

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Radical Teaching Then & Now

by Sarah Chinn



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What is radical teaching? Is it teaching radical content: undiscovered histories, underrepresented authors, language instruction with a decolonial bent? Or is it pedagogical method, countering the hierarchy of the classroom, letting students teach and teachers learn, taking responsibility for the power of the instructor? Or is it resisting the larger structures of control that mandate standardized testing, remove fiction and poetry from required reading because they are too "subjective," and remove "difficult" children from charter schools so they don't drag down test scores?

Of course, it's all these things. Indeed, it's hard to engage in radical teaching without engaging both the micro and the macro structures in both K-12 and higher education. After all, as Christopher Newfield argues in *The Great Mistake*, it's hard to separate the disinvestment in public higher education from the increased focus on pre-professional programs in colleges and universities or from the reduced expectations of student intellectual work that those programs demonstrate. Moreover, the forces of neoliberal corporatization and free market evangelism see the whole picture, recognizing that a student who doesn't have access to real intellectual challenges and meaningful ambiguity, a student who is focused on drills and school uniforms and "no excuses" schooling will be less likely to rebel, especially if they've been told that their entire academic future depends upon conceding power.

Radical teaching is both simple and complicated. It requires trusting our students and questioning ourselves, acknowledging the complexities of identity and power while remaining clear-headed about the mandate to work out of a commitment to justice and equity. For those of us who work in state-funded institutions, both K-12 and in higher education, it often means working with minimal resources and maintaining morale in a space that might lack air conditioning in the summer, chalk or markers, or even intact walls and ceilings. For those in more elite institutions, it requires teachers not to be seduced by their privileges, and to recognize the difference between what one gets by privilege and what one should get by right.

The landscape of radical teaching and the forces that disrupt this landscape have been in formation for a long time. This issue of *Radical Teacher* begins with a "mini-cluster" of articles adapted from talks that made up a Modern Language Association Convention panel on a crucial moment when these conflicting forces erupted dramatically: 1968, the year of the formation of the MLA Radical Caucus. As Paul Lauter describes it, that MLA was a ferment of radical activity: members called for the creation of a commission on the status of women, demanded that the MLA fund the publication of "lost" texts by women and people of color, put up anti-war posters (quoting William Blake, no less), and successfully nominated Louis Kampf (also a *Radical Teacher* founding board member) to second vice president of the organization, which meant his becoming president two years later.

For Lauter, 1968 was the beginning of many victories, both within the MLA and in the larger scholarly world. Certainly, we are living with its legacy now, especially in terms of the much stronger representation of marginalized

people in the academy and in our anthologies and textbooks. Frederick Douglass and Emily Dickinson, to name just two figures from my own field of 19th century U.S. literature, are now recognized as the literary lions they are, rather than historical footnotes or minor players. And, as Ellen Schrecker points out in her article here, "The Disciplines and the Left: The Radical Caucus Movement," the 1960s were a turning point across the disciplines. For example, the Socialist Scholar's Conference, which was founded in 1965, grew enormously and by 1968 was attracting thousands of participants. Within individual disciplinary annual meetings, radical caucuses formed, calling for change both within their fields and in the larger world. Most successful were demands by radical groups that their professional organizations not schedule future meetings in Chicago, the site of violent assaults on anti-war protestors during the 1968 Democratic Convention there. From the MLA to professional societies in sociology, political science, and history, radical candidates ran for delegate assemblies and officer positions, with some success.

Perhaps the most lasting results of this activism have been in curricula, hiring, and publishing. Across the disciplines, radicals pushed for greater representation of women and people of color (and, later, LGBT people) both in the professoriate and in syllabi. While these fights are far from over, it would be hard to argue that today's classrooms look much like their pre-1968 counterparts. And journals that were founded in the wake of radical organizing – *Radical History Review*, *Crime and Social Justice*, and *Radical Teacher*, to name just a few – are still thriving, in print and/or online. For better or for worse, as Schrecker points out, it is now possible "to pursue a completely conventional career as a professional academic even while doing work in such formerly controversial fields as Women Studies," even as we face the growing corporatization of higher education.

And the past is deeper than just 1968, as Frances Smith Foster shows us. As an academic invested in Sankofa – a belief that one must "go back and retrieve from the past that which is useful for surviving in the present and founding a better future" – Smith Foster takes the long view. After all, there were few women or men of color at the 1968 MLA convention, and those who were there grappled with the overt, unspoken, and internalized racism of other participants, both white and black. Foster's first encounter with the MLA ten years later was mostly more of the same, as it had been since 1884, when its first black member, Dr. William Sanders Scarborough, joined. While there were more sessions on literature by people of color in 1978, the halls were still comparatively bare of non-white members, and few white scholars showed up at panels on multicultural literatures.

As Foster reminds us, the past is instruction for the present. Indeed, she quotes from a 1902 *PMLA* article that while it congratulates the MLA for its achievements, reminds its members that its accomplishments are "the merest symbol of what remains to be done." What happens, though, when the past is valued above the present? That is the conundrum I face in my own article "Moving Without the Movement," which looks at the student activism of twenty years after 1968, during my own college years. In the 1980s, it was a truism that radicalism had abandoned the

academy, and students were interested only in personal achievements and monetary success. That is, the 1980s were for radicals “an ideological wasteland.” I argue, however, that the 1980s were a time of political ferment on the left, but that they were made up of individual, albeit interlocking, movements, rather than the overarching “Movement” that characterized the late 1960s.

Activists of the 1980s didn’t expect a revolution, let alone The Revolution. We worked in smaller orbits, on specific goals. In the essay, I trace two movements in which I was intimately involved: anti-apartheid in South Africa and lesbian feminism. Both were, thankfully, free of the kinds of sectarian struggles that had faced the New Left. And both were informed by a knowledge that the work was about solidarity and process: we knew better than to expect immediate results, and we understood the law of unintended consequences.

As too does Dick Ohmann, the author of the final essay in this mini-cluster, and the one with the longest view in terms of life experience. Given the massive changes we have witnessed between pre- and post-1968, one might expect Ohmann to be celebratory, triumphant even. But that would be too easy and convenient, and Ohmann wants us to face some hard truths. For example, along with the diversification of academia came disinvestment in higher education and the collapse of the academic job market. It’s hardly a coincidence that as academic institutions began to take seriously their obligation to include and represent marginalized communities, state and federal governments decided to get out of the business of funding higher education.

At the same time, the shift towards adjunctification began, picking up serious speed in the 1990s and 2000s. As Ohmann points out, despite the rapid and significant growth in college enrollments, MLA membership – which one could see as a rough estimate for full-time employment in language and literary studies – has shrunk by 23%. And the language of the free market, repackaged and remarketed as neoliberal “disruption” and “innovation,” as Catterall and her co-authors chronicle, has suffused academia. Recent *Radical Teacher* issues on the corporate university and critical university studies have tracked these changes, which seem increasingly irreversible. And academia is hardly alone: as Ohmann argues, we should “be reminded that the degradation of labor and the decline of worker self-organization have been deep trends in capitalism for almost fifty years—that is, for most of the time since World War II.” We radicals may have won the small war of representation, but the neoliberals and neoconservatives won the big war of control of the means of production. In many ways, Ohmann implies that the political battles of the 1960s and the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s were just a smokescreen for a larger ideological fight, one that the left lost, around free market economics and the victory of the 1%.

I’m not so sure (and I say this with great respect for Dick Ohmann’s long memory and great political acumen). It’s true that the present is fairly grim, but there are moments that might give us some hope. The victories of left-leaning, if not outright socialist, candidates, many of them women of color, in the 2018 midterm elections is a bright

spot. The passionate advocacy by youth in the US for gun control and against climate change speaks to the investment young people have in making a safer, cleaner, more sustainable world. While I’m not thrilled with the shameless cashing in of corporate American on the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots, the lives of queer people in the United States are at the very least more visible, more legible than ever before.

We’re in a strange moment as educators today. Phenomena that didn’t exist when most of us were students—such as Wikipedia, Google, Facebook—now feel essential (how did we live without them!). The mechanisms of neoliberalism that felt so surprising when we first encountered them – more concrete processes like assessment and productivity reporting, as well as the more abstract concepts of disruption, innovation, interdisciplinarity, and the like – have entered our vocabularies or changed meaning by stealth. I know I’ve often had a sort of uncanny feeling of alienation and recognition at meetings with my dean, wondering if he means the same thing as I hear him saying, so slippery are some of these ideas.

But these are abstractions, of course. What’s most interesting is how radical teaching is being practiced on the ground, in schools, colleges, and universities. The articles in this issue of *Radical Teacher* do just that. Their authors are well aware of the strictures placed upon them, both by the institutions in which they teach and in the larger world. They are also aware of how a radical message can easily be declawed, how, as G.T. Reyes shows us, a call for radical, decolonized love can swiftly be reduced to pleas for “tolerance” and “acceptance.”

Several of the articles in this issue engage directly with contemporary phenomena that suffuse today’s educational scene. Going into the belly of the beast, so to speak, Angela L. Pratesi, Wendy Miller, and Elizabeth Sutton describe a project they designed together to have students edit and/or create Wikipedia entries on underrepresented artists and art educators as well as on Haitian artists. Their classes were especially useful in showing students that what shows up in Wikipedia is not simply a neutral reflection of all the knowledge to be had in the world, but rather a collection of information that its editors valued and thought others should know.

By bringing a feminist pedagogy to Wikipedia, Pratesi, Miller, and Sutton helped their students understand that absence from Wikipedia or a lack of sources more generally mirrors the priorities of the dominant culture, in which there is minimal interest in knowing about black artists or feminist art educators. Indeed, not finding enough information for a person or topic is a lesson in itself – of how women are under-cited and research has yet to be done. This exercise also put control in the hands of students. Rather than looking to Wikipedia for information, they learned not only about what qualifies as a reliable source but also to produce knowledge and develop expertise in both technology and content.

On a more administrative level, Kate Catterall, Julia Mickenberg, and Richard Reddick describe their experiences

working on a university-wide initiative on “faculty innovation” at the University of Texas, Austin. They hoped to show how ideas like “design thinking” and “innovation” which “are often associated with the neoliberal restructuring of higher education...might be harnessed by faculty and students to promote positive change in the university.”

As one might imagine, this effort had mixed results. On the one hand, they had comparatively free rein to come up with activities and initiatives, some of which were generously funded. On the other hand, they found themselves enmeshed in the usual issues of gendered and raced workload (the authors are two white women and an African American man), curriculum, and the structure of the neoliberal university, as well as the inevitable shifts in administrative personnel. As they point out, faculty and students might be encouraged to take risks, but too often we pay the price if those risks don't pay out the way funders or administrators would like. They ended up creating events for a phantom “Center for Faculty Innovation,” that was never established, and all three look back on the experience with considerable ambivalence.

Ambivalence also characterizes Arlene Keizer's short but powerful piece, “Collateral Survivorship.” One of the more welcome phenomena of recent years has been the more open conversation about the effects of rape culture and sexualized abuse of power in schools and the workplace (and when those two are the same thing). A full account of sexual harassment and assault in schools, colleges, and universities surely has yet to be made, and Keizer's article gets us part of the way. She describes her (nonsexual) relationship with a colleague, “Bill K.,” who, she later learned, had sexually harassed and abused students at a New England boarding school some years earlier. He was, in the words of the article from which she learned this, a “skilled predator” of young women, which leads her to re-examine her own relationship with him and how the unspoken rules of gendered power played themselves out in their friendship. She sees herself as a “collateral survivor,” someone who cannot help but be suffused by the constraints of male sexual power even though she was never directly victimized.

It's hard to know how to disrupt these power relations, which seem so ever-present and yet so often invisible. G.T. Reyes gives us a clue with what he calls a “pedagogy of disruption and healing.” In response to racist vandalism of the door of the office he shares with an African American colleague, in which antiracist posters and his nameplate were “crossed out” by scrawled x-es, and his colleague's name plate was turned backwards as though to erase her name, Reyes comes up with a creative and dramatic strategy.

Reyes created “Cross Out Quilts,” grids of squares, on each of which was written either a structure of oppression (white supremacy, toxic masculinity) or mechanism of radical repair (self-determination and revolutionary love, for example). In the quilts, the oppressive terms were “crossed out,” and the radical solutions foregrounded, visualizing and literalizing how a radical politics could neutralize hatred and destruction.

While Reyes found little opposition to the quilt, he did have to face a different problem. As the image of the “Cross Out Quilts” were adopted by other institutions, occasionally the radical messages were watered down, so that, for example, “decolonized love” became just “love” or “tolerance” and “acceptance.” Reyes saw challenging this misappropriation as a way to intervene supportively and emphasize the difference between the two seemingly similar messages. Equally importantly, “what I did not recognize at the time was that the creation and installation of Cross This Out had also cultivated collective hope,” as students, faculty, and staff found a vehicle to not just respond to hate speech but also generate new ways of imagining themselves in the world.

The children Nadine Bryce describes in her article on a fourth grade class project (of which her own son was a member) certainly gives us hope. As a “boundary crosser” between parent and researcher, Bryce reports back her own pleasure at seeing inventive teachers integrate radical content into a curriculum required to maintain state standards of literacy, public speaking, and analysis. Together they studied a variety of social movements for justice and then had the students present on an element of those movements that particularly interested them. Rather than a cudgel with which to pummel children into compliance, teachers used literacy instruction that “enabled and promoted sociopolitical consciousness and community engagement.”

Bryce's article gives us one way in which teachers, faced with state mandates, use creative methods to help students succeed academically while “dar[ing] to teach literacy as a matter of justice for all.” The 4th grade teachers worked together to combine writing, reading, social studies, and public speaking and at the same time empowered the children to tell the stories of movements and activists they admired and that spoke to them.

It's also meaningful that two of the essays in this issue are co-written by three authors. They authentically disrupt the status quo of the single-author article that “counts” for tenure and/or promotion, recognizing that knowledge is most often produced collectively. And several of the articles here are about the collaborative work of groups of students or instructors. They provide guideposts to both theorizing and practicing radical teaching.

The dialogue between the mini-cluster on 1968 and the articles about contemporary radical teaching reminds us that the past must be usable even if we can't agree on how to use it. Perhaps we can hold both Lauter's optimism and Ohmann's realpolitik in our minds at the same time, just as Nadine Bryce's fourth grade teachers maintained a balance between radical pedagogy and state academic standards for their students. As G.T. Reyes reminds us, there must be room for collective hope, for the ability, even if only symbolically, to “cross out” structures of repression, oppression, and suppression.

For if radical change is to be made, it must be made collectively. If radical historians showed us anything, it was that the “great man” version of history was only a small part of how things changed, for better and for worse. Radical

economists look not only at corporations but also at co-operatives for models of functioning businesses, and have coined the term "solidarity economy" to name all those economic structures that operate outside the profit motive.

"Collective hope" may not sound as sexy or immediate as "disruption" or "innovation," but it has proven to be far more enduring and, perhaps in the long run, more generative. Or, at least, let's hope so.



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Introduction to MLA Panel: 2018 on 1968

by Paul Lauter



(LEFT) NO CHICAGO PROTEST PINS, CA. 1968. MLA ARCHIVES, NY.



(RIGHT) LOUIS KAMPF AT MLA ANNUAL CONVENTION, 1968. MLA ARCHIVES, NY.

Think back to what happened in 1968 outside the halls of academe and the corridors of the New York Hilton and old Americana hotels, where the MLA would convene in December: the Tet offensive carried out by Vietnamese forces; the massacres at My Lai and elsewhere carried out by American troops; Lyndon Johnson's abdication; Robert Kennedy's decision to run for president; Martin Luther King's murder and the subsequent rebellions across America; the violent suppression of protests at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Kennedy's murder. Nixon's election.

In the MLA meeting of 2018, held at the same hotels in New York, we tried to set MLA1968 in that turbulent time. Some will remember the 1968 convention as a disruption of professional norms, an intrusion of unprofessional politics. Those of us involved in the "disruption" still remember it as an effort to insert the stunning historical realities of that time into our work—for all of our colleagues and the world to see—at the annual convention.

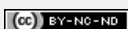
Many threads of activism came together—or didn't. One was the "No Chicago" campaign, which successfully moved to keep the MLA from supporting the economy of Mayor Daley's city after its police riot. A small group of radical activists focused on stopping the war on Vietnam. To that end, we asked for (and were given) a large meeting room to present an anti-war talk by Noam Chomsky; we also collected signatures for the "Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority," which pledged signers to encourage and support draft resistance. We put posters up on the hotel walls: one said "The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction." Another pictured Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver saying, "I got my job through the MLA." We handed out "Mother Language Association" buttons and anti-war leaflets. And we founded what would soon become an affiliated organization within the MLA, the Radical Caucus.

Events at the meeting surprised us as much as MLA officials. We never expected to establish an organization. We never expected to run a candidate, Louis Kampf, for MLA second vice-president, much less—as some charged—"take over the MLA," though we did want to "shake things up."

We never expected to collect funds at a big MLA forum to bail out our comrades who had been arrested for defending the posters we'd put up. We never expected to introduce a motion to set up a Commission on the Status of Women. We never really expected to present a proposal to end MLA's participation in the Center for Editions of American Authors and, instead, to use such funds to publish the work of "lost" women authors and writers of color. Most of these goals emerged from passionate discussions at meetings of a "Tactics Committee" in Dick Ohmann's room in one of the convention overflow hotels.

In one sense, we utterly failed: somehow, our resolution against the war—though passed by large margins at the annual business meeting, and later affirmed by the whole membership of MLA—did not bring the war to a halt or even reduce American attacks. But history suggests that we succeeded beyond our wildest imaginings. We succeeded in illuminating radical change in what was not yet called the "literary canon." We succeeded in helping bring gender norms and hierarchies into question. We succeeded in supporting the national movement, then called "open admissions," to win greater access to higher education for many more minorities, women, and working class people. These efforts helped diversify the traditional white, male faculty, as well as the arts and sciences curriculum. And they led, in due course, to helping the MLA take a stance against the exploitation of adjuncts and the degradation of academic labor.

In 1968, many or most of today's MLA members were not yet born. But the events of that year in Vietnam, the United States, the streets of Paris, and at the MLA meetings produced changes that have affected all of our lives—personal, political, and professional. In the papers that followed this brief introduction, our speakers commented on changes that have, and have not, occurred as a result of events in 1968. Then we mobilized memory, and maybe hope, to debate what might or should happen next. That debate has continued in the many issues of *Radical Teacher* that have emerged since those remarkable days fifty years ago.



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The Disciplines and the Left: The Radical Caucus Movement

by Ellen Schrecker

**RADICAL
CAUCUS**
OF
THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

In December 1968, when the Modern Language Association's annual business meeting chose the radical literary critic Louis Kampf as its second vice president and future president, it was breaking with the MLA's traditional elitism. But it was not an isolated incident. Kampf's election was part of a broader radical movement within the academic community that challenged the conventional knowledge, hierarchies, and pedagogy of the traditional disciplines, as well as the concept of "objective" scholarship that those disciplines clung to. Though the MLA's "Little Bourgeois Cultural Revolution," as Kampf and Paul Lauter called it, ultimately proved less earthshaking than its perpetrators had assumed at the time, the movement that produced it did have a significant impact on American higher education.

By the mid-1960s, as the civil rights movement and the intensifying Vietnam War induced more than a few American academics to shake off the political torpor of the McCarthy era, they began to organize a left-wing presence within the academic profession. One such venture was the Socialist Scholars Conference, an event that began in 1965 and grew so quickly that it attracted some 3000 academics to its 1967 conference at a New York City hotel. The New University Conference (NUC), a somewhat more activist-oriented attempt to bring academic radicals together, was founded in 1968 by graduate students, junior faculty members, and a few sympathetic elders who conceived of the organization as an adult branch of SDS that would operate "in, around, and in spite of" the university.

Most of the action, however, occurred within the individual disciplines, where younger radicals in almost every major field tried to mount some kind of insurgent movement. Although a few scientists and others had been trying for years to infuse their disciplines with critical scholarship and/or political activism, it was not until the late 1960s that a significant cohort of academic leftists actually implemented that agenda. Their efforts found a receptive audience. Within a few years, almost every learned society within the academic profession boasted its own radical caucus, usually started by graduate students and junior faculty members.

Though NUC activists often initiated these groups, their operations varied. Some were carefully structured, others more loosey goosey. In good New Left style, some organized themselves into "communes" or "collectives." A few of these bodies were rather evanescent, disappearing after they peaked in the late 1960s and early 1970s, while others are still around, usually because they had produced a successful journal. Sometimes these groups organized along regional lines. The sociologists, for example, set up both East and West Coast branches of the Union of Radical Sociologists, while the historians of the Middle Atlantic Radical History Organizations had "collectives" in New York, Boston, and Providence.

Like the members of the MLA's Radical Caucus, these left-wing activists focused their early efforts on their disciplines' annual meetings. They all submitted resolutions. While uniformly calling on their colleagues to oppose the war in Vietnam, many of the radical caucuses' proposals were also geared to their fields' specific issues. The

anthropologists, for example, sought to ban classified research. The literary scholars protested against the repression of Soviet, Latin American, and African American authors. In 1968 and 1969, a number of the radical groups succeeded in persuading the professional societies to pull future meetings out of Chicago to express their opposition to Mayor Daley's crackdown on anti-war demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic Convention. Not all of the radicals' resolutions succeeded. They usually encountered considerable opposition from the eminent professors who ran the learned societies. Along with the majority of society members, many of those established scholars did not want to take stands on such controversial issues as the war in Vietnam because it would, they claimed, "politicize" their fields.

The radical caucuses also sought to democratize their professional societies. Again, their demands varied and achieved mixed results. Among the kinds of reforms they pushed were contested elections for officers, the public posting of job openings, attention to women's issues, and the addition of radical panels at scholarly meetings. They also put up candidates for office and, as Louis Kampf's ascension to the MLA presidency revealed, sometimes won. A write-in campaign elected the venerable radical Alfred McClung Lee president of the American Sociological Association, while one of the candidates running on a radical slate for the American Political Science Association's executive committee in 1970 actually won a seat.

Much of the opposition these radicals encountered was due as much to their style as to the content of their demands. They were, after all, in or at least near the New Left and its confrontational mode of operations. Especially in their early days, the radical caucuses disrupted the annual meetings of their professional organizations. Their guerrilla tactics tended to antagonize their more conventional colleagues who may well have agreed with their criticisms of the war in Vietnam, but did not approve of the radicals' disrupting conference sessions and heckling speakers.

We do not have a complete accounting of all the left-wing academic organizations that were formed during the late 1960s and early 1970s. According to one scholar, there were at least eighteen such groups, but he never produced a list. Below is a preliminary and all too sketchy survey of the main ones I've encountered. It probably misses some local and regional bodies, as well as black, women's, and radical groups within the legal, medical, city planning, and other professions some of whose members had academic appointments.

- The MLA still has a Radical Caucus some of whose members were active in creating this very journal.
- The Sociology Liberation Movement (SLM) was founded at the 1968 ASA meeting in Boston. Its publication, *Insurgent Sociologist*, existed for years and is still around under the name *Critical Sociology* even though the SLM's most radical members split off to form an Eastern and a Western Union of Radical Sociologists.
- Probably the most successful of these groups, perhaps because its founders did not seek to reform

the learned society in their field, was the Union for Radical Political Economics or URPE. Formed in 1968 as an independent organization, its journal, the *Review of Radical Political Economics*, has been in continuous existence ever since.

- After an unsuccessful attempt to democratize the American Historical Association in 1969, the radical historians transformed their caucus into what became the Middle Atlantic Radical Historians Organization or MARHO in 1973. Their journal, the *Radical History Review*, is also still around.
- The Anthropologists for Radical Political Action emerged out of the Radical Caucus that had been formed mainly by graduate students within the American Anthropological Association in 1967. I am not sure how long it lasted or how active it was.
- There were two groups within the field of psychology: the Psychologists for a Democratic Society and Psychologists for Social Action. Most of their members were school psychologists in New York, not academics.
- Scientists formed a number of groups that spanned several disciplines and included non-academics as well as professors. Scientists [and later Engineers] for Social and Political Action [SESPA] grew out of a dissident group within the American Physical Society in 1969. It soon merged into a Boston-based organization called Science for the People that published an eponymous journal devoted to demystifying science in order to give ordinary people the ability to criticize its misuse.
- The Union of Concerned Scientists was a somewhat less radical group that emerged from a conference at MIT in the spring of 1969.
- The field of philosophy also had its Radical Caucus.
- The Caucus for a New Political Science was formed at the American Political Science Association's 1967 annual meeting in Chicago. It turned out to be more moderate than most of the other radical caucuses, seeking mainly to prod the discipline to focus more attention on real world social and political problems.
- Some scholars organized within their subdisciplines. So, for example, there was the Union of Radical Criminologists and its journal, *Crime and Social Justice*, began to publish in 1974.
- A similar organization, the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, was formed at the Association for Asian Studies meeting in Philadelphia in 1968. Its founders, who put out the *Bulletin of the Concerned Asian Scholars* for years, were upset with their field's establishment and its timidity with regard to the war in Vietnam.

The radicals who formed these caucuses were among the most politically active graduate students and faculty members at their colleges and universities as well as within their disciplines – supporting student dissidents, opposing

their institutions' collaboration with the military-industrial complex, and seeking curricular and pedagogical reforms. But they were also concerned with the intellectual content of their fields, which they saw as narrowly technical and supportive of the status quo. Each area had its own issues. Anthropologists discovered the imperialist roots of contemporary anthropology, while diplomatic historians embraced Cold War revisionism.

But, when they transcended their disciplinary concerns, these radical academics tended to share similar intellectual interests. It was not uncommon for them to take an interdisciplinary approach. Thus, for example, panels at the conferences MARHO sponsored in the late 1960s and 1970s often featured as many political scientists, anthropologists, and sociologists as they did historians. At the same time, many radicals in history and other fields shared an interest in theory and in the work of European scholars. Not surprisingly, they pushed at the boundaries of their disciplines, incorporating new approaches, new sources, and, in some cases, such as Black Studies and Women's Studies, creating whole new fields. They also discovered or re-discovered Marxism, forming study groups and founding new journals.

One theme that emerged within these radical groups was the demand that their disciplines engage with moral and ethical issues. Especially within the social sciences, these activists criticized their fields' increasing reliance on quantification, which they saw as a way to avoid dealing with real social problems. For the radicals, the traditional assertion of their fields' leaders that scholarship also had to be politically neutral smacked of hypocrisy or worse. They did not believe that such neutrality existed. As these activists put it, so-called "objective" scholarship was nothing other than a defense of the status quo.

Finally, because they were often closer than other academics to their students, the radical ones in particular, they paid considerable attention to pedagogy. They tended to question traditional classroom practices, while experimenting with new, more egalitarian, ways of teaching. Feminists were especially prominent in such academic reforms.

One issue that particularly challenged the radical academics of the New Left was that of how to combine their activism with their scholarship.

One issue that particularly challenged the radical academics of the New Left was that of how to combine their activism with their scholarship. Were they to emphasize "Red or Expert," as the then-current slogan put it? That dichotomy proved troubling for many of the most committed activists, especially when the most radical among them were urging their comrades to leave their campuses and become full-time revolutionaries.

Each activist had to deal with the issue for him- or herself. For many it was a source of tension that was never

completely resolved. As far as I can tell, only a few individuals -- Paul Lauter may be one of the best examples -- were able to make their scholarship their activism. This was also the case for the early second-wave feminists who developed the field of Women's Studies and the African-American and other scholars who did the same with Black Studies. So, for example, Robin Dizard used her academic position as a composition teacher at Merritt Junior College in Oakland, California, to teach rhetoric to the founders and early members of the Black Panther Party.

But not all the leftist academics were able to -- or wanted to -- infuse their scholarship and teaching with their politics. Noam Chomsky may be the most eminent example here. He kept his academic career separate from his political activities; he even took money from the Air Force to support his work in linguistics. Other radicals solved the conflict by dropping out of academe altogether -- often to work full-time within the Movement. Some changed careers. Several of the key founders of the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS), for example, went into publishing. Others, particularly those imbued with a romantic view of the revolutionary potential of the industrial working class, went to work in factories and other blue-collar workplaces. After a few years, many of these people drifted back to the academy, where they continued to bring a radical perspective to their teaching and research.

By the mid-1970s, much of the energy that had driven the radical academic movement had dissipated. The Vietnam War ended and an unanticipated economic contraction plunged the previously expanding academic profession into a job crisis that, as we now know, has lasted for nearly fifty years. The radicals were particularly afflicted, many diverted

from their efforts to transform the university to attempts simply to remain within it. Still, many retained their critical perspective even as they made accommodations with the academic mainstream. Cooptation came in different forms -- and operated in both directions as the rest of the academic community absorbed some of these leftists' initially radical projects. Mainstream economists could no longer ignore inequality even if they did not, as their radical colleagues did, commit themselves to ending it. Nor could historians overlook the past struggles of previously marginalized populations. As a result, it became possible to pursue a completely conventional career as a professional academic even while doing work in such formerly controversial fields as Women's Studies.

Today the academic profession inhabits a very different set of institutions. No longer the expanding and self-confidently liberal university that welcomed -- and sought to tame -- a whole new cohort of critical scholars, American higher education has become corporatized. Dominated by the entrepreneurial values of the neoliberal business community, it subordinates its educational mission to a cost-benefit analysis that gives scant attention to the creation of a democratic citizenry. As a result, the nation's faculties are straining to survive within institutions that have devalued almost everything they do -- except bring in outside money. Still, as radicals, we cannot give up the struggle. We must make common cause with our students and with the current progressive movements to increase access and infuse our institutions with the same critical spirit and democratic values that the radicals of the 1960s strove for -- and occasionally won.



