclusive rhetoric of "we" and "together," May did not shut this student down or out, but rather racialized him as a White male who is part of a raced society. As Cooks (2003) chronicles the performance of whiteness in her Interracial Communication course, she noted "Many students commented that the lack of race and culture in their life seemed to make them dull and/or boring: whiteness performed here in multiple ways, as the standard against which all others are judged, as normal, as

everything, and therefore nothing” (p. 254). I return to Vygotsky’s model of scaffolding knowledge, or knowledge-building, as this student referred to a comment about whiteness that I made the very first day of class because I had created the knowledge-base of whiteness from which students could draw, grapple with, and articulate. This student, TR, recalled my language verbatim, “And I think Dr. Rebecca also mentioned that she was taught as you know as a White, you know, she didn’t have a culture.” Fuller (2000) argues that for Whites, “longing is something; it is not blank, nothing, or normal. Further, it is a longing/absence that is embedded in power relations and historical positionings” (p. 84). Ellsworth (1998) notes that White students may harbor resentment “for feeling that they had to prove they were not the enemy” (p. 316).

May directly asserted his authority of experience in this particular exchange. As mentioned in Chapter 2, authority of experience, according to hooks (1994), determines whose experiences should be the central focus of the classroom and university social space, and May articulated how his particular identities shape his ways of knowing, meaning-making, and the impact of racism on him as a Black, male scholar in the academy, giving his narrative a context and a connection to power structures and institutions.

Further, because Dr. May continued cooperative argumentation and contestation of the space, critical dialogue and learning, another discussion ensued, led by a White, Jewish male student. Cooperative argumentation (unlike competitive argumentation that encourages people to view each other as opponents, thus pitted against each other, successful only when they are right, win the argument, or manage to get their own way)

cooperative argumentation, encourages people to listen and learn from each other, as well to as to deliberate and to be reflective, according to Makau and Marty (2001):

Dr. May: Let me give you one more and then I want to move into another piece. Here's one, when voicing concerns about race, at work or in class, I risk being regarded as overly sensitive or radical. (*Repeats*): When voicing concerns about race, at work or in class, I risk being regarded as overly sensitive or radical. All right, so...

MF: It just reminds me of something. Where does something like affirmative action fall in this kind of discussion?

MH: That's another discussion.

MF: Because going along with what you just said, I as a White man, feel very uncomfortable voicing my opinions about affirmative action because if I do, it seems like I could be racist or discriminatory or prejudiced, so I was just curious where that falls in what we were talking about...

MH: What do you all think? Should MF be defined as racist or prejudiced or biased because he has his own opinion about affirmative action? C'mon. You have opinions. Share. Anybody.

MG (Latina heritage female): I'm involved with a lot of advocacy programs and in some programs that kind of help minority students get to college because they're first-generation, and their described to kind of level the playing field.

MH: Okay, so if we do the history, so maybe the level playing field wasn't leveled for many years. And so these are these actions and who's to say whether or not these actions are again are best to take? No doubt we describe whatever works best. All right, now let me give you some other privileges... Oh I'm sorry. Give me some...

KR (White, gay male): I was going to say sort of that there's still a lot of fear when speaking out against racism. There are such similar threats, I think that people are much easier to speak out against about gender, sexual orientation, or class even though they're so similar, I think there's still a lot of fear about putting those things out or what not out of fear.

In this instance, Dr. May asked and invited the entire class to share what they thought about MF's statement on affirmative action. May invited the discussion about MF's statement without being derailed by the off-topic comment about affirmative

action, yet he did not let allow himself to be put in a position of what Ellsworth (1998) calls taking “the burden of doing the pedagogic work of educating White students about the consequences of White middle-class privilege” (p. 316). May did not perform an essentialized identity, having to speak for folks of African heritage on behalf of affirmative action, but he did shift and refocus the conversation to the topic at hand without being dismissive.

The discussion then turned to other unearned privileges such as male privilege and heterosexual privilege. From the use of the parallel examples, students could see themselves as having multiple privileges and unearned advantages. This exercise was designed to reduce defensiveness, as White privilege is a very contentious subject for all students because White supremacist culture affects all of us, but it is particularly contentious for White students who often get defensive when discussing White privilege. Dr. May provided a toolkit and a language that gave White students permission to be vocal and part of the classroom discussion, when previously, there was discomfort, fear, or lack of experience (three emergent themes from the three White males above) in the discussion about whiteness.

As Denevi and Pastan (2006) posit, a key stage of racial development for Whites is the importance of pride, not as a form of supremacy, but as something that says, “To the extent that I can love and appreciate my group’s difference, I can love and appreciate yours” (p. 70). Instead of feeling this sense of collective pride, Whites often identify with a “collective sense of shame” (p. 70). While Whites are good at identifying themselves as individuals, they struggle to see themselves as members of a group, yet this is key to

understanding the persistence of racism: “Those who seek to understand another group’s collective experience, but cannot make the shift into an understanding of collective pride in their own group, operate from an irresolute position in any cross-cultural exchange” (p. 70).

Honesty Statements: Homophobia and Overcoming Communication Apprehension

Communication 101

At the beginning and the end of the course, Dr. Jay implemented a classroom assessment technique called honesty statements. She asked the following questions: 1) Was this a good class for you? 2) Did you get your money’s worth? And 3) How are you feeling about the class and about yourself after taking this class? Eighteen of 19 students said it was a good class for them, because they learned about themselves, that Dr. Jay made the class interesting, they enjoyed the activities, and they enjoyed getting to know their classmates. Only one student said the class was “a little bit good” because “You got on my nerves.” For question #2, 18 of 19 students said they got their money’s worth, and at least 7 stated that they are more positive people as result of taking the class. At least 8 students referred to Dr. Jay being an excellent teacher; one student said he or she had recommended her class to all her or his friends, and another student said he or she would take the class again if given the chance. Only one student disagreed, stating that she or he did learn about anger and conflict, but that most of the information was not new for him or her. For question #3, students overwhelmingly said that their level of confidence in communicating was greater as result of taking Communication 101; 10 of 19 students listed “more confident in communicating” for this question, but this was

especially impactful for those students who are deeply afraid of public speaking. As Communication 101 is one of the Communication general education requirements, the other is Communication 100: Public speaking, the majority of students who take Communication 101 are afraid of speaking in public. In Dr. Jay's course, every week students would get up "on stage," as she calls it, to do a simple exercise or activity. The fact that students had to get up in front of the class every session allowed students to minimize their fears about speaking in public and at the interpersonal level.

Communication apprehension (CA) has been defined as an "individual level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78). Students also overwhelmingly said that they feel more positive in general as a result of Dr. Jay's course and also stated that they made friends and enjoyed the community that formed in Communication 101. One student stated that she or he were sad to see the semester come to an end, and another said the course was the best she had of all courses this semester.

Only two responses out of the 19 responses for each of the three questions had anything negative to say on the honesty statements. One student wrote in response to question #1: You got on my nerves sometimes, and I thought the name things [name zoom] was kinda redundant and a waste. Another student wrote in response to question #2: "Yes, but as a religious person, I found your talks about LGBTQ issues to be too much. I will pray for you, and God bless you."

Coincidentally, right before she collected these honesty statements, I followed up with her via email to find out how and if my presence in Communication 101 contributed

to the teaching and learning process (answers to follow below in the active participant observer section). She replied within a day and stated:

I was also aware of your unique life experiences, and tried to include tidbits when I could. This turned out to be a point of frustration for one student who felt that I had spoken too “too much” about LGBTQ experiences – despite the fact that I never veered from the text or the NCBI talking points – I’ll address this point briefly in class tomorrow.

As I interpreted and theoretically grounded her response, Dr. Jay distanced herself from her own coming out story, because of internalized homophobia, heterosexism, and most likely fear. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, the state of Virginia does not legally protect against sexual orientation discrimination, namely, those who openly identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, or queer. In her reply to me, she refers to my “unique life experiences” (but not her own), the NCBI talking points, and the textbook as sources of credibility. Like any oppressive hegemonic system, homophobia and heterosexism are not rational or logical but emotional responses. It is obvious in Dr. Jay’s response that she was triggered by this student’s comment and attempted to rely on the text or the experiential exercise as authority. However, she did not acknowledge her own coming out story in her reply. The class following the honest statements, Dr. Jay addressed the responses, specifically, the negative ones. In the classroom transcript, she said, verbatim:

I’d like to thank you for your honesty on the last honesty statements. In some cases, in one case in particular, there was a student who felt like I had gotten on their nerves, and I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to get on anybody’s nerves, just trying to do my best; and somebody was a little upset about all the GLBT stuff, but it’s in the book, and it’s part of the NCBI and it’s my job to do that, so that won’t change from this year to next year. I might tone it down a little bit but I appreciate that, and I thank you for praying for me. I can always use prayers. Let’s see. For those folks that were just irritated, or didn’t like the stories or whatever, I apologize, the whole point of a story is to give you an opportunity to see how it connects to real life.

So, and the rest of the folks who pretty much said thank you and that stuff and I appreciate that too, so, I just want to let you know, I try to make changes, I try not to get on people's nerves, and if I did I'm sorry, and so I'll be thinking about that and really really working to make changes and I appreciate your comments.

After processing this incident for about a week, I decided to follow up with her as a colleague, as a researcher, and an ally. After sorting through my transcripts of all classroom observations, I determined that Dr. Jay mentioned LGBTQ issues in six classes, whereas she mentioned her church affiliation in eight classes. I sent Dr. Jay an email informing her that in class, she mentioned her church and her Pastor more often than she mentioned LGBTQ issues. I told her that I found it interesting that the White, male, Christian student could not relate to her as a Christian and thereby reduced her to her lesbian identity. She found this to be very insightful and helpful in thinking about the student's comment. As Jeannie Ludlow (2004) articulates:

I use the purple rhinoceros to explain to students why they might perceive that our class focuses on certain topics to the exclusion of more familiar ones. I explain that if I say the phrase purple rhinoceros at least two times within one class period, that phrase will catch their attention in ways that brown bear would not, simply because most of them are not accustomed to thinking about purple rhinoceroses. The evocation of an unfamiliar topic disrupts their expectations. So after class, if someone asks what happened in class today?" they may well answer, she kept talking about purple rhinoceroses, not because I spoke about them to the exclusion of other topics, but because the students' own unfamiliarity with purple rhinoceroses would cause them to remember that phrase over all others, even if I said brown bear fifty times. (p. 43)

Communication 305: Confronting Dominance and Power

Near the end of the semester, I made a recommendation to Dr. May that we should use a classroom assessment technique in order to gauge some of the outcomes related to teaching and learning in Communication 305. Specifically, I recommended the

following three questions: 1) What new insight did you gain about yourself as result of Communication 305? 2) What biases were challenged as result of Communication 305? and 3) What actions will you take as result of taking Communication 305? Dr. May allowed me to facilitate this process during the final class period, and this served as quiz #5. Dr. May left the room, and I stayed to collect these responses. He was not given these assessments until after grades were turned in and the semester concluded. I followed up with approximately 12 students via email in order to better understand some of their answers to the three questions and received nearly immediate responses interestingly, from three White men. The first two responses directly relate to White identity and White privilege, the third response relates to male privilege.

KR (White, gay male): Q#1: I gained new insight about my own culture while taking this class. COMM 305 forced me to take a hard look at my lack of cultural diversity. I realized that although I've traveled and had friends of many cultures – I never really thought of myself as having a culture. I always related culture to different religions or ethnicities and that my own culture was just a basic blip on the radar – nothing really distinguishing about it. This class helped me understand that there are several layers to my own culture and that I have to delve deeper and explore these aspects in order to fully acknowledge and be aware of other cultures.

(Follow up correspondence with KR, specifically *what particular identity you connected with that you didn't before? What changed for you or how did this come about?*): I remember one thing from that class was that I really realized that I had never paid attention to my own culture. I had always equated cultural diversity with people from other countries, races, ethnicities. If someone had asked me about my own culture I don't think I would have had much to say because I never felt I had a culture... I was just a White guy in Virginia, nothing fancy there. The class helped me recognize that everyone has their own culture and forced me to look outside of me. It wasn't just me, a plain White guy, learning about others in an intercultural class, it was all of us gaining new insight on our own culture and how we all blend and form a diverse world.

This student, after taking Communication 305, had a new understanding as to how whiteness had kept him from claiming his ethnic heritage or thinking of himself as even having a cultural heritage. When I facilitate Welcoming Diversity trainings in the classroom, I publicly address and underscore the real cost that we (Whites) have paid for giving up our ethnic heritage to become White in the United States. Further, this student echoes the sentiments expressed by White male student, TR, on page 192: that whiteness renders invisibility of culture, but more importantly one feels this as a tremendous deficit or loss. Further, if as a White person, you feel less than proud of your ethnicity, it is easy to see why, in a White supremacist culture, Whites feel entitled to focusing on the “other” or overtly and covertly harboring resentment toward racial groups who claim pride in their ethnic and racial identities. When KR refers to his culture, he uses the words and phrases: lack of culture, blip, had no culture, just a White guy, nothing fancy, plain White guy but in the follow up correspondence, he uses the words us and we to situate himself into the discussion of an intercultural and diverse world. He now began to see himself as having a culture and a race, and he, too, has begun to draw and scaffold from the White-identity knowledge base that I provided in Communication 305.

MF (White, Jewish male): Q#2: My bias towards affirmative action was definitely challenged as result of this class. I look much more favorably on it than I did.

(Follow up correspondence with MF, specifically *why do you think differently now? What changed for you?*): Given our discussions in Comm. 305, I came to the realization that my views on affirmative action came from a viewpoint that wasn't necessarily fair. Given that I am White, I come from a world of privilege, and so things that may come easy to me or be expected, might not necessarily be the case for someone who's in the minority. I never thought about it in terms like that before Comm. 305.

In a personal interview with this particular student earlier in the semester, when asked what biases he brought to the class that have or are being challenged, he had very different thoughts about affirmative action:

MF: Well, if I was doing what you were worried about which is about saying what I thought you wanted to hear...which is I came with all sorts of biases and everything that I thought has been challenged by the course. I don't, I really don't think that I've had any biases that have been challenged. Because the biases, I said before our class feels very liberal. And that's how most of my biases are. And because no one who is really that conservative has spoken up, those haven't been challenged. The only one that I can think of, is I had very specific and very opinionated views about affirmative action. And I brought it up in class one day. And the discussion kind of turned into this pro-affirmative action, and um, I'm very against it. And that is, that was one that was really challenged and I really, you know, had to look at my thoughts and views on it. And, I could see what was being said. I mean, I don't know if my views have necessarily changed, but that's the only one that I can really think of. But other than that, I mean, I have a pretty open mind. And I don't necessarily have biases. I have opinions that can change. That's kind of the way I think about it. Because, you know, I'm not an expert on everything. Kind of the way I go through life. If I have an opinion, basically if I had to make a sign that like would go above my head it was I'm opinionated, challenge me. And so, my opinions might have changed. I mean, not really, because everyone, a lot of people have the same, a lot of our discussions have been stuff where I'm like okay, but that affirmative action one is definitely something that you know I just, I think affirmative action is racist. I think it's another form of racism. Um, I'm kind of this viewpoint right now, and it could be the stage of my life that I'm at, but as our country is becoming more accepting and you know the multicultural populations are growing and growing and you know, White people aren't as in the majority as they have been. I mean, we, still, White people still are. But, they're, I feel that there's a bit of institutionalized racism people who are White. And I think affirmative action is kind of reflective of that. And I get the reasons for it. And that was one of the things that was challenged was hearing about you know disenfranchised people you know, who affirmative action has given the opportunity to. You know, from my own, I have, it's probably my own life experience. I have friends who were you know were smart. Way smart. And got rejected from schools like Columbia and Harvard because they needed to, because of affirmative action, needed to accept people who you know were maybe not were as qualified. But, you know that's racist. But that's my, you know, something like that is a tricky issue. And so, and I also...I know you're not judging me. I'm judging myself. I also think on the flipside, that it's also racist towards minorities because it, to me, it also says you're not good enough to get into these schools, so let's institute this program

that will make sure you get in, because we know you can't do it on your own. And so, it's a combination of those two ideas that are kind of contradictory.

