FACILITATING DIFFICULT KNOWLEDGE IN THE CLASSROOM: INTIMATE
TRANSGRESSIVE PEDAGOGY FROM A PSYCHOANALYTIC
AND POSTSTRUCTURAL FEMINIST
FRAMEWORK

By
MARY L. CROWELL

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To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the thesis of MARY L CROWELL find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

________________________________________
Pam Bettis, Ph.D., Chair

________________________________________
Michael T. Hayes, PhD

________________________________________
Paula Groves-Price, PhD
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This dissertation seeks to address the facilitation of difficult knowledges in the classroom. I employ constructs of poststructural feminism to critique rationalist-only frameworks that limit the forms of knowledge that “count” in the construction of knowledge. In response to these critiques, this dissertation constructs an alternative pedagogical framework from a psychoanalytic and poststructural feminist lens that emphasizes the bordered landscapes of the un/conscious. This approach is named Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy (ITP). Additionally, this dissertation introduces an empirical study that explored one semester of classroom teaching using Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy. Student and teacher experiences are analyzed through the theoretical concepts of ITP with a further discussion of the implications of the pedagogical concepts and empirical findings for multicultural teacher education.
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Dedication

Dedicated to Halle and Kyle
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

I begin this dissertation with Carrillo’s (2010) poignant question, *How can I be a teacher and a human being at the same time?* This discerning question resonated with me as a teacher educator working at the challenging intersections of critical pedagogy and teacher preparation. This intersection is often riddled with heartbreak, frustration, and tears as addressing and acknowledging the difficult knowledges of the world can often be. Having my own share of these experiences, I have felt the pain and despair of the day-to-day encounters of such work: resistant students and colleagues, complicated conversations, emotionally intense stories, and conflict at every corner.

Pitt and Brizman (2003) refer to difficult knowledge “when knowledge references incommensurability, historical trauma, and social breakdowns” (p. 756). These forms of knowledge are wrapped in critical curriculum and address power relations, privilege/oppression, and social ascriptions that powerfully shape our realities (race, class, gender, and sexual orientation). So, what is it like to facilitate discussions focused on difficult knowledges in the classroom with our pre-service teachers? Difficult.

For pre-service teachers, this difficulty and aforementioned heartache becomes most apparent in the classroom when the student teacher is expected to employ this newly acquired “knowledge” in a real classroom, with real people. What happens to the pre-service teacher who, in her one-course class on “diversity”, was more comfortable discussing and envisioning the hypothetical scenario (the one in which our imaginations can cut, remove, and draw in that which is suitable) than wrestling with a classmate’s diverging life experience? What skills is she
equipped with when the real, the concrete, stands before her? The Civil Rights Project at UCLA (Frankenberg & Siegel-Hawley, 2008) reported that a dismal 29 percent of pre-service teachers felt they had adequate training in the realm of “diversity.”

Moreover, the overwhelming cultural trend to compartmentalize education (i.e., multicultural education, art education, science education, math education) speaks to and mirrors the bureaucratic process of compartmentalizing problems and issues. This compartmentalization only works to exacerbate the maelstroms of the teacher who is placed as the apex of all compartmentalized worlds and agendas. Teachers are mentor, administrator, standardized regulator, counselor, negotiator and mediator in one room. Aside from juggling these compartmentalized roles, teachers must also focus on the students’ development and well being. When teachers and students are forced to teach and learn in hardened compartmentalizations, they can endure harsh blows to their emotional, psychological, and spiritual psyche. Encouraged to “think rationally” or told, “don’t be emotional,” directly communicates that emotional knowledge and understanding are not acceptable displays of expression (Robinson-Keilig, Hamill, Gwin-Vinsant, & Dashner, 2014; Taliaferro-Baszile, 2010; Kharem, 2006). Taliaferro-Baszile (2010) details this epistemic paradigm through her discussion of Plato’s dichotomization between reason and emotion, calling it “one of the most destructive and pervasive aspects of Euro-American epistemology. . . with reason, the superior faculty being the pursuit of self-mastery and control” (p. 488). In turn, those who are not “properly” aligned (i.e., do not follow a western rationality conceptual model or considered to be less rational) are somehow maligned.

When forced to operate under and through these models of compartmentalization and exclusion, multicultural education’s effectiveness is limited. Even if the pre-service teacher embraces a critical perspective of education (possibly using a critical foundations perspective
and/or culturally relevant pedagogy), the constant *pain* these teachers (and students) experience and worse, are forced to ignore, deny, and suppress, lead many of these educators’ well-being to be compromised. The emotional exhaustion and psychological pain one endures trying to keep the integrity of these critical spaces in such a teaching environment can be incredibly depressing. One such teacher’s experience is exemplified in Carrillo’s (2010, p. 77), *Teaching that Breaks Your Heart*.

“A [teacher that uses] funds of knowledge, critical pedagogy, and culturally relevant teaching in her first year was now articulating her painful decision to exit the teaching profession. Christina could not reconcile the spiritual debate between her own psyche and soul”.

The issue of self-preservation, or as Carillo mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter- to be human- being at odds with “being a great teacher” as one of my student says, is a crossroad I wish to address, leading to the problem statement that drives this dissertation.

**Problem Statement**

The problem this dissertation wishes to address is the hyper-rationalism embedded in the practices of curriculum and pedagogy in mainstream and critical multicultural education, which in turn discourages the practice and facilitation of *difficult knowledges* in teacher preparation programs across the United States (Gorski, 2012; 2009). In other words, the rationalist-only frameworks imposed in our curriculum, instruction, and pedagogy do little to address the complex, emotional experiences individuals struggle with in grappling with difficult knowledges.

Reiter and Davis (2011) illustrate the little effect multicultural teacher education courses had in their study: “Our results clearly show that the MTE [multicultural teacher education] program had no effect on pre-service teachers’ attitudes, implying that it did not incite them to
question, and therefore revolutionize the ways in which they perceive and teach about the increasingly diverse world around them” (p. 45). In a classroom that continues to see an increase in diverse students (racially, gender identity, sexual orientation, and social class), mainstream multicultural education in teacher preparation has done little to re-orient pre-service teachers’ ontology in their preparation of pedagogical practices in such matters. Multicultural education, as it has been conceptualized, has failed to bring the goal of educating for a deeper self-reflexive inquiry into one’s knowledge construction/production (Reiter & Davis, 2011).

Current literature in the field of curriculum theory calls for more research of the implementation of critical theoretical lenses, in particular, post structural feminism and psychoanalysis to address the growing difficulties mainstream multicultural educational practices have with critically re-orienting the Self/Other relationship (Britzman, 2009; Taubman, 2011; Margaroni, 2005; Ellsworth, 1989; Felman, 1982). These curriculum scholars argue for different multiplicities of knowing such as embodied knowing, sensatorial knowing, and emotional/affective knowing. Ellsworth (1989) suggests that a rationalist-only framework weakens multicultural education and critical pedagogies by reinscribing a hierarchy of knowledge. Additionally, psychoanalysts such as Felman (1982) and Taubman (2011) argue for a psychoanalytical reinvention of epistemological concepts associated with knowing, learning, and teaching.

Although the field of curriculum theory is rife with conceptual alternatives, little empirical research has been conducted on their manifestations in pedagogy and classroom practices. Therefore, this dissertation seeks to respond to two research problems: 1) The lack of a theoretical framework derived from a psychoanalytic poststructural feminist lens which addresses the rationality embedded in multicultural education (both mainstream and critical) and
critical pedagogy and, 2) The absence of empirical research to explore how such a pedagogy manifests in one pre-service teaching classroom and its potential implications.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to document and reflect on the experiences and ruptures of both education students and a teacher (me) as we embarked on a semester long trip through what is called an intimate transgressive pedagogical approach informed by concepts derived from critical psychoanalysis and poststructural feminism. It is to share with the reader that journey with the hopes that this experience can add yet another layer to the conversation around the practices of multicultural education and teacher education. This is considered both an empirical study and a meditation on practices of intimacy in the classroom and its manifestation as an intimate transgressive pedagogy. Its focus may appear to be contrary, even untenable in what is known today as the *meta*, the occupied/er, and solution-based-response laden world of education. My hope for the reader is that this dissertation turns these ideas “inside-out” and brings attention to “unpredictable subjectivities in the classroom and the antinomy between socio/cultural norms and psychic unruliness” (Taubman, 2011, p. 25). The following research questions will guide this study.

1). What poststructural and psychoanalytic concepts may help construct a theoretical framework/pedagogy that extends and critiques critical rationalist frameworks whose goals are to facilitate difficult knowledges in the classroom?

2). What does such theoretical framework/pedagogy look like in a classroom?

3). How do students and a teacher respond to such a framework/pedagogy?
This dissertation seeks to construct a psychoanalytic poststructural feminist theoretical/pedagogy that will offer new possibilities for teaching difficult knowledge found in multicultural education as well as implement this pedagogy in a pre-service teacher classroom.

**Theoretical/Pedagogical Framework: Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy**

The main purpose of this theoretical/pedagogical framework, which I have named Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy (ITP), is to offer teacher educators and preservice teachers an alternative way towards developing, and/or broadening their critical faculties regarding power differentials, knowledge production, and hierarchical systems of socially ascribed characteristics. Like critical pedagogy, ITP addresses both theory and everyday practice. Borrowing from the terminology of critical pedagogy, it can be labeled as praxis, or “action that embodies certain qualities” (Smith, 1999/2011, para 9). Unlike critical pedagogy, however, ITP embodies qualities that are theoretically informed by psychoanalytic and poststructural feminism.

The concept, intimacy, which will be more fully explored in chapter three, emerges from a psychoanalytic feminist framework that focuses on knowledge construction as a deeply personal and creative act that negotiates the bordered landscapes of the un/conscious. Intimacy should not be mistaken for its popular cultural depiction of sexual relations. Rather, the term intimacy should be thought of as the personal negotiation process one participates in involving multiple forms of knowing. It denotes a certain degree of ineffability that precedes subjectivity, or what McKenzie (2009) calls the intersubjective “as a space, unrepresentable in itself, from which any speaking about the subject and the world can only begin” (p. 214). My hope is that in eliciting this somewhat controversial term as a pivotal concept for teacher educators, we refocus our attention to an element of existence that has been largely missing in our technical and technocratic conversations surrounding teaching and learning. Additionally, I see the usage of
intimacy as a direct form of resistance to the technocratic, patriarchal denigration of all words that carry in their meaning a situation of “An’/O’ther.” In this context, “An’/O’ther in intimacy is the sensual, corporeal, emotional, and feminine. While the media has highlighted many forms of inappropriate sexual relationships between teachers and students, calling them “intimate relations,” this dissertation seeks to reclaim the way in which dominant discourse frames the word, *intimacy* in education from something “inappropriate” and “cheap” to a word that emphasizes the singularity and, to a degree, the untranslation of living.

The concept “transgressive,” is not a novel term as it was first introduced as an emancipatory pedagogical goal by bell hooks (1994). She argues that transgression is an act in education that transforms oppressive relationships, which ignore the multiple ways in which learning occurs. She urges us all “to open our hearts and minds so that we can know beyond the boundaries of what is acceptable, so that we can think and rethink, so that we can create new visions. I celebrate teaching that enables transgressions—a movement against and beyond boundaries” (hooks, 1994, p. 12). While the concept, transgression, in ITP ultimately works to “create new visions” as hooks so eloquently states, the use of transgression in ITP falls more in line with McKenzie’s (2009) “pedagogical transgression” as a Foucauldian form of critique that instead of going “beyond boundaries” works to illuminate and expose boundaries. These postructural illuminations show where boundaries exist and are created. Rather than the goal of breaking through these boundaries, a poststructural epistemological standpoint suggests “a tentative and limited freedom to undertake explorations of assumptions and understandings” (McKenzie, 2009, p. 213). From a Foucauldian (1970) perspective, in a world with no in or out, and no escape, agency lies in the ability to creatively re-arrange the world and our worldview each day anew.
When we can both grasp and begin to articulate perplexing ideas and/or experiences laced with ambiguity, we move toward an emerging critical ontology and a more intimate way of relating to the world. In a world where the conditions and qualities of life rest on delicate and changing relationships, these skills are crucial to our own survival and well-being. I believe developing our critical ontological senses and being is both crucial and urgent in the field of education.

Central to this new theoretical/pedagogical framework is grappling with the uncertain and ambiguous qualities of living and knowing, particularly in a diverse society. While likely uncomfortable, this encounter becomes a necessary prerequisite towards the development of a more critical perspective and a better understanding of contentious social issues and relationships. Additionally, ITP proposes that when exploring social issues such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation in the classroom, it is equally as important to couch these observations within a critical self-epistemological inquiry/curiosity. The conscientization (Freire, 1970/2000) of one’s inward gaze is important for understanding the subjectivity and intersubjectivity of the outward gaze.

Also, a critical self onto-epistemological inquiry requires a holistic recalling and deconstruction of one’s past (i.e., their feelings, memories, interpretations) in conjunction with one’s present understandings of her/his current beliefs and assumptions. ‘Holistic recall’ contains multiple modes of knowing, which are corporeal, sensatorial, emotional, and cognitive. These sometimes contentious and multiple systems create a singular experience that informs our ways of knowing, living, and seeing, which oftentimes generate an unsettling feeling. ITP prioritizes these unsettling feelings (or contentious moments) as valuable spaces of inquiry and learning.
Furthermore, this pedagogy considers that studying these experiences in a focused manner can offer a valuable skill set and deepened perspective.

**Research Design and Methodology**

Because one of the major purposes of this study was to closely examine a teacher and students’ understanding and experience with a new theoretical and pedagogical approach in the classroom, a qualitative methodology was necessary (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2011; Willis, Muktha, & Nilakanta, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Giardini, 2008; Tracy, 2013). Tracy (2013) states three core concepts of qualitative research. These are: self-reflexivity, context, and thick description. This study comprises my understanding (researcher subjectivity) of a particular experience in one classroom (context and thick description) with a specific theoretical and pedagogical framework. The strengths of a qualitative inquiry include the ability to explore complex human experiences through the advent of a variety of epistemological frameworks (Tuhiwai-Smith, 2012), to demonstrate the complexity of social phenomena through “textual description[s] how people experience a given research issue” (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005), and to present these experiences in rich, descriptive ways (Berg & Lune, 2011).

Specifically for this study, an action research methodology with post structural feminist sensibilities was employed. These sensibilities include a method of deconstructing relationships that address the subjective and discursive relationship between intersections of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation through a combination of psychoanalysis and socio-cultural critique.

The commencement of action research is credited to native Berlinian and social psychologist, Kurt Lewin, who in the 1930s was interested in “raising the self esteem of minority
groups. . . [where he wanted them to] overcome the forces of ‘exploitation’ and colonialisation that had been prominent in their modern histories” (Adelman, 2006, pp. 7-8). He found traditional models, such as Taylor’s ‘scientific management,’ deductive approach insufficient to his professional aim, which was to “develop social relationships of groups and between groups to sustain communication and co-operation” (p. 7). Action Research positions the researcher as both participant and observer, which shapes the environment and phenomena under study (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Argyris, 1993; Kemmis, 1993).

Action Research’s main goals are to better understand social phenomena, individuals’ experiences and interpretations of phenomena, and promote self-reflection and collective action among participants (Nelson, 2013). Some of the most recent applications of action research in education focus on the practices of the classroom, teacher education, and the improvement of society. Bobrakov (2014) writes, “Action research is more than a mere concern over the technical problems of teaching, but provides the teacher with the necessary tools to investigate their perspectives on curriculum and moral concern” (p. 4). The methods of Action Research are a combination of qualitative methods with a distinct focus on the researcher/participant outlining his/her thought process. While interviews are a popular qualitative tool, an Action Researcher would be interested in the interview to both: 1) gain a better understanding of the participant’s process of understanding, and 2) to stimulate and engage the participant in the reflective process of their own practices and experiences to gain self-awareness and potentially different insight into their own reasoning. As a result, sharing these processes with others is thought to promote “the pre-requisite reflection level of self awareness in order to promote a better understanding of the diversity of students in the classroom” (Hagevik, Aydeniz, & Glennon Rowell, 2012, p. 683).
The Difference Between Action Research and Participatory Action Research. It is important to mention the main difference between Action Research and Participatory Action Research, which is the co-collaborative involvement of the participants as researchers in Participant Action Research. In Participatory Action Research (PAR), participants contribute to all aspects of the research design, which includes articulating the research problem and naming the strategies and methods of inquiry used to address the research problem. The group conducts the analysis and interpretation and determines the cessation of inquiry (Boga, 2004). However, Action Research does not allocate such responsibility to the participant and follows a more traditional qualitative relationship between the researcher and participants. Because the phenomenon under study is the implementation of a pedagogical alternative informed by the aforementioned theoretical paradigm, the interest of the study was already predetermined. Rather than have the participants change the design and components of the pedagogy and theory, it was more appropriate to see how participants (including myself) responded to its implementation.

Data Collection and Analysis. Data was collected during one semester long course, Teaching and Learning 301. Seventeen in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted and 45 students’ papers and class journals were collected. Additionally, my own observations and reflections were recorded and used to help contextualize the data and the analysis. Both the interviews and the students’ work and journals were coded to garner prominent categories, which were turned into themes subject to critical analyses from the aforementioned theoretical concepts. By bringing the students’ and instructor’s experiences to the center of the study and the curriculum, I hope to show the negotiations and movement of the class’ (both individual and collective) psychological and emotional journeys.
Results/Analysis. The dominant theme to emerge was a high degree of vulnerability experienced and discussed by the participants. Vulnerability is defined as a feeling that occurs when an individual’s “normal” narratives are disrupted through alternative narratives and/or interpretations. The feeling of vulnerability manifested primarily through a challenge to one’s positionality or perceived worldview, and through discursive ambiguity, which is a deliberate conscientization of uncertainty in one’s meaning making process. The data is presented through three students’ experiences with vulnerability. I chose to present three student portraits and experiences so that I could illuminate the nuances and struggles of students in a concrete manner.

ITP is woven throughout the reporting of the results and the analysis, and then revisited separately towards the end of the analysis.

Summary of Chapters

This dissertation includes six chapters. Chapter one addresses the problem under study and provides an outline of the dissertation. Chapter two consists of a literature review of the historical events leading up to multicultural education and the different forms it has taken throughout its development. Because the topic of this dissertation is focused on the construction and implementation of a new theoretical/pedagogical framework (ITP), the literature review of multicultural education is limited and focuses specifically on the tenets of liberal, conservative, and critical multicultural education which includes critical pedagogy. Chapter three begins with a call toward an educational practice that focuses on the critical ontological development of the student/teacher. It follows with a pedagogy that aims to cultivate this process through a theory of intimacy. Specifically, I present the components that comprise a theory/pedagogy of intimate transgression, which emphasize the lived experiences and recall of those experiences (retrospective return), the critical movement necessary to processing those experiences (tender
esse), and the ability and attempt to articulate those movements and experiences (loquela).

Chapter four addresses my positionality in the research as both researcher and instructor, along with the rationale behind the design of the study. The tenets of action research are discussed and applied to the study. Chapter five describes the results of the study and includes the analysis and reflective components. Both analysis and reflection are included since I, the researcher, involve myself as both participant and researcher. Chapter six concludes the dissertation with a discussion of the results and potential implications for the field of education. I end with a short reflection of aspects I consider to be important areas of learning (for myself) and future recommendations and suggestions for further areas of research.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature in this chapter will address the field of multicultural education. While I frame my work alongside curriculum theorists, I situate my dissertation within the arena of multicultural education. I see the goals of both fields complimenting one another.

Multicultural education has long been associated with improving social mobility and educational equity for marginalized groups within education. Curriculum theory’s more recent endeavors have focused on the theoretical analyses and the role of curricula (writ large) in education (Pinar, 2012). My hope is that situating my dissertation, which I believe represents a strand of curriculum theory that is relatively new and not often discussed outside of its small circle of academics, within the multicultural arena, will spark some much needed dialogue between the two fields. In doing so, I believe the efforts of multicultural education draw out the insularity curriculum theorists have been perhaps too comfortable inhabiting, and that the field of multicultural education can benefit from a different perspective and reinvigorate itself with different concepts. Working at such intersections between multicultural education and curriculum theory joins two powerful (in their own ways) approaches that I believe, together, can provide new insights into old problems.

Also, for the purpose of clarity and accessibility, I have organized my review in three philosophical strands of multicultural education. These are: conservative multicultural education, liberal multicultural education, and critical multicultural education. I realized the conceptual siloes I have created for each philosophical framework are not completely independent from one another. I understand that, these movements blend and permeate one another. However, I believe
that presenting a “bird’s eye view” of the dominant perspectives of multicultural education throughout the years offers a comprehensive snapshot of the field.

The first conceptual approach to MCE I outline is conservative MCE, then liberal MCE. Because these two approaches have garnered widespread attention and critique, I provide only brief descriptions of each approach. I spend more attention outlining the tenets of critical MCE and critical pedagogy (CP), as I specifically situate my dissertation within these two particular compartments of MCE, hoping to both embrace and challenge certain aspects of these approaches and their implications. I finish the chapter with a poststructural feminist critique of the rationalist-only frameworks that have driven these strands of multicultural education in order foreshadow the work of chapter three.

Overall, I position myself as a proponent of critical MCE and CP’s principles, goals, and foci; however, I challenge particular facets of their frameworks. In laying out my review in this manner, I hope to direct the reader’s attentions to better understand the landscape multicultural education inhabits, and the various tensions that arise within it and pose problems for its ability to carry out its goals. Before I dive into the conceptual approaches of MCE, I begin with a brief discussion of the birth of MCE and the socio-political landscape of that time. Then, I follow with a brief discussion of the agreed upon definition, principles, and foci of MCE. Finally, I address the epistemological foundations that shaped the various entities of what we now know to be multicultural education.

**Historical Origins of Multicultural Education**

In what Goldman (1956/1965) calls “the crucial decade”, the late 1940s and early 1950s, is viewed as an important historical moment that would later shape and inspire the creation of multicultural education. While, this time period has generally been ignored by civil rights
scholars’, Hutcheson, Gasman, and Sanders-Mcurtry (2011) argue that “the events in those years ... is a key illustration of the complexity of the meanings of the struggle to gain access to higher education” (p. 123). Returning from World War II, black soldiers, who encountered Europeans, and other whites in different countries that did not regard blacks as inferior people- were forced to return to a society bent on enforcing Jim Crow laws that legalized segregation and discrimination of blacks. The war changed many peoples’ attitudes, and black veterans were ready to battle the laws that had disenfranchised them. “They realized that Jim Crow was not inevitable and the South didn’t have to be that way” (Wormser, 2002, U.S. in World War II, para 2).

Alongside a changed attitude towards Jim Crow laws by black veterans, many black college leaders’ were seen as influential in the ignition of the Civil Rights Movement. Hutcheson, et. al, (2011) describe their influence in “prepar[ing] students to take advantage of the window of opportunity that the Cold War provided and provided an intellectual foundation for future civil rights agitation” (p. 136). These leaders understood the global pressure the U.S. was under in recruiting international support for its causes. Jim Crow was a contradiction to “the democratic idea and the free market system” (p. 136) and continued to draw more negative attention to the U.S. from its world neighbors. Consequently, many black colleges allowed for more organized resistance against discrimination. These included the promotion of higher education and financial support for black students, financial and educational support for legal activism, extracurricular activities and courses that highlighted international oppressions that helped situate and make conscious local oppressions, and fraternal and sorority organizations created by black activists who worked to bring about equality in education. With the additional efforts of powerful white individuals who were able to advocate for desegregation and black’s
access to education, (c.f., George F. Zooks and the American Educational Council, The Truman Commission), the 40s and 50s were a time when subtle but important changes were taking place. These shifts set the scene for the Civil Rights Movement that would eventually garner full public attention on educational inequalities in the U.S.

As protests, rallies, and sit-ins for black equality became more prominent features of the fabric of American life, so too, did the violent efforts to quell these attempts. What seemed to be relegated to the black colleges, military veterans, and individual efforts of certain white and black individuals, quickly unfolded into a national movement.

Multicultural education, born from and in response to such struggle, was seen as a weapon to challenge public institutions that facilitated discriminatory practices. In particular, education was considered “among those institutions . . . which were among the most oppressive and hostile to the ideals of racial equality (Gorski, 1999, A Brief History of Multicultural Education, para 2). Other activist groups, including feminist scholars and other scholars of color, joined the fight for social and educational change that included and addressed other forms of oppressive practices and discriminations. A number of programs and alternatives within education emerged in an effort to actualize these changes and; together, by the 60s and 70s, these efforts culminated into the earliest recognized forms of a multicultural agenda in education.

**Definition and Principles of Multicultural Education**

Multicultural education (MCE) has several definitions, but in its broadest form it can be defined as “a field of study designed to increase educational equity for all students that incorporates, for this purpose, content, concepts, principles, theories, and paradigms from history, the social and behavioral sciences, and particularly from ethnic studies and women studies” (Banks & Banks, 1995, p. xii; Sleeter & McLaren, 2009). Fundamentally, multicultural
education’s goal is for the maintenance of “human rights and liberation” (Payne & Welsh, 2000, p. 29). Gorski (2006) outlines five agreed upon principles that guide multicultural educators. These are (pp. 164-165):

1) Multicultural education is a political movement and process that attempts to secure social justice for historically and presently underserved students.

2) Multicultural education recognizes that, while some individual classroom practices are consistent with the multicultural education philosophies, social justice is an institutional matter and as such, can be secured only through comprehensive school reform.

3) Multicultural education insists that school reform can be achieved only through a critical analysis of systems of power and privilege.

4) The underlying goal of multicultural education—the purpose of this critical analysis—is the elimination of educational inequities.

5) Multicultural education is good education for all students.

The field is inspired and born from struggle, yet, according to Banks (1995), the biggest misconception of multicultural education is not its origin, but its scope in the field of education. Popular discourse frames multicultural education’s primary focus as solely curriculum reform by adding “content about ethnic groups, women, and other cultural groups” (p. 4). More accurately, there are five aims/goals. These are: content integration, knowledge construction, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and empowering school culture. These dimensions are not mutually exclusive and they work together to elicit institutional change in all aspects of formal education—such as: “curriculum, the teaching materials, teaching and learning styles, the
attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of teachers and administrators; and the goals, norms, and culture of the school” (Banks, 1995, p. 4).

Despite the agreed upon definitions, guiding principles, and goals, there are a variety of philosophical frameworks that multicultural teacher educators (MTE) follow when applying MCE in their pedagogy and classroom. The next sections will briefly introduce three main philosophical frameworks that multicultural educators are familiar with and may employ in their pedagogy and practice. I will provide a brief synopsis of each framework.

**Conservative Multicultural Education**

Conservative multiculturalists believe in cultural homogeneity. In this context, difference is minimalized, and assimilation to the dominant norms is expected. While conservative multicultural educators purport to support the goals of educational equality and excellence for all students regardless of social ascriptions, their processes are “obtained in an open, free, competitive market economy where minorities simply have to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps’” (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001, p. 91). Inversely, conservative multicultural education is a discourse of assimilated sameness. Universalism is of high regard, and a popular depiction of conservative multicultural sentiment is the “melting pot” metaphor, where the United States is a melting pot of social difference, created as one, to make its own unique identity.

Furthermore, one of the key components of this approach is rooted in a universal, competitive, economic model. Individuals are encouraged to compete in the global market in order to increase social mobility. Education is one vessel in which individuals compete for such goals. “The goals of excellence and equity in education are then predicated on student participation in a free market of competition, opportunity, survival of the fittest, and upward social mobility” (Jenks, et. al, 2001, p. 91). Standardized curriculum, which promotes an
economic and global model, is considered necessary to educate and create a “fair” playing field for everyone. Jenks, et. al (2001) report that “many elementary and secondary teachers support this approach, believing that rapid assimilation into the mainstream culture is in the best interest of the minority student” (p. 91). Gorski (2006) adds his own critique stating, “The multicultural education most often practiced by teachers, administrators, staff developers, teacher educators, and others in the US, is a conservative, depoliticized, version that does more to sustain inequities than to demolish them (pp. 163, 164)”.

Critics of conservative multicultural education argue that while universal characteristics of human need (such as the need to be loved, to feel pain, to create) aren’t necessarily disputed, the forms these expressions take are not universal (Prakash & Stuchel, 2010; Loobuyck, 2005, Anagnostou, 2009). Critics have labeled conservative multiculturalism as a depoliticizing mechanism to maintain hegemonic beliefs that undermine the radicalism of the politic of difference. According to conservative multiculturalists, all people are equal, or the same. While differences may exist, they should not disrupt the conditions of sameness and/or tradition that uphold the status quo. Difference, therefore, is seen as a deficit, or a deviation from the standard. Neutrality and objectivity are not only possible but should be seen as valuable characteristics in the fabric of societal health and operations (Loobuyck, 2005). From a postmodern and poststructuralist perspective, this is not possible and, moreover, further exacerbates unequal and inequitable relationships through the discourse of sameness. Critics of conservative multicultural education ask the questions: Whose version of sameness matters? If sameness is a self-evident truth then what happens to sameness when some challenge the notion? How can objectivity and neutrality exist if people experience the world differently? (Morrow & Torres, 1995)
Critical multiculturalists and curriculum theorists argue that conservative multiculturalism reappropriates the status quo through assimilationist discourses that assume everyone is and should be treated the same through a ‘difference-blind’ (Loobuyck, 2005, p. 109) mentality. Furthermore, conservative multiculturalists who adopt this approach are critiqued for not targeting the larger sphere of oppression, which from a structuralist point-of-view, is organized and maintained at the level of the institution (Loobuyck, 2005). In short, conservative multiculturalism is critiqued for “failing to live up to its own egalitarian ideals” (Loobuyck, 2005, p. 109).

The curriculum content within a conservative multicultural education reflects the aforementioned difference-blind approach. This rhetoric suggests that everyone unconsciously or consciously wants and needs the same things over time and space, which leads to universal declarations or self-evident “truths”. The “other” is understood through the self’s perception and construction, (Scott, 2004) not the other way around. This uni-directional, non-reflective gaze is considered egocentric, and, more specifically by critical multicultural scholars, as a reinvented form of Euro or Anglo-centrism (Chalmers, 2002). As Carby (1999) writes: “multicultural curriculum was from its inception part of the states’ strategies of social control. Black culture and history were what the schools said they were” (p. 194).

Interacting with diverse populations is theorized from the dominant group’s position and presented as the “right” and “best” way to interact. As mentioned, the movements of conservative multiculturalism are based on a perspective that views understanding and relationship unidirectionally and on a paternal benevolence that assumes a level of justified authority. Critical scholars critique this gaze and misrepresented essentialist naming and re-colonizing construction of the “Other” (Willinsky, 1998). Furthermore, modern discourses of
division become internalized through naming ‘I am what you are not’. People in positions of power and institutional structures have the ultimate power to name, and do so. Left uncritically examined, this naming becomes a dominant representation that becomes synonymous with ‘universal’ representation.

**Liberal Multicultural Education**

Whereas difference is admonished and ignored in conservative multicultural education, liberal multicultural education emphasizes difference. A major theme in liberal multicultural education is its ‘culture of awareness’. Gary Howard’s title, *We Can’t Teach What we Don’t Know* (1999), effectively captures the assumption of liberal multicultural education: teachers need to be educated, or be made “aware” of the socio-cultural-historical identities of their students, in particular their marginalized students. While liberal multicultural education does not raise the issue of systemic oppression in education to the degree that critical multicultural does, it does critique the lack of voice of marginalized groups that conservative multiculturalists overlook. Liberal multicultural educators push for greater awareness of the social disparities between groups (Sleeter & McLaren, 2009). Albeit, this ‘awareness’ still effectively upholds and does not question dominant practices, policies, and beliefs in education that critical multicultural educators would later confront. Rather, this awareness was framed by portraying “students of color, those from poverty areas, and those whose first language was not English [being] defined as “at-risk” of failure, [where] their homes and communities were defined as culturally deprived and morally depraved” (Sleeter & McLaren, 2009, The Origins of Multiculturalism, para 4).

Another outcome of liberal multicultural education efforts is the depiction of minorities as socially damaged and/or culturally and socially exotic. As socially damaged beings, the sentiment goes that over generations of constant denigration, a profoundly negative self-
perception and affect shaped the minority identity. In an attempt to “fix” this perception, liberal multicultural educators valorized cultural differences. Most commonly known as “the heroes and holidays” approach toward multicultural education, school educators noted famous marginalized historical figures, emphasized different cultural traditions and customs, and celebrated different groups and customs. The tossed salad bowl metaphor is the most common depiction of such sentiments. Like a tossed salad, each separate ingredient is considered special and contributive in adding its own unique flavor. As well intentioned as these actions (and illustrations) are, they have been shown to do little in the way of unseating the dominant narrative so deeply engrained in the telling of these stories, and in actuality have been shown to reinforce the dominant narrative. Moreover, not only do these practices generally reinforce stereotypes, romanticize group attributions and promote a limited and superficial representation and understanding of the past, but also without critically connecting the implications of the past to current -isms and existing forms of oppression, these practices and beliefs successfully uphold the dominant belief that past oppressions no longer exist. Consequently, with structural barriers of inequity not being addressed, oppressive practices and discriminations at the institutional level are allowed to persist and continue operating.