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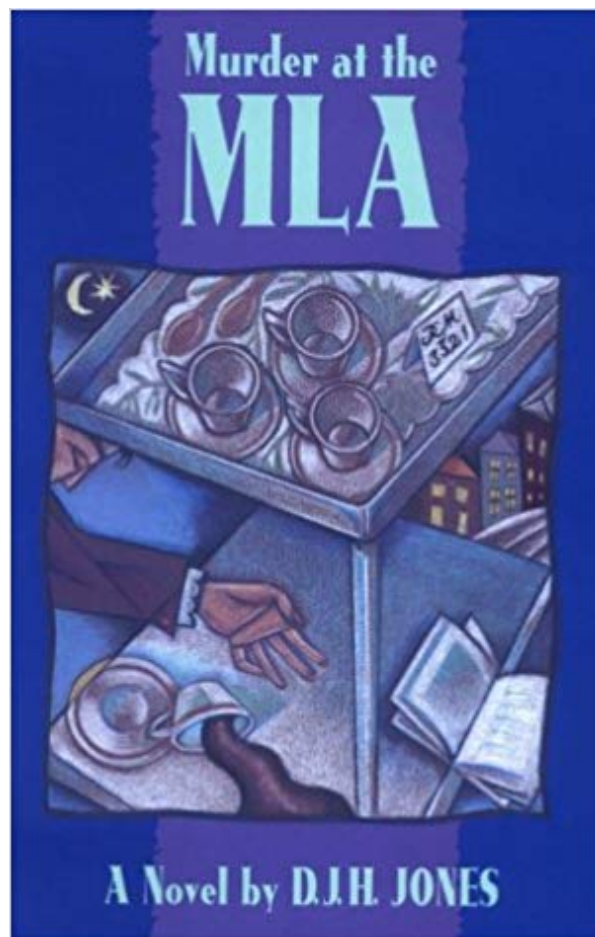
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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

One or Two Things I Think I Know for Sure about 1968-2018: The Movement, the MLA, and the Current Moment

by Frances Smith Foster



D. J. H. JONES. *MURDER AT THE MLA*. COVER BY LOUISE OFARRELL, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA PRESS, 1993. MLA ARCHIVES, NEW YORK.

I am an accidental academic activist of the Sankofa persuasion. Sankofa is, as many of you know, a belief of West African origins -- that one must go back and retrieve from the past that which is useful for surviving the present and founding a better future. It is sometimes represented by a heart-shaped image, but I prefer the bird standing feet forward, looking back and holding an egg in its beak. Having taken a Western Civics class, I see similarities to the Roman god Janus. Having studied American Literature, I hear echoes of Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun*: "The past is never dead. It's not even past." But while similar, Sankofa is its own distinct concept, a concept forged in African culture and most apt for my experiences as an African American. I became a teacher because my family and my community inculcated a strong sense in me that education is power and that believing a lie doesn't make it the truth. I practice what Toni Morrison calls "rememory" and I believe Professor Nell Painter's statement that "What we can see depends heavily on what our culture has trained us to look for." All this to say that I share much of what my colleagues describe but my remarks are eccentric, eclectic, and mixed with a lot of my lived experiences.

First of all, I was not at the 1968 convention. Nor, for that matter, were many other women or men of color. So I had to do a little research for context and my conclusion is that had I been at MLA in 1968, I probably would not have known about the rebellion we are commemorating now. I strongly suspect that experience would have been like Houston Baker's when he ventured to his first MLA that year. As a Victorianist (I aspired to be a Miltonist), Baker was enthralled by the learned lectures read with authority by the luminaries of his field. However, during his two and a half days in attendance, Baker says he saw "only one other person of color" and that individual physically distanced himself by sitting on the opposite side of the room. Houston Baker roamed the conference halls but was entirely unaware of what Paul Lauter characterizes as the "alternative convention" and "its radically disruptive effect on the normal practice of Modern Language Association business." As Houston Baker reports, "in truth, the full and distressing import of that early MLA experience did not come to me from the profession at large or from a left-based insurgency within it. No, the excessive whiteness, smug complacency, racial insensitivity, and black mutual avoidance evident at the 1968 convention were elucidated for me not by my colleagues but by my students" (PMLA 115.7). I, too, would have experienced (as I occasionally still do) certain other "unsettling" moments of what we now call microaggressive racism, though being a woman complicates the calculus of injuries intentional or not.

As Houston Baker reports, "in truth, the full and distressing import of that early MLA experience did not come to me from the profession at large or from a left-based insurgency within it. No, the excessive whiteness, smug complacency, racial insensitivity, and black mutual avoidance evident at the 1968 convention were elucidated for me not by my colleagues but by my students"

This is not to say the MLA had no members of color then. As a matter of fact, records show that the MLA has had African American and women members almost from its beginning. Dr. William Sanders Scarborough, a professor of

Greek whose passions were philology, pedagogy, and politics, joined in 1884. His wife, Professor Sarah C. B. Scarborough, joined soon after and records show them as active conference participants until 1897, when for reasons undocumented but imaginable, they kept their memberships but no longer attended.

A statement by the 1970 MLA president, Maynard Mack, complements Baker's experience of the 1968 MLA convention. Mack begins by saying, "Probably the best thing about the 1968 MLA Business meeting is that it is over." He deplores the "erratic forms" and "deplorable discourtesy," but Mack welcomes the conversation that has begun and acknowledges that among the MLA's many needs are revising the handling of resolutions to take "positions on substantive and not simply ceremonial issues in ways fair to both majority and minority opinion" and to elect officers "by poll of the entire membership."

I began my MLA sojourn nearly a decade later, unaware of the ruckus that preceded my attendance and led to changes such as establishing the Afro-American Discussion Group that made me a bit more comfortable. Much of what Mack had envisioned had come to pass. MLA not only had elected officers but also a Delegate Assembly and a multitude of groups and affiliated organizations to increase fairness to "both majority and minority opinion." What I remember most about my first experiences was feeling ignored or objectified by the radical left, the feminists, and virtually every conference attendee except the African Americans I encountered, most of whom, like me, were graduates of and token professors in predominantly white universities, self-taught in African American literature, and desperate for discussions about our fields. In the decade or so since Baker was in the Hilton but missed the brouhaha, the MLA I experienced had more women and people of color and scheduled enough sessions on multicultural literature to create conferences within a conference. Sadly, then as now, few white members attend sessions featuring scholarship by or about people of color.

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In the 1990s, three critical problems dogged those of us whose color or contours were not pale and male. These problems are well articulated in Nellie Y. McKay's 1998 *PMLA* article "Naming the Problem That Led to the Question 'Who Shall Teach African American Literature?' . . ." According to McKay, while a handful of us were surviving in the academy and actually faring rather well in MLA, (1) there was a pipeline shortage of black graduate students, (2) talented white students were being steered away from focusing on African American literature, and (3) opportunistic white scholars with little or no training in the subject were given authority to teach, publish, and pontificate about African American literature

But to get back to the Sixties, consider Maynard Mack's conclusion that the 1968 disruption revealed "the profound mistrust that was there shown to divide us. It was not, apparently, a mistrust founded on personal knowledge or on the moral character and past performance of the persons mistrusted. It was something far more abstract and inhuman, feeding on slogans and clichés, applying not considered judgments but labels. . . I submit." Mack declares "that the first job for all of us now is to master our fears of each other and close ranks, opening in the Association and likewise in the profession all the avenues of communication that imaginations can invent."

Mack's statements then are disappointingly accurate now. As Paul Lauter, Richard Ohmann, and Louis Kampf wrote in the proposal for this session, "In one sense, we utterly failed [to achieve the goals of 1968]. . . But seen from an historical perspective . . . we succeeded beyond our wildest imaginings." My Sankofa faith leads me to end with a quote from a 1902 *PMLA* article called "Concerning the Unwritten History of the Modern Language Association of America":

Much has been accomplished in the brief history of this Association, but that much is the merest symbol of what remains to be done...



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RADICAL TEACHER

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Moving without “The Movement”

by Sarah Chinn



PROTEST AT THE SUPREME COURT'S BOWERS V. HARDWICK DECISION IN 1986

While I know that this roundtable is designed to meditate on the changes and continuities between MLA 1968 and MLA 2018, I'd like to take us on a little detour to just before the midpoint between those moments, the 1980s, and out of the MLA, onto a college campus. A focus of the activism that this panel deals with is, after all, how scholars might transmit the tools of liberation to students, through new texts, new approaches, and new ways of reading. So it's worth thinking about how well and whether the political experiences of the radicals of 1968 found their way to later generations of students, some of whom became teachers themselves.

Despite the best efforts of the contemporary Republican party to deify Ronald Reagan, the popular consensus on the 1980s is that it was a vapid, materialistic era, one in which rampant deregulation and massive military buildup made possible financial disaster at home and permanent war abroad. The political left, both older activists who lived through the upheavals of the 1960s and 70s, and younger folks who think of the 80s as part of the vague stretch of time known as "back in the day," often represent the 1980s as an ideological wasteland. Indeed, with the exception of the emergence of ACT UP in the late 80s, narratives of progressive and radical political activism often jump from the heyday of radical feminism in the 70s to anti-globalization protests in the 1990s, with a brief stop for the defeat of the ERA.

For me, however, the mid-1980s were a maelstrom of political organizing centered around several flashpoints: the anti-apartheid movement, queer organizing, sex-positive feminism, and protest against US involvement in Central America in the wake of CIA-supported coups on the one hand and the rise of the Nicaraguan Sandinistas on the other. This congeries of issues might seem incoherent, and perhaps it was: what characterized the radical politics of the 80s was the lack of a capital M "Movement." Indeed, when I heard older folks talk about "the Movement" I was hard pressed to understand what they meant. How could the SDS, protest against the war in Vietnam, Black Power, radical feminism, and gay liberation (not to mention the dozens of sectarian offshoots of these various tendencies) constitute a single movement?

One answer to this question was that it didn't. As Heidi Hartmann, Alice Echols, and others have chronicled, much the male-dominated "Movement" of the New Left, embodied on college campuses by SDS, was at best patronizing and at worst openly hostile towards the emergence of second-wave feminism from its ranks.¹ Too often, white support of movements of people of color such as the Black Panthers and the Young Lords was insufficiently nuanced, and could tend towards fetishization of what we might call "oppression realness." And the responses to gay liberation were decidedly ambivalent.

Another, more sympathetic answer is that radicals in "the Movement" recognized the inextricability of anticolonialism and the work of decolonization from the ongoing violence towards people of color in a variety of sites within and beyond the US American incursions into Vietnam, bourgeois masculinist misogyny, and a rampantly consumerist culture that rendered anyone outside the

mainstream invisible (or represented them as actively dangerous). And unlike the leftists of the 1930s, on the whole, radicals in the 1960s – for better and for worse – did not have established institutions like unions and the CPUSA to fall back on either for guidance or for resources. (I think we can see the embrace of Mao as a symptom of this: a rejection of the Marxist-Leninism of an older generation in favor of a vision of top down and bottom up total cultural as well as political change.) As we like to say about the era before cell phones and video games, they made their own fun.

At any rate, whether it was accurate or not, talk of "the Movement" seemed wholly foreign to me as a politically active college student in the mid-1980s. What must it have felt like, I thought, to have such a clear sense of purpose, of goals, that one could imagine oneself as part of a single body of political action. At the same time, though, this talk felt fusty and nostalgic, another way in which baby boomers could claim their superiority over us younger folks, undefined as yet by a generational moniker, too young to be part of the punk generation and not quite young enough to be folded into what would become Generation X (in fact, I think this lack of categorization made me suspicious of the legitimacy of all generational generalizations). Plus, it wasn't clear to 18-year-old me just what they'd achieved long-term. Yes, the US had pulled out of Vietnam, but it took years and a Nixon presidency. Women still made seventy cents to men's dollar (women of color even less) and any number of us had an endless supply of stories of sexual harassment and assault. At the end of my first year of college, the Supreme Court decided in *Bowers v. Hardwick* that there was no constitutional right to homosexual sodomy. And the immiseration of poor black and brown people, hastened by urban renewal and compounded by the arrival of crack, had hardly abated. (Needless to say, I have a more nuanced view of all of this now. But bear with me).

It made sense, then, not to expect the revolution. As far as I could see, believing in the revolution just broke people's hearts when it didn't arrive. Rather, it was more effective to focus on things we could change, within ourselves and within our communities, or on specific and what felt to us like unambiguous sites of oppression (South Africa, El Salvador) and liberation (Nicaragua). As lesbians and feminists, if we had any doubt that our desires were political, *Bowers v. Hardwick* and the Meese commission proved otherwise, just as did the sex wars, into which we threw ourselves with enthusiasm. We did not doubt the inextricability of the personal and the political, one of the conceptual contributions of the 1960s that still felt fresh and important. Somehow we effortlessly combined a kind of postmodern irony about the state of the world with a rock-solid commitment to freedom and justice (to my memory, this entailed watching *Peewee's Playhouse* while we designed picket signs).

To work through these questions, I'd like to spend the space I have here focusing on the movement that absorbed much of my political energy during my college years: the activism against apartheid and specifically for the divestment of university funds from companies that did business in South Africa. I threw myself into anti-apartheid activism: I marched, protested, spoke at rallies, posted

fliers, and spent endless hours at meetings. I slept in our replica shanty and was arrested when it was dismantled by university police. Even though I recognize now how low the stakes were for me as an upper-middle class student at an elite university, and how rife with contradictory meanings was the construction of an imitation shanty on the grounds of the alma mater of a former director of the CIA and current vice president who oversaw the Reagan policy of “constructive engagement” with the South African government, anti-apartheid activism was the seedbed for all my political action thereafter. It deepened my historical understanding of colonialism and transnational white supremacy; it brought me into contact with activists in other movements, especially CISPES; it opened my eyes to the ongoing segregation in the Northeast and the virtual apartheid that was fast becoming the rule in public schools after the collapse of busing and other desegregation initiatives. It taught me how to back up political claims with research (ah, those endless fact sheets!). It also married my political commitments to my academic work, leading me to take classes in South African history and literature, and to write a senior thesis comparing the role of South African women in two different movements in the 1950s and 1970s.

One thing that was missing, though, was meaningful interaction with older activists. I knew a few long-time New Haven radicals through my anti-apartheid work, and a guy who claimed to be a former Panther came to planning meetings. Occasionally we worked with a black church out on Dixwell Avenue. The CISPES crowd was a bit older, mostly grad students and some faculty, but they were also less exciting, less sexy than the anti-apartheid crew. My deepest contact with more experienced activists was with a bunch of older lesbians who were friends with our women’s rugby coach (could I be any more of a cliché?), and through women, mostly veterans of lesbian feminism, whom I met through volunteering at the local feminist bookshop. Through them I learned about the struggle for LGBT rights in Connecticut, as well as the awesome lesbian bar – Promises! – out in Branford. We learned about the thriving feminist scene in the city, and the monthly dances for women held at a local church (fun, but not nearly as exciting as Promises, with its butches, watered-down drinks, and early electronic dance music). These women wanted to teach us, and we wanted to learn: about underground abortion networks, about lesbian separatism, about the sexual liberation that many 1970s lesbians embraced. We felt like part of a transhistorical community, both with the bar dykes and with the wiccans and jocks.

This was markedly different from my experience in anti-apartheid activism. There was a decided presentism about much of what we did, for all of our veneration of prior struggles. Most importantly, many of us did not have the tools to learn effectively from the past. Although not all of us realized it, in pushing for divestment, we were borrowing an approach from the anti-Vietnam war movement and their focus on Dow Chemical as the producer of napalm and agent orange. Some of us had parents who had been in “the Movement” twenty years earlier, a few were the biracial children of couples who had met through radical activism, and some were products of the black political establishment, so they brought that history with them to a certain extent.

But even so, there was a kind of disconnection between what was happening on campus in 1986 and what had happened in 1968.

There were some lessons we *had* absorbed – people of color were at the forefront of the movement, and we were careful to maintain gender equity in our work. We weren’t interested in the virtues of Mao versus Trotsky versus Lenin. But I didn’t even think to miss the kind of cross-generational community I had in my lesbian politics.

A large part of this is the structural limitations of the college experience. A movement populated primarily by eighteen to twenty-two year olds will have a hard time thinking in an engaged way about the past. I was aware of the radical histories of New Haven, but the kind of complex understanding of the histories of slavery and segregation that is part of antiracist politics today wasn’t available in the same way. I realize, too, that antiracism at home was not enough part of the explicit mission of the movement – in more recent discussions with fellow students from those days I’ve been much more aware of how racialized experience divided many of us in ways that weren’t visible to me then.

We could be out as dykes, as feminists, in ways that were possible to them only through great sacrifice.

I think, too, that the older lesbians – I’m older now than they were then – saw the direct results of their work in us younger women. We could be out as dykes, as feminists, in ways that were possible to them only through great sacrifice. We shared a vocabulary not just of desire but also of political commitments, and it was a badge of honor and sophistication among our small lesbian community to be able to invoke – both admiringly and with affectionate mockery – the language of 1970s radical feminism. I like to think, too, that we recognized that we would not have been possible without them, and that we still had plenty in common, as we too had friends who had been disowned by families, bashed, raped, and harassed for being queer and out.

Interestingly, my lesbian activities felt less “political” than my anti-apartheid work because it was part and parcel of my daily experience. Living in an all-women house, debating monogamy, visiting our local women’s bookstore was just the texture of my life. And we were aware that these activities were ones we had inherited from the generation of women who came before us, and ones we had to struggle through together for ourselves. We knew patriarchy was playing the long game, and that our liberation was the work of a lifetime. By contrast, anti-apartheid work felt *new* – something that differentiated us from those who had come before. We had no war in Vietnam to unite us, no dream of revolution to inspire us, no Marxist sectarianism to rupture our work (although I do remember one sexy Trotskyite grad student who caught my attention with talk of permanent revolution and Mexican exile).

Looking back now from the distance of thirty years, it's even harder to draw solid conclusions. Apartheid came to an end, Nelson Mandela ended up leading South Africa, and yet the nonracial paradise we believed would come into being with the rule of the ANC is far from here. Ironically, my feminism has fared better: none of us expected patriarchy would loosen its hold much, or that homophobia would ease. We knew that not everything could be appropriated without cooptation – we knew that marriage wouldn't fix queerbashing or that hiring women as corporate leaders couldn't palliate, well, much of anything. At the same time, I've found the malleability and mutability of feminist and queer politics endlessly nourishing.

Or to put it in the ironic, noncommittal, evolutionary terms my 1988 self would have immediately understood: *la lucha continua*, kinda?

Notes

- ¹ See Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism," [Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism](#), ed. Lydia Sargent. Boston: South End Press, 1980; Alice Echols, "Daring to be Bad," [Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975](#). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1989.



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RADICAL TEACHER

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Losing While Winning

by Richard Ohmann



PROTESTS IN PARIS DURING MAY '68.

In 1968 I was angry: about the Vietnam war and racial oppression, about the complicity of universities, about the rigidity of their curricula, the conservativeness of literary studies, and—in some vague relationship to this web of outrages—the stodginess of the Modern Language Association. So ends the part of this talk given to personal reflection.

I recall those feelings to suggest how far short they fell of systemic critique and proportionate strategy. Some of my fellow rebels at the 1968 convention had clearer minds. But we had no common plan for reinventing the study of language and literature.

Paul Lauter mentioned some progressive changes we nonetheless helped achieve—our unexpected successes. I will comment on two non-successes, starting with some numbers.

The first: MLA veterans from back then remember how the thriving job market of the 50s and 60s abruptly wilted at the 1969 convention, where a job seekers' caucus sprang up, decrying its vistas of underemployment while we decried, among other things, the privileged professoriate.

What in 1969 seemed a job market crisis (and is still often so called) soon began to look more like a permanent collapse. No one in this room needs reminding that tenure track jobs became especially scarce, while adjunct positions proliferated. One illustrative number: last year, MLA listed 320 tenure-track assistant professorships in English. I conjecture that there were about four times as many new Ph.D.s in the field as there were tenure track jobs. Presumably most of the new crop had hoped for old fashioned, starter jobs in lit or comp. Way over half will settle for precarity, a change of field, or unemployment.

The number of tenure track jobs currently listed is down by more than 60% from just before the Great Recession. Some expected our job market to recover as the whole economy recovered. That didn't happen. There was an upward tick for a couple of years, then a further decline in tenure-track jobs—to the lowest figure since the 1960s. That's a trend, not a forecast, but who can find cause for optimism in it?

My second snapshot of MLA post-1968 begins with numbers that have received much less comment. In 1970, MLA membership was just over 31,000. The number peaked, oscillated, and fell. In 2016, it was slightly over 24,000. A drop of 23% may seem insignificant, but not if mapped onto the dimensions of American higher education as a whole. Over the same period of time, undergraduate enrollment grew by 150%. Proportionately, then, MLA membership had fallen by more than two-thirds. Does that factoid warrant the inference that people in the MLA fields now perform only one-third the share of all university teaching that they did 50 years ago? Yes, as a base for speculative thought, including this one: the content of college education has dramatically changed, and not in ways that portend a strong market for literary studies, the other humanities, or indeed, the whole arts and sciences curriculum.

I use the word "market" purposefully. Both the dwindling of MLA and the swelling of the contingent workforce, look to me like two waves of the same, marketizing tsunami that has surged through higher education. The surge has reinterpreted tenure track jobs as a wasteful affront to free market principles, given legislatures an ideological reason to cut funding for public universities, and pressured deans and provosts to devise cheaper, more insecure work arrangements. That degradation of the labor process went hand in hand with a shift in university labor's product, now understood as for students an investment in future earnings, and for society an investment in the growth of GDP. It is marketed as a commodity, with that use value.

On those terms, literary criticism, art history, anthropology, and so on cannot compete well with business, engineering, and information technology. As the curriculum has become more vocational, employees in MLA fields have become a smaller and smaller fraction of the university workforce.

Needless to say, the restructuring instanced by the expansion of contingent labor and the migration of students toward majors with high market payoffs amounts to one big non-success, the weakening of our profession. A strong profession controls the requirements for employment in its domain, and keeps the number of qualified practitioners roughly in synch with the number of such jobs.

Take a step back from this snapshot of our profession, and note that other professions—including robust ones like law and medicine—are passing through similar processes of etiolation. (See *Radical Teacher* # 99, "The Decline of the Professions," edited by Ellen Schrecker and me.)

Take another step back, bring the whole of global employment into the picture, and be reminded that the degradation of labor and the decline of worker self-organization have been deep trends in capitalism for almost fifty years—that is, for most of the time since World War II. Was our profession the laboratory for neoliberalism's war on labor? No, but academe is surely one of its battlefields.

That epochal shift from Fordism to neoliberalism did not happen by chance. It had protagonists: rich ones such as Joseph Coors, the Koch Brothers, and the Walton family, who began reshaping U. S. conservatism in the wake of Goldwater's challenge, through foundations and think tanks (Heritage, American Enterprise, Cato . . .), activist philanthropy, the southern strategy, Reagan's war on unions, the rise of the Tea Party—until a Republican Party that such old timers as David Rockefeller would barely recognize was on the verge of a unified regime. The election of 2016 may turn its history in surprising directions. But meanwhile it has claimed most of the social surplus for a tiny class of oligarchs, and set out to privatize just about everything.

This is a social order with little space in it for projects of racial and gender inclusion, economic equality, disinterested learning, ecological planning, public support of art, and so on—projects that won beachheads in MLA, the liberal arts, and university education in 1968 and after.

I offer one final simplification of this already gnostic talk: the incursion of 1968 was remarkably successful—not just in “stirring things up,” but in catalyzing a serious reorganization of literary and cultural studies, and helping change the content and the politics of higher education. That led conservatives of the Reagan era to target universities, especially the humanities and new disciplines such as black studies, gender studies, and queer studies. Remember the culture wars of William Bennett and Lynne

Cheney? By that time the conservative restoration was aligning its culture warriors with the neoliberal revolutionaries, the free market purists, the evangelicals, the Tea Party, the new populists, and more.

We won; their victory eclipsed ours. Big history swallowed up small history.

To challenge and alter its catastrophic course, we’ll need to look squarely at how we lost while winning, since 1968.



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Democratizing Knowledge: Using Wikipedia for Inclusive Teaching and Research in Four Undergraduate Classes

by Angela Pratesi, Wendy Miller, and Elizabeth Sutton



ART + FEMINISM
Wikipedia edit-a-thon

ART+FEMINISM WIKIPEDIA EDIT-A-THON AT CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERISTY

On January 11, 2018, the President of the United States responded to a bipartisan gathering of lawmakers discussing how to protect immigrants from Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries saying, "Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?" Mainstream news outlets accommodated his vulgar language and reprinted his racist comments, including his preference to bring immigrants from western European countries such as Norway. He particularly derided Haiti, repeating that immigrants from Haiti must be left out of any deal.¹ By the time the 45th U.S. President launched this particular racist salvo, we three professors and our students had embarked on a radically cooperative, inclusive learning journey to make information that is freely available on the internet more diverse, including efforts to highlight Haiti's artistic achievements.

The learning project has its roots in radical pedagogy, a concept and practice that builds on the premise that knowledge is power, and that no knowledge is neutral or free from values. Lisa Nyberg and Johanna Gustavsson define radical pedagogy as "a clear and transparent perspective on power and with a view on education that challenges the prevailing social order through a critical language and *an active construction of alternatives*."²

Wikipedia is the fifth most-visited website in the world,³ and its founders and contributors promote a philosophy of collaboration and neutrality.⁴ Yet, the majority of its contributors do not reflect the gamut of human diversity and identities; most of them "are white, male, technically-oriented, educated and from the northern hemisphere."⁵ It is a free source of information for billions of people, so the demographics of the volunteer editors of Wikipedia matters. There is nothing wrong with young white males contributing to Wikipedia, but content will be shaped by their knowledge, interests, and experiences.⁶ At a regional university in the Midwest, undergraduate students in four classes came together for a Wikipedia edit-a-thon in order to make a small contribution to diversifying the content available and democratizing the production of knowledge by writing content about Haitian art, nineteenth-century women artists, and women art educators. Students from two art history classes, an art education class, and a class dedicated to critical analysis of Wikipedia actively connected the information they were learning in class to a larger collective ideal of diversification. In this way, students' participation in the edit-a-thon exemplified how radical pedagogy acts "not to confirm the prevailing power structure, but...*activate[s] critical thinking...strives to connect knowledge with social responsibility and collective struggle*."⁷

With established and growing programs like Wiki Edu, assigning students to write an article for Wikipedia may not seem like radical pedagogy. However, for students this assignment was radical in delivery and content. At this mid-sized Midwestern regional university, 84.5 percent of the undergraduate population is white and 90 percent originate from within the similarly homogenous state. In many ways, they reflect the typical Wikipedian as described above. Most students arrive with very little experience of diversity, both in terms of their encounters

with peers and in their K-12 educational environments.⁸ The assignments asked students to challenge their assumptions about dominant narratives in history and art history. What is radical and potentially transformative is that the project also asked students to challenge assumptions about their own learning. Through the process of learning about Wikipedia from peers, reading, researching, and peer editing, students learned that authentic scholarship is collaborative, and that Wikipedia--and peer teaching and editing--are *as significant sources of knowledge as a teacher or text*. They practiced critical thinking and connected their knowledge to social responsibility through a collective struggle for inclusion.

Project and Process

In preparation for the spring 2018 semester, the three of us came together to develop a Wikipedia-based project using feminist pedagogies in their teaching practice. With different assignments, students in the four courses collaborated in this effort to improve the diversity, breadth, and quality of information in the free encyclopedia in English. Moreover, the assignments challenged students' research and information literacy skills via an authentic learning experience, specifically editing Wikipedia on art- and diversity-related topics while engaging with the Wikipedia community and teaching other students how to edit Wikipedia on underrepresented topics--the "social responsibility of a collective struggle" for inclusion in knowledge production.

The course Creating Wikipedia for the Arts prepared students to host an Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon during which they taught participants about Wikipedia and how to edit it. Leading up to the event, students enrolled in Nineteenth-Century Art, Arts of Africa, and Foundations in Art Education researched notable⁹ individuals relevant to the topic of their course who did not have an article in Wikipedia or only had a short stub article in need of expansion and improvement. Using this research, they came to the edit-a-thon to create and improve articles, thus making their research freely available to anyone with Internet access.

We aimed to implement more feminist methods that decentered power in an effort to break down traditional hierarchies in the classroom.

This pedagogical model required knowledge and skills from multiple classes to come together for a common goal of information sharing for social justice--in terms of article topics as well as free, accessible, quality information sharing. We aimed to implement more feminist methods that decentered power in an effort to break down traditional hierarchies in the classroom. Those hierarchies typically center and value the instructor as the sole authority. This structure sets up a problematic power dichotomy that ignores or undervalues student's

knowledge, experience, and expertise. Having students marshal their knowledge, skills, and experience into a collective effort to teach each other eliminates traditional power roles, centers their emerging expertise, and empowers them to take ownership of their learning.

One of the shared goals for this project was to have students deeply engage with issues of source quality, source evaluation, and authority. Wikipedia requires reliable sources.¹⁰ This standard challenges students as they search for and evaluate resources they can use as evidence for their articles. It is a good method for practicing information literacy. However, the act of researching, writing, and editing an article that anyone can access, read, and learn from brings about an epiphany moment for students as they begin to recognize their own authority. They can begin to observe different kinds of authority and a continuum of expertise. One student in "Creating Wikipedia for the Arts" shared her revelation that, "a blog or webpage were perhaps just as credible as something published through a 'scholarly' source" because there are different kinds of authority. She went on to explain that "authority is not held in the hollowed, dark corridors of academia" because "people like me or someone who lives on the other side of the world place value in different areas, and we can still contribute to this entity," which is a repository of human knowledge.¹¹ They are no longer simply students in a class; they're beginning to engage in a larger scholarly conversation. Their work is not original research. It cannot be per Wikipedia's pillars.¹² But the self-actualization that comes from publicly engaging in knowledge acquisition and sharing is an important step toward seeing themselves as budding scholars and authorities in their own right.

Students Teaching Students: The Collective Struggle for Inclusivity in Creating Wikipedia for the Arts (Angela Pratesi)

I am really glad that we were able to be a part of a larger movement and that there is a lot of faculty support for projects like this at UNI. I think that it was a really good thing for us as students to be kind of thrown into this a little bit (by having this huge event we had to help run) because it forced us to step up and put our learning into practice for other people.¹³

With a grant from the Wikimedia Foundation,¹⁴ the class Creating Wikipedia for the Arts hosted an Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon. Their main assignment was to collaboratively plan the event and teach participants how and why to edit (see Appendix A for the assignment written by students in the class using Winkelmes's Transparency in Learning and Teaching model¹⁵). This requirement ensured the co-creative process and forum for student-to-student learning. One of the goals of holding edit-a-thons is to reach a wide audience. Therefore, partnering with other faculty, in this case from the art department, ensured a robust and motivated audience the Wikipedia students could teach,

adding to the diversity of information available on Wikipedia about artists and art educators with an emphasis on women and minoritized individuals, and improving the breadth and quality of free information on the Internet. As a result, students not only began to recognize the authority of experts in a field, but also to see themselves as emergent authorities and acknowledge the value of diversity, access, and sharing. They also learned to see their peers as authorities on whom they could lean to learn new skills and ideas regardless of age or the expected hierarchical trappings of higher education. Being able to learn in a variety of ways from multiple sources--be those human, print, or media--is a form of self-sufficiency. By seeing peers as people to learn with as well as people to learn from, students expand the tools they have at their disposal to learn and master content and skills.