This student's response resonated with the sentiments expressed by White students in McKinney's (2005) research based on the myth of meritocracy, a pervasive dominant or status-quo narrative in the United States. The status-quo narrative of meritocracy, or rugged individualism, enables us to distance "ourselves from all that surrounds us, we become defensive, isolated, and alienated" (Keating, 2007, p. 27). White students in their autobiographies lamented about their fears of future victimization, or by being treated unfairly by affirmative action that "causes harm by inflicting reverse discrimination and causing racial tensions" (McKinney, 2004, p. 163). Some students believed they have (or in this case, their friends have) already been "victims of reverse discrimination in college admissions" (p. 149). Rarely discussed is the admission of legacy students to prestigious institutions (McKinney, 2004). For example, at Harvard, one of the schools the student I interviewed mentioned, "legacies are three times as likely to be admitted; for more than forty years one-fifth of the students admitted received this preference" (p. 157). Further, this rhetorical trope of entitlement automatically assumed that minorities are less qualified, as though the student had first-hand experience with the candidates and of the entire admissions process. Even though the rhetoric of reverse discrimination in the university and the workplace is pervasive in U.S. culture, economic indicators prove otherwise. For example one statistic is that as of 1995, White men were 95% of U.S. senior management, but only 29% of the workforce. These conversations are usually based in stories and myths of meritocracy, one of the status quo or "worldviews and

beliefs that normalize and naturalize the existing social system, values, and norms” stories mentioned by Keating (2007, p. 168).

Finally, another White male spoke about the new insight he gained in Communication 305, specifically related to White and male privilege:

SP (White male): Q#1: When it comes to new heights I feel that I have gained a deeper awareness of myself and my effect on others. Before this class, I have never seen the power that I have as a White, straight male. I never even really considered myself as a male. However, when we began to talk about hegemony, I realized that I have too much power, and it has always been a part of my interactions with others. I now have a responsibility to deconstruct this power in any way possible and try and give up my various sense of power in any way possible.

(Follow up correspondence with SP, specifically *what new realizations did you have and how did you come to this realization? What changed for you or how did this shift come about?*): I am actually quite surprised at my answer, because if given the same quiz now, I probably would have written a different answer. I'm actually even confused as to why I wrote that I've never seen my power as a White, straight male, because after taking that class, and then actually thinking critically about my life and my interactions with others, I now see the power that I have. However, I still agree with the second part of my answer, that I don't even really consider myself a male. Correction, I don't see myself as a "man". I see how other straight men interact with people; I see how they abuse others, and try and dominate another in a social circle. I have never acted as such; I've always been one to speak from the heart, to invite others into conversation, to be on the same level as each other. The qualities that I listed I have rarely heard being used to describe what a "real" man should be. Therefore, biologically I'm male, and I'm attracted to females, but I don't see myself as a man.

Interestingly, on at least three different occasions during the semester, I wrote in my field notes that this particular student was operating out of sexism and male privilege. Specifically, on day 8 of the class, students were partnered with another student to discuss a “significant event in your history.” This student, a White male, was partnered with a Korean heritage female. When the pairs were reporting out to the class, SP did not share his own significant event, but he shared the experience of his partner. In my field

notes, I wrote, “SP is sharing JL’s experience. Why?” On day 13 of the class, SP and HM (Asian heritage female) presented their abstract on an Indian festival. I noticed that SP took up a lot of space (in the amount of time he took up and how he addressed others) as a White male. Upon examining the verbatim transcript and my field notes from that day, I noticed that SP did most of the talking. When Dr. May followed up with critical comments or questions, SP on 3 different occasions asked the class, “Are you getting that? Are you writing that down?” Finally, upon concluding the presentation, SP spoke for his abstract partner in a way that I experienced as male privilege. He said: “I would just like to say HM and I got together the past couple of days and HM has been an amazingly hard worker so I think we should really give some props to her. She made this pretty for you guys, so you had something to look at.”

Later in the semester (late October), I convened a group of White students, staff, and faculty called to discuss taking on White privilege. I invited SP to attend the discussion based on the recommendation of another student. I sent out a very detailed email about the logistics of the meeting. On the way to Communication 305, SP told me he received my email but then asked me for logistical details. On my field notes that day I wrote: “It’s all in the email and he’s acting out of sexism by asking me to provide all the details again. This is a dude thing to expect this of me and of other women.” Johnson (2006) states that male dominance “encourages a sense of entitlement in men to use women to meet their personal needs” (p. 91). I comment more on this student and the White male space he was afforded in the Chapter 5 conclusions section.

Several other students named that they had increased insight into their perceived “lack of culture” due to their White identity and White privilege. One Latina female and one Korean-American female also named White privilege. I followed up via email with these students as well, but did not receive responses:

TG (White female): The biases/assumptions that I had challenged in this class were that I never really thought about White privilege. Also, I never really spent too much time thinking about stereotypes, so it was interesting to learn about other cultures.

This response is the White female student who was part of the group with whom I worked on the “who would you hire” classroom exercise. She was the student who shut down and stopped participating after I asked a question about the Black Panthers.

KK (White female): The new insights I gained was to take a step back and look at myself. I have never really thought about my own culture and now I am desperate to know exactly what my culture is. Through learning about others, which I love, has truly made me learn about myself. Some actions I will take is continuing my search of my own culture.

AB (White female): I gained new insight to my identity as a White female. I became aware of some of the privileges that being a part of the “White” population reward me with, without just cause. I have done nothing to deserve these privileges and until now I have done nothing to acknowledge or deny them. At the same time I realized the disadvantages to my position as a female. Men in our society carry positions of greater power, and receive great rewards for performing the same tasks that women are overlooked for. This class challenged my assumption that everyone receives exactly what they work for in life. I understand now that unfortunately, this is not the case.

These three White female students use the words and phrases: never thought about White privilege, never thought about my own culture, desperate to learn about my own culture, and spoke of the advantages of whiteness and the disadvantages of being female, and AB’s relationship to the myth of meritocracy had definitely been challenged. These three White women have situated themselves into the discussion of an intercultural and diverse

world. As Fuller (2000) articulates in her article on the performativity of whiteness, “There has been so much time lapsed between immigration and the present that all family traces of the ‘old country’ are gone except some erased understanding of being ‘White’” (p. 84).

Two women of color specifically named White privilege as though somehow the knowledge they gained from Communication 305 had given them permission to name whiteness and perhaps as illustrated by MG, permission to challenge rather than ignore White privilege. MG’s statement that reflected a more conflict-avoidant strategy prior to taking Communication 305, shifted to a new understanding about her role as a potential change agent in terms of correcting the misinformation of others as well as directly approaching conflict:

MG (Latina heritage female): Biases or assumptions that I had that were challenged as a result of taking the class was that in some cases ignorance can be bliss for others. I ended up taking away from the class that educating people on realities makes people get along much better than avoiding them as I used to think.

JL (Korean heritage female): My main bias is towards White people. I used to see them as arrogant people who thought they were better than everyone. I learned in this course that they have a reason to act like that. The reason is privilege.

In my personal interview with JL, she named whiteness a few times in terms of classroom spaces, faculty, students, and how she was often the only student of Asian heritage, but seemed somewhat apologetic and reluctant to name it so because I am White. She apologized to me once during the interview for using the term White, and then used the vocal filler “um” before she used the word on two other occasions.

TR (White male): I now have a greater understanding of who I am in terms of what identities I assign to myself. I also feel that I because of my new

understanding of my identity, I'm able to understand others with more understanding nature.

MM (White male): Wow. Mostly [I gained insight] about White privilege – scratch that – privilege across multiple dimensions. I realized that in denying, defending, or minimizing that privilege I was being ethnocentric. Well, I had several assumptions about whether or not privilege existed; it does! Also, EY challenged my assumption of Muslim people.

SJ (White female): I realized during this class that there is a real problem opposite of being racist but sometimes acting like there isn't a racial problem. To be honest I never saw myself as a biased person but I suppose I would get annoyed when White people would be called privileged, but in a way I think there are many ways that could be true, unfortunately.

BK (White male): As a White male, coming into this class I always felt uncomfortable talking about racial issues regarding privilege and social structures in a sense that I was afraid of saying something wrong. I felt that it wasn't my place to speak up because what have I gone through? What gives me the right? What I realized is that I don't have to be scared to discuss these issues because the best way to gain knowledge is by sharing with your peers; so this was a bias/assumption that I really had challenged.

These four White students, like the other White students' comments earlier, have come to a new understanding in relationship to their White privilege. Further, TR sees himself as having an identity he wishes to explore, as well as a greater understanding of himself in relation to others. MM is the White male student who wrote his intercultural contact paper on his classroom interactions with Dr. May, a Muslim student, and myself (in relationship to queer identity). SJ's response indirectly names her previous style of intercultural communication that included an avoidance of racism and an acknowledgment that she was previously defensive about White privilege. Finally, BK's response echoes an earlier analysis in that this White male student felt invited into the discussion of race for he, too, is a racialized being and part of a raced society.

Resistance: Or is It?

Extensive literature exists on the issue of resistance in the classroom, particularly when issues of power, dominance, privilege, oppression, marginalization, and other contentious issues are raised. Keating (2007) argues that “many students actively resist understanding the power, privilege, and other implications of whiteness” (p. 81); Fisher (2001) argues that student resistance in the classroom is an accurate indicator that she “has touched on something that, for one reason or another, students consider damaging to themselves” (p. 94); Shor (1996) argues that “in an unequal setting where they lack formal authority, students also resist/engage/manipulate the teacher, the process, and the institution through their informal power” (p. 17); and Tanaka (2003) argues that resistance is “too dichotomous and antagonistic as a doctrinal thrust to enable either party to find a way out of intense conflict” (p. 9). Butin (2005) argues that classrooms that set up what he calls the “zero-sum game” where “either the student or the teacher (who is delivering the content knowledge) has to lose” (p. 5). He instead offers a different perspective on resistance that provides a deeper insight for greater possibilities. These possibilities include resistance “as a proxy for students’ desire for stability and certainty” and “as the attempted maintenance of a particular identity through the refusal and/or inability to see oneself in an alternate identity” (p. 6). The second possibility is especially important in framing the stories I captured from the students I interviewed.

All students I interviewed for this project had their own unique stories. What could be perceived as resistance (i.e., shutting down, not participating, remaining relatively quiet) in the classroom may not have been resistance at all, but rather, students

acknowledging and moving through their own learning, fear, consciousness, internalized oppression and/or dominance, cognitive dissonance, re-evaluation, pain, and a lack of trust in individual members of the learning community and the dynamics of the classroom space more generally. The students I interviewed were grappling with incidents from their past in which they were mistreated and revisiting those incidents during the semester. MJ, the only African heritage student in Dr. May's Communication 305 course, told me in a personal interview that he was afraid of having a Black, male professor due to his own misconceptions that he would be judged more harshly than other students in the class. He felt that Dr. May would judge him more strictly as a Black male, therefore, he did not speak when issues, such as racism and privilege, were introduced and discussed, but he had a realization that he expressed in the classroom assessment. He doesn't feel "Black enough" or didn't come into his own authority of experience to participate in the discussions:

The class is like extremely diverse and I guess like, being African American I don't really consider myself like African American, I call myself Black because I feel like I don't actual have the actual I guess ties or connections to being African, because I guess, when I explain to the people that work with J and N this is a conversation I spoke about it... I don't consider myself fully African American because I don't feel like, I guess African Americans, people that consider themselves African Americans that come here, because they can say that they're from Nigeria or they can actually name places in Africa that they're from but for me I can only go look back to ancestry and say okay these are my ancestors are from, but since I don't really feel I connect with that I don't consider myself an African American and some people kind of down me for it because they think that just labeling myself as Black is kind of derogatory.

Yet, when asked a different question, MJ said he related to the stories Dr. May told in class. For example:

Um, I guess when we first talked about our reflection papers, the first paper we did when Professor Hopson was talking about, I forget where he said he lived, but when he would go to the other side of town how he would have to take off his hat and all this other stuff so he wouldn't be stopped by the police. When I wrote my paper, I really considered what he said and I felt like I connected with it in some sense. Because when I was younger like I lived in this area that the front was really run down and the back they just built new houses, and most of my brother's friends were in the area of the front and there was like a lot of problems up there, the police were always up there, and my mom, I wrote about this in my paper, and she was like, my mom she wanted get me and my sister out of the area and she didn't want me and my sister to have to go through what my older brother and sister went through with the police and everything so I guess I just kind of like more or less relate to Professor Hopson when he gives his stories being on the same spectrum being African American or Black and to be on that same level with him.

When I asked him why he does or does not share personal stories in class, he said:

Most of the times I wish I could do the same thing [as the other students who share personal stories]. But I just don't. Like I said, I see how they can I guess relate their stories and what not, but at the same time, I guess going back to being Black, I feel like it's just so mainstream that whatever I say will be something people have already heard I feel like people are going to be like I've heard that before, it's nothing new. Like, I don't know. I guess that's how I feel sometimes when I talk about being Black, I feel that people are going to be like, I've already heard that before. Your story is nothing new. It's something that's already been said. I don't know it's like I know, I feel that people wouldn't be like that but then again it's just that fear. Like I had that talk with my Sociology 3xx I think it was and it was with Dr. R. Yeah, and like, there was a bigger ratio of African Americans in that class, I felt more comfortable. But at the same time I didn't because it was just I guess, in that surrounding I still felt a little bit uncomfortable.

This response is an attempt to minimize the effects of racism and internalized oppression as described by Hardiman and Jackson (1997) who contend that “four elements take place when social oppression occurs, or the racial contract is in place: 1) The dominant group gets to name and define reality (normal); 2) Oppression is systematically, and subtly embedded into institutions; 3) The oppressed are psychologically colonized and asked to collude with the oppressive ideology; and 4) The dominant group's culture is

imposed while the oppressed group's culture is discounted, misrepresented or eradicated" (p. 17). Further, that MJ felt his story is one that students have already heard, what he labeled "mainstream," or that his story will be dismissed, ignored and devalued, speaks to sentiments expressed by folks of African heritage who claim that if they speak their truths of mistreatment from racism, they will be perceived as complainers. As Wise (2008) poignantly states, "White denial is not a form of backlash to the past forty years of civil rights legislation, and White indifference to claims of racism did not only recently emerge as if from a previous place where Whites and Blacks had once seen the world similarly" in fact "Whites in every generation have thought there was no real problem with racism, irrespective of the evidence" (p. 30). As Hendrix et al. (2003) explore the importance of identity negotiation in the classroom, they argue that "unfortunately, the average student has not come to expect opportunities for expansive dialogue or recognition of their identity" (p. 182).

