A REFLECTIVE NARRATIVE (PRAXIS) APPROACH TO MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

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ABSTRACT

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Freirean critical pedagogy has been critiqued by scholars from across disciplines including Composition and Rhetoric, Education and Critical Race Studies. Critics of critical pedagogy suggest that student's race, class and sex complicate the effectiveness of teaching within a critical pedagogy framework. What is not captured in these critiques is how teachers implement and attempt to resolve issues within the implementation of critical pedagogy. By applying teacher-research methods to her first-year writing (FYW) classroom, Novotny self-examines the process teachers undergo in order to implement critical pedagogy in the composition classroom.

The study focuses on such questions: How do writing instructors implement a critical pedagogy in a FYW classroom? How does the teacher engage with students when discussing concepts/materials/assignments rooted in a critical pedagogy? How does a teacher encourage a "critical consciousness" in first-year student writing?

Researching her FYW course, Novotny composes a reflective narrative methodology to articulate the multiple identities of consciousness that appeared. Doing so, implications are drawn not only for the implementation of critical pedagogy in FYW classrooms but the use of teacher-research as a tool for facilitating Freirean praxis. Through multiple narratives Novotny reveals not only her own critical consciousness development as a teacher but an analysis of students development of "naive" versus "transitive" consciousness (Freire, 1974).

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The process of writing and researching has truly been a moment of learning in my graduate studies. I have found myself often confused, bewildered, and at many moments feeling very vulnerable to the task of researching and exposing myself as a teacher-researcher. Yet these moments have fostered much insight about my pedagogy, my comfort with “doing” research, and critical pedagogy.

All of these moments have been possible due to the trust, patience, and encouragement from my committee members. Ellen Cushman, your interest in my work and continuous encouragement has been tremendously meaningful to me. Julie Lindquist, the time you made to listen to the concerns I was experiencing during this project did not go unnoticed. Your listening ear and outside perspective was extremely valuable and critical to the findings I share below. David E. Kirkland, your kindness and compassion towards me as a scholar and as a human have tremendously impacted my graduate studies. I thank you all for continually encouraging me during this process. Your willingness to cultivate myself into a respectful and open young scholar has been a most rewarding experience. I am honored to know and have worked with all of you.

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to the places that I research, work, and study. Finally, to KJ. Thank you for your patience, love, and support. Without you as my partner, I would not be in this moment.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION - A METHODOLOGY FOR MAPPING

What follows is a collection of stories, narrativized in order to represent a larger constellation or map of the scene of critical pedagogy. I choose to use the word stories, scenes and maps purposely. When I began this process of conducting research as an attempt to understand the process of facilitating critical pedagogy in my first-year writing classroom, I did not fully understand the multiple relationships and entities that would be exposed in such a process. What was discovered were the complex relationships that tell a story and connect with other stories in order to create a larger scene of critical pedagogy. Therefore, in the nature of the study design examining the role of process, I found the need to represent these multiple voices and multiple narratives in this piece. In doing so, what occurred to me was that I was not looking solely at a finalized and finished product but rather the relationships and narratives that exist in creating a finalized product. As a result, chapters are constructed to represent various stories of the scene. As can be with the genre of story, the chapters have different characters and different voices.

This first chapter consists of stories that attempt to situate the reader to the rational of why I selected this as my project. These stories are narrated from my position as a graduate student locating this study around my own experiences, interests and several disciplines'[1] previous work with critical pedagogy. The second chapter is narrated from my perspective as a teacher-researcher. In this chapter, the scene sets the stage for the physical landscape that was constructed in this design of this project. The third chapter attempts to reflect the scene of this landscape from multiple points of

[1] By "disciplines" I am referring to not only Rhetoric and Composition, of which I belong to, but also Education, English and Critical Race Studies.

view and identities. This is a chapter devoted primarily to exposing the complexity of relationships that exist when facilitating critical pedagogy in a first-year writing classroom. As such, I tell the story of how I needed to negotiate my duel identities as a teacher-researcher and also attempt to create a place to present the voices and reactions of my students. The fourth chapter functions more as a reflective piece of thinking back, engaging in praxis, about the process of actually conducting such research and how that influenced my understanding of actually doing teacher-research. The fifth and final chapter then attempts to set the stage for implications of such reflection. In many ways it attempts to ask questions about what I found from this research and how to possibly move such evidence forward in the disciplines[2] and in teacher-research as a research method.

These multiple stories, I argue, create a larger scene of critical pedagogy and asks the reader to think of critical pedagogy not as a set, finalized, product; but as a shifting process that interacts with different people and at different moments for different reasons and purposes. In many ways, this research offers a suggestion that critical pedagogy cannot be thought of as something final but as something that constantly revises and transforms as a result of the narratives that get created within it. As such, I argue that this map is not transferable to all. Rather, maps are situated within experiences shaped by various narratives and participants within those narratives. Therefore, while I wish that this map could become a map for others interested in critical pedagogy, I am well aware that it is not and cannot be a map for all. Nonetheless, it is

[2] Again, my main concern is thinking about critical pedagogy in the discipline of Rhetoric and Composition. However, I understand critical pedagogy to be used in multiple disciplines, as already stated. As such, I believe that some of the implications of this research reach across disciplines.

by looking at these multiple narratives and their connections that create a larger scene that I think larger takeaways about what it means to do work with critical pedagogy and teacher-research can be takeaways for all readers.

Origin Story: Locating My Interest in Critical Pedagogy & First-Year Writing

I was first introduced to the term "critical pedagogy" when I began my master's studies in literacy and pedagogy. This was my first semester of graduate school after being out of school for several years. As a previous undergraduate English major at a private, Jesuit university, attending a large, public research institution for the first time in a field that only remotely reflected my English degree – I was, needless to say, overwhelmed. This feeling of anxiety resided however after reading Paulo Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. A difficult and philosophical text, I found myself oddly drawn to it. Between the political time period it came out of in Latin America and the discussions of love, hope and social justice, I began to piece parts of this text to the teachings I had encountered throughout my life, when privately educated in Jesuit traditions. Nonetheless, the context that our class discussed this book was framed around urban education, something that I had little experience with and about. Despite this gap, I remained drawn to the concepts of Freire and his discussions of critical pedagogy.

Reflecting on Freire's attention to problem-posing education and fighting for liberation, I found myself connecting aspects of this type of education to my undergraduate first-year writing course. When I first entered Marquette University as a freshman, my intent was to become anything but an English major. Following this desire, I enrolled as pre-med determined to one, make a comfortable income and two,

to work and help others. In attempting to fulfill this dream, however, I found the task to be tedious and stress-filled. I became consumed with the idea of needing to study every waking second of the day as I continued to struggle in my science courses. Oddly enough I found my first-year writing course to be a happy addition to my first semester schedule. Coming to this class I found that I could learn about my fellow classmates and their lives, many of them came from places around the US and even the world that seemed like fantasy lands – one even coming from Yemen. But I also found myself able to ask deep, meaningful questions and attempt to grapple with them in the writing assignments. In this course, I found a place to express my voice and my experiences in a way that seemed to come pretty naturally. There was no struggle, no feeling of a need to commit to this work. It was in fact, the opposite experience that I had in the sciences. And ultimately, it was from this experience that I found myself switching from pre-med to English as my degree in order to continue exploring how writing allowed me to connect not only with my world but with the worlds of others.

It was in this first-year writing class that I learned that writing could serve not only an individual purpose but could also be used as a tool to connect personal experience with other's experience and to reflect upon such experiences in truly meaningful ways. As I continued to finish my first semester of graduate school then, I found myself reflecting on my experience as a first-year writing student. Some of this I am sure was partially due to the fact that I was now teaching this course, but also because I started to understand this commitment that I had to this type of introductory course. While some may view first-year writing as a mandated requirement, my experience taught me that it is a rather unique class in which students to get to experience college at an intimate

level and learn to express themselves in ways that large lecture-based courses simply do not nor cannot permit. Further, I found myself thinking about how my first-year writing course that I participated in followed many of the same tenants of Freirean critical pedagogy. As a liberatory pedagogy, it seemed to fit a liberal Jesuit education system that valued work that served others. Nonetheless, while I was drawn to critical pedagogy, I found myself struggling to articulate what it actually was and how it was performed. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 2000) tended to focus around the end result of critical pedagogy – that is developing a new critical consciousness for a liberatory effect. Yet, as someone studying how to teach this, I was left with few to little answers.

Believing in the power of critical pedagogy because of my own indirect experience of it as an undergraduate, I became concerned that I would receive a master's degree indicating my specialty in critical pedagogy yet with little knowledge of how to explain to others how this concept is actually initiated. As I entered my spring semester of graduate school, I enrolled in research methodologies and spent the majority of that class designing a research project that would attempt to answer the "how" of critical pedagogy instead of the end result of critical pedagogy. It was from this course that I arrived at the concept of looking at the process of critical pedagogy in my own first-year writing classroom. What follows then is a group of narratives that attempt to narrate how I facilitated critical pedagogy and what was noticed as a result of looking at the process over the product.

This was a journey that I found was many years in the making. As a child growing up surrounded by Jesuit influences both in education and in my spiritual life, I

found critical pedagogy as a piece that fit the many views of my own approaches. In my personal and professional life, a division that I see is only a cultural construct, I seek to recognize the human dignity of others. This has been a foundational belief of mine that I attempt to live in the multiple communities in which I participate. Recognizing the dignity of others is something that I believe Freirean critical pedagogy holds at its center. It looks with love and hope at the possibilities for all to live in a world that recognizes and upholds human dignity. In my teaching, in my research, and in my day-to-day interactions I too attempt to not only recognize but defend human dignity. The journey that is narrated below attempts to represent my attempt to do just that – fight for the presence of human dignity in the world. At points one can see my struggle to do so, yet I take this journey as one of practice. One that attempts to actually practice human dignity in my work, at times this is failed, however in the writing and reflection of this I work towards bettering this practice. In essence, in the writing of this journey, I engage in a new part of the process of critical pedagogy – praxis. For the writing of this journey functions as a reflective moment and one asks not to simply highlight the good and the bad but to continually strive for better. It is through praxis then that new, more developed knowledge is created. With this, I ask you, the reader, to be gracious in your reading of this. Understand that this writing and project represents simply a moment of practice – one that will continue to be practiced and re-practiced as I attempt uphold my commitment to human dignity.

Understanding Critical Pedagogy As A Shifting Landscape

As indicated in my methodology for mapping, looking at the process of critical pedagogy indicates that there are shifts that occur in facilitating critical pedagogy. That

is, critical pedagogy is not a stagnant concept. Rather, it shifts and reorients as it encounters different narratives and characters of those narratives. While looking at the end result of critical pedagogy may imply it as a fixed-concept, examining the process actually reveals how critical the landscape is to a critical pedagogy. Specifically, there is no one, set landscape of critical pedagogy; rather critical pedagogy is a concept that can move and resituate itself to multiple landscapes. Therefore, in its implementation in a variety of classroom settings – urban, secondary, higher education, I recognize that critical pedagogy can be confusing in nature.

Reflecting on my experience with critical pedagogy in graduate school by discussing its usefulness in urban education differed tremendously from my actual experience of critical pedagogy as a first-year writing student. At first glance it may seem that these are not the same types of critical pedagogy, but in actuality they are attempting to produce the same end result yet do so by approaching the facilitation of this process in different ways. As such, the process allows educators to look rhetorically at critical pedagogy reflecting on the audience it is serving and how it engages with that audience to achieve its end results. As a concept then that continually asks its participants to take action and reflect upon their lives, it makes sense that this could not be a fixed concept. Critical pedagogy depends upon and focuses on a relationship with people. As a pedagogy, it is relational and interactive with the people that implement and are products of it.

Historically, if looking at critical pedagogy's roots in liberation theology, it becomes apparent to see how Freirean critical pedagogy was born out of a movement and a landscape that differs tremendously from how it is applied today. This is not to

say that critical pedagogy today achieves different end results, but rather, that critical pedagogy works in different landscapes for different purposes. It is the job of an educator implementing critical pedagogy to understand how these landscapes and the participants within the landscapes engage differently with these concepts than other previous critical pedagogy examples.

Critical Pedagogy's Roots in Liberation Theology

Freirean critical pedagogy was born out of Third World Latin American politics during the 1950s and 1960s (Kirylo, 2011). During this historical moment, tensions were emerging between the Catholic Church and national governments fight for authority and power. As missionary sites, the Catholic Church had established relationships with Latin American regimes of power. Looking at the landscape of any Latin American city, Berryman (1987) illustrates the visible presence of this relationship in cities nationwide describing the heart of Latin American cities with a plaza in which "stands a cathedral, church, or chapel and along another side the presidential palace, city hall, or other official building. The architectural embodiments of the religious and civil powers face each other across the center of inhabited space" (p. 9). It is this imagery that situates the politics of Latin America intrinsically with the Catholic Church and subconsciously recalls the Catholic Church's role in colonizing Latin American countries (Berryman, 1987). Thus, churches and society were always intertwined in Latin America; the Church[3] was always present. Yet 1960s politics in Latin America began to challenge such a relationship between the Church and society. Specifically, the Cuban revolution and Brazilian military regimes began to implement 'developmentalism' which created a

[3] Please note that by capitalizing "Church" it is referring to the Catholic Church. Lowercase "church" refers to specific pastoral level Catholic churches.

catalyst for clergy and the laity of the Catholic Church in Latin America to begin questioning who the Church was serving and how it effective it was at being committed to the basic human needs of the poor (Berryman, 1987).

The Church wanted to assist governments in achieving developmentalism, yet were highly critical of how governments were distributing resources to the poor. While Brazilian officials were attempting to structure the economic growth of the Third World country, resources continued to fail and reach the poorest of the poor (Berryman, 1987). Situated in a landscape where Church and state have closely resided, the recent Second Vatican Council began to mobilize and encourage members of churches to look more critically at their own churches and how they served their laity (Berryman, 1987). This resulted in Latin American Catholics to begin moving away from political developmentalism due to military regimes frequent and radical killing of clergy and laity that challenged the authority of who developmentalism was truly serving (Berryman, 1987). It is this break between Church and politics in Latin America which scholars mark as the birth of “liberation theology” (Berryman, 1987; Vuola, 2002). Kirylo (2001) writes about the break between the Church and state in Latin America, stating “military regimes in Brazil, Chile, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and El Salvador…were steadfast to control church activities when they thought the activities were subversive to their regimes… [Consequently] thousands of the laity and clergy were threatened, tortured, imprisoned and killed” (p. 186). As a result, small grassroots movements organized around the Church in which fellow clergy and laity created small revolutionary groups seeking to redistribute the resources of the wealthy to the poor (Berryman, 1987).

One of those influenced by the growth of these movements was Freire, who practiced Catholicism. During the time that liberation theology was growing as a grassroots movement in the 1960s, Freire joined a Brazilian-based grassroots movement and began working in Brazil teaching reading and writing to illiterate adults (Kirylo, 2011). They were truly the "poorest of the poor", a theme continually stressed and reiterated in liberation theology. To address development inequities, religious activists began to employ the term "conscientização"[4], encouraging grassroots movements to bring poor and starving workers to an enlightened understanding of their situation and empower them with literacy skills (Berryman, 1987; Kirylo, 2011). The suggestion to employ the concept was rooted in the understanding that it could "help the community come together, articulate its needs, and become organized" (Berryman, 1987, p. 36). Here, arises the root of liberation theology into influencing Freirean critical pedagogy. Kirylo (2011) writes that it was these initial experiences working with the Brazilian poor and the applied concept of "conscientization" that sparked the beginning conceptualization of the now acclaimed text, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

The Need to Understand Landscapes

Understanding the historical and political situations that initiated liberation theology and Freire's own interest in "conscientization" during the writing of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, it is clear that the landscapes in which critical pedagogy is implemented as a tool for creating liberatory education differs tremendously from its

[4] Conscientização is the Spanish language word equivalent to conscientization in English. Both words refer to the process of coming to an awareness. The term conscientização is used in instances when other scholars have indicated a preference for the original root of the word to be used. I use conscientization when I discuss my own project, which took place in the English language, or when I write about Freire in my own words.

historical roots. Freire appeared to understand the limitations of his own method and often articulated that the so-called “Freirean method” should not be reduced to one set model. Instead, by design it “must be recreated or reinvented in order to be meaningful for those involved” (Kirylo, 2011, p. 120). Understanding the need to reinvent and recreate the pedagogy underscores the need for facilitators of this “method” to understand the landscapes and relationships that they are entering into when implementing such pedagogy. Freire’s own call to reinvent such a method emphasizes the need to think of this a shifting and changing pedagogy. One needs to understand “those involved” in order to create meaningful moments that ask of one to think critically about their rationality to the world. As a concept then that is involved in working with others, Freire seems to recognize its own instability and dependence on rationality. It is this emphasis that situates my study by looking at the process and paying attention to this rationality rather than simply looking at the end result of the process – the finalized product. For truly, if one takes Freire’s words seriously, one should be constantly engaging in this method, recreating and it and actively engaging in praxis with it.

A Process Orientation to Studying Freirean Critical Pedagogy

Needing to understand the complex relationships that are engaged with when facilitating critical pedagogy, I sought to create a study that examined the process of critical pedagogy. Reviewing the literature that surrounded critical pedagogy, much of it focused heavily on the final product of critical pedagogy, exploring where one could indicate exact “new consciousness” of students. With such an ambiguous and difficult task, it makes sense that scholars would have difficulty in locating that “consciousness” moment of student learning. Understanding these issues, I sought to study critical

pedagogy that cut across these tensions in the field. While I certainly acknowledge the criticism of the field on critical pedagogy as a product, I desired to know more about how to actually facilitate critical pedagogy and in understanding this sought to theorize how one could respond to these critiques by better understanding the process in engaging with the method. Below then establishes the field's position on critical pedagogy and how I use these positions as motivation for looking at the "how" as a way to possibly respond to the "what" and "where" of critical pedagogy.

Framing the Field's Critique of Critical Pedagogy

Scholars in fields of Critical Race Studies, Rhetoric and Composition, English and Education have criticized critical pedagogy because of its inability to assess both the genuineness of conscientization and of its ability to be recognized and assessed. Both criticisms rely solely upon critical pedagogy as a final product, as an end result. In fact, while many scholars agree that the role of education is to develop student's critical consciousness (Freire, 1974, 2000); how successful such an implementation is however is an issue that continues to be debated. Specifically, in the field of rhetoric and composition, English studies, and education – scholars such as Giroux, (1997), Trainor (2002, 2008), Morrell (2007), Ryden & Marshall (2012) have advocated for applying critical pedagogy theory to the classroom. Others, however, such as Cushman (1999), Durst (1999), Ellsworth (1989), Miller (1998), Phelps (1992), Thelin (2005) have questioned the effectiveness of teaching from a critical pedagogy and its ability to develop the critical consciousness of students.

Critical pedagogy asks students to question the very positions they hold, oppressor or oppressed (Freire, 2000), and many times these positions become related

to position of race, class, and sex. As a result, often times scholars (Anderson, 1997; Bloom, 1996; Goodburn, 1999; Kennedy et al., 2005; Prendergast, 1998; Ryden & Marshall, 2012; and Trainor 2002, 2008) report instances of true student resistance and/or guilt when critical pedagogy is implemented, and in turn, complicates the effectiveness of teaching within a critical framework. The theoretical framework of this study thus relies upon the understanding of critical pedagogy – what it is, overall issues of implementing it, and the debate over whether composition should be taught within a critical pedagogy framework. Giroux (2010) writes that Freirean critical pedagogy is "the educational movement, guided by passion and principle, to help students develop consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action" (p. B15). As such, this pedagogy asks students to bring in their own personal experience and knowledge into the classroom in order to engage in a "questioning that demands far more competence than rote learning and the application of acquired skills" (Giroux, 2010, p. B15). Instead of working from a banking model of education in which the teacher narrates to his/her students and the task of the students is to memorize and absorb the information without question; the Freirean (2000) concept of critical pedagogy asks students to inquire about their experiences and understandings because "apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention" (72). With problem-posing in the classroom, students and teachers learn from each other to re-create knowledge by reflecting on the world they live in, asking questions about its reality, and ultimately formulating a new truth to this reality. It is through such dialogue that Giroux (2010) writes, "knowledge is not simply received by

students, but actively transformed, as they learn how to engage others in critical dialogue and be held accountable for their own views...[ensuring] that the future points the way to a more socially just world" (p. B15). As such, educators and institutions committed to social justice have often praised critical pedagogy as a "'pedagogy of possibility'" (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 301), which challenges the power and stability of societal injustices.