In their weekly reflection journals, Wikipedia students expressed trepidation leading up to the event. Some were "not nervous, just excited,"¹⁶ while others openly worried they did not know enough to teach others how to edit. In a Small Group Instructional Diagnostic (SGID) session before the edit-a-thon, one of the themes that emerged was their concern about the event. They described the event as "looming" which was "building tension." They were anxious and even described it as "tedious," but at least one acknowledged "warming up with the idea."¹⁷ The feedback from the SGID helped me address worries students were not comfortable sharing directly.

Simultaneously embodying the position as teacher, facilitator, and cheerleader, I reassured them they did in fact know enough as evidenced by the research, writing, and editing work they had already done in Wikipedia. To help them feel more confident, they practiced their presentation multiple times in class, using several rehearsal techniques borrowed from theatre--full run through, cue to cue, and a modified technical rehearsal. However, they did not really believe they were prepared until after the edit-a-thon.

This past week we ran the edit-a-thon which was a great experience. I felt that giving the presentation exemplified our credibility in terms of editing Wikipedia. This was an intimidating feat at first but as I began speaking I grew more confident. Before officially starting the edit-a-thon I expected to struggle answering student questions, but that was quite the opposite. There were very few questions I was not able to answer. I think I need to give myself more credit for all the work I have done throughout this semester.¹⁸

The sentiments this student expressed in her reflection appeared in every single student's journal. The act of teaching and working with other students one-on-one made them realize how much they knew. Even better, for the few questions to which they did not immediately know the answers, they discovered they had the skills to easily find the answers with the tools they had already practiced and mastered. Their reflections, both in writing and in a relaxed post-event debriefing during the next class meeting, were universally positive. They expressed great satisfaction with how the edit-a-thon went overall

and personal fulfillment from their ability to help participants. They realized just how much they had learned.

Students did more than discover the scope of their knowledge; they demonstrated flexibility and resiliency in the face of significant unexpected obstacles. On the day of the event, a significant snow storm hobbled the technology necessary to access their presentation slides and stream the live presentation to remote participants. The class quickly regrouped, accessing the slides as a .pdf via their phones, and giving the adapted presentation to those in person. Then, when the streaming technology came back online, one student volunteered to give the presentation solo and answer questions (as a way of practicing her public speaking¹⁹), while the others worked one-on-one with the folks in person. As a team, the classmates problem-solved for the series of unfortunate events and adapted on the spot. In the process they each learned about their own capacity for flexibility, resiliency, and leadership.

Over the course of a few short hours, the students enrolled in *Creating Wikipedia for the Arts* put their knowledge into practice, teaching a room full of people about Wikipedia and how to edit the online encyclopedia. Although the only students in the room who would nominally identify themselves as teachers were the participants majoring in art education, the Wikipedia students took on the role of teacher and recognized their ability to share the skills they had acquired as part of their coursework. In doing so, they proved mastery that was meaningful, significant, and authentic.

Writing Wikipedia: Critically Engaging New Knowledge in Arts of Africa and Nineteenth-Century Art History (Elizabeth Sutton)

In both of my spring semester upper-level art history courses, *Arts of Africa* and *Nineteenth-Century Art*, I included a Wikipedia research project as a major course requirement. While *Arts of Africa* met face to face twice a week, I taught *Nineteenth-Century Art History* online. Most art history courses require students to write research papers individually to fulfill student learning outcomes related to critical thinking, content, and communication. This assignment was a way to provide an authentic and collaborative research experience for students that was potentially transformative in how they thought about research and their potential for contributing to the knowledge of and stories told about women, Haitian artists, and other suppressed or underrepresented narratives.

The assignment for each class was scaffolded into four parts: finding sources and citing; rough draft and peer review; final draft; and participation in the edit-a-thon (see Appendices B and C). All the students had access to the library's research tools, and specifically, online and in-person information sessions provided by students in the *Creating Wikipedia for the Arts* class. The assignment in

both classes asked students to use the online collaborative platform of Google docs to write their drafts and peer edit. Both course syllabi include the stated goal of learning research skills and analyzing and critically evaluating sources. The assignment further elaborated on these goals to be specific to the content outlined in the course description: either research a Haitian artist or a nineteenth-century minoritized artist or work. With Wikipedia as the final platform for submission, clear communication in writing was also an essential outcome (see Appendices B and C).

Nineteen students each created new articles or added information to stubs on nineteenth-century women artists. Eighteen students created articles on Haitian artists for Wikipedia. *Arts of Africa* students were able to benefit from the proximity of the largest Haitian art collection in the US, housed at the Waterloo Center for the Arts. In collaboration with the registrar there, students were invited to choose an artist or art object from the collection that they might research so to make more widely available information on Haitian art and artists, particularly those represented at the local public art center. This opportunity contributed to the authenticity of the research and the importance of collaboration with a community partner. The nineteenth-century art history students had opportunities to choose artists or art pieces in the University's and local art center's collections, but because of the remote nature of the course, were not required to do so. I provided students in both courses lists of possible artists, search terms, and stubs that could be augmented. Many of the nineteenth-century art history students chose to add to a stub.

The authenticity of the assignment is substantiated by students' own words captured in written reflections after the edit-a-thon. They valued their contributions because they saw them *as such*. Indeed, many students commented on how satisfying it was to participate actively in sharing knowledge. Out of the eighteen reflections from *Arts of Africa*, seventeen students never had edited Wikipedia before; the one student who had had done so minimally. All the students in the nineteenth-century art class were new to editing Wikipedia. When asked in a reflection prompt whether they found the assignment valuable, all thirty-seven students agreed that the assignment was valuable. Students found it "fulfilling to create a reliable source...for others in the future to use."²⁰ A student from *Arts of Africa* wrote:

I loved writing an article for Wikipedia. It felt great knowing that the hard work I was putting into writing a paper was going to be read by many more people, not just myself, a few classmates, and you, my professor. I have never edited an article on Wikipedia, so I have that set of skills now which I hope I can use again. I also learned a ton more about Haitian art and Haitian Vodou.²¹

A student from the nineteenth-century art class wrote that "[i]t is really gratifying that my research will potentially be available to others to use and learn from."²²

In addition to the authenticity of sharing research, students recognized that the public platform of Wikipedia

required good research and writing: "I think that this assignment was valuable because we are contributing to research online. Since Wikipedia is a well-known search engine, more pressure is added to make the article good."²³

Interestingly, the two students most critical of the assignment also were two of the best (top-ranked) students in the department, students who consistently turn in quality work. One student wrote:

I've never edited Wikipedia, but it was a valuable experience, I guess. It was pretty cool to see everything at the end all lit up and stuff, but I don't know if there were any greater takeaways than that. . . As a whole, this assignment was not just difficult, it was impossible. I got no catharsis at the end, and feel no pride for what I've done. The rough draft and peer reviews would have been helpful if I had gotten feedback other than "you need more information," but what can ya do. The final post was cool and everything, but hell, I could have just done that at home. In the future, just make us write a paper. I would learn so much more.²⁴

This student was frustrated by the radical aspects of the Wikipedia edit-a-thon research in which she was required to participate. It is safe and easy to write a paper. Paper writing is focused on the individual student and applying processes s/he already knows to gather information, rather than both learning new processes from other students and sharing that information with others. To me, these students' negative perceptions are indication of the potential for transformative learning that such an assignment provides. It made traditionally "good" students uncomfortable because they had to learn new skills such as working with others and being flexible in a dynamic environment with multiple readers--not just the professor.

By researching underrepresented artists, many of whom were marginalized and stereotyped due to their gender or ethnicity, students had to think critically about not only how art history is constructed, but how as researchers and writers they can play an active role in eradicating oppressive stereotypes and general erasure.

Seeing the Value of Wikipedia for the Future of Art Education: Recognizing Responsibility for Representing Female Researchers (Wendy Miller)

As the coordinator of undergraduate art education, I have the opportunity to work with every student preparing to become an art educator at our university. In the spring semester, while teaching Foundations in Art Education, I altered a traditional writing assignment in order to include my students in the Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon. Of my 15 students, 14 were female, and all identified as white, which is typical of students enrolled in art education in our Midwest state.

During this introductory course, students and I investigate the historical development of art education in

order to see how practices and beliefs in teaching art have evolved. We then look toward the future of art education, investigating current research by art educators and sharing new grassroots approaches to teaching and new trends in art education. The students and I use historical and contemporary research to imagine where art education may be headed. Typically, at this point, the students would research an art educator/researcher and then write a traditional paper, discussing a contemporary art educator's research.

This year, I redesigned the assignment to instead teach students to create and submit a Wikipedia entry. The assignment was divided up into four parts, the last being to attend the Wikipedia edit-a-thon. First, students worked with the Fine & Performing Arts Librarian to learn about how to research using the library database with a focus on finding secondary sources. Next, they chose an art educator who is currently researching in the field of art education to examine (see Appendix D). Lastly, they wrote up the Wikipedia entry, or added to a stub article, on the art education researcher to share with others in our class.

I wanted the students to see that these art education researchers, who were working on new, creative, and innovative studies in their future field of art education, were also regular people: artists, teachers, mothers, and friends.

I wanted the students to see that these art education researchers, who were working on new, creative, and innovative studies in their future field of art education, were also regular people: artists, teachers, mothers, and friends. We looked at how they shared their ideas at conferences for K-12 art teachers (like themselves) and realized that they were not be seen as intimidating researchers, but as kindred spirits, sharing the same passions these students are developing. Looking through news articles, conference summaries, and award announcements, the students began to humanize these researchers and see them as people who were working alongside teachers, collaborating and supporting teachers in the field of art. Our discussion led to a realization of reciprocity between the researcher and the teacher and how they could use the findings from art education researchers to guide their teaching, just as the researchers needed the K-12 art teachers and their students to ground their research and provide practical opportunities to test out new strategies and interventions.

The students shared their findings together in class, introducing the art educators to their peers, and together we made connections to the art education timeline we spent the first part of the semester studying. Practices had changed over time, for example the push to move away from the philosophical approach called Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE).²⁵ With the increase in diversity of approaches to teaching art, the flooding of imagery and

visual culture, students saw how art educators were examining new ways of approaching art education.

One student researching scholar and art educator Kristin Congdon, shared what Congdon found to be a lack of inclusiveness or sensitivity to art that was outside the mainstream of DBAE-inspired images in her analysis of DBAE curriculum.²⁶ This student was able to make a personal connection to these findings as she reflected on her own education in K-12 art classes. However, the student was disheartened because she was unable to find enough reliable secondary sources about Congdon, which Wikipedia requires. This lack indicated to students that Congdon was not sufficiently important, leading to an internal conflict since many students found her work to be inspiring and innovative, yet under-cited in the field of art education:

Much of the research that I was able to find, was actually through her writings. I had to read her research studies, and draw conclusions from that in order to fill in information about her. There weren't any other biographies for her except for her professor description on the university website.²⁷

Our class discussed how difficult it was to find secondary sources and how, correspondingly, that it was then important to publish our art educators on Wikipedia to share the important work of these female art education researchers.

Another student was surprised to learn that few females have edited or written Wikipedia articles. Subsequently, and after she learned how to edit, she felt empowered:

I had never written or edited a Wikipedia article, so this entire project was a new experience for me, and it was empowering. I learned how to insert direct links, insert quick citations with links, and how to visually edit. With most of the editors at Wikipedia being male, I believe it is important that people (especially females) learn these simple techniques in order to encourage them to edit.²⁸

Although my class struggled to find secondary sources, this in some ways proved the point of the assignment to them: that women researchers in the field are under-cited, and under-acknowledged, even while their ideas are significant and useful to educators beyond art education. The project empowered many to see they can change that. It is this dearth of secondary sources that had the largest impact on my students. The realization that our subjects and their work are underrepresented and unsung provides the impetus for our efforts to make their work known and accessible. This project allowed my students to see how learning some simple editing tools can change access to information. As future teachers, they have the power to continue using, and also teaching, these skills. Wikipedia editing is now another tool for them to make the invisible visible and add to the intellectual landscape of their field.

Conclusion

The Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-a-thon proved to be a challenging, yet empowering, authentic learning project for students in all four participating classes. Taking a real-time approach to the co-creative process allowed the students and their peers to be responsive and involved in each other's writing, while also supporting, rather than critiquing, the final product of their research. In this modified role, our burgeoning scholars were able to recognize stumbling blocks, and to develop strategies for surpassing them, such as using Google Books to find secondary sources in order to demonstrate notability, a key strategy that developed as we were immersed in the process and staying flexible in the face of technical challenges.

Although some of the students' contributions to Wikipedia did not pass Wikipedia standards for inclusion and were nominated for deletion or eliminated through "speedy deletion," largely due to a lack of available secondary sources pertaining to their subjects, this, too, was a part of the requisite learning inherent in such a task. This reality communicated both the absence of published material by and about women and underrepresented artists and the importance of such scholarly work that creates secondary sources.

Since the first edit-a-thon described here, we already have held four additional public edit-a-thons at the University of Northern Iowa focused on human rights, people of color, women & LGBT+, and diversity, respectively, two of which art students were required or encouraged to attend. We continue to make modifications to assignments and the edit-a-thon experience based on student reflections and the assessment of outcomes. For our students, the edit-a-thon experience highlights a radical awareness of how new knowledge is constructed and disseminated and places them directly into the transformative role of creator and teacher of knowledge, rather than passive consumer. One student's endorsement of the Wikimedia Rapid Grant application funding another series of edit-a-thons conveys this new awareness:

It's so important to bring knowledge to everyone about people in under-represented groups. Having participated in this event last year, I know how much it opened my eyes to how hard it can be to find information without Wikipedia's help, but it's so rewarding to be the one to bring that information together for everyone else.²⁹

Creating assignments for students to collaborate at a Wikipedia edit-a-thon event is a model for how to co-construct knowledge in a way that was radical for students learning how to think critically and engage in their social responsibility to be inclusive and take ownership of their learning at this mid-sized regional public university.

Notes

¹ Josh Dawsey, "Trump Derides Protections for Immigrants from 'shithole' Countries," *Washington Post*, January 12, 2018, accessed April 10, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-attacks-oval-office-for-immigrants-from-shithole-countries-in-oval-office-meeting/2018/01/11/bfc0725c-f711-11e7-91af-31ac729add94_story.html?utm_term=.90a491da336a.

² Lisa Nyberg and Johanna Gustavsson, "Radical Pedagogy," excerpt from *Do the Right Thing: A Manual from MFK* (Malmo: Malmo Free University for Women, 2011), 47-55 reprinted in *Feminism-Art-Theory: An Anthology 1968-2014*, 2nd ed., edited by Hilary Robinson (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2015), 124.

³ As of April 2019, Wikipedia has been the fifth most used website in the world since 2016. For a dynamic list of website popularity ranking see "List of most popular websites," Wikipedia, accessed April 22, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most_popular_websites.

⁴ "Wikipedia: About," Wikipedia, accessed April 26, 2019, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:About>.

⁵ "Wikipedia: Countering Systemic Bias," Wikipedia, accessed April 26, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Countering_systemic_bias.

⁶For more on how digital media can be analyzed to reveal dominant, concealed, resistant, and counter narratives, see Mary E. Hess, "Using Digital Storytelling to Unearth Racism and Galvanize Action," in *Teaching Race: How to Help Students Unmask and Challenge Racism*, Stephen Brookfield and Associates (Jossey-Bass, 2019), 253-72.

⁷ Nyberg and Gustavsson, "Radical Pedagogy," 124.

⁸ University Institutional Research and Effectiveness, *2017-18 Fact Book*, (2018), accessed October 12, 2018, URL, 22 and 24.

⁹ Notable by Wikipedia's standards. "Wikipedia: Notability," Wikipedia, accessed April 29, 2019, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Notability>.

¹⁰ There are two meta-articles that explain the the importance of using reliable sources and what qualifies as a reliable source. "Wikipedia: Reliable Sources," Wikipedia, accessed January 10, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Reliable_sources and "Wikipedia: Verifiability," Wikipedia, accessed January 10, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Verifiability#Reliable_sources. This information is also available at "Wikipedia: About."

¹¹ Final reflection paper for Creating Wikipedia for the Arts, May 2018.

¹² "Wikipedia: No Original Research," Wikipedia, accessed January 10, 2018,

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:No_original_research.

¹³ Student reflection from Creating Wikipedia for the Arts, March 2018.

¹⁴ "Grants:Project/Rapid/Rod Library ArtAndFeminism 2018," Wikimedia Meta-Wiki, accessed February 6, 2018, https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:Project/Rapid/Rod_Library_ArtAndFeminism_2018.

"Grants:Project/Rapid/Rod Library ArtAndFeminism 2018/Report," Wikimedia Meta-Wiki, accessed September 18, 2018, https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Grants:Project/Rapid/Rod_Library_ArtAndFeminism_2018/Report.

¹⁵ Mary-Ann Winkelmes, "The Transparency Project: Decoding the Unwritten Rules of College to Increase Student Success" (presentation, Fall Faculty Workshop, University of Northern Iowa, August 17, 2017).

¹⁶ Student reflection from Creating Wikipedia for the Arts, March 2018.

¹⁷ Jonathan Chenoweth, SGID Notes, March 2, 2018. Small Group Instructional Diagnostics are mid-semester sessions where a trained faculty member comes to class when the instructor is not present and pose questions to learn what is working and what isn't so the instructor can make changes or address student concerns. At the UNI they are organized through the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

¹⁸ Student reflection from Creating Wikipedia for the Arts, March 2018.

¹⁹ Student reflection from Creating Wikipedia for the Arts, March 2018.

²⁰ Student reflection from Arts of Africa, March 2018.

²¹ Student reflection from Arts of Africa, March 2018.

²² Student reflection from Nineteenth-Century Art, March 2018.

²³ Student reflection from Nineteenth-Century Art, March 2018.

²⁴ Student reflection from Arts of Africa, March 2018.

²⁵ Michael Day, "Influences of Discipline-based Art Education Within the Field of Art Education" *Visual Arts Research* vol. 23, no. 2 (1997): 19-24.

²⁶ Kristin Congdon, "What I've Learned from the Other Art Educators." *Studies in Art Education* vol. 46, no. 2 (2005): 138-149.

²⁷ Student reflection from Foundations in Art Education, April 2018.

²⁸ Student reflection from Foundations in Art Education, April 2018.

²⁹ 2604:2D80:C007:925B:46F:4D9D:B3C0:5B09, "Grants:Project/Rapid/UNI Edits 2018-19," Wikimedia Meta-Wiki, accessed August 22, 2018,

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Appendix A

Creating Wikipedia for the Arts Assignment (as written by students)

Purpose: This assignment will allow students to use their planning and teaching skills to educate the community on how to use Wikipedia properly.

Skills: Students will use all of the Wikipedia skills they have learned in and outside of class such as wiki code, source finding, etc. (leadership skills, event planning, teaching, public speaking)

Knowledge: If students are able to teach others correctly then it will show an excellent amount of knowledge.

Task: Participate in planning and teaching during the actual edit-a-thon.

Criteria for Success: Participate in every aspect of the edit-a-thon from planning to teaching our students the day of, along with setting up and cleaning on the day of. (Planning, teaching, speaking, setting up, tearing down)

Appendix B

Arts of Africa Assignment

In the first part of the semester we will be visiting the African collections of the UNI Museum and Haitian collection of the Waterloo Center for the Arts. Students will be researching Haitian artists and/or contemporary African or African American women artists for the March 24 Wikipedia edit-a-thon.

The Assignment:

You will be writing a brief entry for Wikipedia on a particular Waterloo Center for the Arts Haitian artist, an African artist, or a notable artwork by an African artist, or an historical event pertaining to African women and art. In preparation to publish online, you will learn how use the UNI library's research resources and identify what kinds of secondary source citations help to authenticate information in such entries. You will write a draft and review other classmates' drafts, and ultimately "publish" your entry to contribute to Wikipedia's free encyclopedia.

Objectives: Develop research skills, reading comprehension and cogent written articulation

- *Summarize, analyze, and evaluate* secondary sources
- *Synthesize* contextual factors and themes and how they *relate* to specific works and artists
- *Connect and communicate* aspects of African and Haitian art history to today
 - Research Resources Activity due on elearning (assignment 1):, 11:59 pm **February 8**
 - Annotated bibliography and draft (assignment 2) (10 pts) due **March 8 in class and elearning**
 - Peer review 5 pts (5 pts) (assignment 3) due **March 8 in class**
 - Article (30 pts) Assignment 4 DUE **March 22**
 - Participation in edit-a-thon (5 pts) **March 24**

You must submit a rough draft in order to submit a final draft. NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED.

Appendix C

Nineteenth-Century Art Assignment

Objectives: Develop research skills, reading comprehension and cogent written articulation

- *Summarize, analyze, and evaluate* secondary sources
- *Synthesize* contextual factors and themes and how they *relate* to specific nineteenth-century works and artists
- *Connect and communicate* aspects of 19th century history to today

Research Resources Activity due on elearning (assignment 1): Sunday, February 11, 11:59 pm

Rough draft article due for peer review on elearning (assignment 2): Wednesday March 7, 11:59 pm

Review form due on elearning (assignment 3): Sunday, March 11, 11:59 pm

FINAL post due on elearning (assignment 4): Wednesday, March 21, 11:59 pm

Approved for edit-a-thon March 24—you must attend in person or remotely, in real time.

FIRST, get a sense of what this project is about. PERUSE:

<http://www.artandfeminism.org/> and

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Meetup/ArtAndFeminism>

Here is our art library resource page: <https://guides.lib.uni.edu/ArtResearch> and the specific site for March 24:

https://outreachdashboard.wmflabs.org/courses/University_of_Northern_Iowa/Rod_Library_ArtAndFeminism_2018

The Assignment:

You will be writing a brief entry for Wikipedia on a particular female artist, a notable artwork by a woman, or an historical event pertaining to women and art. In preparation to publish online, you will learn how use the UNI library's research resources and identify what kinds of secondary source citations help to authenticate information in such entries. You will write a draft and review other classmates' drafts, and ultimately "publish" your entry to contribute to Wikipedia's free encyclopedia.

REQUIREMENTS:

- Complete Research Resources activity
- Complete Rough draft and peer review
- Final Post must be 750-1800 words (ie: 2-5 pages, double-spaced, typed, 11-12 pt. font).
- Final Bibliography/references of *at least* 3 secondary sources: 1 *at least* either a journal or a book.
- Consistently cited references according to APA or Chicago Style.
- Correct spelling and grammar.
- Well organized content.
- Participate in March 24 event.

You must submit a rough draft in order to submit a final draft. NO LATE SUBMISSIONS ACCEPTED.

Appendix D

Foundations in Art Education Assignment

Each semester, students in Foundations in Art Education are asked to write a research paper on a contemporary art educator. The purpose of this paper to introduce students (preservice teachers) to current research in the field of art education and to foster connections between k-12 teaching and higher education and the impact they have on one another. This semester, we will take a different approach to the traditional research paper by creating a Wikipedia article instead. Here's why:

"We're here because less than 10% of editors on Wikipedia are women!"

"Wikipedia is the largest and most popular general reference work on the internet with more than 40 million articles in more than 250 different languages. The fact is when we don't tell our stories or participate in the ways our history is preserved, it gets erased. Gaps in the coverage of knowledge about women, gender, feminism, and the arts on one of the most visited websites in the world is a big problem and we need your help to fix it." - <http://www.artandfeminism.org/>

Your assignment:

You will research and find a contemporary art educator (focusing toward: female, LGBTQ+, or artist of color) who you are interested in learning more about, who does not already have a Wikipedia page, or has one (stub article) that is brief and needs work or content added or updated. You will then create an article to upload to Wikipedia this semester at the edit-a-thon.

You will need to:

- Find, read, and summarize at least 3 sources written by the educator 10 pts
- Find and cite secondary sources written about the educator 10 pts
- Write 1 paragraph about the art educator – biographical information 10 pts
- write 2 paragraphs about her research/creative activities 10 pts
- write 2 paragraphs about her work -impact/ contributions to the field of art education 10 pts.
- Correctly reference your research (include images if possible)
- Attend the Edit-a-thon (you don't have to stay the entire time 10-4pm) but there will be students and professors to support you, yummy snacks to energize you, and awesome feminist action to empower you!
- Upload your article and send me your paper with wiki link by the due date in the syllabus and be ready to share your learning in class.

Ways you will be supported:

- A list of educators will be provided
- We will meet with Art Librarian, Angela Pratesi, for research support
- Support will be provided at the library event
- https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Contributing_to_Wikipedia



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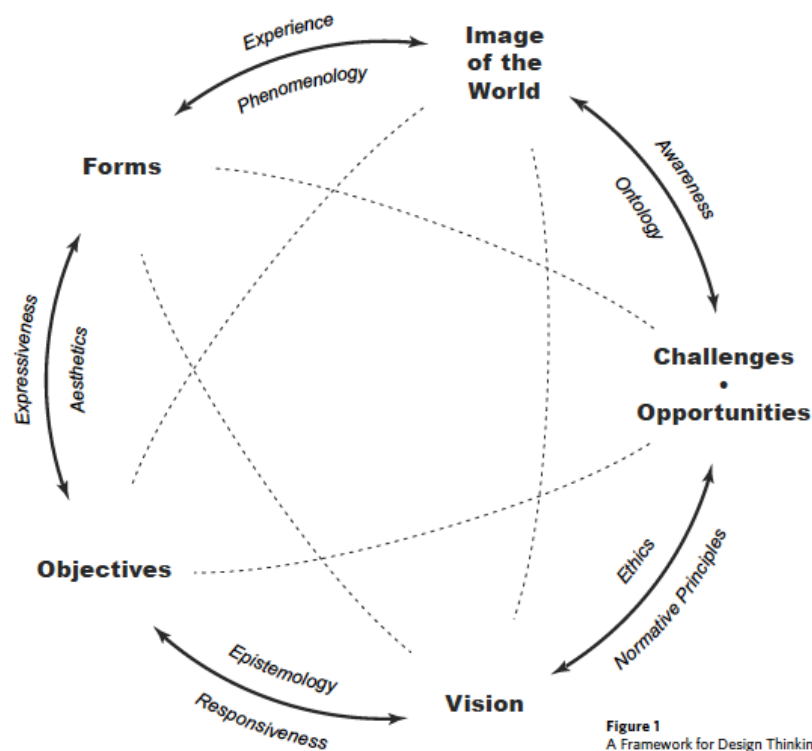
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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Design Thinking, Collaborative Innovation, and Neoliberal Disappointment: Cruel Optimism in the History and Future of Higher Education

by Kate Catterall, Julia Mickenberg, and Richard Reddick



SHEARER'S (2015) DESIGN THINKING FRAMEWORK, FROM ABDUCTION TO ARGUMENT: A DESIGN THINKING FRAMEWORK.

The extensive amount of academic labor of minoritized faculty, especially at research institutions, has been well documented in the academic literature. Three tenured associate professors at The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) present the genesis, evolution, and postscript of leading and serving in an initiative to de-silo and encourage collaboration across the university, culminating in a collaboratively taught course. Integrating concepts of teaching in the neoliberal university context, the gendered and raced distribution of academic labor, and slow scholarship, the authors discuss the pedagogically productive process of collective teaching and decision-making, the frustrations inherent when employing radical pedagogy, and institutional shifts that prioritize a customer-service model of teaching, learning, and rapid research productivity. The authors conclude with reflections and recommendations for scholar-researchers similarly placed in institutional contexts where encroachments upon academic freedom and an embrace of business models collide with personal goals of career satisfaction, collective work, and improving pedagogy.

As universities become increasingly privatized, siloed, and entrepreneurial; as academic labor becomes more contingent; as public funding for universities diminishes even as costs rise; and as “success” is increasingly measured by graduates’ salaries and grant funding yardsticks that call the value of the arts and humanities into question, “we could,” Andrew Whelan suggests, “actively query why, given what we do know about the structural production of complex social problems, everything seems to go along just the same. What is it we don’t know?” (Whelan, 2016, p. 57). Whelan further states that “teaching and research are cast in such a way as to foreclose alternative forms of pedagogy or community engagement which would make more widely known and therefore real the possibility of actually really doing things in different ways” (p. 57). What radical potential can be released when we find ourselves “actually really doing things in different ways?” And why is that radical potential so very difficult to realize?

Miranda Joseph’s essay “Investing in the Cruel Entrepreneurial University” evokes Lauren Berlant’s notion of “cruel optimism” (2011), and resonates with the experience that we recount here: three faculty members (all tenured associate professors, two of us white women and the other an African-American man) in three different departments (American Studies, Design, and Higher Education Leadership) at a major research university, coming together on a series of university-wide initiatives that excited us and suggested possibilities for remaking the university and creating and teaching a collaborative course on the History and Future of Higher Education. Taking advantage of a rare institutional moment when we were able to obtain funding and high-level support for an experimental course, we co-created a syllabus that would not only offer students from different backgrounds and at different educational stages a grounding in the history of higher education but also, we hoped, give them the tools and the opportunity to apply that knowledge of the past to designing possible futures that would reflect their worldview. We recount and attempt to theorize this work not just as an example of the radical possibility (and limitations) inherent

in collaborative, interdisciplinary teaching, but also as an example of the ways in which excitement about “innovation” and “design thinking”—trends often associated with the neoliberal restructuring of higher education—might be harnessed by faculty and students to promote positive change in the university.

However, the timing of our effort, inextricable from forces transforming higher education in troubling ways, suggests that we were up against powers much larger than we had the capacity to take on. Indeed, during the time chronicled in this essay, or approximately six years, one president was forced to step down because he was too committed to “impractical” (i.e. not obviously monetizable) research, two major institutes in our university system devoted to innovation started and then failed, and one of us has been relocated to a new school at the center of the university’s neoliberal restructuring of late. Unsurprisingly, by the most obvious yardstick this article is a chronicle of failure.

But like “innovation” itself, in recent years design thinking has been co-opted to serve corporate models of higher education.

While we learned a great deal about collaboration, genuinely bonded with one another, and leveraged institutional resources to create a dynamic and stimulating pedagogical environment, we also experienced firsthand the disincentives that come with innovation and collaboration—and the struggles inherent to the project of venturing into uncharted academic waters, despite the lip service to “innovation” and “thinking outside the box” from administrators. This article is our chronicle of engaging in service and teaching in the neoliberal university context (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000), where much of the academic labor is relatively unrecognized, and taken on by those who naïvely want to enact positive change in their academic spaces.