However, in his classroom assessment quiz on the last day of class, MJ reflected that a shift occurred from his previously held bias in Communication 305:

One bias/assumption that I had with the class is/was with the professor being African American that it may have been harder on me due to past experiences with African American males. But it wasn't an issue at all. Surprisingly, I was more encouraged if anything.

MJ's fear that Dr. May would be harder on him speaks to both tokenization and the power of representation when one is "the only" (Black, Asian, queer, woman, etc.) in a large group. It is easy to essentialize experience, reinforcing stereotypes of members of a particular group, while at the same time many complexities exist, such as in-group, out-group dynamics, wanting to ally with members of your own group, power dynamics

between teacher and student, and the fear of having an experience that is different from other members of your group. After my interview with MJ, I shared some personal information with him about some of the internalized oppression that I have about being queer and how at times I not only feel less than proud of that identity but that I feel judged by other LGBTQ folks.

Another student, a White female (in a personal interview with me) kept talking about religious bias or rather she was emotionally charged when referring to the ideas, values, and worldviews held by students who had strong connections to their faith and belief systems. She was especially triggered by a Muslim woman who said she would not marry a man outside her faith. I asked AF what topics angered in Comm. 305, and she replied:

AF: Anger me? I don't think anything's really angered me... well, I mean, one thing that does anger me is like when people think that they're absolutely, they know absolute truth. That's what... I don't know, I don't think that anyone is exactly right or wrong... Like, I'm not 100% right, I just try to figure out why, they think they are or where they're coming from, try to understand their point of view. But it doesn't kind of anger me like when that one girl P was like, I will never marry somebody else who's not Muslim. And I was just like why do you have to put that wall up and like just divide like yourself from others. I mean who knows if she has a job one day or she goes out and there could be a guy she really really likes who turns out he's not Muslim and she wouldn't give him a shot because he's not her religion. I just feel that's really, that's not open, it's not being open-minded, and it's not, I don't know I just hate that, I hate that divisiveness and just I'm the best and nobody else matters, you know what I mean? And you can see it with all different things... I mean not just like Muslims or Christians but like the guy who was talking about the Orthodox Jew, like what, when he was talking about his grandpa would do, or when they would put the, what's it called, sit Shiva, and be like, they're dead... and I just think that breeds hate, creates conflict, and it just create injustice like in certain areas of the world. I have a little grappling... that does anger me... (laughter)... Like I said, I don't know I just want to like you know explore all points of view, which kind of comes after seeing the whole big picture, kind of seeing, I don't know, all these commonalities... we're all human, we're all mothers, sisters, you know we all

have fathers... I don't know that's one thing I kind of have issues with... I was very Catholic my whole life and you know went to Sunday School and came up and then just when I started grow up like 16 & 17 in high school and started to see the hypocrisy behind a lot of it.

I quickly honed in on AF's repeated naming of religion as a challenge and trigger for her, and I asked her if there was any significant event related to religion that is a "life event" for her. I read her body language carefully. She grabbed her knees, and her eyes became watery. I told her she did not have to tell me, but I offered to turn the tape recorder off as an ethical decision, if she wanted to talk about it. She agreed to speak and immediately started crying. She proceeded to tell me that she was diagnosed with cancer in one of her femur bones in her leg and had to have an operation. This life event challenged her own relationship to Catholicism. She then proceeded to tell me she had an abortion at the age of 15. She told me what that experience was like, justified why she needed to make such a difficult decision, and then described why she had such an aversion to strong religious beliefs – because for her those beliefs were used against her at a very young age, and she felt very judged. I reassured her that I was not judging her.

I also noticed during our interview her tentativeness when answering my questions. She often would say, "but I don't know," at the end of my questions to her, but obviously she did know, and she was extremely articulate in her answers and also in class discussions. In fact, Dr. May frequently called upon AF because of her deep insight. I told her, "You do know, you keep saying that," to give her courage, to validate her responses, and to let her know she is the authority of her own experiences. This is a typical White female response – to invalidate or doubt one's own knowledge base and answer tentatively, hesitantly, with qualifiers. Tannen's (1990) research on gendered

speech argues that women, and I contend White women specifically, tend to qualify their speech for approval in that “if a woman appears forceful, logical, direct, masterful, or powerful, she risks undercutting her value as a woman” (p. 241). Brookfield (1995) notes that conversational dynamics he witnesses in the classroom include “women’s tendency to preface their remarks with self-deprecatory asides” (p. 151).

When I interviewed a White, Jewish heritage male about what makes him feel vulnerable in the class he replied with the following:

MF: Yeah, um, there was actually, going back to that exercise that we were talking about, when we were doing the same-sex and when I stood in the middle, and because he mentioned marriage, and I feel that marriage is inherently a religious term. And when you use the word marriage because it’s a religious term, all of the, what’s the word I’m looking for, the biases of religion playing into it, you know, the Bible says this, well, the Torah says this, and the Quran says this, so that’s why you know, whereas if you call it, you know, if you just eliminate the word marriage for everybody, for heterosexual, homosexual, whatever, then and it just becomes unions, and then once you’re recognized by the government that way and whatever, and so I said that. And the majority of the class is in agreement, and I could feel the, I could feel the animosity is the wrong word, but it was one of those times where I could feel like I’ve set some people off. And, so, I felt, you know, I don’t show vulnerability too much, but I definitely felt it. Um, usually me being vulnerable is I get quiet, I have some physical things that I’ve picked up you know being an actor I have to be aware of, um, but I guess that I feel a little vulnerable now, and I keep, you know I fidget a lot, um, scratch my neck, it’s kind of my standard, well, so I mean in that discussion yeah, and definitely any time that I really talk about my Judaism, I feel um, vulnerable, but I feel nervous, I don’t even know if that’s the right word, only because there are uh, you know, a couple of people in our class who are um, Muslim. I think there is one girl who’s from Palestine, who said she was from Palestine, and that’s very, you know, very tense. And I’m not saying that they you know have beliefs that would be discriminatory towards me, um, I don’t think they ever would, but I know people, my ex-girlfriend’s ex-boyfriend, who was her best friend and one of her other friends were both Palestinian, and when they found out that I was Jewish they wanted nothing to do with me, because they had been raised by Palestinian parents, who you know, had their prejudices towards, so I guess whenever I talk about that I always feel you know especially because the Jewish population here is not very large, um, you always run the risk of people, you know...

As I noted this student's fear of being "out" as Jewish in the classroom, in the United States where Christianity is obviously and noticeably a privileged faith/belief system, and at times both an anti-Semitic and Islamophobic nation, the Israeli/Palestine conflict plays out in very real ways for Jewish and Palestinian students. That this Jewish student is afraid of discrimination by Palestinians, but not anti-Semitism by Christians is another important area of further research and exploration in higher education and in the critical classroom space. Despite his fear, however, MF felt comfortable enough to share several experiences in Communication 305 related to his Jewish heritage. In fact, in five different class periods during the semester, MF shared personal stories related to his Jewish heritage, including ceremonies, family traditions, anti-Semitism he experienced, and he educated the class with respect to different denominations of Judaism (Orthodox, Reform, etc.).

In a personal interview with DL, an Asian heritage female in Communication 101, she shared that the class discussions about family were very painful and difficult for her. She shared with me very personal information about her own family. She is of Chinese heritage and her biological father lives in China. Upon moving to the United States, her mother remarried a Korean heritage man and DL finds her relationship with her step-father to be very difficult for her to navigate. He is a very traditional, Korean heritage man, according to DL, and she does not agree with his dominance or some of his traditions. She mentioned ancestor worship specifically. She talked about him in the interview at length and that she feels less close to her mother because of him; she feels as though there is a wall that did not exist before their marriage. She disclosed that the most

painful part for her when discussing family issues in class is that she personally feels she does not have a family. She is a very outspoken, articulate, and vocal student in class on all other topics, except as I discovered in our interview, when it comes to family issues. She quite often emerges as a leader in small group projects. As the interview went on, I noted that DL is struggling to navigate two cultures: her Chinese heritage and the U.S. culture. On three themed discussion questions, she expressed that she is less than proud of her Asian heritage by articulating on six separate occasions that she hates Asians and Asian families. However, as the interview progressed, DL did make a distinction between hating Asian families and hating traditions for traditions sake. She articulated to me that the caucus section of the NCBI workshop was a great exercise for Asians in the class to defy stereotypes. She stated twice in our interview that people automatically expect her to be a genius or to excel in mathematics.

As this data of personal interviews, classroom observations, field notes, and personal conversations illustrates, the critical classroom is complex, dynamic, transactional, and partial. For example, what educators deem resistance may not be resistance at all as demonstrated by the personal interviews with students. I will now move to Chapter 5 and offer theoretical implications, explanations, and further analysis gained from these two classroom spaces.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS, AND FUTURE EXPLORATIONS

I don't think the deep understanding of the world that we strive for can come in a single moment. It comes from the long and painful struggle, with the world and with ourselves. Insight doesn't magically descend upon us. We have to work for it, and that always takes time. (Jensen, 2009, para. 6)

Overview

This chapter offers theoretical contributions to the field of critical pedagogy, specifically, the negotiation of identity and power, as captured by the data collected in two Communication courses. Reflections, future research questions, and explorations conclude this final chapter. My problem statement as defined in Chapter 1 that informed this dissertation was: Although teachers and students contest and negotiate relationships, knowledge, voice, and power, marked and unmarked by authority of experience, how is meaning made in the classroom and university space when negotiations are not usually transparent, marked, or named by status quo narratives, internalized dominance, internalized oppression, and power that may surface? What is at stake for the teacher, the student, and the classroom as a community of learners? Further, what is at stake for the researcher?

Chapter 5 discusses the inadequacy of adopting boiler plate teaching methods and the restrictions and privilege inherent in the ideology of the safe classroom space. The instruction of these two Communication professors is theoretically grounded in “teaching

as a calling” apart from professionalism, personal advancement, and values of the marketplace. An ethics of caring, deep accountability, and standpoint/situatedness describe the skillfulness of both teaching content and process in these two classroom spaces as demonstrated by the data in Chapter 4. The two marginalized professors used identity as a site for resistance and consciousness by carefully and deliberately connecting personal stories with communication theory. The important role of the activist researcher in not only supporting but raising the level of critical consciousness in these two classrooms is not mere happenstance. Finally, Chapter 5 offers reflections and questions for future research in critical pedagogy.

Conclusions

A one-size fits all model of teaching that can simply be inserted into a classroom implies that each learning community is static and the parts are merely interchangeable: teachers, students, subject matter, and a room. This view reflects the mechanization and the standardization of teaching apart from its art and science and certainly ignores the cognitive growth associated that is necessary for learning to take place. Bartolomé (2003) argues that blind replication of teaching methods will not guarantee student learning. As Bartolomé explains, such assumptions reinforce a “disarticulation between the embraced method and the socio-cultural realities within which each method is implemented” (p. 410). Further, this approach establishes and reinforces authoritarian control to the teacher and reinforces the banking model of education as described by Freire (1982), rather than the co-creation of an engaged pedagogy. This view ignores the uniqueness of each member of the classroom space, the knowledge and identities of each

member, as well as the synergy and engagement that develops intra-personally and between and among those members of a given learning community. This is not to say that classroom exercises that prove to be effective and successful should be abandoned, but it does suggest that each classroom community is completely incomparable to each other. Good teachers take risks, create spaces that allow themselves and their students to be vulnerable, allow students the freedom to move about, “try on” and explore new ideas and identities, and foster a genuine love for learning that is independent of any “right” method, exercise, or way of teaching.

hooks (1994) argues that classrooms are dynamic and always changing when she describes one particular class that she truly loved versus a classroom community and experience that she loathed during the same academic year. She further elaborates that as teachers “we all learn to make lesson plans, and want to stick to them, and when I began teaching, I would feel panic, a sense of crisis, if there was a deviation from my set agenda” (p. 156). As she gained experience and confidence in teaching, however, hooks learned to let go of control – a major tenet of Freire’s (1982) banking model of education. Further, the critical classroom by its very nature of identity and power negotiation in the course cannot offer, what Fisher (2001) calls “predictability and control” (p. 85). The critical classroom instructor allows and encourages students to come with “experiences, feelings, ideas, and proposed or previous actions they might see relevant to the course” which leads to what she calls “creative control” (p. 86).

The Contested vs. The Classroom Space

Another perspective on the negotiation of identity and power is to treat the classroom as contested rather than the safe space. Ludlow (2004), who offers an analysis of the feminist classroom as a contested space rather than a safe space, asserts that the contested classroom space is one that empowers students when we “encourage them to come to voice in an atmosphere of risk” (p. 46). Because one claims a space to be safe does not make it so. Safety is a privilege, argues Ludlow that confers dominance to privileged groups and is also captured by Brazaitis’ (2003) work, specifically in her analysis of the group dynamics workshop in which she participated. She documented that privileged groups wanted the context to be “safe” before they spoke. As Johnson (2006) argues, “[T]hings of value that all people should have, such as feeling safe in public spaces or working in a place where they feel they belong and are valued for what they can contribute” (p. 22) were never givens for either Drs. Jay and May. In a White supremacist heterosexist capitalist patriarchal culture, there is hegemony operating at all times, or as Dr. May says, “There are rules being taught to you whether or not you want to learn them.” To be successful in these systems of domination, one has to know the rules. Dr. May cannot singlehandedly mitigate the rules and impact of racism and White supremacy, and Dr. Jay cannot challenge the rules and impact of sexism and heterosexism. Learning or knowing the rules, however, does not mean being governed or restricted by them. If your body occupies particular marginalized identities within these hegemonic systems, knowing the rules is not only a matter of survival, but they can be used as a site for resistance. Further, as Hendrix et al. (2003) argue, “student/teacher

relationships are far bigger than classroom interaction; they are impacted by the departmental, institutional and societal climate” (p. 180).

A Critical Incident: The Socio-Political Environment in Real Time

Almost every semester there is something that occurs inside or outside the classroom – May called it a “crash” incident – that demonstrates many of the issues explained that connect the classroom to the larger socio-political environment. In the period of my research such a crash incident was the election of President Barack Obama. In Chapter 4, I captured a series of interactions by various faculty members in the Communication Department because these interactions exemplified power and hegemony and many of the themes discussed in this project, and they also relate to the perception of collegial support, especially for Dr. May. During the Communication “Crash” incident, Dr. Gee was the recipient of several microaggressions that were articulated in email responses to his initial query about the post-election statement that was proposed to the department. According to Sue (2007) microinsults and microinvalidations are not obvious in nature, putting people of color in a psychological bind and that “microaggressions hold their power because they are invisible, and therefore they don’t allow us to see that our actions and attitudes may be discriminatory” (p. 41).