However, as a pedagogy where "personal experience becomes a valuable resource" (Giroux, 2010, p. B15), student and teacher reactions to implementing a critical pedagogy can be contested, resisted, or even completely rejected. In fact, Trainor (2002), a proponent of critical pedagogy, documents the trouble of implementing a critical pedagogy with "the student who resists or rejects critical perspectives or who openly expresses racism or sexism in the classroom has, unfortunately, become a familiar figure in the literature on critical pedagogy" (p. 631). She provides two portraits of white students, Holly and Paul, enrolled in a critical writing class where multicultural texts were selected for the students to read and discuss. Trainor notes that Paul struggled with feelings of essentialism and feeling blamed for oppressing non-whites; whereas Holly's contributions to the course were founded less on feelings of blame, nonetheless, she felt the need to disavow her whiteness in the class. Trainor (2002) speaks to the critical pedagogy's apparent inability to address issues of whiteness. Ryden & Marshall (2012) echo similar concerns in regards to critical pedagogy's issues of whiteness stating that "while the academy has applied much effort to marginalized groups, whiteness as a group has been quietly put aside and ignored" (p. 3) which can

lead to white students in critical pedagogy classes feeling very much “othered” and/or blamed and/or white guilt (Giroux, 1997).

Thus while Trainor (2002, 2005), Ryden & Marshall (2012), and Giroux discuss white students who struggle and resist critical pedagogy, Cushman (1999) works at the opposite spectrum – questioning how critical pedagogy assumes a false consciousness of those minorities who are oppressed and of critical pedagogy’s attempt to “free” them of their oppression and become more critical of the systems they inhabit. Cushman (1999) argues through her fieldwork and ethnographic study in an upstate New York inner city, that those who are oppressed are already conscious of their position within large class, gender and race systems. As such, there is no need to bring about a new critical consciousness – this is something that the oppressed already possess. Therefore, there are questions that arise such as who is benefiting from a critical consciousness? Who is in need of developing a critical consciousness, especially if those who we think are “liberating” already posses an understanding of their oppression?

Understanding the complicated systems of oppression that critical pedagogy attempts to liberate and move towards a larger concept of social justice and its resistance and contested effectiveness, scholars (Anderson, 1997; Bizzell, 1992; Bloom, 1996; Durst, 1999; Ellsworth, 1989; Goodburn, 1999; Kennedy, Middleton, & Ratcliffe, 2005; Miller, 1998; Phelps, 1992; Prendergast, 1998; Ryden & Marshall, 2012; Thelin, 2005; Trainor, 2002, 2008) have debated the importance of teaching composition from a critical pedagogy framework. As a believer in the composition classroom as a place for social justice, Anderson (1997) offers a solution to ensure

effectiveness of activist-rooted pedagogy within the classroom by drawing upon rhetorical stasis theory. Anderson believes that in order for teachers to be effective in creating social justice pedagogies, like critical pedagogy, these teachers must have knowledge within the discipline of rhetoric, primarily rhetorical theory. Thus the composition classroom, and first-year classroom that attempts to teach rhetoric appears to be an appropriate home for critical pedagogy. And while Anderson acknowledges issues of student resistance in this pedagogy, claiming that the result of the students final positioning may not always agree with the position held by the instructor; as a pedagogy, teachers will succeed in by allowing students to develop and create an inner authority answering questions themselves – a more critical consciousness.

Similarly, Bolgatz's (1996) case study of observing discussions of race and racism in a high school Language-Arts History class, argues the necessity of discussing such issues with students in a classroom setting via critical pedagogy. From her study, Bolgatz (1996) acknowledges that it can be difficult for teachers to discuss race in the classroom claiming that, "classroom conversations about race and racism can be difficult. Often teachers and students-sometimes apologetically, sometimes angrily, but most unselfconsciously-avoid the topics altogether. When they do take place, conversations frequently remain superficial or simplistic" (p. 1). While Bolgatz (1996) acknowledges that many teachers do not want to engage in questions and conversations about race in their classroom, she argues that discussing race and racism in the classroom is meaningful for the following reasons: "school is a place where students learn to live democratically; we have a moral imperative to teach students about social responsibility; race and racism are critical aspects of the school

curriculum; talking about race and racism helps students understand their world" (p. 4). Beginning to have these discussions focused around race and encouraging our students and ourselves as teachers to develop racial literacy can lead to more critically consciousness and better understandings of racism in our society. By doing so, steps will be taken as citizens towards promoting a more equal and just democracy inherit to critical pedagogy. As such, while Bolgatz does not root her argument in composition classrooms explicitly, she nonetheless makes the claim for critical pedagogy to be actively taught in educational settings, which is the home of first-year writing.

Further, Kennedy et al.'s (2005) CCCC's symposium on whiteness offers another defense of applying critical pedagogy to the composition classroom. While Giroux (1997), Ryden & Marshall (2012), and Trainor (2002) have raised questions about the attention critical pedagogy applies to white students in the classroom, these scholars find that viewing critical pedagogy from a rhetorical standpoint can add to discussions in first-year classrooms that teach rhetorical tools. Kennedy et al. (2005) contend that by studying whiteness in our composition classrooms, student and scholarly critical thinking is expanded upon and "extends our discipline's study of images and visual rhetoric" (p. 366). Additionally within the symposium, Michelle Kendrick adds to the conversation stating that "in composition we add brown authors to our comp/rhet textbooks and teach about multiple voices, but ultimately we continue to valorize white academic discourse" (Kennedy et al., 2005, p. 401). Therefore, while as a discipline implementing critical pedagogy as a place for other voices to exist is important; the field of composition must start actually making space for these voices to not only exist but to have value within our academic work.

While these scholars view critical pedagogy as supportive of rhetoric and composition's goals, Durst (1999) however contends that while the theories of critical pedagogy are theoretically good in nature, they nonetheless neglect the students' main objective of a composition course. Specifically, in his study Durst found that students are pragmatists in that they are career-oriented and as such the theoretical approaches to critical pedagogy simply do not tend to their needs of obtaining a future career. As such, these students will often resist practices of critical pedagogy within the classroom. Therefore, Durst (1999) suggests instructors should adopt a pedagogy of "reflective instrumentalism" (p. 177). Adopting such, Durst (1999) acknowledges that students are taught to think of critical perspectives but not take an affirmative stance on these. In effect, this pedagogy acknowledges students pragmatic goals, attempts to work with these goals, but pushes students to reflective aspect that is both helpful to students personally and professionally.

More emphatically against critical pedagogy in the composition classroom is Miller (1998) who claims that critical pedagogy is appealing due to its own rhetoric – focusing on teaching the vague, "how to think", than the more concrete, "what to think". Thus, instructors and scholars easily buy into this "conscious-raising" rhetoric. Specifically, critical pedagogy's appeal is so attractive to scholars in the field because "it covers over our more primary role as functionaries of the administration's educational arm" (Miller, 1998, p.18). Further, Miller questions the pedagogy's effectiveness of conscious-raising instruction claiming that instructors will have a hard time indicating a student's true critical consciousness in their papers. In fact, Miller claims that student voice in their papers may not necessarily be representative of their own critical

consciousness and may instead be simply giving the teacher what they want to read. Thus, Miller questions the effectiveness of teaching writing from a critical pedagogy position.

While it is clear that many scholars and instructors understand critical pedagogy as theoretically worthy of implementation, being able to teach and acknowledge true conscious-raising can be difficult as seen in Miller (1998). Further, accounting for issues of dealing with personal issues in the course can also impact classroom engagement (Giroux, 1997; Ryden & Marshall, 2012; Trainor, 2002) and make false assumptions about the goals of critical pedagogy (Cushman, 1999). As such, in order to better understand how to effectively implement such a pedagogy, I return to Freire's original concept by questioning how then does one develop students' critical consciousness?

Freire (1974) understands that achieving a critical consciousness is not an easy and one-step process. Instead, to fully develop a critical consciousness one goes through a series of steps. In these examples students have achieved only a "naïve consciousness" where students believe to be fully conscious but remain naively reductive, and/or over simplify problems (Freire, 1974, p. 18). In this stage, critical consciousness is still developing and as such the formation and guidance they receive by instructors are critical to their success in moving toward a "critical transitive consciousness" (Freire, 1974 p.18). This is the stage of true critical consciousness according to Freire (1974). In a transitive consciousness, students approach problems with in-depth interpretation and openness to revising their own understandings (Freire, 1974). It is making the move between this "naïve consciousness" and "transitive consciousness" that I believe many implementers of a critical pedagogy struggle. The

examples and problematizing of a critical pedagogy that are offered by both Trainor (2002) and Cushman (1999) are actually analyzing the movement between “naïve consciousness” and “transitive consciousness” in their studies. The intention and purpose of them doing so may not be at the core of their pieces, but I argue that both are structured around a questioning of how consciousness is at work in their studies. For Cushman (1999) consciousness always exists. Yet, returning to Freire and consciousness, there is no indication of what type of consciousness is actually existing in Cushman’s piece. Yes, those in the study may already embody a consciousness – but to what degree, is not clear. Furthermore, Trainor’s (2002) piece examines student’s rejection of moving towards a “transitive consciousness” with the case of Paul, a student who cited an inability to move towards a positive understanding of his white identity. Instead of moving beyond feelings of blame for his identity, Paul remained unable to formulate an antiracist white response to the discussions occurring in this classroom around race. Trainor (2002) never traces the case of Paul back to Freirean steps in developing a critical consciousness. Yet, the differences in approaching the subject of race between Paul and Holly, a white student who critically pushed the class according to Trainor to discuss race, may have been due to the multiple levels or steps that a student participates in to engage in a truly “transitive” consciousness. This study then attempts to pay particular attention to those steps or levels that exist in a writing course around race. By doing so, it is my intention to build upon Freire’s understanding of how a critical consciousness is developed by the teacher.

Understanding the levels of a consciousness rooted in Freirean theory, this study attempts to note such instances where the teacher attempts to move students either via

discussions or writing into a true “transitive consciousness”. Miller (1998) states that tracking a true appearance of a “critical consciousness” is difficult to note instances of the author’s true voice. However, as a semester long study and through observations, as well as interview, and the collection of student writing assignments, I am hopeful that this study may be able to provide a better rationale as to how first-year writing instructors implement a critical pedagogy in the classroom, the issues they encounter doing so, and how the instructor encourages a “critical consciousness” in first-year student writing and what that writing looks like.

Freire’s (1974) levels of achieving a true consciousness may provide new insight into the issues that teachers encounter as they implement critical pedagogy. While scholars have suggested that student resentment may be based upon issues of positionality such as race, class, and sex (Giroux, 1997; Trainor, 2002, 2008); applying Freire’s (1974) levels of consciousness may provide new insight into deeper pedagogical issues that plague the ability to move students into a deeper consciousness. Instead of blaming students for resistance to critical pedagogy, perhaps it is the instruction that is obstructing student consciousness and growth. As such, this study attempts to track these instances of student resistance and the teachers negotiation and management of that resistance in order to provide a deeper rationale as to whether it is the student’s resistance acting as the opposition to critical pedagogy or the teacher’s ability to negotiate and manage that student’s resistance.

Responding to the Field’s Critique Through a Process-Oriented Approach

To move beyond and respond productively to the critiques against critical pedagogy, I suggest to implement an approach that embraces an understanding of how

to implement critical pedagogy rather than tear down critical pedagogy as a product the fails to create visible products or assumes too much about the finalized product. Interested in process as a valuable teaching approach both Shari Stenberg and Amy Goodburn have begun to discuss the need to think about critical pedagogy through process. In her *College English* article Stenberg (2006) begins to explore the process of critical pedagogy by examining it as a liberatory pedagogy. Stenberg suggests that critical questions need to be asked of teachers who use critical pedagogy and often times place too many expectations upon their student's final products. Stenberg claims that often times teachers of critical pedagogy enter the classroom with an unwritten expectation of the goal, the end result of the knowledge made in the classroom. Goodburn's (1998) article in *A Journal of Composition Theory* serves as a foundational source for Stenberg and echoes similar sentiments which suggests that teachers often misappropriate a student's knowledge as lacking intellectual fervor when in fact what it is doing is serving to decenter the teacher's own authority on critical thinking and writing. Using Goodburn's articulation of the missteps teachers have when encountering critical pedagogy, Stenberg (2006) suggests that by making "the pedagogical goal not a predetermined 'critical' end, which may alienate students who deem this perspective hostile to their social locations, but a *process* of critical inquiry, we may gain an opportunity to work in solidarity with students" (p. 284). A revised goal of critical pedagogy then should not be placed in the final product or outcome of the student as often times it may clash with our own expectation of that goal "but to value that knowledge as a resource in the process of *collaborative* knowledge making" (Stenberg, 2006, p. 284). Stenberg expresses that dismissing student's own knowledge

and knowledge sources that may be antithetical to academia, especially this is seen with religious or spiritual references being argued as legitimate sources in the classroom, actually disserves tenants of Freirean critical pedagogy. And so what is exposed in Stenberg's (2006) piece is that "While critical pedagogy gives lip service to producing critical citizens who work toward social transformation (Gore 111), the discourse itself focuses little on what this practice looks like" (p. 286). This emphasis on understanding not what this practice is but *how* this practice is done frames my own research project.

By looking at the *how*, there may be new opportunities to better envision the practices of this pedagogy in a landscape like first-year-writing. Specifically, understanding how one does critical pedagogy in a first-year-writing classroom will allow one to see what this looks like and ask key questions as to what its purpose may be in the first-year writing classroom. Answering these questions not only serve practical purposes but also allow us to be better informed of the theory itself. For theory is rooted in practice. As such, theory and practice constantly inform each other. And so to better understand the terrain of critical pedagogy in the first-year-writing classroom may better inform us to its use as a theory for first-year-writing programs.

Using Process to Map a Landscape

Process then becomes an approach that allows one to look at the complexities of a concept and understand them on a local level. As a result, by looking at the process of critical pedagogy allows one to look at the multiple stories that create this larger landscaped scene. Jacqueline Royster's (2003) piece *Disciplinary Landscaping, or Contemporary Challenges in the History of Rhetoric* applies well to this metaphor of

landscaping an academic-based terrain. While Royster's piece speaks to the discipline of rhetoric, her articulation of how to landscape is useful when considering the current state of critical pedagogy. Royster suggests to the discipline that there needs to be "re-set" of the lines, histories, stories and frameworks that are used to when compiling the history of rhetoric. To do so, she suggests a three-fold effort revolving around shifts in order for a more current landscape of a discipline to emerge. By telling stories, historicizing "using the combination of story-telling and history-telling" and using a "re-formed interpretive framework to re-consider data" one can begin to "re-envision the landscape, to see more, to understand what's visible in more dynamic ways, and to develop new theories" (Royster, 2003, p. 196). This three-fold effort is all focused around process – to reconsider how to imagine a larger concept by understanding how process can help us get there. The same is what I am attempting to do with critical pedagogy – to shift the concepts focus on end result and product towards one that values and understands the processes behind this product. Doing so can begin to better rearticulate the value of critical pedagogy beyond the limitations that it faces (Cushman, 1999; Durst, 1999; Ellsworth, 1989; Miller, 1998; Phelps, 1992; Thelin, 2005). This then in turn may result in generating new theories around critical pedagogy and around its relationship to the first-year writing classroom.

CHAPTER 2: THE STUDIED LANDSCAPE OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

What follows below is an attempt to describe the overall characters and narratives that make up enacting a scene of critical pedagogy. As such, I attempt to provide a localized context for the makeup of this research project.

The Site, Context, and Participants

To understand the process of implementing critical pedagogy, I determined with my academic committee[5] that I would use the site of my first-year writing classroom to study how a teacher applies critical pedagogy to the classroom and most importantly how a teacher negotiates issues of resistance and false consciousness within the classroom. While the ability to conduct research in my own classroom did result out of partial convenience, theoretical reasoning was involved in this process. The first-year writing classroom always particularly intrigued me. My origin story that I shared with you above is an indicator of this. I found myself wanting to return to academia after a couple of years of working as a grant writer because I found myself desiring those moments of using writing not in technical use but in affective and inventive approaches. This is what I believe first-year writing program offers – a place to create a space for students to voice their own experiences and understandings of the world around them in dialogue with their peer's experiences and understandings. And so in many ways I see the first-year writing program as a place where Freire's work naturally applies. A place to apply Freirean tenants of critical pedagogy rooted in dialogue to make sense and read "the word and world".

[5] My committee consists of Ellen Cushman, Chair; Julie Lindquist and David E. Kirkland.

As the design of this project became finalized I soon discovered that I would be teaching a section of first-year writing themed, “Race & Ethnicity in America”. This would be the first time teaching this type of themed course yet my interests in whiteness and identity attracted me to this type of course. Further, I found myself understanding that discussions around identity may yield itself particularly well to assisting my students in developing their “conscientization”.

The course was a semester long and ran during the Fall 2012 semester at a large Big Ten university located in the Midwest. 27 students enrolled in this course; the maximum capacity for a first-year writing course. However, after two weeks one student dropped the course citing heavy coursework outside of this course and, as a result, was unable to continue attending. As such, there were a total of 26 students that participated in the class and in this study. Of these students, eight identified as male and 18 identified as female[6]. Additionally since this was a course that analyzed and discussed racial and ethnic identity, students often shared and revealed their own racial/ethnic identities in this course. The following is a chart that reveals student identities.

[6] These students revealed their gendered identities to me through their writing. As such, these were self-identified gender categories that were not assumed but articulated by the individual.

Table 1: Race/Ethnicity of Students[7]

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Students Identifying
African American	7
Asian/Pacific Islander	3
White	13
Haitian	1
Mixed	2
TOTAL	**26**

The majority of the students enrolled in this course were freshman. Four students either achieved sophomore or junior level status. These four students were male and identified either as Asian, African American, or Haitian. All of my white students were freshman.

Project Focus & Research Questions

The goal of this project was to better understand the relationship between the first-year writing classroom and the implementation of critical pedagogy through the role of a teacher. My initial research questions were then focused as:

- How do writing instructors implement a critical pedagogy in a first-year composition classroom?
- How does the teacher engage with students when discussing concepts/materials/assignments rooted in a critical pedagogy?
- How does a teacher encourage a "critical consciousness" in first-year student writing?

[7] These identities were revealed either through dialogue or within student papers. Further, these are the identities students claimed not identities that I assumed.

Thus, while this study purposely focused on the teacher's role in the classroom, it at the same time examined the process and, thereby the products, produced through process by students in the classroom. An overarching objective of this project then was an attempt to highlight the relationship between student and teacher as well as the relationship between process and product.

What I Expected to Learn

By examining the relationships involved in critical pedagogy, I anticipated being able to experience current critiques of critical pedagogy, and by experiencing those, cut across the debates in the discipline of whether or not critical pedagogy should be in the composition classroom. Specifically, I desired for this study to no longer dwell in such debates, but to provide a case for how issues found in these debates are managed and negotiated. As such, the study was an attempt to capture those debates but then add to the conversation by providing instances of how the instructor managed and negotiated those issues and look at the overall success of doing so and implementing the pedagogy. I anticipated then that this study would provide "lived" moments of the following:

- Student resistance/response to instruction encouraging "critical thinking" (Cushman, 1999; Giroux, 1997; Trainor, 2002)
- Teacher response to student resistance to instruction encouraging "critical thinking"
- Student to student responses regarding instruction encouraging "critical thinking"
- Teacher explanation and clarification of assignment prompts

- Teacher review process of student writing encouraging “critical thinking” (Miller, 1998).

While I expected to experience the management end of these moments from a teacher perspective, I was also able to not only document such moments but also the internal reaction and negotiation I engaged in during those moments. This positioning and ability to capture unique data occurred by using teacher-research as a method. These negotiations I believe are crucial to responding and adding to the current conversations that currently reside in the discipline of rhetoric and composition surrounding critical pedagogy.

Describing Methods: Teacher-Research As Narrative

To begin to understand critical pedagogy as a process, I designed the project as a “mini” auto-ethnographic journey. Doing so I planned to use my role as a graduate-level first-year-writing instructor to research not only my student’s process and experience with critical pedagogy but my own as a teacher. This decision was informed by the need to articulate my own process with critical pedagogy as an attempt to “live” and experience critical pedagogy from a first-person encounter. As such, I found myself returning to the larger question “how can I ‘do’” critical pedagogy in my first-year writing classroom?” This question was central to my study, as I understood my position as a teacher an opportunity to truly experience pedagogy. Therefore, while I initially anticipated the study to be authoethnographic in nature, what developed was in actuality teacher-research focused upon myself as both the teacher and the researcher.