As Joseph (2015) notes:

[E]ven those of us with decidedly more privileged relations to the academy in the form of relatively secure employment might be or have been understood to be working for, aiding, and abetting institutions that wear us down, and fail our desires for them and ourselves. (p. 493)

Even as we start by acknowledging our difficulties, we want to take seriously the possibility of making something from a failure, one that came and comes at a critical moment of change in our university and in higher education more generally. As members of a “Faculty Innovation Task Force,” whose origins and evolution we trace below, we were charged with transforming the university: breaking down barriers between research and teaching, students and faculty, and the university and the community that it serves and in which it is enmeshed. That effort introduced some of us to the tantalizing trend toward using “design thinking,” a radical collaborative process hailed in many quarters as a

path toward positive innovation in higher education. But like “innovation” itself, in recent years design thinking has been co-opted to serve corporate models of higher education. We took our work seriously enough that when the provost created a grant competition for collaboratively taught courses, we decided to propose a class that would put our ideas into practice and take on the “wicked problems” (Rittel & Webber, 1973) facing higher education today. We would ask students to approach higher education and the series of “challenge-opportunities” (Shearer, 2016) within this field as complex, socio-political, economic and spatial problems with stakeholders that demand interdisciplinary research, collaboration, and public negotiation to be “tamed,” let alone solved.¹

Just as we three faculty would need to learn to work collaboratively, so would our students: we centered the course around team projects taking on fundamental social, political, economic, cultural, technological, and intellectual issues in higher education, asking students to propose forward-looking solutions by imagining the purpose of higher education in 2025 and by self-consciously aligning themselves either with the status quo or with an alternative worldview that would necessitate a reframing of priorities.

When the three of us committed to co-teach a class combining our various disciplinary perspectives, thanks to Kate’s expertise as a professor of Design, we drew upon a form of critical and speculative design (Malpass, 2013) that references Cross’s (1982) “Designerly Ways of Knowing” as opposed to a neatly packaged and branded approach to “design thinking,” as we discuss below. This messy process of critical and speculative design challenged and often frustrated the students, as did the inevitable logistical challenges that arose as we co-taught this new course. We focus here not just on the “cruel optimism” we brought to this work and the pushback we received, but also on its considerable rewards, from our perspective and also from the perspective of students who ultimately cited our course as transformative. The essay concludes with our reflections on the lessons learned: How we were tested and challenged to meet our own inflated expectations as well as the demands of administrators, peers, and students. How we came to recognize the costs of innovation and radical pedagogy. How we faced the uncertain terrain of mid-career scholars. And how we grew as teachers and professionals.

Berg and Seeber (2016), drawing upon Barry, Chandler and Clark (2001) and others, note that “there has been resistance to the pervasiveness of managerial power and corporate values” in higher education, often initiated by “those in middle and junior levels [who] are actively seeking to keep alive the craft of scholarship by mediating and moderating the harsher effects of the changes through supportive or transformational styles of working” (pp. 9-10). We hoped that our class could be part of that resistance, fostering the improvement of higher education through initiatives coming from students themselves, with our guidance.

Genesis of Collaboration: Faculty Labor Leading to Course Development

Late in the spring of 2014, then-Provost, now-President of The University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), Greg Fenves, asked Julia to join “a small group of distinguished faculty members who are committed to undergraduate education... and are active and recognized researchers in their disciplines” in planning a day-long “Campus Conversation.” Julia sent a hesitant reply, asking about the time commitment. It’s not like the provost emails her every day, but she had been right to worry. The provost’s “Faculty Working Group” (FWG), which she did join, planned not one, but two “Campus Conversations,” and each of the FWG’s six members also wound up chairing a task force; our class emerged from the most ambitious of those, the “Faculty Innovation Task Force,” which Julia was asked to chair.

Meetings with the FWG, then-Provost Fenves, and other administrators were stimulating and inspiring: the FWG discussed the mundane business of planning “campus conversations,” but also considered challenges facing the university and how faculty and students could be involved in positive change. There was an air of mission about the work, as Fenves explained that the university community needed to better articulate the “value-added benefit” provided by our public, residential research university. The term “value-added benefit” rubbed Julia the wrong way, but she also saw Fenves’s point, considering that our president at the time was under siege from the Board of Regents, who rejected his commitment to non-revenue generating research and liberal arts education. Indeed, that summer an emergency Faculty Council meeting was held to defend President Powers from what became known as the “July 4th Coup.” The president was allowed to stay for the immediate future, but promised to step down in a year—allegedly, a victory for the faculty.

At the initial Campus Conversation in fall 2014, about 150 faculty discussed the future of the university and the questions that drive our research. As Julia spent the day talking to the neuroscientist, architect, musician, and historian with whom she’d been seated, she felt a tremendous sense of possibility about what could be achieved through regular conversation among diverse faculty, students, administrators, and community members.

Julia was initially thrilled to be appointed chair of the Faculty Innovation Task Force, with the charge to propose a center that would help make UT Austin “the smallest big university in the world,” a daunting yet galvanizing task. Meetings of the dozen-member task force were generative and filled with utopian energy. Several of us went on site visits (e.g., to Red House at George Mason University, the Futures Initiative at CUNY, and the Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry at the University of Chicago) to actually see initiatives in action. Some went to the d.school at Stanford and learned the ways they were applying “design thinking” not just to design objects like coffee tables, but also to rethink systems and practices.

Kate, who joined the task force when we began conceptualizing spaces for the new center, explained to us that design methods are organic processes that can be utilized to facilitate, research, co-design, and incorporate concerns and needs of various stakeholders. These processes illustrate the potential impact and costs, and most importantly, the larger worldview that any given project will support. But Kate also noted that a design approach can be used by marketers to protect vested interests and to facilitate “quick fixes” for the purpose of “selling” a concept. Thus, design thinking has both been hailed as “the new liberal arts” (Miller, 2015) and as a tool for re-establishing the university’s relevance in the 21st century; but it also has been criticized by opponents of the neoliberal university.

To continue the conversations and exchange of ideas, our task force organized “Idea Lab” dinners, again, with faculty from all around the university who had expressed interest in collaborating on large-scale issues, especially those related to transforming the university itself. One dinner was held outside, in a beautiful courtyard; another was in an art gallery with a visual note taker helping us see how our ideas fit together.

We even had someone start working on a documentary film about our efforts. But like much of what we did, this yielded little fruit.

Service Responsibilities and Burdens for Marginalized Faculty

Decades ago, Exum, Menges, Watkins, and Berglund (1984) argued that women and minority faculty encountered barriers in the academic labor market, due to nature and custom that favored white men, the absence of explicit job descriptions, and formal evaluation criteria. More recently, Guarino and Borden (2017) voiced similar concerns: in an analysis of national faculty survey data, they found a gender imbalance between men and women, specifically in the area of service—controlling for organizational and cultural factors—with women bearing a disproportionate part of “taking care of the academic family” (p. 690), falling in line with a trend since the late 1990s (Antonio, Astin, & Cress, 2000; Porter, 2007; Link, Siegel, & Bozeman, 2007). These trends are also true for Black faculty, specifically: Konrad (1991) found that Black faculty were more likely to be engaged in professional service than their white counterparts. Allen et al (2000) also found that Black men spent more hours outside of class working with students than any other demographic, and the second highest number of mean hours in administrative and committee work, behind white women. In a context with fewer institutional resources, the service and administrative responsibilities often fall to those in the least privileged positions.

As Guarino and Borden (2017) found in their research, the administrative burden of the task force rested on the shoulders of women, akin to the phenomenon that Rich has termed “academic housekeeping” (Reddick, 2011). As Julia wrote and rewrote reports, proposals, and charters for various higher-ups on deadlines, and heard from various parties with competing ideas about what and where the “innovation center” should be, she began to feel

beleaguered. Her co-chair, a grant-funded scientist, who thereby ranks higher on the academic totem pole, complained that Julia had invited too many humanists and artists onto the task force and questioned other decisions. As another woman, from a male-dominated field, Julia’s co-chair undoubtedly felt frustrated by the uneven power dynamics between chair and co-chair but failed to recognize the pressures Julia faced.

Julia made the case to the provost that the work being done was labor intensive, and he granted stipends to task force chairs. But Julia was unable to make the case that her co-chair should also get a stipend. There was really no diplomatic way to argue that her co-chair was doing more work than most chairs of the other task forces. Nor did it feel politic to mention that by granting each chair a month of summer salary, the provost was effectively giving more to the highest-paid faculty, without consideration of the work being done. The stipend itself represented a kind of Faustian bargain, for while the generative work of our task force was a team effort, Julia felt compelled to do the majority of writing, editing, and administrative work, while trying to finish a book and teaching a full load. The money was nice, but did not add more hours to the day. Still, much in the work was rewarding, and several faculty members told Julia that this was the first time in years they’d felt invested in UT Austin and excited about the future.

Our task force presented a plan for a centrally-located, non-hierarchical, welcoming and inspiring space that would foster collaboration among faculty, students, staff, administrators, and community members, with nodes throughout campus (Kate suggested “branded” shipping containers; Rich suggested a Winnebago that could move around campus and the city). Wherever the center was located, all titles would be left at the door: all ideas would be welcome. Our space would include not just a website functioning as a clearinghouse, but also a live “conciierge” who could make connections between individuals and resources, extending various technological efforts on our campus. We would have fellowships for faculty members, and also bring in artists and other people from outside the university. We created various names for the center that would emphasize linking the university’s mission, as well as the various levels of collaboration. However, we were told that “Faculty Innovation Center” was simpler and more descriptive. No one seemed to hear us when we said that “faculty innovation center” sent the wrong message: why only mention faculty if the point was to bring together the entire university community?

We also argued that the word “innovation” is often tied to monetization, business models, and a fetish for “disruption,” which, as Jill Lepore (2014) and Christopher Newfield (2014) argue, contribute to the dismantling of core academic values. Julia shared Lepore’s *New Yorker* article, “The Disruption Machine: What the Gospel of Innovation Gets Wrong,” with Fenves when she was part of the FWG. Lepore demonstrates that the “disruptive innovation” craze that started in business and spread to higher education is based on faulty, or deeply-problematic, assumptions: as Newfield (2014) argues, building on Lepore’s work, disruption “has produced neither social progress nor economic success *as such*.” When applied to universities,

disruptive innovation is especially problematic because, unlike a corporation, a university's *raison d'être* cannot be understood solely or even primarily in terms of bottom line, despite a shared need to balance budgets. Newfield argues that sustainable innovation can happen in universities, but only if led by faculty and students.

When Provost Fenves became President of UT Austin, members of our task force were relieved that the Board of Regents had been willing to accept a president who supported faculty research; we also felt optimistic that something would come out of our efforts. However, the "Innovation Center" was put on hold: President Fenves had many other things commanding his attention, and an interim provost, understandably, did not want to launch a major new initiative.

Still, a call for collaborative teaching proposals, supported by small grants, went out to the faculty in response to another FWG task force recommendation, and several of us on the Innovation Task Force decided to propose a course modeling the "learning community" we'd imagined: if we couldn't make university-level changes we *could*, perhaps, do something on a smaller scale. Julia teaches a first-year seminar on "College and Controversy" (for a selective interdisciplinary major in the College of Liberal Arts) and Rich teaches a course on the History of Higher Education, required for graduate students in the Program in Higher Education Leadership—an obvious place to initiate collaboration. Kate's decision to join in the effort challenged Julia and Rich to approach material in entirely new ways—and to be skeptical about "design thinking" as it is often practiced.

Interdisciplinarity often gets touted around the university, but when the dean of the College of Fine Arts faced the prospect of having an already-overstretched faculty member commit to a project without an immediate benefit to his unit, he balked.

In a bellwether of the roadblocks we would face, Kate had to drop out of our grant proposal because her dean wouldn't support it. Interdisciplinarity often gets touted around the university, but when the dean of the College of Fine Arts faced the prospect of having an already-overstretched faculty member commit to a project without an immediate benefit to his unit, he balked. The dean had wanted Kate to teach design thinking in the School of Engineering, but she refused. Now she was paying the price for being uncooperative. Grant or no, Kate still wanted to collaborate. Happily, upon being awarded a few thousand dollars in research funds, Rich and Julia were able to redistribute the wealth to include Kate.

In hindsight we should have taken more time to develop our combined course. Like fools rushing in, and feeling urgency to prove that the task force's ideas were plausible,

we proposed to teach our new course in the following spring. (We'd show everyone what could be done! We'd transform the university with our class!) Spring courses were already scheduled, but Julia managed to reschedule an undergraduate American Studies course so that it met with Rich's History of Higher Education course, and deans in the College of Education approved our unconventional class. Kate retooled her studio course, "Objects and Spaces," to focus on the university (as well as the larger design of higher education). Kate's class, a studio, met six hours a week (versus the usual three), but all the classes overlapped for two hours: thus we came up with the idea of two interlinked courses focused on the History and Future of Higher Education, one explicitly from the perspective of Design but both sharing the same syllabus and demanding collaboration from all students involved. Most notably, we would use radical design principles to disrupt the usual thinking about educational innovation—to disrupt the disrupters.

When we shared our plans for the class with the now nearly-defunct Faculty Innovation Task Force, one of our colleagues said, "You know, you're going to get terrible evaluations." We agreed without realizing how painful that would be.

Our plans became even more grandiose thanks to money that practically fell into our laps: after Julia asked the acting provost why nothing was being done with the Innovation Task Force proposal (created under a great time crunch), we were offered \$25,000 to support programming associated with our course. We understood that this was really a grant to create public programming for a center that did not exist. But the funding made it actually seem possible that we could use the class to model the kind of expansive, inclusive learning community our task force had imagined. Now we had the formidable task of linking an innovative pedagogical experiment to a preexisting structure of three existing courses—one of which centered on the history of the very institutions whose practices we were critiquing.

We did this by drawing upon work in the field of Critical University Studies (CUS), which, as editors of a *Radical Teacher* special issue on the topic note, "pushes us to think about how we teach and research and the ways our work is always embedded in particular social, institutional, historical, and economic contexts" (Samuels, 2017, p. 3).² If disruptive innovation was part of the logic behind a slew of recent initiatives, including the University of Texas System's \$75 million initiative, the Institute for Transformational Learning, which closed its doors less than six years after opening, or Project 2021, which both opened and closed its doors during the period discussed here (Lederman, 2018; Ellis, 2019), as with the venture Heather Steffen (2017) describes, we were able to draw upon the university's resources to critique some of its practices.

Innovative Pedagogy and Pushback

Courses on the History of Higher Education are often the bedrock of practitioner preparation programs like the one Rich teaches in, usually drawing from the works of Lawrence

Veysey (1970), Frederick Rudolph (1962), and more recently, John Thelin (2011) and Christopher Lucas (2006). However, graduate students in higher education programs are sometimes flummoxed when considering the impact of the Yale Report of 1828, or the Morrill Land Grant Acts on their present and future work confronting a constricting economic context in both the public and private education sectors. They ask for more applied experiences that consider issues that will challenge them as they work as advisors, admissions counselors, and policy analysts. Yet, when it came to actually doing hands-on projects that challenged them to think and work in unfamiliar ways, many were unhappy.

Kate proposed we think about the history of higher education in relation to a future that we—led by our students’ initiatives—might help to create. This design mindset had an immediate impact on the course, as did securing a new, super-smart classroom, created specifically to support collaboration, in the main university library (Bawab, 2015). Kate also had the idea of dividing the class into six teams, each of which would propose an intervention to address a “wicked problem” they had identified in higher education.

The six teams focused, respectively, on *society, politics, academics, technology, culture, and economics* in higher education. Each team, comprised undergraduate and graduate students from all three disciplines (Higher Education Leadership, American Studies, and Design), was tasked with creating a research-based proposal that had a historical component as well as a design-based, forward thinking component—culminating with a presentation at a public symposium.

Realizing that hierarchical relationships can impede collaboration, as with our vision for an “innovation center” that would leave titles at the door, we attempted to flatten the hierarchy between students and faculty and between undergraduate and graduate students. Design students were already on first-name terms with their faculty, but American Studies and Higher Education students were initially more comfortable using “Professor” or “Doctor” prefixes. In the early stages of the semester undergraduates deferred to graduate students, and Design and American Studies students often waited for the Higher Education students (graduate students and the majority) to take the lead, as the “experts.” To mitigate these tendencies, we functioned as facilitators, establishing work environments similar to those encouraged by the Harkness Conferencing table (Waks, 2015), and aimed to foster an egalitarian space for dialogue.

To initiate team and class discussions we provided a collective reading packet, with texts traditionally assigned in a history of higher education course, such as the Yale Report

of 1828 and Veblen’s (1918) “The Place of the University in Modern Life”; works by CUS scholars like Newfield (2011) and Frank Donaghue (2008); scholarship on student protest movements; as well as design-related articles such as Cross’s (1982) “Designerly Ways of Knowing” and Dilnot’s (1993) essay, “The Gift.” We also had each of the Higher Education Leadership and American Studies students read a novel about college life, such as Johnson’s (1912) *Stover at Yale* or Smiley’s (1995) *Moo*.

Collaboration—and funding from the provost’s office—allowed us to offer an unprecedented slate of speakers, including design expert Robyn Liu, who uses design thinking to assist the Australian regional government in addressing pressing social issues in local communities, engaging all constituencies while doing so; Leonard Cassuto, whose book, *The Graduate School Mess* (2015), has challenged both professors and administrators to more effectively prepare graduate students in the humanities for careers outside of the academy; and Christopher Newfield, whose books *Unmaking the Public University* (2011) and *The Great Mistake* (2016) have forcefully challenged the trend toward corporatization of the academy.

Indeed, Newfield’s work critically informed our enterprise. In *Unmaking the Public University* (2011), from which our students read excerpts, Newfield emphasizes the essential link between public research universities and what had long been “a mainstream and politically powerful ideal” of what it means to be “middle class”: this ideal assumed

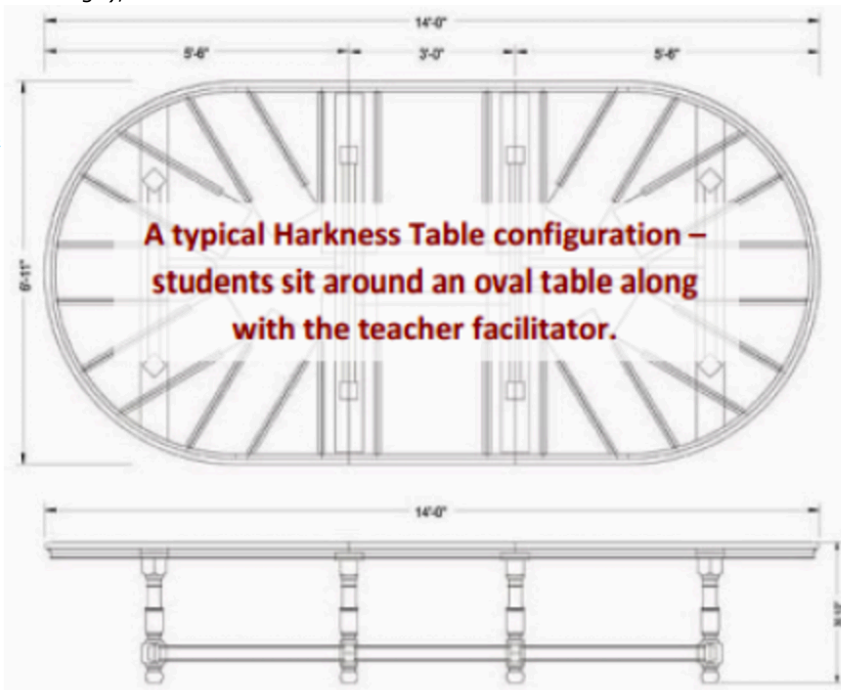


FIGURE 1. DIAGRAM OF THE ORIGINAL HARKNESS TABLE (D. R. DIMES & COMPANY, LTD., 2018; TRUSTEES OF PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY, 2018).

that the “majority was to have interesting work, economic security and the ability to lead satisfying and insightful lives, in which personal and collective development advanced side by side” (2011, p. 3). However, as Newfield notes, if a core principle underlying the broad social egalitarianism of research universities was that “educational needs should dictate budgets and not the other way around” (2011, p. 2),

by the 1970s that principle was under fire, as states began disinvesting in public universities and as universities thus became increasingly privatized, reliant on corporate partnerships, and concerned about balancing budgets. Newfield's work encouraged us to think about the university's relationship to the larger society, and his insistence that innovation initiatives come from faculty and students, rather than from administrators (or "managers") informed the work we asked student teams to perform.

We also brought in others from the university and the wider community (e.g., administrators and former campus activists) as guest speakers, discussants, and tour guides: students got both an architectural tour and a racial geography tour of the UT Austin campus and also visited a local historically Black university. Our class was open to visitors (e.g., faculty and staff colleagues, students who were not enrolled, and members of the community), who prepared for class as our students did, and joined our conversations. In addition to organizing a day-long symposium in which students shared their proposals with stakeholders and interested parties in the university and in the wider community, we created a small grant competition that would allow a team of students to launch their proposed project.

Presenting students with unfamiliar problem-solving strategies and intellectual frameworks initially was a point of contention for all: This was particularly the case for graduate students in Higher Education Leadership, who were being asked to question the logic of the very roles they were being trained to assume. Some of the American Studies and Higher Education Leadership students couldn't understand why they were using critical and speculative design strategies, and many of the Design students were uncomfortable "teaching" their peers. They had difficulty articulating what they do, how they do it, and why they do it, and did not at first understand that they would gain skills as designers by having to collaborate with students from these other fields. Eventually (and this took longer than we'd assumed it would) something clicked, and suddenly the American Studies and Higher Education students began requesting more time to talk to the Design students and those students began to recognize the utility of thinking through design processes with peers who were versed in cultural, historical, and social frameworks that they might lack.

The frustration our students experienced was almost certainly a manifestation of the siloing inherent in the contemporary university: students are conditioned to specialize and to frame issues from one disciplinary lens, so an interdisciplinary approach was foreign, unfamiliar, and "wrong" (less of a problem for students in American Studies, interdisciplinary at its core, but as undergraduates, they tended to follow the lead of the Higher Education graduate students). In essence, we had to patiently help our students make sense of unfamiliar concepts, embrace a sense of ambiguity, and then learn from each other in a collaborative, nonhierarchical space. Unfortunately, many of the students came to really appreciate this challenging and time-consuming process only after they'd filled out course evaluations.

Designing the History and Future of Higher Education

Design students brought to the course visualization and modeling skills and a way of thinking expansively about the course topic using a collaborative and generative design approach to structure the development of arguments for change. But if the expectation was that Kate and her students could bring "design thinking" methods to a consideration of higher education's history and future, she was eager to complicate that expectation. Recent articles have touted the promise of "design thinking" for higher education (Gardner, 2017; Lorenzo, 2016), but the approach espoused by firms like IDEO and institutionalized in Stanford's d.school—often boiled down to five "modes" ("Empathize," "Define," "Ideate," "Prototype," and "Test") and signified by creative types using white boards and Post-It notes—has its limits. Noting her concern about the promotion of design thinking to "disruptive agent" in higher education, designer Amy Collier (2017) points to "how easily people move from design thinking having a helpful role in students' learning to 'solving' higher education's greatest problems that, frankly, may be too complex for design thinking."

Design thinking as appropriated by business schools, and as increasingly applied to the larger project of "innovation" in higher education, typically does not critically assess the worldview within which a new product, city, transportation system or course exists.

Design thinking as appropriated by business schools, and as increasingly applied to the larger project of "innovation" in higher education, typically does not critically assess the worldview within which a new product, city, transportation system or course exists. Kate encouraged students to approach the topic of higher education's future as a systems-level issue and an inherently "wicked problem." To structure this unwieldy topic, student teams referenced a text by Allan Shearer (2015) outlining a history of design methods and borrowed his flexible Design Thinking Framework. Design students guided their teams' use of the framework both to structure initial negotiations and to develop the narrative backbone of presentations. Using Shearer's design thinking framework nudged students into an open dialogue, exposed assumptions, uncovered disciplinary predilections, and forced teams to explore a tendency to accept dominant ideologies as a given.

Acknowledging that personal experiences can shape values and sometimes invisibly determine priorities that shape research agendas we began by asking each individual to reflect on and share the story of their personal journey to higher education. Self-awareness when entering into a collaboration is essential. We then asked student teams to either consciously align themselves with the status quo, or

to explore an alternate worldview that would necessitate a re-framing of priorities in answer to the question: "What will be the purpose of higher education in 2025 (or later)?"

We guided research and concept development gently, using smaller assignments (cognitive mapping exercises, adopting Shearer's design cycle), and constructing scenarios that included a target (place), a time period (no sooner than 2025), a character from relevant constituencies (student, faculty member, parent of student, staff member, alum, etc.), and the kind of interaction or experience being addressed (admissions, distance learning, student debt, etc.). We used speed critiques, where the teams made quick pitches, both visual and verbal, and the group and faculty gave feedback. Through this process, we sensed that most participants felt engaged and vital to the success of their team's project by mid-semester. We were thrilled as students increasingly shared expertise and began to meet outside of class regularly. As student teams began to work more autonomously, they acquired a real sense of agency and ownership of the process. As a result, they did not need to defer to faculty as frequently.

In the *2011 ICOGRADA Design Education Manifesto*, designer and educator Meredith Davis argued that common design education practices that offer individual students simple or already "tamed" problems to solve, problems situated in artificially stable contexts, does them a great disservice. Like Davis (2011), we felt that students in our programs were shielded from the complex challenges of their time and that graduates were often ill-equipped to engage with others in addressing such systems-level problems. As they negotiated higher education as a "wicked problem," student teams met with policy makers, university administrators, politicians, and professional designers, and were challenged to address the multifarious needs of these diverse stakeholders, whose conflicting priorities made consensus and clear problem definition impossible.

Ultimately, the team members became somewhat more comfortable initiating plans for change in imperfect circumstances. They established a few initial parameters in order to start moving towards a resolution by deadline. They proceeded, at first cautiously, through rapid cycles of research, discussion, and propositions, all the while arguing, testing, and redesigning. Some were distressed that the research was on-going throughout the process, not completed in advance, but these conditions replicated many real-world situations. They tweaked parameters and eventually honed goals using the abductive methods inherent to the iterative design process and methods that would eventually, if somewhat painfully, lead to relevant conclusions and the development of proposals addressing issues like course evaluations, financial aid, student activism, university communications, and open educational resources. Finally, the teams had to accept the reality that once framed, the relevance and appropriateness of their proposals would evolve and change over time (Rith & Doubberly, 2006), necessitating continual tweaks or fundamental redesigns in the future.

When economist Herbert Simon (1996) stated, "Everyone designs who devises courses of action aimed at

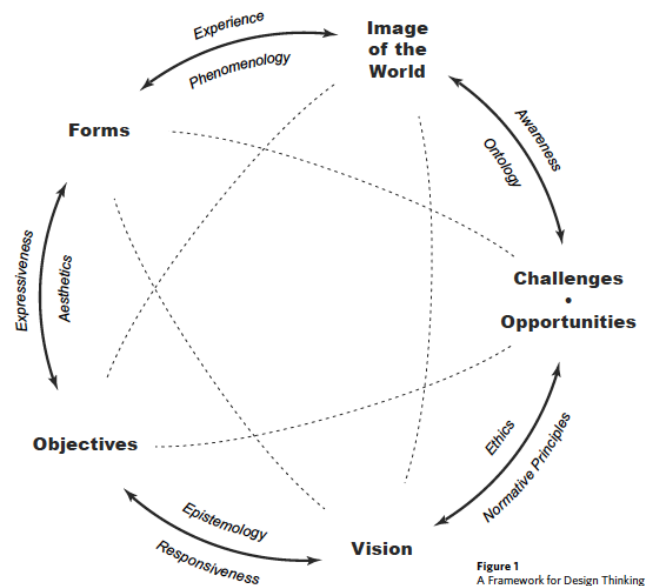


FIGURE 2. SHEARER'S (2015) DESIGN THINKING FRAMEWORK, FROM ABDUCTION TO ARGUMENT: A DESIGN THINKING FRAMEWORK.

changing existing situations into preferred ones" (p. 111), he recognized that design itself does not have a subject; it is a process that can be applied to any subject area to identify priorities and to propose possible futures. Simon acknowledged the utopian aspirations of the designer and delineated the iterative process that informs debates along the way, leading to the framing of an argument for doing things differently in the future. Our student teams grappled with this definition of the designer throughout the course, but ultimately understood, through doing, that design could frame arguments for change in relation to any given topic. They also embraced the opportunity to use their unique personal and disciplinary perspectives to shape meaningful change in higher education.

The teams ultimately succeeded in proposing a range of relevant interventions for higher education, recognizing that neither the process, nor the outcome, was perfect, but that their proposals could positively affect conversations about the trajectory of higher education for the next generation. Chris Newfield joined forces with Beto Lopez (formerly of IDEO and now head of UT's Design Institute for Health) to respond to the students' initial iterations of their proposals, and both were impressed, by the process even more than by the products: as Newfield said of the students, afterwards in conversation, "they're committed to a meaningful version of the university and they're thinking very concretely about how to get that."

Design, Politics, and the Neoliberal University

Design as a field has increasingly been at the forefront of efforts to turn public research universities into vocational training schools. There is a rather uncritical euphoria surrounding programs—such as one recently created in our university (which employs almost entirely non-tenure-track

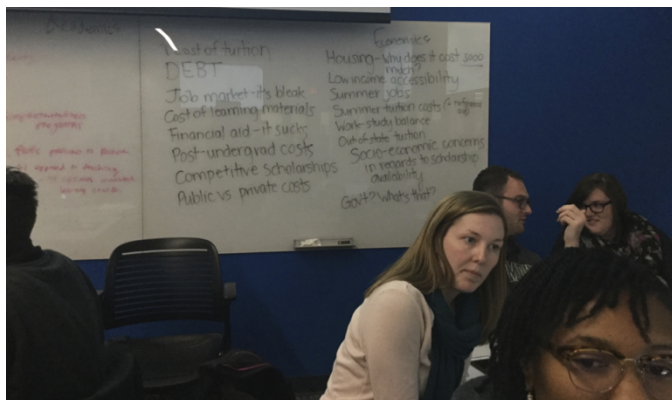


FIGURE 3. TEAMS USING THE CONFERENCE METHOD (AND A DESIGN-BASED MAPPING STRATEGY) IN NEW CLASSROOMS WE WERE ABLE TO RESERVE IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES FOR OUR COLLECTIVE COURSE.

faculty)—that will soon permit off-site, internship-heavy, and otherwise commercially-oriented research. These initiatives yield economic benefits for the University, employment opportunities for some students, and funding for certain areas of faculty research. However, they also have the potential to replace alternate, less economically persuasive design research pathways. This leaves more experimental and less obviously lucrative research to private institutions, undercutting the historically democratic mission of public universities.