This incident, coupled with the outcome that Dr. Gee’s contract was not renewed, illuminates that it is much easier to have “difficult dialogues” with those you have power over in an academic setting, in this case, faculty having power “over” students. The difference is that Dr. Gee initiated a difficult conversation with those who held power over him, at least collectively in this sense, with apparently serious rebuke. When I asked

Dr. Gee for permission to write about this event, he enthusiastically supported this, and even gave me permission to use his name. I must admit, chronicling and documenting this incident frightened me, for I felt a somatic reaction of protectionism kick in, and I struggled for the courage to document this incident. After grappling with the issue, I ultimately decided it was necessary to make this interaction visible.

Back to the Calling

As was discussed in the literature in Chapter 2, the university structure mirrors the modern U.S. corporation in many ways. For example, in traditional research institutions, the rising of professionalism, securing grant funding (often a requirement in tenure-track faculty position advertisements), and boosting the university's status and rank through intellectual property are *modus operandi* and deeply tied to capitalistic structures. With such a commonplace business model and operation, it is easy to see why the art, skill, passion, dedication, and resources for teaching and learning can easily become diminished and a lower priority in colleges and universities. Both Dr. Jay and Dr. May describe their passion for teaching as was apparent from having the opportunity to see them in action twice a week for 15 weeks, and from their disclosure in my personal interviews with them. When asked why they teach, they responded:

Dr. Jay: Because I love it. Because it's really the best way to impact young lives in a really positive way that can make a tremendous difference. And because it's fun. There really isn't anything better than being in a classroom with folks who really want to learn and folks who really don't want to learn. I teach because it's something I've done all my life. I come up from a family of teachers and we had a speech program in my family, as you know. And I have always just seen myself as a teacher. I've always admired good teachers, education was really important in my family.

Dr. May: I think in terms of my skills and abilities, teaching is probably one of those things that I can do rather successfully. I've always been a teacher. Even as an undergraduate there were opportunities to earn money by either constructing workshops or classroom situations um, after graduation I found myself working for a community center where I had to organize classes and workshops and learning opportunities. And even beyond that I spent time as a specialist in the area of violence prevention and so all in all for you know ten or more years I found myself in teaching situations. So as a graduate student, studying organizational communication and the ways in which power, culture, and difference matter within organizational settings, I just thought it would be only natural to continue teaching, and what better place to be than on a college campus, teaching what you like to teach, which is communication.

The reasons these two teachers give for teaching differs dramatically from the new professional described earlier in Chapter 2 and implies a commitment to the profession that is aligned with the value of the public good rather than the value of the marketplace. Unlike the new form of professional that is motivated by self-interest and tied to capitalism, the calling was based on three anti-market principles, as explained by Larson (1997): 1) the work ethic (in that there is intrinsic value in the work, vocation, or calling); 2) a universal service (in that one's calling establishes community bonds and responsibility to the community); and 3) that high rank imposes duties and confers rights, therefore, high rank is not a value in the calling. Sullivan (2005) makes discernments about the calling, that "authentic professionalism can impart a strong sense of identity...it is a way of life with public value" as opposed to the career (p. 39). The ideology of the new professionalism serves to legitimize social inequalities by stressing educational and occupational hierarchies and by creating elite classes and tiers of public intellectuals. Intellectual classism may reinforce competition and individualism in the form of expertise. For example, an emphasis on the number of research grants and publications can overshadow the importance and motivation of teaching for faculty. Further, as was

mentioned earlier, Dr. Jay has been a Term Faculty for several years (Her contract is renewed annually based on teaching evaluations, committee work, and service.), and she teaches many sections of Communication 101: Introduction to Small Group and Interpersonal Communication. She also teaches Communication courses at a local community college in order to sustain herself financially.

As I mentioned in the introduction and methodology section, each classroom was quite different, given the nature, purpose, and scope of the course. Dr. Jay had the limitation of a more standardized curriculum, text, testing, and accountability to the basic course coordinator to ensure uniformity in the 40 sections of Communication 101. Dr. May had more flexibility in both the content and his approach to Communication 305 and, therefore, was able to offer much more supplemental materials related to critical theory, including film and several experiential exercises. I would term Dr. Jay's style as an engaged pedagogy, which I explain in Chapter 1 as hooks (1994) defines it, borrowing on the liberatory scholarship of Paolo Freire (1982), that emphasizes well-being, a commitment to the process of self-actualization, and empowerment of students and teachers. Dr. May's approach was explicitly a critical progressive pedagogy, as Shor (1992) defines it as

[Critical progressive pedagogy is] habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional cliches, received wisdom and mere opinions to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse. (p. 129)

These two educators did not treat students as numbers or clients, and they did not use workforce language, but genuinely fostered a love of learning for its own sake. I define

workforce language as semantics that frame students as clients or that focuses on preparing students for the workplace, for individual upward mobility and success. As stated in Chapter 1, that the personal is political, a central tenet of feminist consciousness-raising and standpoint, personal stories must be encouraged and welcomed and must connect to systemic socio-political structures such as patriarchy, White supremacy, racism, male privilege, heterosexism, sexism, homophobia, and other oppressive hegemonic systems. Otherwise, personal stories remain confessional and can be countered, ranked, dismissed, or negotiated paternalistically. Systemically framed, problems can be systemically addressed rather than benevolently “handled.” The central features of these two classrooms could be summarized as follows:

- 1) an ethics of caring, attunement that led to somatic learning and shifts, pathos, empathy, and ethical listening, all of which are direct outcomes of attunement;
- 2) deep accountability that includes interrupting individualism, making connections to structural oppression, risk-taking, commitment, empowerment, and trust;
- 3) standpoint or situatedness, that includes the sharing of personal stories, the partiality of knowledge, and a pedagogy of discomfort.

Ethics of Caring

Both instructors employed, modeled, and exemplified the rule of mutual respect for themselves and fellow students, as well as applied what Keating (2007) describes as a classroom rule that “people have a basic goodness” (p. 34). Specifically, they created a classroom space of mutual respect, reciprocity, trust, and valuing by setting the tone and modeling these concepts beginning day one in their respective courses. They created this mutual respect by implementing exercises, such as the name zoom, agape love, the peace journals, good news, and “do something to make the world a better place” Thursdays.

Setting this tone, and more importantly, embodying it in the formation of a learning community, is crucial in sustaining it.

Each of these instructors provided an ethics of caring that went above and beyond a “normal” teacher/student relationship. That Dr. Jay sent out a welcoming email to all students two weeks prior to class that stated, “Come early to class. I cannot wait to meet you,” must be acknowledged as it is significant in letting students know they matter. Undergraduate students are not only resentful of required general education classes but they can feel like a mere number in a seat. The Communication 101 students were told they would be part of a community and that “this will be a great class.” Further, Jay engaged in a weekly activity so that all students would know each other by name, which further solidified that students were part of a community.

Dr. May employed the agape love concept at the beginning of the semester to demonstrate that there is love for the sake of love, for example, whether students were communication majors or not, they were welcome and valued in the space. Using agape love as an anchor, he would revisit the concept and remind the class: “Remember we agreed, even when you disagreed with me, we all have agape love for you.” He revisited this concept during week 10 when the topic was privilege: “Agape love to you and agape love back at me, correct?” An ethic of caring requires a delicate balancing act and should not be confused with caretaking that further oppresses or disempowers students or that creates a climate in which students are dependent or enabled to rely on the instructor in meeting each students’ individual needs. This type of caretaking is not helpful, is unrealistic, and can lead to burn out for the instructor. For example, one student asked

Dr. May if he would make all of his lectures available on power point slides. He addressed this student's question but told students they were responsible for taking notes during each class period. He gave a personal example that he took scrupulous notes in his undergraduate and graduate classes and those notes assisted him greatly throughout his educational career. Dr. Jay stressed the necessity and importance of using on-line resources included with the required Communication 101 text for mid-term and final exam preparation. While she highlighted for students the concepts they should study, she did not waste class time going over details they could access themselves. An ethics of care means that students receive attention and that they matter.

As I documented in the data collected from personal interviews, students felt valued and cared for in both Communication 101 and 305. In their interviews students used the following words about their respective learning communities:

- accepted/accepting
- appreciated
- comfortable
- engaging
- open
- related
- respectful
- warmth
- welcomed/welcoming

One of the greatest fears students have is a fear of public speaking, according to McCroskey (1977). To combat this fear and to ensure her students did well on their speeches, Jay had students in front of the classroom each week "on stage" practicing. By the time the public speeches occurred during the semester, Jay's students were not only more comfortable, but they earned high marks on their speeches as the data in Chapter 4

illustrates. Further, after group presentations, Jay offered one-on-one feedback/assessment sessions for each group so they could improve on the next speech. After the final group speeches, she again held one-on-one feedback sessions, offering an overall assessment as to the groups' strengths, challenges, and where they improved during the course of the semester. Dr. May required that students present abstracts on the readings each week. This assignment not only provided them the opportunity to practice their public speaking skills, but also allowed them to engage in multicultural theory and ethnographic works in a critical way.

Attunement. I believe the concept of attunement has deep implications for critical pedagogy and anti-oppression work. For example, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, as a White child, I was physically threatened by my mother when I attempted to cross the boundaries of whiteness, thereby suppressing my natural curiosity to connect with people of African heritage especially. The continued non-attunement during my childhood to present my "acceptable" side or the requirement to perform whiteness in a way that was incongruent with my very being shaped who I was to become as a White person. I would become somatically fearful to present whiteness in any other way. These are what Sullivan (2005) calls somatic habits of whiteness. If a child is constantly learning that being queer or Asian or disabled is unacceptable, I believe attunement is a crucial aspect to consider for educators, for this implies that students are constantly in a state of associating with the embodied connections of their respective identities that were not seen, valued, or appreciated. Further, this also means that students and educators are

constantly relearning and negotiating somatic connections or unconscious habits to the unearned privileges they were taught to protect.

In these two classroom spaces, students were truly seen and heard. May enabled students to build somatic habits of resistance to privilege by developing a “feeling for” members of the classroom community. According to Mate (2003), a Canadian physician who studies the correlations of life threatening illnesses to social conditioning and early childhood development, talks about the concept of attunement. Attunement, a process in which the parent is “tuned in” to the child’s emotional needs, is a subtle process and is deeply instinctive but easily subverted when the parent is stressed or distracted emotionally, financially or for any other reason. Children in non-attuned relationships may feel loved but on a deeper level do not experience themselves as appreciated for who they really are. They learn to “present only their acceptable side, repressing emotional responses the parent rejects and learning to reject themselves for even having such responses” (p. 208). Attunement is a profound concept to consider in the classroom space, especially with regard to educators truly hearing the stories of students or allowing them to “keep it real.” Educators say they value personal stories, but what messages do students receive when their stories are challenging or they somatically trigger teachers? As Gingrich-Philbrook (2003), a queer performance artist articulates about the so-called resistant audience member, often we react by thinking we need to “Convince? Persuade? Cajole? Implicate? Seduce? You know the one I’m talking about: the one we’re supposed to know more than and politically convert in an epistemic triumph of our own design” (p. 354). If educators are inadvertently asking students to “perform” in a way

that is untruthful, educators are, even with good intentions, reinforcing a non-attuned or fragmented self. When educators hear oppressive remarks, how do they respond? Are the comments reframed to connect back to oppressive and unjust institutional structures, or are the comments handled paternalistically by attempting to “protect” the individual queer woman in class? The paternalistic response focuses all the attention on the queer woman as an individual. It also puts the burden on her to educate the class, as though we aren’t all pained by the experience, acknowledging how the oppression hurts every one of us. Are educators reinforcing a lack of attunement or positivism by asking students to adopt the facade of what sounds like the right answer, congruent with the educator’s politics, one that sounds particularly pleasing or benevolent because challenging it is hard work, requires risk, and puts likeability at risk? Further, for White educators in particular, the triggers could very well be an unconscious somatic habit or struggle to protect whiteness, especially. Somatic shifts in learning, when students are valued and heard and when attunement is practiced, do not require educators to convince, persuade, cajole, implicate, seduce, or convert students. Attunement allows students to move about in their thinking and their bodies rather than confined to a “performance.”

Both instructors actively encouraged and cultivated a deep level of pathos and empathy among students in the classroom that is associated with attunement. I use the terms “in feeling” or “feeling for” in that students developed a genuine feeling for each other that went beyond sympathy and benevolence. They developed a true compassion, not only with their classmates but with the instructors. One way instructors developed pathos is by sharing personal stories in the classroom starting with their own. Goodman

(2010) argues that “personal stories tend to have the most effect on students” (p. 10) when examining differences in the classroom. One of the students in May’s class, for example, said explicitly that he “felt a slight pang” in his chest when he heard hurtful comments made about an African heritage professor outside of class because Dr. May’s own life experiences as a Black male had deeply impacted him. When this student heard the identity “gay” coupled with the term “alternative lifestyle” in another of his classroom experiences, he remembered the word I shared in class that I “never wanted to hear again” about my particular identity group, and that alternative lifestyle, particularly for queer folks, was not only diminishing and oppressive, but relegated queerness to a less than or inferior status in a heterosexist culture. This student said he felt a genuine “ouch” somatically in his body, rather than merely connecting with the words rationally or intellectually, and he spoke out against the comment. Another student explicitly said that learning from the direct experiences of the professor and other students allowed her to leave class thinking “I’ve never thought of that before.”

When Jay came out in the class, one student sought her out to tell her, “This was the best class I ever had,” and another student said he felt “proud” that she had the courage to share her life with the class. When she expressed her genuine fear in coming out, students were able to connect with that fear at a deeper level of humanity rather than merely theoretically. Jay provided the foundation so that two other students came out during the semester. Buddhist teacher Pema Chodron (1997) states,

Only in an open, nonjudgmental space can we acknowledge what we are feeling. Only in an open space where we’re not all caught up in our own version of reality can we see and hear and feel who others really are, which allows us to be with them and communicate with them properly. (p. 97)

I would argue that the most impactful feature that emerged during my research is the concept of attunement. If given the serious attention it deserves, attunement can move the classroom space to a new level of consciousness about identity, multidimensionality, negotiation of power, and learning because it moves students to a new level of understanding intellectual material: they can somatically feel and identify with the material in addition to thinking about concepts, ideas, themselves, and others. The bodily associations and shifts would not have been possible without the courage of these two faculty members who proudly occupied their marginalized identities, allowing students to see the full range of those identities and therefore, attunement is reciprocal.