Using teacher-research as a method in this study allowed for process to become the focus over product. Maclean & Mohr (1999) subtly reference this when they discuss

what happens when teachers become teacher-researchers stating, "traditional descriptions of both teachers and researchers change. Teacher-researchers raise questions about what they think and observe about their teaching and their students' learning. They collect student work in order to evaluate performance, but they also see student work as data to analyze in order to examine the teaching and learning that produced it" (p. x). While Maclean & Mohr (1999) indicate that teacher's use of final products to evaluate student performance, they rightly qualify that by following up and indicating the need to look not solely at the final piece but at the production behind the teaching and learning – the process of production. Looking at the teaching and learning, the processes that students came to create that final product, teachers move beyond a position of authoritative assessment and rather into active, self-reflective learners exploring how their teaching impacts student productions. Teacher-researcher Ruth Ray (1993) emphasizes the role of reflection in teacher learning or teacher-research writing that "what matters for teacher-researchers is less their learning of a method than their understanding of a *point of view about observation* that holds regardless of method and that also validates certain methods" (p. 172). Ray (1993) keenly articulates how through reflective examination of process, set and fixed methods cannot necessarily apply to teachers doing teacher-research. Instead, as a process-oriented approach, teacher-research as a method shifts and changes to the landscapes that it situates itself within and as a result teachers conducting teacher-research need to constantly be reflective about their "point of view" of observation that assists them in discovering their questions generated by their classrooms.

Applying teacher-research to this work allowed me to narrate this experience from the multiple identities and perspectives that centered on this study. In reflecting about the learning processes of my students, I found layers of my identity within this. There are stories then that follow about me as a teacher attempting to “do” critical pedagogy, stories about me as a researcher attempting to analyze and understand how I “did” critical pedagogy, and then there are stories about me simply as a graduate student attempting to understand how one not only conducts teacher-research but also what I began learning about critical pedagogy beyond the theoretical and into the actual practice of it. Additionally, there are stories of my students as participants in this study and their experiences with wrestling with critical pedagogy.

I gathered a compilation of stories using audio recordings of my class, creating a reflective journal narrating my experience as a teacher-researcher and my relationship to the class, creating reflective memos that captured my research assessment of student work, as well as collecting the assignments produced by my students. Additionally, there are other stories that were produced in the assignments that students fulfilled. Framing the course around story in turn created a slue of mini-stories that students revealed in their writing and some of this is shared below in my analysis of how these stories revealed aspects of a developed critical consciousness. I selected these data sources as key to understanding the process of critical pedagogy. Some of these data sources like the audio recordings and reflective journal are indicators of the day-to-day process of creating a course around critical pedagogy. Some of the data sources such as student assignments are more final in their nature, and some may fail to look at the process over the product. However, I argue that these data sources were examined

in their entirety as key pieces to a larger scene. As such, my understanding of the student products were not informed simply by looking only at these finalized assignments, rather there was a layered approach to examining such assignments. Specifically, as someone conducting teacher-research I was positioned to examine several of the pieces that went into creating them – the classroom discussions, the teacher conferences, the development of the student over the course of the semester. As a result, the products simply indicate how successful or unsuccessful at times the process was to creating the final end product.

Creating Assignments Framed Around Freirean Tenants & Theoretical Use of Story

Using a first-year writing course as the location for this study, I did not create "new" assignments that explicitly aligned with Freirean critical pedagogy. While the first-year writing program does not explicitly follow in the design of their assignments a Freirean critical pedagogy framework, I argue that in many fundamental ways the program is designed for students to engage in deep inquiry and asks for students to understand their thoughts, questions and knowledge as important contributions to the larger university. Specifics of the program's commitment to inquiry and community can be seen in their statement, declaring "As part of the general education requirement, First-year Writing contributes to the larger mission of the University by focusing on inquiry-based teaching and learning that encourages students to begin to understand themselves as:

- Contributing members of MSU´s community of scholars
- Committed to asking important questions and to seeking rich responses to those questions

- Developing the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to improve the quality of life for themselves and others through their scholarly, social, and professional literacy activities." [8]

The program's commitment to inquiry is situated in a problem-posing-like classroom which asks students to consider "their relationship with the world, leading them to be challenged and yet prompted to respond to that challenge within a context of other interrelated problems" (Kirylo, 2011, p.156). Freire writes that this is a process where students "develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation" (as cited in Kirylo, 2011, p. 156). Facilitating such development one must rely upon dialogue. Freire writes that "human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but by true words, which men [and women] transform the world…Men [and women] are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection…If it is in speaking their word that men [and women], by which naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which men [and women] achieve significance as men [and women]. Dialogue is thus an existential reality" (as cited in Kirylo, 2011, p. 156). This dialogue depends upon one's commitment to understanding as Kirylo names it, one's authenticity. By authenticity Kirylo (2011) refers to Freire's dependence upon one consciously understanding one's self and one's relationship to others based upon that self. Today we may call this focus on authenticity as a focus on positionality. In order to engage in true and revolutionary

[8] Michigan State University, Department of Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures. (2012) First-Year Writing. *Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures*. Retrieved March 5, 2013, from http://wrac.msu.edu/first-year-writing/.

dialogue, one must have a deep understanding of one's positionality in the world and their relationship to others in the world as a result of their positionality.

Understanding this emphasis on positionality, I extended my theoretical frame based upon Freire to begin to include Thomas King. King (2003) discusses stories in his book *The Truth about Stories*. Here, King narrates Native American oral histories and stories alongside counter, more hegemonic, colonizing stories and doing so, reveals the multitude of shapes and presences that stories have – allowing one to see stories that may have not been heard or acknowledged in the presence of other colonizing narratives. I decided to emphasize the importance of stories as a way to create a space in my classroom that recognized the many different relationships my students had with the world. That is, I saw the assignments that the first-year writing program assigned asking students to engage in understanding and analyzing different stories that existed in the world. On top of this though asked students to question how they, as people with positionality, engaged in these stories. As such, there was an action-reflection piece built in as an attempt to connect back to Freire and his emphasis on praxis via dialoguing about positionality.

Therefore, while I followed the commitments of the programs goals and their assignments, I made decisions that explicitly extended more visible connections to Freire and his discussions around facilitating a critical pedagogy by blending that with King's acknowledgment of the importance of story. As such, each unit asked students to engage in some type of action-reflection process about the different types of stories that were asked to be examined. Specific examples of how these connections were made can be seen in the units and the descriptions attached to them.

As mentioned earlier, these units were required by the program and simply the framing of how I asked students to think and approach the units was were my extension of Freire and King entered into the assignment. Unit one typically is taught as a memoir or autobiography genre-like assignment. Students are asked to consider skills or knowledges they already possess and write about these. As a race and ethnicity themed course, I wanted students to begin considering their own experiences with race and ethnicity. As such, the first unit was called a "racial memoir" and asked students to answer the question in a narrative-style "*What stories/experiences has your family (this can be understood broadly) told you about race?"* Here the intent was for students to consider how realities of race are constructed around mythological stories that are carried with us from generation through generation and ask students to reflect upon the legitimacy of such stories. The second assignment is typically more analytical in genre and asked students to consider race in popular culture. In this unit, students were asked to consider how has race as been told as a story in American popular culture? In this unit the class spent time looking at how the media creates different types of stories of race and in turn this fictionalization has been developing (especially due to reality TV) more of a false representation of reality. The third unit is a research unit built upon inquiry skills. Here students need to examine race in the professional world and answer the question, what stories does the professional world tell about race? That is students needed to research their intended profession and learn more about how their own race is and has been treated? Further how such treatment may indicate a level of quality of life. The fourth unit tends to be non-essay in nature and asks students to remix knowledge that has been made throughout the semester. That is students were to look

at their campuses interaction and commitment to diversity and present if such a commitment exists and if so, how it exists. The fifth and final project serves as a culmination of knowledge that has been generated from this course and asks students to both reflect on this knowledge and project into the future about the need or lack there of to produce of post-racial society. Specifically, what new stories need to be written in regards to race and ethnicity? Within all of these assignments then students engaged with Freirean concepts of action-reflection, positionality and dialogue. And the knowledge that was generated asked students to continually reflect upon the stories that had been exposed through the class with the last assignment asking them in many ways to re-write a future that they would be proud to exist in as raced beings.

Narrative then functioned as a way to invite active reflection into student's papers but also provide them a place to voice their own questions and concerns about different narratives that surround them and define them. In many ways then narrative functioned not only as a tool to provide voice but also critique and reconstruct voices that surround these students. "For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other." (Freire, 2000, p. 72) This questioning and rebuilding situates the assignments students engaged with in the course in order to create new narratives that are more "hopeful with the world, word and each other."

Interpreting Data

Multiple moments of storytelling then existed in the data that I collected. Stories that reflected on my position as a teacher and researcher were revealed in my reflective

teaching journals which became fieldnotes, stories about my relationship with the class and the class's relationship with the content was revealed in the daily audio recordings, stories about my student's relationships and understandings of race were revealed in their final assignments, and stories about what I saw as a researcher in students final assignments were revealed in my unit memos. Understanding these multiple narrative moments, I used discourse analysis to code for individual and collective moments indicating process. I define "individual moments" as moments where I noted my own self-reflexivity. Typically, my journal became a data set that noted the steps and scaffolding I took in a day's class to assist with students connecting the goals of the assignment to the production of the assignment. Additionally, the journal became a place to reflect on the management and relationship I was experiencing by functioning as both the teacher and researcher. Specifically, it became a tool to document and engage in reflexive dialogue on how to manage the researcher and teacher identities I embodied and how those identities were being reflected on the class. As such, these "individual moments" were focused on the individual. Typically, I was the individual, focused on examining the identity issues I experienced as both a teacher and researcher. However, the journal also provided a place to note specific instances where I saw a student emerging in the class or struggling. As such, these moments focused around the individual experience of the course. The collective moments, however, refer to the piecing together of multiple narratives. One example of a collective moment oriented around process is student development within the semester. By reflecting on a student's development and their ability to model inquiry throughout the semester, I began to compile through audio recordings, unit memos, reflective journals and

submitted writing assignments a collective argument about the development of that student's consciousness throughout the course in relation to my interventions. These interventions were either through the assignments I created, the texts assigned, or conversations between the two of us, or the class at-large, noted in the audio recordings and reflective journal. Typically, students whose data was examined across "collective" moments were students who emerged in the "individual" moments as well. That is, the students that become represented in the data were at points reflected on because of their participation in the class and content of their assignments. As such, often the "collective" and "individual" moments worked together to create codes indicating areas of development within the data. These areas of development were typically seen as process-oriented moves that impacted the products created in the course. Examining then the language of how process was revealed through these two lenses, the collective and individual, I positioned myself to capture a more complete and dynamic understanding of how relationships connect and build when implementing critical pedagogy. As a result, my data attempts to underscore the multiple identities and narratives that are generated from working within a critical pedagogy framework.

What needs to be noted in the interpretation of data is recognition of my own racial identity and how that may have influenced my expectations of student assignments, especially as they were concerned around developing a critical consciousness of race. As a white, female interested in critical race studies, especially the topic of whiteness, I brought certain expectations of my student's discussions of race into the classroom and into the coding of the data. While I tried to be objective and code for moments of process, there clearly are certain biases and expectations that I

had placed upon my students – especially my white students. I expected them to grapple with their whiteness and many of the assignments attempt to push students to explore their own racial identity with a critical eye. This expectation of my students to engage in critically reflecting on their own positionalities and identities was fostered through my studies on whiteness and race. I acknowledge that I brought this into the classroom and that it appears in the coding and interpretation of data. This is expected I argue though in that I followed teacher-research methods that positioned myself as both the teacher and researcher. As such, the avoidance of biases is a struggle when attempting to analyze oneself as a teacher from the position of a researcher. These biases can be hard to examine when one embodies multiple identities in the research project. This issue of multiple identities will be discussed with more detail in what follows.

CHAPTER 3: PARTICIPANT REFLECTIONS OF THE LANDSCAPE

The Multiple Identities of This Project

As I began this project, I failed to anticipate the amount of identities I would both encounter and negotiate throughout this experience. In many ways, I conceived of this project as an experience with few participants, myself as the teacher and then my 26 students. What I did not realize until actually entering this classroom was the nature of how identities would be stressed and performed, not only of the students but of myself too. One reason for this focus on identity is the nature of the course. As a race and ethnicity themed course, discussing identities in generality as well as discussing one's own identity often occurred due to the goals and framing of the assignment around critical pedagogy. Further, I found myself wrestling with managing my identity as a white woman in the classroom talking about issues of race and ethnicity as well as negotiating my performance as a teacher and simultaneously a researcher. In many ways this was and continues to be a position that requires much negotiation and reflection in order to continually understand how one's relationship with the classroom as a teacher and one's relationship with the classroom as a researcher is most often a relationship that cannot be separated and constantly informs each other. Reiterating MacLean & Mohr (1999), when teachers become teacher-researchers, the "traditional descriptions of both teachers and researchers change. Teacher-researchers raise questions about what they think and observe about their teaching and their students' learning. They collect student work in order to evaluate performance, but they also see student work as data to analyze in order to examine the teaching and learning that produced it" (p. x). Therefore, this chapter in many ways attempts to set the scene of understanding the

influence identity construction and management occurred in my classroom. The complex relationships between teaching and researching as well as examining the relationship between facilitating a critical pedagogy process between students and teachers that frames this chapter.

Negotiating Roles as Teacher-Researcher

Students in this course were informed on the first day of the position I would be taking as a teacher and a researcher. I explained to them the intent of this project was to learn more about my skills and development as a teacher particularly in relation to my understanding of facilitating their critical writing and thinking skills, via critical pedagogy. Additionally, it was articulated to them that they did not need to agree to participate in this research study until once the course had been completed. This was a shared concern of the IRB[9] reviewers. Therefore, in order to avoid any impartiality being both a researcher and assessor of their work, it was agreed that students would not determine if they wanted to participate in the study until the course was completed.

With this said, separating the relationship between functioning as a teacher and then as a researcher was much more difficult to negotiate than expected. In fact, reflecting upon this experience, it has dawned upon me that, in fact, I did not fully consider how the relationship between the two would impact my teaching and data collection process. Therefore, it was not until I was "in-it" – doing the research and teaching the class that I found myself needing to negotiate these two identities. Ultimately I believed that the place of the classroom would naturally erect a teacher presence withholding the appearance of researcher until the writing of this research.

[9] IRB stands for "Institutional Review Board" and in order to conduct research at my institution, I needed to receive IRB approval.

This however I found to be false especially as data began to be collected and coded. I found the place of the classroom, where I was not only creating data but also collecting it, merge with the outside, research task of coding. It was in this process that I found my analysis as a researcher could very much effect my practices as a teacher. However, I was concerned about this relationship, as I did not want my positionality as a researcher to inform the moves that I was attempting to make as a teacher. Mainly, I did not want my motivations of conducting this research to surpass the needs of my students as developing writers. I wanted to remain committed to the task of teaching and assisting students rather than have my research motivations usurp the expectations of the job as a teacher. This was a tension that continued to be present throughout the course. In order to manage this process I looked at the time spent in the classroom as a place to be a teacher. When I would walk in to the classroom, I was “Ms. NJ” to my students. I did this by not discussing my “data” but discussed from a teacherly perspective what I was noticing in their writings. And while to have the presence of a teacher to my students, as I taught, I continually began to reflect upon what was occurring in the class in order to mentally note this. Once the class concluded, I would spend 15-45 minutes reflecting upon what I saw as the researcher. With the collection of these reflections, I typically found flaws in my teacherly understanding of what was occurring in the class – and would attempt to correct this during the next class period typically by altering my scaffolding process. This process of collecting reflective research notes and using those to impact my teaching continued throughout the semester and symbolized the negotiations that were informing my stance as a teacher and a researcher.

Place, Space & Practices[10]

Due to the theme of the course, I often found myself reiterating the frame of story when discussing content related to race and ethnicity. As such, I encouraged practicing how to discuss identity through the use of stories. That is, the class would discuss what stories of race have been told to us from our families, the media, and the University greater community as way to begin articulating how these places and their practices create spaces of racial and ethnic identity. I found this use of discussing place, space and practices incredibly necessary in order to encourage and create a space where students racial and ethnic experiences could not only be voiced but feel as if in the place of the classroom, that their knowledge was valued. Therefore, in discussing how outside spaces reflect ethnic and racial views, at the same time, I was attempting through practice how to analyze these places and practices, trying to create a space in my classroom to reflect these various experiences.

In the beginning of the course, I often did this through my own modeling. That is, I would disclose to my students how different places that I occupy have reflected through their practices a valuing of my own identity. Frequently, I disclosed my own positionality as a white, middle-class female. I would discuss how when I enter different places where people do not personally know me I am often read either by my physical attributes and/or by my name, Maria. I would explain to my students that where I grew up and went to primary school was a very upper-middle class, white environment. Therefore, I remember when I first started school and no one knew me, many of my peers asked if I was Spanish or Italian because of my name “Maria”. They assumed

[10] This section draw’s from Michele De Certeau’s (1988) *The Practice of Everyday Life* that “space is a practiced place” (p. 117).

because I have an “ethnic” name that I must associate with one of those identities. And as such, I was considered “exotic”. This place reflected a space where anything with a possible connection to an identity other than the “norm” white world would reflect a space where ethnic diversity was “othered” and seen as “exotic”. When I disclosed to my peers that I was neither of those identities, my peers would react in disappointment. They desired to be affiliated with an “otherness”. As such, I found myself in my primary days exotifying myself. I began to do this in middle school with the same, but older group of peers. During this time my class began ancestry projects. I interviewed my grandparents for this project and began being interested in my predominantly Czech ancestry. Both my mother and father’s sides of the family identified, to various degrees, with Czech. Specifically, my grandfather made clear to me of how his parents and grandparents had relatives identifying as “gypsies”. I remember hearing this word and being entranced. With this news, my ancestry project extended beyond my Czech heritage to my “gypsiness”. Presenting this news to my peers in school, I adopted this othered identity. I became “Maria, the gypsy queen” and I embraced it – even making a movie with my fellow peers for a class project on it. Now, to my 14-year old knowledge, I really had little to any idea of what a gypsy was. Nor did I care to really know. What I did care about was finding a place for my name and identity in a space that valued homogeneity in class, race, and religion. While I certainly am Caucasian, my dark hair and dark eyes seemed different from the vast majority of blond hair blue eyed peers. Further, I was an import in this place. I did not grow up in the small village where this school was because of my parent’s finances. My parents were not doctors or lawyers or business owners like the vast majority of my peer’s parents. Instead, my mom was a

part-time teacher (full time mother of 5, at the time) and my father worked in fundraising for a local University. While my family was definitely not poor, I was definitely not a part of the social or economic class that my peers frequently participated within. As such, entering a space of racial, ethnic, and class homogeneity – I became “othered”, willingly and some not willingly.

Sharing this story with my class I showed how places often reflect the values of those spaces. Very much my name and, to some degree my physically appearance based on attributes and class, a story was create about how I was valued because of the perceptions of my race, ethnicity, and class. The process of me explaining how these practices impacted the place of my schooling as a larger representation of a space of homogeneity was a tool I used to model not only how to think about experiences as a “story” but also to be transparent about my own “stories” of race and as a result my own approach and interest on this subject. I felt this especially important being a white woman of middle class background asking my students of various racial and class backgrounds to share and analyze their own stories of identity. Important though was that I stressed that this story was only one example of a story of race and ethnicity told to me. My intent in doing so was to acknowledge that all my students come from different backgrounds and experiences and thus the places and practices that occupy those places are going to create different spaces for stories to exist. As such, as a class, the needs to a level of respect in regards to the different stories individuals have experienced. In doing so, there are no false or wrong stories – only stories that should be told in order to have a better understanding of how the class, as a community studying race and ethnicity, move forward to impacting future stories.

Dominant Practices of Whiteness In the First-Year Writing Classroom

Drawing from De Certeau's (1988) concept of space as a "practiced place" (p. 117), a theoretical foundation can be created to understand how the space of the first-year writing classroom becomes a practiced place. That is, the practices that first-year writing curriculum believe, the practices that are valued by first-year writing instructors, and the practices that students in the first-year writing classroom are taught to achieve then constructs the space of the classroom.