Newfield (2016) has suggested that the R1 university, whose engineering programs have long been the cheap R&D workshop for the U.S. government, is fast fulfilling a similar role for private corporations. In this iteration of the public university, students, rather than being reimbursed at a rate commensurate with industry-based internships, are paying tuition while serving as cheap intellectual laborers in the service of big business.

State political leaders have taken aim at the UT Austin, ousting one president and de-vesting the institution, providing only 12% of the university's budget today (in 1984, 48% of the budget came from legislative appropriations). Many of these same politicians have the audacity to publicly question the science behind climate change and to advocate on behalf of the gun lobby (students are now allowed to carry concealed weapons to their classes). In addition to creating a range of unfunded mandates, the legislature's actions contribute to a culture of fear and confusion that in turn limits critical discourse and academic freedoms within the university. In this

environment teaching students to make arguments for futures that embrace sustainability, that question the very idea of "human centered design," run contrary to the mainstream and may even seem radical. In this world, design easily becomes political (Rittel & Webber, 1973).

Reflecting on Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Inquiry

This current state of affairs in higher education speaks to the final intervention that the course made: our effort to reimagine the process of college instruction. As a graduate student, Rich read Paulo Freire's work and was fascinated by his description of "banking" education, described in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970):

Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat... [T]he scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits. (p. 58)

A similar mode is the transmission model, where there is "a fixed body of already existing knowledge that needs to be taught and learned. Teaching essentially consists of the transmission of the body from the teacher to the pupil" (Nola & Irzik, 2005, p. 175).

However, in a liberatory pedagogy, Freire argues, education comes through dialogics, utilizing cultural knowledge and cooperation to address social problems. Instead of primarily focusing their attention upon learning a body of information that the professors taught, the six topical groups had the opportunity to research, integrate, and synthesize knowledge, and to propose their own, original approaches, or interventions, with which to address a range of problems (or, drawing from Shearer [2015], what we took to calling "challenge-opportunities") now confronting higher education.

In reality, problem-addressing, and problem solving, rarely happen in an off-the-shelf manner. Our effort to move from banking and transmission to liberatory approaches—with all the challenges of teaching an inaugural first-of-its-kind course—was itself a challenge-opportunity. As was the effort to collaborate on a deep level with colleagues with different modes of training, epistemological perspectives, and disciplinary norms. We did not accurately anticipate how difficult and time-consuming it would be to alter course protocols at UT Austin, to negotiate ingrained teacherly habits, to collaborate across disciplines, and to test out new methods, while keeping all participants on board. We observed that many of our students became frustrated when they couldn't get an immediate response to questions posed over email: a consumer-driven model of the university amps up student expectations about email response times from professors, a reality made especially challenging by our need to coordinate responses. When teamwork progressed smoothly, class meetings were relaxed and productive, but when a team lacked direction, a deadline loomed, or worries about collaborative grading became too much, anxieties sometimes led students to panic and direct backlash at faculty, the teaching assistant, and, on occasion, peers.

Certainly, we as faculty members made mistakes: our biggest mistake was trying to fit too much in without recognizing how much time effective collaboration really takes, for students—and us as well: in addition to the major projects we had each of the Higher Education and American Studies students do an ethnography and also had them read and report on a college novel, i.e. “the imagined university,” while Design students were asked to do critical analyses of teaching spaces on campus. We should have done less. But we wonder now how much our identities (two white women and an African American man) impacted the pushback we received from students, who were unused to having authority decentered in the classroom, and wanted to know exactly what they needed to do to be successful in the course.

As the day-long symposium approached, at which team proposals would be pitched to a public audience, stress levels soared. However, on the day itself, the euphoria and sense of achievement was palpable as student teams rallied to present cohesive proposals that were well researched and well-argued, both visually and verbally. Unfortunately, we had to administer course evaluations at the meeting *prior* to the symposium, seeking feedback at a moment when students felt most vulnerable. Thus, the primary metric used to evaluate our course’s “success” is arguably skewed (Estelami, 2015).

Despite the unfamiliar terrain and some inevitable course pacing issues, we received many positive responses from students *after* the course’s end, even from those expressing the highest levels of confusion and frustration during the semester. They wanted us to know that their experiences in the course had positively, almost immediately, influenced their educational or professional goals. One student told us that she used the design thinking methodology during a summer internship in Washington, DC, which impressed her supervisors. Another mentioned that comfort with ambiguity she developed during the course had been a great preparation for doctoral studies.

In final reflective comments (turned in after official evaluations were done) students observed how difficult it is to make even small changes in the university. One Design student asked, “Why is it when the university wants change to happen and wants to start that which ‘changes the world,’ we can’t even make a course to combine different majors without fighting the university to do so?” A graduate student in Higher Education mused on the indicators of a good education, going beyond the current obsession with immediate job placements: “... if a student leaves college having a better understanding of who they are as a person, a clearer moral compass, and motivation for their path forward, well, isn’t that success?”

Three years on, we continue to apply much of what we learned in teaching this unique course. As faculty in different departments, we still look to each other for feedback and support, and we each seek out initiatives that breach the conventional formats of our classrooms, such as active learning strategies recently acquired from colleagues in the theater department. But we’ve also seen the critiques of the neoliberal university that we taught in our class resonating with changes at our university, some of which have made it

harder to carve out time even to co-write this article, especially as it is unclear whether it will “count” toward promotion for some of us.

Course Post-Script

With our course, we made an argument for breaking silos, for creating non-hierarchical learning spaces with instructors who guide rather than lead, for students to co-construct their educational experiences, and for teams to build knowledge collaboratively while devising solutions-focused proposals. A digital Scalar “[book](#),” created by students, now serves as a record of the course, providing access to lectures, readings and assignments, keeping that work alive and accessible to the public (Barba, Campbell, Wilson, & Zaldivar, 2016).

Part of understanding this teaching experience is recognizing how time-intensive collaborative course-building can be, the impact such pedagogical experiments can have on careers, and the potential for less stable student evaluations. If the risk-laden process of experimentation and development of innovative courses is to be supported at public universities, participants need to be protected from the negative consequences of experimental practice—not just negative in terms of students’ resistance, but negative in terms of the time required to do this work. We obtained grants, but teaching this course took away from time to do work that earns us promotions and raises. There is a lot of talk about encouraging experimentation and innovation (and even collaboration) but in the grand scheme of things, small, one-time grants count for much less than time and long-term merit raises. These consequences are especially weighty for scholars without the protection of tenure, or the security of full-time employment.

Even for tenured, full-time faculty, especially those with marginalized identities, there are risks. Research shows that gender bias can negatively impact women’s course evaluations (MacNeil, Driscoll, & Hunt, 2015), and Black academics are held to a “performance” standard in academic spaces, rather than one based on the content of their work (McGee & Kazembe, 2015). However, as our colleagues on the Innovation Task Force had warned us, we should have *expected* negative evaluations, given that we took a considerable risk in disrupting course structures, pedagogy, and products.

Gardner (2017), reflecting on his experience at Stanford’s d.school, noted, “To do design thinking properly, we would need to embrace failure, even celebrate it, because trying and failing and trying again is key to the process.” During Julia’s recent promotion to full professor, the only question about her teaching was why evaluations in this one class were so low. This “failure” was not celebrated at the moment it counted.

Equally important to both faculty buy-in and effective course development is the design and introduction of flexible, long-term evaluation methods. Without such support, low course evaluation numbers have immediate and negative consequences on opportunities for promotion and merit increases.

In a seminar Rich attended recently, Harvard Kennedy School professor Dana Born discussed the paradox of the espoused value of risk-taking in organizations, compared to the actual cultural rewards (and punishments) in those same organizations. Many of us present agreed that we had heard strong rhetoric at the Campus Conversations and elsewhere about the merit of risk-taking, but we've also seen that "failures" result in firings, demotions, or even the stigma of championing a lost cause. Virgin CEO Richard Branson's borrowed quote from playwright Samuel Beckett, "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better" (as quoted in O'Connell, 2014) does not acknowledge the penalties inherent in risk-taking. Indeed, we have collectively imagined what it would be like to "fail better" by teaching the course again, with the benefit of our previous experience to augment those aspects that didn't work as well as we'd hoped. Very quickly, the disincentives (as much as we would enjoy it, and as much as we believe it would be a benefit to our students) re-emerge and we change the topic. One day in the future, perhaps?

We have not yet succeeded in changing the culture of teaching and research at UT Austin. While the university has created a new Faculty Innovation Center (FIC), it has a different focus and staffing structure than the Task Force imagined, and is essentially a rebranded Center for Teaching and Learning. The difference between the FIC's current configuration and the dialogue that initially inspired it could prompt cynicism, and it has. Still, the leaders of the FIC, which came into being around the same time we were teaching our class, were, and remain strong supporters of the work we (and our students) were doing, and invited us to get involved with the center.

In becoming president, former provost Greg Fenves had successfully leveraged the Campus Conversations, the task forces, and the faculty engagement he'd helped to promote. But after Fenves left the provost's office, such initiatives ended. After a new provost was hired, Julia requested an appointment with her to discuss the Faculty Innovation Task Force's proposal, but after multiple rescheduling Julia was finally told there was no room on the provost's calendar, and there would not be any room in the foreseeable future. This was disheartening, but it was a small victory to discover that Fenves, learning that we were bringing Christopher Newfield to campus, invited this trenchant critic of higher education administration to discuss the challenges facing public research universities.

As we write, a university program created to leverage the skills that the humanities can bring to business has teamed up with the School of Design and Creative Technologies to offer a new series of three-day design thinking workshops, charging \$1,800-2,500 per seat (Human Dimensions of Organizations and School of Design and Creative Technologies, 2019). These creative thinking-to-action courses are aimed at both corporate audiences and educators. Workshop promotional materials suggest that after completing a three-day course attendees will be fully equipped to put their "ideas into action." Such grandiose promises of design-driven transformations seriously understate the complex problem-spaces that our students negotiated within the space of higher education, and the instant-expert certificate stands in stark contrast to the

nuanced, messy and necessarily slow acquisition of knowledge so central to a high-quality university education. Lucrative workshops help support public education at a time of diminished public funding, but they also threaten to damage the ethos, research and educational mission of the university.

Implications and Reflections: Taking Risks, Embracing Slow Scholarship

Rather than end on a skeptical note, we'd like to invite speculation about how our experience might point toward the possibility of faculty-driven institutional change, where that change might come from, and where it might lead. Although we don't know how much if any credit we can take for it, many of the ideas proposed by the Faculty Innovation Task Force *have* been absorbed into a range of ongoing projects at UT Austin, from Pop-Up Institutes to the even more ambitious Bridging Barriers Program. Faculty and students involved in these initiatives (including each of us) have reflected favorably on their interaction with scholars and researchers from varied backgrounds.

Reflecting back on the experience of serving on the task force, and on the course we created, we acknowledge that we operate from positions of privilege: we are all tenured at a well-resourced institution, and had grant support for the course and related programming. Many of our colleagues who lead, or might want to lead, these sorts of collaborations may not have these advantages. In fact, we would strongly urge scholars in more precarious academic positions (assistant professors, adjunct and non-tenure-track faculty, as well as graduate student instructors) to think carefully before embarking on wide-reaching projects such as ours. Although our teaching evaluations took a one-time hit, we have strong teaching records and could "afford" the risk of innovating with our pedagogy and approach.

Our collective work and subsequent reflection made clear to us the ways that our individual voices, and those that intellectually and personally sustain us, can be muted in the academy. Fortunately, we found powerful allies who advocated for us in spaces to which we did not previously have access. We also recognized the importance of finding ways to translate our teaching passion into academic capital: we forged connections with CUS scholars Christopher Newfield and Marc Bousquet, presenting together at a session of the American Studies Association's annual meeting (Catterall, Mickenberg, & Reddick, 2016). And this collaboratively authored article is a scholarly publication that may "count" in ways that our course did not (though it may not be weighted equally in our respective disciplines).

Our recommendation for those seeking to de-silo their academic lives is to think about how the process itself might be leveraged for the currency needed for tenure, promotion, and recognition, even as we'd confirm that the best reason to collaboratively teach across disciplines is that it makes us grow as thinkers, teachers, scholars, and people. It is a sad reality that the push for greater faculty productivity leads us to consider our teaching in relation to quantifiable metrics of "productivity" (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000). On the other

hand, the pleasures of the work itself were resistance to the emphasis on academic throughput and output, as Berg and Seeber describe in *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy* (2016). We like sitting down together and talking about this stuff.

One of our guest speakers, Leonard Cassuto, told the class that our collective endeavor was “brave.” While we are more modest regarding this label, we agree that collaboration and de-siloing the academy in the current political climate in our state and nation is a risky proposition. With an increasing focus on metrics and outcomes rather than process, we took on a project that resembled what Mountz and colleagues (2015) term *slow scholarship*:

Good scholarship requires time: time to think, write, read, research, analyze, edit, and collaborate. High quality instruction and service also require time: time to engage, innovate, experiment, organize, evaluate, and inspire. This kind of slow work both defies and is threatened by the myriad demands on our time as academic laborers. (p. 1237)

The process of collaborating across disciplinary divides, within a bureaucracy that is often indifferent, and at worst, actively hostile to collaboration; learning to teach as a team; and ultimately, the process of reflecting on our experiences has taken considerable time—time that tenure and concurrent projects that we can be confident *will* “count,” afford us. It is imperative to consider how difficult this would be if we did not have those protections. Nevertheless, we remain committed to pedagogical collaboration, and to each other as colleagues. As underrepresented voices in academia during a time Newfield (2016) refers to as “pseudointegration,” we are doing our best to resist the encroachment on academic freedom that comes with the trend toward hiring untenured lecturers and “professors of practice”, and emphasis on business models. One way we have done and continue to do this is by providing challenging, thought-provoking, and by-design inefficient spaces of engagement.

What was significant about our endeavor? We attempted to use a radical form of design thinking to critique or disrupt the idea of disruptive innovation in higher education. We taught students a more nuanced form of critical and strategic design methods, methods that can be used to streamline productivity or to re-conceptualize everything, starting with a political system that might sustain alternate agendas. We alerted students not just to the possibilities of design thinking but also to its limitations, suggesting that wicked problems can only be tackled effectively through a deep understanding of history and social contexts. We insisted on making our classroom and our work *public*, and inspired our president to meet with a prominent critic of disruptive innovation and the defunding of public universities. We put undergraduate and graduate students in conversation not just with each other but also with outstanding scholars from other institutions, administrators, politicians, faculty, and the local community, and we convinced those students that they had important things to say and learn. We asked students to imagine a future in which changes in the university would originate from the bottom up instead of the top down. We engaged

with, and questioned, our own assumptions about the current state and future of the university, as instructors, as intellectuals, and as colleagues from different disciplines—in class, on a local radio program and podcast (Dryer, 2016), at national conferences, and here in this article.

Did we succeed? Arguably, by the only metric that counts in teaching, we failed. But here we are, suggesting to others that maybe we as teachers can begin to design ways to disrupt the disrupters, and redefine the terms of the debate.

Notes

¹ Vitasek (2014), drawing on Rittel and Webber (1973), as well as Churchman’s elaboration on their work (1967), describes the core characteristics of “wicked problems” as follows:

- Wicked problems have no definitive formulation, and every wicked problem is a symptom of another problem.
- Every wicked problem is unique, and there is always more than one explanation for a wicked problem, with the appropriateness of the explanation depending greatly on the perspectives and values of those involved.
- Solutions to wicked problems are only good or bad, not true or false. The solution is largely a matter of judgement.
- There is no surefire template to follow when tackling a wicked problem; plus, solutions to wicked problems can generate unexpected consequences over time, making it difficult to measure their effectiveness.

Those attempting to address a wicked problem must be fully responsible for their actions.

² American Studies scholars have, in recent years, engaged CUS to suggest ways in which higher education reveals fundamental tensions and struggles in American society. See, for instance, Marez (2014), which originated as the 2013 Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, and the symposium in the December 2012 issue of *American Quarterly* (see Greyser and Weiss [2012]).

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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Collateral Survivorship

by Arlene R. Keizer



FISH" GRAFFITI BY JAMES DE LA VEGA. 104TH STREET AND THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY. (2007). WIKIMEDIA

"Keep a watchful eye/over yourself/as if you were/your own enemy."

—James De La Vega, Nuyorican artist

A part of me is still in thrall to a part of Bill K*, the dazzling fiction writer recently denounced as a "skilled predator" in a report on the sexual harassment and abuse of high-school students at a private academy in New England. Let me be clear: I never took a class with Bill; I was his colleague for a decade in the English Department at a research university in the western US. I was a tenured faculty member when we met, and we had a flirtatious though never sexual relationship, the kind of relationship I've had with dozens of male mentors and colleagues during my years in graduate school and as a faculty member at three elite research universities.

I've been a committed feminist since adolescence. Throughout my undergraduate and graduate training and my years as a professor, I developed into a feminist scholar with, I believe, a reputation for supporting, even championing, the careers of other marginalized people in academia, especially other feminist scholars, especially other scholars of color. What drives this essay is not #MeToo, though I have been sexually and racially harassed at work on numerous occasions. Reading newspaper coverage of the prep-school scandal immediately gave me a stomach cramp because I was confronted, more powerfully than ever before, with my recognition of myself as a woman socialized to love the "skilled predator," to find herself pleurably desirable within his gaze.

This essay is an attempt to understand my status as a *collateral survivor* within rape culture. I didn't Google the term "collateral survivor" as I wrote this essay. I'm not aware that anyone else has used this term; for me it denotes an individual who has not directly suffered rape or sexual abuse or sustained sexual harassment, but upon whom the muted effects of these forms of psychic and physical violence have nevertheless made a mark. As a black, cisgender woman involved solely with cisgender men, I consider myself profoundly lucky to have never been a victim of sexual assault. Nevertheless, I have spent the past two decades trying to come to terms with a sexual consciousness formed through the collateral damage—the radioactive fallout—of other women's violation.

When I joined the English Department and met Bill, one of my first questions to a female colleague was, "What's he doing single?" I asked because, in my experience, the enormous egos of straight male writers render most of them incapable of living without supportive female companionship for any significant period of time. It was a knowing and contemptuous question, for I considered Bill too handsome, too traditionally masculine, and too privileged within white-supremacist culture to be of personal interest to me. (And he wasn't entirely single, but that's another story.)

Bill K's personal charm is like a force field. From my own response and my observation of the responses of many other straight women in his orbit, I feel comfortable saying

that, if you were the female object of his direct interest, you would experience that interest as a gravitational force, not metaphorically but physically. I immediately distrust my own responses to such men because I understand them to be the residue of my childhood as the daughter of a brilliant, handsome, profoundly charming and articulate Classics professor from Trinidad. In other words, my initial fascination with men like Bill is a lively form of transference, a compulsion to repeat the specifics of my family romance.

Perhaps not every woman drawn to older, glamorous male pedagogues can trace her attractions so clearly back to their source. But the heterosexual erotics of instruction, in which an older male teacher broadens the intellectual and sexual horizons of a younger female student, are so embedded in Western culture, both high and low, that they have become a form of cultural common sense, a taken-for-granted relationship structure. One needn't have a direct familial experience of such an emotional template to be affected. Moreover, only egregious violations of the laws or institutional rules governing sexual consent are now being subjected to negative scrutiny; the general structure of these relationships retains hegemonic force.

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What fascinates me about the development of my friendship with Bill is that, even knowing what I knew about myself, and guessing what I quickly guessed about him, I still came to feel profound affection for him and to enjoy his company whenever I found myself in the same room. I sought him out on more than one occasion. The sound of his smooth and flexible tenor voice, the relaxing quality of his presence, and his extraordinary sense of humor all found an answering *something* in me. As a weird, creative person, I often find myself in need of equally weird companions for creative research, and Bill did me the enormous favor of accompanying me to a local firing range when I decided that, for an essay I was writing, I needed to learn how to use a handgun. He promised to dedicate his eventual story about this experience to me, and I can't help smiling when I contemplate my anticipation of the moment when a situation I co-created for us will be acknowledged as a muse. *What do I call this feeling?*

Reading Bill's fiction was the act that opened the door I'd casually slammed upon first acquaintance. If you love well-crafted stories and novels, if imaginative literature has helped you to live your life, you will understand exactly what I'm saying. For intellectually oriented, straight women, knowledge and skill are aphrodisiacs; they function the way power and money do for many other women in capitalist patriarchy. My devotion to Freud's writing, despite its

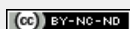
obvious imperialism, racism, and sexism, is compelled by the structure of revelation he employed. Freud's best essays are a scholarly striptease; they offer riveting ideas, test those ideas, then offer deeper levels of revealed knowledge to those readers who, through their continued attention, self-identify as initiates. The adage "Curiosity killed the cat" was meant to spare women like me from the depths of fascination offered by intellectually gifted and verbally talented men. Such men offer their learning and their abilities like a feathered, multi-colored lure. The hook upon which women like me have been caught is our need for the recognition of our own talent and brilliance. I was at least 40 years old before I became capable of offering that recognition to myself.

De La Vega's graffito, which serves as an epigraph to this essay, was reproduced on a postcard I've had on display in my apartment for over a decade. I was drawn to its decolonial valence, but this saying is, of course, also deeply psychoanalytic. The insight it offers is what every analysis comes to know, even after a successful analysis. Ultimately, the injunction to view one's unconscious as one's own potential or probable enemy is (as a loving friend pointed out upon reading a draft of this essay) a radical acceptance of the kind of punitive self-surveillance Foucault identified and analyzed as the exemplary mode of modern and postmodern governance. To oversee one's own basic romantic and sexual impulses using the lens of this harsh dictum: this can define the life of a certain kind of survivor, even a collateral survivor. Might it also define the psychic life of some reformed perpetrators?

Here's the question I find most compelling, as yet another cluster of abuse in yet another elite educational environment is revealed: "Did Bill K come to understand the need to imagine himself as his own enemy?" I have to believe in the possibility that some who stand accused of abusing their power as teachers can and have learned other ways of inhabiting this role, turning away from the pleasures of the explicitly sexual seduction and domination of those within their professional care. The contemplation of projects of redemption and redress, whether successful or foiled or wholly misconceived, characterizes several major pieces of Bill K's fiction. I'm no recording angel; as long as his behavior changed, what authority can measure the transformation of conscience and consciousness?

I'm grateful that I was not a student at that New England prep school or one of its peer institutions in the 70s, 80s, or 90s. I'm grateful for the forms of difference that may have made me appear less receptive to the predatory behaviors of the socially privileged. (Once again, let me be clear: these differences did not wholly protect me. They simply constitute alternate forms of vulnerability.) I'm grateful that the male mentors I chose and those who chose me didn't violate my trust, and, when they considered doing so, I'm grateful that I was able to elect self-preservation over the illusion of their positive regard. I'm grateful for the still, small voice that tells me to "keep a watchful eye over

myself," a voice born within the resilient psyche of an abandoned black girl.



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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Cross This Out: A Pedagogy of Disruption and Healing

by G.T. Reyes



G.T. REYES, OUR DOOR WITH A CROSS THIS OUT QUILT

This was not my first encounter with a blatant act of racism. It was not a good feeling. Acts of racism, whether blatant or as microaggression, never are. I had had to respond to various forms of racism before. Although I am an early career Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership, I have been in the world of urban education and community organizing for some time now. The current iteration of me has serendipitously had enough practice with responding to acts of systemic oppression to face this new one with dignity, criticality, and creativity.

Towards the end of my first quarter working at California State University, East Bay, I received a text from my colleague that she would be re-printing signs for the door that my officemate and I share—ours had apparently been “marked up,” she mentioned. When I first received her text, I was disappointed, but also appreciative of her offer to reprint them. The marked-up signs had read, “Black Lives Matter,” “Brown and Proud – Todos Somos Arizona,” and “All students are welcome here whatever your ethnicity, sexual expression, gender identification, gender identity, political stance, or immigration status.” Although there were similar signs on most of the office doors within this wing of the College of Education, ours was the only one that was marked up. I immediately asked for a photo.

From this photo, it was clear that more than a reprinting of signs was needed. At first glance, I could see that “Educational Leadership” was also crossed out and my officemate’s name plate, which was underneath mine, was reversed as if to invisibilize her. My officemate is a powerful African American woman who stands for ideals similar to mine, and seeing her name plate reversed conveyed a violence beyond a mere mark-up. However, not until I received an email from my department’s administrative coordinator saying she would order me a new name plate—she had been unable to remove the marking from the existing one—did I realize something more directly personal.

I had been targeted. In addition to the signs, my name was also crossed out with permanent marker. It was as if someone was saying to me, “We want to be clear, Dr. Reyes. You are on notice for representing beliefs that we reject and that we cross out. As such, we cross YOU out.”

Cross This Out: A Story and Framework to Inspire Critical Action

In this article, I recount the events and experiences from what I call “Cross This Out.” I share this *testimonio* (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012) first to be in relationship with you as the reader. I seek to connect with your own racialized experiences, your work, and you as human beyond this article. Second, I aim to make transparent the undergirding principles that critically

informed my response to our door. To be clear, what happened was not simply vandalism. This was a visual-spatial violation as well as negation of radicalized ideas and people. Unfortunately, such acts are all too common. As such, visibilizing the principles that informed my designed response aims to invoke your agency through offering a versatile framework that can be adapted to different contexts. To assist with invoking one’s radical imagination (Kelly, 2002), I also share how other educators across the country have implemented these principles within their own contexts.

My hope in sharing Cross This Out is that we are reminded that radical pedagogies do not exist solely within the four walls of our classrooms. We can act and we can make that action public alongside our students and colleagues. As such, radical pedagogies reach out and up in order to respire, inspire, and conspire. That is, our radical pedagogies facilitate the respiration of hope, courage, and affirmation into our humanity. Radical pedagogies inspire



FIGURE 1. OUR OFFICE DOOR WITH SIGNS CROSSED OUT.

us to imagine futures that are absent of oppressive conditions, as well as engage us in a praxis that maps such futurity. Finally, my hope in invoking the radical imagination conspires to be disruptive by interrogating the very practices and structures that systemically inhibit our well-being in the first place.

Cross This Out: A Designed Response

One thing I learned from being a leader of a school and community-based organization was that when an oppressive and/or traumatic act occurs, a timely and thoughtful response that is rooted in both critical courage and love is necessary. People are always waiting to see how a leader responds. That includes students in your classroom and school, as well as the adults within your school and the

surrounding community. Such responses grounded in critical courage and love send messages about where folks stand, what is valued, and what will not be quietly accepted. Critical courage and love also require that we consider our own humanity and need for justice, healing, and self-preservation.

Not responding is also a response—one that conveys just the opposite message. I responded the very next day from when my door was first violated. As I considered what my actual response would be, it occurred to me that if someone felt emboldened enough to cross something out, I could cross things out too. My overall message was “If you want to cross something out, then cross *this* out.”



FIGURES 2. OUR DOOR WITH A CROSS THIS OUT QUILT.

The idea of crossing something out became the central idea behind my designed response. I created and installed what I called the “Cross This Out” quilt. Each “quilt tile” was made of cardstock that contained a specific idea that I either sought to courageously “cross out” or embrace as a value. Since I believed that the timeliness of my action was important, I had to also balance the simplicity and attractiveness of my design. The form of the quilt—paper, large print, intentional use of color and grey tones—was designed to be bold, eclipsing, and modular. Though not intentional at first, the form of the quilt’s design also made it easily accessible for others to install their own. After I installed the quilt, I quickly learned that such accessibility would be valuable.

Cross This Out: Four Principles That Guide a Pedagogy of Disruption, Healing, Mobilizing

Within a few days, several people had requested copies of my quilt design. The first batch of quilts that I shared included only words. In full transparency, some of the words represented universal ideas, which meant they also lacked precision of intended meaning. For instance, my first version of the quilt included ideas such as “love” and “hope.” When others started to request permission to modify the content of the quilt, I noticed some added words such as “tolerance” and “acceptance.” Because I did not want the critical perspectives that grounded my design to be lost or misinterpreted as they seemed to be doing in some cases, I realized that I might need to articulate a stance.

Creating a stance could explicitly frame the nature of the quilt’s design and intended purposes. In order for this stance to consistently capture the essence of my intentions, it had to possess an architecture that was principled, values-centered, socio-historically grounded, and higher purpose-driven (Reyes & Zermeño, 2018). Before continuing with discussing Cross This Out, let me pause briefly to describe this architecture.

Possessing an architecture is to have a design and structure. A stance that has an architecture that is principled, values-centered, socio-historically grounded, and higher purpose-driven creates an interconnected design with multiple layers that have social justice aims. Being *principled* meant that articulated beliefs and perspectives would act as a foundation of reasoning for both the purposes of the design and the design itself. In this manner, a system of beliefs could be articulated in such a way that could be versatily applied towards different contexts, while still being rooted in a set of foundational principles.

A *values-centered* stance commits to a humanizing practice that is rooted in values deemed important, and in the case of Cross This Out, important to me. Developing a stance that is centered around values requires transparency in terms of not only what one believes, but what one believes *in*. For Cross This Out, the choice of words that were not crossed out represented ideas that I valued – that I believed *in*. What I valued was also represented in what I rejected – those ideas that I crossed out.

A stance that is explicitly grounded by a *socio-historical* analysis ensures that the creation of the stance is informed by and situated in a larger body of discourses that unapologetically critique systems of oppression and how they have manifested in society. Additionally, critical discourses that provide a socio-historical analysis help to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between our specific contexts and the systemic and reproductive nature of oppression. In the case of Cross This Out, I invoked concepts such as the *Beloved Community* as discussed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, *Self-Determination* as facilitated by Huey P. Newton, and *Self-Preservation* as framed by Audre Lorde.

Lastly, a stance that drives towards a *higher purpose* reveals a social justice vision rooted in a collective hope

(Ginwright, 2016) that moves beyond the immediate moment. Too often our purposes are confined to short-term, one-dimensional, technocratic, individualistic, and apolitical goals. Watson (2018) adds, "social justice does not just live in our heads, but also in our hearts—and most definitely in our hands and feet. In other words, it is not merely what is conceived that is revolutionary, but what is achieved" (p. 16). A stance must always remind us of our higher purpose and what we want to achieve. Cross This Out's higher purpose aimed to go beyond installing a visual arts exhibit as a counter to vandalism. Cross This Out aimed to invoke praxis in the hallways, in the classrooms, in the assemblies, on social media. It sought to create conditions that invited dialogue about the meaning and impacts of concepts articulated on quilt tiles. It invited self-reflection and further exploration of what one believes *in* and what one stands against.