Ethical listening. A crucial principle and theoretical grounding of the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI) methodology is that listening is a revolutionary act. hooks' (1994) White, male colleague, Ron Scapp underscores the importance of listening when he states, "[E]ven though students are speaking, they don't really know how to listen to each other" (p. 150). As a follow up to Scapp, hooks states, "[O]nce the space for dialogue is open in the classroom, that moment must be orchestrated so that you don't get bogged down with people who just like to hear themselves talk, or with people who are unable to relate experience to the academic subject matter" (p. 151). In other words, listening must have purpose and the explicitness of this goal must be articulated so that the classroom is not a free for all discussion without critical thinking coupled with ethical listening. Each instructor observed encouraged ethical listening (De Vito, 2007), characterized as honest hearing, without prejudgment, putting aside prejudices and preconceptions as best as you can while attempting to understand the emotions inherent

in the message. In the classroom this was underscored by mutual respect for peers and instructors. In the Communication 101 classroom, ethical listening is one of the explicit learning objectives for each section of the course and underscored in the Welcoming Diversity “pairs” exercise of the NCBI methodology in Dr. Jay’s class. Students both witnessed and practiced this objective. The facilitators of the training modeled listening without interruption. Students are encouraged simply to “be there” for their partner without asking questions and the process is reciprocated by the other partner. We rarely and truly ethically listen to another without wanting to interrupt, refute, ask questions, or insert our own ego into the dyadic interaction.

In the Communication 305 classroom, listening is stressed in the key critical exercises for the entire course. As I scoured through all of my field notes and the verbatim transcripts for Communication 305, for example, I could not locate a single time that a student interrupted Dr. May or another student, even when particularly contentious issues were discussed. This speaks to the culture of respect that Dr. May established and fostered in his classroom. Ethical listening is a direct outcome of attunement.

Deep accountability. In light of the socio-political structures that alleviate themselves of accountability (law, educational policymakers, outsourcing, professionalism), accountability was a profound feature in these two classrooms, though it surfaced differently and uniquely in each. These instructors required accountability by creating a deeply humane learning community. This accountability included risk-taking, subjectivity, vulnerability, participation, and commitment to all members of the classroom. These courses required more participation from the students apart from

merely showing up as well as reciprocity, and calling out invalidations, especially in May's course. That these two faculty members engaged in risk-taking, by modeling vulnerability despite what they were up against professionally and personally, they remained ethically committed to taking great risks despite the consequences. They modeled humanity, and students wanted to be in on the action. Though accountability was never explicitly mentioned by either instructor, this feature best captures the level of commitment these instructors modeled and grounded as a foundation for their classrooms.

Both instructors created a classroom climate that encouraged engagement, self-reflection, and that valued and respected each student's identity. Self-disclosure, though a risk, was illustrated by Jay and May. This occurred in two kinds of situations: 1) in critical incidents, and 2) stories they shared but even more conversationally. As Brookfield (1995) argues, "[W]here a culture of secrecy exists, reflection is doomed" (p. 251). hooks argues

[W]hen education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess ... professors who expect students to share confessional narratives but who are themselves unwilling to share are exercising power in a manner that could be coercive. (p. 21)

As May said in his personal interview with me, "I think in gaining trust you have to commit something, you have to give, that's what discussion is all about, you know you have to always be ready to offer something about yourself so that others are comfortable in offering something about themselves." In addition to the more contentious stories mentioned in the risk and storytelling section of Chapter 4, Dr. Jay, for example, shared with the class that one of her close friends recently lost her partner to cancer and that

every Thursday, she and her partner cooked dinner and spent the evening with their grieving friend. Dr. May talked about the use of Black vernacular, specifically, the use of the word *be* to represent the past, present, and future. He used this example to illustrate the rules of power in that the dominant culture would deem vernacular speech as unacceptable in university and organizational settings. He also used the example of what is acceptable manner of dress in the institution, asking the class to ponder if or how they would view him differently if he wore a doo-rag to class. He disclosed to the class that at his son's school, the students were urged not to talk about the election of President Obama. These personal stories not only demonstrated a level of disclosure that supported the communication theory students were studying, but also demonstrated the collective reciprocity of pedagogical freedom as hooks (1994) describes.

Dr. Jay had everyone learn each other's names and held them accountable for knowing each other's names. This created a different level of accountability than for other general education classes of this size (28 students). One of the students I interviewed disclosed that "students show up more and they talk more to each other for this class than other classes" he attended. This is important to note as in the Department of Communication, low attendance is an issue of concern for faculty who teach the two required communication general education courses, including Communication 101. The two opening exercises she used each class period, good news and the peace journal, required students to connect with each other on a personal level each class, and to report back on activities they had done outside class. Further, the peace journals required students to take action outside of class that were positive and good for themselves and for

others. When Jay had laryngitis, she modeled accountability and trust in the students to allow them to facilitate and take leadership for the class rather than simply canceling the session that day.

Dr. May held everyone accountable to their own thinking. For example, during the “Where Do You Stand?” activity he asked each student to justify where they stood or to explain why they changed positions. He made students accountable to their thoughts and ideas, making all thought processes transparent, which is antithetical to traditional intellectual or theoretical abstractions. May encouraged students to work out liberal or “untested positions,” for example, during the “Where Do You Stand?” exercise. During this exercise, students had to justify their positions beyond the rhetoric of equality in order to expose the disconnections or gaps from the actual reality of those positions. This explicit example serves to illustrate May’s method of testing students’ thinking and positions about contentious issues and ideas rather than to rely on the liberal rhetoric and theoretical posturing. May held students to personal pronouns, such as “I” and “we,” that connect knowers to their knowledge without a separation of neutrality and objectivity that is associated with positivism. Further, that students were asked every Thursday to go out into the world and do something to make it a better place, he held students accountable to actions more communally, taking action outside the confines of a designated classroom space.

Further, invalidations, or the intercultural concept of denying and minimizing that occurred in the 305 classroom, were addressed later in the semester. These incidents were not left unaddressed. I refer to the invalidation I captured in Chapter 4 that occurred

toward May by a White male student who asked the following question after Dr. May made a statement about his experiences in the workplace of denied racial privilege: “To play devil’s advocate. Have you ever thought that maybe people are predisposing themselves to find something [racism] that wouldn’t be there?” During this same class period, Dr. May explored denied privilege based on sexual orientation. I shared my experience of not feeling safe displaying public affection with a female partner because of the potential threat of not only rhetorical violence, but physical violence. A White male student stated:

Now is not as bad as it was 15 or 20 years ago but I mean there was a danger element. They would never hold hands, there were a lot of threats. I think now they feel comfortable they don’t feel out of place I should say, but I guess out of respect for everyone else, there’s still that fear that they’re making someone else uncomfortable, they won’t show affection in public.

This student used the words “people” to speak for people of color and “they” to speak for members of the LGBTQ community, and I felt as though he were speaking for me. This too is a form of invalidation as he “subtly negated and nullified” my thoughts and experiential reality as a White, queer woman. May then moved to denied class, educational, gender, and religious privilege in order to engage students more critically in thinking about unearned advantages and to invite further discussion on denied privilege. Having one’s voice, life experience, and authority of experience denied and minimized are not only cornerstones of intercultural insensitivity and ethnocentrism, but they deny our very humanity. Microinvalidations, according to Sue (2007), cause psychological trauma and distress. Accountability requires that participants sort through the messiness

of multiple identities, and to acknowledge our own experiences and knowledge are inherently partial.

Standpoint/situatedness: Where I sit. In my transcripts, field notes, or classroom observations, I noted that Jay and May were careful not to tokenize or reinscribe students with essentialized identities with regard to race, gender, religion, sexuality, age, ability, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Though students from specific identities were asked and encouraged to speak about their specific experiences, tokenization or being asked to speak for an entire group (though individual disclosure was rewarded with trust) was managed with care and skillfulness. For example, three Jewish students (White female and male, U.S. and Argentinian heritage, respectfully) in May's class talked about their Jewish heritage that confounded and recognized intersectionality rather than creating a monolithic Jewish identity. Personal stories and experiences were welcomed and offered in the spaces of these two courses, in Dr. May's class especially, as he invited curiosity. His was not a class of unity or harmony, but rather, a pedagogy of cognitive discomfort. Tensions were welcomed into the classroom, "bumps in the road" as he called it, as long as there was mutual respect and agape love accompanying the tensions. As Cooks (2003) argues, "these tensions are importantly not dichotomous, but multiple, leading to complexities in positions and consequences of all involved" (p. 247). May's course especially disrupted habits of avoidance, ignorance, and turning "others" into objects of study. As I stated in Chapter 4, White students in particular had both a desire and longing to learn more about themselves as racial beings, as owners of race. As Fuller (2000) argues, "longing is something; it is not blank, nothing, or normal" (p. 84). White

students in May's class were grappling with uncertainty about their whiteness, their perceived "lack of culture," but by the end of the course, as the data I collected from the open-ended classroom assessment questions suggests, several White students developed an active consciousness. This new ownership of whiteness contributed to several White students claiming that they wanted to delve deeper into their own culture apart from the normalcy of whiteness.

Each of us, by virtue of the groups of which we are part has different access to the ways we see the world, the ways we move through social spaces, and different vantage points from which to view communication. However, in our standpoints, our knowledge is only partial, shifting, unstable, and becoming. In standpoint theory, Makau and Marty (2001) suggest the identities, roles, or statuses occupied by a communicator are relational (p. 163); Wood (2004) argues that it is "the social, symbolic, and material circumstances of a particular social group that shape members' perspectives on themselves, others, communication, and social life" (p. 183). Standpoint theory suggests that each of us theorizes and makes sense of the world from where we are situated within it, and that by virtue of our standpoint, each of us experiences and views the world differently, even within particular marginalized or privileged groups. When one occupies a particular marginalized social location and has access to the dominant perspectives' blind spots, it gives those outsiders a particular perspective to which the dominant group does not have access. In this way, the person outside of the dominant group has a propensity for understanding the dominant group better than the person in the dominant group can understand themselves or others. The marginalized or outsider possesses what Du Bois

(1903) calls a double consciousness, a “double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes, must give rise to double words and double ideas, and tempt the mind to pretence or to revolt, to hypocrisy or to radicalism,” (p. 143) the ability to code switch, and an ability to view inequities, systems, and rules with a clarity that the dominant group simply cannot. White privilege does not allow Whites access to their blind spots, for example, while they do not have an accurate picture of the lives of African heritage folks, or as Du Bois articulates, the Black world is veiled from Whites. Patricia Hill Collins (1990) argues that “Black women’s ability to forge these individual, unarticulated, yet potentially powerful expressions of everyday consciousness into an articulated, self-defined, collective standpoint is key to Black women’s survival” (p. 26).

Both Dr. Jay and Dr. May occupied marginalized standpoints in relation to their identities, classroom spaces, and learning communities, though Dr. May welcomed the standpoints of the students and me as participant observer/activist researcher. In this convergence of perspectives, Dr. May’s insights as an African heritage educator gave him a particular way of knowing that cannot simply be articulated in a method, an intellectual theory, or a prescribed classroom activity. As May stated, when illustrating how denied privilege plays out for him as a Black male scholar in the academy, “There is rarely a time when race is not an issue in my social or professional life” and “when voicing concerns about race issues at work or in class, I risk being regarded as overly sensitive and/or radical” (p. 18). Dr. May used his life experience by virtue of his identities as his standpoint through which to navigate the intercultural classroom and also to, as Hill articulates, “deepen knowledge, behaviors, and values aimed at constructing a more just

society and world” (p. 86). In this way, May has a particular vantage point of knowing Whites and whiteness better than they (we) can know themselves, utilizing this standpoint as a site of resistance to White privilege.

Dr. Jay, a White, lesbian female, has a particular vantage point and perspective from which to see heterosexism, homophobia, and sexism, particularly as someone who lived in the “straight” world prior to coming out as a lesbian. Though Jay could pass as straight, she makes the deliberate choice to come out in the classroom, utilizing this particular standpoint as a site of resistance to heteronormativity and further contributing to the canon and knowledge base of interpersonal communication theory. Hill (2004) states that “queer visibility is a quintessential and necessary political act and a critical practice in itself” (p. 92). Pharr’s (1997) research on homophobia and heterosexism posits that though all women are hurt by homophobia by its control of a woman’s life through fear, and by its effect in limiting social change, lesbians suffer the most damage because they are the double victims of sexism/homophobia from men and from heterosexual women, even feminist or progressive women. A woman who steps outside the rules of patriarchy and threatens its authority can expect to be hated and feared by men and those women who find their source of power in men.

Some of the assumptions that may be associated with standpoint theories include overestimating a person’s knowledge base, taking for granted that because a person understands one aspect of his identity, he automatically understand the intersectionalities or multidimensionality of identities and the complexities of these intersections. Evidence supporting standpoint theory is the inconsistency of making privilege and dominance

across all social locations. Each instructor was especially articulate about his or her own marginalized statuses (race, gender, sexual orientation) and less articulate about others where they hold dominant statuses. The presumption that power, privilege, and dominance are recognized in all instances might be another expectation put upon critical educators from marginalized identities. For example, while Dr. Jay addresses sexism, heterosexism, and queers herself in the classroom, other privileges are often unmarked, such as Christian privilege (anti-Semitism and Islamaphobia are left unaddressed), White privilege (racism is only touched upon), U.S. dominance, and so on. Further, in my field notes several times during the semester, I noted that Dr. Jay “triggered” me in that I observed a reinforcement of a gender binary on at least four occasions. She had essentialized certain communication behaviors associated with women versus those associated with men, such as women are overly emotional, they nag men and men are more logical.

In Communication 305, Dr. May’s cultural competency in addressing racism, White privilege, gender, and male privilege does not automatically transfer to competency in other systems of privilege and power. For example, in his analysis of the film *Crash*, he concluded that the film has its limitations in that while the film addresses race and ethnicity, for example, it does not address sexual orientation. In my feedback to May (which he incorporated into his analysis) I told him that the film does address sexual orientation: the film assumes that every character is straight or heterosexual, therefore, there is no need to mark or name queerness or any sexuality other than straightness. Further, as I noted at length in Chapter 4, a White male student whom May described as

an intercultural communication enthusiast, not only exhibited sexism on several occasions but took up a great deal of social space in Communication 305. Dr. May later asked me about this student, and I shared my perceptions as to how I experienced this student's White male privilege in several interactions. This student, however, began to question his own White male privilege as demonstrated by his answer to the classroom assessment questions and his follow up email to me as discussed in Chapter 4.

Partiality is an important concept in standpoint theory. As Kumashiro (2003) argues, "even perspectives that critique social inequities cannot help but be partial, offering only certain ways of thinking about oppression and social change that can themselves be critiqued" (p. 365). I learned about my own blind spots during an exercise in Dr. May's class on power, dominance, and patriarchy in intimate relationships. Dr. May and I paired and had a discussion. I told him that the power dynamics in same-sex relationships feel different because queer folks get to redefine the rules. He argued that power dynamics still play out in intimate relationships. As I further reflected, I realized how I underestimated the role of my upper-middle-class and highly educated status and their salience in my own intimate relationship. Our discussion allowed me to see how patriarchy did play out in my life, just in a different way. Rarely do educators have the opportunity to engage in this level of meta-processing of classroom processes and engagement in such an intentional way. With the exception of institutionally structured, supported and resourced team-teaching opportunities, teaching is often an individual enterprise. During the three and a half months of this case study, both instructors and I

had the benefit of deliberating with and learning from each other as well as the immediacy of processing daily classroom interactions.

The Johari window (figure 2) is a communication model that serves as a useful visual representation to illustrate key themes, including the invisibility of privilege to the holder, the partiality of knowledge. What is “not known to self” emerges only when we are in dialogue and relationship with, and accountable to, others outside of our groups.