The “damage-centered approach” (Shalaby, 2014, p. 127) that seems to personify the liberal multicultural education movement, has not surprisingly, been critiqued. Shalaby (2014) states that deeply etched in the heart of MCE is a past that, in order to justify the need, has relied on “proving brokenness . . . [in that] we establish people as injured, impaired, or less than, in order to demand a remedy for what ails them” (p. 127). In establishing different social and cultural practices and ways of knowing and learning as Shalaby deems, “the myth of inferiority,” dominant models remain uncritiqued and are allowed to continue perpetuating hierarchy in the
name of multiculturalism. The myth of inferiority is the unquestioned narrative of a “supreme” standard. Shalaby, who traces its origin back to colonialism, explains how this narrative is epitomized through the achievement gap discourse, which she calls a “deeply etched, visual rank order of human groups” (p. 127). This damage-centered notion goes hand in hand with the notion of empowerment, which was seen as liberal multicultural educator’s antidote towards addressing those who were labeled disadvantaged or at-risk.

Empowerment

Theoretically, this concept’s aim was to increase a sense of agency or ability to be socially mobile. It should be noted that “Empowerment pedagogies” with the wider inclusion of voices, became more widely accepted for critical multiculturalists to critique the system itself. A theory, pedagogy, and curriculum of empowerment began to gradually shift its focus on the perceived “lack” of non-dominant groups and the power of the individual to the narrowness and exclusions of the system. This shift drew from a range of sociological, psychological, and cultural studies literature. Everything from school procedures such as tracking to access to resources (Darling-Hammond, 1995), to studies in learning styles dominated the field of research during this movement. Cultural sensitivity workshops and trainings were advocated along with instructional materials that could educate teachers about multicultural education. Multicultural centers were seen as important institutions that supported this notion of empowerment, and such centers became institutionalized.

Currently, the battle over discourses of ‘Empowerment’ continues. It is commonly believed that social groups who “fall behind” in school would not do so, if their culture were infused in the curriculum. As Banks (as cited in Gay, 2000) writes, “this theory postulates that discontinuities between the school and low-income students and students of color is an important
factor in their low academic achievement” (p. ix). In other words, it is pitched to educational reformers as a “tool” to reach marginalized student so they can be more “productive” citizens, which benefits the system in place.

This epistemology, pedagogy, and curriculum dominate the commercial sector of multiculturalist education (May & Sleeter, 2010). However, critical multiculturalists heavily criticize and problematize the discourse and discursive practices of liberal and conservative multicultural education.

**Critical Multicultural Education and Critical Pedagogy**

Critical multiculturalists do not believe a free and competitive market will lead to increased human rights and liberation for all people. On the contrary, they argue, leaving the issues of equity and excellence in the hands of a free and competitive market only works to exacerbate social disparities and make these efforts more challenging. Critical multiculturalists are concerned with addressing social issues at the macro- (organizational and conceptual) level, demonstrating that many of the dominant beliefs used to uphold certain practices and behaviors within the education system are a product of the ways in which one’s socio/cultural ideological thinking shapes the constructs of reality. Critical multiculturalists are interested in addressing power and asking difficult questions: “Under what conditions and by whom are concepts of equity and excellence constructed? What do they look like for different groups and in different circumstances” (Jenks, Lee, & Kanpol, 2001, p. 94)? Critical multicultural educators are interested in the sociopolitical context, meaning, CME is concerned with “tak[ing] into account the larger social and political forces operating in a particular society and the impact they may have on student learning” (Nieto, 1999).
While critical multicultural education seems to serve as an umbrella for numerous movements and pedagogical endeavors in fields associated with social justice education (i.e., anti-racist education, eco-justice education, policy reform), care politics (Noddings, 1984), and public health; it is difficult, if not nearly impossible to articulate the full breadth of its expressions (Leistyna, 2002). While being diverse in its employment, critical multiculturalism has most commonly been associated with critical pedagogy (CP). Leistyna (2002) writes, “Regardless of the abundance of names that are summoned to describe Critical Multiculturalism, there are important theoretical insights and practices that are woven throughout these various concepts, which often grow out of a common set of issues and conditions, that provide the focus for critical education within shifting spheres of political conflict” (p. 13). And, she explains in her analysis of critical multiculturalism that she will use the concept “interchangeably . . . with critical pedagogy and critical multicultural education” (p. 9). Gay (1995) writes of the strong ties CP has with CME stating:

Differences between multicultural education and critical pedagogy are more context than content, semantics than substance, and oratorical than essential.

At the level of philosophical principles, ideological emphasis, and outcome expectations, multicultural education is a form of critical pedagogy . . .

Multicultural education and critical pedagogy are mirror images of each other . . .

As philosophies they constitute a set of beliefs which value an educational process that celebrates and facilitates individual diversity, autonomy, and empowerment.

As methodologies, multicultural education and critical pedagogy are means of designing and implementing educational programs and practices that are more egalitarian and effective for diverse student populations. Both employ a language
of critique, and endorse pedagogies of resistance, possibility, and hope. They are grounded in principles of personal liberation, critical democracy, and social equality, and an acceptance of the political and partisan nature of knowledge, human learning and the educational process. – p. 156

For the purpose of clarity, I will identify elements of critical multicultural education (CMCE) that intersect with CP to 1) Better illuminate the elements CMCE and, 2) Introduce the tenets of the leading form of pedagogy being studied and practiced by critical multicultural educators and other educators focused on social justice, equity education, and critical theories and analysis (Gorski, 2009). Although, CP has its own process of development, the new conceptualizations for the field are incredibly similar to that of CMCE. The following sub-sections will outline the characteristics of both CMCE and CP.

**Systematic forms of Oppression**

Critical multiculturalism focuses on systems of oppression which perpetuate inequity and asymmetrical relations of power between social groups (Price, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2012; Gay, 1995; Au, 2009; Bowles, 1971/1977). Power is unequally distributed purposefully to maintain control and domination over marginalized social groups (Berlak, 2009). Acquisition of power is determined and heavily influenced by the social constructions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation (Zinn & Dill, 1996). Critical multiculturalists critique liberal multiculturalism and its foundations asserting that liberal multiculturalists skirt around issues of systematic inequalities and in-fact reproduces them through avoiding dominant culture -systems and structural power (Young, 2010).

Critical pedagogues and critical multicultural educators see this form of oppression expressed through the banking model of education. The banking method of education treats
teachers as all-knowing, authoritative, representatives of a fixed and absolute reality. Students are expected to be submissive objects or passive receptacles of this reality and are discouraged from questioning or deviating from the norm making “the scope of action allowed to students extend[d] only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits” (Freire & Bergman Ramos, 2009, p. 164). As a result of this constraint, formal education becomes a model which “mirrors the structure of an oppressive society in which the oppressed and the oppressors are divided” (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011, p. 78) as “the more students put their efforts into receiving and storing information deposited in them, the less they can attain the critical consciousness that comes from” (Freire & Bergman Ramos, 2009, p. 164) intervening as societal change-makers and transformers in the world. Rather, both camps believe that students and teachers come into the classroom with experiences and valuable knowledgeable. Increasing student power through encouraging more student voice in the classroom is believed to be a way in which people in positions of oppression can combat that which “routinely ignores inequities among marginalized ethnic, social class, and cultural groups, and ignores or violates their rights, cultures, and experiences” (Gay, 1995, p. 157).

As such, Critical Pedagogy’s (CP) main concern is social transformation through political praxis and critical consciousness (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Giroux, 1997) through the institution of education. Praxis is defined in critical pedagogy as “the informed [, creative, and ongoing] practice, [and] committed action (Smith, 1999/2011, What is Praxis, para 13)” of a critically conscious individual. Critical consciousness is the “ability to perceive social, political, and economic oppression and to take action against the oppressive elements of society” (“Developing Critical Consciousness in an Age of Oppression,” n.d.). The earliest form of CP, and what is considered to many as the founding of CP, comes from Freire’s (1970/2000) *Pedagogy of the*
Building on fundamental concepts such as praxis and conscientization, critical pedagogues call forth a different way of teaching and learning: where education is student-centered and problem-posing. This means students become active subjects, rather than passive objects, responsible for the examination of their experiences in relation to the world and the relationship with societal problems, capable of transforming their surroundings through an ongoing process of reflective reconstruction of their engagement with the world (Joldersma, 1999 & Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).

Critical pedagogy’s central tenets are change in teachers’ role, critical self-reflection, critical praxis of dialogical relations, emphasis on student voice and lived experience, and a critical positioning of one’s social location in relation to the larger social order through a critical analysis of historical texts and events (Freire, 1970/2000). Freire believed that by restructuring educational practices and implementing a problem-posing model of education, critical consciousness could take place, and hidden political agendas and problematic and inequitable status quo effects of schooling could be identified and transformed. The process of conscientization, or conscious awareness, is considered the first step in the transformative process of praxis or political action. This awareness initiates the Oppressed’s desire for emancipation (Freire, 1970/2000). Dependent on the first phase, transformative and liberating education would spread by way of resistance and/or rebellion and a new pedagogy would be established that Freire called, “a pedagogy of all people” (p. 54).

Language

Another site of examination for critical multiculturalists and critical pedagogues is language and the discursive ways in which ideas become articulated in society. Curriculum, policies, procedures, formal (including but not specific to legal) documents and texts are
deconstructed (Foucault, 1972). Pinar (2012) writes, “We become the language we speak” (p. 35) and interrogating language (through its multiple forms) provides an intertextual and more critical understanding between the text and the practices and ideologies that inform such texts.

More recently, the field of CP is concerned with the centrality of interpretation, or critical hermeneutics. This concern emanates from the understanding that language is a political tool. Critical pedagogues see language as an inevitable force of power used to both liberate and oppress, and as an unstable entity used to shift meaning and construct the world. Language manifests itself as a practice with implicit rules used to regulate and navigate ideas and belief systems. For example, within education, discursive powers take shape through the books or texts students and professionals are encouraged and/or mandated to read, whose authority and “guide”/lines are visible, through the forms of instructional and pedagogical methods, and through the goals and areas of information that are valued. (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2002)

The Hidden Curriculum

Critical race scholars argue that modern discourses of domination and power embed themselves into curriculum. Curriculum then becomes a tool for dominant culture and serves as, what Zizek (2010) claims a hegemonic reconstruction of domination and an ornamental adornment to the face of social injustice. Critical multiculturalists and curriculum theorists heavily critique all aspects of formal education claiming that formal education’s failure to address systems of inequality based on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation and other social ascriptions, are in fact nuanced and different versions of the same hierarchies of power. “What is not present in the schools today” (Pinar, 2012, p. 37) is visibility of the absences that traditional curricula have left out. These absences and invisibility serve as important truth-telling moments of formal education’s hidden agendas (Besley & Peters, 2007). For critical
multiculturalists, any structure, pedagogy, or curriculum that fails to address these issues are themselves rearticulating forms of oppression through systematic –isms (i.e., racism, classism, hyper-masculinity, and heterosexism).

Maybe the most glaring testament to this notion can be seen in Ross’ (1901) infamous, *Social Control*, which provides a clear agenda at maintaining unequal power relations through education.

The secret of order is not to be bawled from every housetop. The wise sociologist will show religion a consideration it has rarely met with from the naturalist. He will venerate a moral system too much to uncover its nakedness. He will speak to men, not to youth. He will not tell the “recruit,” the street Arab, or the Elmira inmate how he is managed. He will address himself to those who administer the moral capacity of society—to teachers, clergymen, editors, law-makers, and judges who wield the instruments of control . . . In this way he will make himself an accomplice of all good men for the undoing of all bad men. – p. 144

Ross is explicit in his collusion. His work calls for the “secret of order,” – an order based on supremacy and a continuation of racist, gendered, and classist ideology- to be kept within existing circles of power through the guise and label of rationalism and scientific curriculum. In other words, Ross calls for deliberate deceit to perpetuate existing social hierarchies by marrying discourses of moral goodness with the discourse of scientific rationalism. Over a century later, critics of standardized curriculum continue to make the argument that universalized and objective notions have hidden within them biased belief systems that have socio-political agendas that will not benefit all (Apple, 2004).
Interrogating Whiteness and Making Whiteness Visible

Making the concept of whiteness visible is an important way for students to recognize the systematic oppressions of institutions and other structures of power (Porter, 1999, Britzman, 1992). Critical multiculturalists and critical pedagogues argue that in order for equitable education to occur, anti-racist discussions and revelation of racist ideologies must be a central and constant source of examination (Thompson, 1997). Racist ideologies are found to uphold institutional oppression through procedures and biased qualifying attributions that privileges Whiteness-a more recent form of Eurocentric/Americanist bias and rearticulates the boundaries of inclusion/exclusion. Language is also a powerful contributor to reinscribing racist ideologies, and modern discourses re-name racist practices through bureaucratic and legal jargon (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1994).

Anti-oppressive pedagogy (Kumashiro, 2004) operates on this premise as well whereby education is taught for the “Other.” In doing so, it provides a counter-narrative often unheard and challenges taken-for-granted assumptions of the dominant culture. Students come to see multiple perspectives informed by social positioning. Anti-racist pedagogies (Lee as cited in Au, 2009) follow this train of thought with a strong emphasis on Whiteness and racial disparity as an underlying catalyst for all other intersections of inequality. Critical race theory underpins anti-oppressive/anti-racist pedagogies and curriculum as it attributes the importance of creating counter-narratives, validates other forms of knowing often dismissed such as sharing lived experiences and marginalized perspectives, and critiques liberalism (Gay, 2000).

The Myth of Objectivity and Neutrality

According to positivist epistemology, objectivity and neutrality “ensure” fairness and validity (i.e., ‘is the test consistent in measuring what it is intended to assess?’) (Crotty, 2007).
Critical multiculturalists argue that positivistic forms of inference are inherently biased and therefore diminish the credibility of the researcher who states his/her work is free from political agenda and since every phase of the research process - data collection, analysis, and representation - is understood through the discretion and filter of the researcher’s position (Wright, 2006). Furthermore, “bias” or the filtering process of interpretation also occurs at the level of the policy maker and the administration of school districts. At each stage of transfer, critical scholars question and problematize the notion of objectivity and neutrality of research and resulting policies. Hegemonic practices occur when discourses of objectivity and neutrality are used to mask hidden agendas (Morrow & Torres, 1995). At this point in time, the terms, ‘objectivity,’ and ‘neutrality’ are being replaced with new labels, such as “achievement gaps,” “standards,” “accountability,” and culturally deficient discourses centered on “need” for intervention programs that can alleviate labels of “At-risk” and/or “slow” learners. According to critical multiculturalists and pedagogues, the names have changed but the subjugation and social control over particular groups have not (Shiva, 2005).

Currently, supporters of standardized testing argue tests are free from bias, objectively “analyzed” and predict and name important “trends” within society. According to supporters of standardized testing, standardization is a method directed towards improving the disjointed and diverse range of teaching philosophies, which they claim create unfair positions of “achievement” or lack thereof for students. Implementing a standard curriculum throughout the system ensures a systematic way of monitoring and tracking teacher instruction and promotes “equal” education. Critics argue that rather than a way to ensure fairness, it is a way to ensure conformity and compliance through surveillance. Further, it reduces the role of the teacher to
technician, needing little training other than classroom management, dealing with “behavioral” issues, and keeping her/his students in line with the curriculum (Taubman, 2009).

Critical scholars attack standardized testing as it is argued that the test is culturally biased towards members of the dominant culture (Taubman, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 1995; King, 1995; Gordon, 1995; Gay, 2000). The construction of knowledge is subjective.

The Notion of Difference

Difference is a fundamental issue discussed in all multicultural conversations. However, both conservative and liberal notions treat difference as either a fixed entity unchanging in its form, shape, and movement, or a linear model of normalized sequential steps to ameliorate it. They do not see difference as a biological conclusion (like conservative multiculturalists might), nor do they see individuals as bound by their cultural stereotypes and products of their cultural legacies (as liberal multiculturalists have been critiqued). Rather, critical multicultural educators focus on difference as a social construct informed by various social ascriptions.

Critical pedagogues have generally agreed with critical multicultural educators’ notion and analysis of difference. However, there does seem to be more discussion happening among critical pedagogies who are working to further broaden this notion than from curriculum theorists who argue that even the social ascriptions that seem so clearly identifiable, theoretically, are in fact, heterogeneous and fluid and experienced in multiple ways (c.f. Lather, 2007; Deleuze, 1969/1990; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Pinar, 2012; bhabha, 1994; Eppert & Wang, 2008).

Identity

Critical multiculturalists and critical scholars study the effects and constructs of dominant culture on minority identities and issues surrounding representation (c.f. Taubman, 2009; Apple, 2004; Fine, 1994; Urietta, 2003; Fanon, 1963). The degree to which dominant culture shapes
identity is profound as it not only attaches to an individual psychological self-concept but also is
developed through the process of daily living (Pinar, 2012; Au, 2009). Most often, critical
multiculturalists examine formal education’s policies, procedures, and teaching
philosophies/pedagogies, and curriculum and the multiple ways it produces sites of
dis/empowerment. Trends of low achievement on standardized testing of different social groups
are indicative of a dominant culture’s power over these groups (Gay, 2000; Kumashiro, 2004;
Apple, 2004). Unfortunately, assumptions and stereotypes are difficult to: 1) admit and 2)
breakdown especially for white teachers who have been trained to ignore racial/ethnic difference
and think those differences are wrong (Landsman, 2009). Critical theorists view the breakdown
of assumptions necessary in transforming social disparities, dehumanizing identity constructions,
and oppressive systemic practices, policies, and beliefs that encourage inequitable power
relations.

Assets

As resistance to what critical scholars have termed, the White gaze, certain efforts have
been made to realign the representation and narrative of marginalized groups’ histories,
relationships, and understandings. The overall purpose of this realignment is an attempt to
reassert power to historically disempowered social groups’ byway of reclaiming the
interpretations of events, beliefs, and experiences that were most commonly addressed by the
colonizer. Paris and Alim (2014) define asset pedagogies as those “pedagogies [which]
repositioned the linguistic, literate, and cultural practices of working-class communities—
specifically poor communities of color-as resources and assets to honor, explore, and extend” (p.
87). Asset pedagogies come as a response to deficit, or damage-centered approaches created by
the White gaze that was ultimately deemed as “untenable and unjust” (p. 87). The intention of
asset pedagogies is therefore a way to re-imagine different ways of learning through honoring different, non-dominant, sub-cultural practices and ways of knowing.

While asset pedagogies have been foundational in contesting pedagogic hegemonies and have begun making a more visible appearance in K-12 curriculum, Paris and Alim (2014) state with a loving critique that these pedagogies, are as well, subject to falling pray to the same inflexibility and static nature that asset pedagogies seek to disrupt. More specifically, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) and other asset pedagogies (CP does fall under Asset Pedagogies) are critiqued for failing to “resist static, unidirectional notions of culture and race that [can] reinforce traditional versions of difference and (in)equality without attending to shifting and evolving ones. [And potentially] avoiding problematic practices [that are kept] . . . hidden beyond the White Gaze” (pp. 92, 95). As critical multicultural scholarship grows in visibility in mainstream education circles, asset pedagogies continue to garner more widespread attention. This will be explicitly discussed at the beginning of the next chapter through a feminist critique of critical pedagogy.

The review of literature of multicultural education and the study of curriculum make evident the entanglement of social positions and the struggle for power and control in schools. Further, through a historical examination, the lingering impacts of such struggles become clear in formal education. I hope that this review has shown the constant reinscription of hierarchies and the long-standing powers of dominant discourses. While critical pedagogy and critical multiculturalism have clearly created a more sophisticated analysis of oppression within specific socio-political and cultural contexts, I believe they could be strengthened with an alternative approach. More specifically, the next section will address the limitations of a rationalist-only framework that undergirds critical pedagogy and multicultural education’s approach. I use
poststructural feminists’ critique of rationalism and, specifically of critical pedagogy, to demonstrate how a rationalist-only framework limits critical pedagogy and other social justice frameworks that rely on similar foundations.

Leading critical pedagogue, McLaren (1995/2002) cautions against this rationalist framework writing, “much that currently passes for critical pedagogy bears the birthmark of a failed modernity” (p. 80). While, I do not contest the macro-level analysis of critical pedagogies—these analyses have provided important lenses to understanding social and systemic ills- I do not believe macro-level analyses and the rationalist approaches utilized is a sufficient pedagogical tool for the micro aspect involved in the individual processing of these notions.

A Feminist Limitation of Rationalist-Only Frameworks

According to Ellsworth (1989) and other poststructural feminists (Ellsworth & Miller, 1996), the limitations of a rationalist-only framework must be addressed. Failing to address this limitation reinscribes (however inadvertently) dominant hierarchical ways of knowing and legitimates certain forms of knowledge through a series of exclusions and rankings. Rationalism, not unlike scientism, has its own systems of logic and exclusions through a hypothetical-deductive analytical model of reasoning. Scientism (Lather, 2005) is linked to rationalism through its instrumental reason and by “the scientization of politics” (p. 4). A hypothetical-deductive analytical model of reasoning is the most recognized and valued form of reasoning within dominant discourse (Lather, 1992; Lemke, 1990).

This becomes problematic in critical pedagogies when, for instance, issues like racism, can only legitimately be discussed, understood, and reasoned if toward a rational end. This might show up in a classroom setting through students discussing systems of oppression with a singular
focus on how these systems “work” rather than including the affective domain, including potential grief, generational pain, and implications for the self.

Although critiqued by feminists, critical pedagogy’s framework still solely relies and promotes rationalist-conventions as one of its guiding principles (Tobelmann, n.d., Giroux’s Principles of Critical Pedagogy, Principle 6). It has yet to include other domains of knowing as a primary and valuable source of knowledge. It can be argued that even with Giroux’s reconceptualized understanding of rationality through reason as mediator and mediated by relations of power, politics, and knowledge, a reason-centered pedagogy still reduces the multiple forms of knowledge and obscures heterogeneous and contradictory information that can unravel rationalist arguments. Conversations that include visible emotional and/or physical responses and/or a difficulty in articulating concepts that are not clear or definable are deemed irrational and irrelevant. In doing so, I believe conversations work at a superficial level, bypassing important signals that can inform necessary stopping points that could be further explored. To further expand, I share the following experience.

My Experiential “Row” with Rationality in the Classroom

When I first began using critical pedagogy in my classroom, I would notice how quickly a lesson over a concept, such as institutional racism, could turn into what felt like a blazing battlefield between those who felt attacked and those who felt validated by the concept. In my early years, when those palpable sensations arose, I did one of two things: Either I ignored the obvious emotional intensity (including my own nervous heartbeats) in the room and continued on with my lesson ignoring the elephant in the room, or I tried to defuse the bomb I felt was about to go off, either through deflection (I would subtly try to change the subject, or steer to a
different topic) or (less generally) placation, commenting in such ways as, ‘But, regardless, we must remember, we are all human.’

When an angry white student would fervently profess, “I am not racist” because s/he had a best friend, cousin, neighbor, who was a person of color, I tried diligently to stick to the sociological “facts.” Realizing I had a classroom focused on how I would respond to this explicit challenge, I attempted to remain true to the rationalist approach that drove the analysis I was provided in my own learning. I’d ‘calmly’ try to explain how we all participate in systems that privilege certain groups’ tendencies, practices, and beliefs. And then I would move on.

When class was over, even if I felt like I had managed to deliver the information without a bloodbath, I still felt dejected. While I tried to inform students of important critical concepts very little, if anything, changed. I learned that while a rationalist approach did allow for the words to be spoken, not addressing those displays of gestures, signs, and other forms of articulations felt like driving off a cliff and being met with a sign that said, ‘Clear roads ahead.’ It clearly did not feel right, and it felt like I was going in the very opposite direction of where I wanted. But, staying faithful to the old adage to “leave your emotions at the door” I did my best to uphold this principle in my pedagogy.

There were two glaring issues that surfaced of “sticking to the facts,” “remaining ‘calm’ while playing the role of ‘peacekeeper’,” and overlooking the emotional tension in the room, elicited: 1) While it was not my conscious intention, my ‘calm’ demeanor, was interpreted as the “rational” response, while my student’s emotional response was deemed, “irrational.” Even though I was experiencing similar emotional intensities (albeit for different reasons), I hid them. “Acceptable” displays of reasoning did not include visceral emotional responses. Instead, what was “acceptable” was factual information. While I tried to reiterate the overlapping
interconnections between social dynamics and individual lives, I saw my angry student’s eyes glaze over. S/he had “checked out” and went somewhere else. I had successfully sidestepped, with a rationalist approach, an important moment for this student. I realize that what this student wanted me to address was something entirely different from the critical analysis I was prepared to discuss.

While part of my refrain was in part to keep from a full-blown escalation, the other part of my reasoning understood that my student was displaying a level of vulnerability in sharing any kind of emotional response. Rather than address it, I met my student’s challenge with a “rational” response, which served to “trump” and silence my student’s initial response. I was the regulator in the room, and I had regulated my student’s experience with a power move (unconsciously at the time) that had been done countless times to me! While I do not advocate for a relinquishing of power and authority, I was/am upset that I had inadvertently used an approach that had oftentimes been used to silence me.

Removing the individual’s subjectivity and multiple forms of knowing from the gaze of rationalism is not only unrealistic (c.f., Britzman, 2000; Pinar, 2006; Logue, 2008; Lather, 2007; St. Pierre, 2000; Eppert & Wang, 2008), but also dangerous as this form of dichotomous thinking can create damaging illusions and separations. Even those of us who claim to be “conscious” of these illusions and separations are not immune to these dangers. In a rationalist-based approach in critical pedagogy, the roles of both the teacher and the student are to engage in reflective practice, where presumably one can objectively and rationally distance their emotions and bias with an impartial standpoint. In my exchange with a student’s anger, s/he was not performing her/his role of “reflective” student. What happens when one of the said parties fails to fulfill their role in rationalist-based thinking and discussion? They lose. The only problem with this rationale
is that understanding and relationship building do not play by those same rules. When one loses, the other does as well. Understanding how little is accomplished in these rationalist approaches there becomes a serious need for learning how to approach and think about these call-and-responses differently.

The second issue that arose from my response was the perceived distancing of personal responsibility. While addressing the collective experience that systems of oppression inculcate, a level of perceived personal attack may be removed; however, approaches such as these, do little to further the critical understanding of the individual. The individual is more willing to “give up” her/his sense of individual agency to the powers of the system. If a sense of contradiction or emotional intensity arises in the learner’s understanding of these systems, they are generally ignored or reproached being misunderstood as an inappropriate response or as a lack of understanding. Approaches such as these do not necessarily encourage individuals to further an examination into their own lives and practices. At best, learners settle on a conclusion of awareness of macro-level forces, forces that overwhelm an individual sense of agency or, at worst, relegate critical curriculum to a memorization process of how social forces work, and/or factual information, with little to no critical thinking involved.

It wasn’t until a few curious students stopped by my office to ask me questions that I felt a genuine relationship begin to form. It was in these encounters where I felt I could be more personable. I don’t mean personable by charismatic or friendly, but personable in the sense that we talked about how we felt about the material discussed in class. In those exchanges, we asked each other questions about our lives, we shared details and stories that didn’t make it to the classroom for want of what we worried was not an appropriate setting. We talked about places in the curriculum that felt contradictory, but were difficult to articulate or make sense of. It was
these moments I thought about most. After more time, and more confidence in my teaching abilities, I realized that all of these concepts dressed in rationality, linearity and deductive thought provoked emotional reactions and elicited emotional language. Why did these conversations, these stories, these exchanges, sometimes these tears and expressions of sadness, anger, confusion, embarrassment, and even joy have to be validated outside the curriculum? I believe that validating and including the affective domain as both process and end, we open ourselves to more than what rationalist frameworks allow, which are often simplistic strategies and overgeneralized interpretations of what are inherently complex and emotional systems.

Also, a rationalistic framework predominantly operates in ideological constructs such as democracy and assumes a universality that there can be an agreed upon fundamental moral principle. This universality creates the false illusion that consensus can be achieved and that principles, social rules and boundaries are harmonious between people. Further, and more problematically, universality oftentimes becomes synonymous with natural order (Young, 1989). Rather than a phenomenon’s journey to universality stemming from conflicts over power, it is categorized as naturally occurring. This also adds to the stigmatization and othering of anything considered ‘non-universal’ or different. The notion of a naturally occurring phenomenon also presupposes objectivity, where once again, people who participate under this universality are characterized as fully rational beings, disinterested participants who are detached from political and personal agendas and gain and who are simply allowing nature to take its course.

Before I move on, I want to make it explicit that it is not my intention to downplay past researchers’ efforts, and/or the goals of critical pedagogy. I respect and appreciate the work, and the important ways in which its use has shaped education should not be underestimated. However, because of my commitment and passion for the goals of critical pedagogy and
multicultural education, I believe that we, as teacher educators, are approaching these goals in a limited, if not potentially deleterious manner. It is because of my respect for the work critical pedagogues and critical multicultural educators undertake, that I believe a different approach I call, *Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy*, can respond to and potentially transform some of the limitations I have outlined. While I believe the concepts and the goals of critical pedagogy play a necessary role in equity education, I strongly urge practitioners of the field to re-think the ways in which we epistemologically and ontologically approach these goals and concepts in our own teaching practice.
CHAPTER THREE
PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents an alternative psychoanalytic, poststructural feminist framework/pedagogy, intimate transgressive pedagogy (ITP) that extends the work of critical pedagogy. This section will 1) introduce the purpose of ITP and a brief landscape of ITP, 2) emphasize how ITP epistemologically differentiates itself from critical pedagogy’s rationalist framework through a multidirectional, discordant, and process-focused orientation of knowledge construction 3) Focus on the purpose of ITP through a discussion of the psychoanalytic use of intimacy as a theoretical guide for ITP’s conception of a critical ontology of the self. 4) discuss three psychoanalytic concepts to facilitate ITP’s approach of facilitating difficult knowledge in the classroom and; 4) discuss how I understand the notion of care implicated in ITP’s overall goal and practice of freedom.

As a brief note, I want to inform the reader that this chapter will contain some overlap in ideas. This overlap is not meant to be redundant, but to 1) serve as a reminder, as there are many theoretical concepts being worked in and throughout the chapter and, 2) demonstrate that while I have outlined this chapter in epistemic, pedagogic, ontologic, and value-based sub-sections, these categorizations are not separated in living; therefore it would be difficult, if not implausible, to keep separate -“neat and tidy” - the ways in which these ideas permeate and infuse themselves into one another. Rather, I hope this chapter’s layout will give the reader some broad but concrete parameters to construct and conceptualize ITP as well as some room to work multiple interpretations within it.

Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy
ITP serves as an alternative pedagogy for educators to facilitate Pitt and Britzman’s, (2010) notion of difficult knowledge in the classroom: “knowledge [that] references incommensurability, historical trauma, and social breakdown” (p. 756) – differently. This approach is steeped in a Kristevean psychoanalytic perspective of meaning making with a poststructural feminist overlay. ITP utilizes the concepts of retrospective return, tender esse, and loquela to assist in educators’ facilitation of difficult knowledge. Additionally, through the practice of ITP (and its concepts), I believe ITP encourages a different onto-epistemological orientation that promotes a poststructural feminist definition of a practice of freedom (St. Pierre, 2014; McKenzie, 2009).

I define intimacy as the encounter between and exchanges of the unconscious and conscious, or the un/conscious in the bordered relationship between Self-An/”O”ther. An intimate transgressive pedagogy (ITP) utilizes a blend of psychoanalytic and poststructural concepts to examine one’s intimate knowledge. My hope is that ITP can offer educators a different perspective on how pedagogy may be thought, practiced, and discussed from a critical perspective.

Bertoff (1981) believed that critical awareness was developed through a “consciousness of consciousness”. This phrase stems from the idea that we can liberate ourselves from the constraints of socially oppressive forces through introducing new knowledge into our worldviews (Pearlman, 2014). A consciousness of unconsciousness ascertains that “new” knowledge is actually a reworked knowledge of the past’s unknown, or knowledge that has been forgotten, destroyed, or ignored, knowledge that was deemed unknowledgeable. It is knowledge that disrupts the flow of sequential, consistent, and definite conclusions. Instead of a linear and consistent approach that a consciousness of
consciousness implies, a consciousness of unconsciousness argues that “new/old”
knowledge is actually recursive, and on further exploration, generally inconsistent,
contradictory, multiple, infinite, and sometimes incoherent.

An intimate transgressive pedagogy argues that while approaches toward learning
and knowing can be linear, sequential, and deductive, it is always limited by those very
characteristics as well as contradicted by other forms of knowing that are more resistant to
the rules and guidelines of rationality. These other forms of knowledge are limited as well;
however, the major premise becomes that understanding the cycle and totality of
knowledge is implausible. Rather than overlook this aspect, this tension is used to stay in
critical conversation and stay open to different arrangements and orders of thinking,
learning, and knowing. This does not mean, however, that ITP accepts relativism and/or
nihilism as an appropriate interpretation to this process, but that in learning the limitations
and potentialities in these order and arrangements, we also must be more willing to take
responsibility for them as well as consider and initiate the possibility of alternative orders.

To better illustrate the epistemological shifts of ITP, I focus on two main
divergences from rationalist-based pedagogies, which articulates thinking, knowing, and
learning within ITP as multidirectional and discordant, and ultimately process-centered.

**Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy: Bearing Witness to the Multidirectional and
Discordant**

ITP is distinct from rationalist-based pedagogies in its conception and philosophy. First,
whereas rationalist-based pedagogies lean towards stable conclusions/interpretations and
consistent narratives, ITP treats interpretation as multi-directional, conclusions temporary, and
narratives discordant and provisional. In critical pedagogies that promote, voice, for example, a
rationalist-based philosophy can be problematic. Critical pedagogies assume that oppression can be transformed through the emergence and inclusion of student voice in the classroom. The desire for student voice as a counter to oppressive power relations was created as a response to young people’s exclusion from the decision making process on issues associated with their school and classroom experience (Cook-Sather, 2007). The rationale is that including students’ voice will better equalize disproportionate imbalances of power through unity and consensus. However, as Ellsworth (1989) points out through her study, unity could not be reached as her students’ identities of multiple and different levels of subordination/subordinator were not taken into account by this rationale. Rather, their differences were ignored and sameness propagated through an “us versus them” (subordinated versus subordinator) construct. Within such a construct, one’s social ascriptions that make up one’s identity are treated as fixed, where the assumption of fixed sameness under such bifurcated constructs does not allow for the ways in which multiple positionalities can contradict one another. In addition, Ellsworth states that not all voices are given equal weight, and what oftentimes occurs is students’ voices are left unexamined/un-interrogated (Cook-Sather, 2007). Narratives that are treated as a seamless, ordered, and a congruent series of linear and rational events is a notion reflected both in social and personal discourses. As a solution to diminishing oppressive relationships of power, simply incorporating student voice is problematic to critical pedagogy’s fundamental vision of transformation and social justice.

ITP considers voice as one of multiple forms of expression (loquela, which is discussed in later sections). Narrative is just one site of examination and form of expression. While expression is considered integral in ITP, it is not for the purpose of solidarity or unity. Shared experiences can be an important outcome, but more important to ITP, is the type of dialogue it
provokes. The purpose of voice in ITP is to provide a platform for learners to seriously deconstruct and express examinations of the un/conscious process of thinking, learning, and knowing. Tensions, intensities, convergences, divergences, and multiple forms of knowing that arise from this deconstruction process need to be consciously expressed, felt, and shared.

To have the capacity to notice, pay attention to, and hold the tensions inherent in the multiplicities and expressions of an experience, thought, and assumption defines my usage of what it means to bear witness in ITP. More specifically and of focus in my study and for this pedagogy, bearing witness to this tension exposes the various forms of disavowal, the darker and uglier sides of ignorance and mechanisms of defense, and the fear, struggle, and anguish in the world that can drive us to ignore, to silence, and to justify and permit oppressive actions, thinking, and ways of being. Pedagogically, bearing witness means wrestling with Britzman’s (1998) difficult knowledge that requires “a courage to explore the multi-dimensions of our desires and confront truths about ourselves and our world that can be very difficult to admit” (xxxviii) and to locate one’s responsibility within that particular form of agency and do the unthinkable not only in our classrooms with our students, and with the public, but also in our innermost private thoughts. It is to hold such complicated conversations (Pinar, 2012) in high regard and necessary. This involves exploring our cognitive and maybe more urgently, our affective attachments to our desires to ignore, to not know, to our clingingness to certainty and stability and our vulnerability in such states.

Examining this vulnerability can be terrifying. Kristeva (1980) discusses such terror through the examination of poetic language as a form of Other. Poetic language, its stigmatization, and its non-compliance towards categorical and fixed interpretations and ways of knowing are more pronounced than in other forms of language and cannot be reduced to its
foundations and functions of heterogeneity to meaning and signification. Meaning, that poetic language, deals with the notion of language as “a free play, forever without closure . . . a disposition that is definitely heterogeneous to meaning but always in sight of it or in a negative or surplus relationship to it” (pp. 132-133). This does not indicate it is free from constraints, but that there is “a distinctiveness admitting of an uncertain and indeterminate articulation because it does not yet refer. . . or no longer refers. . . to a signified object for a thetic [driven by Ego] consciousness” (p. 133).

Analogous to poetic language, is the self’s relationship to an/Other, where poetic language signifies what Kristeva calls the semiotic over the symbolic— the vast openings over the narrowing. Just as the multiplicity of meaning and heterogeneous re-arrangements and formulations are exposed, so too, is this embraced and represented in an/Other. The terror, or the fear of the Other resides in this uncertainty and indeterminancy—in its indecipherability and suspension of categorization, where from the psychoanalytic perspective, borders between the “not yet”—referring to stages of infancy—and the “no longer,” (St. Pierre, 2004) which skirts the rim of psychosis, or paralysis. Between these polar ends, the threat of collapse is undeniable. This makes the Other as we know it, either through a person, an idea, a thought, interpretation, the self, a pedagogy not simple or inferior, but on the contrary, dangerous and a serious threat to all that is seemingly stable and fixed. Yet, it is what Kristeva (2002) believes to be the opening of psychical life, “even at the price of errors and impasses” (p. 6). Bearing witness illuminates the limitations and illusions of homogeneity, and transgresses the limits of monolithic borders to multiple divergences.

Bearing witness, therefore, becomes an act that calls on the being to relinquish control surrounding notions of absolute and fixed ways of knowing and meaning. Instead, it asks the
individual to acknowledge and occupy, what has been called the transitory “middle space” (Deleuze & Guatarri, 1980/1987) where meaning, experience, and understanding are always caught in a rift of “ebb and flow.” This middle space is a transitory entanglement of the “no longer” and the “not yet,” where Bhabha (1994) notes, “is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past” (p. 2). In an intimate transgressive pedagogy, one’s (re)account of a memory, an experience, or an event is always changing. More specifically, the individual grasps such a space through allowing one’s internal pull in diverging directions to arise and hover in consciousness. This is opposed to critical pedagogy’s rationalist and universalized framework that privileges the rational and the abstract over the contextualized (Ellsworth, 1989).

Bearing witness speaks directly to the contextual contradictions that are often overlooked in rationalist frameworks. For example, Ellsworth (1989) details these contradictions in her own classroom experiences when she explained how anti-racist discourses “were structured by highly problematic gender politics” (p. 110). White women and women of color, because of their contextualized experiences and identification as a woman, could not adopt this discourse without undermining their experiences as a woman/of color. Bearing witness allows for the contradictions and ambiguity in one’s experience and understanding not to be admonished for its inconsistency, and therefore eliminated from consciousness, but for it to serve as an appeal to re-conceptualize prior and present understandings of being and “knowing” differently, and to see this internal divergence as a valuable source of learning/knowing itself—a different, altered consciousness.

**Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy as Dynamically Process-Oriented**

This altered consciousness invokes the second major distinction between ITP and rationalist-based critical pedagogies. Critical pedagogy, in its preoccupation with a means/ends
approach risks diminishing the value and importance of the intensely emotional and
indeterminate process of “working through” and confronting one’s anxieties and fears. ITP puts
this process at the fore, encouraging the emotions and contradictions that arise to be transparent
and sees these moments as powerful pedagogical “pivots,” – a movement between sensation and
thought (Ellsworth, 2005) where the learner experiences learning in and through the senses.

In addition, ITP does not see process and end/result as separate. As a process it is always
temporary, unstable, ever-re-arranging, and amalgamated. For example, Margaroni (2007)
compares Agamben’s Cyclopean eye to witness bearer, who, in its damaged, bleeding, and
wounded shape testifies to the tears and fury of what it has witnessed, and ultimately serves to
demonstrate the process of witnessing as an open-ended, multidirectional and intensely intimate
act. In other words, to bear witness is an act rife with intense emotion and uncertainty (which
does not have to necessarily be verbalized). She writes, “If it [the eye] refuses to know or see this
is because, in the context of testimony [witnessing], it is “tears and not sight that are the essence
of the eye” ([Derrida, 1989, p. 92] as cited in Margaroni, 2005, p. 29). What too often occurs in
critical pedagogy and other frameworks that have rationalist foundations is the process and the
end are deconstructed so categorically that the imagined borders used to organize the material
can become solidified into impenetrable classifications. The focus becomes once again on a
certain and stabled order of classification of experiences. What ITP might ask is why the
individual feels the need to order and classify those experiences, and in that process what is that
individual potentially (and possibly willingly) ignoring through that ordering process.

This categorization in its crystallization also becomes decontextualized and in turn,
ideologic, or doctrine. Focusing primarily on the “ends” is to overlook the critical process.
Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy is not about ‘ends.’ Tears, contradictions, pain, dissolution, and
singularity of these experiences are minimized or homogenized, and at worst, seen as irrelevant in rationalist frameworks. Within a rationalist framework, because ends, or results, (and more preferably, definite ends and stable results) are the major focus, formulaic prescriptions abound (Mckenzie, 2009). This is seen time and again in teacher preparation programs, where the dominant model of handling difference is reduced to the level of taking an inventory of difference, which is then followed up by a prescribed step-by-step “how-to-guide” built from the same rationalist framework that serves to undermine a transformative approach to difference. Within such an approach, all pieces that make difference significant, complicated, challenging, negotiable, unique, and ultimately a struggle (context, intense felt emotion and affect, contradiction, ambiguity) are removed.

For example, in the textbook, Multicultural Teaching: A Handbook of Activities, Information, and Resources (8th Edition, Tiedt & Tiedt, 2010), the first chapter, titled, “The Changing Face of Multicultural Thinking” discusses and describes the authors’ perspective on the turn from non-critical to critical understanding of multicultural education through examples such as the turn from the “melting pot” metaphor to the (apparently more critical) “tossed-salad bowl” metaphor. When attempting to disrupt the notion of what a “true” American is, the authors provide racial and ethnic demographics of the American landscape to show the increasing diversity of racial/ethnic groups residing in the United States. Migration from different countries and aspects of citizenship are portrayed through the statement, “America has been generous in conferring citizenship,” which can be inferred as a justified benevolent presence of power that requires exams for naturalization to “show the candidates understand democracy” (p. 10). This statement assumes not only a monolithic definition and an unproblematic understanding of democracy, and a rationalization for a process of citizenship that is problematic, but also makes
the assumption that those who are born within the United States automatically assume a universalized notion of democratic principles as well. Furthermore, in no place is the contradiction, the stripping of one’s identity, and the difference within what it means to be an American addressed. Instead, the authors summarize this “disruption” with the following:

You could argue that these naturalized citizens are the true Americans because they have had to demonstrate their desire and knowledge to become citizens. As former Congressman and Japanese American Norman Mineta remarks:

“In immigrants leave the country of their birth to come to the country of their heart” (p. 11).

The statement utilizes a binary discourse. This statement takes for granted the conflicting and contradictory experiences of immigration and replaces that understanding with a non-complicated and romanticized narrative of superiority/inferiority. In addition the “true” American is the one who sacrifices, where there is a pre-supposed, and un-problematicized knowledge that creates, in these authors’ narrative, a kind of “Super” American, who “really” knows what it takes to be a “true” American. For these authors, their end goal is for the acceptance of a growing racial/ethnic diversity, but their analysis goes no further, and the process to which they arrive at this attempted end dives no deeper than a numerical (statistical) and re-assimilationist argument that barely glosses the contextual differences that make experiences of immigration (in this example) singular, intimate, unresolved and complex. What it does propose is a solid, linear, and unproblematic interpretation of one’s journey towards citizenship. Relations of power are not challenged and difference is not experienced and interpreted differently. There is no witnessing because the narrative put forth veils the painful negotiations and struggles, contradictions and ambiguities of such a process and experience. What is left is a
de-personalized abstract caricature no more humanized than before. Instead, ITP contextualizes the individual’s internal workings from such a middle space, and offers no “true” end nor “true” beginning, only a series of openings that invite us to re-emerge, slightly altered, each time. In other words, polarized “ends” and “beginnings” are illusions, and can be seen as different forms of hesitations, pauses, or turns back onto itself. In addition, because the middle is seen as an ongoing process, the internal workings that accompany such process, which include pain, struggle, tears, contradictions and so forth, are brought to the fore.

To manifest these epistemological divergences through pedagogy, the following section will address three psychoanalytic concepts taken from Julia Kristeva’s, *Intimate Revolt* (2002), to help educators facilitate difficult knowledge in the classroom.

**Retrospective Return**

Kristeva (2002) introduces and defines retrospective return as the relentless repetition and re-visitation of the infinite potentialities and re-configurations of our thinking and being so as to keep from re-entrenching ourselves further into the precariousness of the world we have created from an irreconcilable binary space. Retrospective return is our capacity to retroactively question our present and prior assumptions, experiences, ways of knowing, of thinking, and being without falling off one of the “deep ends,” of the binary trap. It is a difficult commitment to hold the middle space of knowing/unknowing, certainty/uncertainty, which in its entirety cannot be fully contained or understood. She writes, “the path of retroactive questioning. . . comes to an irreconcilable conflict. . . [the concept] distinguishes the modern man from both the Christian man, reconciled with God. . . and the nihilist, his enraged but symmetrical opposite” (p. 7). We have come to a space where the privilege of certainty (in all forms: thinking, being, communicating) is no longer permissible or sustainable. What is required is a different
intelligibility. Our capacity to question ourselves and to consider uncertainty as a necessary and invaluable space of learning is what is most critical for our times.

I see relentless retroactive questioning as the practice with which we cultivate our capacity to retrospectively return. Within retroactive questioning, we ask ourselves to re-visit our interpretations and assumptions of the world and then re-visit them again with the implied assumption that each time we commit to re-visiting, we learn something different: we hear and see something we did not previous, we feel a potentially different sensation, and thus our alignment shifts. Deleuze and Guatarri (1980/1987) write about this process through their concept of desiring machines, where the internal working of desire is like a well-oiled machine, where everything is influenced by the other, but unlike a machine, the “separate” pieces, however indistinguishable, change and reconfigure infinitely based on its prior and present interactions, which means that at any given time, its overall shape ceases to ever be the same as it once was, or ever was. Representation through this lens is not necessarily meaningless, but its fixedness is interrupted. Psychically, retroactive questioning is inherently interdependent in relation to its present context and prior interactions.

**Tendere esse**

ITP’s epistemology prioritizes a position of doubt and uncertainty. At the “border states of the mind”, the retrospective relationship of *tendere esse, also known as, the transient movement within borders*, reverberates between the “not yet” and “already no longer” (Kristeva, 2002, p. 7). Doubt and uncertainty linger in one’s consciousness. Vacillating between seemingly polar ends, such as here and there, arrival and departure, the landscape of the intimate becomes the interplay between dualities, or difference. Kristeva’s examples of dualities and differences include law/desire, pain/pleasure, affect/reason, intuition/spirit. These dualities are not mutually
exclusive, and taken together produce an altogether different experience, generating a heterogeneous continuity between body-soul-mind. Instead of conceptualized as ends, an intimate approach sees these dichotomies as reflected counterparts cut from the same cloth, which Kristeva defines as the “essence of the intimate” (p. 50). Notions of the intimate, and the concept, intimacy, therefore, should not be considered somehow “contained” but ubiquitous. It is in every moment, in every encounter both consciously and unconsciously, privately and publicly, where the momentary meeting of border states come together, escalating the senses to a degree of intensity previously not experienced and, in consequence, eliciting feelings of contradiction, ambiguity, and uncertainty that hold, according to psychoanalysis, (Logue, 2008) a vast treasure of dynamic learning.

What then becomes of the notion of knowledge in such a dynamic space? In an intimate understanding, the concept of knowledge changes from a notion of truth seeking, solution-based, answerable and linear product of inquiry, to a wrestling with the psychical, active, and willful forces we exert not to know. The psychoanalytics (c.f., Freud, 1933; Freud, 1967; Britzman, 2010; Kristeva, 2002; Lacan, 1978) focus on this willful ignorance- or “the knowledge of what we cannot bear to know” (Logue, 2008, p. 55). Logue (2008) explores the idea of “willful ignorance” through Nietzsche’s subversive understanding of modern day’s interpretation of knowledge, concluding that the concept, “knowledge,” is a construct wielded to veil one’s willful desires not to know, to overshadow one’s fears, to preserve one’s interests, and ultimately, to keep intact, one’s fragile construct of a stable and fixed (and comfortable) reality. In other words, “knowledge” can also be understood as a strategic form of maintaining and perpetuating power and disavowal. Logue writes that a willful ignorance veiled under the will for knowledge, “is a strategy of power in so far as it is the motivating force behind the will of knowledge, which
seeks neither enlightenment nor liberation but certainty and control, and it is a strategy of resistance in so far as it enables subjects to defend against realities that are inimical to their vitality” (p. 57)—or disavowal. Knowledge, which in a traditional sense is commonly associated with truth seeking, is exactly what Nietzsche proposes traditional forms of knowledge is obsessed with avoiding. In a world with no room for uncertainty, Logue’s statement, “We do not will the truth because we cannot live with it” (p. 56), rocks a framework that claims traditional forms and purposes of knowledge as the ultimate quest for humanity.

Just as intimacy requires a struggle with the very difficult proposition of willful ignorance so does Pitt and Britzman’s (2010) construct of difficult knowledge serve as a framework for the kind of grappling one takes on in juggling the tension between active and willful knowing and not knowing. According to Pitt and Britzman (2010), taking on difficult knowledge means struggling and highlighting the paradoxes of interpretation, the emotional significance involved when building one’s constructs, and the crisis of representing these contentious forces byway of meaning and interpretation. They write, “interpretation makes narrative, but there is also something within narrative that resists its own interpretation” (p. 759) leaving narratives incomplete in terms of coherence, but teeming with emotional significance and dynamics that hint at the dilemmas of transference (the conflicts that arise when one tries to make sense of a new experience through the moods and natures of older conflicts which cannot be completely resolved or accounted for in the new interpretation and experience). Within an educational context, this means studying the narratives used (and not used) in curriculum, people’s multiple interpretations and representations of their subjective experiences associated with narratives of and in pedagogy and curriculum, and how these narratives form into being a construct of identity that is perpetually conflicted but elided through the crisis of representing
knowing that is made more difficult through binary constructs and traditional forms of knowledge.

Pitt and Britzman’s (2010) study found that when their participants were asked to articulate their emotional and intellectual experiences when dealing with difficult knowledge, participants had a tough time narrating their experiences and thus, their interpretation. The struggle arises from the conflict between attempting to tease out and separate the emotions felt while recollecting and remembering the experience from the reported knowledge that emerged from such emotional forces. In other words, the heterogeneity of their emotions complicated by their multiple understandings of it through time (manifest and latent- retrospective return) further troubled their ability to coherently narrate their experiences with difficult knowledge; and thus, their articulation and interpretation of it.

The importance of difficult knowledge is highlighted through one’s struggle with subjectivity. Britzman (2012) writes, “subjectivity is our greatest risk; vulnerable to repression whenever one faces the freedom to change the mind and leave the prohibition not to, that nagging thought that something might happen” (p. 46). What becomes clear in Britzman’s declaration of risk is the anxiety felt when one’s subjective interpretations and narrations are challenged to reveal and invite a conscious and willful risk into the unknown, or to know something differently. Yet, Britzman says it simply when she states, “The problem is that if one cannot stand the mental pain of thinking, one gives the mind away” (p. 53). Pedagogically, it begins from a space of uncertainty and doubt; it does not ask people to struggle with anything new to but challenge them and the institution of education to center these struggles, nor to be so quick to “resolve” them.
To exemplify how difficult keeping these struggles at the fore is, I use a different classroom experience told by Britzman (2012). In an undergraduate class of education Britzman’s students resisted and disliked reading a text from a psychoanalytic standpoint on adolescent development. She writes, “The classroom became a madhouse. . . some students decided they hated the book without even reading it” (p. 47). The reasons she cited for their dislike were (pp. 47-48),

’It’ [the book] was hard to understand and made too much of things. . . The author used unfamiliar words and had the audacity to change the meanings of the words the students already felt they knew. Some students argued that the author was only making up difficult things. More than a few students felt the examples the author gave were crazy (or unbelievable). From there, they [the students] drew two more conclusions. If the author was driving them crazy it must only mean that she herself was insane to write such a book and, by association, given that the professor assigned the text, the professor was the craziest of all.

The text and the instructor challenged the students’ current interpretations, assumptions, and expectations of both the class and their constructs of adolescence. This triggered resistance. Ultimately, having to re-think or even begin to think about their assumptions in a way that created room for different meanings and interpretations reflects the inherent aggressive nature underlining Britzman’s discussion of the purpose of theory, and, I include, one of the purposes of difficult knowledge. What then becomes another purpose of difficult knowledge is to point to and make issue with the difficulty of learning. This then becomes the difficulty in listening and the difficulty in teaching how to learn and listen in a way that incorporates vulnerability, handling loss and the pain of mourning loss when one tries to learn something different or new.
Yet, learning how to struggle and navigate one’s psychical discomforts and uncertain outcomes within such transient border spaces generates not only pain and loss but creativity, hope, and a more robust confidence as one continues to re-emerge (and simultaneously be reabsorbed) anew with each challenge they embrace.

I propose that learning how to listen differently, how to embrace the struggles and negotiations of learning, cycles back to re-shifting our attention not only to what our students say and how their words are “rationally” interpreted, but the emotional significance in our students’ words and silence. In other words, in order for our students to be more comfortable with the idea of treating knowledge as a complex, multiplicative, and difficult way of knowing, teachers and teacher educators must, as well, re-learn how to listen differently. Rationalist frameworks have us ignore the domain of the sensate; however, in learning how to listen differently, this is a mistake. For one cannot accept nor understand the premise of and locating difficult knowledge/learning if one cannot or will not recognize and register the pivotal role the domain of the varied senses plays in shaping intellectual understandings. This isn’t to say that the intellectual labor of our cognitive selves isn’t important. On the contrary, it is; but an ITP proposes that our cognitive and intellectual selves are steeped in the affective, much more messy and contradictory realm of emotion. I see the most important area to concentrate on in learning to listen differently as the transition and transformational point between the domains of the sensate to one’s intellect, which from ITP, is known as the imaginary and uttered through the process of loquela.

**Loquela**

But what makes up the imaginary? Kristeva (2002) says, “It is neither perception nor thought” (p. 46), but vision. It is the “domain of images (of the imaginary) that represents this
[internal vision of] intimacy. . . a place that finds itself between deliberate recollection of the judging, discursive mind” (p. 46). This is loquela: an embodied speech that consciously finds continuous co-presence between the senses (the body) and the intellect (mind) with the consequence of stirring our psyches, and creating profound intensities within our experiences (the felt), our memories of them, and our interpretations. Kristeva writes, “[loquela is] the infraverbal but nevertheless discursive sign of the affects of the soul” (p. 47).

What loquela signifies is the process of unfolding thought and at the same time reflects the presence and livingness of affect and its entanglement with the imaginary in that process. As Kristeva writes, “neither thought nor nameless affect are priorities here” (p.) rather it is a preverbal sort of language which signifies the “individual is entering a process of naming” (p. 106) which is marked by the tiniest, barely audible mark of affect (p. 7).

Kristeva examines St. Ignatius of Loyola’s unfolding thought-affectual process through his documentation of his own notion of intimacy. He called this process ‘loquela and tears.’ For days on end he records his relationship with tears and the expressed interior workings of his soul (loquela) to the point of nearly going blind. Christian mysticism challenged rationalist spiritualist efforts that attempted to split the body and mind. As Kristeva summarized, the soul, as a result, came to be known not as a “”passive” . . . and “formless” soul as antiquity had it, but a differentiated intimacy, always already formed by thought and, because of this information, in possession of its own logic” (p. 48). Intimacy, which comes from the Latin root meaning, “the most interior” then becomes implicated in the discursive relationships that are projected in the broadest capacities. Matters of the personal, the most private—the troublesome emotional—problematically known as the internal, no matter how fervently bound within the illusions of compartmentalization and modes of separation, are mired in the public, the external, and the
discursive. Loquela then becomes the attempt to verbalize this entangled relationship. It is not surprising then, that the process of attempting to put into words such a relationship is consciously vexing and incomplete for the speaking-being. Yet, it is precisely this relationship, this tension, and this struggle that I believe can trigger the degree of criticality needed in engaging with difficult knowledge to the extent that it does not allow the individual’s mind to separate from emotion and its other sensatorial forms of knowing. Furthermore, this refusal dissolves the notion of objectivity in that “true” separations, which proffer absolute autonomy, do not, nor can, exist in any form. In other words, thoughts, emotions, feelings, actions, and collective (historical, social, political) happenings are indefatigably implicated in the vocalized realities of one another.

I believe the struggle to attempt to name an unfolding of thought can trigger productive and transformative doubt and uncertainty in our own unyielding assumptions and interpretations. Does not this conflict also serve (to many) as a motivator to continue exploring, even if initially, it is couched within the naïve hope of certainty and stability? Not only does the struggle and challenging feelings that arise elicit a sense of necessary anxiety for psychical growth, but it also invites an equally necessary sense of wonder. Jickling (2009) shares his own process and unfolding of thought as he attempts to put into words the emotions he felt as he was crossing the Canadian mountains on a canoe trip. He writes of the impact the wild landscape had on him. He shares that it took him days to understand the connection the land made him feel, to the point he was nearly incapacitated of speech on the subject. He writes, “I felt it long before I understood it. . . I felt something that transcended words and even memory. It was an embodied, know-it-in-your-bones kind of knowledge” (p. 166).

Jickling’s story expresses the importance of the pre-verbal, or as Ellsworth (2005) calls, the non-linguistic realm of the experience. For her, this realm holds the notion that the
transitional space between thought and feeling resides in the intimate landscape and is the root of learning. In addition, she states, “’Knowings’” arise from a place more elemental than intellectualization. They arise from the “fission of the physical encounter” and “immediate somatic response”” (p. 8).

Epistemologically and practically, this means that teachers need to dive further in any experience, preceding authoritative accounts of narration in all forms (curriculum, formal methods and modes of instruction, in the stories told by students and the stories we accept which “make sense”). It also indicates what Ellsworth (2005) points out to be the need for educational researchers, teacher educators, policy makers, and teachers to “create concepts and languages that release and redirect the forces now locked up in such binaries [as discussed through the concept of tender esse] by addressing them not as separate in relation of opposition but rather as complex moving webs of interrelationalities” (p. 3). Despite the foreseen difficulties of such an undertaking, a “language of the threshold,” as Margaroni (2007) names this aspect of Kristeva’s work, and what I believe to be a deeper and fuller examination and theorizing of “experiential-emotional understanding” does what Jickling (2009) proposes: “adds flesh and life to the bones so often polished smooth and white by analytical thought” (p. 168).

For Pinar (2006), paying attention to the subjective meanings and social significances of those meanings strengthens the intellectual content of curriculum and gives the material and “knowledge” teachers are to transmit a needed degree of richness (through affect and emotion), substance (through multiplicity) and needed flexibility (through conflict and wonder). Without such a process, he says we are left “with dispositions [as] mere skeletons. . . [to which will] constrict rather than self-reflectively structure our intellectual lives. . .” (Jickling, 2009, p. 11).
In addition to cultivating a stronger capacity to think multiply, I believe loquela serves as a healing agent. Kristeva (2002) mentions the works of Beirnaert, who conceptualized loquela as “the place of the other”—that uncertain, resistant to representation and unnamable place—which, through loquela, “is ready to be vocalized, but not yet expressed in words” (p. 106). In certain ways, loquela shares similar properties as testimony, which is expressed through witness bearer, who, according to Margaroni (2007), uses testimony as “a compulsion to narrate” and at the same time understands that “narrative is a form of betrayal” (p. 29). In Margaroni’s concept of testimony, an individual’s articulation (narrative) is never complete, yet the narrative nonetheless must be spoken. Although both loquela and witness bearer as testifier share similar contradictory spaces, I see and use the concept of loquela as a construct that puts more emphasis on the emotional inarticulation and irresolution involved in such verbal expressions.

However, it is important to reiterate that loquela is not pure affect/emotion. If anything, this slight separation, the struggle to express feelings into being, is the healing quality I want to highlight. For Kristeva (2002), loquela occupies a fundamental space in psychical functioning. It serves as the transition point “between the unnamable aspect of intrapsychical representations (affects, drives) and the psychical representation of linguistic signs of communication” (p. 106) – the less refined and partial, but nevertheless, initial components of verbal meaning making. Loquela can be seen as a process between the sensorial and linguistical which provokes one’s imaginary. Kristeva and Barthes argue that in conscientizing loquela, the absence and necessity of more deeply exploring one’s phantasmatic language (what I believe to be the imaginary) and multiple landscapes becomes clearer- the conscientious process of how one’s imaginary, which as discussed before is the specific arrangement of images, which provides an outline—a domain of images—constructs the imaginary, and then to which informs and/or shapes a discourse. And
it is precisely loquela, the struggle to utter an imaginary, to name it, that can demonstrate the complexity of thinking and the multiple modes that shape reality, the sense of understanding, and the process to which conclusions are made. In addition, loquela brings to the center the infinite entry and exit points our rational-cognitive mind overlooks. Requiring an individual to pay attention to loquela requires one to direct one’s focus to the ways in which the construction of an idea is taken for granted. This is not to say that rationalism is, nor necessarily should be, destroyed, but it is and could be reconfigured to mean and be thought of differently: either as a component of a more holistic frame of thinking, knowing, and being—or as non-hierarchically conjoined to emotion/affect. Through ITP, rationalism, as understood and used in dominant discourse, is transformed.

**ITP and Critical Ontology**

I believe ITP and its concepts, its epistemological standpoint, and its notion of intimacy contributes to the discussion of the “ontological-shift” occurring within educational research literature (St. Pierre, 2014). ITP offers us a way to use the notion of intimacy as a way of re-imagining and re-thinking what it means to be human, to experience difference, and transform and conceptualize power relations. I define intimacy as the state of being in a profound relationship and inter/connection with an/”O”ther (i.e., the self, an individual, way of knowing, being, and/or idea or understanding) that involves multiple modes of knowing (affect and cognition) and being in relationship (i.e., personally, politically, socially, spiritually) which I highlight through its more unsettling component- that of constant and continuous change (transition), interdependency, and shared singularity. Through this definition of intimacy, the “intimate” denotes a way of knowing and of being in association with an/”O”ther that cannot be replicated. Nor can it ever fully articulate the range of rhizomatic entry and exit points involved
in one’s relationships and states of being (thinking, feeling, sensing), which is constantly in flux and re-constituting. Kristeva (2002) writes that the intimate is, “what is most profound and most singular in the human experience” (p. 44). In this understanding of intimacy, there is no such thing as sameness, yet this should not be misconstrued to mean understanding or inter/connection does not exist. On the contrary, it is our shared degrees of difference that connects us emotionally, physically, and spiritually, however disheveled and entangled that may be. In this state, one may feel conscious feelings of intense solitude and intense interconnection. Although appearing contradictory, the further one attempts to lean away from this entanglement, possibly through choosing one or the other seemingly polar end, the further one deviates from intimacy and its indices and towards a prescribed and fixed way of knowing and being.

Through a rationalist lens, constructs of humanization and difference are understood through dichotomies that oppose and are mutually exclusive from one another. Power differentials are thus seen as an inevitable and natural consequence of these opposing relationships. Naturalist discourses can be seen in examples such as gender divisions where women’s work is naturally inferior to men’s work based on the notion that men’s work is more difficult and more significant. Or this discourse can be seen through the example of racial differences where white individuals are seen as superior and, therefore, deemed naturally more dominant. The notion of intimacy functions as a potential way to re-organize and re-conceptualize these dichotomies not as “true” oppositional ends that operate in a divisive manner, but as signifiers to the limitations of our own thinking and as an invitation to play with and re-organize our thinking and being in the world in a rhizomatic, non-hierarchical and atemporal way. Re-configuring these said dichotomies through a lens of intimacy helps us understand that our narratives inform our experiences differently and allow for more complex
and “messier” understanding(s) of difference. Re-conceptualizing the relationships of duality, paradox, antagonism, ambiguity, and contradiction through ITP can help deepen one’s understanding over the formation(s) of the Self/Other identity and challenge the problematic aspects of rational and dichotomous constructs that also inform identity formation. By re-orienting our concept of the Self/Other identity through an intimate landscape, we potentially set ourselves up to transform our relationships and understandings through an endless process of (re)experimentation (Deleuze, 1980/1987).

A Critical Ontology of the Self through notions of the Intimate

I believe an intimate approach can lend itself to the process of becoming critically ontologically oriented. I define a critical ontology of the self as one who dynamically examines one’s being in the world from a position of ambiguity, openness, and curiosity. Further, a psycho-social analysis must be included in what it means to be critically ontologically oriented.

First, a critical ontology of the self within an intimate transgressive pedagogy encompasses a reworking of the rational self insofar that the self and the self’s identity is no longer seen as separate and autonomous from discourse, knowledge, and power. By rejecting the notion of self as a truly autonomous and individualistic entity, one makes room for a discursive space that allows for “an emergence of a politics of transformation that allows polyvocal selves within new discourses of self identity” (Caldwell, 2007, p. 780). This reworked understanding of identity incorporates the body not as separate from the mind, but as an integral site of discursive power. Foucault (Butler, 1989) perceives the body as the site for discursive inscription-meaning, the body as canvas to the historical, political, and social forms of power and knowledge. Certain notions of resistance, according to Foucault, therefore are thought to lie in rearticulating and redefining the discursive formations, which are expressed and interpreted on and through the
body. In addition, to Foucault’s notion of the body, I include a feminist and psychical relationship of the body as a site of understanding byway of affect, the senses, and emotion. This means paying close attention to our body’s physical and emotional responses as we experience, remember, and attempt to interpret and narrate our experiences.

Second, a critical ontology of the self within ITP focuses on the psychical processes of one’s ongoing negotiations and struggles with the purpose of opening one’s ways of thinking, knowing, seeing, and interpreting the world, and one’s experiences and relationships. Invoking intimate knowledge acts as a transgressor- a disruption to the seemingly harmonious dominant discourse, which shapes our understanding of reality as common, universal, objective and fixed. McKenzie (2009) writes, “[transgression] suggests a tentative and limited freedom to undertake explorations of assumptions and understandings (p. 214), where “negotiation . . . [and] struggle is still possible” (p. 215). The ability to consciously negotiate and struggle can be considered the essence of ITP as boundaries are illuminated and simultaneously reimagined with the intention to create new and/or different borders that re-invoke the imaginary.