Arguments surrounding the first-year writing classroom as a colonized space can be found in discussions surrounding practices of Western whiteness dominating the construction of the classroom. Specifically, the composition classroom where students are taught how to write is primarily rooted in understanding writing from the Western white ideologies. One understanding of how whiteness becomes the pillar of "good writing" can be seen in Marshall's (Ryden & Marshall, 2012) observation of Basic Writing. Marshall asserts that both the Basic Writing class and the basic writer have failed to be adequately defined and have been existing as generalizable abstractions – that which is not white and thus not "good writing". By failing to adequately define Basic Writing and the basic writers that enroll in these classes, Marshall (2012) suggests that authorities on Basic Writing are attempting to control their own unstable professional identities by instilling this generalizable abstraction and identification of the basic writer. Therefore, there appears to be a system of colonization continuing to be at play. Ensuring that through vague and generalizable measures, first-year writing instructors can look to the relative difference of language and writing use in order to maintain the need for Basic Writing despite the larger trends of minority populations enrolling in

higher academic institutions. As such, there is this need to create this idea of instability, i.e. difference in writing skills, ability language, in order to maintain colonized practices. By refusing to make changes to composition classrooms to reflect the changing demographics, institutions and faculty guarantee their own employment in the system that is so "fundamentally flawed so as to privilege white mainstream US culture" (Ryden & Marshall, 2012, p. 66-67). The objective of composition courses focusing on basic writing and the basic writer tends to incorporate working from a deficient or remedial position in order to ensure faculty and institutional need. Marshall (Ryden & Marshall, 2012) even suggests that within the field of composition there is this approach to anything other than white which represents ideas found in Said's (2002) *Orientalism*, claiming that Western white composition teachers may be defined as having a "colonial 'career'" defined by the position and ideas of Western white dominate men (p. 48). Therefore, despite significant enrollment shifts and the field of composition shifting with changing demographics, those found instructing in the composition classroom have typically valued practices of "white writing" in order to construct a space so economically dependent upon non-white writers or second language writers so as to continue a system of colonization where "good" writing is "white" writing.

Goodburn (1999) echoes similar ideas regarding the compositional makeup of composition researchers and teachers. She acknowledges like Marshall (Ryden & Marshall, 2012) that the demographics of the student populations are becoming less and less the dominant white student. However, while Marshall (Ryden & Marshall, 2012) focuses upon the student demographic in first-year writing classes, Goodburn (1999) observes and analyzes the influence of the first-year writing instructor demographics. As

such, Goodburn (1999) finds that the majority of composition researchers and teachers are primarily white and root their understanding of composition in their "constructions of whiteness as inherent to how we teach and do research" (p. 83). By assuming positions of whiteness without the consideration of other race representations in the classroom, approaches to research and pedagogy will then be constructed from understandings rooted in dominant whiteness. Thus, maintaining systems where writing and representations that do not fit the mold of whiteness will not be allowed as a valued practice in the writing classroom. As such, it is this idea that practice creates space that becomes influential to understanding how compositions practices continue to create a colonized space where white writing is rewarded and "othered" writing discouraged. By following Goodburn's (1999) suggestion, the first-year writing space appears to be practicing Western white ideologies and thus are constructing the space of the classroom. As such, when students of demographics beyond white enter the first-year writing space, these students are forced to adapt and assimilate into foreign practices of whiteness in order to survive residing in that space.

McIntosh (1988) offers further conversation to this idea of white dominance in the first-year writing classroom. She begins her discussions by theorizing the idea of privilege as a way to "overempower certain groups" (p. 296). This privilege then allows people to control others based either on their race or sex, which can result in "unearned advantage and conferred dominance" (p. 297). Specifically, whiteness as a privilege gives "cultural permission not to hear voices of people of other races" (p. 295) and thus these practices of ignoring other voices become embodied in an understanding of whiteness as unearned dominance in Western culture. McIntosh (1988) connects white

student's embodying their privilege and how they practice unearned dominance by thinking that "racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see 'whiteness' as a racial identity" (p. 297). From this understanding, it becomes clear how Western education systems practice the erasing of white racial identity. Even McIntosh (1988), herself a white woman, asserts how education can embody colonial ideologies stating that her schooling followed the pattern that "whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral; normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow 'them' to be more life 'us'" (p. 292-293). It is adopting this concept of making "them" like "us" where one can identify roots of colonization. Here, the dominant norm, that is white in this example, must rely upon this differing in order to maintain white as ideal and something to be aspired. Thus, to apply McIntosh's understanding of whiteness as ideal and dominant, then its existence in our classroom (Goodburn, 1999; Ryden & Marshall, 2012) draws the parallel that it must be consider dominant and something for all to reach to in composition classrooms and writing.

Understanding then how practices can reflect racial dominance and a false creation of "normative" behavior, instructors need to consider how practices rooted in whiteness impact the composition classroom space. Specifically, as an unmarked and unexamined race, whiteness in the classroom functions very much as a colonial ideology. Yet, many equate the understanding colonization as an ancient historical concept located overseas and absent from United State shores. However, by understanding the relation between whiteness as a dominant practice and influential constructor of the composition classroom, colonization has becomes a very real and

present idea. Frankenberg (1993) makes this connection between colonization as a continued and real practice. In fact, whiteness as an unmarked and barely examined characteristic assists in the reproduction of colonial discourse in present day. Speaking to the present existence of continued colonization, Frankenberg (1993) writes “one effect of colonial discourse is the production of the unmarked, apparently autonomous white/Western self, in contrast with the marked, Other racial and cultural categories with which the racially and culturally dominant category is co-constructed” (p. 17). By not examining whiteness and its influence, colonial discourse then begins to assign whiteness as normative and that which all other races should be examined in relation to their resemblance to whiteness. As a result of ignoring whiteness, it and Westerness then do not become “‘the problem’ in the eyes of white/Western people” (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 18). Instead, it is what is examined – those found racially different from whiteness – that becomes the problem. As such, unexamined whiteness and its assumed privilege to hold marginalized non-whites accountable to adapting to white Western ideologies demonstrates the continued existence of colonization on U.S. shores.

It is from colonial discourse rooted in white Western ideologies that racial discourse is born. For racial discourse becomes recognized as something that is unlike and inferior to normative and dominate white discourse. And Trainor (2008) works to understand how racial discourse continues within classroom walls. From her study at a predominantly white high school, she finds that the classroom suggesting that contrary to popular belief, “racism often does not stem from ignorance, a lack of exposure to other cultures, or the desire to protect white privilege” (Trainor, 2008, p. 3). Rather, the

causes of racism and racial discourse are frequently found in the realms of “emotioned discourse”. By “emotioned” discourse, Trainor (2008) is referring to the “interconnected but nonlinear dynamics of lived affective experiences, emotional regulation taking place through institutional and culture practices, and language” (p. 3). As such racist discourse is much more affective than logical and based upon local experiences occurring at school. Trainor claims that it is in the unexamined hidden curriculum in schools that racist discourse continues to exist and dwell arguing that “what makes racist discourse persuasive is school itself-its many tacit, unexamined lessons, rituals, and practices that exert a powerful but largely unacknowledged pedagogical and persuasive force” (p. 4). Trainor (2008) here begins to apply De Certeau’s notion of practice as constructing space, writing “students become convinced of such beliefs in part through the routines and culture of schooling” (p. 3). It is in the unexamined practices found in school that create a space for racist language to exist and thus allows “institutional contexts of schooling that inadvertently provide emotional scaffolding for racial discourses” (Trainor, 2008, p. 4). By allowing hidden racial discourses to exist in classroom spaces, clear ideologies of colonization and dominance thus perpetuate in the subvert actions of students and as Trainor suggests teachers as well. Thus, while the Trainor (2008) argues that racial discourse may not be primarily the reflection of attempting to maintain McIntosh’s notion of white privileged dominance, but it is the practice of emotioned discourse that does continue to perpetuate ideas of white dominance in classroom culture today.

Finally, Bloom (1996) suggest the first-year writing classroom as a colonized space rooted in perpetuating white dominance by confronting the space in terms of

economic social class. Specifically, for Bloom, the college composition classroom is very much a middle-class enterprise. Teachers of college composition are primarily middle-class themselves and as such instill middle-class values into their students who are or are aspiring to be middle-class (Bloom, 1996). Bloom (1996) claims that "one of the major though not necessarily acknowledged reasons that freshman composition is in many schools the only course requires of all students is that it promulgates the middle-class values that are though to be essential to the proper function of students in the academy" (p. 658). Therefore, often times the argument rests that, by learning to write as a middle-class citizen student, all students will be in a better position to obtain jobs. Yet, Bloom raises the question that no one is asking what it means to ask student writers to write like middle-class writers. Further, she suggests that by the academy operating from this position it may actually do more of a disservice to lower-class students who are punished for not writing like middle-class students.

While Bloom raises key issues regarding colonizing the composition space from a middle-class ideology, Marshall & Ryden (2000) have suggested that there is a link between middle-class ideologies and whiteness. Often times, terms such as "middle-class" become conflated to mean "white" and as such act as codes for power (Marshall & Ryden, 2000). As such, while Bloom makes the claim for middle-class practices constructing the space of the composition classroom, those middle-class practices are also acting as white privileged codes of dominance in the classroom. Therefore it appears that both class (Bloom, 1996; Marshall & Ryden, 2000) and race, particularly whiteness (Frankenberg, 1993; Goodburn, 1999; McIntosh, 1988; Ryden & Marshall, 2012; Trainor, 2008), operate as dominant practices within the composition classroom

that in turn construct the first-year writing classroom as a colonized space privileging middle-class white values while depending upon enrollment of those deficient and remedial non-white, lower-class individuals in order to sustain the practices of the first-year writing classroom.

Student's Response to the Landscape of Critical Pedagogy Situated around Race

Understanding how the first-year writing classroom can be a contested space, especially when discussing issues of race and ethnicity, the sections that follow explore how students responded to assignments that asked them to engage in analyzing the stories of race that they encounter. The ways in which they engaged with these stories reflected a level of comfort with discussing their identity in a class where multiple identities existed as well as the relationship between their racial identities and their own consciousness. What follows is how the assignments revealed students of particular identities analyzed and reacted to an analysis of themselves as raced beings. Such a task asked students to not only discuss their experiences with race but also critically analyze and write about those stories as they related to their own identities.

Reflections Revealed Relationship Between Race & Critical Inquiry Skills: Stories from White Students

Interesting moments revealed themselves around the relationship between interacting within a race and ethnicity class and asking students to engage in critical inquiry steps. It was in these moments that I, as a researcher, began to gain insight in regards to how my students began to insert their understandings of identity and consciousness into this course. The first and third units of the course were explicitly situated for students to reflect upon their racial identities. Most interesting in these two

units was that students who identified as white in the course had the most difficultly actively reflecting and demonstrating their own consciousness of their white identity in the world. Instead of critically discussing their whiteness, students tended to discuss race from other perspectives that distanced themselves from personally analyzing their own identities.

The first unit assigned asked students to narrate stories they have been told about race, specifically stories from their family, something inherently historical in a way, the second task of the assignment was to move from these stories to the present day considering how those stories have influenced their own understanding of race and their identity. In many ways, the second question asked students to analyze these stories into meaningful moments. This could be considered a two-part question, one asking: What from the story(ies) that you shared have no impacted your own understanding of race? And the second part of the analysis asking for students to reply to the question, how do you practice this understanding and negotiate this understanding considering your own racial identity? Initially, students embraced this assignment. The creative freedom to write a story as opposed to a traditional, academic paper intrigued them. And while most of the students were able to analyze what the story said about race, the ability to transfer how this analysis impacted their own identity was something that students struggled with and found difficulty in executing. My white students struggled the most in answering that second question. Perhaps due to comfort or lack of understanding the assignment, they hung to historicized or distant stories of race, never moving the story to their lived experiences.

An example of such historicization can be found in Spence's[11] piece. Spence identified as a white male in the course. In his papers and occasionally through his participation, his analysis of race tended to be geared towards the history and politics of race in the U.S. and not in the analysis of this in his own life. Evidence of this begins in the introduction of his first paper with the statement:

> *"Citizens of this great country have been held back and objectified to discrimination and abuses for hundreds of years because of the pigment of their skin. The roots of this racism seem to be embedded in the upbringing of individuals in America, from all aspects of race."*

This introduction is a move Spence uses for the reader to equate the idea of racism as a concept of the past. Spence continues to create a distance of discussing race in his paragraph as he ends the introduction emphasizing:

> *"From childhood I have learned from the experiences shared with me by my family and friends that to be racist is to be wrong."*

Here, Spence begins to write not about race necessarily but about racism as a historical marker and something that he has been taught from his family not to engage in. He continues in the paper to attempt to make a move to begin to analyze the stories of race, though they are narrated more as experiences and less as an actual story. But the choice to analyze is clear when he incorporates a quote referencing the need to analyze one's environment stating:

> *"To quote W. Clement Stone, 'You are a product of your environment. So choose the environment that will best develop you toward your objective. Analyze your life in terms of its environment. Are the things around you helping you toward success - or are they holding you back?' My own personal environment*

[11] Students granted me permission to use their names in this research. Some students requested I use a pseudonym for their name. They are represented in this study under the pseudonym they have selected to use and gave me permission to use for this research. Spence, asked to referred to as Spence Sowulewski. For purposes of simplification, I do not include his last name and refer to him only as Spence.

> *that affected my attitude on race is made up of the people that I have learned the most from, my family."*

Spence's decision to incorporate a quote about the need to "analyze your life" is an interesting move to make in this paper. While Spence tries to make the moves that are necessary in this paper – analyzing one's own identity construction from the stories that one has been told about race – he does so by quoting from a deceased philanthropist and businessman. The analysis of Spence's own life does not exist in this paper. But aware of the need to provide some self-analysis, Spence opts to incorporate an outside and distant source in order to attempt to fulfill a goal of the assignment. Additionally, after including the quote, Spence immediately makes another move to share his family's experience with race. Doing so though, he again relies upon his older relatives, especially his father's experience, to narrate stories of race. Again, never connecting those stories to his life. This is a distancing move that positions Spence to fulfill the assignment yet to fulfill it in a way that allows him to avoid personal reflection. As such, he introduces a story about his father's experience moving from a midwestern town to a southern city for work. The story details how Spence's father encountered aspects of Jim Crow laws in the plant where he worked, despite Jim Crow laws being abolished at that time. Spence writes:

> "*The majority of the laborers were African American, and lived in a town about 20 miles from the plant. When my dad had to go to a corporate office in the town, he saw that it seemed to have been skipped over by the Civil Rights Movement all together. Whites lived on one side of the town and black on the other. Jim Crow still had a hold on the city, and separate but equal signs depicting, "White Only" were plastered on various bathrooms, water fountains, and playgrounds. And keep in mind; this was in the Mid-90's."*

Here Spence selects to remain distant from his analysis of his own identity by writing about his father's experience with civil rights. Instead of discussing what that experience

meant to him, the experience of his father recounting that story, in understanding his own identity, Spence moves to historicize his family's experiences with race. He never actually reflects upon this analysis directly. An additional component to consider is the story that Spence writes about – the Jim Crow experience. In many ways it is an explicitly racial story connected to the civil rights area. For Spence, a "racial story" appears to have a relationship with history. As a white man in the twenty-first century, perhaps Spence cannot make everyday connections between race and his life. Instead, he seems to resort to discussing what he has learned and been taught about race from a historical context instead of from a current and cultural context. This appears when he concludes his paper stating:

> *"I feel fortunate to have parents like my own, who went to great strides to show my siblings and I that racism is a thing of the past, and that skin color doesn't matter, it's the actions you take that determine the kind of person you are."*

Spence's own race as a white male is not something to be understood or at least shared in this paper, instead it is his relationship and lessons about racism that he chooses to share, even though the reader is never given a direct example of what racism might be for Spence. The closest affiliation of what may be racism to Spence appears to be Jim Crow in nature. How racism may manifest itself in the midwestern city he grew up in appears not to be either of interest to him or perhaps visible to Spence, especially as a white male.

Kallie, a white girl in the class, makes similar moves to Spence. While she does not rely as much on historicizing the subject of race, she does make moves that allow her to remain distant to the topic of race and avoid engaging in how the stories of race

have impacted her racial identity construction. Like Spence, Kallie begins her paper by referencing race as a subject of U.S. history writing:

> *"A few weeks ago when I first received the paper explaining what the topic of my first project would be, I instantly knew what I would write about. The question pertaining to the topic was, "What stories/experiences has your family told you about race?" The instant I saw this the first thought that came to my mind was my younger, adopted cousin. Prejudice has always been considered a major issue in our country, but thanks to my cousin, I have learned so much and she has made a big impact on my life."*

While the opening suggests that perhaps Kallie has spent time reflecting on race in the course, this suggestion is soon dismissed when she declares that she had an immediate reaction and understanding of what she would write on – her adopted cousin experiencing prejudice. In this paragraph Kallie makes associations with race, not as something that impacts herself, but as something that is other and thus the need to use her cousin's story in order to fulfill the assignment. The paper then becomes a story not about Kallie's experience with race but about her aunt's quest to adopt a child and her cousin's struggle to identify in a white family and culture. This type of white dominance is first revealed when Kallie shares how her grandparents were suspicious of her aunt adopting a child, especially a non-white child, writing:

> "*My grandparents did not support her in the slightest way. They were from a small farm town in the middle of Kansas and had never been exposed to any racial diversity. They strongly feared what others would say. They worried that Aunt Jennifer would have people saying terrible things about her and her family and assume she had a child with a black man."*

This is the first inclination in the paper that Kallie's aunt would be adopting a child of a different racial and/or ethnic background. Before this, no acknowledgment of the adoption as a race issue was introduced. Now with this introduced Kallie implies to an outside reader an assumed relationship between adoption and racial diversity,

something not necessarily assumed by other readers, including myself. The paper continues to discuss race related to adoption and baby Ava[12] growing up with a white family in a midwestern city. Kallie discloses how Ava struggled to "fit in" a predominantly white city and white family stating:

> *"While Ava struggled in the past with her color, she has been able to overcome those tough obstacles presented in her life with the racial comments and cruel looks and become stronger and more confident in herself."*

Here Kallie positions herself in the story as an authoritative narrator of her cousin's struggle to negotiate with her identity. Yet, part of the task of this assignment is for Kallie to do the same in terms of her own identity. Instead, she opts for her African American cousin to do this work in the story – to critically analyze what it meant for Ava to be a part of her family, never analyzing what Kallie's own white identity means. After she shares the story of Ava's struggle to fit in, she begins to analyze what it means about race stating:

> "*As one could very well imagine, Ava has truly impacted my life and all for the better. When she first came into our family, I was only four years old. Needless to say, I have been aware of different races from a young age. Growing up, I was always taught that we are all the same. The color of one's skin says nothing about them. We are all people who need to be loved. While Ava's life changed drastically for the better when she was adopted, so did mine."*

What develops within this story are strong missionary-like themes that center around understanding "the other", in this case, black Ava. While Ava clearly struggled and suffered understanding her identity in a family that was not fully supportive and in a predominantly white neighborhood, Kallie still sees Ava as in a better world than what could have been. For Kallie, Ava has been saved by her aunt's "call to adopt" a child. Further, despite Ava's suffering, Kallie makes clear the importance of how Ava impacted

[12] This is Kallie's cousin.

her life. Thus, a different type of narrative emerges compared to the narrative Spence provides. Kallie's is a narrative of, what I call, racial sacrifice – exploiting the story of a person of color for the benefit of one's own success. Doing so, Kallie perpetuates a practice of privileging her already privileged white identity while taking advantage of her adopted cousin's racial struggle in order to advance her own agenda – completing the assignment. Kallie, as the narrator, allows readers to learn more about Ava and her perceived struggles with her race. Sharing such a story, albeit unknowingly to Ava, Kallie positions herself as someone who benefited from her experience of having an "othered" or racially different cousin. Only by addressing how lucky Ava was to be adopted into a better life does Kallie present a positive or hopeful narrative around Ava's struggle. Yet by creating a story that highlights her cousin's struggle, Kallie understands herself witnessing such a struggle as a beneficial experience in which she has learned about race. Importantly though, what is not provided are clear examples on how that impacted Kallie's understanding of race. Instead it is limited to a generic and broad assumption that Ava's life taught Kallie to appreciate racial and ethnic diversity. This appears in her conclusion when she writes:

> "*I have a sincere respect for the African American population within the states. They seem to suffer so much and for no reason other than the fact that their skin color is darker than mine. It is not fair that people should say terrible things or exclude others from groups just because they come from a different race."*

Searching for moments where Kallie begins to discuss her own identity, the reader must wait until the ending when Kallie concludes with a final story about Ava, stating:

> *"I have heard of too many days that my cousin, Ava, has come home from school and locked herself in her room to hide the tears. Hearing that breaks my heart and it makes me so much more aware of my own personal comments to others. Hearing how upset the little things can make someone has really led me to watch every little action I do in my life. I certainly do not want to send someone home*

crying like other girls have done to Ava. Some people are extremely sensitive about their race and any little comment could upset them."