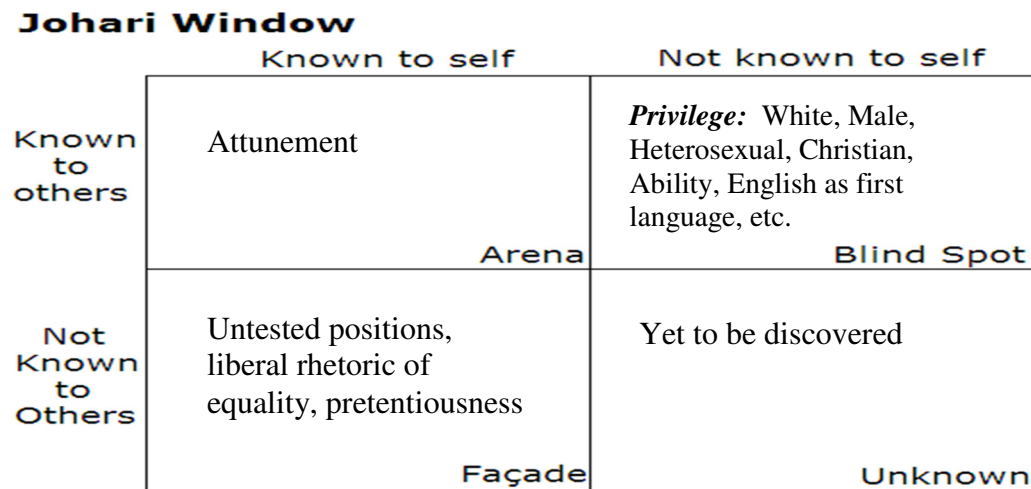


Figure 2: The Johari Window (Luft & Ingram, 1969)

Though thematically I have articulated the ethics of care, deep accountability, and situatedness, all three of these features work with and build upon each other. For example, without attunement and ethical listening, there is no trust. If professors do not self-disclose and incrementally build trust in the classroom, students are less likely to share their personal stories. If personal stories are not shared, participants cannot understand another’s standpoint. In this way, the emergent classroom features

synergistically work with each other, and the sum of the classroom experience is greater than the individual members. When students know they are valued and that they matter, they are more likely to stay accountable to their classmates and to the instructors. When students get to witness and experience, somatically, the backgrounds and life experiences of others, they are more willing to identify with and stand up for others outside of their identity groups. When students are encouraged, challenged, and cared for, they not only commit to attending the class more, but they participate at greater cognitive and affective levels.

The Marginalized Professor

Part of a “letting go” in the classroom is to abandon entrenched ideologies, status quo stories and narratives, dogmatic and binary thinking, or competitive argumentation and debate. The two instructors I observed for this research were careful not to engage in classroom practices that fostered or rewarded competition or provide students with concrete, absolute answers even though privilege, racism, sexism, and heterosexism permeated the socio-political environment and institution, and specifically as it relates to both of these educators’ primary identities. Both deviated from normative expectations of the “sage on the stage” by employing methods that not only engaged students but challenged their worldviews. Both instructors relied on “successful” strategies and processes for engaging students in the classroom to enhance learning as well as negotiating identity and power. As I reflected on the instructors’ pedagogy, Dr. May’s especially, given the course content in Intercultural Communication and his explicitly critical approach to the discipline of IC, I realized that Dr. May managed to *de-*

personalize issues without *de-politicizing* the classroom learning environment. For example, there were a couple of instances in which students essentialized Dr. May as the definitive expert on blackness (affirmative action and the use of the N-word specifically). Instead of performing as the expert, Dr. May encouraged the entire learning community to participate in these particular discussions and he connected these issues to larger institutional socio-political structures within a historical context. In this way, May interrupted the liberal approach of discussing systemic oppression and mistreatment on individual terms or solely as individual experiences.

As was stated in Chapter 4, what could be perceived as resistance (i.e., shutting down, not participating, remaining relatively quiet) in the classroom may not have been resistance at all but students acknowledging and moving through their own pain, trust issues, fear, internalized shame, or reconnecting with critical incidents in their past from which they were mistreated as I documented in my personal interviews with students. Butin (2005) argues that classrooms often set up what he calls the “zero-sum game” where “either the student or the teacher (who is delivering the content knowledge) has to lose” (p. 5). He instead offers a different perspective on resistance that provides a deeper insight for greater possibilities. These possibilities include resistance “as a proxy for students’ desire for stability and certainty” and “as the attempted maintenance of a particular identity through the refusal and/or inability to see oneself in an alternate identity” (p. 6). Both instructors observed avoided providing absolute certainty for students. Dr. May, especially, encouraged action, but he did not provide students with prescribed ways to act. He instead asked students to decide for themselves, providing

more uncertainty, accountability, and ambiguity. As my interviews and informal conversations illustrate, students had an additional outlet in which to explore contentious issues, personal struggles, cognitive shifts, and identity negotiation.

“By focusing on the systemic nature of oppression,” according to Goodman (2010) “faculty can avoid suggesting individual blame. This approach reduces defensiveness and resistance”(p. 3). By keeping issues at the individual or private level, educators fail to address institutional racism, sexism, heterosexism, anti-Semitism, ableism and poverty, to name but a few injustices that take place on marginalized bodies. Further, individual blame can lead to guilt and resistance and derail the possibility of somatic, cognitive shifts in learning. The critical pedagogical classroom serves to keep issues public and interconnected with a focus on social change and action. While Jensen (2010) and Gorski (2007) argue that too much of classroom dialogues focus on internal healing instead of political action, I contend that students need a place for internal somatic work to happen in order to identify with the pain of others. I do agree with Gorski and Jensen’s assessment in that if issues are personalized to a confessional without linkage to social action and institutions, dialogues can serve the status quo.

The instructors had their own limitations in terms of which particular status-quo stories they interrupted more than others, however, because of their particular standpoint, identities, social location, expertise, power, and privilege. The multidimensionality of the classroom setting is negotiated on a daily basis in ever-changing U.S. classrooms and this case study reflects this transaction. In Communication 305 course, May talked about the significance and detrimental effects of power, hegemony, privilege, denying, and

minimizing the experiences of others. He informed the class that he gradually introduced the topic of privilege, and White privilege specifically, so that students would be able to ethically listen to, but more importantly, seriously consider and grapple with the topic without defensiveness. The White, male, Christian student who asserted that Dr. Jay discussed LGBTQ issues too much during the semester and wrote that he would pray for her, engaged in invalidation and essentialization of her identity in that he “conveyed insensitivity toward her identity” as a lesbian, as well as nullified her identity as a Christian. Dr. Jay used humor to address this invalidation against her lesbian identity by stating that she appreciated the feedback of all students, while at the same time she articulated that pedagogically her work stands theoretically grounded.

Fear of retaliation on student evaluations is a very real and salient issue for both of these educators. During the semester I observed these two classes, a bi-racial (read as African heritage in a White dominant culture) President was elected. That the Southern Poverty Law Center recorded hundreds of hate crimes, death threats, nooses found on college campuses, and racial epithets during this landmark election speaks to the threat (perceived or otherwise) of rhetorical and physical racial violence in the socio-political climate, and the university setting is not exempt from these crimes. That Proposition 8 (the California Marriage Protection Act passed in November 2008) and other discriminatory ballot initiatives against LGBTQ people were also associated with the 2008 election speaks to the threat (perceived or otherwise) of rhetorical and physical homophobic violence in the socio-political climate. Nast (1999) argues that faculty who take curricular and pedagogical risks need to be able to “count on strong support from

colleagues, departmental chairs and university administrators” and that “classroom realities of homophobia, sexism, and racism are acknowledged at an institutional structural level to be societal in reach and global in scale” (p. 102).

The positive outcomes of learning, development, and growth that developed in these two classrooms are not without risks and personal cost for these two marginalized professors. These two professors must anticipate resistance, blame, lack of safety, push back, and retaliation. As I mentioned earlier, to have a voice at the table of dominance, you must not only know the dominant rules and how to negotiate them skillfully, but you must have acute awareness of every corner of the house in which the table is situated. Any time these two professors talk about their marginalized identities it is amplified at extraordinary levels because they can easily be ignored, dismissed, minimized, blamed, labeled as angry, or said to be biased or furthering their own agenda as though these issues should be compartmentalized and are not relevant to their areas of expertise. They must carefully and courageously situate their identities in the realm of communication theory delicately because the expectation is that subjects should be talked about objectively. With objectivity and positivism, students learn to study about people, not with them or from them. This could very well be the first and only marginalized professor students have ever had. In a very real way, these two educators gave permission to talk about and try on new ideas and identities in ways they may never have had the opportunity to do so before their classes. Finally, these two professors added to the communication canon upon which the entire learning community could now access.

In my personal interviews with both Dr. Jay and Dr. May, I asked them if they had collegial support at University Y and what that feels like for them. Each had very different responses. Dr. Jay talked about not having any at first and then feeling as though she eventually gained collegial support. To reiterate, Dr. Jay is in a non-tenure track, yearly contract (renewable each year) position. Dr. May is in a tenure-track position, but has not yet received tenure. Interestingly, Dr. May spoke about people not getting in his way as a form of collegial support:

Dr. Jay: Actually, that's a good question. Interestingly enough, when I first came here I did not feel a lot of collegial support. And because I didn't feel it, I was in the self-fulfilling prophecy kind of way, looking around for incidents that would support my feeling that I wasn't being supported. So I would say, there's another incidence, there's another case, there's another case, and until I actually changed my perspective, I continually got exactly the same thing I was looking for... what a surprise. And about a year or two ago, you know, this whole attitude's really not serving me. Because it's possible that people are trying to support me, but I am so resistant to their support, that I'm not even seeing it. It's not appearing on my radar. So I started to think about it and I started to say, what if I'm wrong, what if there is support for me out here that I don't even know about. And some of my friends had said you know this person seems to like what you're doing, this person... and so eventually I started to let in some ideas that would allow me to believe a different thing. As I started to change my attitude, I started to see a lot more support. Which was again, what a surprise, but it was helpful. Because, had I not changed my attitude, I might be gone by now.

Dr. May: So what I'll do is instead of being totally politically correct, I'll give you some examples for how that support has worked to my advantage. The support works to my advantage when persons who may not necessarily understand or agree with my position or my journey or my commitment either contribute to it anyway by giving me space and time to do what it is I do or by helping me make the connections, to forge a greater opportunity to do what I do, you know in terms of specific examples, I think my chair is a good example. And if they don't show active support they don't necessarily disrupt what I'm trying to do. And I appreciate that as well. So we'll see at times for tenure...

What I can infer from their answers is that collegial support looks very different for each of them respective to their status and position in the university. As Dr. Jay is a

term professor and teaches courses at other local universities in order to have financial sustainability, acknowledgement of excellence in teaching is a high value and priority for her. That she teaches at least five to six courses in a given semester, workplace support may translate differently from those who are tenured or on the tenure track. Dr. May, a tenure track professor, sees support in colleagues making connections that he is given the support to conduct research and that folks “don’t disrupt” what he does is a value for him as he prepares to go up for tenure in the very near future. That Jay changed her attitude and that May looks for those who do not disrupt, implies a certain level of accommodation required in order to settle in and find a place from which they can do what they do. They have managed to reframe their position in a socio-political climate that may not understand what it is they do or why. In this way, marginalized professors are also grappling with attunement in their respective academic departments and with colleagues.

The Activist Researcher Role

An ethical and activist researcher cannot come to the classroom empty-handed, unwilling to commit something and expect to “extract” valid and meaningful data. Entering as a partner in this research allowed me to gain valuable insight and the opportunity to engage outside of class with the instructors and students more personally. At a meta-level of consciousness, as a White female in Dr. May’s class, I was concerned about White privilege, power, and how I would be perceived by students in relationship to his authority in the classroom. I wanted to ensure that the students knew it was *his* classroom and that I was an invited guest. However, I was also aware of building trust

with members of the learning community so that I wasn't viewed as someone passively observing and taking information for my own agenda, which is another form of power. To that end, I was constantly interrogating my White privilege, yet I cannot ignore the realities of internalized sexism, heterosexism, and homophobia as well. How little space should I take up as a White person? How much space should I take up as White, queer female? How queer should I be in this classroom space? How often do I speak or share my own authority of experience? What happens if Dr. May refers to my queerness without my permission? What happens if I am asked to speak and I am not comfortable? When Dr. May and I agree on contentious issues, will students perceive us as ganging up on them? If we disagree, how will students perceive us?

In Dr. Jay's class I had a similar but different balancing act to manage and a different set of meta-cognitive questions. I wanted to ensure that the students knew it was *her* classroom and that I was an invited guest. How much space should I take up as a White female? How queer should I be in this classroom space? Will our relationship be perceived as too female or too queer? If I interrogate whiteness too much will students perceive my role as antagonistic toward Dr. Jay and will her classroom authority be compromised? If we disagree how will students perceive us? These questions arrived with me each class session and at a very meta-cognitive level I was instantaneously asking and answering these questions during each class period, during each interaction, and upon leaving each class session and interview. At various times I offered alternate perspectives in both classes that differed with both instructors. It was welcomed, acknowledged, and appreciated by students and instructors. Reflexivity, or the process of

critical self-reflection on my own biases, enabled this project to emerge as one which Ravitch (2007) terms “collaborative integrity” (p 83). As I continually reflected on my own agenda, I was able to document the effective pedagogical strategies, dialogical themes, and the authority of experiences that emerged from members of each learning community rather than my own predetermined findings.

I wanted to hold myself accountable as a participant observer and researcher ethically, pedagogically, and personally. I asked how, as a researcher and participant, I contributed to each Communication class I observed. I posed the following question to both Dr. Jay and Dr. May: “I’m wondering how/if my presence in your communication class has contributed to the teaching and learning process and what did it feel like for you having me there?”

Dr. May: 100% contribution. You actually made a big difference. I think for me personally um, I hope it came across that I was a little more structured in my approach, in my delivery and in concluding arguments and ideas. I’m hoping that because another professional was there, someone with great depth, great insight to what it is we’re talking about, because you were there, I’m hoping that I put together each class and the entire journey in a way that you would find appropriate, respectful, and effective. On the other hand, I think you being there also added another voice, another way of seeing the ideas, and during the few times I was able to draw you in to get your opinion, I think you helped to expose another facet of the diamond or of the argument, and so my ideas, the students’ ideas and your ideas collectively created a greater understanding and a greater awareness of the issues and being the professional that you are, you actually brought a high level of participation in ways that I have not had the privilege of enjoying in the past. I’m always very impressed with my students, undergraduates and grad students alike, but just your presence alone took us to the next level I thought. And I think it helped some students to make a greater connection whereas the connection may not have been as strong with just me. So, you helped me personally, but I think it helped them as well.