To exemplify this notion, I use Britzman’s (2012) discussion over the use of theory where she attempts to theorize theory’s purpose and place within academia. She believes the same challenges and struggles found in theorizing are ultimately necessary for the psychical life to keep from degeneration. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, she writes that “theory is not benign” (p. 44), and because theory’s fundamental purpose is to grapple with the problems, holes, and imbalances observed in struggle and pain, so shall a critical ontology of the self be treated as such. A critical ontology of the self can then be considered as an ongoing theorizing and re-theorizing of the Self/Other relationship. This involves tracing the development of our assumptions and interpretations from a standpoint that these assumptions and interpretations are
shaped through a historical and socially imposed context. While a self understood through its location in the historical and social landscape of discourses is important, I believe it is insufficient to my definition of living a critical ontology and leaves out the fundamental movement required in living in such a state. The movement I refer to is akin to Taubman’s (2011, p. 20) notion of the unconscious.

Institutionalized knowledge and the aspiration to scientific certainty, control, and prediction on which it is founded cannot bear psychoanalytic knowledge because psychoanalytic knowledge reveals a hole in institutional knowledge, reveals that it cannot ultimately be transparent to itself or one with itself. The knowledge that reveals this hole is knowledge of the unconscious... I... refer to the knowledge that arrives from the unconscious and reveals to us what we do not know, and how we are always already implicated in what we do know and we resist knowing.

The “hole” Taubman refers to as what we cannot know, what we resist knowing, and what we are already implicated in our knowing is pivotal in living my conceptualization of a critical ontology. Within other pedagogies, prior notions can resolve themselves with a sense of certainty and finality, but ITP does not make those concessions. I believe that when one engages with knowledge construction as a Self/Other examination that is never complete or completely “knowable,” one creates an entry point of infinite inquiry and creativity.

Pedagogically, this means placing both our students’ experiences and the contextualized interpretations of those experiences at the center of teaching and learning, while also challenging the permanency and remoteness of these interpretations. While discussing power relations for example, students do not merely take the telling of their experience in relation to power as a self-
evident truth. Rather, from an intimate transgressive standpoint, it is an opportunity for students’ to focus on and develop their capacity to articulate how their assertions of that experience came to be, how it changes (or changed, or will change), and how the multiple dimensions of one’s social landscape (which is always changing, being challenged, being transformed and contradicted by and through contexts) dramatically affects one’s personal landscape, which performs the same internal storms to that of the social. In other words, our experiences and our interpretations of those experiences are not completely our own, they are not confined to our mind alone. They are shaped, molded, and subject to the political, the social, the cultural and the everyday that we encounter both through the plurality of our senses, our cognition, and our unconscious.

When we understand this and begin to trace the lines to where our assertions and assumptions (assumptions of the Self/Other relationship) have travelled, we begin to sense the complex and layered dimensions of our subjective imaginings all of which are permeated with affect and inchoate reason (to an origin that has no name, or starting point). We begin to employ a critical ontology of ourselves. Foucault (1977) sees this critical ontology as self-regulatory, where “individuals are continually in the process of constituting themselves... [where] self also implies understanding of one’s identity” (Besley & Peters, 2007, pp.21-22). From Foucault’s perspective, self-regulation is a conscious practice and awareness of our more unconscious and normalized everyday practices of how we re-arrange our experiences in such a way that translates into our specific and subjective ways of knowing and being. Interrogating one’s subjectivity through her/his remembered (past) and everyday (more recent) practices aims to examine one’s being in the world, how one’s reality is shaped through these interpretations and experiences, and what it means to be in the world.
Foucault’s (1977) earlier works focus on the top-down-and out relationship of power on the shaping of ontology through the institution and the socially discursive’s influence over the individual’s subjectivity. McKenzie (2009) extends and focuses the conversation to highlight the tension between the two. The felt anxiety from these tensions under such self-regulation opens a potential pathway for consciousness necessary for deepening one’s capacity to sense and learn to articulate the minutiae of heterogeneity occurring during a seemingly homogenous event, discourse, assumption, thought, and experience through the intimacy of one’s own knowing and being in the world. In other words, one’s subjectivity and/or position, although it cannot be divorced from larger social influences and forces, always leave room for conflict, resistance, and therefore, difference. Understanding this tension through one’s own experiences and interpretation of experiences shapes a consciousness necessary for the individual who has the capacity to bear witness to the workings that are largely ignored, silenced, made invisible, and/or marginalized, all of which inspire the fundamental elements of McKenzie’s limited notion of freedom—negotiation and struggle.

**Intimacy as Care**

Finally, I see ITP serve as a powerful form of care in the guided ongoing interrogation of the struggles and wonder in one’s experience and process of naming and re-exploring discourses. I consider the qualities I have named in a ITP important aspects to learning how to actively and more productively: wrestle with the necessary but difficult knowledges of the world, to learn how to listen differently and now, in addition, demonstrate care for the Self and an/O”ther. In my next section, I begin by briefly discussing Nel Noddings’ interpretation of care, her critique of traditional ways of conceptualizing care, and her justification for an ethic of care in
educational discourse. I follow with Deborah Britzman’s notion of care and how ITP can be considered a form of care.

**Notions of Care from Noddings**

Noddings (1984) defines caring as an interdependent relationship: “a relationship that contains another... [and] one that is rooted in receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness” (p. 4). According to her, the notion and ethic of care is an ontological aspect of humanity. To be in caring relationship with another “provides the motivation for us to be moral” (p. 5), and for Noddings, the focus of her work centers on the question of how to “meet the other morally” (p. 5) so as to reduce unnecessary suffering, violence, and pain associated with pathological behavior and thinking. To Noddings, one’s degree of “goodness” can only be measured in the other. It is not enough to say that one cares if the other does not feel cared for. Yet it should not be mistaken that in such recipriocity or measurement, does it mean the acts of care need be equal or contractual. Namely, in a sincere caring relationship, the expectation is not to have one do as the other does. However, what is expected is that at some point, the position of carer (one caring for) and the cared for may/will will switch roles. In addition, it is learning how to care for that one ultimately learns how to care about, which encompasses more conceptual and larger forms of care (i.e., issues, events, peoples one does not personally know). Noddings believes that at any point in time, an individual is simultaneously a carer and the cared for.

The notion that the cared for and the caring for are not separate and permanent classes which separate populations of people, directly challenges the patriarchal and dominant mode of thinking around care. Noddings outlines the limitations of what she calls the “traditional moral philosophy” (xxii) of care, which she states is built upon moral reasoning. According to Noddings, this logic has concentrated too heavily on the establishment of fixed universal
principles and rules that mirror the same epistemologic issues associated with western patriarchic reasoning long critiqued by feminists (hierarchy, linearity, fixedness, universality, and exclusion). This logic further becomes problematic as the language used to discuss morality has relied too heavily on what she terms, “the language of the father” (p. 13), which has largely ignored what Noddings calls the “feminine in the deep classical sense.” At its foundation, the patriarchic viewpoint that treats care as a universal and fixed principle is an abstract notion that can be generalized to different contexts and situations. The limitation of abstraction is isolation “from the complicating factors of particular persons, places and circumstances” (p. 37). In addition, the language of the father ignores what Noddings believes is deeply rooted in human ontology: the longing for relatedness and belonging from a standpoint that these relations are messy, complex, interwoven, and largely immeasurable and incalculable.

In her interpretation, the feminine prioritizes alternative constructs like emotion, feeling, reception, and relationship. These constructs are important aspects when exploring the notion of care as they work to reattach the soulful engagement of more than just the intellectual mind, but the body, the senses, and the heart in such a way that they are not considered purely pedantic or trite (as has been the case in traditional ethics). In order for the individual to respond in such a way, the panorama of care must shift to what Noddings calls the subjective-receptive mode. The subjective-receptive mode involves reflective and reflexive thinking leading to a heightened awareness of how one lives and one’s larger existence in the world. For Noddings, this mode allows her “instead of receiving the world or the other, I may receive myself, and I may direct my attention to that which I have already received” (p. 35). This spiraling movement between different spaces of reception, which ultimately influences one’s subjectivity, is inherently connected to one’s relationships and how one connects in the world. I believe it is through this
spiraling interdependency that people learn how to care for and care about people, events, and issues that may at first feel unrelated or inconsequential to an “independent” self.

In summary, an intimate transgressive pedagogy works to cultivate a dynamic critical ontology of the self through the process and practice of bearing witness to the heterogeneity of our multiple ways of knowing and interpreting our experiences. This pedagogy works to focus our attention on the ways in which the construction of knowledge and meaning-making emerges from the construction of identity, or the Self/Another relationship. Therefore, from this perspective, studying knowledge construction implies a study of the Self. The following section will expand on this notion of care from a critical psychoanalytic standpoint. Because ITP is a practice and art of studying the Self-An/Other relationship in order to more critically comprehend knowledge construction, I elaborate on certain psychoanalytic concepts that I believe help to better explain the conceptual foundations I have proposed.

**Care According to Britzman**

In an intimate transgressive pedagogy, the examination and re-imagination of the Self/Other relationship then becomes central, as an intimate framework requires one to revisit, time and again, notions and interpretations of care and relationship. Britzman (2009) critiques previous models and notions of care that have been built on a materialistic means-end understanding, where care is only considered in the form of external and physical resources best represented through the world of social policy. Further, “taxonomies of human development” which follow the same suit, barely touch the issue of the pain(s) experienced in need. In addition, she warns of the social science’s tendency to objectify, as a thing, the emotional world, which can lead to misassumptions and overgeneralizations.
Fundamentally, she states, “care itself is the advocacy of human dependency as the foundation of life, transience, and vulnerability” (p. 774). This dependency forces us into spaces that are unknown, provisional and fragile, and is what, as humans and other-than-human forms of life, connects us to one another. If more fully examined and re-conceptualized in this way, Britzman states that the notion of care would look, be heard, and felt differently. Her work attempts to take on what she calls the, “shadow experiences [of] care” to better understand the Self/Other relationship. These “shadows,” which loosely fall under the constructs and aspects of feelings of ambivalence, the aspects of the inexplicability of need itself, what is most inchoate in our interpretations, experiences, and feelings, are all aspects of but generally overlooked components to care. The popular notion of intimacy is that it is our commonalities (as if they are not in constant flux and flow), which connect us to one another. This is often misinterpreted as consensus, but as I have mentioned previously, it is our shared degrees of difference that usher in feelings of commonality. I believe that the same “shadows” Britzman describes in relations of care are also present in the intimate. To deepen a relationship of care one must be willing to interact intimately, and that involves acknowledging difference in a non-divisive (i.e., non-relational: where one stops being in relationship with an/”O”ther) way. Precisely, it is the acknowledgment “that the singularity of one’s trauma cannot be shared. . . [which] is already a response to the suffering of the other, his/her vulnerability that calls to the surface my own” (Margaroni & Yiannopoulou, 2005, p. 224).

This calling forth can also be considered what Melanie Klein describes as “a reaching for the other” (Britzman, 2009, NA). According to Britzman’s analysis of Klein, this “longing for” works from the early bonds of the infant to the [proverbial] mother in the form of suffering, fear of abandonment, and thus, meaning-making. The mother’s capacity to care represents and
establishes the notion of the ‘good object,’ and ultimately the notion of love. However, the mother’s desire and need for autonomy fills the cared-for with anxiety, fear of loss, and renders the recipient filled with vulnerability. This dependency, this need, is both desired for and fills one with a hatred of and rage over this dependency.

Care, therefore, from a psychoanalytic perspective, is ultimately a reparative act as it attempts to repair and reattach one’s self to notions and feelings of love in spite of its equally paralyzing and abandoning other. However, as has been expressed, care and love are not benign and benevolent entities. They carry with them, as an underside, a degree of aggression, volatility (even violence) and conflict. I believe that in order to take full responsibility for our acts and behavior, acknowledging and critically reflecting on this notion is imperative. The history of the world is laden with acts or intentions of care gone wrong or mishandled. Freud (1933) warns us, “When we read of the atrocities of the past, it sometimes seems as though the idealistic motives served only as an excuse for the destructive appetites” (p. 210). When dealing with caring relationships, the darker, more painful aspects of care must be addressed and given their due value when considering how these emotional and affective components shape the individual’s identity formation of the Self and it’s relation to an/”O”ther. If not, we risk falling prey to the same folly of our predecessors, who uncritically, and therefore unwittingly perpetuated distorted pathological (harmful) relations.

It should be briefly mentioned that for Britzman (2009), the term, self is deceptive in that rather than a “true” and unwavering self, she offers that the individual is composed of multiple selves formed through the “binding and unbinding to external others.” Again, based off of Klein’s work, Britzman believes that this conceptualization helps one see the Self not as a fixed and agreeable Self, but one that is “divaricator and as divided” (p. 773). What this signifies is a
Self in movement, in constant motion that interacts with and must pass through a spectrum of conflicting and contradictory emotions. The Self then is in an ever-present state of internal drama. These internal dramas composed of varying levels of intense and contradictory emotions culminate to become a powerful force, a force that threatens our psychical stability and motivates our desire for reparation with an/”O”ther.

I believe that in consciously regarding and exploring one’s personal and more silent (socially speaking) selves one can learn how to become a more effective and responsible caring being towards others (in the form of for and about). As Britzman recollects, it is through our relationship with ourselves, which aforementioned, is shaped (bound and unbound) by our relationship to the Other that our desires, intentions, and actions are created and brought into being. What initially occurs in this conscientization process is that dichotomies and/or contradictions are drawn forth and illuminated, heightening one’s internal drama. The social condition and drive for the individual is the belief that one must choose one end over another, and most preferably, the end that is socially desirable. This is not what I proffer as a tipping point of transformation although it may be necessary for some to see the glaring dichotomies of their own thinking in their process of emergence. I believe a pedagogical pivot point in one’s process of emergence is the hesitation one is willing to undertake when met with this binary and the process the individual goes through during this time: the degree one exercises in bearing witness, retrospective return, loquela, and tender esse. I believe employing these concepts into one’s daily life, helps develop one’s critical ontological development of the Self.

However, this is a critical point where one can alter a binary way of being/seeing, as long as these components are active during moments of heightened internal dramas. The more one is willing to forgo the resistance inherent in traditional epistemologic and ontologic ways of
knowing (in the form of certainty, fixedness, and universalization), the more one creates more room for “new responsibilities [created by the Self. . .] which can be thought anew and enlivened” (p. 775). In addition, Britzman believes that in exploring the Self, or Klein’s relation to our selves from a more psychoanalytic and intimate frame, one can better sense how contradiction, ambiguity, ambivalence, pain, and wonder through the advent of uncertainty ultimately claim how we learn to relate and make relations within and to the world.

For example, Britzman discusses the irony of care and its relationship to inequality through its private wordlessness, its immeasurable and unquantifiable characteristics. This ineffability provokes feelings of resentment, guilt, and love. In this context, care is known as a paradox: a taboo that is both seen as personally disparaging and socially disregarded and a prerequisite need. The Self, or selves in all of this, desperately tries to infuse a sense of (stable) order to these feelings of need. Because of its inherent and resistant nature to give completeness, need goes through stages of demand, desire, and anxiety over loss. These changes continuously rearrange how one comes to understand “the uneven developments of justice, care, and equality, terms that are themselves subject to our uneven development” (p. 776). What this relationship demonstrates is the mirror effect of how our public dissoluble notions reflect our internal dramas. More specifically, it reflects how care, for example, is far more than its altruistic and benevolent proscription. Britzman (2009, p. 776) summarizes:

My clinical hunch is that the labor of care leaves in its wake inexplicable experiences that are not work, that are good and bad, that signify both love and hate, and that create and diminish our capacity for reparation, itself the elusive element that lends to care its grace, fragility, and feelings of envy and gratitude.
In Britzman’s understanding of care, the individual who participates in the labor of care acquiesces to the desire to grow, however “forward/backward,” or “good/bad” that may be. For teacher educators who engage and facilitate difficult knowledge with their students, I say care is not necessarily a good thing, but a powerful thing. Intimacy and transgression as a form of care is intense, and because of its intensity, it gives way to powerful experiences. Whether those experiences are deemed “good” or “bad” is not necessarily the focus, but rather the more powerful the experience the more opportunity to “practice freedom” through negotiation and struggle.

Further, in addition to being able to articulate these emotions, one must employ the practice of retrospective return through retroactive questioning. To transform struggle, it is not sufficient to just learn how to name one’s suffering although that is necessary and important. The “reach toward the other” is what I believe and interpret to be, Klein and Britzman’s implicit form and assumption of retrospective return. For in reaching for the other (the proverbial other as well as the physical other), we reach for what is an unknown and uncertain and open the field of potential.

What appears to be most powerful in Klein’s, and as an extension, Britzman’s analysis of care, is the affective bonds between the Self/Other relationship. In this sense, care (or lack thereof) is the basis on which any and all relationships form. Care, in this analysis, is no longer considered to be a form of altruism or superiority, or even privilege imposed or given to an/”O”ther, but a necessary, frequent and important integration of social, personal, and psychical (self) responsibility that carries within it an emotional and conflicting core rife with never ending tensions. What then does that mean for our pedagogical practices and constructs, where care has largely been considered and represented in a way that neglects these more complicating emotions
and notions? It appears that care is an irreconcilable notion and act. Further, pain (and wonder) is unavoidable. Care, no matter its multiple cultural contexts, is needed and required to nurture, to love, and at the same time, it is volatile, unpredictable, and uncertain. Care is filled with both pains and wonders from the past and continues creating new forms of pain and wonder when employed in the present.

What then does this all mean for teacher educators who may take up such a pedagogical practice in their own classrooms? While the forms it manifests may (and should) be different, the experience of care should not be an “easy” one. In asking our Self, what is our responsibility towards our students, I answer that it is taking conscious responsibility for how we, the teachers, consider notions of care and act out these notions through our relationship with our students. This approach to care recognizes that our thoughts and actions can (and most likely do) carry unintended consequences (for good or bad), and that what “worked” for one student may not “work” for another, or for even the same student in a different context. Also, it means understanding and accepting (to a degree) that the teacher-student relationship will not always feel “good.” As I previously stated, this notion of care is intense, meaning its emotional state(s) are strongly felt, presented, and most likely shared with one another. I will not comment on the way these state(s) ought to be felt, present themselves, or be shared, although I like others, would like them to be in a manner that feels comforting and respectful, but this may not be the case. Care, in this context, is a risk; yet, I contend that all thought and action carry risk. This form of care has the individuals engaged in the relationship more conscious of the tensions, and the potential volatilities.

I believe that in embracing ITP and its onto-epistemic positionality educators learn how to approach their facilitations with difficult knowledge more care-fully. Many of our intentions,
interpretations, and decisions stem from a place of care. But facilitating difficult knowledges, interpreting difficult knowledges, understanding our process of meaning and sense making of difficult knowledge is not as simple as our intent to care. Re-framing care to mean taking ownership of and for the way in which one lives out their thoughts, beliefs, and knowings addresses a psychological form and discussion of care I think is needed in educational research.

While there is ample amount of scholarship addressing the different forms and manifestations of difficult knowledges, little scholarship addresses how to facilitate this work through alternative pedagogies. In attempting to address the limitations of rationalist-based pedagogies that work to address difficult knowledges in the classroom, this chapter comprises the characteristics of an alternative theoretical and pedagogical framework. I have outlined its epistemological divergences from rationalism and offered a pedagogical approach consisting of the psychoanalytic concepts, retrospective return, tender esse, and loquela to facilitate educators in the classroom. I followed with a discussion on the ways in which I see ITP contributing to a poststructural feminist formulation of a critical ontology of the self, and end with a re-worked notion of care (from a psychoanalytic perspective) to demonstrate the way in which I see ITP as a form of care politics in education. The next chapter will address my research design and methodological approach of how I employed ITP in one semester of facilitating difficult knowledge in the classroom.
CHAPTER FOUR
METHODOLOGY

Because one of the major purposes of this study is to closely examine a teacher and students’ understanding and experience with a new theoretical and pedagogical approach in the classroom, a qualitative methodology is necessary. Studying how students use language to construct meaning and their experiences allows me, the researcher, to gain a sense of their “indigenous modes of organization” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 646). I utilized an action research methodology infused with feminist sensibilities for this study. The following sections will address the origins of traditional action research, the reasoning behind my decision to incorporate a feminist research paradigm, and the theoretical foundations of action research and critical feminist methodologies. The second half of this chapter addresses my research design, which outlines the specific methods chosen, the various forms of qualitative data collected, and a synopsis of the process undertaken in my data analysis.

Feminist scholarship has been paramount in transforming what counts as knowledge produced in the name of science (Harding, 1998). In addition, because it has always been my aim in both my research and teaching endeavors to attempt to bring about change to both the field I serve and in which I teach, I have approached this study not as an objective outsider, detached from the environment and people— but as a passionate, involved, and committed activist. I have the desire to change, critique, reflect, and improve my own practices and beliefs and to be in constant dialogue with others who are entering the challenging field of teaching at this time. As a result, the methodology most appropriate for my study is action research embedded with
poststructural sensibilities. The next subsection outlines the purposes and conceptual foundations for such a research framework/design.

**Origins and Goals of Action Research**

Action research examines a range of social phenomena and the ideas and rationales that govern behaviors. Both qualitative inquiry and action research’s goals include understanding the complex and multi-faceted nature of social phenomena and people’s interpretations of phenomena (Peshkin, 1993). Action research is designed to privilege critical self-reflection, incite collective action/consciousness based around a shared desire to create action and/or change in an intended area, and help build and strengthen relationships. In addition, action research shares with an intimate-transgressive pedagogy the goal of agency and social and personal transformation.

The origins of action research are largely credited to the native Berlinian and social psychologist, Kurt Lewin, who in the 1930s was interested in “raising the self esteem of minority groups. . . [where he wanted them to] overcome the forces of ‘exploitation’ and colonialisation that had been prominent in their modern histories” (Adelman, 2006, pp. 7-8). He found traditional models, such as Taylor’s ‘scientific management’ insufficient to his professional aim, which was to “develop social relationships of groups and between groups to sustain communication and co-operation” (p. 7). The goals of action research privilege experience as a legitimate way of knowing and aim to transform asymmetrical relationships of power through action and a commitment to critical self-reflection and inquiry (Baum, MacDougall & Smith, 2006). It works to generate living theories that help improve, explain, and illustrate the beliefs and practices of participants’ understandings of and experiences with social phenomena (McNiff & Whitehead, 2009). Dick, Stringer and Huxham (2009) detail the importance of theory building...
within action research stating that its necessary to observe how “theory and participation fit together” and, I would add, where they seem to diverge. For action researchers, understanding how living theories are used to make sense of one’s actions or beliefs “is the primary purpose of action research” (p. 119).

Furthermore, researchers are seen as influential shapers in action research. They are positioned as both participant and observer: each roles shape the environment and phenomena under study (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005; Argyris, 1990; Alrichter, Kemmish, McTaggart, & Zuber-Skerritt, 2002). Also, the researcher assumes the role as facilitator with the aim to re-construct learning as a process of resocialization, liberation and empowerment (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In other words, action researchers are expected to not only document and report the phenomena but to actively work to transform it for the purpose of social justice.

Fine and Weis (2003) address qualitative research that focuses on social (in)justice as a process which ought to be driven by an explicit theoretical articulation in order to “connect the dots” (p. 66). In this case, my theoretical framework’s influence on both my students’ experiences and my pedagogical practices/philosophies become the social phenomena under study. As well, with action research, the researcher’s presence is acknowledged as a source of knowing and allows the researcher to represent herself as a participant as well one who seeks to explore and inquire into one’s own practices. The next section will go into deeper discussion of action research’s theoretical foundations with an explanation of the infusion of critical feminist understandings.

The Theory of Action Research and Poststructural Feminist Sensibilities

Theoretically, action research can be conceptualized as a form of grounded theory, where lived experiences dictate and lead to a construction of a theoretical framework (Whitehead,
The pedagogy under study did grow from lived experiences; however, in becoming more focused and strategic with both my teaching practice and my pedagogical agenda, I have attempted to utilize, implement, and forefront the concepts of these theories more so than ever before. The practices that occurred in my study were not sporadic, but rather a deliberate and ordered attempt to put these concepts to work for the purpose of understanding how they would manifest in the practical application of one classroom. In other words, the pedagogy and theory under study emerged from a bottom-up process (student and teacher experiences) but they were executed in a top-down direction, from teacher to student.

Additionally, I want to emphasize the hermeneutical cycle and multi-directional aspect of these experiences. Keeping consistent with the previous chapters, I want to be conscious of my approach with my participants’ experiences and not treat these experiences as fixed or linear, but as a dynamic, ebb-and-flow process of interaction. While I subscribe to the goals of action research, which address experience as a valuable form of knowing and source of understanding to promote equitable relationships, I emphasize the changing nature embedded in such experiences and am careful in conceptualizing and presenting these experiences as complete, coherent events. Because the concepts of ITP are also a part of my practice within the classroom and a main focal point in this study, I lean heavily on Kristeva’s (1980) call for a theory of “signifying systems and practices that would search within the signifying phenomenon for the crisis or the unsettling process of meaning and subject rather than for the coherence or identity of either one or a multiplicity of structures” (p. 125). The desire for coherence emanates from a traditional western and rationalist epistemology and tends to skip or minimize the heterogeneity and multiplicity that exists within coherence, making one’s process, in this case, that of research appear seamless. A theory that searches for the crisis or the unsettling process aims to highlight
tension, contradiction, silence, and conflict. Moreover, because I utilize ITP, which focuses on psychic and embodied tension, these contradictions, silences, and conflicts aim to disrupt notions of naturalness, fixedness, and unity.

Therefore, I utilize feminist methodological sensibilities such as Kristeva (1980) and Zavos and Biglia (2011) that focus on the dynamic interplays between such tensions in order to demonstrate the difference in experience. I believe incorporating this focus serves to demonstrate a more nuanced and complex understanding of one’s group experience. This approach aims to highlight how collective knowledge is not consensus driven, but co-operative. At the intersection of action research and poststructural feminist sensibilities, a collective experience is not about sameness in experience, but more about the negotiations made in shared experiences. Experience -collective and individual- from this perspective, can be shared yet diverse, united and disparate, harmonious and contradictory. This tension is important as it provides, what I believe to be, a better understanding of the multiple forces that are generally overlooked by an outside perspective and/or not publicly presented by the group. This is an appropriate framework for my study as ITP serves not only to incite consciousness of one’s negotiations and struggles but requires participants to be reflective of those negotiations. Furthermore, ITP is interested in the process of those negotiations as a site of inquiry and learning. As one student responded, “It’s a lot to take in. I have to process this.” An intimate pedagogical framework is concerned with exploring this student’s process through an explicit analysis of prior actions, belief statements, assumptions, and feelings.

The next section of this chapter will outline the research design and the particular methods I utilized in my data collection and analysis.

**Research Design**
The research design is composed of two dimensions. The first dimension is action research, where the goal of the research is one that “honors, centers, and reflects the experience of people most directly affected by issues in [the] community” (incite-national.org, 2014, para 1). For this study, I wish to honor experiences, interactions and relationships of both students and the teacher (me) who experience an intimate transgressive pedagogy implemented in an introductory teaching course. ITP is designed not only to critique multiple forms of oppression and power, but also to motivate individuals to see themselves as agents capable of transforming those realities through intimately changing one’s paradigm and relationships with their ontological orientation to the world. These goals are similar to action research’s main goal: to “transform inquiry into praxis or action” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 34).

The second dimension of my research design incorporates poststructural feminist sensibilities, sensibilities that “attempts[s] to write in what usually gets left out of research accounts, namely the moments of tension, disagreement, conflict and sometimes also personal and collective breakthrough” (Zavos & Biglia, 2009, p. 153). Post colonial and critical feminist scholarship state that knowledge is constructed in multiple ways, yet the problems of representation and power differentials are often minimized. Bringing these tensions to the fore gives researchers, scholars, educators, and policy makers a better understanding of both theory, practice, and, where and how theory gets lost in translation into practice, and how practice both affirms and destroys the theoretical foundations it emerges from. Before I outline specific methods of a qualitative action research approach, I first address two main critiques of action research and include my response to each critique.

Critiques of Action Research
Krimmerman (2001) addresses two main critiques of action research. The first objection, “Objection from Popular Incompetence and Bias” and the second objection, “Objection from Profounding Political Ideas with Scientific Criteria” (p. 63) stem from the belief that participants in action research who are not educated or trained in the scientific method and will drastically reduce objectivity because they may not want to be represented in a negative way or are driven by the potential loss or gain of power and privilege. The second objection addresses the apparent need for separation between political agendas and research. This concern centers on replication and validation, which are hallmarks of positivist and post-positivist approaches to research. These critiques, however, at an epistemological level, diverge into differing perspectives of what’s “acceptable” and “not acceptable” based on one’s definition of science and research rigor. Approached with the understanding that all participants’ ideas, thoughts, and beliefs are not fixed but in process diminishes the first objection, as both researcher/participant(s) understanding is considered to be ever changing. At best, participants’ experiences are a brief but incomplete snapshot of a moment in time and space. A critical perspective of action research sees the overlay of both experience and understanding as a process that is certain to change, but still can hold tentative implications. In response to the second objection, action research’s epistemological framework challenges the post-positivist paradigm that political agendas can be successfully disconnected from all aspects of understanding and ways of knowing. Rather, action research’s framework supposes that through explicitly connecting political, personal, and social agenda, a fuller and richer understanding can be reached.

Adler (2011) outlines three important dilemmas, which emerged from her work implementing action research in the classroom. The first dilemma she termed concerns power dynamics where Adler highlights the tension of many action researchers who see action
research’s goal as an extension to and/or promulgation of the democratic process. Theoretically, action research is known as a collective process whereby participants identify problems, come together collectively, dialogue and reflect on the issues and then work together to respond to the problem. A democratic process seems implicit, but no matter how much teachers/researchers attempt to minimize the power differential between them and their participants/students, power is still indeed present. Further, within the participant group, hierarchies abound. A feminist poststructural perspective does not ignore these power differentials. While I did consciously work to make my participants feel more comfortable and empowered in the telling of their experiences, I did not necessarily work to eliminate the power differential of my position and theirs. In addition, while it is clear that my position and rank as teacher/researcher was clearly well known, the more subtle forms of resistance and ways in which my social location (as a young, Asian woman of color) were challenged were much more discrete but still nonetheless played an important role in the dynamic and shaping of both the study, the class, and the relationships formed. This interplay will be discussed more in depth at a later time, but for now, it is mentioned to reiterate how power always is in play in any relationships. Within this study, I want to make this tension clear. I dealt with it by consciously picking and choosing where I wanted participants to demonstrate agency, which was their voice and in particular, addressing the conflict and challenges they were experiencing while working through the curriculum, their relationships, and their thought/becoming process. By advocating that they take more responsibility for their identity work and the class process, I believed that I was practicing a form of pedagogical democracy and using my position of power as teacher to facilitate that ownership. I do not see this conflict as necessarily a challenge to democracy, but a challenge and disruption to the way in which democracy is conceptualized, which again, demonstrates the divergences
generally overlooked in dominant discourse. Utilizing a poststructural feminist perspective, which may inconvenience traditional sensibilities, acknowledges different positions of power, in addition to people’s different stakes within the participation and reflects, what I believe to be, a more accurate representation of the dynamics that remain constant outside of the study and in the everyday.

The subsequent sub-sections of this chapter describe different forms of data collected and my analytical approach to the data.

**Participants**

Participants included 45 students enrolled in sections of an introductory Teaching and Learning course that I had been assigned to teach. This is a preprogram course where students are taught the foundations of western educational psychology specifically tied to development and learning with the instructor’s own infusion of critical pedagogy and critical social theories. I ensured the students that participation was voluntary, and it was explicitly stated that non-participation would not affect any aspect of students’ grades or performance assessment. All materials related to the study were confidential, and participants' identities concealed.

In addition, the students were those who had not yet applied and/or been accepted into the teaching program. I find this position unique. Their decision to teach had not yet been solidified by the college of education, and many had not taken a formal collegiate course focused on the professional field of teaching and education. Studying an introductory course provides a glimpse into how students’ previous experience with education shapes their understandings of schooling before they become enculturated into the teacher preparation program.

**Forms of Sampling.** Qualitative fieldwork suggests purposive sampling as an appropriate form of sampling when the research study is used to achieve a certain goal (Crotty, 1998/2007). In
addition, in non-probability studies, convenience sampling can be used. Convenience sampling was used and considered an appropriate form of sampling as the issues under study pertain specifically to the students in the introductory teaching course.

**Data Collection**

Data collection took place during the academic year of 2012, January through April, at a large land-grant university during one specific introductory course to teaching and learning in the college of education. This study utilized traditional qualitative research data collection techniques and I collected a variety of forms of data, which provided a more holistic understanding of the class dynamics and understandings. I collected data from 45 individual written journal reflections, assigned homework and class projects, personal field notes and reflections from the researcher, and 17 one-on-one, semi-structured interviews conducted with students that lasted approximately one hour for each interview (see appendix A for interview questions). This occurred over one academic semester, consisting of sixteen weeks, and 150 minute per week class.

Consent forms were approved by the Washington State University’s Internal Review Board. Each consent form included a detailed summation of the study taking place, participants’ rights and privileges, a discussion of confidentiality, and an explicit statement that all participation was voluntary, and that the study could be terminated at any time by the participant and/or the researcher, and would not affect participants’ grade or performance in the course.