Here Kallie begins to reflect on how these stories about Ava of impacted her understanding of race when she articulates that she does not want to be someone that makes others cry about their race. Disconcerting is the last line where she writes about *"people [as] extremely sensitive about their race".* The language signals a distance from Kallie's white race and "other" races. As a white woman, Kallie does not see herself as a contributor to racial sensitivity nor her identity as a product of racial sensitivity. Instead, races other than what is "normed" or "white" are produced seen as egg-shell issues, meaning one who identifies as white is placed in the position needing to be sensitive to others regardless of their own actions. That is, the language and structure of this final quote implies one that "other races" are sensitive and two, that "normed" or the white race can create sensitivity issues because of their assumed power and position in the world. Yet, Kallie clearly does not see these implications of her own racial identity in the paper. Instead, she resorts to viewing the stories of her cousin as the closest examples of racial experience that she can participate with – never exposing her own identity, only her cousin's.

Melissa Johnson's[13] story narrates another example of a white student distancing themselves from acknowledging and wrestling with their own racial identity. Unlike Spence and Kallie, Melissa J. opts to tell a story beyond U.S. borders and begins her story of race through her experience on a mission trip to Costa Rica. Instead of

[13] This student selected the pseudonym Melissa Johnson. For purposes of simplification when referring to her, I will call her Melissa J. This is because there is another Melissa that appears in the research. To differentiate the two, Melissa Johnson will be referred to as "Melissa J." and the other Melissa will be referred to as "Melissa".

historicizing the narrative as Spence opts to or attempting to claim another person's racial experience as their own like Kallie attempts, Melissa J. decides to tell the story of "the exotic" by placing the reader in a foreign, travel narrative. Melissa J. begins her story writing about her travels stating:

> "*Stepping off the plane I could practically smell the heat. It was muggy and my hair started to frizz. (Clearly responding to the mass amounts of humidity). As a group we shuffled past customs. All of our white faces sticking out like a sore thumb."*

Immediately there is a distancing between herself and others as she references that they stuck out "like a sore thumb". Her account of missionary work is an attempt to situate her experience with race not in her own life but in the lives of others who "are in need" of her help – beyond the borders of her own home. In her story, Melissa J. begins to create an equation between race and missionary work. She narrates:

> "*The fact of the matter is both this little girl and I were open to learning about each other. The Nicaraguans taught me that race shouldn't matter. These little children were the most welcoming and trusting people I'd met. We weren't seen as strangers to them but people who were willing to learn more about their race."*

Here, Melissa J. articulates that her role in this situation was in fact to learn more about race, yet earlier in the piece Melissa J. states that the purpose of this trip was conceived from an email her mother received from their local church, writing:

> *"One day she came across an email that was inviting people from our church to join a mission trip to Costa Rica. So, of course she wanted to help them. Within a couple months, we were packed and ready to serve the people of Costa Rica."*

It is clear then that Melissa J. makes many attempts to reach broadly to connect to the assignment's topic. Race is conceived of as something "exotic" or "other" – something beyond the tall, blonde, athletically built Melissa J. Possibly unable to draw from her day-to-day experience or perhaps simply choosing not to think about racial experiences

close to her own background, Melissa J. selects a travel-type journey and attempts to draw parallels between the missionary work of the project and how it relates to race. As a result, the outside reader like myself is asked to believe the stories of "helping" and "serving" Nicaraguan refugees as radical and transforming experiences that taught Melissa J. how:

> *"Important [it is] to not judge someone based on race, and with willingness, time and effort you can get to know another race despite the language barriers and stereotypes."*

Yet what those prejudgments were for Melissa J. the reader does not know. She, herself as a character in the story, is never fully developed. Instead, the Nicaraguans function as the primary characters who live in *"very poor living conditions"* and have *"very few opportunities to advance in society"* become developed characters with quite pessimistic identities. Yet, Melissa J.'s own identity and own positionality is not revealed. Instead, she hides behind these exotic characters as a way to avoid her own self-analysis and reflective identity within her story.

Stages of Consciousness in Spence, Kallie & Melissa J.'s Papers

Freire (1974) discusses the stages one experiences when transitioning into a truly "transitive consciousness" in which students approach problems with in-depth interpretation and openness to revising their own understandings. Often Freire states that before one enters the stage of transitive consciousness there is "an initial, predominately naïve" stage (Freire, 1974, p. 14). Freire (1974) writes that the "naïve consciousness" stage is characterized by:

> An oversimplification of problems; by a nostalgia for the past; by underestimation of the common man; by a strong tendency to gregariousness; by a lack of interest in investigation…; by fragility of argument; by strong emotional style; by the practice of polemics rather than dialogue; by magical explanations. (p. 14)

Recounting the distancing moves that Spence, Kallie and Melissa J. make in their narratives, it becomes clear that they remain in a naïve consciousness stage and fail to move into a more transitive consciousness. While Freire's (1974) characterization of a naïve consciousness does not specifically reference the tactic of distancing oneself as an indicator of this stage of consciousness, I argue that this move is more aligned to a "naïve consciousness" than a transitive one that offers in-depth reflection. Thus, what emerges is the need to think about rhetorical moves that position oneself in their narratives and indicate how one is moving through consciousness.

Freire's characterization of naïve consciousness fails to incorporate rhetorical consideration yet it provides opportunities to build on his characterizations as to when and how rhetorical moves may be found in a naïve consciousness. For example, in Spence's piece there is a clear historical account that allows him to position himself from a distance. Here, there is not an explicitly nostalgia for the past, but a move to incorporate the past in order position his reflexivity from a distant, historical account instead of an immediate, personal account. Thus, while there may not be necessarily moments demonstrating a "nostalgia for the past" as Freire (1974) claims can be seen in naïve consciousness, there is a discussion and recounting of the past functioning as a rhetorical move to avoid entering a self-reflective, transitive consciousness. Linking these characteristics to rhetorical moves in writing may help better position writing teachers to discuss how rhetoric impacts the voice and level of self-reflexivity in writing. Doing so, may call attention to the need for students to use rhetorical moves to position themselves into a more transitive consciousness – in both their writing and arguably, their thinking.

Reflections Revealed Relationship Between Race & Critical Inquiry Skills: Stories from Students of Color

While the stories from my white students used rhetorical moves to distance themselves within their narratives, stories from my students of color tended to rhetorically position stories of historicized racism as continuing to be relevant to today's encounters with racism. Doing so, their own identities became significant and self-reflective characters in their papers as they discussed how others construct images of their identity today based upon historical accounts of racism that continue define what it means to be "raced" and "not white" today.

Chelsea and Andrianna, both self-identified students of color, selected to write their first paper on their grandmother's. Both selected stories that were shared to them about their grandmother's experience with race as they grew up during the civil rights movement. The students do not explicitly discuss their identity when reflecting and analyzing their grandmother's stories. However, these students use the historical storied accounts to make claims about how historical accounts racism continues to influence today's cultural attitudes on race. This is especially evident when Chelsea and Andrianna discuss their concerns about how they see others construct false identities, based upon historicized accounts, about themselves as two girls with black skin. As such, while like the accounts above, there is not a clear move to focus solely upon their identities. However, Chelsea and Andrianna do begin to make moves that have previously not been seen in Spence, Kallie or Melissa J.'s papers. Mainly, they demonstrate an acute awareness of how others construct their identities. Doing so, they rhetorically situate themselves to raise awareness of how this exists, especially how this

exists beyond their control. Further, the stories differ from the accounts above because the stories they share are deeply close to their own lives. These are stories they have been told as “cautionary stories”. Stories of looking for signs and reactions of others, no matter how small they may seem, because any look or action may indicate threating situations. Chelsea indicates her remembrance of the story as a moment that marked great significance in how she understood race, writing:

> “*This goes to show how powerful story is and how it can have such a great impact on one’s life. Since the first time I heard this story, I’ve never forgotten it. Not because of its extreme awfulness, but because of the impact it had on my way of thinking about race.”*

The story does not act solely as a narrative but as a type of folktale. There is a lesson to these stories that needs to be taught in order for young children to understand the implications it may have in their own lives. As such, the selection to share these stories of magnitude possibly allow for these students to reflect with more purpose and implications for their own lives.

To see evidence of the different moves being made, let’s begin with Chelsea. Chelsea begins her paper by immediately positioning herself and acknowledging her identity in the opening paragraph. She writes:

> “*I was luckily born into a time where racism was declining and becoming less prominent. Also, I am from the inner-city which is made up mostly of black people. I went to a high school that was racially diverse, but primarily African-American. The neighborhood I was raised in is on the border of a Metro-Detroit suburb, but I was still surrounded by my own race. Therefore, rarely was I ever put into predicaments in which I encountered racism. I am very fortunate in the sense that is not something that I have had to deal with, but beginning this new chapter in my life at Michigan State University, this may change. No longer am I a part of the majority, I can now feel the realness of being a minority. Based on the stories my family has shared with me throughout my life, I am aware of how real racism is.”*

Immediately, there is reflection on how the different places that she occupies have the potential for outsiders to construct an identity for her. In many ways she indicates in this opening paragraph the vulnerability of her racial identity as something that cannot necessarily be controlled by her due to interactions with others. This is further explained through the story she shares about her grandmother. When her grandparents were traveling on a business trip in the late 70s, Chelsea writes:

> *"My grandparents pulled their burgundy 1975 Pontiac Bonneville over, and went into the rest stop along with the other couples. There were limited stalls available in the women's restroom, which caused a long line. As one person came out, another went in and so on. My Grandmother and her friends waited patiently in line, and behind them stood a white woman. Finally, it was my Grandmother's turn to use the restroom and when she came out she noticed the next person did not go into the restroom. The white lady stood there very hesitant with a disgusted look on her face. Under the impression that the lady was simply not paying attention, my Grandmother kindly told her "I'm finished. The bathroom is open." The lady gave her a very evil stare, and continued to stand there very sternly with her arms folded. She then caused a scene and refused to use the bathroom after a black lady. She felt so strongly about this she stood there in her all white pants, spread her legs apart, and urinated on herself in front of everyone who was watching. Shocked, surprised and disgusted that someone could be so hateful and so nasty, my Grandmother and her friends quickly exited."*

The story, while racist in nature, also demonstrates how others can construct identities. Chelsea indicates the lack of control someone of color has in regards to the construction, and often the presumptions of that person, when she quickly follows up after this story writing:

> *"Although I am growing up in a time where racism is not nearly as blatant or evident, some part of me still lives in fear that I will be faced with it. There is nothing that bothers me more than to be judged or treated wrongly by people who have drawn conclusions about based on my physical appearance."*

Here, Chelsea acknowledges the challenge of others constructing a false identity based upon her race. She makes this connection by analyzing the story of her grandmother and then drawing implications of that story to her own life. Therefore, while she does

choose to historicize through the selection of the story, unlike Spence's story, Chelsea immediately connects the historicization of the piece to her own current life. As a result, this diminishes the distance between the story and implications of that story on Chelsea's racial identity. The reader sees her fusing the story to her own life when she reflects:

> *"Coming to Michigan State University was a whole new ball park for me. Suddenly, I was no longer surrounded by people who like me, talk like me, and for the most part, share the same views as me. I secretly live in fear of racism and prejudice. This makes me pay extra attention to the things I do to show that the only that really separates me from them is skin color. I live on campus in Shaw Hall, where we share a community bathroom. The floor I live on is predominately white and sometimes I wonder if I am being viewed how my grandmother was viewed by the lady in the white pants. Although it may not be spoken upon, I wonder if the girls may choose to use a different shower than the one that I use, or wash their hands at a different sink. I am not afraid of the Caucasian race, I am afraid of the judgment that may be passed upon me because I am not a part of it."*

Again, here she is echoing an awareness of how race can impact the construction of one's identity – leading to assumptions about herself. She continues echoing this awareness of racial identity construction stating:

> *"I never let it be known that I am "proving myself," I don't do things that I normally do; I just do things in a more mindful manner. I have never admitted this to anyone, not even myself."*

Interesting is her choice to disclose at the end that she has "never admitted this to anyone" not even herself. Yet, by disclosing this information she has now admitted it to herself (and to the reader). What perhaps was a subconscious reality has now been more to a more accessible awareness, more surface level than before. It appears that Chelsea was not without a critical consciousness. This is evident by sharing her grandmother's story and analyzing its impact on identity construction, which has allowed her to make her awareness more prominent.

Chelsea's story begins to make moves that stretch beyond a naïve consciousness. This is especially clear when she discusses the new awareness she has had about her identity while a student in college. Faced with this awareness of being "the minority" as she puts it, she discloses her process of testing and revising her practices that influence the construction presume about her identity. This is clear when she states that "*I don't do things that I normally do; I just do things in a more mindful manner.*" Returning to Freire (1974) then and his discussion of consciousness development, Chelsea's statements seem to align with the characteristic of transitive consciousness as the "testing of one's 'findings' and by openness to revision" (p. 14). This paper reveals Chelsea's findings of moving into a different racial space and in many ways "testing" her practices and performances within that space understanding how it reflects and constructs her identity. These moves to incorporate rhetorical reflection between her grandmother's story and her new experience at college, one can begin to trace moments of consciousness development beyond a naïve phase. As a first paper and first-year student, Chelsea's naivety is not all completely absent. The paper at points makes grand claims that suggest a lack of critical reflection. For example, in the paper Chelsea makes a move to connect her grandmother's story to today's world claiming that her grandmother's story took place "*in the 1970s, a time when blacks and white were learning to unite*." This contradicts parts of her paper when she discusses her polarizing experiences in college as a black student. Nonetheless, it can be argued that Chelsea is attempting to make moves that are developing beyond a mere naïve consciousness into a more developed transitive consciousness because of the revision and critical reflection she presents in the piece of writing.

While Chelsea's story focuses on asserting how she finds others constructing her identity, Andrianna's story focuses around how her mixed identity creates ambiguity around her identity construction. The reader begins to understand this in Andrianna's story as she introduces a story about her grandmother's racial identity. Identifying as "mixed", Andrianna draws connections between her grandmother's struggle to perform an identity and Andrianna's own tensions negotiating her racial identity. The reader sees this after Andrianna shares stories about her grandmother's struggle to "fit in" with her own identity, Andrianna writes:

> "*I remember just as my grandmother, I was considered the "white girl" on the cheer team. All of my best friends since elementary had been white and the first boy I talked to was white. It wasn't entirely my fault because all of my life, I heard stories on how African American people treat the lighter skin, blacks, which still exists today. For some reason darker skin African Americans believe that the lighter the skin, the better opportunities and chances are in life. Me being just like my grandmother, light skin, long black hair, I experienced everything she went through."*

While Chelsea focused on how other races, especially those who identify as white, have attempted to construct her and her grandmother's identity, Andrianna asserts how her own identity became constructed by her African American community. She stresses this throughout the paper, and opts to end the paper with the following final sentence:

> *"Not only are there stereotypes against white and black Americans, but also the light skin and dark skin African Americans."*

Unlike Chelsea's piece, racism is not of particular concern to Andrianna seen by the stories she opts to share. Instead, there is special attention made to race as identity constructors and the implications of identifying as "mixed" in a culture where, as she states, *"racial scrutiny is all around the world and has been around for many years."* Andrianna then uses this assignment as a way to begin discussing and negotiating her own identity. The stories Andrianna shares about her grandmother do not require a

historical context like the stories above. Instead, the stories Andrianna shares are relevant beyond time – questioning what it means to identify as mixed in a culture that has remained timeless in regards to how it constructs racial identities. That is, for Andrianna, American culture has and continues to view race from a binary position – black or white – what continues to remain is preforming a mixture of these races and negotiating where one self-identifies within that performance. As a result, the narrative Andrianna creates is one that emulates timelessness and allows for close-up view of Andrianna's own understanding of her identity.

What occurs in Andrianna's piece that never appears in Chelsea's is a move towards engaging with, wrestling and complicating what it means to identify as "mixed". This wrestling is evident not only in Andrianna's experience but with her grandmother's experience as well. Andrianna shares this shared ambiguity writing:

> "*Me being just like my grandmother, light skin, long black hair, I experienced everything she went through. The only difference, in our stories is that the whites and other cultures accepted me, and a few more blacks.*"

There is a camaraderie to Andrianna's story that appears when she discusses the close bond she feels with her grandmother. In her conclusion Andrianna briefly discusses what this bond has meant stating,

> "*Therefore, the stories my grandmother told are a learning experience about race, and I feel without it I will still be naive to things that may occur."*

For Andrianna, the stories her grandmother has shared have assisted her in moving towards a more critical understanding of race. In fact, the sharing of stories functions as a kind of dialogue in this piece in that it incorporates a different perspectives and simply other stories that create a more complicated statement of the world. As such, by engaging in this practice of dialoguing between her grandmother and the lesson's those

stories have taught Andrianna, she begins to move from a naïve consciousness to a transitive consciousness (Freire, 1974). Unlike the other students who used stories to create a distant narrative, Andrianna connects story and the reflective. The rhetorical move then to use story as a place to present a wrestling with ideas and, thus very much a dialogue with the reader about these ideas, begins to establish movement towards transitive consciousness.

While Andrianna and Chelsea's papers both use their grandmother's as characters to discuss their own racial identity, Brandon remains critical of the option to historicize his racial identity. As such, instead of writing about a story a family member told him about race, Brandon selected to critique such a move and, in doing so, share an experience from middle school where he began to wrestle with his identity. This piece functioned differently than what was yet seen in these papers. For it narrated directly from a first-person point of view and articulate a clear annoyance with incorporating third-person perspectives into their work because of what it takes away from their own stories.

Brandon immediately begins his paper by criticizing and mocking historicizing moves stating,

> "*My family has taught me about race for as long as I can remember. It was not a fun subject for me. Usually, it involved blacks going through tough times (slavery, segregation, etc.) and how I am lucky to be living in this time where I have rights I can express. I heard it all before: Africans were abducted, taken over to America in cramped and dirty ships, and forced into slavery."*

The reader clearly uses a mocking tone when he writes *"I heard it all before".* Using mockery as a tool, Brandon establishes his all but acute awareness of race from a historical perspective. This reliance to associate race with history and politics is

somewhat of an annoyance to Brandon and he discusses how he negotiates and wrestles with these assumptions made about his race throughout his paper.

As he continues on with his paper, Brandon begins to provide the reader with a rationale for his critique and mocking stating,

> "*Talking about my race with my family became boring – it was like I was listening to a broken record. I was taught it in school, so whenever they talked about it to me, I felt it was a review of what I had learned in class. Their message did not feel as powerful as it should have because I thought I knew what they were going to tell me before they actually told me. It also didn't help that I went to a private, Catholic, mostly white school where everyone I knew was white, including my friends."*

For Brandon there appeared to be little relevance to the actual content based upon his day-to-day interactions. Yet after disclosing his boredom of learning about the history of his ancestry, Brandon makes an interesting narrative move and switches into a story about a 3rd grade classroom project. Designed as an interactive history report, Brandon describes his choices of who he could pick in order to research and perform writing,

> *"There were so many choices: Babe Ruth, George Clooney, Abraham Lincoln, etc. But they were white, and I wanted to be someone I could accurately portray."*

Here, Brandon begins to make connections between identity and performance. The task to physically portray a historical person limited Brandon's choices when accounting for Brandon's own identity and he accounts for this stating his desire to *"accurately portray"* someone. Making this narrative move into a different story, Brandon moves away from his historical critique to actually repositioning his use of history. As the story progresses the reader sees clearer evidence of this when Brandon decides to be the unknown Scott Joplin describing the scene as:

> "*When our audience (comprised of parents and older students) arrived, they could see each student from the half circle we formed. They scattered to the walls, swarming the costumed children at their posts. Four parents came up to*

> *me and asked me questions about Scott Joplin, and I answered them as best a 3rd grader could. When they left, I looked around – no more people were coming in my direction. I stood there, patiently waiting. I looked around again, and I watched as groups of people gathered around the more famous 3rd graders. I knew Scott Joplin wasn't the most well-known person being portrayed here, but I didn't think he would be overlooked this much, either. I felt left out, unnoticed, forgotten. I wanted to cry, but knew that I would be completely ignored by everyone (except the teacher) if I started."*

Brandon's decision, to embrace his identity and perform a racial historical character based upon his own Black race, ended up isolating him. When he arrives home from his performance, he is encouraged by his mother to tell his father about the experience and he writes,

> *"I told him how I wanted to be white so that people would like me more and would talk to me. He sent me to my room, saying I hadn't learned anything from all the talks we've had on being proud of our heritage. He said I was still ignorant of the past, but because it was late, I would "re-educated" another day. My heart was heavy – I knew I had failed my parents, and I still didn't understand the importance of being black."*

In looking at the progression of Brandon's paper, he begins the paper critiquing history as important to identity. He uses his own story about historically performing identity and his father's reaction to his own rejection of his race as a way to describe the process he underwent in embracing his identity. Therefore, while Brandon may have not followed the assignment by telling a direct story about race, Brandon in fact writes about the process he went about negotiating his racial identity. Further, it suggests that there is a relationship between awareness of one's identity and historical identity. That is, by performing a historical identity, one may become more engaged with that actual history. Performing an identity then moves the historical element of it into conversation with the present day. This is evident in Brandon's narrative when he performs Scott Jenkins to a 21st century audience. Moving the historical into the present created, Brandon's own

wrestling with his identity surfaced to a more *"real"* and accessible level. As a result, there is the possibility to imply a usefulness of looking at the historical when asking students to engage in personal realizations regarding their identities.