As the quilt was quickly being disseminated, I realized that my principled, values-centered, socio-historically grounded, and higher purpose-driven intentions were being missed. I needed to interrupt this immediately because I believed deeply that my intentions behind Cross This Out were radical. Upon careful reflection, I soon released a second iteration of Cross This Out that included more precise word choices and an introductory framing. I articulated a set of principles organized by the four areas listed below as part of that framing:

1. Culture of Critique
2. Action and (R)evolution
3. Teaching and Learning
4. Healing

Cross This Out: Cultivating a Culture of Critique

Cross This Out must stand in the political sphere of culture in ways that its visual nature acts not only to inspire others to participate and provoke thought, but also to incite critical dialogue and self-reflection around complex ideas that open up a critique of systems of oppression. That is why the selection of terms is complex and specific. On the surface, Cross This Out may seem like a "positive" response rooted in "acceptance." I assure you, though, that was not my intent. I wanted to provoke people's critical curiosity and open up opportunities for teaching and learning. A concept such as "love" is universal to the point that no one would likely question it or engage in dialogue about it. Seeing "love" professed would certainly incite good feelings of positivity, but I needed to provoke more.

For instance, from the Critical Pedagogy tradition that can be traced to Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970), more nuanced concepts like "revolutionary love" (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008) and "political love" (Sandoval, 2000) were also invoked in the quilt. Both of these derivatives of love contain an analysis of oppression that most people would not know. However, the intent to invoke critical ideas that stemmed from universal notions was to tap into one's familiarity with certain ideals (e.g., "love")

while also catalyzing enough of a pause from any viewer to create a slight dissonance. The right kind and amount of dissonance can incite one's critical curiosity (Camangian, 2013). To do that, I knew that this action could not be one that sat within the polite terrain of neoliberalism.

If Cross This Out were a neoliberal effort, I would not have highlighted radical concepts such as "radical healing," "critical care," or "indigeneity," all which have been thoroughly examined, theorized, and/or researched within critical, sociocultural discourses. Rather, I might have chosen more neoliberal, mainstreamed concepts such as "tolerance," "inclusion," "acceptance," or "diversity." If this were a neoliberal effort, I would not have drawn attention to complex and controversial ideas such as "white supremacy," "toxic masculinity," or "settler colonialism" that could potentially open up teaching and learning opportunities of these particular forms of systemic oppression. If this were a neoliberal effort, I would have chosen more general, bumper sticker-like, depoliticized concepts like "inequality" instead.

No. My response was rooted in a critically-informed stance that rejected systems of hate, supremacy, and oppression. It did not seek inclusion. It sought to disrupt the very systems that intended to exclude minoritized folks like me in the first place.

Cross This Out: Cultivating Action and (R)Evolution

Cross This Out must not only inspire action, it must encourage agency, creativity, and critical (r)evolution. Educators, organizers, and youth/young adult advocates must be able to access the essence of Cross This Out, while also evolving it in revolutionary ways that are culturally responsive to their own contexts. Knowing where we stand on issues and events is important; how we stand there is crucial.

While my officemate and I were the only ones in our hallway whose door received racially-motivated vandalism, we were never alone in having to respond to it. *Where I*

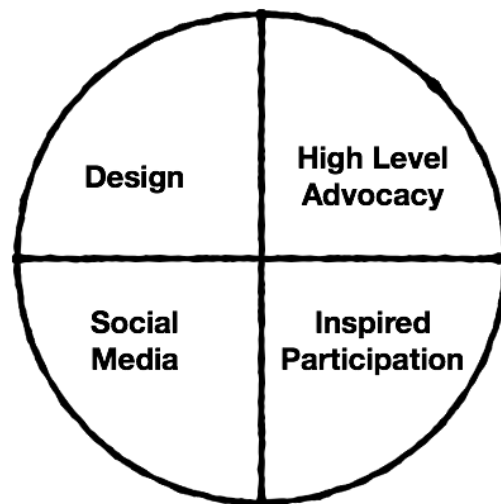


FIGURE 3. ACTIONS TO TRANSFORM AN INDIVIDUAL RESPONSE INTO COMMUNITY MOVEMENT.

stood on racialized oppression was demonstrated by *how* I stood there when the moment arose. That single action, however, invited many others to both show *where* they stood and *how* they stood there as well. Four actions intersected to transform my individual response into an emerging community movement.

First, the design, content, and accessibility of the form itself—the Cross This Out Quilt—was not only boldly visible and easily readable once installed, it was also made available as a PDF file, a packet of already printed-out card stocks, and as a single unit, door-sized poster. Having these three forms of the quilt readily available for others to use dramatically reduced the potential barriers associated with having to invest significant labor and thought towards creating one’s own quilt. At the same time, the modularity of the design that involved each quilt tile being a separate 8.5 x 11 piece of paper made it so that individuals installing a quilt could reconfigure it in their own way.

Second, even though I considered myself an intermediate user at best, I leveraged the social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter, while employing a movement building medium: the hashtag. In my postings, along with my description of what happened and how I responded, I invited others to utilize the PDF file I provided to install their own quilt, take a picture of it, and then post it under the hashtag, #CrossThisOut. I believed that with the assistance of these social media technologies, folks who had not installed their own quilt could get inspired not only by my actions, but also by others. I wanted to invoke the sense that folks could be a part of something bigger than any one individual.

Third, my college Dean and the university’s Chief Diversity Officer both championed my quilt response. They viewed my action as a model of how to lovingly, critically, and creatively respond to acts of oppression. As such, they not only encouraged others to install a Cross This Out quilt on their door/wall, they also had several printed-out packets available for other faculty/staff to take. Their advocacy as people with positional authority carried weight in inspiring others.

Fourth, the combination of the first and second actions, which focused on disseminating the quilt and inviting others to install their own and post a photo to #CrossThisOut, created momentum in ways that moved beyond people I knew. Within a week, several people both on my campus as well as other university and K–12 campuses in and outside of California posted their unique designs of the Cross This Out quilt. It became less about who I was and what I did and more about what we all valued. It was not that Cross This Out *gave* agency or “voice to the voiceless.” Cross This Out merely helped others to showcase the powerful work they were already doing in an accessible format that was simultaneously building community and a movement. Their inspired participation was contagious.

Cross This Out: Cultivating Teaching and Learning

Cross This Out must invite and inspire extended teaching, learning, and organizing opportunities alongside students. We must shift the traditional teacher–student relationship towards one that recognizes teachers as students and students as teachers. For instance, as the photos and #CrossThisOut postings started to emerge on social media, I was excited to see what I did not anticipate. I saw teachers and program coordinators working alongside their students to create their own version of the quilt from scratch.

Through social media, I also saw words that I had not initially thought of from elementary students all the way up to graduate students who made their own quilts that crossed out ideas such as “gun violence” and “police brutality.” In a 7th grade middle school English/Language Arts class, these words also extended to writing what the teacher, Ms. Gente, called a “critical essay project.” This project involved



FIGURE 4. CROSS THIS OUT SENT FROM COLLEAGUES AND STUDENTS WORKING IN THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STUDENT CENTER AT CSU EAST BAY.

students researching a community issue and asserting a position on it. Ms. Gente shared a critical essay by one of her students, Jelani (all names used in this article are pseudonyms). Entitled, “Racial Profiling and Police Brutality in the Town,” Jelani maps out an argument that begins with examining data:

The community-based organization, Mapping Police Violence, said that black people are three times more

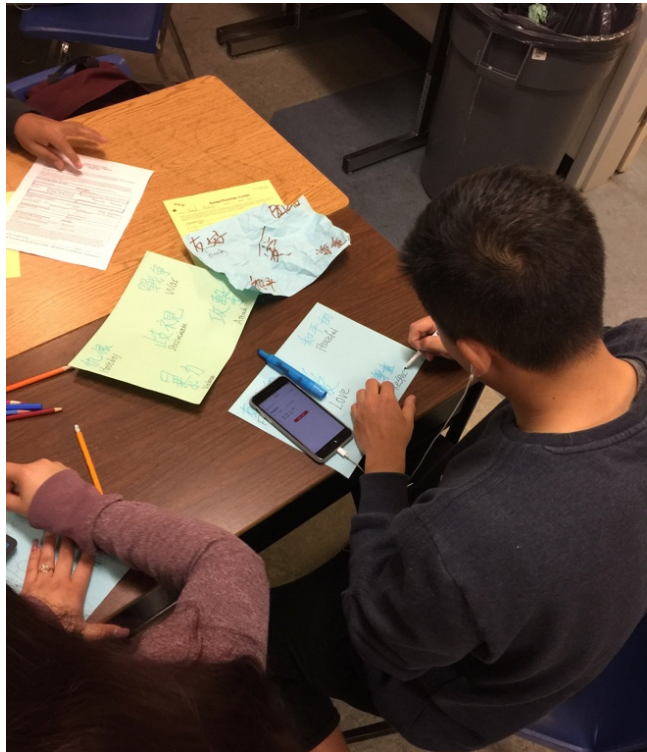
to continually resist and counter systemically oppressive acts.

GINWRIGHT (2016) makes a distinction between systemic oppression and suffering. Oppression is the structure of beliefs, practices, processes, behaviors, and language uses that “limit opportunities, restrict freedoms, and constrain liberties for marginalized groups” (p. 28). Suffering, however, is the result of the compounding and cumulative internal traumas of experiencing oppression. Often, people who commit to fighting injustice are so outwardly focused that their energy is heavily directed towards the fight outside of their bodies. In many cases, this commitment comes from a sustained history of experiencing systemic oppression from an early age. The effects of experiencing systemic oppression accumulate (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012;

Smith, Yosso & Solórzano, 2007; Solórzano, Allen, & Carroll, 2002).

As these effects compound over time without engagement in intentional healing justice work, people can prematurely age. Public health scholar Dr. Arline Geronimus (1992) called this “weathering.” Her research examined how age does not hold the same effect for all people. Geronimus found that experiencing a lifetime of socioeconomic, racialized, and gendered oppressions at the individual and community level made African American women, in particular, age more rapidly than other ethnic groups.

Given this, when we allow those experienced oppressions to remain in the part of our brain that regulates emotions, we internalize them into our body. When we



FIGURES 7, 8, AND 9. MS. CORAZON'S STUDENTS' CROSS THIS OUT QUILTS.

receive traumatic experience after experience, threat after threat, we can get numb to them. We start saying “it is what it is” or “it’s whatever.” We get exhausted. We get burnt out. Over time, we get weathered.

As educators grounded in a commitment to continually work towards a more just and healthy world, we often work so relentlessly hard that we do not realize when we internalize the daily traumas faced throughout the course of our fight. Fighting oppression, as well as carrying those that our students face, is still traumatic. When we continuously neglect the trauma and suffering that we experience over time, our brain causes us to lose awareness and attentiveness over our bodies.

The part of our brain that first experiences the suffering caused by oppression is the one that regulates emotion and threats. This part of our brain viscerally catalyzes our fight or flight responses. Our brain also does not distinguish between physical, emotional, mental, and social threats. A threat is a threat—it sends the same signals throughout our body that trigger our need to fight or flee.

Even though I did not perceive the act of some unknown person(s) crossing out ideas I stood for as a physical threat, I certainly realized that I was under threat. That evening when I first saw the photo of my door and through the next day when I created and installed my Cross This Out quilt, my body was experiencing a heightened state of anxiety and alertness. These were symptoms of suffering. At the same time, since I am a trained and experienced martial artist, my body felt as if I was anticipating a physical fight.

Imagine our students who face such conditions day in and out. To be under a constant state of threat means that they are also under a constant state of heightened anxiety and alertness. On the block, we might refer to that heightened state as being “armored up.” Such an existence is not only emotionally exhausting, but also mentally and physically draining as well. That exhaustion is internalized by the body if there are not intentional conditions and practices in place to process the traumas and nurture the necessary healing.

Our work as educators within our institutions, with our coworkers, our students, and their families places us in positions where oppression, trauma, and threats can be experienced both directly and indirectly. The structure of schooling is such that its fast pace, demanding schedule, multiple competing priorities, and variety of personalities with unique experiences create conditions that make us continually move and continually move *on* without taking the necessary time to pause, work through traumatic experiences, and humanize ourselves by listening, validating, understanding, and processing. The ways that schools are organized also maintain a hyper focus on developing and implementing “solutions” before thoroughly and critically problematizing situations first. If we do not have a thorough analysis of a problem, then it is likely that our solution will neither be sustainable nor effective. As a result, the very nature of working within a school setting can be traumatic.

However, when we employ the part of our brain that controls cognitive processing, we can productively work

through trauma and towards healing. We interrupt the weathering process. Our work in schools does not only have to be traumatic and singularly defined by the oppression experienced (Ginwright, 2016). Our work can and should be centered upon healing as well. The power of the work we do in schools is that we do it *with* and *in* community. This makes possible the liberatory potential of cultivating collective hope. Healing does not have to be a solo endeavor. Our healing is not only *self*-preservation—it is also *community* preservation.

The work I did to create Cross This Out helped me to process the trauma I had experienced. It helped me to employ the cognitive processing part of my brain in order to interrupt my suffering from settling too far into my body. But what I did not realize at the time was that the creation and installation of Cross This Out had also cultivated collective hope.

A Movement of Collective Hope

What I realized through the Cross This Out journey was that folks were activating a process of healing—for themselves, for those whom they worked with, and for anyone who walked by their door. Together and individually, we were processing the ways in which visual symbols of oppression often get invisibilized, which unknowingly also traumatizes us. Rather than seeing another racially motivated sign or act of vandalism that went unaddressed, though, Cross This Out allowed us all to take a collective stand. It said to those who had witnessed and/or experienced similar acts, “You are not alone” and “We got you.” It began to open up dialogue toward cultivating collective hope.

As I was taking a photo of my newly quilted door, two young Arab women walked past me. I cannot say I knew what they thought, felt, or even said to one another, but they stopped. I heard them talk to each other in their native tongue. They smiled at each other. They smiled at me. Then they took their own photo of my door. I was so moved at what had just happened, that I did not think to stop and ask them what they thought. I just allowed myself to experience the unspoken connection. I experienced collective hope.

One teacher from Minnesota, who had worked with his English class to create their own Cross This Out quilt, shared with me a reflection written by one of his students, Esperanza:

Why “Cross this out” was so crucial for me to participate and create as much posters I could think of was due to a lot of reasons. One being, as a person of color I want to do everything I can to advocate and raise awareness. Another reason being because by doing this small action I’m not only making myself feel better, but I could make others feel better as well. I can potentially make a better environment by letting my peers know that this isn’t tolerated here and it should be treated as a safe place where everyone should be valued and welcomed. Another reason, as a teenager having to walk through life constantly being patronized and told what to do, a project like this that lets you take charge

and voice your opinion couldn't be passed up. So that's what this project means to me. (Esperanza, personal communication, March 2, 2018).

In Esperanza's reflection, she revealed her sense of agency to not only get involved with her school community, but also to send a values-centered message that she believed was needed. She also revealed her agency to be a part of her own healing and the healing of others. Such messages, especially from young people, communicate to other youth the importance of expressing one's voice not as an end goal or product, but rather as part of an ongoing process of cultivating collective hope.

Visual symbols such as Cross This Out stand in opposition to the public hate that increasingly pervades our country to the point where people become inured to it. Cross This Out sits at the intersection of community organizing, teaching and learning, and healing in ways that help to embolden us to not shake our heads and remain silent, to never be silent, to never accept acts of supremacy and domination as the norm. If some people are emboldened to cross out Black Lives Matter signs or put up "It's okay to be white" posters, then we must also be emboldened to publicly show what we stand for and how we stand there. We must do so in ways that are not only inclusive of others, moreover, but also in ways where our actions aim to disrupt, dismantle, heal from, and reconfigure the very systems and practices that excluded us in the first place. In that process, we collectively heal. What will you cross out?

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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Social Movements for Freedom: An Anti-Oppressive Approach to Literacy and Content Area Learning in an Urban Fourth Grade Classroom

by Nadine Bryce



PHOTO BY T. CHICK MCCLURE

The Curriculum Showcase

I arrived at my nine-year old son's fourth grade classroom around 9:10 am on a Friday morning in June, eager to see what children had done for the long-awaited annual curriculum showcase. Every classroom had been transformed into a vibrant gallery of students' work (Author, 2012), and hundreds of excited adults and children filled the hallways and classrooms. On a bulletin board in this room was a sign that displayed two guiding questions (Figure 1).

How can we analyze the ways activists fought for change?

How can learning about their lives inspire "social justice"?

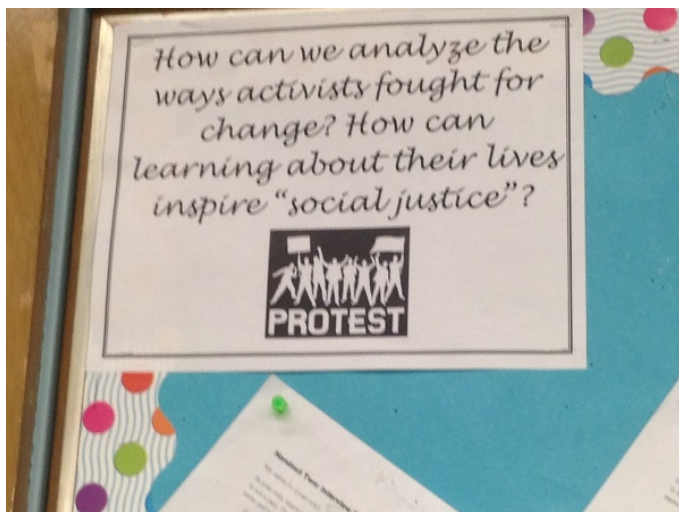


FIGURE 1. THIS SIGN DISPLAYED GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE CURRICULUM UNIT ON THE STUDY OF ACTIVISTS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Parents and community members were already clustered around children, near trifold presentation boards, propped up on tables. Images, captions, slogans, and brief essays affixed to the boards provided concrete evidence children had studied and reflected on the contributions of activists who fought for freedom and justice. They referred to these images and artifacts as they talked.

As a parent of this school for five years, I was looking forward to this celebratory event to applaud the teacher and children for their hard work, and to witness my son's growth as a learner. But, in my dual-identity as a parent and a teacher, a boundary-crosser (Dyson, 2007), a former elementary school teacher, current teacher educator, and educational researcher, I was thrilled to explore children's learning and knowledge production. Because the showcase addressed racism, sexism, colonialism, classism, and homophobia, I tell this story of my encounters with children to link my personal experiences to a broader context, the power and promise of using literacy in an anti-oppressive pedagogy to raise children's awareness and transform learning in an urban elementary school.

Methods

I began this qualitative inquiry into the curriculum showcase as a part of a larger case study on literacy in project-based learning at this school, to explore teachers' and children's academic experiences, challenges, motivation, and attitudes while engaging in project-based instruction. Project-based learning (Boss & Krauss, 2007; Krajcik, Blumenfeld, Marx, & Soloway, 1994; Solomon, 2003; Spires, Hervey, Morris, & Stelpflug, 2012) invites children to explore challenging curriculum-based problems or social issues through an integrative, interdisciplinary approach. The teacher, several parents, and the principal consented, and parents gave permission to write about their children's work. Data sources include reflections on my experiences and encounters with children (Denzin, 2014; Dyson, 2010; Ellis, 1997; Ellis & Bochner, 2000), along with artifacts and handouts children gave as a part of their presentations, pictures of trifold presentation boards, semi-structured interviews with the teacher, principal, and several parents, and field notes generated after the observation, away from the classroom (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 2003).

Data were organized and coded for initial themes and patterned regularities (Creswell, 2007). More than an in-depth account of what unfolded during the curriculum showcase, I present specific events and circumstances of my interactions with children to illuminate my personal story within the culture of the classroom and school in which this inquiry took place (Reed-Danahay, 1997; Van Maanen, 1995). The goal is to transcend the narrow and modest origins of this classroom-based inquiry and extend it to the big picture concerned with the transformative power of education as a site for hope and struggle (Freire, 1994/2014), "hope for a better life, and struggle over how to understand and enact and achieve that better life" (Ayers, 1998, p. xvii). In this paper, I examined how literacy enabled and promoted sociopolitical consciousness and community engagement, how the teacher purposefully engaged children to consider obstacles to an expression of their full humanity and courage to move against these obstacles (Ayers, 1998; Bomer & Bomer, 2001; Kumashiro, 2000, 2015; Vasquez, 2014).

The Learning Context

With an enrollment of 804 students, this urban elementary school was the second largest in its district. At the time of the study, 69% of the students were Black, 11% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 10% White. This school had the highest percentage of students who scored at levels 3 or 4 on standardized tests (ELA = 77%; Math = 71%), outperforming schools in the comparison group (ELA = 64%; Math = 65%), and schools citywide (ELA = 40%; Math = 42%). Compared to 661 other elementary schools in the city, 13% of the children at this school had disabilities (compared to 20% citywide), 2% were taught in self-contained classrooms (compared to 6% citywide), 1% were English Language Learners (compared to 18% citywide), and 46% were in economic need (compared to 61% citywide).

My son's teacher, Ashley Lorenzo, a veteran of 10 years, was teaching fourth grade for the first time. She described her class of 32 students, predominantly children of color, as reflecting the racial and economic diversity of the school. In this average fourth grade class, several students were achieving at an accelerated rate, and several were struggling, but all of them were reading on grade level. Two children had IEPs (individualized educational plans) and needed special education services, and none were English Language Learners.

In this unit, Ms. Lorenzo invited students to explore what it means to fight against oppression, for freedom and justice, in the United States and beyond. Throughout the year, children read about civil rights, immigration, the labor movement, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and freedom movements, past and present. They analyzed a range of texts, including novels, informational texts, biographies, song lyrics, and visual images. In response to their reading, and for the showcase, they created pamphlets, newsletters, posters, timelines, essays, dioramas, poems, songs, digital slides, and other artifacts. They made notes to organize and practice what they would say during their presentations.

What follows are selected samples of children's topics and responses to illustrate the transformative power of education, and how one teacher used literacy as a form of social action to raise children's consciousness and inspire change (Vasquez, 2014). Analysis (Creswell, 2014; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2003) of my encounters with all 32 children in 10 presentation groups revealed patterns of an active and strategic approach to literacy (Duke, 2014; Fountas & Pinnell, 2006). As children read, wrote, and talked with others, they paraphrased, summarized, and interpreted what they learned. They compared, contrasted, and evaluated people's actions and the outcome of events that challenged oppression.

Synthesizing Social Movements

For two hours on that Friday morning in June, just a few weeks after the standardized tests, parents, family members, friends, teachers, administrators, and community representatives dropped in to hear children talk about their work.

Adults bustled about from station to station, while children hovered near their desks, stepping away from time to time, to visit a friend or two. I glanced over at Reggie (all children's names are pseudonyms), who was standing alone by his station, an interactive whiteboard with a scrolling digital presentation on social movements. I missed the first slide. The second slide projected while Reggie explained that a social movement is "...something that changes a law." The slide stated:

HOW PEOPLE CREATED SOCIAL MOVEMENT

"Do you know how people created a social movement? First, people wants to take over an action of what is happening, and to change it. Secondly, you would have to spread it out on newspapers, on websites, social networks, E-mail your friends, and tell organizations to help spread the word. Also, you can tell the press and

make blogs to influence people. Lastly, go and take action and try to influence the government to change the law. This is how people create a social movements."

Instead of reading from it, Reggie used the slide to frame his talk. He initially told me, "Reaction, revolution, and reform. How do you create a social movement? You can create a social movement by...they create it by...well, it's what I said. The 3 Rs."

Then an image appeared, of a large group of people standing together, holding a sign that said, "Free speech."

Reggie explained, "But it's not easy because they have to like, like gather people up and then, after they gather people up, they have to go and protest. And after they protest, they have to try...well they continue protesting, but they have to try to convince the government."

Referring to the slides, Reggie explained, "It switches by itself." He read, "Famous social movements," then said, "I'm not gonna mention all. I'm gonna mention some. The civil rights movement, the labor movement, immigration movement, the LGBTQ movement, there were many, many movements."

Next, an image of tens of thousands of people facing the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. appeared, and Reggie said, "This is...this is about a movement." Then he paused.

"The March on Washington, it looks like," I added.

"For civil rights?" he asked.

"Yeah," I said, and nodded. He paused again.

I asked, "What do you think is the result of all these people getting together to protest something?"

"The result? To change something that is not fair, or that they just don't like. Because if there was no thing as social movements, the world would still be unfair. And, we would be going to different schools. Like people, people would be like, unfair. Everything would be unfair."

The image of people standing at the March on Washington in 1963 gave Reggie pause, as he contemplated a broad answer to my question. Without social movements for freedom and justice, the world would be unfair. Although his slides included notes on movements for civil rights, labor unions, immigration, LGBTQ+ rights, and Indian independence from British colonial rule, he did not read them all. Yet, he referenced the struggle to desegregate U.S. schools based on race, though it was not a part of his presentation. Like Reggie, when relevant, children in all other groups highlighted information they learned from a synthesis of other lessons, in addition to the results of their research and writing.

In the 3 - 5 minutes or so I spent with each group, space permitting, it was not possible to completely assess what a child knew about a given topic. However, that was not my expectation. I was drawn into each presentation through a more authentic author-speaker-audience relationship, one that disrupted the teacher-as-sole-authority trope common to most schools (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995). Children presented what they learned, sometimes

by reading from their notes, but most times, through an exchange of questions and answers designed to elicit discrete facts merged with key ideas.

Understanding Race, Economics, and Power

I visited Amir's group on the Labor Movement and listened to him read.

The labor movement in the United States grew out of the need to protect the rights and interests of workers. Those in the organized labor unions fought for better working wages, reasonable hours and safe working conditions. The labor movement led efforts to prevent child labor, give health benefits, and provide aid to who were injured or fired.

Labor unions existed in one form or another in the United States.

Also, the immigrants coming into the country affected the wages to decrease. Poor pay and work conditions led to the creation of the 'AFL' the American Federation of Labor in 1866. The Congress became sympathetic to the labor force, as time passed, which led to the creation of the Department of Labor.

All these events led to the "Fair Labor Standard Act" which mandated a minimum wage and pay for overtime work and basic child labor laws. The labor movement grew and changed along with the major historic events during the twentieth century."

After he read, I asked, "So, what's the big idea that you want us to remember about the labor movement and immigration?"

Amir replied, "That, that, that people didn't get good pay and, and had unreasonable hours. Did you know, a woman in a factory, she got zero dollars? A slave. In a week, she got no money. Later on, a woman also, she got two dollars per hour. Now working hours decreased to eight hours a day, she could earn up to fifteen dollars per hour."

Another student in Amir's group, Mike, said, "I was doing a timeline, and I was also doing connections. An average Pullman porter would have to work twice as many hours than an average American."

"Can you tell us what a Pullman porter is?" I asked.

Mike continued, "Well, they worked on trains from, like for uhmm, like you wanna go somewhere or travel by train, they would clean the trains, uhmm, if there was anything minor, they would like help someone with their luggage. Yeah."

"So, were they mostly Black men, or no?" I asked.

"They were mostly Black men. Like, they were used like slaves," Mike said.

Amir added, "They relied on tips. And, they didn't get money. And, they could live in the railroad or in the train.

They could stay and sleep, but they didn't get money." He speculated that in today's economy, they might earn about two dollars an hour.

I asked, "Is there anything else you want me to remember about the labor movement and civil rights?"

"The civil rights...the labor movement isn't the second social movement...it's the first in history."

In this unscripted learning event, children navigated and narrated their exchanges, giving facts from their research, while making connections between historic and contemporary issues. They took turns sharing that labor union movements struggled to address fair wages, hours, and safer working conditions for all workers. Ideally, the unions advocated for racial and gender equality, which came out in their talk, but leadership was segregated and assumed to be the privilege of White men, which did not come out in their talk. Union leaders' historic resistance to diversity and equity and unwillingness to change systems based on White privilege is a complex part of the reality of social movements, which children will learn as they explore the effects of structural and institutional racism.

Evaluating Tensions and Taking Perspective

Francesca introduced her diorama, which depicted the March on Washington, where Dr. Martin Luther King "...gave the great I Have a Dream speech," she said. I noted images of mostly Black men holding signs, like "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom" and "No U.S. Dough to Help Jim Crow Grow." Newspaper headlines, such as, "Let us not wallow in the valley..." and from the *Washington Post*, "250,000 Jam Mall in Mammoth Rally: Solemn, Orderly Pleas for Equality" lined the panels of the box to recreate the scene. Finally, near a picture of the pool, were the words, "Free at last! Free at Last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Francesca began, "Uhhh...basically, the civil rights movement revolved around segregation, and how they were like, 'You have to go over there because you look different.' It was just completely wrong. And, so, like, think about the way Dr. King worked to stopped that saying. But Black Panthers was more revolved around resisting police brutality, and uhmm the police actually crippled the civil rights that aided and protected them. Uhh - but you might think that Black Panthers were violent, but actually, it's more of, if you punch me, I'm gonna punch you back. Self-defense, not violence."

"Okay. So, they didn't start the trouble, but if they had trouble, they would fight," I said.

"Yeah. Like, so Martin Luther King and Black Panthers had different approaches to the same argument."

"Right. Uhhh. Which approach do you agree with after learning about both of them?"

"Uhhh. I think Black Panthers at this point...because I defend myself, if I was getting hurt right. If I got boys, or something, I'd defend myself. Uhhh...they're working to do

the same...help the same causes, but self-defense. So, I might think Black Panthers.”

“So, so, they used violence when necessary, and he advocated non-violence.”

“But he thought that it’s better to wait to get your freedom, so I just honestly think that...” Francesca said, then paused.

“Okay. You disagree with that strategy.”

“I don’t mean that I don’t like him. He was a giant part of the civil rights, but...I think there...,” she said, and pointed to her poster, to another group member’s biography of Rosa Parks, and someone else’s essay on the connections between the civil rights movement, Black Lives Matter, and the Black Panther Party. She gestured and signaled other strategies that involved direct action and protests.

Francesca’s strong opinion in favor of more radical approaches to fighting injustice was surprising. I didn’t expect to hear this young girl who appeared to be White wrestle with the differences between nonviolent protests of the civil rights movement and the self-defense stance of the Black Panther Party. Ms. Lorenzo exposed children to a wide variety of activists and movements, and children were free to explore and interpret these ideas, often from their intersectional identities as children, raced, classed, and gendered (Crenshaw, 1991).

Challenging Heteronormativity

This final example epitomized the value of the diversity in this school and the larger community. Children challenged oppression by naming LGBTQ+ rights as human rights.