**Interviews**

**Semi-Structured Interviews.** Semi-structured interviews were conducted outside of class with a guiding list of interview questions (See Appendix A). Semi-structured interviews are defined by Galletta (2013) as an interview “sufficiently structured to address specific topics related to the
phenomenon of study, while leaving space for participants to offer new meaning to the study focus” (p. 24). Galletta outlines the advantages of semi-structured interviews stating that the relationships between the researcher and the participant is set up as a “give and take” (p. 24) or reciprocal relationship, which allows for “the researcher to probe a participant’s response for clarification, meaning-making, and critical reflection. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to include observations and experiences that the researcher may not have been able to know about (Galletta, 2013). For example, one of my first warm-up questions asked participants to describe, in three adjectives, their experience with class. This question allowed me, the researcher, to further probe participants to further elaborate on their descriptions. When students used the adjective “challenging” to describe their experience in the class, the follow-up probe allowed students to articulate, in their own way, what challenging meant to them. It also allowed the interview to feel more conversational as I followed their line of thinking. Incorporating participants’ articulations of their experience allowed me to gain a more layered, diverse, and complex understanding of how they experienced my facilitation of difficult knowledge.

Each interview was audio recorded and brief notes were taken for clarification. My attempt was to make the interview process as open as possible so that as Foley and Valenzuela (2000) report that this style has the capacity to generate more personal narratives and honest opinions and experiences.

The interview lasted roughly between 30 to 90 minutes. Interviews were digitally recorded, and researcher notes were taken throughout each interview. Interviews were conducted outside of class at the participant’s convenience and comfort. Interviews were conducted in my graduate office.

**Informal Interviews/Conversations.**
In addition to formal interviews, I documented any informal interactions that took place between students and me. One limitation of formal interviews is the degree of heightened anxiety and awareness of the interviewee’s self-perception. Confirmation biases, which are responses that are not necessarily the participant’s sincere and genuine beliefs can be more of an issue in formal interviews as the interviewee may try to avoid appearing or being perceived in an undesirable way (Nickerson, 1998). Informal interviews and/or conversations that take place outside of class can be valuable in that participants may not feel as self-conscious of their responses and feel more comfortable offering their perspective. Further, unanticipated questions and/or points may arise in informal settings that may not be captured in formal interviews (Siedman, 2005; Maxwell, 2012).

This occurred when a student visited my office. She had a few questions about an assignment. Afterwards, she discussed her experience of a homework prompt I had given the class. In listening to her share, I learned that her father is struggling with cancer and that she is one of the primary caretakers of her father. She also does most of the interpreting for her father as he does not speak English and he relies heavily on her to assist him both in and outside of the home. I gained insight into how the homework prompt—which was to attempt to go through a 24-hour period of silence—affect her ability to care for her father’s needs. Also, she indicated that the topics that focused on power and privilege resonated with her lived experiences, which she began to discuss in more detail. Our informal interaction allowed us to learn more about each other and established a relationship we would continue throughout the semester. In that exchange a connection formed and I found an opportunity to learn how the course concepts expressed themselves in her experiences. I find including these experiences in my data integral to providing a deeper and more holistic approach of understanding my students’ experiences.
Reflection Journals

Reflection journals written by the students were also collected. Saukko (2005) emphasizes the important role critical reflections play in action research. A practice that has remained consistent throughout my teaching is the use of student journaling both at the beginning and end of class. I use the beginning class journal prompts to ask students a question based on the intended topic of that class period. Over time this prompt evolved into interpreting quotes that challenged or attempted to shift the dominant paradigm thinking. Later, these prompts also included poetry and literature passages to help push students’ epistemological orientation and, to encourage different ways to understand and learn about a concept in the curriculum. Moreover, these prompts were designed to elicit critical thinking and ideas through metaphorical, philosophical, and figurative language.

The end journal reflections are an examination of the class period. Practically, I used the exit reflections as a way to gauge my own teaching practice and pedagogy. I asked students to share what they learned, what was interesting to them, any confusion they may have experienced over concepts, and their overall thoughts of what they took away from the class period. For my study, I used students’ journals to look for potential discursive threads and patterns. In addition, their reflections helped me better understand their perceptions of particular topics and provided a timeline of their experiences. These reflections were also used to provide a better understanding of student interviews. After my interview and my observations from the interview, I re-read each interviewee’s journal to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of that interviewee’s experience with the topic. Because the journals were written every class period, they provided an excellent illustration of the journey students experienced in class. When coding I looked for affective and descriptive language to help me examine the affective domain of their interactions.
with the course material. Their journals were ungraded. I chose not to grade their journals for content but rather for participation with the hopes that students would feel less pressure to follow a script and write from their lived experience.

One prompt asked students to respond to a quote about the metaphor of terrorism and nihilism and the continuum of degrees of certainty. One student wrote:

[Student]: I think when the quote talks about “to know” it means big T Truth [“truth” underlined several times]. If someone disagrees with you they are wrong and what they say doesn’t matter. That is why “to know is to kill”.

In that same student’s exit journal of that class period, he writes:

[Student]: Wow. That was one hell of a discussion! To see how my peers describe women was amazing. What a weird world we live in, even today.

In this student’s reflection, I looked for her interpretation and words that would describe her emotions. Also, I used the entries to gauge students’ comprehension and development of their critical thinking skills.

**Researcher Journal/Field Notes**

Auto/ethnographic field notes were also a source of data. Field notes are an important piece to any qualitative inquiry as they help to provide rich and thick description necessary to understanding the context of any site of study. After every class, besides documenting what took place, I recorded and shared my own experiences and reflections. Pairing both the students’ journals with my own observations and thoughts through my reflections helped me more clearly and explicitly observe the negotiations between my students and me. I also used my journaling to detect how my emotions and feelings shaped the interaction with my students. Analyzing our journals clearly demonstrated an evolving relationship I (as the teacher) formed with the
participants (students). This data also supports how important the relationship process became when navigating difficult and challenging social topics. In the presentation of my data analysis, I include my own thoughts and feelings to provide support for other instructors who may experience similar feelings. As a practicing researcher, my hopes are that the weaving of my experiences throughout the study will help readers to be able to contextualize and understand the environment described.

Within qualitative inquiry, the historical and rhizomatic narratives we live our lives by become foregrounded to better understand both one’s self and the actions and beliefs of a socially discursive world. Also, central to my pedagogical framework is the explicit and transparent emphasis on crisis and how one explores, negotiates, and attempts to move through crisis, or in a more general sense, struggle. Epistemologically, research that uses reflective journaling as a method attempts to ask the questions, “how much does a scholar know, how does she know it, and what can she do with this knowledge in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 766). The self-reflexive field notes and journaling both from the researcher and the participants play an important role in demonstrating the nuances of one’s experience, the tensions and negotiation process, and the contradictory and complex nature embedded in social interaction. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

**Class Discussions.** The discussions in class explored dominant paradigms and the institution of formal education and difficult knowledges. Classroom discussions make space for exploring assumptions and students’ potential conflicting, contradictory, and/or emotional responses with course material and ideas. Students wrote about their experiences, and then discussed in small groups, which were later brought to an all-class discussion. I recorded their responses in my journal and field notes. Some examples of difficult knowledges came in the form of discussing
power, privilege, intelligence, white privilege, gender norms and expectations, alternative philosophical frameworks, standardized testing, and identity formation.

**Student Work**

Many of my students’ assignments required reflection and a description of emotions present during the process of carrying out the assignment. My goal was to better understand their emotions, thoughts, and considerations through their own words. These reflections, both in written journal reflections, projects and other assigned prompts aimed to capture the “first-person narrative” (Creswell, 2008, p. 119) where “tell[ing] stories about themselves and their own experiences” allowed for a more accurate and reliable telling of the experience participants undergo. Chase (2005) addresses narrative as formative where “the stories that people tell affect how they live their lives” (p. 658). Further, treating students’ work as a form of narrative offered me a glimpse into the identity work they constructed through language. In addition, the students’ work is considered to be an archive of data addressing my research questions through these methods.

**Data Analysis**

Because my study is exploratory, Saldana’s two step coding process was appropriate. Saldana (2009) offers a two-step coding process to aid in the development of qualitative analysis. The first cycle of coding occurs during the initial phase of analysis that includes establishing preliminary categories for further analysis. Saldana outlines seven possible methods to structure the data. These include: grammatical, elemental, affective, literary and language, exploratory, procedural, themeing the data (p. 45). Within each of these approaches, lie specific coding techniques to better facilitate the chosen method of coding. The second cycle of coding consists of a refinement process that incorporates the researcher’s analytical skills to help them more
deeply understand their preliminary codes. This cycle of coding emerges from the researcher’s first cycle of coding and is dependent on the approaches used in the first cycle. Further, Saldana offers that researchers can also take a hybrid coding method approach. My design utilizes this hybrid methods approach: elemental (rough filtering process), affective (focused on emotion and affect), and exploratory (preliminary codes with tentative labeling). Within each one of these methods I employ more specific coding schemes of that are structural, descriptive, in-vivo, and emotion based codes. Additionally, I utilized a continuous read-and-re-read approach with my data. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) discuss the value of this practice, which they state, captures insights and develops connections between events.

My first cycle of coding included a combination of structural, descriptive, emotional and in-vivo based coding techniques, which was initially executed during my overall read-through of students’ interviews, journals, and final reflection papers. I read my field notes and journal entries. Saldana (2009) calls a structural coding approach “a grand tour” (p. 48) overview, which allows the researcher to establish preliminary codes that will later “be collected together for more detailed coding and analysis” (p. 66). “It is a questions-based code (p. 67)” that acts as a collection of categorizations relevant to the analysis. A descriptive coding approach helps to establish the topic of the study, by “identifying what is talked or written about” (p. 70). This is particularly useful for a wide variety of data sets and allows the researcher to form a “basic vocabulary” (p. 71) to inform the researcher what was heard, or in the case of action research, what was experienced. In this phase, I looked for common responses to lectures. Finally, I utilized an in-vivo coding approach, which extracts data verbatim to “help indicate the existence of the group’s cultural category.” In-vivo coding “refers to a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record” (p. 74). My “grand tour” of the data established a
structure, which allowed me to focus on the explicit language my participants shared. This allowed me to further hone in on descriptive and affective words that would help establish my preliminary themes and later my second-cycle of coding (pattern coding) of vulnerability.

My descriptive coding of words generated seven preliminary themes: issues surrounding voice, conflict; issues surrounding sensory and intellectual process; struggles naming voice; guilt; fear of representation, and intersections of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Within each theme, I highlighted words written to describe the experience connected with each topic. For example, within my theme of intersections of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, I highlighted words that emphasized the topic of race, class, gender, and/or sexual orientation in one color (blue) and then noted the words students wrote that were associated with the theme. One example: “I have never been in a situation in which discussing race and the privileges my ethnicity has given me was appropriate, and therefore did not know how to share my experiences or ideas in regards to the topic.” In this example, the blue highlight was used to outline the event, in this case race and ethnicity, while the yellow was my in-vivo coding technique used to capture the descriptive and affective codes participants used through their words. After highlighting all experiences in each code, I looked for what shared experiences emerged from each theme’s yellow highlights. This produced an expansion to all themes known as cluster categories (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Clustering words or phrases is a qualitative technique used for domain-elicitation, which in this case consists of looking for descriptive and affective words that highlight students’ feelings and areas of foci related to their pedagogical experience. In my theme of fear of intersections of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, I found different experiences. Some students highlighted the fear or uncertainty they felt in discussing these topics while others shared that discussing these topics provoked prior lived
experiences they had forgotten. After expanding each theme I noticed repetitive overlap between each theme.

The dominant experience to intersect each theme was an overwhelming sense of not-knowing, and a difficulty and fear associated with this experience. One descriptive word, which kept being emphasized, was that of vulnerability. I then re-focused my attention to each time the word ‘vulnerability’ was used. Accordingly, I listed additional words and phrases students used in relation to ‘vulnerability’. This second-cycle of coding consisted of “pattern coding” whereby an assembly of codes are clustered together to inform a broader, or “meta-” theme (Saldana, 2009). Pattern coding allows for the establishment and development of a major theme (Miles & Huberman, 1984), which in this study, is ‘vulnerability’. The most common words associated with vulnerability alluded to uncertainty and difficulty. I then went back to my previous codes, paying attention to how students discussed uncertainty and difficulty within the themes. The two most common ways in which these events were discussed related to 1) Students’ difficulty and uncertainty with the assumptions they held and 2) Experiences that seemed to vacillate between painful experiences and re-interpreted understandings of those experiences. These reassemblies of the data into related sub-categories is referred to as axial coding, where “properties . . . and dimensions of a category refer to such conditions, causes, and consequences of a process” (p. 159).

To demonstrate this form of axial coding to inform the larger pattern code (vulnerability) one student shared, “Having to dwell on things I experienced in middle and high school not only felt like beating a dead horse, but seemed to carry the same visceral horror I experienced when those things were actually happening, which got rather unpleasant at times.” She later writes, “Having to dwell on and relive these things also means regularly confronting them, which on the
one hand, completely sucked, but on the other hand, I know will make me a better teacher because it will give me more courage.”

In this student’s experience, I noticed a cluster of affective and descriptive words: “visceral horror,” “unpleasant,” “sucked,” and “courage.” I also noticed some action phrases such as “dwell and relive,” “regularly confronting” “beating a dead horse” and “I experienced”. Pairing these two forms of expression together, I analyzed that this student described a certain process (her action phrases) that elicited certain forms of emotions, to describe her particular reasoning behind her understanding of her experience.

The ways in which students discussed their experiences and feelings of vulnerability led to my definition of vulnerability, which is the ability to disrupt normalized narratives and acknowledge alternative (and at times, potentially unconscious) narratives, which generate heightened sensations of curiosity, fear, anxiety, and conflict. I collapsed my prior seven themes into two sub-themes I titled: challenges to one’s positionality and discursive ambiguity.

I crosscut my data sources to look for similar and/or contradictory experiences. I highlighted areas of each theme that elicited tension, contradiction, and emotion to better understand how students discussed their experience with each theme. I consistently practiced this throughout each phase of coding, which contributed to my re-worked themes’ emergence. Also, I continuously reread my journal entries, field notes, and students’ journals and worked to triangulate each code and theme.

This holistic and hybrid (Saldana, 2009) approach helped offer a more comprehensive and consistent analysis. Under my theme of ambiguity and uncertainty from my preliminary theme of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation (RCGS), one student wrote, “I had a hard time contributing to it [the discussion pertaining to RCGS] because on topics like this, I have a
hard way stating my opinion in a non-“threatening” way.” To gain a more comprehensive understanding of this code, I also read the student’s journal entries prior to and afterwards, which read: [Prior: An entrance entry referring to the poetry of Wendell Berry] “I believe that this statement is talking about whenever we have to be right, it is bad for the world. Hence, flowers will never grow if the ground is hard. But when people doubt what is “right”, the dirt gets plowed and rotated, which is good for the Earth.” [After:] “There is a lot of different thoughts and ideas that are being thrown around right now that is doing some weird things in my brain right now.” If, the participant making these statements was interviewed, I revisited related parts of the interview: “I definitely go along with stereotypical jokes of races and stuff, and I usually only do it around people I know who won’t get too mad because they’re my friends, but looking back on it some of the jokes I did say, I think did offend them. . . I definitely didn’t realize.” I re-read my journal entries and field notes surrounding that period. This particular entry addressed my observations and experience with a class period that focused on a physics article that addressed hidden agendas and constructing reality through what is hidden and what is explicit.

So what happens to you does not affect or influence me. What happens in one part of the country doesn’t have a direct impact in another. Students were looking at me as if I were crazy. We moved on. The implicate order was introduced and students had a difficult time understanding this concept. I asked another student to share her analogy with the iceberg, and she said that in her English class her professor discussed how when we see an iceberg we only see about 20% of it. The rest is underneath, or hidden. I used her analogy to explain (roughly) the concept behind the implicate order. That there are social forces at
play which are bigger than us that we cannot see but that govern a lot of the
events and realities we experience.

Re-reading these data pieces together reinforced the notion of uncertainty and ambiguity
within this particular student’s experience and my data code, and was a process I
implemented for each thematic establishment and analysis.

The next phase of my analysis included analytic induction, whereby I “tested” the data
(my students’ experiences) with the theoretical concepts I highlighted (Ratcliff, 1994). For
example, examining and understanding how people negotiate their lived experiences with the
narratives they use to tell their stories is an important aspect of ITP. In one particular experience,
a student responded to an article about traditional gender norms with anger. In her reflection she
writes, “I got really mad. I felt the tone... came across as almost patronizing... I don’t think
that parents force their kids into gender roles simply because it’s easier. I think gender roles are
there because it is what fits the majority of people.” Earlier in the semester she wrote, “I’m afraid
the gender and sexuality attributes of the big 4 will be taught in a way that will contradict my
personal beliefs.” When she shared her response in class, other students challenged her
interpretation by saying they believed it wasn’t patronizing but satirical. After a few students
commented, I discussed that in studying the frames that influence a particular experience, we can
better understand whatever we are looking at. I said it is not as simple as just a matter of “right”
and “wrong” but looking at different pieces that affect our examinations and frame our
understanding. The student reflected in her journal, “I liked this class period, the discussion on
gender was interesting. I felt a lot less attacked once you clarified that we aren’t trying to destroy
gender roles, we’re just trying to see the big picture.”
This example is shown to present the multiple points of data used to help me better understand the theoretical application of negotiating lived experience and how it “worked” in one student’s particular experience. Referring back to my overall theme of vulnerability, one can note the ways in which prior established beliefs are disrupted through sub-themes of uncertainty, (“I’m afraid the gender and sexuality attributes of the big 4 will be taught in a way that will contradict my personal beliefs.”) and connected to the theoretical concepts reviewed in chapter three.

My first round of analysis recorded students’ words after the phrase, “I felt,” or, “I feel” as linguistically this is a prompt to describe affect. Working with the codes mentioned previously, I was able to explicitly attach descriptive words such as, “challenging,” “difficulty,” “surprise,” “sad,” “angry” with my theoretical concepts. This allowed me to gain a better sense of how the theoretical concepts were being expressed and received. Additionally, in chapter five, I contextualize my analysis with further theoretical analysis to help connect these experiences to larger social issues within education.

This combined analysis approach is consistent with the field of cultural studies and critical ethnographic/case studies used in action research (Avison, Lau, Myers, & Nielsen, 1999). Because action research methodologies are still fairly new to the research field, Avison, et. al (1999) call for supplementary criteria for “design, process, and presentation” (p. 96) The critical perspective used to accommodate the analysis process helped create a bridge between the data and the pedagogy under study. One of my study’s goals is to try and understand how this pedagogy influenced students’ perceptions, beliefs, and ideas about teaching, learning, and relationship. I hope that this approach, based on my students’ experience, and my understanding
of our experience together, can encourage dialogue on potential implications of individuals who engage with difficult knowledge in intimate and transgressive ways.
CHAPTER FIVE
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section of the paper addresses my findings and analysis. As stated in chapter four, I began my analysis by coding my students’ work, reflections, and interviews. I re-read the transcripts of my interviews, field notes, observations, and own reflections. I paid close attention to what words students used to describe their experiences and feelings and started counting and listing their words through emotions (i.e., anger, surprise, sadness, nervousness). Then, I categorized the words from my list with the material that was discussed at the time. What emerged were themes of certain forms of feelings associated with certain events or discussions. For example, the word “hard” or “challenging” was often associated with the discussion of the “Big 4” (race, class, gender, and sexual orientation), most notably on the discussion, race. I went back to students’ daily reflections to help me better understand their immediate feelings and to help me gain a sense of what the collective experience was like that day. I also read and re-read my reflections of that day to help me remember how I engaged with them. Because I taught two sections of the same class I compared each section’s renderings and looked for potential similarities and/or differences. Next, I re-visited my pedagogical framework to analyze the relationship of my findings to the theoretical concepts.

The following chapter outlines my most prominent theme, which is broken down into sub-themes. Before I discuss my findings, that of vulnerability, I briefly outline the approach of this chapter. First, I define and describe my prominent theme. I then briefly discuss the concept of resistance from Logue’s psychoanalytic feminist standpoint to help the reader better understand the major theme. The first third of this chapter focuses heavily on certain psychoanalytic concepts from a feminist post structural/psychoanalytic standpoint to help the
reader better understand the data presented. I then discuss the sub-themes of my major theme and their manifestations. Next, I introduce, through narrative, three students’ experiences with the class, their experiences with the pedagogy, and how the themes emerge from their narratives. I infuse my analysis throughout these narratives with the conceptual elements mentioned prior. I close the chapter with a brief summary of the pedagogical and theoretical experiences that took place in class, which segues into my final chapter that focuses on my implications for the field of education, multicultural education, teacher preparation, and future directions.

Vulnerability

The most prominent theme to emerge from my participants was a strong feeling of vulnerability. I define vulnerability as the ability to disrupt normalized narratives and acknowledge alternative (and at times, potentially unconscious) narratives, which generate heightened sensations of curiosity, fear, anxiety, and conflict. Vulnerability can be seen as a de-normalizing of the individual’s belief systems whereby a person engages in risking, to a certain degree, the stability of prior certainties or accepted “T”ruths that uphold his or her construction of reality. My findings suggest that a ITP has the potential to elicit high degrees of vulnerability, which, in turn powerfully shape one’s practice of self-reflection.

Students reported feeling vulnerable multiple times throughout the course, specifically referencing the word ‘vulnerable.’ Often, this vulnerability elicited shame, embarrassment, frustration, and fear. Students felt varying levels of each emotion depending on the discussion and specific topic; and students’ manifestations of vulnerability played out in multiple ways, which later sub-sections of this chapter will address. Before I continue the discussion on vulnerability, I explain how the affect of vulnerability can be understood as a “softer form” of
Resistance as Willful Ignorance from a Feminist Psychoanalytic Standpoint

According to Logue (2005), studying the different forms of resistance in matters of social justice, power, privilege, and knowledge production is important as resistance can be considered a form of willful ignorance “towards difficult knowledge” (p. 333). Logue’s (2008) deconstruction of the nature of resistance draws on and adds to Nietzsche, Mills and Freud’s conclusions that the will to truth is not a desire for actual understanding, but an active movement against what Britzman names, difficult knowledge for the purpose of acquiring and maintaining forms of power and resistance. In this sense, the search “for knowledge” is not about enlightenment as much as it is about control and power; and resistance is understood as a strategic defense mechanism against realities or changes that would interrupt or exercise incongruity in the subject’s life.

While the concept of resistance in cultural studies has largely been used as a means of resisting oppressive forces and attempts to thwart the actions of controlling power regimes (c.f., Prakash & Esteva, 2005; Tucker, 1978; Illich, 1970; Luke & Gore, 1992; hooks, 1994), it is important to note that resistance in this study means to intimately engage in difficult knowledge as a willful act to disavow any personal and psychological responsibility towards agency. Critical educators hear this disavowal multiple times in student responses with phrases like, “I didn’t create the problem; I didn’t ask to be born with privileges; Why should I have to suffer for what happened a long time ago?” Systemically, this disavowal is embedded in our bureaucratic and rationalistic framework: issues surrounding social justice and in/equitable relations become relegated to certain units of an institution rather than presented as an issue for the aggregate. This
allows for units not traditionally associated with “social justice and in/equity” to maintain unjust and inequitable relations as they are seen ‘outside’ of the unit’s scope. In education, we hear these narratives all the time: This is the math department; if you want to bring up issues of academic disparities in ethnic groups, why don’t you go over to the cultural studies program?”

Additionally, Eppert (2010) adds that when resistance is overlooked (intrinsically and/or externally), the result is not relief, but the opposite: a deepening of what McKenzie calls, “hardened” feelings. Anger, aggression, bitterness, denial are all examples of hardened energy in motion, or “e/motion” (p. 227), while e/motions of love, forgiveness, peace are all soft forms of energy. Paradoxically, Logue (2008) writes about Freud’s thought on resistance as a prerequisite of sorts to any form of meaningful learning; she quotes Freud (1966), “we should be suspicious that any real learning has occurred if we do not (p. 142) [regard the] “propensity to defend against that which one finds anxiety-inducing and/or threatening” (p. 334). What does this mean then for students and educators alike when they encounter resistance either internally or witness it around them? How should they interpret such e/motion and disavowal?

Both Eppert and Logue suggest that the role of resistance in education—while commonly considered at best, a nuisance, and at worst, a teacher’s and/or curriculum’s worst nightmare—has an important place in shifting perspectives. Logue concludes that resistance can be considered a signal towards a meaningful space of learning and an important starting point for transformation. Eppert (2010), however, states that when experiencing resistance, it is important to stay with the e/motion rather than try to resolve, or in her words where, “resolve is pursued as running away, withdrawal, repression, or anger and aggression” (p. 227).

Studying the heightened feelings we encounter through our rememberings of our construction of worldviews, socio-politically, psychologically, and culturally is one of the main
goals of ITP. As an educator, it is a delicate line to walk— not allowing one’s patience and compassion to convert to resignation and neglect, especially when a student resists vehemently. On the other hand, it is also difficult to not forgo the relationship with the student when our own e/motions as teachers and critical pedagogues experience the blow resistance can have on our psyche and spiritual well being. Yet, at these heightened moments of intense emotion Eppert believes, as critical pedagogues, we must quell our own worries and be patient.

Delving deeper into the notion of resistance, Eppert (2010) considers the terror-filled, war-laden, and hyper (everything)-induced context of the twentieth and twenty-first century, which she states has produced extreme levels of anxiety, collectively and individually. She argues that the external grievances we witness on a daily basis are expressions of the war within, a war handed down from generations past, where wounds unbeknownst become unwittingly passed down both directly and peripherally. As a result, our world suffers from a Post Traumatic Stress Dysfunction whereby there are no nameable ways of coping with such events and relations. Eppert (2010, p. 223) urges us to re-frame by asking the question,

Might the terrorism that surrounds and strikes us not be mystically seen as an inner terror, perhaps as something that began as fear but because it remains unresolved and not dealt with individually and culturally has dramatically grown and, if so, what might that something be?

Eppert contends that our systems of inequity and worldly suffering all originate recursively in the soul, or, in more pragmatic terms, the individual’s psychological well-being. This produces a pathological form of power that creates unnecessary forms of suffering (Macy, 1998). Combining Eppert’s (2010) notion of destructive power, which is an inculcation of “unresolved [fears] not dealt with individually and culturally” (p. 223), and Logue’s proposition
of resistance as a defense mechanism to maintain one’s illusion or ability to exercise power, the
necessity of studying this form of resistance in the form of repression (psychological, spiritual,
and cultural) from a psychoanalytic standpoint becomes significant. ITP attempts to unearth
these suppressions to better understand how concepts manifest pedagogically; and, in turn, how
this pedagogy shapes students’ interactions with difficult knowledges and what insights from the
processing of difficult knowledges can be drawn from pedagogically.

In my early years of formally engaging with difficult knowledges with others, it was a
pressing but silent desire of mine to better understand the seemingly invisible but monumental
shift when I would witness in An/Other or myself a small break in resistance. My findings
suggest that this shift comes in the delicate and softer form of vulnerability, resistance’s long-lost
cousin. I call vulnerability ‘softer’ to reference Eppert’s (2010) notion of an e/motion’s source.
‘Softer’ places are more malleable and open to shaping, while ‘hard’ places do not allow for such
openings to exist. This is not to say that the feeling of vulnerability is an ‘easy’ place to reside.
On the contrary, it’s demanding and painful as it requires one to regard the limitation of one’s
thinking and consider unknown spaces of learning.

Key to my findings, the practice and employment of retrospective return (or the constant
re-visitation of past lived experiences) in the curriculum, instruction, and pedagogy have been
imperative in producing the degree of vulnerability expressed by my students. For them, it was
the personal experiences of their own lives that heightened their sense of discomfort, but also
pushed them to keep exploring. Their gaze could no longer be imposed onto An/Other; their
feelings of disavowal and distance were no longer possible in their own intimate understandings
of their personal lives. What normally would have been quickly written off as irrelevant or
dismissed from their consciousness had morphed into a plethora of feelings described
paradoxically as fear/curiosity, embarrassment/courage, shame/forgiveness, and stress/excitement.

While I am reporting these feelings as one combined experience, this was not explicitly apparent during the course. Students would express embarrassment and anger after a conversation, and then later report feeling emotions of sadness and resignation, and even later feelings of curiosity and a desire to probe further. This is just one example of the ways in which students documented their affective journeys in the course; however, there were a myriad of combinations, back-and-forth movements, and not all students stood in the same e/motion for the same amount of time. The important aspect to highlight is the role of remembering and placing the individual’s subjective lived experiences at the center of reimagination, inquiry, and care.

While critical pedagogues have long postulated the importance of self-reflection, ITP takes somewhat of a different turn from the traditional practice of the inner-gaze. First, it is not considered neutral, objective, or labeled empowering or oppressive. The lived experience is considered as an event that is subjectively assigned to interpretation from a multitude of forces and layered with contradictions, differences, and continuous change. Second, the practice of self-interrogation focuses more so on: 1) the multiple interpretations and application of those interpretations (relationally speaking) rather than the narrative itself, and 2) the outlines (or limitations) of the narrative. Rather than confirming the acceptance of the narrative, the borders of how different narratives bump up against one another is examined.

Once students had a specific experience to focus on, the pedagogy asks them to find disjuncture, or moments of heightened tensions or e/motions in their rememberings. When asked to filter these moments through a critical lens, students brought up disturbances and different iterations of the event not previously held. Further, asking students to then articulate and share
these events through a critical filter further intensified their discomfort of not being able to neatly conclude and hierarchize their understandings and feelings. Issues that once previously focused on An/Other now were not as instantaneously definable when the experience and renderings of the subject were implicated as well. From ITP, these occurrences are not surprising considering key components of the theory like *tender esse*, loquela, and retrospective return, in combination, are designed to provoke intimate memories of the individual from other spaces of consciousness rather than relying solely on a rational-cognitive line of reasoning.

For this degree of vulnerability to develop, there were two main aspects of their rememberings students were asked to problematize in their thinking, seeing, being, feeling Selves: their perceived positionality, or socially located identity, and the discourses that to that point-in-time, structured their reality and worldviews. The next two subsections are devoted to deconstructing and demonstrating how these aspects were employed and specifically, the different manifestations of each inquiry.

For further clarification, positionality is considered to be the individual’s socially located identity based on social ascriptions such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. In Patricia Hill Collins’ black feminist thought (1999), also known as, standpoint theory, one’s positionality is determined by their social location, which is a part of a larger “matrix,” which hierarchizes and influences one’s experiences and perceptions of the world. The discourses are a broader accumulation of narratives, interpretations, symbols and ascribed meanings from a multitude of systems (i.e., language, ideology, culture) that inform one’s social location and social practices. As critical discourse analysts claim, discourse serves as the “language above the sentence” (Rogers, 2004, p. 4). Just as linguists see discourse as a larger multitude of forces instructing the
word, the clause, or the sentence, I see discourse as a larger multitude of forces which instructs the positionality of one's social location in the world.

**Vulnerability through Positionality and Discursive Ambiguity**

As students learned to consider concepts such as power, privilege, positionality, and knowledge production from both a critical and personal standpoint, feelings of anxiety surfaced. Many students reported their positionality (a particular worldview associated with socially located factors such as race, class, gender, and sexual orientation) was challenged in different ways. The main challenge occurred through a direct contestation to previously established beliefs and assumptions about a particular topic or issue. Also, students cited the difficulty of articulating their understandings out loud because: 1) Students didn’t comprehend the curriculum or text, 2) their current understanding filtered through a critical lens generated contradictory experiences and emotions, and, 3) they feared their articulations would be misinterpreted or misunderstood, and therefore negatively judged by others.

Students also manifested forms of vulnerability through discursive ambiguity. De-normalizing their personal experiences meant having to place firmly established understandings that were full of meaning and personal value in a state of reconsideration and uncertainty. Rather than a solid grasp on one interpretation of their prior experience and understandings, students were asked to consider multiple interpretations that existed through various forms of knowing. One example is through the body and the senses. Instead of utilizing only the cognitive function, students were asked to note the condition and state of their bodies in relation to critical social issues. This meant becoming more aware of this everyday environment and critically assessing how these constructions shape identity, behavior, belief systems, and relationships in
daily life. Additionally, students were asked to take important personal experiences and the conclusions of those experiences and decenter them through ITP.

The next sub-sections will address, in-depth, each category of how vulnerability manifested in the participants’ responses to the course and the curriculum with a brief discussion on the concept of resistance towards alternative ways of knowing.

**The Challenge of Positionality through Voice**

For many students, this class was their first introduction to critical social concepts such as knowledge production, privilege, power, and positionality. Vulnerability occurred with and in students’ relationships with An/Other and the Self. This occurred through first being asked to identify their social location based upon race, class, gender, and sexual orientation status. Students were introduced to a number of concepts and asked to express their belief systems surrounding those concepts. Throughout the semester different belief systems emerged, were shared, and discussed through an intimate transgressive lens. The participants discussed how the curriculum and instruction challenged their previous views and beliefs about the world.

Students expressed that they had never been asked to position their experiences based upon their social location before and that the task was jarring to their reality. One student responded with, “This is just all so complex.” While there were a few students who heard about these concepts in previous classes, they reported their interaction with them was brief and unlike the way in which this class approached them.