Brandon's performance of a historical identity impacted the retelling of this story. That is, in performing the historical identity, there is an erasure of distance in the narration. Instead, the experience becomes first-hand instead of a distant observation of the historical. Readers see more distant observations of the historical in Spence, Kallie, and Melissa J.'s pieces where the historical functions rhetorically as a move to avoid self-reflection and fail to practice an "interrogative" and restlessness in their stories (Freire, 1974). Yet, Brandon's story models aspects of transitive consciousness, where he very much testing his findings of the audience's reaction to his historical performance and his parent's response to it. As a story that models this process of "testing" and "revising" findings, Brandon rhetorically positions the historical account as reflective in the immediate world. Thereby, resituating the use of bringing in the performance historical accounts as relevant and currently meaningful. This is apparent in Brandon's story not only because of his account of the historical performance but of his immediate critique and mockery of learning from the past. Taken together, Brandon's paper provides insight into the moments of his transitive consciousness rooted in revision. For while Brandon begins the paper critiquing the relevancy of history, the paper ends with a revised and reflected upon understanding of how historical performance can provide meaning making of one's identity.

Reflections Revealed Relationship Between Race & Critical Inquiry Skills: The Appearance of Consciousness

Reading these scenes of stories, there are clearly different ways that students approached the assignment. For my white students, they decided to engage with stories of race from a distant or historical perspective. Sharing stories about their own race either was too challenging or the stories they had were deemed unfit or irrelevant to suit the task. Either way it was clear that these white students struggled with thinking about themselves as a raced being and what it meant to be white. Evidence of this is discussed in the stories above. Nonetheless, these students did articulate an awareness of how race impacts the world around them – either historically or through examples of others. As such, it was not necessarily that these students did not have an awareness of race but perhaps simply did not have the tools, confidence, or ability to convey and reflect upon their own positionality. My students of color, however, clearly engaged in a variety of ways with the task. Yet, a common denominator of all of their stories was that each made narrative moves to take their story(ies) and connect them to their present day lives, often through self-reflection. Doing so these students referenced a stage of consciousness in this process. My white students also exhibited a level of consciousness around their identities, yet often this consciousness was not as self-reflexive nor as developed as my students of color. This then suggests that when working within a critical pedagogy framework, consciousness in students already exists. However, this consciousness may be developed at different stages and in different moments for different students.

Freire (1974) speaks to this when he discusses the difference stages of a critical conscious, transitive and naïve consciousness. Additionally, though, there are

numerous characteristics of how these two stages of consciousness are characterized. That is transitive consciousness is characterized by a lengthy list of attributes such as:

> The substitution of causal principles for magical explanations; the testing of one's 'findings' and openness to revision; by the attempt to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and to avoid preconceived notions when analyzing them; by refusing to transfer responsibility; by rejecting passive positions; [and] by soundness of argumentation. (Freire, 1974, p. 14)

The list of attributes for a transitive consciousness continues, and as such, it is clear that not all students will be capable of embodying and practicing all the characteristics of this consciousness. Nor will all students be practicing a certain set of characteristics at the same time. The same can be said of the characteristics of a naïve consciousness, which contains a similarly lengthy set of attributes. What can be further problematic is the ability for a teacher to identify and connect a set of attributes to a student practice. Some of this I argue is the ambiguity that Freire allows in assigning attributes. But a further issue is how Freire (1974) discusses these attributes directly to the "militarily authoritarian state presently prevailing in Brazil" (p. 14). Understanding then Freire's discussion of transitive and naïve consciousness as situated within the 1960/1970 politics of Brazil, it becomes clear that a resituating and renewed application of these terms to the current US classroom needs to occur. This is necessary in order to remove the ambiguity in such terms and by doing so will hopefully assist in teachers being able to position their content and interventions into more productive moments where students are encouraged to engage in a mode of transitive consciousness. It is raising this complicated understanding of a Freirean critical consciousness to a more surfaced level comprehension that teachers may better position themselves and their success of using of critical pedagogy in the classroom.

Looking Across Units, A Reiteration of Unit One: Student Consciousness Correlating with Student Racial Identity

As I looked through the data sets collected for this study and noticed the first unit displaying patterns of various stages of consciousness and its correlation with student's racial identities, I began looking across other sets to determine its presence within the course of the semester. Doing so, patterns of student's reactions in unit one were emerging within unit three.

The third unit asked students to research how their intended profession created stories about race. Approaching the assignment through a narrative lens, students were asked to research their profession and analyzed the stories that get told about how their profession treats racial identity. An additional goal of this assignment was for students to not only participate in a research discourse, but also make meaning out of their research and reflect upon what they have learned about their intended profession and its narrative about race. As such, this information asks students to assess if they wish to continue to join this profession and if so, how they anticipate negotiating their identity within that professional space.

Working through this assignment, it was clear that my white students struggled to articulate their privileged racial identities. Evidence of this first appeared in the research questions students posed in their annotated bibliographies. Chelsea, a student of color in the class, poses questions that not only reflect the landscape of the profession but also critically assess' how her identity may impact her potential success in this field. She asks:

> *"How will being an African-American woman affect my chances of being a successful broadcast journalist? Will it affect my chances of entering the field? Reaching broad audiences?"*

Here, not only is Chelsea asking questions regarding her own identity but looking at the structure of the field she is entering and asking questions of how the field creates narratives of race. Additionally, it is clear that there is an assumption that her identity may limit her in this profession when she asks her final question about how her Black identity may impact "reaching broad audiences". Here, Chelsea articulates a question critical of her own identity and in search of potentially revising how she may approach entering this field based upon the answers that she discovers. As such, Chelsea is attempting to expose her identity for the sake of new knowledge in order to position herself more marketable to her profession. Doing so, she is attempting to move from a naïve consciousness that "lack[s] an interest in investigation" to a more transitive consciousness that "attempt[s] to avoid distortion when perceiving problems" (Freire, 1974, p. 14). Yet, when looking at a question that Kait, a white student, poses, there is a lack of reflection on what her identity may mean in her intended profession. In the annotated bibliography Kait poses the questions:

> *"How does being a White woman affect my potential successfulness of working in Food Industry Management? What is the quality of life when working in Food Service?"*

Unlike Chelsea's last question that reveals a moment of identity reflection, Kait's questions, while they fulfill the assignment, fail to demonstrate a reflective moment of how her white identity may impact her ability to enter her desired profession. That is, Chelsea understood potential limitations placed upon her because of her race. Yet, as a white girl, Kait struggled to articulate how privilege may work in her advantage and

problematize what that might mean in the research questions. Instead, there is a naivety to her questions that allows for “a lack of interest in investigation” (Freire, 1974, p 14). Similar to Spence, Melissa J. and Kallie’s papers in unit one, such a lack of examining oneself could be due to uncomfortably to do so in a classroom discussing race or simply the inability to begin to articulating an analysis of embodying a race that appears or is thought of as “raceless”.

The intent of the exercise to pose research questions was two-fold, one to focus the breadth of the assignment, and two, to guide the student’s process of developing questions that asked them to research not only the discipline but themselves in that discipline as well. In many ways, the second part of the purpose was to attempt for students to engage in critically analyzing themselves as raced humans in their intended field. What was not accounted for in this was how white students who anticipated not finding much research on their race in the field would impact their ability to fulfill the assignment. Students of color came to class with lots of research ranging from affirmative action affecting minorities’ medical school applications to research indicating the need for more minorities to work and research in the African American community to better assist the obesity crises. Yet, many of my white students came to class with articles only about their discipline. As such, they would express their frustration with not being able to find anything that discussed their race - only minorities. What occurred as a result was that my white students were attempting to model a process that I created and benefited my students of color. My white students simply did not have the tools to figure out the next steps in asking questions about why there was no additional information regarding their race in the profession. These students failed to understand

the lack of information as a signifier of how racial inequality operates through hegemonic and assumed "normed" structures.

Examples of these stalled moments appear in Kait's paper when she concludes after disclosing her research results:

> *"Being a white woman in the food industry may have its advantages and disadvantages. I believe that being a woman will help me get a job in the industry because of the fact that women are very knowledgeable about food and cooking. With me being a 'White' woman I think that this will not help or hurt me. The industry is looking for diversity and 'White' is not necessarily diverse but I don't think that a business will not hire me because of the fact that I am white."*

Here, Kait fails to see the contradictions present in her statements. While she asserts that the food industry is "*looking for diversity"*, she fails to think that may have an impact on her own success with securing a job in this industry. No critical questioning of her identity is present in this statement. Instead, Kait decides to simply assume the continuation of a privileged white norm in the industry. She does not see her racial identity being threatened by this call for diversity; instead, she assumes that this call will affect "others" and not herself. On the contrary, Chelsea's paper immediately attempts to address how racial identities in broadcast journalism have been contested. In the second paragraph Chelsea asserts a complicated understanding of her identity in relation to laws governing equality stating:

> *"As an African-American it is no secret that some things may not work in my favor despite laws that have been put in place to prevent workplace discrimination and the promotion of equality for all. I am up for the challenge. I am dedicated to enduring the obstacles I may face before reaching my goal of becoming a successful and well-known broadcast journalist."*

Unlike Kait, Chelsea demonstrates her complex awareness of how structures like laws often provide a facade of equality but often work only on a surface level, never deep

enough to effect significant change. As a result, Chelsea realizes that “despite laws” she may still need to endure obstacles as a result of her racial identity.

Race and Consciousness Development

Unit one and unit three provide examples where there appears to be a relationship between race and one’s ability to critically question one’s identity, indicating different stages of consciousness. My students of color continued to make moves towards more transitive consciousness that accounted for how stories of race impact their lives and how they must negotiate those stories. Whereas my white students tended to engage in more naïve consciousness by remaining distant from those stories, never fully engaging in what those stories meant to the construction of their own identities. As a result, questions arise regarding whether it was the implementation or design of the assignments that perhaps facilitated some of this disconnect between my white students and yet favored my students of color. Answers to those questions are not clear. What is clear, however, is that discussing personal identity is challenging and asking students to engage in critical moments of their identity asks a lot of the students but also of the teacher to help facilitate and guide these moments. The next “mini-scene” that follows will articulate how I attempted to guided these moments, relying on students of color to model inquiry.

Students of Color Modeling Inquiry

Unit three, as a research unit, proved to be a challenging unit. Teaching this unit previously to other course sections, I anticipated this. In the past students over other sections have felt overwhelmed and daunted by the research requirements. I expected students in this course to express similar feelings of anxiety and worry, yet I did believe

that with a theme of race and ethnicity, the research project intrinsically had a tighter focus, which could relieve some student anxiety. Yet as the previous section indicated, new questions arose from this project – especially when trying to guide my white students to critically reflect upon the potential lack of research that they were finding about their own identities in their research. As such, during this unit I found myself more than any other previous unit modeling moves of inquiry to my students by engaging in problem-posing questioning. Yet, this was never conducted from a position where I was the example. Instead, I drew upon those who were willing to participate in the class and would respond to their questions of confusion by "mapping" out a response. Evidence of this confusion can be seen in my fieldnotes.[14] In order to assist students in understanding the assignment, I applied the acronym MAPS[15] to the project. Literally and figuratively asking students to "map" out their projects. Doing so, I began to locate areas where students were confused and/or overwhelmed by the assignment. By applying MAPS and thinking rhetorically about the paper, the assignment became more focused and developed a real purpose that attempted to have some meaning to these students' lives. The notes from this class indicate this:

> "*Anonymous*[16] *gave a very broad purpose – to find out more about the discipline and how your race is treated. This was right, but I wanted them to be more specific as it related to the audience (their parents). As such I had them talk to*

[14] Fieldnotes were collected via the reflective journal that I kept during the course of conducting research. As such, the fieldnotes represent my understanding from a research and teacher perspective of moments occurring in the classroom. Additionally, the fieldnotes were dated and represent a progression of the class over the semester long course.

[15] MAPS stands for Mode, Audience, Purpose, and Situation.

[16] This is a student who opted to referred to in this work as Anonymous.

> *the person next to them and refer to the assignment she to try and figure it out. At first they didn't want to talk (like usual) so I started to walk around the room to get them talking to each other. Melissa J. then suggested that the purpose was to convince their parents of why they are studying what they are studying. I said this is right but how does race matter? And then we talked about the quality of life and figuring out how their own positionality as a raced person effects their success in this field. We then started brainstorming potential topics b/c only few people knew what they wanted to write about."*

Here MAPS assisted in moving from large, broad issues to posing more local and personally meaningful questions regarding student's choices of study and their own identities.

Later in the unit, once students began researching their disciplines, the process of piecing the parts of the map together began using students own research and modeling the process to begin evaluating and thinking about that research. As such, students came to class with an "action plan" that began to ask students to articulate a hypothesis about their race and their discipline as well as indicate potential sources for assisting in answering this question. As students shared their information and action plans in groups, it became clear that students had begun feeling overwhelmed by this assignment. Many articulated that they simply did not understand the types of questions to ask people they would interview nor did they understand how to organize this paper. As such, I asked for a student to volunteer their topic for a modeling exercise. Confident in her work as a typical "A" student, Rebekka a young African American woman raised her hand. Writing her questions on the board, Rebekka wrote two questions that she wanted her assignment to be framed around:

> *"Do you believe that there is a correlation between gender and nutrition, as it pertains to diets?"* and "*What type of research has been done recently in the African American community that explores eating habits?"*

My fieldnotes from this day articulate the process that the class engaged in, working out with Rebekka and modeling to the class how to go through the process of gathering, analyzing and writing research. Evidence of this process follows:

> "*This [the two questions] was interesting because I said the first question is more of a question for an interview and Rebekka agreed that it was. So then we focused more on the second question being the main research question. She identified then that she is going to interview Dr. Lorraine a dietician and Kelly who is an African American senior at MSU studying dietician. So then we mapped how the first question she wants to ask (the first research question) relates to the larger research question and relates to her relationship with Dr. Lorraine. Then I asked what are you going to ask Kelly? And she wanted to just ask her about her experience in the program. But I began to see in the questions that the questions Rebekka was asking didn't include her in them. So I began to push why she was interested in asking the questions she is asking and she said it is because she wants to do research in the African American community. So I said that you could ask Kelly who works in that community and identifies as an African American woman questions about access to that community. How does that community respond to her? Are there challenges? Do they open up? So then we went back to the main research question and said that we needed to add a part about access in there in order to include more of Rebekka into the research question. Then we said that we could look at a textbook that analyzes how this kind of research that Rebekka wants to do is talked about. And she indicated that she already found an article that relates to the diets of races and genders. So then we started to draw all of these connection points together and show again how they are relating and building together. So then I told the class that if I did this over again, I would then show this as a web with the research questions in the middle and textbook, article, and 2 interviews webbed out from there to see how they all relate to each other and talk to each other. This was quite helpful I think and I saw students writing this down."*

From these notes, one can see the additional questions that developed as a result of mapping. I found the concept of mapping, one that then naturally allows for problem-posing to occur. In many ways mapping then led to a "webbing" of ideas. The map grew and changed and shifted as students began asking questions that expanded upon the research that they discovered. Evidence of this is seen not only in Rebekka's example, but also in Nicole's.

Nicole, unlike Rebekka, did not volunteer to model. Instead, I selected Nicole as an additional model because she has always presented herself as an active member of the class and one that actively engaged in the work. Additionally, Nicole, like Rebekka produced work that typically modeled deep critical inquiry of herself. As someone who identified as mixed, Nicole's work tended to question the ambiguity of her identity. This questioning of identity as a step needed for this paper, as such, I thought Nicole to be a great example of modeling such a step. Asking to use her research questions, she was somewhat hesitant as expected. Yet, I assured her that this was simply a way to practice the process of creating a final research product. Assured that there are no wrong answers, simply a way to better your process, Nicole agreed. The question that Nicole posed was *"How beneficial is being a minority in this field [social work]?*" Asking this question, I pushed on Nicole to explain to the class why she was asking such a question. Why would her positionality be something to consider. I did this intentionally for other students to consider reflecting upon their own identities within this paper. I noted Nicole's response to justifying the reason why she wanted to consider her own identity in my fieldnotes that further illustrate the process of this assignment:

> *"She indicated that she is interested in this question because so many of the clients social work serves are minorities. Thus, she is wondering if there is a correlation between being a minority social worker and being a minority getting social work. This was great! I told her then she needs to add this context in the paper. Then we mapped out how this research question would then impact the questions she would ask in her interviews. She identified that she is going to interview a professor of social work that she knows here and her old boss, a social worker. She said that she was going to ask her professor what is like to be a white male working with minorities? And she was going to ask the old boss (Sharon we called her but this was a pseudonym) how her positionality as a white woman would impact her work? I asked why these questions and she said it was because of a fact she read in a textbook about white women being the largest population of social workers and so she is interested in how that relates to her large research question and the people she interviews. She then is going to*

> *look for an article that may help further support the information that she finds. We traced then how these artifacts (the articles, textbook, and interviews) all work together as a conversation to help support her main question and then it is at the end where she can include a reflective piece discussing how her analysis of these artifacts helped discover her own positionality in the field. This seemed to click with her and I could tell that the class started to pick up when I began to stress that all these pieces need to be in conversation together. It can't just be a paper that goes through the motions and says "I interviewed this guy and he told me this about engineering" and Then I found this fact in an engineering textbook and then I found this other article about race and engineering. No, I said it all needs to work together and support your research question (which is your thesis)."*

While Rebekka's paper dealt more with the topic of a discipline and its interaction with race, Nicole's asked key questions about herself in relation to performing within that discipline. Both approaches were correct to creating a final product for this paper. Asking these additional questions then students began to create webs as a way to engage in deeper problem-posing activities. Below are figures that provide evidence of the physical map created during this process in order for the class to understand the "how" part of "doing"[17] and writing research. In the following figures, aspects of the map are highlighted as ways that allow for students to extend problem-posing from an invisible arena to a visible and tangible way to "put the pieces" together and extend their maps into engaging, dynamic inquiry webs.

[17] By "doing" I am referring to the gathering, analyzing, and development of data for a research project.

Figure 1: Core of Problem-Posing

For interpretation of the references to color in this and all other figures, the reader is referred to the electronic version of this thesis.