Oliver, Emily, and Sandra created a poster with a prominent rainbow flag and sign that said, “Born This Way.” As I approached the group, they chimed in together. “So, we...so first of all, the letters LGBTQ stand for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer.”

Oliver continued, “Which basically are homosexual. The struggle in the LGBTQ community is they have been abused while they love each other, by law. It’s very depressing.”

“Yeah,” I agreed.

“Also, the issue that they face today are many LGBTQ people still face violence, especially those of non-American descent. Even though American gays were granted the right to marry last year, they are in danger of losing that right with the new politicians of the office. Also, the rights that they fought for were to love who they want to love, whoever they love, to be whatever gender they feel inside, and to be free. Also, some notable figures are, Emily, I’ll let you do Emma Goldman, ‘cause you wrote about it, so...,” he added.

“Okay. Emma Goldman was not, was a heterosexual or not gay,” Emily began, “...and she, but she didn’t like how the government treated the LGBT community. So instead of going along with them because she is heterosexual, she actually stood up in court and had a whole long speech. If

you read my paragraph that I worked oh so hard on, there’s actually only a fraction of her speech,” Emily explained.

Oliver added, “A quote that she said was, ‘The demand for equal rights in every vocation of life is just and fair. But after all, the most vital right is the right to love and be loved.’ Also, this one is from Oscar Wilde. He was imprisoned and punished with hard labor because he wanted to stand up for men and the other gay people, the other homosexuals. And a quote that he said, was, ‘You don’t love someone for their looks, or their clothes, or their fancy car, but because they sing a song only you can hear.’ Also, the last quote is from Harvey Milk, uhmm, who was the first openly gay politician elected to office in California. He created laws against discrimination for someone’s sexual orientation. He got murdered shortly after taking office. A quote that he stated is, ‘All young people, regardless of sexual orientation or identity, deserve to have a safe supportive environment in which to achieve their full potential.’”

“Absolutely,” I said.

Emily pointed to the poster and added, “And, there’s a fraction of it...” referring to Emma Goldman’s speech.

I asked them, “What did you learn from all this research?”

Oliver replied, “I learned...this is something I already believed, but it just makes me think of even more, that LGBTQ people should not have to fight for the right to love who they want. Everyone has the right to be who they are. Love is not a privilege. It’s a right.”

Fighting for equality and fair participation in government for all citizens, gay and non-gay, was the mission. Emma Goldman fought for the rights of women and LGBT people to be fully liberated in their exercise of freedom, to be treated as fully developed and self-determined human beings, equal to all others. She was a feminist, a revolutionary, a writer, an organizer.

Sandra, also a member of this group, wore a black jacket and pants to portray “Rachel Maddow,” a news anchor on the cable news station, MSNBC, and read the biography she had written about Maddow, highlighting her success as one of the highest rated news anchors on cable television, and a proud and married lesbian.

Mark, the final member, shared an advocacy song he had written. He pointed to himself, and said, “This shirt inspired me a lot.” Written in magic marker were the words, “Love is Love.” He explained, “Because, teens are committing suicide, because people are bullying them for becoming who they really are, I have to support the LGBT community. I feel like they have self-determination. And, I wrote this song.”

“Can you sing it?” I asked.

Reading from his yellow lined paper, Mark’s lyrics flowed easily.

It Ain’t Easy

We got to win this fight

For LGBT rights

It isn't right

You got to try

To win this fight

Having rights

It's a given thing

Like being in a school...

Yeah, it's a right

Why do you discriminate them?

They are people like us.

If we be mean to them

They will commit suicide.

"They will commit suicide. That represents the teens," he interjected.

It ain't easy

To be them

It ain't easy

To try to fit in

It ain't easy

Not to be bullied

Why? Why? Why?

They are people like us.

Why, why, why?

It's not fair to us to be bullied.

For this group, and the rest of the class, the right to love, the right to self-determination, the right to live in peace, LGBTQ+ rights, were human rights.

Social and Academic Empowerment Through Literacy

As children prepared to engage in interactive conference-style exchanges with family and community members about social movements for freedom, they met Anchor Standards for College and Career Readiness in reading, writing, speaking, and listening (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010). Individually, they compared and contrasted what they found, analyzed and synthesized information from multiple sources, documented and displayed relevant and accurate findings, and responded to the ideas of others. Collaboratively, they presented and built on each other's ideas, while expressing their own, clearly and persuasively, each demonstrating a strong command of academic English. Children organized their findings and gathered supporting evidence to reason in a way that was appropriate for the audience. Some used digital media to find and present images on their posters or in a digital slide show, but everyone created collaborative

trifold boards to display ideas and augment their presentations. Each child contributed a written text to reflect the outcome of a literacy-focused inquiry-based cycle, reading and writing to ask questions, conduct research, gather and analyze evidence, and present findings on social movements for freedom.

In a school where administrators and teachers believed in the capacity of each individual child, and the transformative power of education, it is easy to see how and why a prolonged study of topics like social movements for freedom are the norm. Children were educated so they can become members of "strong, stable, self-governing communities" (Ayers, Hunt & Quinn, 1998; Bomer & Bomer, 2001), able to tackle the most pressing issues of our time, engage in informed exchanges with family and community members, and examine issues of equity and fairness.

Instruction was designed so that children work at their highest capacities, individually and collaboratively, using literacy strategies for comprehension, analysis, and concept building. With information gathered from print, visual, and media sources, and through writing and reflection, children paraphrased, summarized, and synthesized what they learned. Some copied from texts without citing the sources, like Amir did while quoting from two websites (e.g., history.com, investopedia.com) to define and describe the labor union movement. Others were more skillful as they wrote in response to their reading. In this classroom, children were honored at all stages of reading and writing development. Ms. Lorenzo encouraged ongoing self-reflection and peer feedback, supplemented with teacher feedback, and direct instruction. Children worked iteratively through reading and writing processes, rewriting and revising their work. As expected, their writing improved, was focused and substantive, but not perfect.

At times, children read the same novels and informational texts, and at other times, they read individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Led by the questions Ms. Lorenzo posed at the beginning of the unit, how activists fought for change, and how learning about their lives can inspire continued efforts toward social justice, children looked for specific examples to illustrate themes (Vasquez, 2014). As a class, they read, *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis (2002) and *Tiger Rising* by Kate DiCamillo (2001) as whole class novels. They read *One Crazy Summer* by Rita Williams-Garcia (2010), *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry (1989), and *Crash* by Jerry Spinelli (1996) for book clubs. They tied the themes in literature to their study of history and a range of topics: the fight for freedom from colonial rule against the British in the United States and India; the struggle against apartheid in South Africa; the fight against Nazi invasion in Europe; the struggle for racial equality and the right to vote during the civil rights movement in the United States; modern day civil war in Syria; ongoing struggles for gender equality in the U.S. and around the world; and civil rights for those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. In this class, and in this school, teaching and learning toward social justice (Ayers, Hunt & Quinn, 1998; Kumashiro, 2015) meant expanding what children read beyond the experiences and perspectives of those who are privileged in the U.S. and around the world, to reflect all of humanity (Hudson, 2017). Children read a

wider range of texts and learned to ask different kinds of questions about which interpretations matter in school and society and for whose benefit. The goal was to help them examine and challenge the, often, invisible narratives that privilege and favor some groups and identities while marginalizing and disadvantaging others.

Children were afforded the freedom to choose their projects and mode of response, based on their interests and strengths, so they were naturally motivated for this work. They worked together at all stages of the project-based lessons (Blumenfeld, Soloway, Marx, Krajcik, Guzdial, & Palincsar, 1991; Duke, Halvorsen, & Strachan, 2016) that led to the curriculum showcase. Teachers guided them through a pedagogy of possibility (Simon, 1987), to research, read, write, and talk about what they learned with an authentic audience, using literacy to promote academic achievement and sociopolitical consciousness.

As a part of the Curriculum Showcase, all students were asked to write a reflection on their learning experiences. My son wrote (spelling corrected),

I believe that our Curriculum Showcase is important and relevant to today's issue because it shows what is happening in other parts of the world, like in Syria, so we can know what is going on. I learned that the U.S. government is involved with Syria by fighting only Isis and Russia who supports the Syrian government is fighting both ISIS and the opposition groups against the Syrian government. The Syrian Civil War started in 2011 when the government launched soldiers on peaceful protesters because they supported the Arab Spring when 15 boys were tortured and one killed at age 13. Also in 2011, 450,000 Syrians had been killed. In 2014, ISIS made life hard for Muslims.

The Curriculum Showcase is important and relevant to society's history, like with the Holocaust. In the Holocaust, the Nazis took over Berlin and other countries and made Jews wear the Star of David. The Nazis also arrested Jews and sent them to concentration camps. This relates to today's society because there is segregation. Some rights are not for gay people, some rights not for women, fewer unions and people get fired easily, and some immigrants cannot come to America.

Learning from history and present-day issues helps students know what happened in history and how that helps shape our country now. We need to know history because some events are bad and we can't let them happen again, but it is. For all these reasons, we learn lessons from history to prevent bad things from happening.

In this unit on social movements for freedom, children used literacy to look closely at human struggles and the fight for freedom. By making connections between the past and present, children learned that the struggle for justice is complex and ongoing. People must continue to work together and make enormous and persistent efforts to bring about social change. As Ms. Lorenzo explained, the fight for human dignity and freedom continues and is all the more important because of today's divisive political climate which breeds inhumanity and harshness against the most

vulnerable among us, the working class, the poor, the elderly, the disabled, children, veterans, women, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and immigrants. We need a curriculum, she said, that inspires advocacy and empathy for others.

The Challenge of Challenging Oppression

An anti-oppressive approach (Kumashiro, 2015) to an integrated English Language Arts and history unit on social movements is not a common occurrence in American public schools. Through a narrow curriculum, American schools historically reinforce perspectives and experiences of those who are privileged in U.S. and European societies (Zinn, 1999). Many do not wish to recognize ways in which schools contribute to oppression through racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia, for example, and do not agree we need to change the way certain groups or identities are favored and privileged while others are disadvantaged or marginalized.

Those who do must challenge the ways schools and teachers resist change or make change difficult. Common ways of teaching that do not challenge oppression may actually help to perpetuate oppression and the status quo in schools and society. How can teachers prepare for teaching in crisis, and uncertainty, for healing and activism (Kumashiro, 2015)? They must look critically at ways to work against oppression and toward social justice. And, since no educational practice is always anti-oppressive, teachers need to explore the anti-oppressive changes made possible by alternative discourses on teaching (Kumashiro, 2000; Vasquez, 2014).

Both the content and pedagogical processes of the curriculum showcase on social movements were anti-oppressive. Children studied the decisions and actions of activists who fought for social change, in an organic curriculum that emerged from children's interests and teachers' informed perspectives. Children's independent research, writing, collaborative discussion, and assembly of final products transcended traditional forms of education, copying the teacher's notes and answering questions from the textbook. Instead, they negotiated how much they read and wrote, and how and what they shared with an audience. They worked heterogeneously in groups based on interest. They learned to think along with others, developing an intersubjective concept related to specific aspects of social movements (Bomer & Bomer, 2001). The conference-style presentation format afforded children an opportunity to use literacy to broker their own knowledge, as they fielded questions and shared information prepared in advance.

Though the organic curriculum teachers developed was complex, and young children were at times limited in their capacity to understand all the actors and their roles in working for or against justice, the curriculum and pedagogical practices involved in the showcase created a widening and empathetic space for all, without diminishing the demands for motivated learning and deep engagement (Filippatou & Kaldi, 2010).

Importance of Family and Community Involvement

Parents helped to get resources, like trifold boards, books from the library, and online resources, including images children used for signs on their visual displays, and articles they read and annotated in class. In the younger grades, parents helped to create models and exhibits. In the upper grades, children created their own displays, using materials parents supplied. If families could not afford to purchase materials, teachers used resources from the art room, with the principal's support.

Parents of children in Ms. Lorenzo's class, and other parents whose children had been in the school since kindergarten, highlighted the impact of the showcase on family discussions at home. For example, when Mesha's son, Brandon, was in third grade, he researched foods commonly eaten in South Africa. They went to a South African restaurant, and tried bison and porridge made from ground up grain. They gathered texts on the subject from the library and online. For his project, Brandon made a South African braai, a type of barbeque grill used to cook a variety of meats at gatherings for friends and family. His father and grandfather helped him assemble the braai from a large plastic water bottle and other materials they bought from a hardware store. They cut the water bottle in half and painted it, then added wire mesh for the inside, and a wooden stand for the legs. Mesha helped Brandon form and paint "meat" out of clay. For fourth grade, Brandon researched the #MeToo movement, a network of grassroots advocacy groups who speak out against sexual harassment and sexual violence against women. Mesha wanted Brandon to understand the importance of respecting women, so she and her husband talked with him about what he read and saw in the media, to help Brandon become critically aware of behaviors that might harass or harm women, and to stand against inappropriate behavior. For the showcase, he wrote a poem about it, using one of Maya Angelou's poems as a model.

Sara talked about Jeffrey's fifth grade showcase on the Constitution and equal rights. He researched the Separate Car Act of 1890, that allowed railroad companies in Louisiana to accommodate Black and White customers, but in separate rail cars. Jeffrey researched Homer Plessy, who was hired by a radical group of men called the Citizens' Committee to Test the Constitutionality of the Separate Car Law, to purchase a ticket and attempt to travel in a rail car designated for White passengers only. Plessy was a free man of Creole heritage, born of a Black mother and White father; his complexion was very light, and he essentially appeared to be White. Since the law did not define what it meant to be "Black" or "Colored" or "White," he challenged the very premise that a person could be defined by race based on the color of his skin. Further, the men argued, the law imposed a mark of servitude on Black people, specifically, because they could not move about freely in society, on public transportation, or in public spaces, which, they argued, violated the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteeing citizenship to African Americans and equal protection under the law. Sara said the children were disappointed and upset when they learned Plessy lost the

case and the "separate but equal" law was upheld. For the showcase, Jeffrey dramatically reenacted the moment Plessy got arrested, and what he might have said to the arresting officers. At home, he performed his monologue to share what he learned and contribute to an ongoing family discussion of racial discrimination in the United States.

Parents like Mesha, and Sara, who volunteered at the school and accompanied children on school trips, reported that each year, the community is "blown away" by the showcase and raves about how much children have learned. In the classroom, they asked children questions about what they were learning, prompting children to summarize, synthesize, and reflect on their projects. During the showcase, while visiting a number of classrooms with family and friends, Sara and Mesha reported asking, "What did you learn?" "What do you want me to remember?" "Did you enjoy researching your topic?" Most often, children were enthusiastic and motivated to study their topic, with one exception. Sara said some children told her the showcase on racial segregation was hard for them because they didn't like learning about the history of legalized racial discrimination in this country. She told them, the subject might not be good, but the project gave them space to talk about racism as a painful part of America's past and how it impacts our lives today.

Teaching for Democracy

In this class, literacy was taught from an anti-oppressive approach to prepare children for critical and capable citizenship in a participatory democracy, through a pedagogy of hope (Freire, 1994/2014), a "pedagogy of possibility," one that is "not yet, but could be if we engage in the simultaneous struggle to change both our circumstances and ourselves" (Simon, 1987, p. 382). A close examination of the curriculum showcase revealed how a unit on social movements for freedom embodied this pedagogy of possibility. Children's project-based learning highlighted the transformative power of education as a site for hope and struggle (Freire, 1994/2014), as they used themes in literature and social studies to understand, for example, the connections between race, economics, and power, and tensions in social movements when challenging racism and heteronormativity. The curriculum promoted critical reading and writing, sociopolitical consciousness, and family and community engagement. Family members supplied resources and materials, served as discussion partners at home and audience members during the showcase at school, to extend learning opportunities beyond school using resources in the community. In this school, literacy was a fundamental right, equal to civil and political rights. Teachers promoted a literacy that leads people to positions of power and authority, in which they are conscious of their own power, and work for their own interests. This curriculum dared to teach literacy as a matter of justice for all (Finn, 2009; Freire, 1994/2014).

The problem is, "[i]n American schools, children of more affluent backgrounds get an empowering education and powerful literacy; children of poor and working class (and to a surprising degree the middle class) get domesticating and functional literacy" (Finn, 2009, p. ix). However, children in

this school, 46% of whom were in economic need, and a majority of whom were Black and Latin Americans, used literacy to carry out integrative, multimodal research projects, in an education fit for informed, actively engaged citizens who read, write, and think critically, question inequities, and engage meaningfully in ideas about fairness, justice, and struggles for a better world.

Three decades ago, Kozol (1991) documented social and economic inequalities in America's public schools, and revealed the pernicious pattern of racial and economic discrimination against poor and marginalized children. He found that schools were predominantly segregated by race, and schools in more affluent neighborhoods spent nearly twice as much as schools in urban areas on per-pupil funding.

For example, in 1987, New York City public schools in urban areas like Harlem and the Bronx, serving predominantly Black and Latino children from lower income families, spent approximately \$5,500 per student, while schools in suburban Yonkers, Manhasset, Jericho, and Great Neck, serving predominately White students, spent approximately \$11,000 per student (Kozol, 1991). Wealthier districts had more money to fund public schools because they paid higher property taxes on home and land. Those schools could pay for smaller classes and higher teacher salaries. Administrators and students in these districts, praised for having the best schools, suggested students came from "good" neighborhoods and families, and benefited from having well-resourced libraries, smaller classes, enriched math, science, and technology classes, advanced placement and gifted programs, with teaching that promoted higher-order thinking. School officials reportedly said there was "no point" in putting money into schools in poorer districts, serving predominantly Black and Latino students, because teachers did not stay long and children would not accomplish much, compounding the effects of low expectations and systemic racial and economic bias.

Teachers and administrators in struggling communities, according to Kozol, acknowledged the difficult circumstances in which their students lived and went to school, reporting overcrowded classes, without enough chairs, desks, and books, and curriculum that did not meet children's academic needs. Low teacher salaries, high teacher turnover, and limited student support services abounded. Children in those struggling schools noticed the difference and questioned the unequal conditions between their schools and schools in wealthier communities. They still had high aspirations, with dreams to become lawyers, doctors, business leaders, and architects. Yet, few were prepared enough to take SATs, or graduate in four years. At the time of the study, a lower quality of education for children from poor and working-class communities was an accepted fact (Kozol, 1991).

That was thirty years ago. One would hope we have made enormous progress since then. But at the time of writing this article, 30,000 public school teachers in Los Angeles went on strike to demand higher salaries, smaller classes, and more support staff in a school system serving 500,000 students, predominantly lower income Latino Americans. Inequitable school funding remains a persistent

problem for the poorest children in our nation, and their teachers.

Lack of equitable school funding plagues our school system, but modifications in funding in New York (and other states) show that change is possible. In 2017, statewide, New York public schools spent an average of \$23,265 per student, among the highest in the nation (National Education Association, 2018). New York City schools use a funding formula and agreements with specific service providers to create two-thirds of their budgets to meet children's educational needs. They consider children's grades, grade levels, academic needs and performance, special education needs, English Language proficiency, and graduation portfolio requirements in specialized schools. The goal in applying this funding formula is to meet the needs of children who require the most support and apply the funding criteria evenly across schools.

We have come a long way from neglected buildings with crumbling ceilings and walls, but some districts continue to struggle with enormously overcrowded classrooms, low teacher salaries, limited support staff, lack of resources, and segregation by race and socioeconomic class. Kozol reminded us that children from poor, working-class (and some middle-class) communities should no longer be denied the means to compete with children who attend schools in wealthier neighborhoods. And, as this brief inquiry shows, school leaders and teachers can act with courage and vision so children can receive a challenging, academically rigorous curriculum, in the face of ongoing efforts for more equitably funded programs.

All children, regardless of race or class, deserve a curriculum steeped in powerful literacy (Finn, 2009; Pinar et al., 1995), working collaboratively with teachers and other children to negotiate the curriculum beyond the classroom, using resources from the library, online, and in the community, to evaluate, analyze, and synthesize knowledge gained from reading, listening, and talking with others about important ideas, such as social movements for freedom from around the world.

Reimagined, teaching and learning can be student-centered, project-based, and collaborative, using strategic reading and writing while integrating literature and subject area learning. Curricular approaches, such as these, can be empowering for all children, from working-class or middle-class backgrounds, where families have long struggled for civil, social, and political rights (such as the right for workers to unionize, earn living wages, have access to quality health care, and attend quality schools). Teachers, parents, and the principal in this school, aware of the inequities in society, engaged with curriculum topics, like social movements for freedom, to expose injustices in the U.S. and countries around the world, so children could learn that people secured and protected their rights by organizing, resisting, and challenging oppression. Through connections to current struggles to protect citizens' rights and make a democracy work, children learned what it means to be a part of a larger community, to value justice, question inequities they see in the world, and connect what is learned at school to their own lives.

While the teacher in this study was professionally competent and loving (Freire, 1998), she expressed no awareness of a social class analysis of her teaching, yet she was explicit about what it meant to educate children about the importance of their own voice, and the voices of others, consciously interacting in the world in service of freedom. She aimed to teach children to fight against authoritarianism in favor of democracy and encouraged them to engage in critical reflection on events in the world. For this teacher, pedagogy is, indeed, political.

In the school's effort to educate children as responsible and critical citizens, teachers created learning experiences steeped in dialogue, open to the free exchange of ideas. Children learned to respect each other, leaning toward tolerance and deference, against racism, misogyny, classism, and heteronormativity (Kumashiro, 2015; Pinar et al., 1995). While some would want us to believe that education as a part of the superstructure of society cannot change for working- and middle-class children until material conditions change, as educators, school leaders, and community members, we can share information, organize, and mobilize each other toward democratic ideals. We can deliberately and pedagogically challenge authoritarian tendencies and cultural traditions that maintain these injustices. As Freire said,

Citizenship implies freedom – to work, to eat, to dress, to wear shoes, to sleep in a house, to support oneself and one's family, to love, to be angry, to cry, to protest, to support, to move, to participate in this or that religion, this or that party, to educate oneself and one's family, to swim regardless in what ocean of one's country. Citizenship is not obtained by chance: It is a construction that, never finished, demands we fight for it. It demands commitment, political clarity, coherence, decision. For this reason a democratic education cannot be realized apart from an education of and for citizenship. (Freire, 1998, p. 90)

A curriculum unit on social movements, in an urban fourth grade public elementary classroom, grounded in an anti-oppressive, justice-oriented pedagogy, puts powerful literacy in the hands of children for whom this type of instruction was historically, systematically, and institutionally denied. In this practice, we bear in mind, the right to an empowering education is on par with civil and political rights (Finn, 2009).

Conclusion

Education in this school was a site for hope and struggle, enabling and promoting sociopolitical consciousness and community engagement (Spears-Bunton & Powell, 2009). Throughout the curriculum showcase, parents and the teacher played a pivotal role as supportive learning partners and authentic audiences, bearing witness to, and encouraging, deep thinking and strategic reading and writing. The school enacted a pedagogy of promise steeped in critical literacy in which children read, wrote, and talked about social action and the struggles for freedom in local and broader contexts (Gay, 2010; Lee, 2007). Children wrestled with the challenges of the ongoing and complex nature of working for civil and human rights, and confronted

difficult contemporary movements, protesting police brutality against unarmed Black civilians, and organizing and fighting for women's rights, gay rights, and justice for victims of sexual harassment and assault. They examined issues of equity and fairness, as a normal course of study, in elementary school. Education and literacy in this public school offered working- and middle-class children a chance to expand beyond the limits of an education that prepares them for employment, only. Through an empowering education, children learned to "evaluate, analyze and synthesize while reading and listening and to persuade and negotiate through writing and speaking" using literacy to "understand and control what's going on around [them]" (Finn, 2009, p. 257). But changes to a school curriculum cannot eliminate poverty. An empowering education disrupts entrenched historic and contemporary social stratification based on race and class, because it encourages educated citizens in a democracy to organize, secure, and protect their own rights, while negotiating "powerful institutions of social class and free-market economy – which are based on inequality – to find a just equilibrium with full citizenship – which is based on equality" (ibid, p. 263).

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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Poetry **Two Poems**

by Lucy Arnold



PHOTO BY TOA HEFTIBA

Peace

i like being up early
before my family stirs
me and the gentle snorts of the coffee machine
and armed men on the street corners

on receiving an email from a white
woman explaining that she is worried for
her safety following protests on campus

i too am a white woman
and i get it
our safety—yours and mine—is paramount
historically
also contemporarily
also—
never mind

the email you sent to me
your white female professor
at a university
rocked today by protests
following the shooting—
another shooting—
of a black man by police

this email
somehow managed to boil this whole
thing down to one thing:
your safety
also: why you cannot attend class this evening
which is cool
i get it
and i think you thought
i'd get it
which is why you sent it
and i do—
i get it

your safety matters to me
but
let's face it
your safety has mattered for a long time
your safety has often been valued
beyond your freedom, your mind, your sexuality, your education

ironically

(appropriately?)

enough

so while i do get it

i guess what would have been nice

would have been

even the tiniest

the most minute

intimation

that someone else's safety

also matters

that today there is civil unrest

there are fires

there are students lying on the steps of the student union

because black men and women are

not safe

and that they are not safe—

at least partially

and certainly not always by your will

for the sake of your

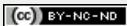
fucking safety

anyway, yeah i get it

homework's still due

be safe,

your professor



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Ghost Dance

by Lisa Mullenneaux



PHOTO BY EFFREY D. ALLRED. SHOSHONE NATION CHAIRMAN DARREN PARRY NEAR PRESTON, IDAHO

Ghost Dance

"If you think the Indian wars are over, think again."
Carrie Dann, Native American activist, 2002

Blue-black raven, eyeless,
flaps and squawks
at night turned day upon
the mesa where at 5 a.m.
the wrong sun crowned an insurrection.
Now sandstone heaves and fissures,
ledges leap from mountainsides,
and rolling shock waves ripple
the desert floor charring pinyon and juniper,
jackrabbit and Gila monster.
A shot no gunslinger ever dreamed
has landed like a fist, melted sand
to poison glass. Enemy country, after all.

*We are Newe of the Shoshone nation.
Never gave them our land, never took their money.
But they came and they took. We call them
the alphabet agents—BIA, BLM, AEC, DOE.
They built and they mined but above all they bombed.
At the Nevada Test Site. Over 1000 shots with names
like Buster-Jangle, Plumbob, Teapot, Hardtack, Nougat.
Like something you'd want to eat?*

*We raise cattle and one day in 1973
my sister Mary got a notice that we were
letting them graze on government land. No,
she says, these are Shoshone lands.
If our cattle grazed on Paiute land, to the west,
we would be trespassing. They sued us anyway.*

Sing to drumbeat's thunder
of beanstalks breeding missile silos.
Jackass Flats, Skull Mountain,
Death Valley, Tombstone. Ranchers survived
with barbed wire and cheap gas, herding sheep
and tumbleweeds. Then the Firecracker Boys
invented a power brighter than the sun,
lethal for half-a-million years.
They rode in to wage war on "worthless land"
with blast sites and bunkers buried in sand.
Didn't see John Wayne in a hot spot shooting
"The Conquerors" until the Duke turned in his six guns.

*He had been dreaming, my grandfather,
of a White Rabbit fat with blood
that would eat our grass, our seed, our lives.
When it finds us, he warned,
it will weave a spider's web around us,
and we will live in square gray houses
on land too barren to grow crops.*

Sheep and cattle grew sick and died,

ranchers grew sick and died from beta burns,
heart attacks, kidney failure, anemia, brain tumors.
The Great Basin became a sponge for toxins
in the hair, skin, water, grass, corn, tumbleweeds.
Bombs in their backyards. No exceptions.
"Oh, my desert," sighs Ed Abbey's ghost.
"Yours is the only death I cannot bear."

*My grandfather ate only once a day,
burned sage, and kept on dreaming.
The Big Knives, he said, are a heartless people,
who keep slaves and paint them black
to set them apart.
Grandfather saw many visions and it was
their sorrow that killed him.*

Soldiers at Camp Desert Rock watched
the world end through clenched teeth.
Shut their eyes and saw bones in their hands.
Returned to base with bloody noses, vomiting.
The "Greatest Show on Earth" starts
with fireworks before dawn, then a red-tinted cloud.
Kids eat pink snow and their thyroid quits.
"Sacrifice babies" born scrambled by isotopes.

*The whites are like poisonous serpents,
my grandfather told us, feeble when cold
but warm them up and they'll sting you to death.
They first asked for a wigwag, then
our hunting grounds, now everything.*

Joe Mormon's 400 ewes, too sick
to make it back to Cedar City for lambing,
stood motionless on the trail, then fell dead.
New lambs had no wool or three legs
or hearts beating outside their chests.
January, minus 20 degrees,
but their bodies didn't freeze.
They were that hot.
Put a counter on the pile of bones,
the needle hit the post.
Ravens and magpies ate them
and pretty soon they died.
Sheep in the pens, sheep in Mormon churches.
Part of God's plan.
What the government don't tell us,
we don't need to know.