Robin: I think the reflections helped, and the assignments, and the readings. . . I know in [the other class] we had one book, which was, you know, more like definitions, ‘this is how it is,’ but for this [class] it was more applicable, you know? We did have a textbook but . . . the knowledge you brought. . . we were
more open with conversation. You would say something and it would definitely make us [students] think about it.

Robin’s statement, “this is how it is,” refers to how many lectures surrounding social issues consist of a historical and factual recounting. While historical and factual recounting is an important way to educate about social issues, I believe it, as a stand alone, is insufficient as this information fails to reinvent itself in the individual’s identity and current worldview. When conversations around race, gender, and other socially constructed concepts come into discussion, a ‘this is how it is-’ or a more cemented and distantiated exploration and dialogue, fails to incorporate the passion and fluidity felt buzzing through such conversations. Robin’s sentiment, ‘for this [class] it was more applicable,’ refers to the experiential aspect and incorporation of emotion and one’s prior experiences. I believe, infusing a socio-experiential (the social, personal experience and the emotional) way of knowing complicates and reimagines a historical, current, and factual recounting of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation differently to individuals who may have once seen themselves “outside” of the scope of these topics. Reimagining the historical, the factual, and the “Other” content of critical curriculum opens pathways for dialogue between others that, I believe, manifests into Britzman’s notion of difficult knowledge.

Moreover, voicing such complexities embedded in difficult knowledge appears to be itself an education. One’s subjectivity –or one’s social and experiential influences—complicates traditional curriculum. This “autobiographical work” (Pinar, 2006) plays a critical role towards implicating the subject directly into the social topics at hand.

By revisiting educational experience, the autobiographer is questioning taken for granted forms of knowledge, unsettles received forms of knowledge to expose the power/ privilege/ knowledge systems of control both in and outside
education, and out of the tensions negotiates, collaborates, rewrites, recreates an always-in-the-making lived curriculum validating creative voices and innovative perspectives (Sharma, 2012, p. 143).

In addition, the emergence of an awareness of difficult knowledge appears to be most apparent through one’s constant re-positioning and fluid interpretation in relation to concepts associated with difficult knowledge. It is the discussion following and the questioning of one’s experiences and one’s interpretations that allow for ebb-and-flow movement of questioning to be triggered, or in my framework, for tender esse to occur, which I believe is imperative for an ITP to thrive.

The Fear of Resistance. One common pedagogical practice for critical pedagogues to employ is through factual and historical recounting. This has been encouraged over the incorporation of personal experience and emotion for fear of resistance, backlash, “us vs. them” mentality, and/or mental shutdown (Schlein & Chan, 2012). As educators know, even one student exhibiting this mentality may have a strong impact on the rest of the students’ experiences and interpretation of the curriculum and instruction. Teacher educators who are interested in teaching such material face the possibility of such responses continuously, and most are well aware, or soon made aware of the potential of students to shut down any further engagement with the material and with building relationships.

Further, teachers’ social locations, which are placed front and center in the classroom (i.e., one’s race, gender) further complicate students’ responses and interpretation of the curriculum. In other words, interpretations and conclusions made are always informed, no matter how subtly or unintentionally, by the medium with which the information is presented. An older
white middle to upper class male presenting the same curriculum will evoke a different response than a younger working class female of color.

In my case, the threat, or fear, of misrepresentation was felt by both my students who felt their positionality threatened and myself as I constantly worried that they would use my positionality to absolve their discomfort from further critical self-epistemological inquiry or identify me as the Other in an already contentious and fragile dance between the pervasive construct of “us vs. them”. Despite these concerns, I’ve learned that triggering tender esse in someone’s psychological orientation, and allowing for tender esses’ emotional intensity to come through (as one student called it, “emotionally draining”), is powerful for certain people’s process of transformation. It is this “dance” or tightrope one then learns to walk between inciting uncertainty—a sort of precipice between knowing and unknowing—with the stability and comforts of one’s foundations of reality. For my positionality, as a younger Asian teacher educator, embracing and employing concepts from this framework does not come without its own risks and vulnerabilities.

The role of Discursive Ambiguity in Generating Feelings of Vulnerability

According to Niccolini (2012), initiating “moments of disorientation are vital” (p. 7) when establishing opportunities to eschew traditional educational paradigms. Students reported feeling moments of disorientation throughout the semester in multiple ways. Some of these moments occurred cognitively, whereby they identified difficulty in both understanding concepts in the curriculum and the multiple ways in which the curriculum could be interpreted differently from their own understanding. Other moments occurred affectively, whereby students reported feeling confused or conflicted about the renderings of a past personal experience. And students also felt disoriented through the body when they were asked to put themselves in unfamiliar
situations/contexts that stimulated their senses and corporeality. Altogether, I name these moments of (dis)orientation as experiences of discursive ambiguity. Discursive ambiguity in this section means the unclear, or indeterminate state of one’s reality. For my study, the term ‘discursive ambiguity’ will be used to closely relate the critical concept of ‘discourse’ with a more focused observation on the role of uncertainty.

**The Introduction of Uncertainty.** I use the term ‘ambiguity’ with discourse because the role of uncertainty in my students’ attempts to make sense of the curriculum and instruction is so pronounced that it seems to disrupt these definitions, or at least, to emphasize the vulnerability of discourses through the ingress of doubt. Uhlmann and Uhlmann (2005) argues that what makes the discursive reality so powerful is its implicit, invisible, and unarticulated expressions that go unnoticed and therefore interpreted as the natural order of things. Foucault’s and other scholars’ notion of ‘discourse’ seem to signify a conscious and/or unconscious understanding of some meaningful construct being implied. What I found in my students’ work and interviews, however, is a powerful conscious understanding of not understanding, a sort of discursive ambiguity. My students sometimes clearly and plainly articulated they did not know or understand the curriculum or, their own thoughts at all, which in turn disrupted their working knowledge or current, more stable construct of reality (or discourse).

For my students, the emergence of their voice throughout the duration of this course seemed to generate strong feelings of uncertainty and hesitancy both in their presumptions and their ability to name the new sensations they felt. This division and vacillation appear to overwhelm them and become the event under consideration. What I noticed in my interactions with students at moments such as these is the ways in which they appeared for lack of better words, “stuck.” During these moments they did not appear to follow their previous established
belief systems, nor did they appear to evoke any new or alternative belief systems. In practical terms, one could describe their state and response with a quizzical, “Hmmm.” In literature, an author might describe their “stuckness” as mulling. It is this parenthetical occasion, which I believe, if held onto long enough leads to an unraveling of sorts. Rather than look at the ways accepted cultural knowledges/practices become embedded in people’s daily interactions and constructions of meaning (i.e., a poststructural lens) this section seeks to understand how a purposeful and prolonged ambiguity complicates people’s discursive representations and interpretations, and more importantly evokes a sort of internal crisis.

A Brief Note on Ambiguity and Cognitive Dissonance. It is important to mention my purposeful and deliberate attempt to eschew the use of the term, ‘cognitive dissonance.’ Cognitive dissonance is a psychological term defined as the tension experienced when two or more competing thoughts or beliefs are in each other’s company. For dissonance scholars, the discomfort generated from a contentious relationship motivates one’s desire for Need for Closure (NFC), or as Stalder (2010) calls it, “the desire to seize and then freeze on a firm answer or view” (p. 775). While, I do believe the role of uncertainty does generate a sense of dissonance, I avoid using the term for its widespread use and the assumptions of an alignment between external behaviors and internal thoughts. While, this assumption has its merit, a poststructural feminist perspective would critique the notion that our thoughts and behavior are ever consistent, and that it is only the illusion and the rationalizations we choose to acknowledge and the others we willfully ignore that create an un-fluctuating and un-contradictory illusion (Zizek, 2002). Rather than promote the modernist binary constructs (discomfort leads to a need for resolution through either changing the thought or changing the behavior), I believe the use of the term
uncertainty and/or ambiguity is more representative of the multiplicity of the roles and purposes it plays in the psyche and the process of one’s learning.

Additionally, the goal of ambiguity in this study is not necessarily to change one’s behavior, (i.e., to lead to a “better” behavior) but to become a more critically reoriented ontological observer of behavior and thought as a manifestation of a combination of thoughts and prior experiences and assumptions. Behavior changes may be a by-product of bringing the role of uncertainty to the forefront of consciousness, but it is not the focus of this pedagogy, especially if it leads to a more cemented belief system than before. In fact, the purpose of ambiguity in ITP is to increase the tension of a cemented interpretation. This isn’t to say that multiple interpretations will not be ranked, should or should not be, but that the role of ambiguity in this pedagogy should be considered more as an impetus for epistemic and ontological curiosity and multidimensional observation. In a critical ontological orientation, the place of dis/comfort in terms of ‘closure’ does not exist except in the space of increased comfort with exploring uncertain terrain.

When inserted into the context of cultivating a critical ontology of the self, the role of both ambiguity and crisis become fundamental, albeit, painful characteristics of its development. As Joanna Macy (1998) writes, “pain has a purpose: it is a warning signal, designed to trigger remedial action. . . The problem, therefore, lies not with our pain for the world, but in our repression of it” (p. 27). Ambiguity within the midst of pain serves as an important position of suspension whereby, according to Curtis (1990) and psychoanalysis, “the ego has been displaced by a power beyond its control (its unconscious), a new center (the self) has not yet been established” (p. NA). It is this space, what Deleuze and Guatarri (1980/1987) calls the ‘middle space’ that I feel is a significant juncture of opening and need for further scrutiny by critical
scholars. In the current hour of solutions and results-based “remedies”, we are quick to overlook what Hall (1994) calls, “the nasty, dirty down below” (p. 100); yet it is the precipice between the no longer but not yet that can potentially explain the how’s and why’s of people’s diverging movements in the continual tearing down, building up, and rearrangement of one’s identity—what our critical scholars on identity politics have cited in numerous poetic prose: the hyphen (Fine, 1998), the liminal, (Pinar, 2006) the 3rd space (bhabha, 1994).

The rest of the section will describe and discuss three student’s experiences with vulnerability in the forms of ambiguity and positionality. I will explain how the curriculum and pedagogy paired with a retrospective return to their intimate pasts shape their current understandings of power, privilege, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. In chapter four, I outline my methodological strategy, which is a qualitative action research approach supplemented with a critical feminist lens. I have followed this path up until this point, collecting my data from multiple forms of observation (i.e., students’ work, semi-open interviews, field notes, and personal reflection), clustering and coding my data based on emerging dominant themes, and analyzing my themes through a specific theoretical lens (outlined prior in this chapter as vulnerability manifested in a challenge to positionality and a condition of discursive ambiguity); but diverge in presenting my results in the traditional qualitative frame. Rather than present my results with a description of each theme and provide multiple examples from the data, I have chosen to utilize a case study presentation of three students’ experience with the course. Each case study provides a fuller and, I believe, richer description of the student’s experiences, highlighting the theoretical concepts more effectively and, intimately. Exploring the student’s narrative more holistically allows the reader to better understand and see the subtle processes, which gradually occurred over the course of the semester, rather than in chunks or pieces.
Additionally, allowing the student’s path with the course to be unfolded through case study, I hope, keeps us, as educators, from leaning too heavily on our own assumptions of what a student presents to the public (to us) and what kind of happenings are more hidden and held private. At the beginning of each student description, you will note a bit of caricaturizing of the individual. This is purposeful. Once we have read the initial description many may find themselves saying to themselves, “I know this student. I’ve had this student in class before.” I have chosen these three cases for that reason as well: as they represent a “type” of student we all feel we “know.” What I hope the following cases show are that the caricatures of these students are just that: a rough, superficial, outline that too often, without any further probing, becomes sealed as their labeled fate. ITP tries to fill these outlines in, to give them more dimension, and layers. In doing so, I believe the multiple forms of relationships and ways of knowing we hold can better demonstrate the tensions, and complexities, while sharpening our lens on the realities present in difficult knowledges and relationships between Self and An/Other.

*Josh’s Story:*

Josh is a white, upper-middle-class male from a small, conservative Christian-town in the state. The town in which he grew up was considered homogenous to Josh, in which he knew of no “gays and lesbians,” ethnic and racial diversity was slim, and gender roles remained traditional and unquestioned—in fact, Josh said until this class, he had not considered alternative forms of gender roles for men and women. In Josh’s words, his family represented the “normal American family.” In association with this label, he recalled a story (that left him amused) where his friends from college came home with him on the holidays and his mother waited for their arrival, greeted him and his friends with a polished smile and an apple pie. His father, the head of the household, was the financial provider. He had a sister. They ate family dinners together. For
Josh, this was his “normal.” Not surprisingly, many of the critical concepts shocked and even angered him. In my interview he specifically mentioned how he saw the material as me (his teacher) personally trying to attack him.

Josh: When we were going over the information I thought, ‘gosh, this is so annoying. I don’t want to talk about this, like all you’re trying to do is make me feel bad and things like that. And how should I say this? [pause] I was like, ‘You’re just trying to…’ I don’t know. You’re not sensitive but it’s been like… you never really thought about it before and it kind of, like, disrupts your… manlihood. . . And I was like, ‘Oh, like you’re just trying to make me feel bad and trying to lessen my accomplishments and all this stuff,’ and I was kind of frustrated, and I guess I kind of wanted to leave.

Josh identifies the “information” [curriculum] as an extension of my identity through his repeated referrals that “You’re just trying to… [and] “all you’re trying to do”. Josh’s own positionality, his manlihood, is threatened, which is directly tied to his self-worth, or as he names them, his “accomplishments.” Moreover, the use of the “us vs. them” relationship to absolve critically engaging in the information is seen through Josh’s statement, “you’re just trying to make me feel bad . . . I kind of wanted to leave.” In this example, Josh is tempted to disengage from the curriculum and discussion and further, leave his positionality un-examined.

He further explains how his socially located position as a white-male was disrupted:

Josh: Being a white male you’re really privileged and everything and usually you’re supposed to feel good about yourself. Like since I’m a white male I’m supposed to be feeling good about myself but the whole time I couldn’t help thinking, like am I, like a lot of things in my life have they come because I’m a
white male? I do really work hard for everything that I do but and I’m really, I try to be as quality of a person as I can, so I feel that’s kind of what’s gotten me a lot of things but when that came up I never thought of that but kind of in the back of my head, ‘man, like some of the things that I’ve been privileged to do, have they come just because I’m a white male? Like that was kind of like, ‘Oh man, am I not as good as I…’ well, ‘am I not as good…as I think I am’ or have a lot of my accomplishments, are they kind of lessened be of that?’ I don’t know.

Here, Josh’s social location as an upper-class white male forces him to question his own positionality and his beliefs about how his positionality are tied to his accomplishments. He begins to worry that either he is seen as having those accomplishments granted to him through his social location or being perceived as having those accomplishments granted to him because of his social location rather than his efforts. Interestingly, this consciousness, this anxiety over how his social location effects both others perceptions of him and of himself is the same consciousness and anxiety felt by many marginalized individuals who are continuously scrutinized with arguments that they are awarded upward mobility because of their social location (i.e., their underrepresentation) rather than their own efforts. Further, his understanding that white males are “supposed to feel good about themselves” suggests an acknowledgment of white men’s social status in society, which is tied to power, is associated with notions of accomplishment, self-worth, and self-made hard work.

Josh demonstrates feelings of vulnerability as his beliefs about the source and perception of his accomplishments are now uncertain. He explicitly asks the questions, “A lot of things in my life, have they come just because I’m a white male? Am I not as good as I think I am?”
introducing doubt to his prior assumption that because he is a white male, he has been privileged to “feel good about himself.”

Ironically, it is this very privilege of not having to consciously deliberate and feel anxiety over such positioning, perception, and questions of identity that I feel can be dismantled more profoundly than with a traditional historical and factual recounting of oppression. One important experience that helped Josh from shutting down was the constant pressure to relate the material to his own experiences in combination with listening to others share their experiences. One particular experience Josh described through a discussion surrounding stereotypes and racism was about his best friend who is Korean. Josh said that he has always “joked” with his friend about his race. It wasn’t until Josh was forced to reexamine his interactions with his friend in a critical light that he realized his life made it more difficult to disengage.

Josh: I think there was a big section in our class that talked about social norms and racism and things like that. I think it was in the identity section, but… I think we had a big discussion on racism and stereotypical stereotypes of different races that I never really thought of . . .

I definitely go along with stereotypical jokes of races and stuff, and I usually only do it around people I know who won’t get too mad because they’re my friends, but looking back on it some of the jokes I did say, I think did offend them. They wouldn’t really laugh or they were kind of quiet after that and I never really thought about what I was saying I guess, and I would continue to agg ‘em on and be like, ‘C’mon why aren’t you laughing, I’m trying to be funny.’ It’s kind of stupid on my part but I just never really realized.
Josh: I never really think about this stuff until I have to, like for a test or when I do my homework. . . I’ve never known this my whole life so why is this coming up now and I don’t really need to worry about it right now, and you’re kind of just like, ‘making me feel bad’ and I don’t really like that, I don’t know who does… but then when it came down to the times I actually had to think about it and things like that, I’m a pretty, pretty… gosh what is the word I’m looking for? Uhhh…‘wow this is kind of,’ I don’t know, ‘this is kind of a big deal.’ When I thought about it, I thought ‘man I should really incorporate, going back to the race, the stereotypical comments, that’s kind of incorporated in this and just things like that. I definitely kind of changed my opinion and the way that I thought. . . I feel like the stereotypical jokes, or whatever, that was a problem because I was realizing how I was affecting my friends, how like, I was demoralizing them.

Here, we see Josh vacillating between his prior experiences, the curriculum, his positionality, and engagement when he first states that he “never really [had to] think about this stuff. . . I’ve never known this my whole life. . .” He begins to experience the conflict of tender esse when he asks himself, “Why is this coming up now?” His positionality starts to destabilize when he states, “you’re kind of just like, ‘making me feel bad’.” His emotions begin to intensify which he doesn’t “really like. . .” He references his recall of his experiences indirectly through his statement, “the times I actually [researcher’s italics] had to think about it” and “incorporate” his prior experiences into the material “changed my opinion and the way I thought. . .” He
proceeds to desire to shift his consciousness through his relation to his friends when he said, “I was realizing how I was affecting my friends, how like, I was demoralizing them.”

In addition, it was Josh’s consciousness that helped Josh remain in the uncomfortable state of tension of negotiating his identity and his behavior, his knowledge and perception of the world through the “realiz[ation] that [disengaging] would be selfish. . . [and the realization] how I was affecting my friends” that kept him in the state of tension of tender esse. Josh expressed how being in conscious relationship with this tension was a continuous battle. “I could have definitely been like, ‘I don’t need anything like this, I’m perfectly fine with the way I think and I don’t have to incorporate this in my thought.”

The “dance” between instructor, especially one identified as “Other,” and students is fragile. My positionality may have served as a threatening presence to his identity and towards his justification of his beliefs and actions among his other relationships. Josh processed this information through a constant back and forth movement between resistance and opening, which can be seen through his daily end-of-class reflection journals and further reinforced through his interview.

For Josh, it wasn’t his admiration for me (the teacher) or his desire to engage with the material, (he wanted to do the opposite!), but his personal relationships outside of class, specifically his best friends, that motivated him to stay open to different iterations of how race, class, power and privilege wove in and out of his life in powerful and intimate ways. This understanding came as a mini-break through for me as his teacher since for the longest time, I felt the only way to engage resistance was solely through a likeable relationship between teacher and student. This isn’t to say that our relationship wasn’t important because it very much was, but I realized that employing retrospective return meant the potential for individuals interacting
with this material could be taken much more seriously without the educator playing the role of the all-knower and/or convincer. Rather, my responsibility was to listen to him share his experiences (without the judgmental tone) and ask him questions that kept his focus on why he might have felt or behaved in the manner he did; and at times, to share my own experiences and understandings with him.

Rachel’s Story:

Rachel was a friendly and smart student with an ever-present smile on her face. She loved Disney movies, princess stories, and dreamed of decorating the walls of her future classroom in bright and colorful portraits of warm sunshines with happy faces. She seemed like an individual who did her best to avoid unhappy situations, her smile a banner of unwaivering happiness like the sunshine that would float over her future classroom. She walked in the first day of class with that smile I would see often, armed to disarm her classmates into friendship. Her smile stayed through the first week of mandatory and disquieting get-to-know-you’s, and the silly but fun game of musical chairs we played to figure out our seating assignment. It wasn’t until I announced that for this course, we were going to tackle a lot of difficult subjects like race, class, gender, and sexual orientation, did I see the smile droop for the first time. And as quickly as I saw it droop, I saw it return, only it wasn’t the smile from before. Rather it was a nervous smile, a smile you wear out of politeness, and a smile you wear to blend in. I’ve had many students like Rachel. In fact, many of my students that semester was like her. They walked in expecting a class that would talk about teaching in a particular way.

Getting to know Rachel through her experiences was illuminating. Beneath her smile, I found, was an individual who was deeply curious. She would surprise me with how deeply she thought about the concepts discussed in class, when she would hang around in the semester
staring at her journal, and then furiously start scribbling in it. A couple of months, after one class where we discussed a quantum physicist’s thoughts on reality and truth, she nonchalantly asked, “So if things are constantly changing all the time then how come everything is structured the way it is?” I replied, “Remember [X’s] discussion on truth and reality?” She paused and thought for a moment. A few seconds later she said, “Oh, so the truth is [according to X] that everything is constantly in motion but we try to make it stop?” Then she pointed her finger at me, flashed a smile and said, “Got it.” Amused, I watched her walk out of the room, laughed to myself, and gathered my constantly-in-motion things.

When I conducted my interview with her, I asked her to describe her experience with the course, she replied, “Intriguing, difficult, uncomfortable, exhilarating. . . The things we would cover, I would think about them. They would resonate with me and I would kind of mull them over while bored, I guess. . . It was exhilarating to find new things.”

Interested to find out what kinds of “new things” Rachel was referring to, she shared, “Uhm, that you know, stereotypes, like, ‘If you work hard you get just as far as anybody else.’ With some of the activities we did . . . I definitely realized that’s completely untrue.

Rachel then began discussing her past.

It was difficult to let go of some things that have been reinforced to me by my community I grew up in . . . So many memories are tied to that little town as much as I love and resent it at the same time. It just challenged a lot of things that that town prides itself on, like being very, ‘these are the rules, this is how you do it, being very integrated into the traditional school system’ which with some of the stuff that we studied like alternative schools, I kinda realized, wasn’t the best, maybe isn’t the best way for everyone, and I thought that was really interesting
the way I connected with that. And along the same lines I always thought there was something wrong with me when I came into first grade from the Montessori schools and I thought the reason I had to be punished all the time was because I didn’t get it and it made me really frustrated as a first grader and I realize now it’s just different but in my town the way you do things is the way you do things.

For Rachel, the perspective and practices of her town heavily influenced her perception of the world and incited a retrospective return to her experience transitioning from an alternative schooling format to a traditional public school. She mentions a conflictual moment when she remembers her town’s pride for tradition. She states, “I kinda realized, [it] (traditional forms of schooling)wasn’t the best, maybe isn’t the best way . . . and I thought that was really interesting the way I connected with that.” Many articulations of tender esse come through in the language of loquela: through hesitations, pauses, and stuttered sentences. “I kinda . . . [and] maybe isn’t” are two examples of this provisional turn. Further, we see this in Josh’s language as well when he states phrases like, “kind of . . . just like . . . uhh . . . [and] I don’t know,” which all appeared before he transitioned to a different perspective.

When I asked her to tell me more about her memory of first grade she replied:

For a long time I didn’t really understand, like, why it happened. I just knew that it did. I got punished for wanting to do art instead of math and I played on the jungle gym wrong. The other kids knew to get in the line and go one at a time across the monkey bars or to like go through the little bridges and things, you know, in a line, linearly, and I’d go around to the outside of the structure and like, play on the top or the outside . . . but I thought it was way more fun and way more creative and you didn’t have to wait in a line, and it seemed to make so much
more sense that, you know, why would I play like everyone else? These people are blind! They obviously don’t get it. It was really frustrating to see.

Me: How were you punished?

Rachel: I spent a lot of recess time on the wall, like when you were bad you’d just have to sit by yourself on the wall, and my best friend—she’s still my best friend—she’d sit with me even though she knew how to play on the structure, but she’d do it [play Rachel’s way] anyways because she thought it made sense to her too. . . We spent a lot of recess playing and then getting in trouble and then sitting on the wall.

Me: What are your emotions from that now?

Rachel: I’m kind of relieved that I wasn’t a “bad” kid. I was the “bad” kid that always influenced my perfect best friend to do bad things, so I feel kind of glad that I wasn’t the bad kid, and I hope that, reflecting on it, that the people who were punishing me weren’t thinking I was doing it to be disobedient or to completely defy what they were saying to me, but that I just found different and creative ways around everyone else’s lines.

Me: How do you think the material that you learned about [from the course] influenced that specific memory?

Rachel: It shed new light on it and made me understand a little bit more. It gave me a little more insight into what the teachers were thinking . . . “Oh . . . it’s not the right way, she needs to learn if she’s going to continue in the school system, you do math during math, you do reading during reading, this is just how
we do it.’ And that isn’t wrong at all, that’s just a different way of doing it, but, on the flip side, there’s more than one way. . . It was nice to gain some insight.

I had not known about this experience until the interview, so it was somewhat startling to me to hear Rachel go into such depth around an experience that happened many years ago. When she describes her continual punishments for doing things “wrong” in first grade, I was surprised to hear, that after all these years, she felt “relieved that I wasn’t a bad kid.” Rachel highlights the shifting interpretations she’s made from pairing the curriculum with her past experience of continuously getting punished in first grade. Interestingly, for Rachel remembering this past, which brought up some unpleasant memories and emotions, seemed to be cathartic. Instead of being the “bad” kid she was named growing up, she understood that she thought about things differently.

One experience in class, however, was not as cathartic. Rachel goes on to recall a specific experience in class that remained with her throughout the semester.

Rachel: The first few days of school [in class] we were talking about gender roles and we were throwing out all sorts of terms that explained like a woman, good or bad, and someone said, ‘sorostitute.’ I took very much offense to that because I’m very proud to be in my sorority and I know that there are a lot of stereotypes correlated with it and I am not, I think I’m not like the typical “go out, party.” Like I’m really not like that. I’d rather stay in, watch movies. I’m not going out and trying to get guys and whatever.”

Rachel experiences an intense emotional reaction to the word, ‘sorostitute’ from another classmate’s naming of sorority females. In her journal, she writes, “The only thing I have to reflect on is how uncomfortable and rude the word “sorostitute” was. It is a terrible stereotype
that, I, as a sorority sister, who is proud of myself and my sisters, is something that I really try to stay away from.”

She proceeds to describe how deeply the label affected her:

I was afraid that every time I’d wear my letters to class I’d have that stamped on me, and I did not like that at all. And actually throughout the semester I have an hour between this class and my next class, and if I wanted to wear my letters I’d set out my outfit and on purpose not wear them to this class.

When I read Rachel’s response in her journal entry, I journaled back to her, “I think this is an excellent point that we [the class] should further discuss. The interconnection of labels is an important point to understand. And—what are the implications of such labels?”

Here, my response was an attempt to begin a dialogue with Rachel about her experience with her classmate’s label and the labels we were studying in class. How could she use this experience to better understand a critical standpoint? She addressed this question in her interview stating:

Rachel: It [the “sorostitute” comment] was actually really hurtful because you’re proud of it. You’re proud that, you know, you are associated with those other women, and I totally took that as a metaphor for what we were talking about with racial stereotypes and how your associates or the stereotypes that are associated with something reflect back on you, and even though you’re proud to be Black, Asian, Native American, White, but there are stereotypes and so I guess it gave me a more empathetic view . . . At first I made sure to really work hard in the group and come up with good things to say and I tried to be a leader and be organized and be respectful . . . It was something I thought about the whole
semester and when I did have the opportunity to get in the group with her [the girl who called her the name] I consciously was like, “okay this is how she thinks you are, so you need to be different from that, you need to show her you’re not like that, you need to reflect well on your sisters and I felt like I had to reflect well to…”

Me: Represent for the whole group?

Rachel: Yes, it sounds ridiculous. But when you have like ties like that I understand why there’s so much tension not just between people in general but with racial issues. It really did shed a lot of light on it for me and so I guess I dealt with it by putting it back into the class and putting more effort into trying to understand, so it motivated me.

For Rachel, the dialogue and the experience of her classmate’s labeling, motivated Rachel to stay with the discomfort she felt while discussing issues surrounding race. Rachel’s process, not unlike Josh’s, was emotional and experientially linked to her ability to stay in the discomfort and uncertainty of such difficult knowledge.

Rachel [continuing the interview]: I kind of ran myself in circles. I would try to understand and we talked about white privilege . . . I felt empathetic, confused, and a little frustrated because it’s so deeply engrained. You can change yourself but you really can’t change anyone else and it’s really hard to break, or disrupt a system that works so smoothly for the majority which is what a lot of the majority is going to support, and I feel kind of guilty because I am part of that support system because it does benefit me in a lot of ways, even the smallest things.
Rachel has made a new connection and sees how her own identity is implicated in such complexity. Rachel no longer sees herself as “outside” of these issues. They are her concern. “I am part of that support system [privilege] because it does benefit me in a lot of ways, even the smallest things.”

Through Rachel’s experience with representation, she begins connecting her positionality to others, most specifically through racial sub-groups and racial conflict. She reports feeling responsible to represent her “whole group” and further connects this responsibility with other minority statuses and imposed group responsibilities.

[. . .] when you have ties like that I understand why there’s so much tension not just between people in general but with racial issues [for example]. It really did shed a lot of light on it for me and so I guess I dealt with it by putting it back into the class and putting more effort into trying to understand, so it motivated me.

For Rachel, this tension served as an opening into a different understanding around race relations and racism, which related on a different level of vulnerability in terms of her own race and gender. Emotionally, Rachel was upset about the label imposed on her and became conscious of the stereotypes associated with the label. Her understanding of ethnic minority status, labels, and relations changed as a result of her personal experience in class, and through the anxiety she reported feeling with her sorority and her classmate, her sense of racial relations and the desire to learn more about it changed as well. “It . . . shed a lot of light on it [the topic of race and racism, power, and privilege] so I guess I dealt with it [her classmate calling her a derogatory name] by putting it [her anxiety and anger] back into the class and putting more effort into trying to understand [the larger social issues], so it [the personal experience] motivated me [to stay open]”. Once more, we see the role retrospective return has in holding the individual in
an uncomfortable and challenging state of *tender esse*, which ultimately led Rachel to a vulnerable state where current and prior beliefs were suspended and thrown into realms of uncertainty and problematized.

Additionally, Rachel emphasizes the importance of expressing her past experiences.

Rachel: I really appreciated that not everything was concrete. It made you reach a little bit to grasp a concept rather than just saying, ‘Well, here… This is what I want you to get out of it.’ It kind of made you have your own personal experience, which is very valuable . . . because your personal experiences are what you use to learn the topics you’re talking about from. I liked that everyone shared their ideas and we got to know each other very, very well. And even people that I didn’t have a one on one conversation with—just from their comments from class—you kind of knew a little about what they were about . . .

[This class] was quite different [from other classes]. It’s more of a dictatorship in my other classes. This one was ‘reflect on what you think of this, what is your experience.’ I like that it made you look inward and then also process what was being presented but not forced down your throat . . . I also liked that there wasn’t necessarily a wrong answer. There were no sanctions. If you didn’t agree with something, but eventually, even though I personally wouldn’t agree with something, I would eventually understand and I was able to entertain a concept or an idea without necessarily being forced to accept it, which I thought was really good.

*Bethany’s Story:*
In the year of 2011, one year before I was to collect my “official” data for my dissertation, I met a student named Bethany. It was my third year and sixth semester facilitating conversations with difficult knowledges. Bethany was a bright, smart, intellectually driven and curious individual. She was also one of the most vocally (and non-vocally) resistant students I have had. Throughout the course, I felt bursts of angry laser beams being shot through me as I introduced more critical material each class period. While she was not the most resistant student I have interacted with, she certainly was a strong representative of the type of resistance I encountered and still encounter with critical curriculum.

Students like Bethany, students who are strong-willed, smart, and resistant to the curriculum peak my own epistemic curiosity the most. I am intrigued by the tensions and the ways in which these tensions play out in the classroom and in our relationship as student and teacher. Having Bethany in class was not a ‘joy’ but intriguing, and I learned a great deal from our relationship, in which she played a strong role in cultivating how I have reconsidered the role of resistance, vulnerability and ambiguity in pedagogy.

In the past, I always worried about students like Bethany. She was very outspoken (in her own way), stubborn (her words), and influential with her peers. She had a strong personality (not unlike many of us critical pedagogues), and I knew from the first sideways glance she gave me that familiar feeling of trepidation and fear (yes, fear) I had of her ruining my perfect paradisiacal fantasy of the transformative social justice plan I was going to employ. Before Bethany, whenever that feeling of dismay arose, it felt like a dooming sense of a long, exhausting battle ahead, and nothing else except the word, ‘dread’ could better articulate my feelings of students who displayed such resistance.
Nonetheless, it was my relationship with Brittany and what she was able to articulate at the end of the course that helped me reconsider relationships that hold these contentious experiences in a way that helped me break the naïve longing and illusions many of us critical pedagogues hold. Additionally, it Bethany’s courage to share with me how unnerving the process was for her that led to my reformatting what role vulnerability played in resistance.