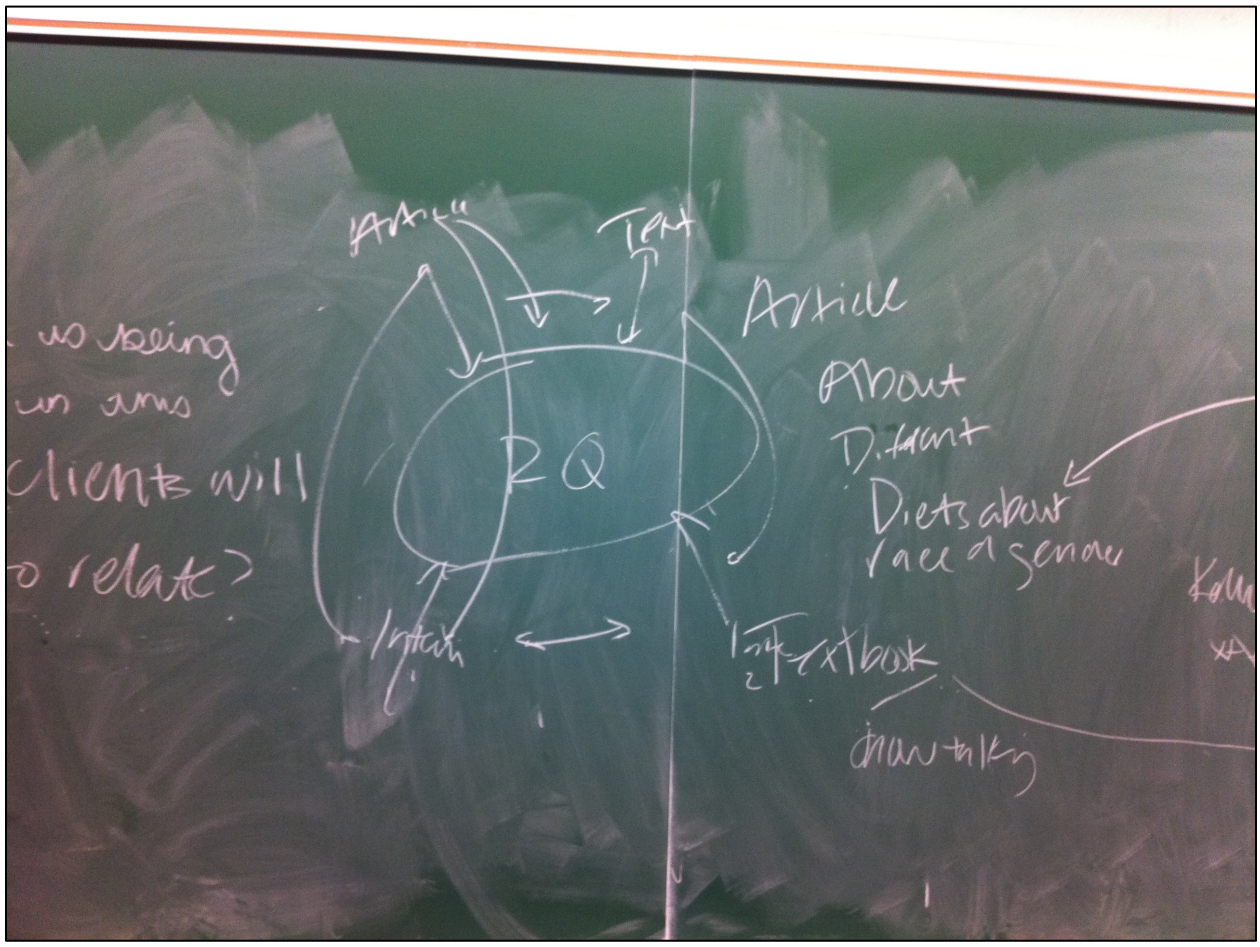

Figure 1, above, focuses on the "core" of the problem-posing. Within the circle is "2Q" representing the two research question that students initially propose about their topic. For instance, in Rebekka's paper the two questions she was interested in answering about the field of dietetics were:

> *"Do you believe that there is a correlation between gender and nutrition, as it pertains to diets?"* and "*What type of research has been done recently in the African American community that explores eating habits?"*

The purpose of this “core” in the web however is to model how these initial questions may evolve and undergo a revision process as outside research begins to inform the questions. As such, in the figure about you will see arrows and directional pointing away and to the questions. This imagery is meant to represent the multiple ways that the required research impacts the questions. That is, the top left corner of the circle contains the scribbled word “Article” with an arrow pointing to the “2Q” and an additional arrow extending past the “2Q” section to the scribbled word “Interview”. These directionals mirror the modeling process I dictated to the class during this webbing. Doing so, I indicated that by reading an article related to one of the “2Q’s” one may not only find information that better informs a “2Q” but may also come across new information that may not be either entirely clear or supportive of the original “2Q” as such, a sub-research question may be generated, of which may be appropriate to ask during an interview with a professional in the field. Thereby attempting to demonstrate how outside research not only impacts the “core” “2Q’s” but also influences the construction of interview questions. On the right hand side of this figure, this similar type of modeling is repeated for including research via data gathered from textbooks, outside background text, and an additional scholarly article. Focusing on this “core” and how it continues to be revised and influenced by the research, the goal was for the students to understand how research is a living entity – never fixed and always producing different narratives about itself through the different sources it appears. It is by understanding the research paper as a living entity that asks students to engage in a process-oriented approach in researching their topics.

Figure 2: An Extended Web of Problem-Posing

Text in the figure is not meant to be readable, but is for visual reference only.

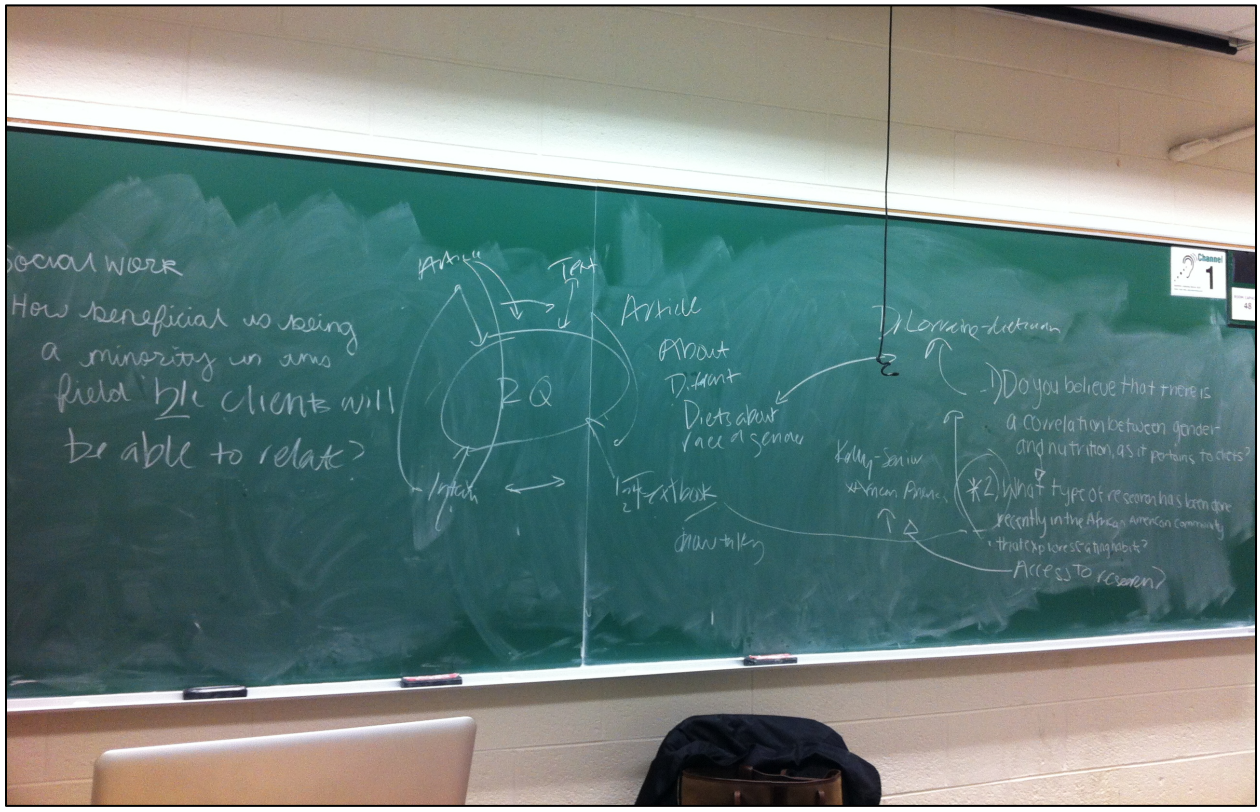

Figure 2, pictured above, provides a landscape of how the “core” web branches out to more developed and focused webs. As such, the core remains in the center. However, on both the right and left side of the board are additional questions. During the modeling of this process, I began with modeling to the students on a more abstract level with the “2Q” scenario evident in figure 1. Once the foundational theory behind the process of researching was explained, I moved towards application and asked of Nicole and Rebekka to become applied models to this web. As such, on the right side of the figure is a question Nicole posed about the profession of social work as it relates to her

race. As Nicole introduced this question, I wrote it on the board to the right-side of the "2Q" core. From there I verbally applied the "2Q" process to Nicole's question.

Figure 3: Student Application of Creating a Problem-Posing Web

Text in the figure is not meant to be readable, but is for visual reference only.

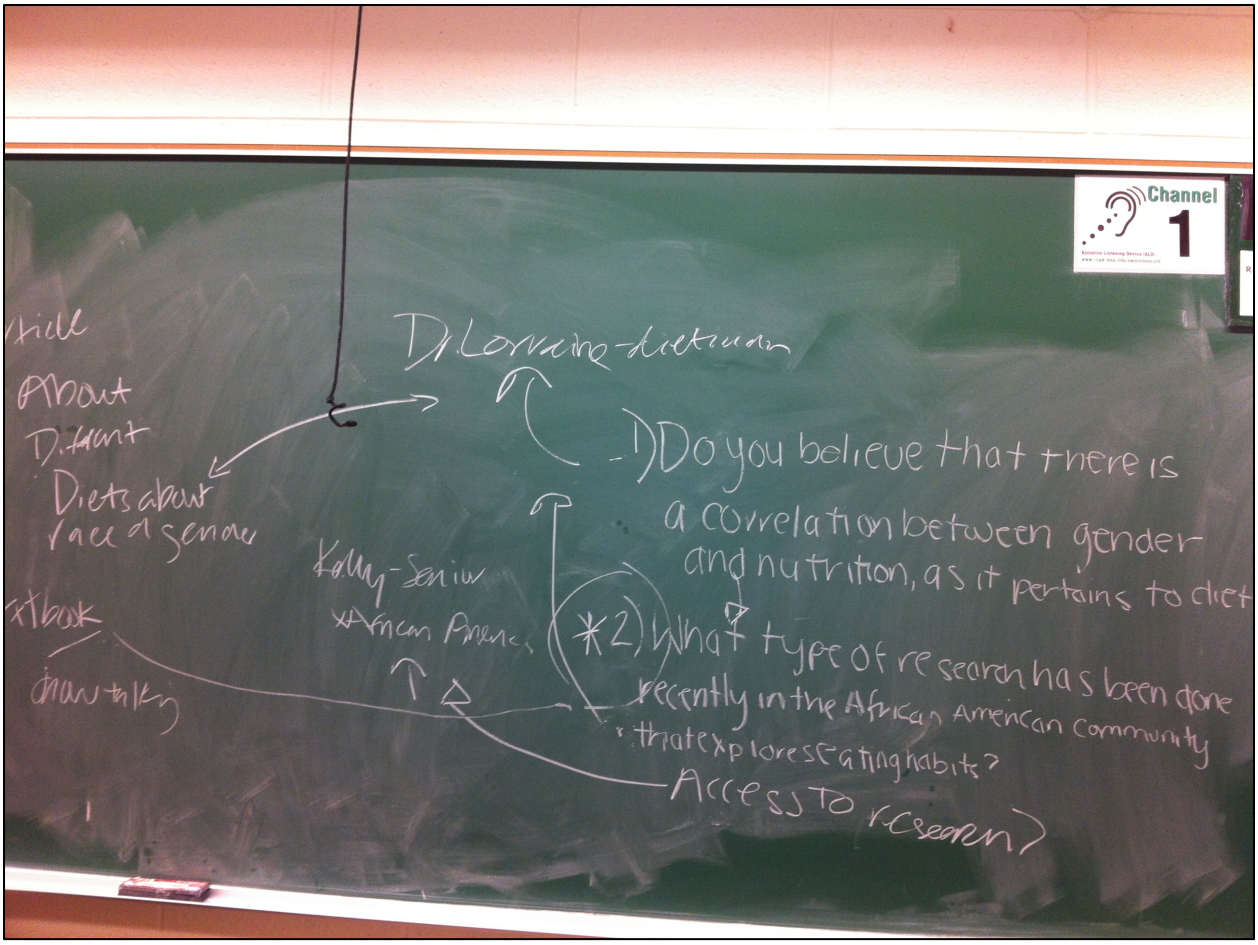

Figure 3 represents the final installment of the webbing process. After verbally applying Nicole's questions to the "2Q" core, I moved on to Rebekka's questions to demonstrate and physically model the connections compared to simply verbally modeling them in Nicole's example. As such, on the right side of the figure above are

two questions that Rebekka poses for this paper. In examining question one and question two, it became clear to Rebekka in this process that question two suggested that there was an already assumed answer to the first question. That is, in asking "*What type of research has been done recently in the African American community that explores eating habits?"* appeared to imply that yes, I do *"believe that there is a correlation between gender and nutrition, as it pertains to diets."* Realizing this, the webbing focused on the researching the second question in order to support Rebekka's validity in her first question. Doing so, it became clear that some of the answers to the research would depend upon her interviews and as such Dr. Lorraine, a practicing African American dietician, and Kelly, a senior undergraduate majoring in dietetics, emerged as focal points in this research. As Rebekka began to add layers to the research through the textbooks and articles (seen further to the left of figure 3), a new question began to emerge from the data she was presenting. That is, while finding the types of research done on her community and eating, what she began to find through textbooks and articles was a new issue perpetuating the problem – a lack of access and information the community had to such research. As such, Rebekka began to realize that she needed to return to her interviewees, and begin to pose questions that inquired about the lack of information the African American community has about the danger of certain eating habits. Through this exercise of webbing, Rebekka began to see research as a process that leads to new questions and new issues that continue to need revision and explanation.

This webbing process while focused on Nicole and Rebekka's research also allowed the class to see the process behind problem-posing in a research paper. As

such, after finishing with guiding Rebekka through the modeling, I encouraged the rest of the class to engage in a similar process in order to find gaps, contradictions, and new questions that may arise out of their research. It was my hope that through emphasizing the process of research that the products produce may be strong and demonstrate more characteristics of transitive consciousness than naïve consciousness (Freire, 1974). While many of my students of color demonstrated moves that engaged in moments of transitive consciousness, my whites students still struggled to articulate how their identities impacted their professions, as seen earlier with Kait's research questions. This continued relationship between consciousness and race poses questions about the assignment and how to have white students begin to think critically about the lack of research on their own identities. Further, modeling students of color research questions may have better assisted students of color than students not of color may have impacted the results of the assignment. That is, students not of color may have not found the actual modeling relevant to their assignment. If this was the case it seems to suggest that there were really two different assignments presented in this unit – one assignment asking students of color to research how their identities may impact their profession and the other assignment, asking students of color to research their identities in their profession and in doing so, then two, think about how their identities may or may not be represented in the data and why this may be. This realization of how asking students to research their identities may in fact create multiple versions of assignments was not realized until I began sorting and coding the data.

Stephen's Emergence as a Peer Model

A more student-led form of modeling inquiry occurred in the classroom from Stephen, an older member of the class who has already taken a first-year writing course but was excited about this course with the theme race and ethnicity. Having once taken this course without passing, Stephen frequently articulated his new understandings of the projects by experiencing them for the second time in the class. Further, he often did this referring to his own identity as a young Black male that was passionate to not only graduate college but also work in the political and legal arena fighting injustice. Immediately, Stephen stood out as a student model in this course. Before our first day of class, students were asked to post a brief bio about themselves and why they took the course. The purpose of this was two-fold. One, to allow everyone to get to know each other ahead of time and practice posting blog assignments. Two, for me to understand why students enrolled in this course – either out of their interest in race and ethnicity or simply because they were assigned this course due to scheduling constraints. In his bio post, the reader sees Stephen not only as a mature, purpose-filled student, but one that actively reflects upon his positionality. Introducing himself to the class writes on the class blog:

> *"Hello! My name is Stephen…I am currently a Junior at Michigan State. My major here at MSU is IDS with a cognate in Political Science and a concentration in Community Governance and Advocacy. I plan on becoming a Youth Advocate and possibly a politician one day, just without the stigma of being "crooked." I am the eldest of two children and originally from Detroit, Michigan. I am really focused in obtaining my degree from MSU and plan on graduating in May of 2014. I am very blunt in my approach with knowing something and answering questions. I am a great listener and really am a team helper. I enrolled in this course because I am the exception to the rule and realize that I have a purpose and destiny that needs to be complete with the sole focus in mind to help the generation behind me understand that there is more than what is in front of them. What I expect from this course is the ability to express myself in writing on the topic that I have always lived with being an African American Male. I also plan to strengthen my writing with bright ideas about what Race in America actually is."*

Through the language that Stephen selects to describe himself, he positions himself as a leader by indicating his desired to “express” himself in regards to his identity and by doing so “strengthen” thoughts. Further, there is a level of confidence to him stating that he is “the exception to the rule”. Initially reading this one may not fully understand what Stephen means in that moment. But throughout the course Stephen reveals how American culture attempts to limit and stifle his possibilities towards a successful life. In the third paper this appears when he explores how structures create stereotypes of the type of man he should become writing:

> “*The temptation is to insist that black men “choose” to be criminals; the system does not make them criminals, at least not in the way that slavery made blacks slaves or Jim Crow made them second-class citizens. African Americans are not significantly more likely to use or sell prohibited drugs than whites, but they are made criminals at drastically higher rates for precisely the same conduct.”*

Stephen’s mature and reflective nature positioned him in the class as a reliable, and often needed, student modeler. Passionate about his desire to work with communities of underserved minority youth, Stephen continued to volunteer his thoughts and perspectives to the class throughout the semester. During the third unit when Nicole and Rebekka also served as models, Stephen warned the class and the time commitment and importance of this assignment. In my fieldnotes, I note this moment when Stephen essentially became a peer teacher writing,

> “*Stephen stepped in and was a leader today and offered a lot of his own experience with this paper. This was very helpful and I think the students really appreciated hearing what he had to say. In fact, he gave the first example of the discipline. He is writing about being an attorney but looking at that through the discipline of political science and interdisciplinary studies. He said that the most important thing is to know what it is that you want to research and to understand how the discipline is an “end goal” whereas the major you are in is like the “process” to get there.”*

I recall noting this in my reflections because the influence his thoughts had on my own teaching. Often times throughout the class, Stephen stepped in and would clarify moments of confusion that I simply didn't see as a teacher or didn't see as information students needed to know. The above example marks such a moment. In these moments, Stephen acted not only as a model to students but a model for me as well. His contributions not only highlighted how to think about identities that I clearly did not embody but also how what I may have assumed as common knowledge about how to approach an assignment simply was not common knowledge to all of my students. As such, I found myself valuing his presence not only as beneficial to his peers but to reflectively thinking about my own teaching and assumptions in the course.

Thinking about these different moments of modeling that occurred in the classroom, I am struck by the identities of these modelers. Consistently throughout the course, these three students served as essential models to the students, and at times to myself. Interestingly though, these students who modeled were all students of color. Rebekka and Stephen modeled their inquiry processes as African American students and Nicole found herself reflecting on how she negotiates her often-ambiguous mixed-race identity. Understanding this, a question develops: why were none of my white students models? Some of this may be contributed by my own interaction in the classroom. Perhaps some of it was due to my attention to students of color and using them as models in the classroom. As a result, this may have in turn been interpreted by my white students as having no place to model their inquiry in the classroom. Yet, I question this as the sole answer. The reason is because I too often used my own positionality as a model for the class, an example of this I previously shared when

discussing space, place and practices. That is, I would provide verbal models of how I could approach assignments based upon my own identity as a white female. Further, I tried to incorporate texts and articles in the course that focused not only on discussions of color but discussions of whiteness as well. The class read chapters from Tim Wise[18] on whiteness and stressed the course as "stories of race" as a way to question the multiple and different perspectives on it. Yet, clearly white students either did not feel comfortable and/or did not feel capable of using themselves as models in the classroom. As such, there appears to be a question regarding the relationship between critical inquiry skills and one's own racial identity. Within a course based upon race-themed topics, my students of color clearly found ways to express and model inquiry skills. Yet, my white students based upon their classroom participation and writing assignments clearly struggled. Is there a relationship then between students of color allowing themselves to locate their own identity consciousness better than white students? Does assuming one as white and thus almost "raceless" impact students to critically question an identity that is assumed normed and often unexamined? These questions led me to developing the fifth and final unit asking students to reflect upon the course and how, if any change, of how they view race and their own identities have changed.