*Like a dervish it came from nowhere
and landed everywhere, wrenching the earth's jaw
until it howled, gouging its belly.*

*Daylight Lifter, the sky is already red.
Mainland Slayer, the earth is shaking.
A quaking caldera and bellowing wind have disarmed you.*



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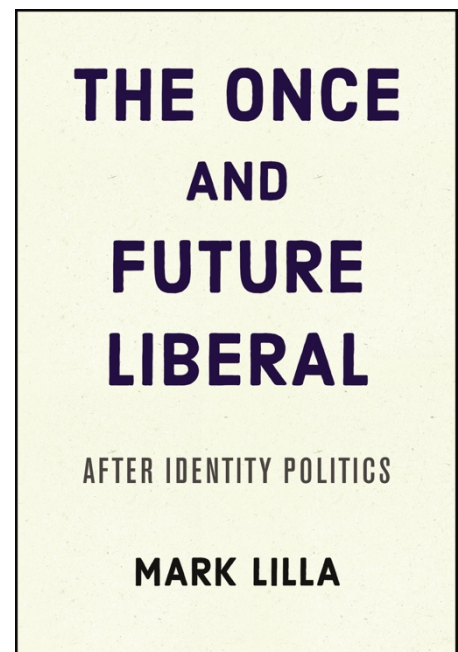
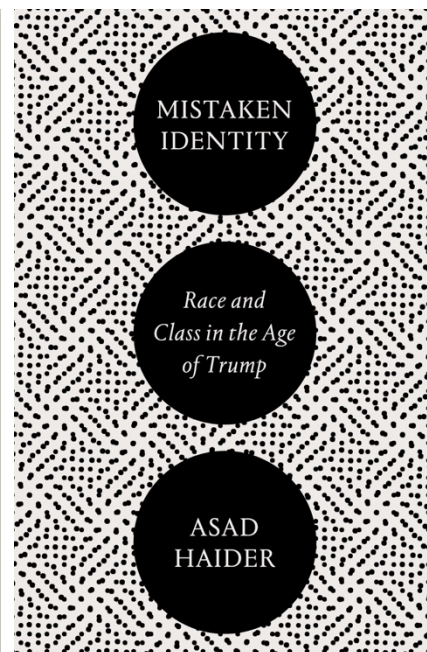
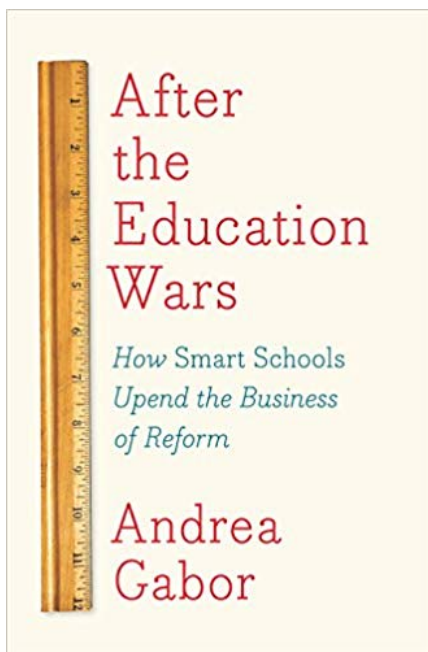
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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Review Identity and Its Discontents

by Sarah Chinn



After the Education Wars: How Smart Schools Upend the Business of Reform, by Andrea Gabor (The New Press, 2018)

Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump, by Asad Haider (Verso, 2018)

The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics, by Mark Lilla (Harper, 2017)

Poor identity politics. In the early 1980s it represented a new way of imagining political activism that took into account the realities of lived experience, and the failures of 20th century movements that systematically (if informally) excluded, ignored, or trivialized issues that might “distract” from the central problem at hand. Hence the active exclusion of black women from the suffrage movement of the early 20th century, the hostility towards any complaints from women of discrimination in the New Left, the decades-long unspeakability of homosexuality in pretty much every movement, and so on.

Identity politics was designed to end all that by insisting on the significance of marginalized identities, as well as the necessity to bring those identities to bear on seemingly unrelated issues. Coupled with this was the clear message that more marginalized people were often at the forefront of movements that did not take their oppression seriously: gay men in the New Left, black women in the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, lesbians of all races in the fight for reproductive rights (and in Gay Liberation and in anti-apartheid organizing and in the fight against US involvement in Central America and struggles against anti-semitism and racism. In fact, lesbians in every movement). It was also a kind of *realpolitik*: a pragmatic recognition that no one was going to advocate for Asian American women or Chicana lesbians or disabled people except themselves. As the Combahee River Collective, the spiritual godmothers of identity politics, declared in 1977,

Our politics initially sprang from the shared belief that Black women are inherently valuable, that our liberation is a necessity not as an adjunct to somebody else's but because of our need as human persons for autonomy. This may seem so obvious as to sound simplistic, but it is apparent that no other ostensibly progressive movement has ever considered our specific oppression as a priority or worked seriously for the ending of that oppression. (Taylor 18)

History had shown again and again that the price of involvement in 20th century political movements meant subordinating one's own liberation to the larger struggle, and activists arguing for an identity-based critique of systems of power had had enough. While working for reproductive rights, advocating for survivors of rape and other kinds of gender-based violence, running community clinics, the women of Combahee refused to subordinate their own identities for the “greater good.”

Over the ensuing decades, “identity politics” shifted shape and was redefined, mostly negatively. The culture

wars of the 1990s were an outcropping of debates around identity as much as “values.” In his speech to the 1992 Republican National Convention, Pat Buchanan said as much, calling out feminists, the “homosexual rights movement,” and various other offenders against American values. Republicans, he maintained, were engaged in “a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself” not so much against ideas as against people: not just the Clintons but all the leftists, radicals, feminists, homosexuals, mobs, from whom “we must take back our cities, and take back our culture, and take back our country.”¹

Increasingly, identity politics was embraced by the right (although not in those terms) and repudiated by the left. When Barack Obama ran for President, he sidestepped questions about racial identity as much as he could. Even in his lauded 2008 address on race, Obama decried “the temptation to view my candidacy through a purely racial lens.”² He criticized his former pastor Jeremiah Wright for “express[ing] a profoundly distorted view of this country – a view that sees white racism as endemic, and that elevates what is wrong with America above all that we know is right with America.” Even as he identified slavery as part of the founding of the United States – indeed, its “original sin” – Obama returned again and again to a message of “unity,” a word he used three times, and the need to maintain the “union” of the nation, used eight times.

It's not surprising that identity politics has careened back into political discourse in the wake of the election of Donald Trump. Trump's campaign was organized around demonizing various racial and gendered others, and glorifying American whiteness as a transcendent identity, a tendency he's carried through to his presidency. And yet, rather than acknowledging that a progressive identity politics from the left might counteract Trump's appeals to white and male supremacy, many on the left are still running as far away from that label as they can. This allergy to identity is not limited to one element of the left, as the books reviewed here show. Both Asad Haider on the Marxist left and Mark Lilla, a centrist Democratic historian, see identity politics as a temptation, a trap, in which claims to victimization trump real political action.

Haider is, at least, sympathetic to claims to identity politics, deeply informed about its origins, and a believer in an intersectional approach to political problems. In the final analysis, though, he sees identity as “an abstraction, one that doesn't tell us about the specific social relations that have constituted it. A materialist mode of investigation has to go from the abstract to the concrete” (11). For Haider, things went wrong somewhere in the early 1980s, in which “emancipatory mass movements..., which struggle against racism” were distorted into “the contemporary ideologies of identity, which are attached to the politics of a multiracial elite” (20). That is, identity is an easier pill for bourgeois people of color, queer people, white women, etc. to swallow than, say, the redistribution of wealth and a robust critique of capitalism.

As a Marxist, Haider prioritizes a materialist analysis. This is not to say that he sees race, gender, and sexuality as irrelevant. He's well aware that racism,

misogyny, and homophobia infuse US politics, and that those interlocking systems are not going to be magically undone by a workers' revolution (not least because the people who suffer under those systems *are* the majority of the working class). He's clear-eyed that racial solidarity among white people has been a powerful political and cultural force from the beginnings of the United States as a national entity and was a major factor in the 2016 election. Moreover, he understands the practical as well as ethical damage white racism has done on the left, especially labor movements, pointing out – correctly, I think – that “the cost of this indifference to race [by unions] was that socialism was always competing for recruitment with whiteness” (59), a dynamic that has had an alarmingly long half-life.

For Haider, the remedy to white racial solidarity is “class solidarity across races” as well as gender and sexuality (59). His case study here is the British miner's strike of 1984-85, in which feminist and queer groups – notably Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners – joined efforts to support miners politically and materially. This kind of integrated class analysis was instrumental in maintaining the miners' commitment to their strike (as well as keeping food on their tables), even if they were ultimately defeated by Margaret Thatcher. This relationship was reciprocal: over the course of the 1980s, the miners' union pushed through support of LGBT civil rights.³

Ultimately, Haider advocates for what he calls “insurgent universality” (109), which will both include an intersectional analysis and focus on anti-capitalism. After all, “it is the structure of the capitalist system that prevents all people who are dispossessed of the means of production, regardless of their identities, from having control over their own lives...in all their particularity” (51). I'm sympathetic to this argument, but to my mind it leaves important questions unanswered.

How, for example, does a primarily materialist analysis understand the mechanisms by which even middle-class and affluent people of color are as proportionately disadvantaged by race as their poor and working-class counterparts? Starting in the early 1980s, researchers have repeatedly found that in simulated hiring situations at every class level, “white” candidates (identified either by photographs or by “white-sounding names”) are selected for interviews up to twice as frequently as their “black” counterparts.⁴ Elite orchestras have moved to “blind” auditions, in which musicians play behind a curtain so their race and/or gender are not visible to conductors and concert masters, precisely to counter the self-perpetuating dominance of white men in classical music. Gendered, homophobic, and racialized violence occurs both within and across class lines, muddying the rhetoric of class solidarity. Finally, while I'm fully behind an intersectional, anticapitalist politics that roots political action in the struggle of liberation for all, I'm not sure that looking to control over the means of production will get us there.

While Haider's argument, despite its lacunae, is sharply argued and grounded in the scholarship of leftist, antiracist, and other liberationist approaches, Mark Lilla plays much, much faster and looser with his argument, resulting in a head-scratcher of a book. This may be in part because *The*

Once and Future Liberal is really a long essay dressed up in a book's covers. It achieves its 139 pages through the kind of tricks I criticize in my students: large font, wide margins, inches of space between paragraphs, as well as frontispieces to each of its chapters. I have to confess I struggled to be impartial about this book, although Lilla makes that very hard, not least due to the blurb by Fareed Zakaria. But Lilla gives the reader plenty of ammunition with which to shoot down his thinly-defended arguments.

Perhaps most egregious, especially for an academic, is the almost total lack of evidence for any of his claims, citations for his arguments, or any kind of bibliography that readers might consult to undergird the book's approach. Lilla's favorite rhetorical form is the *ex cathedra* pronouncement unsupported by any proof: “the paradox of identity liberalism is that it paralyzes the capacity to think and act in a way that would actually accomplish the things it professes to want” (14); “equal protection under the law is not a hard principle to convince Americans of” (126); “Black Lives Matter is a textbook example of how not to build solidarity” (127); etc., etc., etc.

Lilla imagines his audience here to be much like him – vaguely left-leaning folks with a vested interest in the Democratic Party. If Haider's guiding light is historical materialism, Lilla's is a liberal Democratic Party, to whom all those on the left should subordinate their own concerns (more on this in a minute). His version of identity politics is a kind of mushy narcissism in which political commitments take a backseat to self-knowledge and growth. What those in the New Left, for example, “wanted from politics was more than social justice and an end to the war, though they did want that. They also wanted there to be no space between what they felt inside and what they did out in the world” (74). In a vaguely disturbing metaphor, he characterizes identity as “an inner homunculus, a unique little thing composed of parts tinted by race, sex, and gender” (65).

Since he is a historian, Lilla can't ignore the effectiveness of the various movements he derogates, but he offers the reader a kind of bait-and-switch. On the one hand, pre-identity politics, civil rights organizers were Obamas *avant la lettre*, who saw fidelity to a more perfect union as their ultimate goal: “the civil rights movement offered a constructive way of serving both the African-American community and the country as a whole...not to idealize or deny difference...but to render it politically impotent”(63-4). On the other, while gay liberation, feminism, antiracism and the like may have made the country “a more tolerant, more just, and more inclusive place than it was fifty years ago,” their fatal mistake was that they “didn't contribute to the unification of the Democratic Party and the development of a liberal vision of Americans' shared future” (76).

The kind of bad faith – not to mention chutzpah – that Lilla displays here is astounding. Implicitly he is claiming that the activism he decries as narcissistic and impotent did achieve some of the major cultural, legislative, and legal changes of the past decades, but their focus should have been not their own concerns but the health of the Democratic Party. Moreover, these changes did effect far more unity than the Dems themselves by fighting for parity

for all Americans, of whom people of color, queer people, and white women are the majority (not to mention, of course, that marginalized people, especially black women, are far more likely to vote Democratic). Lilla wants to snatch the cake out of our mouths and eat it himself, while complaining that it's too dry.

Finally, Lilla is tone-deaf about the organizing of the past couple of decades. Radical organizing has been characterized by big-picture thinking. Occupy is a prime example of this, in which activists explicitly spoke to and as the 99% of the population who do not control the means of production. The Women's March was hardly narcissistic, unless one considers the concerns of women of all classes and races self-indulgent. And protests against Trump's "Muslim ban" were broad-based and justice-oriented: perhaps the most striking image of 2017 was of people swarming JFK airport to offer legal and moral support for detained travelers. Not only is there no mention of the rise of the Democratic Socialists of America both on college campuses and around the country, Lilla grossly misrepresents Black Lives Matter, which he calls "a textbook example of how not to build solidarity" (127 – at this point I have to confess that I threw the book across the room).

To paraphrase Asad Haider, not only is identity politics an abstraction to Mark Lilla, so is every concern beyond loyalty to the Democratic Party, which has a very mixed record on upholding the rights of the putatively self-involved identity groups Lilla berates for not being "liberal" enough. Indeed, both books are short on concrete examples of what the pragmatic avoidance of identity politics might look like. I'd argue that that's because the politics of identity are inextricable from policy, from government, and from lived experience, rather than beholden to them.

This intertwining of on the ground reality and the abstractions of identity is played out expertly by Andrea Gabor in *After the Education Wars*. On the surface, the book seems like a methodical, heavily-researched takedown of what we've come to think of as neoliberal education schemes: high stakes testing, charter schools, "accountability," and the like. And in those terms it's a success. Gabor recognizes that "[s]ince the beginning of the millennium, the story of education has been, in important respects, a business story" (2). She's not wrong: from the idea that schools should be run by businesses to the increasing influence of philanthropist business people, the language of the marketplace infuses K-12 education. As Gabor puts it, business-oriented educational reformers value "ideas and expertise forged in corporate boardrooms over the knowledge and experience gleaned in the messy trenches of inner-city classrooms" (4).

Gabor walks her readers through the genesis of charter schools, which were initially imagined (by Albert Shanker no less!) as laboratories for progressive teaching and intellectual exploration, unfettered by restrictive union regulations and a city-wide curriculum.⁵ They were organized around an educational philosophy that advocated for schools that were "participative, collaborative, *deeply democratic*" (15), schools that taught the whole child and engaged the whole teacher. But over the years, filtered through neoliberal mantras like entrepreneurialism and

accountability, and often bankrolled by billionaire businessmen, schools in general and charter schools in particular developed into the opposite of this progressive vision. Instead, they were skills and test prep oriented, individualistic, and top-down.

On closer examination, though, the story Gabor tells is not just of the corporatization of public education – although she does tell that story, and well. As her case studies of New York, Texas, and New Orleans show, these policies were put into place in majority black and brown school systems, systems often living in the shadow of legal segregation, white flight, and federal and state abandonment of cities. Gabor's contrast of corporate boardrooms and inner city classrooms is about class, of course. But it's also, and in many ways intrinsically, about race. The structure of a neoliberal schooling – drills, "no excuses" discipline, the throwing away of students who can't keep up and an inability/refusal to offer meaningful special education, the policing of dress and speech – are all in the mold of a Jim Crow conception of black children as lazy, slovenly, unable to control their behavior, and responding only to threats.

The structure of a neoliberal schooling – drills, "no excuses" discipline, the throwing away of students who can't keep up and an inability/refusal to offer meaningful special education, the policing of dress and speech – are all in the mold of a Jim Crow conception of black children as lazy, slovenly, unable to control their behavior, and responding only to threats.

The starkest example of this pattern is New Orleans, both pre- and post-Katrina. Gabor has done her homework, and traces the historic lack of investment by the city and state in education in general and black education in particular. After the withdrawal of Union troops and the end of Reconstruction, New Orleans established race and gender segregated schools. Not only was this a financial disaster (each district had to have four schools: white boys, white girls, black boys, black girls, rather than one coeducational integrated school), it set the pattern for disparate spending on education for African Americans. After desegregation, white New Orleanians did what their counterparts across the South did: pulled their children out of public school. By the 1990s, New Orleans schools were among the lowest-achieving, lowest-funded, and dangerous schools in the country.

Hurricane Katrina destroyed the majority of school buildings and Louisiana, governed by Mary Blanco, and New Orleans, with mayor Ray Nagin, saw an opportunity to remake the city's schools along the charter school model, converting the whole school system to charters. They also sought philanthropists from the business world, especially the Gates Foundation, to fund this change, which was designed to be anti-union, top-down, and market-oriented. And they invested in an educational philosophy implicitly

based in the idea that black children need more discipline, are more impervious to punishment, have minimal mental health needs (despite the massive trauma of the storm), and must be pushed relentlessly to succeed.

Even Haider's sophisticated analysis of the intersections of identity politics and anticapitalism get us only so far here. On the one hand, it's true that the corporatization of New Orleans education was a significant part of the handover to charter schools, many of which were run by corporations like KIPP and Success Academy. But to my mind the governing issue here is not class but race. The majority-white city of Gulfport, Mississippi was destroyed by Katrina, but its education system was not auctioned off to entrepreneurs and charter school companies. In addition, the charter school network in New Orleans provided minimal support for children with special needs, effectively encouraging the most disadvantaged students to drop out without a high school diploma, and shunting them towards low-wage work and/or prison.

It's hard to imagine what scheme could have single-handedly rescued New Orleans schools. Students had spent months away from their homes, often doubling or tripling up with relatives, after having experienced the shock of the flooding itself. New Orleans was already a violent city with high rates of gun violence, and a poor black city. But the rebuilding of New Orleans schools represents an opportunity squandered in large part because the city and state government and the philanthropists they sought out could not imagine a participatory, progressive education system

that educated the whole – often profoundly traumatized and already undereducated – black child.

Andrea Gabor shows us how race makes an enormous difference in educational policies and outcomes. In *After the Education Wars*, race is not an abstract identity. It is, rather, a confluence of forces that makes things happen to people of color that rarely if ever happen to white Americans. And it's not clear what an "insurgent universality" or a liberal, civic-minded Democratic Party can do about that.

Notes

- ¹ For the full text of the speech, see <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/buchanan-culture-war-speech-speech-text/>
- ² For the full text of this speech, see <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/18/us/politics/18text-obama.html>
- ³ Unfortunately, this solidarity did not stop Thatcherism's erosion of the trade union movement or the passage in 1986 of Section 28, which stated that local authorities could not "intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality" or "promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship."
- ⁴ A typical title of one of these articles speaks for itself: "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination."
- ⁵ This is not to say that Gabor is anti-union (and Shanker was decidedly not!). In fact she finds that on the whole the presence of unions has "a positive effect on student achievement" (11).



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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Invisible Rainbow: Notes for Educators and Librarians

by E. F. Schraeder



PHOTO BY PETER HERSHEY

Growing up and feeling like you don't fit in is a common enough experience, and for LGBTQ youth, sometimes benign neglect is the best one can hope for. Even though there remains no federal employment protection or housing discrimination protection, recent modest gains for the LGBTQ community at large seem to be resulting in pushback this summer of 2018 against one of the community's most vulnerable members: youth.

First in June, a law was proposed in Ohio that would force teachers (and presumably librarians) to "out" transgender students. While it's not likely to gain momentum, this proposal targets LGBTQ kids for outing. At a basic level this issue falls in direct opposition to the core values of librarians, who are professionally bound to protect patron privacy, and teachers, who are professionally bound to make "a constructive effort to protect the student from conditions detrimental to learning, health, or safety" (AAE). At a human level, such a proposal jeopardizes the safety of at-risk youth, especially considered in light of the reality that roughly 40% of the homeless youth served in organizations identify as members of the LGBTQ community. Then, in August, the Washington county Utah library district banned LGBTQ displays, and while it's getting a lot of attention, this library isn't alone in the fight to erase LGBTQ identity. Utah eventually opted for a "libraries are for everyone" display instead. While there is nothing wrong with the notion that "libraries are for everyone," this potentially erases LGBTQ identity, history, and reality.

These incidents contradict two core values of the ALA, specifically privacy and diversity. At a time when hate group membership continues to climb across the U.S., people (like librarians and educators) who can safely speak up for inclusion are desperately needed, because here's the thing, LGBTQ people exist. We existed as youth a generation ago, when we hardly ever found ourselves reflected in library displays, books, or media (and still managed to grow up queer). Neither outing or ignoring LGBTQ youth will make them go away, but silence and inaction may make them suffer. If a librarian works in a district that seems hostile to LGBTQ inclusion, here are six strategies to consider that may help keep your library from erasing the rainbow.

1. *Make Diversity a Starting Point:* Imagine what the bookshelves would be like without LGBTQ authors like Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee, Rita Mae Brown, Virginia Woolf, Radclyffe Hall, Oscar Wilde, Gertrude Stein, James Baldwin, and so many others— those are some of the most celebrated and popular authors on the library shelves! Consider diversity as a starting point rather than an add on, and always include work by LGBTQ authors and members of historically marginalized groups in displays to recognize these significant literary contributions outside Pride Month and other celebrations. Please remember to include brief bios so these authors' identities are not erased! Beyond the classics, from science fiction, horror, romance, to mysteries and more, there are also LGBTQ authors in all genres (many of us writing the stories we didn't get to read growing up) that may be

included in Mystery Month, Women in Horror Month, etc. *Hot tip if you have science fiction fans in your school, include new classics on your reading lists like Rivers Solomon's *Unkindness of Ghosts*. Confused about where to start? Visit morediverse.com.

2. *Stick to It:* There are stickers marking mysteries, romance, and other subject classifications in libraries. Rainbow stickers on the spine may seem subtle and wouldn't have to be 'on display' to be easily found, but use caution: some patrons may prefer not having their book selections with visible markers, so consider highlighting in a more subtle way like "Award Winner," "Diverse Book," etc.
3. *Community Resources:* When all the displays are banned, a school group or library can still be a hub for community resources. Invite local branches of PFLAG, GLSEN, and other community groups to drop off materials and newsletters to make available to the public.
4. *Think Outside the Rainbow:* the LGBTQ community is not new, and LGBTQ impact is not limited to the struggle for LGBTQ rights: commemorate Bayard Rustin during African American History Month; Saeed Jones, Audre Lorde, June Jordan, Assotto Saint, Chrystos during National Poetry Month; James Baldwin during Banned Books Week; Billie Jean King during women's history month; and others. Don't doubt that LGBTQ activists and authors have impacted history, and seek resources to recognize LGBTQ accomplishments all year. Make these important connections to history that happened outside the rainbow.
5. *Now a Major Motion Picture:* If your school or library hosts a "Read the Movie" book club or event, consider including LGBTQ titles like Reinaldo Arena's *Before Night Falls*, André Aciman's *Call Me By Your Name*, Patricia Highsmith's *The Price of Salt* and *Carol*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Shamim Sarif's *I Can't Think Straight*, Sarah Waters' *Tipping the Velvet*, Fannie Flagg's *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe*, and others!
6. *And the Award Goes to...* If your library or school highlights literary award winners with displays or book lists, include Lambda Literary Award winners, too.

Discovering LGBTQ themed books probably won't make anyone 'more queer,' but it just may help patrons and students from feeling alone. Your library shelves, syllabi, and recommended book lists can make all the difference in the world, and here's hoping these six strategies help keep the rainbow visible.

Note

A version of this article appeared online at The Office for Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association. September 12, 2018. <<https://www.oif.ala.org/oif/?p=15433>>

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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Teaching Note Explaining Internalized Oppression Using the Film, Claudine

by Teresa A Booker



20TH CENTURY FOX

Lester and Tina Pine's 1974 film, *Claudine*, is a fictitious story depicting the dating life of Claudine, a 36-year old African American mother of six who had been married twice (and "almost" twice). This film can be used to explain internalized oppression and how it might manifest itself differently even in individuals from the same families.

Racism is the discrimination against people based on skin color. Internalized racism (or internalized oppression) "denotes the various ways in which members of a targeted group come to believe the messages of oppression about themselves, their capacities, their limitations and their self-image." (Margles & Margles, 2010, p. 140). In classes on race and ethnicity, the classic example of internalized oppression is the Clark Doll Experiment, created by Drs. Mamie and Kenneth Clark, married African American psychologists. While investigating the racial preferences of African American children, the Clarks asked two questions of the children regarding dolls identical in every way but skin color: Which is the good/bad doll? Which doll looks most like you? More than half of the children in the study identified the white doll as good and the black doll as bad. "The Clarks[s] concluded that the children had suffered damage to their self-esteem and self-image due to segregation and the pervasive negative perception of African Americans" (Anderman and Anderman, 2009, p.147).

Claudine is set in Harlem approximately thirty-five years after the experiment. Claudine receives welfare while also supporting her family as a domestic worker for a white family in the suburbs and is paid off the books. Encouraged by her girlfriends, Claudine decides to begin dating again and agrees to go out with Rupert, a garbage man who services the house of her employer in the suburbs. When Rupert arrives at Claudine's for their first date, he is greeted by an apartment full of children: Charles, the oldest, about eighteen years old; Charlene, the oldest daughter, about sixteen; Patrice and Paul, the middle children, about fourteen and thirteen, respectively; and Francis and Lurlene, the two youngest children, approximately six and five, respectively.

Over the course of the film, the audience witnesses the budding relationship between Claudine and Rupert, as well as between Rupert and Claudine's brood. Charles is not interested in establishing a relationship with any new man in his mother's life and makes his feelings known. Not only does Charles disapprove of Claudine's dating choice, he also resents there being so many half-siblings in their small, crowded apartment. Charlene—envious of her dating mother—thinks she should be allowed to see her boyfriend, Teddy, while her mother is out with Rupert. In the absence of adult supervision, Paul socializes with unsavory characters from the neighborhood and decides to drop out of school to become a gambler on the streets. Patrice, Lurlene, and Francis warm up to Rupert relatively quickly, compared to the others. However, Francis spends a considerable amount of time pretending to be invisible after being reprimanded by his mother.

According to Margles & Margles, "common manifestations of internalized racism include: failing to meet expectations, feeling defensive, unwanted and unwelcome;

a heightened concern about the gaze and perception of others; propensities toward violence and aggression; feelings of despair and hopelessness" (2010, p.141). Examples of internalized racism are plentiful in the film, and each of Claudine's children depicts a different aspect of internalized racism. For example, a social worker regularly visits Claudine's apartment to monitor her compliance with welfare regulations. The monthly kowtowing and concealing of second-hand gifts from Rupert are too much for Charles. That, along with his feelings towards his siblings and his belief that he will never be "free" to have the same job opportunities as white men, leads him to obtain a vasectomy so that he will neither conceive children nor fail to meet the expectations of a father. Angered by Charles's rash and ill-considered act, Claudine chastises him, saying, "That's what 'Mr. Whitey' does to the black man: He cuts off his manhood—but you did it to yourself!"

Unbeknownst to Claudine, Charlene is surreptitiously dating Teddy, a character the audience never sees. Oldest daughter Charlene's willingness to have Teddy teach her "things" (like "how to hold [her] liquor") suggests that, somewhere, Charlene has accepted negative messages about her value as a person, as a young woman, and, specifically, as a young black woman. Her self-loathing and defensiveness about her boyfriend manifest themselves during an argument with her mother when Charlene yells, "I'm nothing! That's what I am. I don't know nothing. I don't have nothing...I'm nothing!"

Rupert saves Claudine's third son, Paul, from the streets by intervening during Paul's dice game. While watching Paul play dice with street gamblers, Rupert notices Paul's ability to perform complex mental arithmetic with little effort and convinces him to go back to school. Although Paul's reasons for dropping out are never stated (and nothing about his speech, dress, or habits suggests that he aspires to be or acts white), one can assume that his talent sparks accusations from his classmates. So, with regards to the doll experiment, since Paul can't be both "good" (in this case, at mathematics, a perceived "white area" of activity) and black (meaning behaving in a way that maintains his acceptance by his community), he is willing to accept society's stigma to fit in with neighborhood expectations. Paul must make a choice between the lesser of two stigmas/expectation paths: one of working the streets (causing him the least amount of stigma from those he cares about most, while simultaneously *not* conflicting with their expectations) and the other of appearing to meet/exceed the low expectations of his teachers (while simultaneously *not* conflicting with their expectations, either). Street hustlers are *expected* to be smart and good with numbers. So, Paul literally did the math and realized that math skills were better rewarded on the street.

Although Francis is young (and his pretense of invisibility little more than a childish exploit), his feelings of despair only appear after he is chastised by Claudine. Moreover, when he does speak—as evidenced by his description of his art—he longs for a family with a "mommy and a daddy." So, not only does he feel less valuable as a family member when his mother takes his sister Lurlene's side over his, but Francis also appears to have accepted

some negative message that his family is less valuable because it is incomplete.

Internalized oppression is not automatic. The strong, the mature, and the properly socialized can avoid it because people can choose to not buy into negative propaganda and, ultimately, implement a self-fulfilling prophesy for themselves. It is ultimately up to them. While on their first date, Claudine and Rupert discuss their marital histories and number of offspring. As they talk, they offend one another with their questions. As they offend, each sarcastically appropriates the racial stereotypes of African Americans onto themselves. When asked why she has so many children, Claudine says that she “grinds them out” just to get a few bucks, per child, in welfare. When asked why he doesn’t see his children, Rupert says, “You know us heartless ‘studs’ with no feelings...” The sarcastic tone of the conversation reveals that nothing they say is true. Moreover, it is obvious that neither believes the propaganda of the dominant group. Their use of those stereotypes—even between themselves— illustrates that they are aware of the negativity directed towards them even if it does not apply directly to them.

When asked what daily messages might feed into characters’ internalized oppression, students hypothesize that Charlene hears that she is less valued if she doesn’t have a boyfriend, that she is not a “real” girlfriend unless she has sex, or that it is foolish for unattractive girls like her to hold on to their virginity because they are not guaranteed any man, down the road. They argue that Charles is told by Claudine that his comments/opinions are not valued, he believes he can’t be a “real man” without equal access to jobs, and he witnesses that his chivalrous desire to defend his mother’s honor can be undermined if Rupert, a man more than twice his weight, *allows* himself to be hit by a child (Charles). In an age of Black Lives Matter—which is the lens through which these students see the world— it is easy for them to conceive of Charles's desire not to bring children into the world and Francis's need to be invisible.

Students indicated that they enjoyed both the film and its connection to the theme, internalized oppression. Some report that they have told their parents about the film while others say, when they see me in the halls, that they either still remember the film or will be registering for a future course of mine because they remember this specific film from a past class. *Claudine* provides a realistic case study that supports examination of internalized oppression.

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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Contributors' Notes



NORTHWEST WASHINGTON, WASHINGTON DC. PHOTO BY VLAD TCHOMPALOV

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Sarah Chinn teaches English at Hunter College, CUNY. A member of the Radical Teacher editorial collective, she's the author of three books, *Technology and the Logic of American Racism: A Cultural History of the Body as Evidence* (2000), *Inventing Modern Adolescence: The Children of Immigrants in Turn-of-the-Century America* (2009), and *Spectacular Men: Race, Gender, and Nation on the Early American Stage* (2017), as well as articles in *Signs*, *GLQ*, *Prospects*, *American Quarterly*, and *WSQ*.

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