As I discussed in Chapter 4, my participation in Communication 305 assisted profoundly in co-creating the intellectual and critical knowledge-base from which the

learning community could draw. That I named and marked whiteness the first day of class allowed whiteness to be discussed very early on in the semester, where otherwise, this would not be the case. I performed similarly to Cooks (2003) when she states, “Through drawing the White students’ attention to my White bodily performance, I hoped also to direct their attention to the ways that power and race structured their vision, where White became (for them) an empty signifier” (p. 256). For example, in one of the classroom sessions, Dr. May told the class that he is very intentional as to when he introduces McIntosh’s Invisible Knapsack and White privilege. On day 23, the next to last week of the course, one of the chapters discussed in class centered on a lesbian couple adopting two African heritage children. In class, I mentioned that:

I was just going to go the concept of avowing someone into existence, just even in the intro. Marlene and Fern are a lesbian couple who adopted two African American boys. So we’re already marking who’s normal and not, the fact that it doesn’t say that they’re a White lesbian couple, they’re a lesbian couple, so the implication is that they’re White. But the two African American boys are named into existence.

Dr. May elaborates on naming and tells the class:

Sometimes when I discuss race and groups, I leave out certain words. I didn’t use the word White privilege with you all until probably half way through our time together because I didn’t want to be stereotyped and locked in. I wanted you to open up to listen to me. And then at some point I figured I’d introduce these other concepts, right, so everything is strategic, you know rhetoric is power.

When I asked Dr. Jay about my role in Communication 101, she responded:

Your presence in our Communication 101 classroom did contribute first to the teaching and also to the learning in our class. First, as an instructor, your presence was soothing. I looked forward to seeing you because I knew there would be another teacher in the room. If I forgot something or if you felt I needed to add something, there was always the possibility of having your input. It kept me honest to know that what I said would be recorded. I found that I did a little

bit more planning so that the stories, the activities, and the examples would be as crisp as they could be. I was surprised that after 50+ times of teaching this class, I still wanted to do my best so your research would be successful. I was also aware of your unique life experiences, and tried to include tidbits when I could. This turned out to be a point of frustration for one student who felt that I had spoken too much about LGBTQ experiences – despite the fact that I never veered from the text or the NCBI talking points – I’ll address this point briefly in class tomorrow. Your contributions to the learning were that the students had another teacher – but also a friend – who might be turned to for advice, guidance, or support. I think students genuinely looked forward to seeing you every day. When you added a comment here or there, they showed appreciation. I feel that you were very well received as a member of our class. I think they liked you and having you there. The experience of having you a participant/observer felt very positive to me. Often, you gave me my first “post-class” feedback as you were packing your belongings. I appreciated that. Sometimes you added reassurance and support...things I often look for when I feel unsure how things “went” in class that day. I thought you were remarkably sensitive to how I might feel after class each day. So, to recap, I was delighted to have you as a member of our class. You added immeasurably to our experiences, and I would gladly do this with you again. I learned a few things about myself in the process...and that’s always a good thing. Thanks for asking.

During the NCBI training in Dr. Jay’s course, I participated as a member of the class, sharing personal details about my class background (I am usually the only participant who claims to be a child raised on welfare) and my queerness as described on the verbatim transcript. I also talked on at least three occasions about gender issues, making sure students could discern between gender and sexual orientation, and I also informed the class about campus activities related to these issues. That she referred to my presence being supportive and reassuring may speak to both the negative comment she received on the classroom assessment, and also another critical incident she shared with the class. Early on in the semester, she informed the class that a student had been stalking her for a year or so and that she might need to interrupt the session if this student showed up during class. As it turns out, she was informed twice during the semester that

the student may show up and she asked me if I would be on-hand to call campus police. I agreed to do so. After she shared the “Woke Up Green” story, I stayed after class to find out how that experience was for her and we discussed it.

As both a participant observer and an action researcher, I had a vantage point through which I could offer scholarly, structural, and personal analysis and reflection that each of these instructors found to be valuable. Both instructors explicitly stated they took my role seriously, wanting to be crisp and structured in their overall lessons as well as process. Often educators are observed only once during the semester by a peer who cannot possibly have a holistic picture of what the instructor is creating in terms of community-building and pedagogy. For example, at the end of the semester in which I collected my data, I sent May the classroom assessment answers after the grades were submitted. As Freire (1998) states, “the freedom that moves us, that makes us take risks, is being subjugated to a process of standardization of formulas, models against which we are evaluated” (p. 111). Too often, according to Shor (1992) not only do students who become teachers “learn the unilateral style of teacher authority” but they are trained to view education as “something done to students by teachers who dominate the classroom” (p. 102). Although Brookfield (1995) argues that “colleagues’ observations of our practice can be one of the most helpful sources of critical insight,” they should be selected carefully and should have “a wide variety of experience as teachers in the area in which you’re working” (p. 83). Multicultural classrooms not only require a different approach in the evaluation process, but they require of the observer an acute knowledge and self-awareness as to how power, privilege, and difference are negotiated in the

classroom. This speaks to both collegial support and collegial accountability. As Jensen (2004) eloquently states, “[T]he only real job of any teacher is to help students find themselves” (p. 14). Peer observers should be chosen with this in mind rather than observing only when it is time for promotion, tenure, or reappointment.

The impact my role had on students is illustrated by the personal disclosures students shared with me. Each of the students I interviewed for this project had her own unique stories and this process allowed for students to connect somatically to parts of their lives in which they received negative messages about aspects of their identities. For example, MF struggled with marking his Jewish heritage in public, MJ wrestled with his African heritage identity, and JF processed gay identity with me as his ally. The personal interviews I collected contributed to an ethic of care of these two classroom spaces. An unintentional outcome of the student interview process is that these students had the benefit of processing their thinking with me related to the content, ideas, and classroom environment without judgment. I had the opportunity to witness the struggles of these students relative to their identities, what I might have otherwise perceived as resistance, and they gave me insight to information I would otherwise not be able to access. This process gave me the capacity to view students in a different way, enabling me to see from their perspectives, what struggles they are bringing into the classroom. They challenged me in my own abilities to be able to “let go” and listen with complete mindfulness. I learned to listen differently, more carefully, and more thoughtfully as result of this process.

In these personal interviews with students and faculty, attunement and ethical listening were key features for the quality of information I gathered and allowed me to connect with each student to get at their unique and often times, very personal stories, especially when I struggled internally with what was being said. For example, when MF (White, Jewish male) in Communication 305 shared with me his thinking on affirmative action and how he believes it is racist against White people, ethically and somatically, I struggled to be there and listen to this student. In an excerpt from our interview, he stated:

I think affirmative action is racist. I think it's another form of racism. Um, I'm kind of this viewpoint right now, and it could be the stage of my life that I'm at, but as our country is becoming more accepting and you know the multicultural populations are growing and growing and you know, White people aren't as in the majority as they have been. I mean, we, still, White people still are. But, they're, I feel that there's a bit of institutionalized racism people who are White.

However, I believe that because I listened, I provided this student an outlet so that he could “try out” and process his thinking on this issue. By the same token, when asked, I offered my own thoughts on the issue of affirmative action, race, and privilege when the interview concluded. This student literally followed me to my office after the interview to engage in further dialogue, and I finally had to ask him to leave my office because I had another appointment that day. We regularly dialogued at the beginning of each class.

Another student in Communication 305, AF (White female) discussed many personal things with me. She talked about the White female student who sat directly beside her in class with whom she vehemently disagreed and tried to provide her with other perspectives. This student, she stated, embodies a lot of the judgmental religious thinking of “White Christian republicanism” (AF's words) in that she espouses colorblind

racism language, and she refuses to acknowledge White privilege, and AF tried to distance herself from during our interview. My regular seat in class was directly in front of these two female students, and I regularly heard grumblings from the student to whom AF was referring. After my interview with her, we talked about the impact of racism and sexism on White women and how we are expected to perform: nice, unsure, answering questions with uncertainty and using qualifying language, and passivity. I told her I had some articles for her and brought them to her the next week.

MJ (African heritage male) talked about struggling as a Black male in a predominantly White institution and culture. He talked about the impact of racism and gender oppression as a Black male; he talked about the struggles he faced when in the presence of students who strongly identify with African countries; he talked about the impact of internalized racism on the Black community as he described not feeling Black enough, that his story isn't unique, that he will not be listened to, and that he will be dismissed. Further, he was the ONLY student in the class of African heritage other than the instructor. How would the classroom climate have been different for him if he had other African heritage students in the room? I also wondered why were there no Black women enrolled in Intercultural Communication.

Another student, I interviewed in Communication 305, JL (Korean heritage female) told me about her participation in a Public Relations course the same semester and that she and two other women, one of Asian heritage who she later identifies as a Korean heritage woman who has been in the United States eight years and whose "English is still building" and an Ethiopian heritage female, who are the only non-White

members of that particular learning community. She expressed to me how she avoided being relegated to that working group because she's lived in the United States her entire life. She stated she feels "sometimes she might have to work harder, and she doesn't want the teacher to ignore her." She told me:

[I try to] just integrate everywhere, cuz I'm not, I don't want to be placed somewhere else differently because I'm not White, you know, and I already know, we learned about privilege, and I totally see how privilege works and everything. And, I didn't even notice that before this class though so that actually...see I learned a lot in this class.

Given the nature of the course content in Communication 101, students I interviewed were cognitively less impacted by my role. However, they disclosed different types of information that included personal stories, intercultural and identity struggles. For example, the students shared deeply personal stories with me. JF (White, gay male) shared his own coming out story to his mother and her struggles with his being gay. He also talked with me about why he does not feel comfortable attending Pride Alliance meetings on campus: his gay identity, while important, is not the most salient identity for him. ED (African heritage female) shared with me that her sister is a lesbian so Dr. Jay being out in the classroom allowed her to think about and relate to her sister differently. DL (Asian heritage female) shared very personal information about her family and her own struggles navigating and bridging two cultures. Finally, DW (Jamaican heritage male) talked with me at length about his struggles as an athlete on the track team and how difficult it is to balance the demands of athletics and his studies.

In Communication 305, on at least four different occasions I shared my own personal authority of experience of being out and queer. I mentioned one example earlier

in the classroom exercises section in Chapter 4, but I also mentioned it on at least three other occasions during the semester. One instance centered on the power of naming or avowing, the theoretical concept introduced in the content, and I talked about members of the LGBTQ community using the term queer versus members outside of that community using the term and how it would be derogatory. I also talked about the stereotypes that might accompany me now that I have outed myself in the class and most of the students do not know me personally. Finally, when Dr. May talked about unearned and denied privileges he flipped McIntosh's knapsack on White privilege and explored male privilege, class privilege, and heterosexual privilege. I talked about how I would never publicly show affection toward my partner because of the sexualization (sexism and eroticism) that happens with women couples and also because of the fear of violence that might be perpetrated against us, or as Dr. May later clarified, rhetorical violence that may also occur. These are not the only instances in which I spoke in the class, but I use these specific examples to illustrate the importance and reciprocity of my own risks, vulnerabilities, and storytelling that contributed to accountability to this learning community.

A White, gay male outed himself in Communication 305 during the semester, but it was much later that he did so. I imagine that my queerness was an important part of the classroom discussions. That my White, queer, femaleness was named and avowed many times during the class, it contributed to what May names as taking the class to the next level and helping students to make personal, theoretical, and structural connections they may not have made otherwise. In this way, I held myself accountable as an active

participant researcher, and students and faculty therefore, felt accountable to me. As Shor (1996) notes, “protest is harder and more risky when you do it by yourself” (p. 211). Finally, May also referred to my expertise as a scholar in the field of Communication as an observer.

My methodological approach that includes detailed field notes, participant observations, verbatim transcripts (transcribing as I went for efficacy), confidential demographic profiles on each student, interviews and personal conversations inside and outside of the classroom, the intentionality in the selection of sites, the duration of my study, and the depth and breadth of my participation was instrumental for the evidence presented in this case study. Although my methodology can easily be replicated, the outcomes will be incomparable because of the unique synergy, dynamics, and members in any classroom space. Further, skill and cultural consciousness deeply impact the subtleties, processes, and findings. These findings do, however, suggest the numerous possibilities that exist in the critical engaged pedagogical classroom.

Future Explorations

I wrote in my field notes: For future research, I would want to know if Dr. Jay reinforced a gender binary so that students would be more comfortable with her sexuality. One of the female students from the section of Dr. Jay’s course that I observed told me, in a casual, unsolicited conversation only a few weeks ago, that she felt like the gender binary was very rigid in the course. She too, wondered if Dr. Jay was overcompensating for being out in the classroom. This student has a heightened sensitivity toward gender

issues as she is obtaining a minor in women and gender studies and has taken courses, such as queer theory.

Some research questions for future exploration might include: How much do you push students, given the current political climate? How much is too much, that is, when do faculty hold back? How does one challenge dominance and maintain a semblance of safety in this kind of climate? Further, why was JF (White, gay male) comfortable seeking out Dr. Jay during her office hours, yet MJ (African heritage male) did not feel comfortable seeking out Dr. May? These questions could be pursued as follow up to this research project as they speak to the complexities of identity, privilege, power, and dominance.

Future research questions on the intersection of race and gender include: if females are expected to mother, nurture, care take, and comfort others, might Dr. Jay's pre-semester welcoming strategies be perceived as gendered and racialized strategies? For example, a study on women's perceptions of womanhood by Settles et al. (2008) found that "women described caretaking as a positive, desirable aspect of their womanhood" but especially for White women (p. 461). How was May's use of the agape love concept racialized and gendered? Did Dr. May's use of agape love challenge the students' training as to what they can expect from male teachers? Further, did May utilize agape love to mitigate and perform gender as a Black male to counter the prevailing stereotypes and perceptions that he should be feared or that he is threatening because of what Rome (2006) refers to as the "African American male criminal stereotype" (p. 78).

When the White, male, Christian student wrote in his honesty statement that Jay talked about LGBTQ issues too much, did she realize that she distanced herself and her lesbian identity? As I documented in Chapter 4, she was triggered by this student's comment and attempted to rely on the text or the experiential exercise as authority. However, she did not acknowledge her own coming out story in her reply.

As I also documented in Chapter 4, a White, male, Jewish student I interviewed disclosed that he felt "nervous" identifying publicly as Jewish because there were Palestinian heritage students in the class. It would be interesting to explore why this Jewish student is afraid of discrimination by Palestinians, but not anti-Semitism by Christians. I am interested in this topic as it relates to higher education and in the critical classroom space.

Finally, I would like to further research accountability and how it works in tension with the issue of institutional likeability. In Chapter 2, I utilized Gorski's (2007) work on critical intercultural education to discuss the notion of spending one's institutional likeability in order to challenge power and privilege. Both instructors refer to likeability during critical moments in which they utilized marginalized identity and challenged status quo without naming it specifically. When Jay told the "Woke Up Green" story during week 5, she theoretically grounded the story in the communication concepts related to self-disclosure, one of the key topics that week. She connected her coming out to the concept of motivation and risk. She told the class: "So I make an agreement that I'll come out in every class even though I know that you might go away. I don't like that, but sometimes people are like, Oh you're gay, bye and they bolt. So, I know that's a risk

for me but it's an important risk." On week 10, when setting the stage for a discussion on privilege May stated: "So, what I want to do then is to identify privilege. Can we do that? All right. You won't hold it against me? Will you be my friend after class? All right? Agape love to you and agape love back at me, correct?" Did making their concerns about likeability transparent temper the students' defensiveness, engagement, and reflection with the material? Did my role as an out, White, queer woman and activist researcher mitigate their likeability or potential loss of likeability in any way? Did my role increase the level of risk-taking and vulnerability between myself and the two faculty members? Did the higher expectation of deep accountability alleviate the potential loss of likeability? These questions are exciting research possibilities for critical pedagogy.