For her final reflection assignment of the class, Bethany wrote a long, articulate description of her experience with the course. From the outside, I knew the material enervated her, but reading her process, I didn’t realize how deeply class touched her. She described her experience coming to class as scary and uncomfortable. Not a day went by that she both dreaded and became intrigued with what might lie ahead in the next class. It was as she had written my own thoughts down. She writes,

“[This course] pushed me. There’s no use trying to deny it . . . I’m proud of the challenges . . . of the difficulties I’ve had to face . . . Of course that’s not to say I’ve always enjoyed it. I’ve lost count of how many times I’ve wanted to pull my hair out, or fling [our material] at the wall and give up.”

She wrote about breaking down, experiencing many sleepless nights:

“To say wrangling with my inner sense of justice was tricky is a vast understatement . . . So many days I came to class on edge, prepared to be dealt a blow to my self-esteem, my confidence in my place in the world, my intelligence, my beliefs and how they were “wrong”, and my optimistic view of the world. It was more than not wanting to hear. I didn’t want to listen. I didn’t want to consider . . . We talked, and talked, and talked some more. It was fun, it was challenging, it was scary. By halfway through the semester, all preconceived
notions I had initially about the class had dissipated. To be perfectly honest, I stopped trying to assume what would happen, for I knew that I would nearly always be wrong . . . In a nutshell, *I stopped trying to expect.* I tried to keep an open mind with every piece of new material, and forced myself to keep asking why. Every week brought a novel wave of thinking, and even though I didn’t necessarily like it, I grew to accept it . . . Only by knowing that . . . each day I had to expect the unexpected . . . did I manage to keep my sanity, and let me tell you, it was no easy task . . . In the intelligence unit alone I must have suffered about fifty mental breakdowns that left me huddled in a corner, resting against the wall with my face upturned to the ceiling in deep thought. Do not take that as jesting, for it is the truth.”

Bethany wrote of the intense vulnerability she felt and witnessed in her classmates, and how others’ courage to be vulnerable inspired her to share more than she thought she would. “By seeing all of those around me gradually taking in the information offered, by following their examples, I managed to do it myself. They made themselves and their ideals vulnerable to the class, and in that I saw strength. If they could do it, why not I? And so I did.”

She spoke of how angry she felt, first at me, then at herself and the world.

“When I felt harassed, you assured me the purpose wasn’t to harm me or my psyche, but rather to engage me and get me critically analyzing concepts . . . You encouraged me by allowing me to voice my thoughts in journal entries, and never shamed me or put me down for what I had to say . . . It took weeks to break down the barriers holding me . . . but once they were down, I realized what I had been missing all along: the opportunity to grow . . . The media clips were the things
that got my blood boiling . . . but the readings helped too, as did the songs . . . [A particular article] struck a chord somewhere deep inside me and that article alone made me want to rip off my shirt and fly around the world like Superman . . .

What is wrong with the people in charge of education today?“

She shared how uncomfortable yet magnetic the curriculum and the discussions were for her, and how, wrestling with this material and other people’s realities broke a level of idealism she says she fiercely fostered in the beginning.

“Potential teachers may spend hours imagining how their lessons will be taught, how much their students will come to love them, how their classrooms will be arranged/decorated, and how, despite the payload, they will feel fulfilled in their contribution to future generations. At least such is the case for many fellow classmates I have spoken to; I myself would be lying if I said my thoughts have not strayed down these routes. I have become enraptured with fanciful ideas about teaching, and what it will bring me . . . We’ve spoke of the stupor gripping today’s classrooms many times, and, I’m sad to say, I, like so many others, had fallen for it. I didn’t want to get up. I didn’t want to move. I wanted to take my notes, pass my exam and be done. . . Do this, do that. Get good grades. Write like this, not like that. . . It scares me a great deal to know that I was . . . simply along for the ride. . . [But] I suddenly was looking forward to the different mediums we could and did utilize. They were fresh, different, and unlike too many of my other classes, caught and held my attention for more that Ooooo-shiny! timeframe I mentioned earlier. Class became… well, fun is not the right word. Perhaps captivating? Unique? Intriguing? Some combination of the three? . . . My favorite
[topics] were not necessarily those that supported my frame of mind, or made me feel ‘safe’. Quite the opposite. My favorites were those that challenged me, those that kept me awake at night considering endless possibilities (and yes, I admit these nights happened more than I feel comfortable sharing.) Basically anything that had no ‘right’ answer delighted me, though also unnerved me. I am a highly logical person who moonlights as an emotional thinker, and more often than not these two halves of my brain crash; the impact happened more in this class than any other I have taken.”

She wrote about the multiple negotiations she consciously became aware of when she experienced feelings of guilt, pain, anger, defensiveness. She discussed how rationalizing and ignoring these feelings were not possible for her; and, that it was in fact, what triggered her propensity to introspect at such an intimate level that prompted a semester long sojourn of crisis. These experiences created openings that arguably had yet to be perceived and articulated.

“White privilege was difficult for me personally . . . It’s not comforting to hear some of the things T&L asked us to hear; this is especially true in cases where, even if the intention is not to do so, one feels attacked for things both in and out of their control . . . The rational side of my mind agreed with what was being said, and the emotional, defensive side refused to listen. Why should I feel guilt over something I don’t know how to fix, and didn’t bring upon myself in the first place? . . . My modification didn’t happen overnight. It took a lot of support from my peers, and from you, Mary . . . Slowly . . . with plenty of water and sunshine, I began to bloom. I grew stronger, taller, more receptive to what the class was presenting for my interpretation. I learned to thrive on it . . . All the struggles, all
the anxiety, it was all for a reason, and that reason was to spur my want to learn.

And learn I did. I learned about resilience; I learned about keeping an open mind; I learned about society; I learned not about knowing, but about understanding; I learned about people and the way they think. More than anything, I learned about myself, and . . . [my] potential . . . It came as a thrilling surprise . . .

Like Josh and Rachel, Bethany, felt the most discomfort and challenge to her positionality and resistance with issues that she felt she immediately identified with (i.e., her reference to white privilege). We can see the tension of tender esse between resistance as defined by Logue in Bethany’s statement, “. . . the emotional, defensive side refused to listen. Why should I feel guilt over something I don’t know how to fix, and didn’t bring upon myself in the first place?” play out with what she names her “rational side of [the] mind”, which she states, culminates into “struggle” and “anxiety.” What Bethany names her “emotional side” supports Logue’s notion of willful ignorance, whereby resistance is an active attempt to “refuse to listen”. The “rational side” can be considered as the critical lens which was used to compare her feelings, assumptions, and experiences to, which, for Bethany, created tension and pain.

What this excerpt doesn’t show is the continual dialogue Bethany and I engaged in throughout the semester. This back and forth conversation is better captured in the journal reflections where she and I wrote multiple times to one another throughout the course. In these reflections, a range of emotions were recorded—from anger to excitement, to wonder and curiosity—my role in this pedagogy was not to quell these emotions but to address them and ask her to trace their lineage. In times where I sensed she felt she could not or did not want to disclose, my writings let her know my door was open and I was willing to wait, and I was interested in what she was thinking about and feeling.
Bethany’s excerpts are displayed to illustrate the role and process of Bethany’s hardened e/motion (Eppert, 2010) of resistance to her latent manifestation of vulnerability. Also, this is a process that takes quality time. Note, Bethany’s reference to, “Slowly,” and, “with plenty of water and sunshine” which can be interpreted as the characteristics of dialogue, patience, and reflection, denote the time and degree of energy needed to cultivate this relationship. Also, it demonstrates what I believe to be potentially the most challenging and therefore, pivotal role this step or shift plays in transformative education and the limitations of mainstream critical pedagogy (which I have outlined in previous chapters). As Mayo (2002) writes, “Students as non-acting, non-feeling bodies are allowed to be present [in the classroom, discussion, and analytical process], but the actions and feelings that define their identities are not” (p. 174). When Bethany’s actions, feelings, and her self-identified knowings were allowed to be a central aspect of the curriculum and juxtaposed with the concepts outlined in critical pedagogy, her degree of opening to different interpretations grew. “Slowly . . . I [became] more receptive to what the class was presenting for my interpretation [italics is the author’s],” For Bethany, the potentiality of where this opening could take her was expressed when she wrote, “It was all for a reason, and that reason was to learn . . . It came as a thrilling surprise.”

As I mulled over what this meant for my pedagogy, I considered how important the sense of unsettlement was and how it provoked her. And, although it didn’t lessen the degree of pain I felt for her and from her (if anything it intensified) it did help me empathize with her and re-evaluate the meaning of resistance in my students. Rather than see it as a bane, I began to see it as a boon: as a sign of potential opening, if responded to and handled with care. I saw in it a treasure-trove of opportunity and growth. Not only could I see it but Bethany’s words helped me feel it, and that was important. This was an important experience, not just for what I thought it
could do for my students but what it did to me, as the sense of challenge, helplessness, and fear was a mirror into my world as the instructor.

How many times do teacher educators who study and explore these issues feel as an island unto themselves? How difficult and painful is it (at least for me) to hear my students say certain things that cause me to want to pull my hair out, vent, and lay awake in the middle of the night? How scary is it to share bits of yourself that reveal a person penetrable of pain, not immune to anger, frustration or despair? How troubling is it to feel if what you’ve said or done was not “right” and instead relegated to the realm of the imperceptible? I saw those questions and those same events happen for my students and that, for me, was new and nameless at the time.

What was at that point, a (conjectured) intuitive feeling somewhere that remained unnamed in my gut, became the desire and need to articulate and develop a more purposeful and deliberate pedagogical style that, I considered, could alter the “us versus them” relationship. In Bethany’s poignant words and detailed feelings, I found a potential bridge of standing not in the ever-pervasive and invasive territory of the either/or binary, but in a tangential and powerful space of both/and and neither/not. For my pedagogical framework, the ambiguous space is intimately comprised of a concurrent stream of ideas and ways of knowing that are simultaneously both and not the things we say and think they are. Relationally speaking, Bethany and I could stand in our own spaces with our own contradictions, live with our own fears of one another and what each other did or did not represent, and care for each other and learn from each other through our own unique, intimate, and vulnerable process.

These former examples demonstrate the academic ambiguity that the students faced. This is a primary goal of critical pedagogy as it poses problem-based inquiry to inspire praxis-oriented
teaching philosophies and pedagogies and epistemological curiosity (Fobes & Kaufman, 2008). Yet doing so can be an extremely challenging endeavor as well as present a conundrum for the hyper-rationalist framework that serves as its foundation. If we are to promote and encourage epistemological curiosity, how are we to achieve it within the limits of western rationalism? Because rationalism is practiced through traditional models of hierarchy and privilege, many forms and mediums of learning are excluded (Burbules, 2000).

Within the context of difficult knowledges, the emphatic component of rationalism’s distantiation is the supposed preferred and upheld method of “engaging” with these knowledges, with the assumption that boundaries of socially sensitive topics must be kept “civil”, in order to maintain connections for both inter- and trans-group relations. The problem however, according to Mayo (2004), is that “While the purpose of civility is to enable relations across barriers, civility works precisely because it maintains the distance it initially appears to bridge. Civility, in other words, is not the way people build close relations” (p. 171). I would add that it is precisely the barriers which deepen the us versus them paradigm and keep the boundaries of Self and An/Other firmly embedded and exclusive to one another.

This distance becomes problematic not only relationally but also academically. Several students shared that making the larger sociological connections was difficult for them. These sociological connections such as power, privilege, and social location related to race, class, gender, and sexual orientation were, in the beginning, abstract ideas that many reported not considering. For example, one student responded in her journal reflection on the discussion of race and racism, “I don’t really ever think about how my actions could be discriminatory. I always think of racism as being something long outdated . . .” However, employing a an intimate transgressive pedagogical approach to the students’ interaction with the concepts allowed
students to better see how these concepts shape their everyday life, their relationships and constructs of reality.

**Corporeal Learning**

Additionally, incorporating the body seemed to play a strong role in facilitating these connections. One powerful experience the students referenced was an activity known as, “The Privilege Walk.” The “Privilege Walk” is an exercise created by sociologist, Peggy McKintosh (1989), whereby individuals are asked to take physical steps forwards or backwards to represent their lived experiences and encounters with social privileges. These privileges or disadvantages are based on the sociological analysis of one’s social location through the identification of one’s race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. An individual’s social location is considered to be a powerful predictor of the type of experience one may likely encounter throughout his or her lifetime and indicate the degree of social mobility one has in her/his experiences (McKintosh, 1989). For this activity, students are asked to begin by standing in a horizontal line. Then students take steps according to their experiences. At the end of the exercise students are asked to look around and take in the scattered layout of their once horizontal line of classmates. To emphasize the hierarchical aspects of these steps, students are then asked to race to a desired spot. Those who are located towards the front have a better chance at acquiring the coveted position. The Privilege Walk exercise is a powerful visual and visceral display of difference through social location and reminds us that socially, people are not born into the same circumstances or encounter the same forms of treatment based on their social location.

This exercise garnered reactions both through the number of students who discussed this activity in their final reflection, through the emotional responses they shared. Approximately one-third of all my collected final reflection papers referred to this activity specifically as the
event which induced the most intense and vulnerable feelings. The following excerpts demonstrate how the exercise affected them. A major response was one of embarrassment, shame, or feeling exposed:

I noticed that all of the people who didn't have English as their first language were behind everyone else in the class (very far behind some) when it came to the question about needing to help your parents when they retire I noticed it was very mixed but the people at the very front took a step forward (meaning they wouldn't need to help their parents). This all connects very significantly with the 3Ps and identity because the people who were ahead were white and *Sam won the "prize" and he is a white male. The questions asked were all about who our parents were and what it was like for us as children. We don't realize how our childhood sets us up for our adulthood, but it does and obviously our parents set us up for many things. It can put us ahead or behind but we don't always realize it. I felt very embarrassed and would have been worried about what people thought about me. I wouldn't have wanted that attention brought to me...

Erin connects her knowledge of previous critical concepts (the 3Ps: power, privilege, and positionality) through the questions about family, specifically, observing that students whose primary language was not English were “behind everyone else . . . (very far behind). . .” She connected these students’ positionality with their likelihood of needing to “help their parents” as a “significant” indication of one’s social positioning in life with the statement, “We don’t realize how our childhood sets us up for our adulthood. . . It can put us ahead or behind. . . [the 3Ps]“ For Erin, observing her classmates movements in this activity allowed her to understand how inter/generational positioning shapes a current classmate’s social positioning. The observation
elicited feelings of embarrassment and the desire to hide, or conceal, other’s perceptions about what those (lack of) privileges mean to her identity and public persona.

Another student highlights the ambiguity of interpretation.

During this activity, I felt exposed because everyone could see my background and compare my positionality to theirs. I felt like I would be judged for my place on the lawn, either pitied or envied, depending on my position. My place in society, determined by questions about my background, was out there for everyone to see. People could notice when I took a step back, when I moved up, or when I stayed where I was. During this activity the transparency and straightforward characteristics about this activity were what made me feel vulnerable. You either moved, or you didn't. The answer was either yes, or it was no. This binary aspect made me feel isolated from those who answered differently from me, and I felt a little bit misunderstood when people could see my vulnerability but didn't always know the full story of things. I think that these feelings are a good metaphor for life, and the fear and vulnerability that we often fear as we go through our day-to-day experiences.

Because this student was unable to justify or explain her steps, (in other words, she did not talk or rationalize her movement) she worried people would misjudge her vulnerability and not “know the full story of things. . .” This student stated she experienced feelings of “fear and vulnerability.” While traditional discourse in education discourages these experiences (i.e., promoting certainty and guaranteeing “safe” environments), this student expresses the notion that these feelings were “a good metaphor for life. . . [as the fear and vulnerability expressed in her experience was an
accurate, although less discussed, experience] we go through [in] our day-to-day. . .” As well, she made connections to the concept of binary responses and the false sense of equivalency it gives off: “The binary aspect made me feel isolated. . . I felt a little bit misunderstood.”

Another student shares a similar sentiment of being “misunderstood” depending on what steps she took in the exercise. The fact that she could be “judged for my place on the lawn. . . [and] everyone could see my background and compare their positionality to mine” gave this student a sense of “exposure,” which leads to her feelings of fear and vulnerability.

The privilege walk activity was not the only corporeal experience infused in the curriculum. Throughout the course the students were sent home with homework assignments that were experiential in nature and used to enhance or compliment the major concepts we discussed in class that particular week. For example, one homework assignment was a 24-hour vow of silence, in which students were unable to speak either orally or through writing. The goal of the exercise was designed, like many of the other assignments, to provide students the opportunity to observe their everyday lives, experiences, and interactions with a different gaze than one they previously held. This was my first time using this activity with my students and I was curious to know what would come of it.

What I found was an increased resolve to utilize more critical experiential-oriented assignments like this one. Students had different experiences with the assignment. Some were more observant of the concepts discussed in class since they had resolved they would not need their voice for the day. Some listened to conversations and
observed relationships that they never paid attention to before. Some students felt frustrated because others would become impatient and intolerant of their silence and therefore did not want to be around them, making the students describe their encounters as frustrating, insecure, and challenging. Many students described listening differently since they spent more time thinking about what they would say than what others were saying. While the experiences were all different, the one prominent theme to emerge during our class discussion of the assignment was how experiencing silence was different than just talking, reading, or thinking about it. One of my students reported to me that she was unable to do the assignment because she was afraid that it would harm her psychologically and emotionally.

What these anecdotes suggest, is that combining experience-based curriculum with an intimate transgressive pedagogy can generate powerful discussions and considerations. Students seemed to engage differently the more other mediums were used rather than the traditional lecture-format undergirded with a rationalist framework.

**Revisiting Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy**

The participants’ involvement with an intimate transgressive pedagogical approach garnered high levels of vulnerability through feeling conflict with their particular positionality and, feelings of ambiguity surrounding how to narrate and interpret their past and present experiences. This suggests that a ITP requires teacher educators to focus their attentions on the psychological, emotional, and interpersonal level of processing difficult knowledges.

The preceding section outlined how such a pedagogy manifested itself in practical experiences in the classroom. The subsequent sub-section will outline how these manifestations are connected to the theoretical concepts that were outlined in Chapter Three. First, I briefly
discuss Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy’s primary conceptual intents and purposes for education. Second, I re-visit my pedagogy’s key concepts and how these concepts seemed to emerge in the pedagogical practices and, in the classroom itself.

Critical Ontology and the Practice of Freedom

The purpose of ITP is to address our current problem of what Kristeva (2002) terms “the new world[‘s] order” (p. 4) and control over the practice and freedom to revolt. This “new world order” falls under the political and economic practices of neoliberalism, and the post-industrial advancements of technology and scientifism (Lather, 2005), and the narrowing of cultural diversities through universalism and hyper-rationalism. A major battleground is taken place in formal education between proponents of this order who are looking to use formal education to perpetuate assimilation to this order and those that view education as one of the most critical spaces to contest (and reimagine) this order. ITP is designed to provoke the latter and reimagine the future through displacing and critiquing its past from a different lens—an intimate lens.

Kristeva (2002) believes that a system created from the notion of revolt, which for her is characterized by a “life of consciousness [which remains] faithful to its profound logic . . . of protesting against already established norms, values, and powers . . . [and further] the possibility of questioning”, means reinvigorating the “psychical life [of] infinite re-creation” (pp. 3-4). The psychical life is a fundamental element of revolt as it seems to be one of the last spaces that have not been fully colonized and resolved.

The psychical terrain of a critical ontological awareness then means re-orienting the psyche’s conflictual tensions at the center. For Kristeva, revolt becomes “indispensable to keeping the psyche alive”, which at the heart of this theory means the practice of freedom through developing a critical ontology of the self. For Foucault and McKenzie, conflict acts as a
means of potential change, and without this potential, our agency dies. Therefore, to practice freedom in ITP means to have the freedom to struggle, and to navigate our negotiations within those struggles. Further, one cannot strategically transform spaces without understanding and having an awareness of borders and limitations. Specifically, struggle then means the freedom to explore and trace those borders for ourselves. Psychically, this cannot be done with the Ego at the center.

Pedagogically, a practice of freedom manifests itself transgressively, through an individual’s psychological journey of exploring the limitations of one’s thinking, perceiving, and ways of knowing and seeing. This is a difficult and emotional process, for to explore one’s limitations is ultimately to let go of Ego (at least momentarily) and to invite rhizomatic forms of learning to occur. In order for this process to occur, the concepts within ITP need to be exercised. This means staying in moments of tender esse (the “not yet” and “already no longer” (p. 7), through the dissolution and dispersion of retrospective return. Retrospective return is the critical recall of the past in a non-unified manner; and, simultaneously practicing loquela, which is the initial and not-yet concretized attempt at naming these experiences. In other words, loquela is the primary attempt of speaking into sense-making.

The following paragraphs will discuss each concept and its association with the manifestations in the classroom.

**Tender Esse: Struggling to acknowledge and stay in ambiguity.** Integral in Kristeva’s notion of revolt is an indefinite form of questioning and discord. This should not be mistaken with the popular cultural meaning of revolt whereby questioning is permanently suspended. This problem can occur in traditionalist and avant-garde circles, and according to Kristeva, is a withdrawal from revolt.
This is where we are: we can either renounce revolt by withdrawing into old values or indeed new ones that do not look back on themselves and do not question themselves or, on the contrary, relentlessly repeat retrospective return so as to lead it to the limits of the representable/thinkable/tenable . . . limits made evident by certain advances of the culture of the twentieth century.

Tender esse (discordance), therefore symbolizes the terrain of which retrospective return (indefinite questioning) operates on. It is a terrain that invariably acknowledges and respects uncertainty and doubt, as they are motivators for the psyche to practice the relentless return to interpreting past perspectives and experiences.

Within the classroom, it is difficult to “nail down” certain behaviors as moments of tender esse, since it is ultimately a psychological experience. However, reported feelings of struggle and questioning are used as indicators of this (consciously) transitory space. Students reporting feelings of “difficulty,” and “challenge” from being “unsure” can be initial signals of tender esse in process. However, we can also look to the reported origins of their feelings to get a better gauge of tender esse’s influence through retrospective return.

**Retrospective Return: Indefinite Questioning and Multiple Re-interpretation.** Within Kristeva’s concept of revolt, lays the other half of its relationship, which is the indefinite return to memory and experience. Each return is an attempt to understand our experiences differently. This was seen in the classroom through students’ tellings of past experiences and their multiple interpretations of those experiences. This process can be more explicit than tender esse as retrospective return can verbally be expressed through sharing of narrative. For example, signs of retrospective return were marked when students’ would say, “I used to think,” or, “I remember a time when . . . I thought this . . . but now I think . . .”
Loquela: The Struggle to Name the Imaginary. In ITP, the concept and practice of loquela, which is considered the attempt to name the arrangement of imaginative pieces of our psyche, is necessary. Its purpose is two-fold: 1) Naming how ideas are arranged is considered to promote critical ontology through exposing the subjectivities with which people arrange their ideas, and 2) as a healing agent, to give voice to thoughts and ideas that express the multiple forms of knowing.

Identifying loquela in the classroom is more difficult than tender esse and retrospective return. This is because the very nature of loquela is intertwined in what Kristeva termed the ‘infraverbal,’ or the in-between space of senses and utterance. I used physical markers such as body postures (relaxed, tense, slumped, expansive) and emotional physical markers (tears, frowns, eye movement) in combination with people’s oral language and moments of hesitation and/or stutters to focus on what words and ideas were said. While I believe loquela is ubiquitous, meaning, at all times ideas and thoughts are in a pre-cognitive, “working into” state, I noted moments that were most heightened either collectively (as a class) or individually (through students’ work, interviews, and observation).

The following chapter speculates potential implications of using such a pedagogy in education. More specifically, I respond to Peter Taubman’s (2011) call for a re-emergence of psychoanalysis in education in more depth.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter will discuss the conclusions and implications of the dissertation. I revisit the dominant theme of vulnerability and briefly summarize its sub-component themes. The themes are traced to its theoretical foundations, its importance on multicultural education’s current junctures, and its implication on the field of multicultural education for teacher educators interested in addressing difficult knowledges in the classroom. Additionally, I address, through personal reflection, the multiple ways I felt entangled by this pedagogy, future directions I hope to see this work taken up, and a temporary conclusion of ITP and education.

My analysis indicated that while most students reported feeling varying degrees of vulnerability and difficulty within the course, they felt these experiences and emotions were valuable and significant to their development in their journey towards becoming a more informed teacher. The analysis can further address the field of multicultural education’s (MCE) issue surrounding pre-service teacher resistance to engaging with difficult knowledges associated with MCE in teacher preparation programs. As this dissertation has outlined, critical pedagogy, which is an emerging popular form of pedagogy taken up by multicultural educators in education, is understood as pivotal work that has laid the groundwork for important systemic and institutional critique. Although it is clear critical pedagogy’s formulation has set up pedagogues for a more critical eye with which to address structural powers of oppression and hierarchy, this dissertation seeks to extend this work by addressing the limitations of a rationalist-only framework. Curriculum theorists call for more research regarding a heavier emphasis on alternative theoretical frameworks in pedagogy, teaching, and learning (Taubman, 2011), as well as a more complex understanding of student resistance (Gorski, 2012). Hence, this study can be
considered an exploration into such concerns. The receptive responses from the data suggest further inquiry into the multiple applications and implications of ITP in MCE endeavors.

As Ellsworth (1989) suggests, a rationalist-only framework interferes with learners’ ability to more fully engage with difficult knowledge and hold complicated conversations as it limits certain forms of knowledge. Further, I believe in respect to facilitating complicated conversations in the classroom, scholars take a closer look at these conversations and their relational, social, and psychological psychical processes and expressions. Before I discuss my conclusions, I provide a brief note:

This dissertation is an active attempt to respond to the needs that scholars and researchers in the field of social justice, multicultural, and curriculum educationalists advocate through an intimate transgressive theoretical/pedagogical framework. While I believe there are many worthy theories to address social/political/educational issues in education, my work with ITP has been valuable for my personal and pedagogical development. I do not expect this pedagogy to fit others as well as it has fit me, or in the same way. And I encourage other pedagogues and scholars to enact their own unique frameworks, for it has been the widespread critical reading, talking to mentors and colleagues, and “trying the ideas out” in the classroom that have been what has made this framework so valuable. While I do not expect others to adopt every idea in this reading, I do hope this dissertation provides a different perspective to some of the daily challenges teachers face not only in their classroom, but also in their own hearts and minds. Moreover, I hope that the concepts and the application of these concepts in this dissertation illuminate that there is no “perfect” pedagogy and that nothing can be replicated as it was. The same ideas employed by different people have multiple outcomes. Concepts employed by the same person but with a different student, classroom, time, do not look the same or have the same
outcome as it did. Knowing this provides both a kind of madness and peace. In a time where “outcomes” seem to be the only thing that matter and the common sense discourse proffers that a standard, repeatable, experience can replicate a standard, repeatable outcome; the teacher can find her/himself frustrated when the experience doesn’t follow the intended “outcome”. At the same time, I believe the reality of uncertainty offers us an exciting challenge worthy of our efforts. If anything, I hope this dissertation inspires others to push themselves out of their comfort zones and take some risks.

I believe this dissertation offers powerful preliminary data of which I hope motivates other scholars to try some of these ideas in their own practice and to reflect on these ideas in their pedagogy. In my next sub-section, I revisit my prominent theme and consider what this means for the field of Multicultural Teacher Education.

**Vulnerability**

**Challenges to One’s Positionality, and Discursive Ambiguity**

From an ITP standpoint, I define vulnerability as the ability to disrupt normalized narratives with a degree of openness to alternative (and at times, potentially unconscious) imaginaries. In doing so, the learner generates heightened sensations of curiosity, fear, anxiety, and conflict. Additionally, I contend that vulnerability is the “softer” e/motion of Logue’s concept of resistance as willful ignorance. I clarify “softer” to refer to McKenzie’s discussion on openness to energetic movements, or e/motions. In facilitating Pinar’s “complicated conversations” around Britzman’s “difficult knowledges,” this openness is vital for the learning process. However, the presence of resistance need not be necessarily interpreted as failure amongst the teacher. On the contrary, resistance signals a psychological defense mechanism meant to protect someone’s construct of reality. As facilitators, we know these conversations are
not easy. Defense in this context can be paralleled with Parker Palmer’s (1998) discussion of fear that when tension is felt and there is a palpable degree of discomfort present, we generally are where we need to be. The challenge is not to avoid these spaces, but to explore them more deeply. My students and my attempt to address these tensions through ITP, which has been previously mentioned as a study of knowledge production, has, in effect, been a Self/Other study. It is personal. It is my hope that in employing this pedagogy with my students, they have learned to look at “knowledge construction” differently, that what is thought to be “knowledge,” is a deeply personal and intimate creative and imaginative space. While attempting to better understand how we came to the conclusions we did with the material, studying our interpretations of current and past lived experiences using ITP gave us insight into how our “T”ruths could be both “t”ruth and “fiction”, helpful and inimical.

Additionally, sharing our process with each other illuminated this process more intently, challenging one another from holding any interpretation with a fixed perspective. The movement of our discussions challenged us to re-visit and re-think our understandings constantly. This back and forth movement generated a sort of collective and personal ambiguity and challenged our personal beliefs informed by our otherwise taken-for-granted socially located selves. Pedagogically, pairing the content of critical pedagogy with ITP did not clash. While this pairing did produce a certain degree of tension between the two, I saw this tension as healthy. The sociological, or critical angle shed light on the shaping of our socially located identity, but the dynamics of ITP made us aware of the uncertainty and ineffability of these social ascriptions and their combinations, keeping them from defining our understanding too formulaically and definitively. Further, ITP brought an intimate form to an otherwise abstract depiction of power, privilege, positionality, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. It gave personal meaning to
many students who thought these concepts were irrelevant. And it challenged me from remaining inflexible to change.

This process was challenging and brought many e/motions to the surface. Keeping consistent with ITP, we did not ignore these e/motions, but rather attempted to give language to them (at different levels of interaction) and considered these e/motions and difficulties in articulating as sources of knowledge that contained within them prior experiences that needed to be, as difficult as the task may be, articulated and reflected. Collectively, this process was foreign to many of the students, and initially, some students resisted participating. However, many of those students reported appreciating the process and hoped more classes would challenge them in such ways.

**Implications for Multicultural Teacher Education**

Gorski (2009) documents for, “A concurrent push for more research on approaches to and practice in MTE” (p. 317). He adds “This study uncovered several points related to MTE which are ripe for scholarly attention [one being]: the ways various approaches to MTE translate into teacher practice” (p. 317). Additionally, he adds “There remains much to be explored regarding the practice of multicultural teacher educators and the challenges they face. . . Continued work on these conditions is critical, not only to the sustainability of those doing the MTE work, but also to the ideals of multicultural education” (2012, p. 232). Considering the multiple forms of resistance multicultural teacher educators face (i.e., from students, colleagues, departments, institutions), a psychoanalytic poststructural feminist regard to notions of resistance provides an alternative way to conceptualize resistance in tenuous relationships. This reworking of resistance in MTE is not intended to placate the individuals in the relationship- where one “gives in” to the other’s beliefs and position- but rather to keep continuing the difficult work of returning to the
intimate landscapes of knowing. As a result, and consistent with ITP, individuals engaged with such challenges are expected to wrestle with a degree of uncertainty and ambiguity in their learning and relationships. Portraying resistance as a potential entry point into softer e/motions such as vulnerability offers educators a potentially different way to approach and engage resistance, or willful ignorance.

The major element of ITP is the notion and necessity of uncertainty while exploring issues with difficult knowledge within social justice/multicultural education. Addressing these issues, Gorski (2009) names this resistance as cognitive dissonance (p. 54). While I have made it explicit in prior chapters that the conceptual and practical outcomes of ITP are not the same as cognitive dissonance theorists (who hold the notion that psychological balance is desired and possible), I do agree with Gorski’s definition that part of a transformative process involved in dissonance is the “introduction to a new frame of reference” (p. 54), and the acknowledgment of the important aspects of discomfort, uncertainty and ambiguity felt in such an introduction. He writes, the:

Realizations—that my educational work is the facilitation of and the facilitation through cognitive dissonance—has been the most important revelation of my life as a social justice educator-activist. It has changed virtually everything about how I teach about poverty, racism, sexism, imperialism, nationalism, heterosexism, and other oppressions, not because I want to protect the feelings of those who are experiencing cognitive dissonance related to one or more of these issues, but because everybody experiences cognitive dissonance related to one or more of these issues.
If extended into the field of MTE, this then means the possibility of *embracing* such (un)knowings both for the teacher and the student. This doesn’t mean that the experience of the teacher or the depth of knowledge of the teacher is thrown out, but sets up the relationship between student and teacher as less adversarial. I see this “starting point” to be important for multicultural and social justice educators, especially for those educators who may be perceived as the Other right away for any visible marginality. Gorski furthers his revelation stating:

> And my second most important revelation has been this: the best way—perhaps the only way—to engage cognitive dissonance as a pedagogical tool in social justice learning is to teach *explicitly* about cognitive dissonance. (p. 55)

I suspect, if implemented, implications for the multicultural educators would be an increased willingness on the student to be more open to the task of wrestling with such difficult knowledge, and a deeper dialogue about the intimate landscapes occurring in such a task. Revisiting the reality that despite the increased attention and sophisticated approaches to analyzing power differentials and oppressive realities in scholarship, the divide between, or resistance of such relationships in *practice* is still as deep as before. Re-addressing the relationship both between the teacher and the student—in particular the teacher’s *perception* of the student, and the relationship one holds with the Self can provide a powerful way in which to orient psychological power between student and educator. I believe, such a reconceptualization and implementation of such reconceptualization may allow students to better relate to the material and to see the instructor as a mentor rather than an adversary.