Reflections

As I entered into this project, I had many personal goals in addition to the research purpose, problem statement, and questions. One of those goals was to reflect on my own teaching and facilitation practices in the effort to become a more open, honest, and generous educator who is not interested in dominating or forcing my views onto others. I wanted to become a more mindful educator and become more skillful at abandoning my own ego in order to better "hear" what others have to say without judgment, expectation, or what Buddhists call attachment. Rather, I wanted to hone my own thinking, skills, and knowledge so that I created the "space" for all participants to learn from each other. By participating in these two Communication classrooms, I witnessed a new openness in myself. I recognized that each member of a learning community has a story. One of the principles of the National Coalition Building Institute

methodology is that to change hearts and minds, we must listen to each other's stories rather than resort solely to our "heads" or our intellect. While both instructors theoretically grounded the classroom space and dialogue, they welcomed and valued the life experience of each member of the learning community, including my own. Each of the eight students I interviewed had a unique story. Both of the educators I interviewed had their unique stories. However, the non-critical classroom space does not allow for such stories to emerge because there is an agenda, there is a task, there is a syllabus, there is a test or paper, there is expediency, there is power, there is hierarchy, there is a hidden curriculum, and there is fear.

As an educator I personally fear many things. I fear sexism, homophobia, heterosexism, and my complicity in racism. I fear that I will not have adequate answers to the questions asked by students. I fear the patriarchal, combative style of debate rife in academia. I fear resistance and the limitations of my own cultural competence. I fear making mistakes. I fear my own complicity in upholding the script of the perfect, passive, nice caretaking White lady workhorse that I have been trained from which to perform. I fear that I will protect whiteness and patriarchy. I fear White people, especially their silences. I fear that I will not be a good ally to other educators or students when they need my voice most. I fear that when I come out as queer in the classroom, students will tune me out and reduce me to that one identity. I fear that students will misunderstand or dislike me. I fear that students and colleagues will see my vulnerabilities and use them against me. I fear being too soft and yet too strong. But more importantly, I fear I will lose control over the classroom or the educational space of

which I was invited to lead or facilitate. The fear of losing control has many implications but can, to our detriment, manifest in ways that make us act ostentatiously and without authenticity. But I must ask myself, why do I feel entitled to having control in the first place? What training did I receive as a teacher and educator that I believe I have to be in control? Being in control of an entire classroom learning community seems like a huge burden for one individual, yet that is the authoritarian model of teaching. As Buddhist teacher David Riccho (2002) articulates, “We cannot give someone our acceptance and allowing when control takes precedence over equality or when we get too attached to our own version of reality. We cannot easily show authentic affection when we are driven by fear” (p. 178). For those times we interrogated institutional power, privilege, racism, sexism, and homophobia, as Johnson and Bhatt (2003) argue, we centered our voices strategically to better create student-centered learning experiences that are inclusive of diverse experiences.

Johnson and Bhatt (2003) employ the autoethnographic to make the personal political in the critical classroom. Further, they make explicit their multiple identities to model the importance of what hooks (1984) calls “comrades in the struggle” (p. 68), collegiality, and the importance of ally building in the Communication classroom. Johnson and Bhatt’s (2003) model of allyship in the classroom provides an excellent framework for theorizing my role as a co-creator of knowledge construction in both the Communication 101 and 305 classrooms. Though it was a difficult balancing act for me as a participant observer, action researcher, and as an ally, the instructors and I strived to model power sharing. Acutely aware of multiple roles in the classroom, I assessed how

much space I would take up in the classroom. As Ravitch and Wirth (2007) articulate, “[T]he insider action researcher, then, is an ongoing state of negotiating his or her research objectives, professional identity/ies, and relationships that are embedded in the site” (77). Had I not engaged as both a participant observer and an action researcher and ally, the data I collected would look very different. That I contributed to the instructors’ ethic of care, joint accountability, and offered my own standpoint and situatedness, further contributed to fostering a high level of trust. That I was able to “be with” these two learning communities for an entire semester, I was able to settle in and present myself in a subjective and authentic way. I was not in it for a quick take, to exploit these two classes, but I was willing to make significant contributions and take significant risks.

The findings of my project are not meant to serve as a blue-print for engaged and critical pedagogy, or teaching methods – what I argue against in the beginning of Chapter 5. In fact, I would argue these classroom features, teaching strategies, and pedagogical decisions cannot be merely replicated or “performed” since these two teachers have unique lived experiences, autobiographies, and marginalized identities and are committed to reflexivity, self-awareness, and using their lived experiences and identities as sites of resistance. At a feminist brown bag discussion in September 2010, I presented my dissertation and findings to an audience at a local University comprised of approximately 30 students and faculty. During the question and answer session, a few faculty members asked for specific strategies to counter what they called “resistant and combative” students in their own classrooms. The discussion then turned into a thoughtful, collegial dialogue about privileged students assuming authority of experience in their classrooms.

What I gained from this opportunity is that faculty are indeed looking for different models of teaching that are counter to traditional authoritarian, binary, argumentative classrooms that shift students affectively and cognitively. This research is meant to provide examples from two highly skilled professors that can aid in that endeavor.

APPENDIX A

EMAILS OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN DISSERTATION RESEARCH PROJECT (PRE-HSRB APPROVAL)

21 April 2008

Dear Dr. Jay,

I am writing about my dissertation, Tentative Title: Contesting and negotiating classroom and social space: a phenomenological examination and exploration of power at one University. I am asking if I can observe one of your courses (see sketch of methodology below). You are one of two faculty I am asking. I ask you for several reasons:

- 1) Students consistently rave about how much they learned in your class and what an excellent teacher you are. This is an "unofficial" nomination by them. You just received a teaching excellence award, an official nomination/validation.
- 2) You teach topics and issues in a general education course that have the potential to transform students, and provide deep critical thinking to language, and the power of rhetoric in "color blind" and "homophobic" times.
- 3) Your status as an out White, female lesbian, locates you in an interesting intersection of power in an institution situated in Virginia, a state that is governed by homophobic legislation.
- 4) I am very sensitive to the dynamics of the classroom space, the commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, and to doing quality work that will have the potential to impact university processes, teaching evaluations, and provide insight into classroom dynamics and identity.

I am working out the particular methodology. I would hope to be able to:

- 1) observe classroom dynamics;
- 2) interview you;
- 3) interview different students;
- 4) utilize a few of Angelos and Cross' classroom assessment techniques on a regular basis.

I would be happy to talk through *anything* with you in person, via phone, etc. Please let me know your thoughts. I will certainly understand if you want to decline.

Very sincerely & respectfully,
--Rebecca

21 April 2008

Dear Dr. May,

I am writing about my dissertation, Tentative Title: Contesting and negotiating classroom and social space: a phenomenological examination and exploration of power at one University. I am asking if I can observe one of your courses (see sketch of methodology below). You are one of two faculty I am asking. I ask you for several reasons:

- 1) Students in my COMM 365 course this Fall 2007 raved about how much they learned in your class and what an excellent teacher you are. This is an "unofficial" nomination.
- 2) You teach topics that have the potential to transform students, and provide deep critical thinking to language, and the power of rhetoric in "color blind" times.
- 3) Your status as an African Heritage male locates you in an interesting intersection of power in a predominately White institution.
- 4) I am very sensitive to the dynamics of the classroom space, the commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, and to doing quality work that will have the potential to impact university processes, teaching evaluations, and provide insight into classroom dynamics and identity.

I am working out the particular methodology. I would hope to be able to:

- 1) observe classroom dynamics;
- 2) interview you;
- 3) interview different students;
- 4) utilize a few of Angelos & Cross' classroom assessment techniques on a regular basis.

I would be happy to talk through *anything with you in person, via phone, etc. Please let me know your thoughts. I will certainly understand if you want to decline.

Very sincerely & respectfully,
--Rebecca

APPENDIX B

STUDENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- a) Have you utilized the instructor's office hours? If so, for what purpose? If not, why?
- b) What are some comments, conversations, and topics that excite you in this class? Describe, give specific examples.
- c) What are some of the comments, conversations, and topics that anger you in this class? Describe, give specific examples.
- d) Do you experience vulnerability in this class? What specifically makes you feel vulnerable? When do you feel vulnerable?
- e) Do you share personal stories that relate to class concepts, issues, and ideas? Why or why not?
- f) How do you listen or respond when other students make themselves vulnerable or share personal stories in this class? Does it happen regularly in this class in your opinion?
- g) When you disagree with the instructor in this class, how do you respond?
- h) When you disagree with opinions expressed in this course, how do you manage that process?
- i) Do you ever feel like you have an opinion that is different from the majority in this course? How do you express that opinion so you feel heard?
- j) What does this classroom climate feel like for you?
- k) What are some of the strategies the instructor uses to connect with you (to encourage you? Engage you?)
- l) What biases do you bring to this course that were/are challenged?
- m) If you had one minute to talk about the best elements of the teaching methods in this course, what would you say?

APPENDIX C
FACULTY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- a) Why do you teach?
- b) What are your explicit course goals for the class I will observe?
- c) What are some of the more implicit messages/lessons you hope to get across to students)?
- d) What do you consider your core identity/ies when you enter this classroom?
- e) Do you ever feel vulnerable or scared in the classroom? Can you describe one or more specific examples? How did you handle the/se situation/s?
- f) Do you ever feel angry in the classroom? Can you describe one or more specific examples? How did you handle the/se situation/s?
- g) When do you feel successful in the classroom or during a semester? (Describe and give specific examples.)
- h) What does resistance feel like for you (how does it show up)? Specific examples?
- i) What are some strategies you use to meet resistance? Specific examples
- j) Describe what collegial support looks like for you? Does it exist here at University Y for you?

APPENDIX D

POST-HSRB INVITATION LETTER TO FACULTY

13 August 2008

Dear Professor Jay & May,

I wanted you to know that my dissertation proposal “Contesting and negotiating classroom and social space: a case study that examines and explores power in two Communication classrooms at one University” has been accepted by my committee.

My study will be an illustrative case study, collecting data from:

- a. In-depth interviews with participating faculty (audio taped);
- b. Direct observations of the classroom that will include micro-analysis of classroom dialogues, exchanges, and conversations (audio taped);
- c. Focus groups/interviews (preferably follow up interviews with individual students in person and via email correspondence);
- d. Classroom assessments (Angelo & Cross, 1993, Cross & Steadman, 1996, and Brookfield's, 1995, protocol for classroom research);
- e. Class assignments or journals (reflective on experience and material);

My working relationships with you will enable me to gain more nuanced data (see a. above) because I wish to “capture the deep meaning of experience in the educator's own words” and because in-depth interviews “require close, personal interactions between researcher and participant, often over long periods of time” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, 54-55).

The direct classroom observations that include micro-analysis of classroom dialogues, exchanges, and conversations (audio taped) include the student responses: insensitive comments, sharing of personal stories, vulnerability, expressions of moral outrage, minority opinion, ideological opposition to the instructor. Faculty responses include: generosity versus right/wrong, encouraging action, pedagogical strategies, faculty connection with students that includes rapport, empathy, and credibility. I will examine classroom tenor marked by energy shifts, resistance, anger, and overall classroom climate. I will examine my own reactions to my operationalized concepts and the observations resonate intellectually and somatically. I will invite students to send reactions and reflections to me electronically should they wish to do so. I will collect information from students and code (informal naming by the student) and demographic information. I will utilize formal approval via consent forms (stamped officially by HSRB).

I will utilize classroom assessments (via Angelo & Cross, 1993; Cross & Steadman, 1996; and Bloomfield, 1995 CATs protocol) to measure cognitive challenges and successes such as difficult, confusing concepts, classroom support, defensiveness, classroom rapport and support, what is getting in the way of learning, when do you feel most supported and encouraged and by whom. Finally, I will read reflective student journals or writing samples assigned by you related to course content and process. I will briefly introduce myself and give a brief overview of my purpose “I will be studying negotiation of classroom space and teaching pedagogy”.

I would like to interview you twice, no more than one hour at the beginning and middle of the semester with the following questions:

Faculty in-depth interview questions:

- a) Why do you teach?
- b) What are your explicit course goals for the class I will observe?
- c) What are some of the more implicit messages/lessons you hope to get across to students)?
- d) What do you consider your core identity/ies when you enter this classroom?
- e) Do you ever feel vulnerable or scared in the classroom? Can you describe one or more specific examples? How did you handle the/se situation/s?
- f) Do you ever feel angry in the classroom? Can you describe one or more specific examples? How did you handle the/se situation/s?
- g) When do you feel successful in the classroom or during a semester? (Describe and give specific examples.)
- h) What does resistance feel like for you (how does it show up)? Specific examples?
- i) What are some strategies you use to meet resistance? Specific examples
- j) Describe what collegial support looks like for you? Does it exist here at University Y for you?

Ideally, I would like to interview you briefly during the course of the semester when critical incidents occur in class. However, I want to respect your time given your numerous responsibilities. If follow ups during the semester are not feasible with your time constraints, it would be ideal if you would agree to complete the classroom assessments that your students complete (d. above via (Angelo & Cross, 1993; Cross & Steadman, 1996; Bloomfield, 1995 CATs) to measure cognitive challenges and successes such as difficult, confusing concepts, classroom support, defensiveness, classroom rapport and support, what is getting in the way of learning, when do you feel most supported and encouraged and by whom.

I would like to talk to you via phone or in person prior to the data collection. Please let me know which method is most convenient for you. My data will be available to you once grades are turned in for the Fall 2008 semester. I thank you, very sincerely,

for allowing me to create this important study that will contribute immensely to the field of higher education.

Very Sincerely,
Rebecca

APPENDIX E

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Authority of experience: determines whose experiences should be the central focus in the field (hooks, 1994; Applebaum, 2008)

Critical multiculturalism: challenges and interrupts status-quo stories about identities and universalizing experiences (Keating, 2007)

Critical (progressive) pedagogy: habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking that go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, clichés, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of action, event, object, mass media, discourse, etc. (Shor, 1994); curriculum that interferes with agency (Hendrix et al.)

Engaged pedagogy: emphasizes well-being, a commitment to self-actualization, and empowerment of students and teachers (hooks, 1994; Fisher, 2001)

Internalized dominance: a sense of conscious and unconscious superiority and authority, an exercise of power and privilege (Rosado & Barreto, 2002)

Internalized oppression: a sense of inferiority, powerlessness, and the limited ability to access resources (Rosado & Barreto, 2002)

Social space or the “field”: the site of struggles in which individuals seek to maintain or alter the distribution of the forms of capital specific to it (Bourdieu, 1984)

- Bourdieu: freedom & constraint – secret codes of symbolic domination that manifest in “modalities of practice”, the ways of looking, sitting, standing, keeping silent, or even of speaking

Transformative education: changes the canon, paradigms, and basic assumptions of the curriculum (Banks, 1994)

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