Moreover, I see the implications of these concepts having a dramatic effect on the critical ontology, epistemology, and practice of the instructor. Rather than feeling “fixed,” which can provide feelings of comfort and/or feeling like being stranded on an island, I see this pedagogy
as an invitation to infinite re-creation. This doesn’t mean throwing out all models and prior scholarly work on such matters, but neither does it advocate for complete acceptance. As I have stated previously, I hope this pedagogy inspires us as educators, practitioners, and researchers to “play” with these models and concepts, and to add our own contextual layers to make these models and concepts “work” for us and our students. As, Gorski writes, “Each of us, including me, enters social justice learning with more learning to do. We are socialized to believe we have a deeper understanding of the world around us than we really have” (p. 56). What would our scholarly world look like, if we were more willing to share this notion with one another more willingly!

The Impossibility of Teaching

To better elucidate between the concepts I use in from my empirical findings with ITP, which are ambiguity and uncertainty, with dissonance theorist notions of cognitive dissonance, I briefly want to comment on the work in psychoanalysis.

In Felman’s (1982) article, “Psychoanalysis and Education,” she cites Socrates and Freud’s admission of the impossible task of teaching and the important lesson we can learn from such an admission. In her observation, psychoanalysis offers the field of education renewed pedagogical hope in the form of its critique. She writes, “psychoanalysis . . . is first and foremost, a critique of pedagogy” (p. 23). She cautions the reader not to mistake this critique to be interpreted as anti-pedagogy, but a nod to the powers of the unconscious. She states,

What, indeed, is the unconscious, if not a kind of unmeant knowledge which escapes intentionality and meaning, a knowledge which is spoken by the language of the subject . . . but which the subject cannot recognize, assume as his
appropriate; a speaking knowledge which is nonetheless denied to the speaker’s knowledge?

According to Felman’s analysis of the works of Freud and Lacan, knowledge in its totality is unknowable. Pedagogy, in its rectitude of knowledge construction, is not the authority progressive notions make it out to be. Psychoanalysis, therefore, calls out the “traditional pedagogical belief in perfectability, the progressivist view of learning as a simple one way road from ignorance to knowledge” (Taubman, 2011, p. 177). Psychoanalysis in pedagogy, Felman writes, “radically displac[es] our very modes of intelligibility” (Felman, 1982, p. 27). An intimate transgressive pedagogy attempts to enact these sentiments. How can I aptly summarize the totality of my experience in the classroom, my “successes” and “failures” employing this pedagogy, an orderly conclusion and future predictions of how this pedagogy ought to look and what it ought to generate? In writing this chapter, I feel the forces of uncertainty bear down on me. And no more acutely do I feel Felman’s words ring loud: “Every pedagogy has historically emerged as a critique of pedagogy . . . [and] in one way or another, every pedagogy stems from its confrontation with the impossibilities of teaching” (p. 24).

What I, and I believe Felman, and other psychoanalysts working within education are attempting to do is to reconsider the structure of knowledge. In this structure, learning stems not only in the conscious act of substantiated knowledge, but also in our “ignorance,” or the crossroads of what we know and do not know. Ignorance cannot be eradicated, but it can be more fully explored. As Felman (1982) writes, “Ignorance can teach us something” (p. 30) Going back to Logue’s notion of willful ignorance, Felman states that ignorance is connected to what is not remembered, what will not be acknowledged. Structuring a pedagogy that seeks to explore these uncertainties, these ignorances, these not-knowings, the unconscious more
explicitly addresses Taubman’s (2011) efforts to reconstruct what teaching and learning could explore and how those explorations could offer us a different entryway to our understandings and perceptions of Self and An/Other relationships. In effect, psychoanalysis in education could offer us a creative way of understanding, observing, interpreting where “the rubber meets the road” so-to-speak. It puts into action our theoretical assertions and the implications of those assertions in a lived, empirical, concrete, and complex world.

More importantly, I believe, it critically re-orient our ontology and epistemology of relationship, being in the world, and knowledge construction to what more closely aligns with “the roots of multicultural education [being] educational equity and social justice” (Gorski, 2009, p. 317), and at least makes a formidable stand against the hegemonic texts and agendas that try to pose as MTE. “What passes for MTE [which] . . . scholars . . . generally agree . . . is not multicultural at all” (p. 309). Including psychoanalysis in our studies, pedagogies, and scholarship, as a return to the ineffab(ility) of knowing offers the field of MTE a renewal and radical subversive approach in times which are overwhelmingly bent on peddling neoliberal and neoconservative agendas as the superior form of knowledge and orientation in the world. Felman (1980/1981) aptly summarizes this return.

Lacan’s well-known inaugural call for the “return to Freud” is in fact itself an operation – and a notion – far more complex, far more original than the simple gesture which it customarily is understood to be: it is not simply a historical return to the authentic origin of a doctrine, nor even a return to Freud’s original text as opposed, on the one hand, to its dogmatic, oversimplified interpretations and, on the other hand to its distortingly inaccurate translations. It is a return to Freud untranslated as a symptom of the essential untranslatability of his subject matter.
. something which defies, resists translation: it is a return whose function, paradoxically, is not so much to render Freud familiar as to renew contact with his strangeness . . [a] struggle with the radical impossibility of translation . . . not as a domesticated, reassuring answer, but as an irreducibly uncanny question. (p. 46)

ITP does not believe that the world and our psychological terrain are balanced places. In clear distinction to dissonance scholars, the act of “restoring” balance is not possible from ITP’s standpoint. This is not necessarily negative, it is just is. Just as Britzman (2000) illustrated about the notion of care, there are many negative consequences that humans ignore in the act and name of care. The danger lies in the disavowal of such perspective and in the re-appropriation and ignorance of responsibility in one’s ontological and epistemological positionings. Whereas dissonance scholars may point to a “return” to cognitive balance, I see an intimate transgressive pedagogy as a return to the unconscious—what cannot comfortably be domesticated and thus, inspires us to follow the interminable questions that grow from such an intimate, human space.

**My Entanglements**

And if I have not hammered the importance and essence of uncertainty and ambiguity enough in ITP, I offer one final distinction between two divergent strands of psychoanalysis and its projects. An overwhelming affirmation I have formed after completing this dissertation hearkens back to notions of imagination, creativity, and play in our theoretical and pedagogical endeavors. As I think about how to answer the inevitable questions, “Well, how do I (I, as in, someone else) do this pedagogy? How do I know if I’m doing it, right?- I go back to this notion of play and creativity informed by subjectivity. I cannot possibly know the multiple context of other teacher educators, and I cannot say with assertion how carrying out these concepts in one’s
pedagogy ought to look like. I understand this statement can be terribly frustrating for other educators who want to “know.”

I can offer my experience and share that it takes a certain level of risk (on multiple levels) that is different for each person. I encourage individuals who are interested in employing a similar type of pedagogy to play with the ideas expressed in this dissertation and make them their own. In doing so, I think the howling nose dives and incredible highs experienced can be shared with a sincerity that is appreciated by many educators. I believe sharing my manifestations and experiences with this pedagogy and its theoretical concepts drives to the desires Taubman (2011) writes of in his discussion of psychoanalysis in education.

Ignored or disparaged are the very theories constitutive of psychoanalysis, theories that work on the border of the socio/cultural and the instrapscychic, that explore the mysteries of subjectivity, and that can illuminate the dreams, desires, ideals, and terrors that shape our understanding of education. – p. 2

What would multicultural education look like, be known as, if we were allowed to more fully articulate these dreams, desires, ideals and terrors? In Taubman’s (2011) book, *Disavowed Knowledge*, he outlines the tumultuous historic relationship between psychoanalysis and education citing disavowal of the unconscious as a primary component for this strife. He writes that the field of education and psychoanalysis has been primarily concerned with what he termed, the therapeutic project whereby the profession’s goal has been to “cure” the ills of the world and the individual. This project is most associated with the medical model. Individuals learn how to control their environment, predict outcomes, and provide measurable and reliable methods and outcomes. It reflects the practices of multicultural education and teacher preparation programs all over the country, with standardized textbooks with its predictable
questions at the end of the chapter for its predictable questions that will be asked on the later exam. It’s reflective in the comments we hear from our students, administrators, policy makers, and fellow educators when they say, “Tell me how to do it.” As education continues to mimic more corporate models, the inner lives of teachers and students are treated more as scripts that can be re-written. As Taubman writes (2011), These “approaches replace the inner lives of teachers and student with behavioral techniques and quantifiable outcomes” (p. 2). ITP does not promise a therapeutic-process journey. However, it does align itself moreso with the latter project, Taubman outlines, an emancipatory project.

While a certain sense of control and predictability is understandable, to believe that it can effectively replace the quagmires of uncertainty is implausible. What has too often been ignored, according to Taubman, is the emancipatory project.

The emancipatory project, on the other hand, works toward deepening and helping us understand the inner lives without promising the results that we will be a happier, more beautiful, or more just life or a better job or a better relationship or a higher test score. The emancipatory project eschews efforts at control and cure, offering questions and interminable analysis, rather than answers and solutions. Such a project never assumes it knows in advance what is best for patient or student or what the outcomes of its endeavors will be. . . . The emancipatory project cherishes a kind of understanding for understanding’s sake, a suspension on the part of the teacher and analyst of immediate judgment to be replaced with curiosity, attunement, analysis, and a focus of creating conditions such that the patient or student can generate material for further elaboration or analysis . . . While both projects are related in a certain way, often in undisclosed
ways, and while they blur the highly blurly world of the classroom, they do have different trajectories. Many educators, and I certainly include myself, feel committed to as well as torn between aspects of these two projects. We want to advocate for particular pedagogies but we resist turning them into recipes . . . On the other hand, while we cherish the unpredictable and spontaneous . . . we worry about the very loss of control and the potential chaos that may ensue. (pp. 6-7)

As well, ITP does not guarantee positive or intended outcomes, but it does offer us the opportunity to work through difficult knowledge found in our socio-political/educational landscapes differently. Further, it envisions how one can potentially use certain psychoanalytic and poststructural feminist concepts to work on one’s own onto-epistemological journey in a deliberate manner.

The “Final” (for now) Word on Intimate Transgressive Pedagogy in Education

What I find lacking in multicultural, social justice, collective (dis)empowerment talk is a glaring absence of attention to the incredibly difficult onto-epistemological journey the psyche takes. Social transformation is first and foremost a personal transformation that, I believe, is the hardest transformation of all. It requires more than a cognitive understanding of how macro-level forces “work,” but a serious, oftentimes, emotional and cognitively exhausted/wrecked psyche to endure wrestling with all that it worked so hard to disavow, or forget. While I applaud critical pedagogies that have worked to expose and articulate social forces in such a way to address oppressive power dynamics, I worry that we as facilitators of this work, rely too heavily on and believe these pragmatic findings alone can address the maelstrom of intensities the psyche encounters within difficult knowledges. I do not mean difficult knowledges from a macro-level critical analysis, but the pain, shame, embarrassment, vulnerability, confusion, anger, and
sadness that support such macro-level inequities. It is knowledge that cannot be healed through a rationalist-approach. From my work I have learned that there is another, more urgent, issue that needs to be addressed in our goals of MCE and CP, and that is the aforementioned emotions that take place in such learning. If we fail to take into serious account how these articulations shape “knowledge,” I believe CP and other MCE endeavors will plateau, or worse, lose footing in the battle with neoliberal/conservative ideals. ITP attempts to address these subtle and overlooked, but nonetheless powerful, aspects of one’s journey with critical thinking/being. It does not shy away from displaying these difficulties; and while I do not expect ITP to make these difficulties any easier, I do hope that it begins a necessary dialogue about this process into different circles of educators and education-related fields. Understanding the time, energy, and work it takes in facilitating difficult knowledge means finding better ways to support these efforts from multiple positions and at multiple levels.

I can only speculate what the field of education might look like if we spoke more audibly of what is now only whispered about behind closed office doors, what is thought before bodies drift off to sleep at night, what is not said but in the passing of looks and subtle gestures. Unlocking those doors can be altogether daunting. It is not something that can be totally prepared for, and it is supposed to feel awkward and tiring at times. But in seeking healing in education I believe, wholeheartedly with Kristeva (2002), who writes, “I am seeking experiences in which this work of revolt, which opens psychical life to infinite re-creation, continues and recurs, even at the price of error and impasses” (p. 6). Additionally, I agree with other curriculum theorists and psychoanalysts who believe that in employing such concepts in pedagogy, the responsibility of the teacher changes: from one that charges the student as ignorant unknower, to the student who is mentored and supported to follow the questions that inspire them to seek, to learn, to
understand, to reconsider, and then start again. What conclusions they, or we, arrive at are not nearly as important (we, from an ITP perspective know that conclusions are subject to change) as the desire and courage we, as educators, cultivate while exploring the multiple ways of knowing, being, and relating to the world. Indeed, it is the ability to experience struggle, to negotiate our meaning-making process, and to try to understand our knowings (and their limitations) from a multiplicity of articulations that help us re-create the conditions of what I consider to be intimate knowledge and a form of knowledge that we need more of. Raising the consciousness of our intimate knowledge is what I consider to be revolutionary and transformational, a practice of freedom.
APPENDIX A
Interview Questions

PI: Michael T. Hayes, Ph.D
Research Assistant: Mary Crowell
Interview Protocol: Qualitative Inquiry: Intimacy, Pedagogy, and Education

Research Problem: Many teacher education courses utilize a traditional didactic instructional method, which can often limit student involvement and learning within the course.

Research Purpose: Explore pre-service teacher education students' response to an instructional strategy focused on listening, dialogue, and critical self reflection.

Research Questions:
1. What role does intimacy play in one’s teacher preparation, development of pedagogy, and teaching practices and interactions with others when preparing pre-service teachers to inclusive education, diverse learners and multiple social contexts unlike their own?
2. How and where does power and privilege intersect with intimacy in potential pre-service teachers’ processes of teaching philosophy and identity development?

Interview Questions:
1. What are fundamental qualities of an inclusive and socially conscious teacher? Explain.
2. How do you think your previous experiences have shaped your ideas of that particular construct of teacher? Explain.
4. What kind of emotions did/do you feel when engaging with material and curriculum that dealt/deals with social inequity and social injustice? Explain.
   a. Why do you think that is?
5. What do you believe are the reasons for these injustices and inequities? Explain.
7. What future students do you speculate you would have the most difficult time relating to, why?
8. How much time have you spent considering issues surrounding social inequity and social injustice?
   a. Depending on the response, ‘why do you think that is?’
9. What would you like to learn more about in regards to social injustice and social inequity? Why? Explain.
APPENDIX B

Participant Consent Form

Attention: Study Participant

Date: January 12, 2012

Re: Explanation of T&L 301 Research Project
Study Titled: Qualitative Inquiry: Intimacy, Pedagogy, and Education

From: Michael T. Hayes Associate Professor, Principle Investigator
Mary Crowell, Graduate Student

This letter is regarding the research project that Michael Hayes, PhD and Mary Crowell will be conducting with student participants from Teaching and Learning (TL) 301 course at Washington State University (WSU). Washington State University’s IRB department has certified this study as exempt (IRB # 11769). We are asking your consent to be an interview participant and consent to the use of any work produced in TL 301 for this research study. The purpose of the research project is to examine student’s journal reflections, projects, and interviews regarding students' response to an instructional strategy focused on listening, dialogue, and critical self reflection.

The project will be conducted during spring semester 2012 to spring 2013. During the spring 2012, data will be collected from student’s in-class reflection journals and interviews. All participants will be given this form, which outlines the research project. Students consenting to the study will be informed that they may discontinue their involvement at any time.

Participant confidentiality is of utmost importance to the project; therefore, students’ names will be coded to ensure autonomy throughout the study and into any publications that may come from the data. Benefits to the participants may include understanding their thoughts about TL 301 as an asset to the university. Benefits to society may include a better understanding of how students in an introduction to education course respond to critical pedagogy. Although the research project is considered low risk, any psychological effects that become problematic to the participants will be referred to the appropriate WSU department(s).

Please review this form and contact Michael T. Hayes (mthayes@wsu.edu) or Mary Crowell (mlcrowell@wsu.edu) if you have any questions or concerns regarding the research project. After review please sign and date below to demonstrate that you understand and give consent to be interviewed for the research project.

Researcher ___________________________________________ Date ________________

Participant signature____________________________ Date ________________

Participant printed name ___________________________________________
APPENDIX C

Syllabus

T & L 301 – Learning and Development
Spring 2012  3 Credits
Tue/Th Section 3

Instructor: Mary Crowell
Akmal
Office: Cleveland 230
Email: mlcrowell@live.com
Phone: 335-8050
Office Hours: T/TH 12:30-1:30

Course Coordinator: T. Akmal
Office: Cleveland 337
Email: takmal@wsu.edu
Phone: 335-4703
Office Hours: TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION, COMPETENCIES, AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Description of Course
This course is designed to provide prospective teachers with opportunities to articulate assumptions about teaching and learning, examine the theoretical foundations of learning theories, construct personal theories regarding what it means to teach and learn, and relate these ideas to contemporary issues in education. These personal theories will be grounded in a critical analysis of students’ lived experiences, educational theories, educational reform initiatives and activities (community service learning project, discussions, role-plays, etc.) in the course. As a student in T&L 301, you will be expected to take previous knowledge from Psychology 105 or 198 and apply psychological theories to educational practice.

You will be encouraged to constantly make connections among learning theories, human development theories, and educational practice. In addition, the theories and content of the course are a foundation for understanding “developmentally appropriate practice,” which all teacher candidates need to demonstrate on the Washington State Performance Based Pedagogy Assessment (PPA) during student teaching. It is HIGHLY recommended that you keep your textbook, as well as all notes from the course, as these will prove useful for the PPA as well as the standardized tests required for licensure.

The conceptual framework of the College states:

The College of Education contributes to the theory and practice of the broad field of education, and dedicates itself to understanding and respecting learners in diverse cultural contexts. We facilitate engaged learning and ethical leadership in schools and clinical settings. We seek collaboration with diverse constituencies, recognizing our local and global responsibilities to communities, environments, and future generations.

The connections to the conceptual framework in this course include emphases on: learning and human development theories, understanding and respecting learners in diverse cultural contexts as related to designing educational experiences; engaged learning and ethical leadership as
related to designing educational experiences; and collaboration with other teachers, school communities, and environments as related to designing educational experiences.

**Department of Teaching and Learning Outcomes for All Teacher Candidates**

1. Use enduring content and pedagogical knowledge to inform teaching
2. Develop relevant, rigorous, and developmentally appropriate curricula
3. Modify curriculum and instruction based on the individual needs of K-8 students
4. Use assessment of K-12 students’ learning and own teaching to inform future planning and teaching
5. Attend to the social and civic development of K-12 students
6. Work respectfully and collaboratively with colleagues and community to ensure quality instructional programs and stewardship of public schools

**1997 Standard V Knowledge and Skills** introduced in this course:

- a. Apply their knowledge of the state learning goals and EALRS.
- e. Articulate the theories of human development and learning.
- f. Use inquiry and research.
- i. Articulate the responsibilities, structure, and activities of the profession.
- l. Apply research-based and experience-based principles of effective practice for encouraging the intellectual, social, and personal development of students.
- m. Apply different student approaches to learning for creating instructional opportunities adapted to learners of both sexes and from diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds, and with exceptionalities.
- n. Articulate areas of exceptionality and learning - including, but not limited to, learning disabilities, visual and perceptual difficulties, and special physical or mental challenges.
- o. Apply effective instructional strategies for students at all levels of academic abilities and talents.
- p. Apply instructional strategies for developing reading, writing, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.
- r. Apply classroom management and discipline, including:
  - r(i). Individual and group motivation for encouraging positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
  - r(ii). Effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication for fostering active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interactions in the classroom.
- t. Apply formal and informal assessment strategies for evaluating and ensuring the continuous intellectual, social and physical development of the learner.
- x. Use educational technology including the use of computer and other technologies in instruction, assessment, and professional productivity.
- y. Apply strategies for effective participation in group decision making.

**Washington K-8 Endorsement Competencies Aligned with this Course**

2.0 Common Core: Understanding of learners and their communities (Candidates possess a deep understanding of the development and learning of children and young adolescents.)

- 2.1 Understand major concepts, theories, and research related to typical and atypical development of the whole child and young adolescent.
2.3 Understand the roles that children’s cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, language development, socioeconomic status (SES), gender, and disabilities play in learning
2.4 Understand children’s varied approaches to learning and ways of accessing the curriculum
2.5 Understand how community factors such as social/cultural makeup, economic health, and educational values impact the learning of children and young adolescents
2.6 Understand the needs of high-poverty and at-risk children and adolescents

TEXTS AND MATERIALS

*Cougar Coursepack T&L 301* 🐆

1 Blue Book

**Note:** Bring the Woolfolk text, Blue Book, and *Cougar Coursepack* to each class session.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

*Professional Dispositions*
Teacher preparation programs at Washington State University assess the “professional dispositions” of all teacher candidates. This assessment occurs throughout the program, both in courses and in field experiences. A description of WSU’s use of professional dispositions is available at [http://www.educ.wsu.edu/TL/dispositions.htm](http://www.educ.wsu.edu/TL/dispositions.htm) as is the actual form used to indicate and communicate concerns and remediation, if necessary. If issues arise you will be given one verbal warning, which will be documented by the professor, and the next meeting will be used to document a Professional Dispositions form and may be cause for removal from the course because of insensitivity to issues prevalent in many school settings.

*Attendance*
This course meets requirements for state legislated credentials; therefore, **attendance is mandatory.**

1. Students are expected to attend each scheduled class punctually and remain for its entirety. Three times tardy and/or leaving during breaks or during class session will be counted as an absence.
2. According to WSU policy, “absences impede a student’s academic progress and should be avoided.” When class attendance is not possible, an absence will be excused if the student provides written verification that it falls under University guidelines, i.e., “illness, personal crises, mandated court appearances, parental responsibilities, and the like.” Such absences may be accommodated when contact is made in advance and all work is completed within the assigned week.
3. Unless an extreme circumstance arises, a third absence will be considered excessive and result in a grade no higher than a B regardless of the quality of student work.
4. Missing four class sessions constitutes 25% of the course. Upon a fourth absence, excused or unexcused, we counsel students to drop the course. A grade of C or higher in T&L 301 is required for admission to the College of Education teacher preparation programs. Students who miss four or more classes will find it very difficult to achieve a grade of C or higher.
5. If you are going to be absent for any reason, you must notify your instructor via email or telephone prior to class. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with written notification regarding the date and reason for their absence.

Class Expectations
Attendance, by itself, is insufficient. For each class session students must competently engage in its events. In general, this involves exhibiting a professional demeanor and being prepared to consider, discuss, and apply assigned readings. You are expected to complete a careful and critical reading of all assigned materials by the dates assigned. Your instructor will assume that you have completed all readings and will engage the class in discussions and activities related to the core topics. Your instructor will not lecture on the assigned readings. These readings are essential to your participation in class activities and successful completion of assignments. In accordance with University policy, basic expectations include showing due respect for order, morality, and the rights of others.

Policy on Academic Integrity
Teachers expect academic honesty from their students. No less is expected of teachers - whether entering the profession or already members of it.

WAC 504-25-015 Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty, including all forms of cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication, is prohibited. Knowingly facilitating academic dishonesty is also prohibited. The expectation of the University is that all students will accept these standards and conduct themselves as responsible members of the academic community. These standards should be interpreted by students as general notice of prohibited conduct. They should be read broadly, and are not designed to define misconduct in exhaustive forms. Faulty and their departments also have jurisdiction over academic matters and may also take academic action against students for any form of academic dishonesty discovered in their courses.

Disability Resource Center Reasonable Accommodations Statement
Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC (Washington Building, Room 217). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist.

Intensive American Language Center
Students requiring additional support in English language acquisition are encouraged to contact The Intensive American Language Center (IALC) at Washington State University at ialc@wsu.edu or 509-335-6674. The IALC is nationally accredited by the Commission on English Language Program Accreditation (CEA) and is a member of the American Association of Intensive English Programs (AAIEP).

Professional Communication The faculty members of the teacher education programs emphasize the importance of effective written and oral communication for teachers. Students of the program are expected to demonstrate that they can meet standards of professional communication on all of their assignments. A student who fails to adhere to the conventions of
writing (e.g. makes consistent grammatical and/or spelling errors, frequently misuses words or phrases, fails to organize writing in an effective manner) may be required to work with the Writing Center or complete additional coursework. Students will also be held accountable for demonstrating that they are capable of clear and professional verbal communication.

Late Assignments
All assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you email or deliver the assignment to your instructor by 5 P.M. on the day it is due, your instructor has the discretion of reducing your grade or not. After 24 hours, your assignment will be considered late and points will be deducted.

GRADING, ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMS
Each evaluation for this course stresses the ability to display the attributes and dispositions expected of a successful teacher. Therefore, students must be prepared to use course information reflectively to meet the challenges of K-12 teaching. This demands acquiring a substantive knowledge base (i.e., careful initial readings of assignments and subsequent consideration of their content) and using appropriate terms, concepts, and theories to explain classroom practices.

Grading Scale
Course requirements will be evaluated on a percentage scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LETTER GRADE</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>DESCRIPTOR</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-94</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>93-92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>91-90</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89-84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83-82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>81-80</td>
<td>Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79-74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>73-72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>71-70</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69-64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>63-62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>61-below</td>
<td>Failing</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Participation (150 POINTS)
Participation in this class is paramount in creating a quality collegiate classroom experience. As future prospective teacher candidates, there are high expectations based on student responsibility to participate in each and every aspect of the course. Points will be given for being in class and contributing to thoughtful, respectful, open and engaging discussion/activities. Examples include, but are not limited to discussion, active and attentive listening, in-class group presentations, in-class writing activities, group work, video responses, and role-playing, etc. Also, this course is designed to provoke thoughtful discussion and critical thinking based on social issues and psychological implications. Some discussions and content may be challenging to engage in and students are expected to engage maturely, professionally, and open to multiple perspectives with everyone in the class, the material, and the topics at hand. Further, professional communication is expected at all times and the professional disposition assessment created by
the College of Education will be an expectation at all times. Attendance is also counted in participation points. See the attendance section for more details regarding attendance.

**Educational Philosophy Media Project Presentation** – 75 points
This presentation explores an educational philosopher of your choice. During the first half of the semester you will be conducting a short media clip lasting approximately 4-6 minutes. Groups will be formed by the end of the second week of class. Each group must find at least 3 journal articles/books from and about this philosophy/philosopher and cite these resources in your media. This presentation needs to be engaging and include important quotes and/or written passages to illuminate your project. Each individual will draft a short one page reflection on the process of gathering information on your philosopher and how this philosopher shapes your own teaching perspectives and identities. Further instructions will be given in class.

**Group Presentations (Alternative Education) – 100 points**
This presentation will explore alternative approaches in education. During the second half of the semester you will be conducting a group presentation lasting approximately 20 minutes. Groups will be formed around mid-terms. Each group will select an alternative method of education and 3 different schools using this approach (at least 1 school must be from Washington state). This project will be interactive and use a power-point with pictures to give a general overview of the educational approach, a video clip (no longer than 5 minutes long), demographics of each school (race, gender, reduced lunch, etc), graduation and college acceptance rates, public/private, information regarding school curriculum, etc. The group must contact via phone or email a teacher/administrator/student from the school to get answers to questions the group may have regarding this approach to education. Further instructions will be given in class.

**Assignments**

**Weekly Assignments** (5-15 POINTS each)
Short assignments will be made in class. These will be due at the beginning of the next class session. These assignments are designed to help you engage with the concepts covered in the text and in class. While each assignment is not worth many points, failure to turn in several assignments will definitely affect your grade.

**Synthesis Papers/Project** (75 POINTS)
You will write 1 Synthesis synthesizing information from the text and class discussions. The paper should be 3-4 pages double spaced and include information on characteristics of learners, connections to cognitive development, and effective teaching strategies for that particular developmental level. It is important to include components not only from your educational philosophy presentation and the Woolfolk text, but from all course material (i.e., handouts, media clips, discussions and lectures). Full descriptions of each of the 4 assignments will be posted on the course website. See the course calendar for due dates. See the table below for the synthesis paper options. You may also choose to complete an alternative to the synthesis paper. This option allows you to complete a digital story, and/or photographic journal (scrapbook)
including the same elements that are required for the paper, except in video format. Additional instructions will be presented in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intend to teach</th>
<th>Early Childhood</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle School</th>
<th>High School</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preschool-kindergarten</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grades 1-5</td>
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<td>Grades 6-8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grades 9-12</td>
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**Community Service Learning Project** (130 POINTS)
You will complete a service-learning project where you will volunteer for a minimum of 10 hours in order to complete the Community Service Learning component of this course. In addition to fulfilling the responsibilities of the placement, you will write 1 reflection (1 page single spaced) in which you explain the hours you dedicate to the project, *include in this paper a written reflection which makes explicit connections between the course content and the Service Learning Project*. Because the focus of the assignment is on connections with the course material, you should choose a placement working with school-aged children or youth that will enable you to see some of the learning and development theories in practice. This paper is due by 5pm.

An on-site supervisor must sign your weekly record of service-hours forms. Turn in the original to your instructor and keep a copy for your records. If it is determined that you are not truthful or have forged any signatures, you will be referred to the WSU Conduct Board and will receive a failing grade on the assignment.

Grading for this project includes 6 points for each hour you volunteer for a possible 60 points, 20 points for the reflection paper, and 10 points for submitting your volunteer placement form by the date assigned. The scores on your reflection paper will not be added to your grade if your volunteer time is less than 6 hours. In other words, you cannot volunteer for 2 or 3 hours, write your reflection paper, and expect that you have fulfilled this assignment.

Specific grading criteria for the short papers will be provided in class. See the course calendar for due dates. Late papers are subject to the policy stated above.

**You must obtain your placement through the Center for Civic Engagement or receive permission from your instructor for a placement not obtained through the CCE.** Failure to find your placement through one of these avenues may result in loss of volunteer hours and the requirement that you start over in an approved placement. Get your placement as soon as possible. A placement form is due the fifth week of class. You will receive 10 points toward your final grade for returning this placement form on or before the fifth class meeting. Regardless of the option selected, you are expected to spend 10 hours on site throughout the course, not all in one or two days.

NOTE: The state of Washington requires students to have 80 hours of volunteer contact with children before applying to the teacher education program. The 10 hours required for this course may not be applied to that 80-hour requirement. However, any additional hours dedicated completed through this project may be applied.

**Choose Your Own Assignment (75 Points)**
Choose **Option 1**: Shadow a Teacher or **Option 2**: Read a Great Book

**Option 1: Shadow a Teacher:** You will make arrangements to visit a teacher’s classroom during March 12-16 during the WSU Spring Break. Your instructor will discuss with you how to contact the building principal and teacher to ask permission to spend time in their school. You will receive directions for observations and activities to be completed once you have received permission from the principal and teacher to complete this assignment in their school.

**Option 2: Read a Great Book:** Many books provide practical tips for working with children and youth. You will receive a reading guide from your instructor. Read one of the listed books below. From the book, find 4 related events/activities which you have observed during your Community Learning Service Project. Write a short (1 page single spaced) description comparing the events and/or dominating themes in the book to what you observed during your Community Learning Service Project. (How were the events/activities similar; how were they different?)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intend to Teach</th>
<th>Read</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>Black Ants &amp; Buddhists by Mary Cowhey</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Spectacular Things Happen Along the Way: Lessons from an Urban Classroom by Brian Schultz</td>
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<td>Teach Like Your Hair is on Fire by Rafe Esquith</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle School</td>
<td>Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Listening to Urban Kids: School Reform and the Teachers They Want by B. Wilson &amp; H. Corbett</td>
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<td>Fires in the Middle School Bathroom by Kathleen Cushman and Laura Rogers</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Black Boy by Richard Wright</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lies My Teacher Told Me by James Loewen</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ain’t no makin’ It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood by Jay MacLeod</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fires in the Bathroom by Kathleen Cushman, Students of &quot;What Kids Can Do&quot;, and Lisa Delpit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any</td>
<td>Savage Inequalities by Jonathon Kozol</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Escaping Education by Madhu Prakash and Gustavo Esteva</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Decultrualization and the struggle for Equality by Joel Spring</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Written Assignments** All written assignments should be single-spaced in 12-point font unless otherwise noted by the instructor. It is preferred that all papers be double sided to reduce the use of paper. Points will be deducted for failure to adhere to the conventions of writing (e.g., consistent grammatical and/or spelling errors, frequent misuse of words or phrases, failure to organize writing in an effective manner). Grading on all written assignments is based on 80% for content and 20% for the conventions of writing. Please remember to put your name, section number, assignment, and date at the top of each assignment.
Meet with the Instructor: (20 points) Each student will be required to meet with the instructor one time throughout the semester. The intention of this assignment is for the student and instructor to have an opportunity to get to know each other, ask questions that the student may have, and/or address any needs or concerns about the course.

Exams
Unit Exams (35 POINTS each/140 POINTS) A 35-point exam will be given at the end of each developmental level. See the ‘Major Assignments’ section of the course calendar for dates. There will be no make-up for the unit exams.

Final Exam (100 POINTS) You will choose from a take-home short answer final exam, or completing an artistic expression with a 1 page reflection regarding your artwork. Each choice will be explained further towards the end of the semester. Final Project or test due by December 13, 5pm.

Extra Credit
A maximum amount of 15 points can be earned for extra credit. The criteria for earned points will be further discussed by the instructor, and will require the student to share their extra credit with the class. The instructor will determine if any other forms of extra credit will be given throughout the semester.
REFERENCES