The Closing Act: Unit 5

For the fifth and final unit I wanted to have an opportunity for students to trace their development in both their writing and their inquiry skills. To do so, I designed the final to be an in-class essay in which they would be provided two essay options and

[18] Tim Wise is an American anti-racism activist and writer.

expected to write on one. Additionally, the week before I provided the course four different essay options, of which I noted that I would narrow down to two options. All options were framed around this explanation:

> "*Your ideas of race have probably changed as you have worked through the theme "stories of race". In this final essay, it is time to reflect on those changes in order to construct and effect changes for a more equitable and just society. As such, I invite you to think about revision (in terms of changes of behavior or ways of thinking that you want to influence as a writer) as an invention strategy that facilitates self-reflection for each of these writing prompts."*

The two options presented the day of the final follows:

1. *From your personal experience of the different issues you wrote or read about this semester, in terms of the construction of racial ideologies, write a four to five page self reflection paper that reflects on the prospects of a post-racial generation. Considering the writing assignments (major assignments and response papers) you have done for this class, ask yourself: How can we move toward a post-racial society? Is it possible to create a society that exists beyond race? Can we move to a "color-blind" society? Would that be a good thing for society? Explain. As members of the millennial generation, you should write this as a letter addressed to the next generation (aka the future).*

2. *We've spent time this semester discussing privilege as associated with race. In many ways we have linked whiteness with intrinsic privileges simply because of one's color of skin. In what ways has race privileged you (to a certain perspective, certain story, certain people, certain jobs, certain dorms, etc.)? In what ways has your race put you at a disadvantage? Thinking back to this experience(s), how do you now view race and privilege? For example, in what areas of your life does race impact the opportunities you receive. Now, as you leave this class with a more developed understanding of race, how do you plan to negotiate your own racial identity as you encounter others who may have not taken this class and developed a critical understanding of how race positions individuals? Make a manifesto (a written statement declaring publicly the intentions, motives, or views of its issuer) about your understanding about your own race and how it impacts yourself and others. This should be a four to five page essay and should be written as a letter to yourself stating your manifesto and reasons for developing this position.*

Upon presenting the two prompts, 14 students selected option one and 12 students selected option two. In total, 6 students of color selected option one and 6 students of

color selected option two. The students who identified in the class as white, 8 of them selected option 8 and 6 selected option 2.

When creating the two assignments, I wanted to provide two tasks that required different moves in order to make the task of writing a timed-essay less anxiety-filled. Additionally, I was interested in the motivations. What happened in assigning these two choices then was that students had the option for either reflection or analysis. Option one allowed for more distance in this response and more of a place to critically analyze society and culture, less of a critical consciousness of the self but a critical consciousness of the world, whereas option two was designed as a task to be much more reflective in nature and depended upon a level of intimacy to be revealed through the student's manifesto. As students turned in their papers, I briefly asked them to comment upon why they selected their option. Interestingly instead of simply writing down his understanding, Andrew (a student who typically does not participate and seems quite often annoyed at the class) came up to me and explained his paper. What follows is how I recounted the experience in my fieldnotes:

> "*Andrew stopped me at the end and said that he was worried about the final paper because he said it was a lot of math. He said I may not understand it and that someone who is good with numbers should maybe look at it for me. But he seemed worried he said b/c it wasn't a "feelings" paper. But I said that was fine it was an analytical paper. That is not a problem because he choose one and that is how it could be- less feelings. I was surprised by this because Andrew has never talked to me at all in the semester unless I initiate it. So I think he must have been concerned about his grade and wanted to let me know that*."

It was clear that students were able to discern between the two different levels of consciousness being asked of in these assignments. For example, Chelsea echoes a level of distance available to her in option one yet the ability to critically discuss race in society by stating "*During the course I have realized that there is a potential for a color*

blind society." Amanda also unknowingly references a level of distance in option one stating *"I felt It was easier to reflect on what I learned based on this topic."* It is interesting from this statement to consider the idea that "what I learned" was easier and to question what Amanda meant by "what I learned". Does "what I learned" accompany learning about personal experience or learning about more abstract, distant ideas. From Amanda's paper, it became clear from the content that "what I learned" referenced more of a distancing of the personal – more abstract, discussing how the media shapes perceptions of race in American culture. Melissa J. too echoes similar sentiments about the comfort of working from an analytical, and what appears to be a more abstract and less personal orientation, stating *"I felt I had more information for this and I really wanted to talk about what I learned."* The idea that learning is not necessarily personal but abstract and not located within in oneself continues to repeat and particularly repeat in the comments provided by my white students like Melissa J., Amanda, and Andrew.

What was most interesting from these student comments was that they selected the prompt based upon ease. Again, option one for some students (often times white students) seemed to reply that it was an easier one to answer because they had more "information" to answer it. Marissa, a white student, writes *"I felt like it was easier for me to write about this because I had more information to talk about."* And Ashli, a mixed student, almost copies this answer stating "*It was the easiest one for me to relate to and I had more info for it.*" Whereas Margaret, a white student, who selected option two describes the ease to do this assignment not in terms of information but in relation to emotion writing "*I feel more passionate about this topic and that I could write a better paper on this."* Andrianna too wrote "*I felt more of a personal connection to the topic. I*

feel there are more I can say about this topic." Jordan blatantly describes option two as a more intimate option writing *"I thought it was a little more personal and maybe would be easier to write about."* And finally Kallie makes reference to this difference between distanced information and personal knowledge writing "*I have gained so much this semester that it really seemed to apply perfectly."* It is clear that she has learned new information yet she does not refer to it as abstract. Instead, she references the personal quality to it and how it has perhaps effected her personally using the verb "*gained*" instead of "*learned*". It is this distinction that I think speaks to the two types of critical consciousness that was developed in this class and seen in their final papers. Some students "gained" personal insight into their lives regarding this race compared to the term "learned" that was often referred to when students explained their rational for selecting option one. These students appear to "gain" or grow in some way, many times a personal way, whereas students who "learned" appear to write about their experiences through more general ideas like the media or statistics on race in America. Learning does not appear to have the same connotation as gain for these students.

This insight I believe aligns traditionally with Freirean critical pedagogy and the idea of the "conscientização". Whereas some did learn to develop critical inquiry and critique about the society and world they lived in but were not willing to apply this to their own lives. Thinking and reflecting on these outcomes can perhaps speak to some of the criticisms of critical pedagogy. For instance, it poses specific questions to teachers who want to use critical pedagogy in their classrooms in regards to how they critical consciousness. This was something that I struggled with throughout the course. Did it matter to me as an instructor if students simply never developed a personal critical

consciousness? Was it ok for my students to exert a less personal conscientização? What were the types of student subjects I was trying to develop? Is personal reflection in regards to one's identity a necessary component to producing critical pedagogy products? In thinking about my own teaching and the discipline that I am attempting to belong to, I believe that it is important to ask students to engage personally with critical inquiry skills. Such skills I see are important to creating not just better students but students capable of understanding themselves as agents in a larger world that contribute to the construction of others within it. As such, as rhetorical subjects and agents student reflection is something that is necessary and integral.

Clearly, I was not always successful in doing so with all of my students. But I am confident in the fact that I was at least able to begin laying down a foundation for these students to begin building their consciousness up and extending it from the outside, more inward. That is partially what looking at the process of critical pedagogy has revealed to me. Most often skills for critical pedagogy are laid outward and it depends upon the personal situations and experiences of students to begin applying it inward. The teacher can only do so much to assist in facilitating this and building the skills of critical inquiry from an extended place. The student, for a true critical consciousness to be honed, needs to complete the next part of the process by turning those outward skills inward – on the self.

A Cautionary Tale: Melissa's[19] Dismissal vs. Spartan's[20] Cultivation

[19] Please note, this is a different Melissa from Melissa J.

[20] This is a student who opted to referred to in this work as Spartan.

In examining the process of critical pedagogy, it became apparent that parts of my pedagogy were focused and valued students reflecting upon their identity. As such, I became critical and wanted to “push”, primarily my white students, who wrote around issues of race instead of analyzing and confronting their own identities in the world. Yet such a pedagogical position can be a dangerous one. In fact, Stenberg (2006) questions such a positions by asking what are “the consequences of valuing a critical position over the writer herself”; specifically, “What is the cost of a pedagogy that is built on dismissal?” (p. 283). A cost analysis of such dismissal can be seen in the example of my students Melissa, a white student, and Spartan, a Haitian immigrant.

Melissa was a student who at the beginning of the semester seemed very engaged and interested in this course. She sat in the very front row and actively began asking questions and offering examples. Slowly though over the course of the semester she became more disengaged, often had personal conflicts that forced her to miss class, and soon hardly participated or showed. At first my understanding of this was that she simply had too many personal factors influencing her life and thus forcing her to be distracted from her work and school. Yet, it was not until I asked the class to perform a midterm evaluation of the course that another reason inserted itself into her story. While the midterm evaluations were anonymous, she provided clues on her response that indicated this was her response. She suggested that it would be better if I, the teacher, were more open to different experiences and ideas and that because I shot her down in the beginning that she no longer felt a space for her in the classroom. In reading this I was taken back to the first couple weeks in class where Melissa provided an example of racism she, a white student, experienced at her high school in Michigan. As she was

describing the “reverse racism” she was experiencing and how she felt a victim of this, I asked her to think about this experience on a larger spectrum and in relation to the experiences some of her peers were offering. She continued to argue with me about the validity of her experience and I continued to push her to attempt to think beyond this understanding of being a victim of reverse racism. The next day she did not show in class and I became concerned. The following week she returned to the class but it was clear her engagement and interest in the class was not what it was – no longer participating in the same manner in class. It was my dismissal of the legitimacy of her experience that I began to draw connections to Stenberg’s assertions in her own classroom. What happens when teachers assume a certain “critical” position upon our students? How does such a pedagogy attempt to move students towards a larger understanding of themselves within the world? In this instance, Melissa had not yet developed a critical consciousness of extended inquiry – on the world but instead continued to foster one that focused upon her. And so in realizing this I questioned the process of critical pedagogy. Does it first depend upon an extended version of understanding the world? And then relate to a more internal personalized position in which one has a foundation of a critiqued vision of the world and only in that can one begin to map themselves and their position into this world?

This contrasted sharply with my relationship with Spartan. Spartan was a second-year Haitian immigrant that frequently attended class but did not say much. I first began to gravitate towards Spartan when I read his first paper in which he described his experience growing up as a child of migrant workers in Florida as:

> “*When we first came to America, we lived in a place called Little Haiti in Miami Florida. It was both of my parents, my Great Grandma, my 2 aunts and my 4*

siblings and I. We live in a one-bed room apartment with big sourer rats on the pipes. I was probably 2 or 3 years old at the time but that put a scar in my memory that will never go away. We lived there for a while and in Little Haiti were one of the craziest places you can live, especially if you are trying to raise a family. But some people have to do whatever it takes to get by and endeavor for one step closer to that American Dream… I wasn't too much into school. I was always worried about what I didn't have and wanted that fast money. The way we lived was pretty rough. Both parents had to work and we would all be at the house. We had to make our own meals until our parents would come home and my dad would bring food or my mom would cook. I remember some days were real hard like I would open the refrigerator and cabinets and there would be no food and I would open it 20 minutes later and it would still be the same. I would do that for hours every 20 minutes hoping that at least a piece of bread was in there the next time I would open it. I don't know why but I use to picture that the piece of bread would be there when I opened it. After I got tired of that I would drink water and go to sleep so that the pain of being hungry would go away."

Reading that excerpt from his paper, my heart ached from reading about his experience. The identity of teacher and researcher disappeared. His experience was so compelling and heart wrenching that I found it hard to "push" on him to become more critical of this position like I did with Melissa. Instead, as an international student who revealed the deeply personal hardships of his life with me, I felt compelled to work with him on an individual basis in order to develop his thoughts and structure. Frequently, Spartan and I would meet during my office hours and discuss his paper. I wanted to encourage him. I wanted to show him that his stories and insight had power and persuasion. I wanted to cultivate him as a student and develop how his experiences could foster a critical understanding of what it means to be an immigrant and how personally that impacts him as a student at a large big ten institution.

Yet, where was I to make this decision that I should cultivate Spartan and dismiss Melissa? There is no doubt that Spartan's dramatic and emotional story impacted my own pedagogical practices and motivations. Whereas with Melissa, a girl who at points I believed tried to be self-righteous in her enunciations of being a victim of

reversed racism, my motivations seemed to disappear. I was never angry with her, but I was clearly not interested or invested in her story. I wanted to work with the more powerful and dramatic story, but in doing so, I rejected the lines of communication with others who openly wanted to discuss and engage in such a dialogue. These two stories of Melissa and Spartan function then as a cautionary tale of understanding a teacher's identity and when engaging in critical pedagogy practices. For I believe that my own position as a teacher and white middle class women overpowered my performance and pedagogy when working in a class of students attempting to discuss and make space for their racial experiences. When such work is done, it must always be cautioned against making assumptions of what that product of critical pedagogy should be. In my case, I was determined that it should b something that asserted and admitted to the privileges that being white assumes and that students of color would speak to the hurdles they needed to overcome. Yet, in doing so I missed the moments of student's real-lived experiences. As such, critical pedagogy appears to depend upon such exposure, which leaves those who participate in it vulnerable. As a teacher, I needed to do a better job protecting that vulnerability and fostering a place for all experiences to live and then gently provide models to move these experiences into a wider circuit of realization.

CHAPTER 4: KNOWLEDGE-MAKING THROUGH COLLABORATION

Process as Knowledge-Making

Considering the stories of Melissa and Spartan then and the dangers of dismissing assumed "uncritical" inquires, teachers of critical pedagogy must reorient their assessment of this practice less upon the product and return to the processes that ask to students to engage in the process of developing a critical consciousness. And in doing so, Stenberg (2006) reminds us that the goal then is not to overcome or dismiss students' knowledge, but to value that knowledge as a resource in the process of *collaboration*" (p. 284). Critical pedagogy can then begin to be conceived as beyond an individual practice focused upon one's critical consciousness. Instead educators can look to critical pedagogy as a moment of collective processes that students (and teachers) engage and wrestle with as a knowledge-making and consciousness-building practice. Reorienting one to process rather than product better positions the teacher to move beyond a position of assumed knowledge and into one that truly begins to "de-center" the classroom and create a space for collaborative knowledge-making.

This reorientation then lends itself to better visioning the landscape of critical pedagogy. Royster (2003) in her piece "Disciplinary Landscaping, or Contemporary Challenges in the History of Rhetoric" speaks to possibilities that focusing on knowledge-making lends the discipline of rhetoric, and I argue, can be applied to our discussion her in regards to the process of critical pedagogy. Royster (2003) writes:

> In contemporary academic circles, we can actually critique claims to truth and ask: Whose truth is this? When and under what conditions do these assertions remain true? For whom are they not true? What happens when we put several claims to truth together? What kind of truth and knowledge does that make? From this perspective, what appears are the persuasive dimensions of

> knowledge-making and the challenge, thereby, of creating a space for variability amid well-entrenched traditions. (p. 161)

Returning to Melissa's story, from her perspective, those stories of reverse racism were truths to her. Yet, my push to attempt for her to think beyond these experiences to a larger world suggested to her that I did not believe those truths or did not find the validity of those truths. Yet, applying Royster's piece to this can begin conversations about how approaching the classroom and critical pedagogy as a practice for collective knowledge-making may better position educators when those emotioned moments of a students experience in need of a push, to draw upon the collective knowledge of the larger group and in doing, attempt for these varied and vast experiences to influence Melissa's individual knowledge-making process. That is there should begin a look at the larger, collective knowledge-making of critical pedagogy in our classroom as a tool to begin cultivating the more individualized critical consciousness of students who feel resistant to such ideas.

A Collaborative Experiment for A New Consciousness: Remixing Critical Inquiry Skills

Three months into this project was when the need for collaboration began to surface. As students like Stephen, Rebekka, and Nicole began modeling their inquiry processes to the class, and in doing so, performing their own current state of critical consciousness, I began to take notice of the generative knowledge that was being shared to their peers. No longer did I need to rely solely upon myself to model my own critical inquiry into race and how to represent that within their writing. Further as students began to step forward and actively participate in sharing their wrestling with the topics, their peers became more engaged and often there arose organic moments where student dialogue controlled the classroom. Students became the main players

and I simply “refereed” the space. For example, during the third research unit I divided the class into groups and had them present a mini-lesson each discussing a chapter on “how to evaluate sources”. Working in groups, leaders emerged. This was clear in both Stephen and Nicole’s groups. Interestingly though is that as peer-led groups, participation increased. I was simply an “outsider” looking in on these lessons and activities that student groups prepared. Here, students not only were engaged but were asking questions and in conversation with one another. In many ways I did became a “referee” in this space – managing the time and clarifying when complex questions arose.

Realizing the engaging learning environment that was created from this activity, I wanted to take the opportunity to generate more collaborative learning in a unit. “The remix” is unit that our first-year writing program developed in order to provide students an opportunity to apply rhetorical skills using visual and audio techniques. As such, this unit typically does not require a traditional paper and tends to produce several short videos and collage-like products. The purpose of this unit focusing on making rhetorical “purposes, moves, and effects more visible by asking you to do something that helps you to be very aware of the rhetorical choices you make. In other words, this is a project designed to help you see how rhetoric works.”[21] In other courses students apply the concept of “remix” to previous papers they had turned in, sharing an alternative view and representation of that product. For this course, however, I decided to build upon the concept of remix and extend it beyond rhetorically remixing a paper but remixing the

[21] Lindquist, J. *WRAC Fall Orientation and Workshop Series* [PowerPoint document]. Retrieved from Resources for Writing Teachers ANGEL site: https://angel.msu.edu/section/default.asp?id=DEV-dejoy_msu_edu8122009_10833

production of research. The previous paper focused upon a traditional research project, which asked students to incorporate several sources into their paper, typically these sources are articles and text-based in nature. As such, the unit four remix would ask students to take the research skills they had learned from project three and extend them in a different form to unit four by collecting data from their experiences and interactions around campus. This unit then asked students to work in assigned groups to go out into the field (aka campus) and research the spaces that they inhabit and in doing so to pay attention to how our university is positioned as a campus actively valuing diversity. It was further explained to students how their university had made statements regarding its commitment to diversity. The goals of this assignment that were articulated follows: to apply new modes of making arguments, to make a strong argument using experience and reflection, and to work as a group of diverse students to think critically about different experiences on campus. The intent of this assignment was then to pair students into diverse groups of four-five students and have them research the different places that they occupy on campus. In doing, it was expected that they would engage in dialogue in the creation of this project in order to discuss the differences or similarities of such and how those different cultural experiences and backgrounds may influence one's own outlook on the authenticity of this university's commitment to diversity.

While parts of the project were successful in that some student groups actively worked together to create collaborative knowledge, there were definite elements of failure to this project. I describe some of the failings in my fieldnotes that were collected as I reflected back on the projects that were produced. From these fieldnotes, one can see the reflection on process over product within them:

> *A major fail of this assignment I think was the primary intention I had with this group to get them talking and experiencing other groups of diversity around them. The purpose of working in groups was to actually get together, go places that they belong and talk about the diversity (or lack there of) that they witness. But this did not go well. Not sure because of time, other commitments, the fact that I assigned the group – but I don't think there was enough evidence for me as the teacher to see that this occurred. The only place that I could attempt to find documentation of this was in the memos. It appeared as if Rebekka's group did this and Nicole's. The other groups it was usually just a few of them that actively worked on it and talked about it. That being said it was clear that a few people had to carry the majority of the weight of the projects and the others simply do much at all. Therefore, if I would redo this assignment, I would have smaller groups. It would either be pairs or groups of three and I think I would consider people selecting their own groups. This was a learning process for me and I am curious if this revision would help facilitate more discussion (the kind that I was trying to initiate from this project).*

Despite the my perceived failure of the assignment, student memos[22] reveal traces of dialogue and points-of-view being challenged and opened via that dialogue. This is evident in Kallie's memo, writing:

> *"I think that our video is great. What I find the neatest is how we were all so different with such different stories to tell. While each of us talked about our personal experiences, I find the video interesting because of the drastic differences in every interview. It was neat to compare our stories and get insight into what it is like for others around me here at MSU."*

The memo above reveals an amount of dialogue that occurring the group about the project. As a group project that typically worked on the project outside of class time, such dialogue was not evident or apparent to me as the instructor. I had hoped for such dialogue to exist within the groups, discussing the different racial experiences and view points that students had in order to generate more opened discussions about what it means to live as a raced being on campus. The specifics of what was discussed in their

[22] Upon completion of the assignment, students were asked to turn in memos that described their experience working with groups.

meetings were never revealed to me. Yet, the benefit of dialogue appeared in other student memos. This appears when Andrianna echoes similar sentiments stating:

> "*We learned to listen and accept the views of each others opinion of our project, as well as show each other that we all equally cared to make our project the best of our ability."*

As members of the same group, Kallie and Andrianna's group final project attempted to include individual reflection on the information and the conclusions that they made. This was the only group whose final project explicitly included personalized student reflections in the piece. Nonetheless, members from other groups articulated the benefits of working collaboratively. This appears in Marisa's memo, writing:

> *"I also enjoyed the fact that it was a group project because everyone contributed ideas that you may not have thought of it you were working on your own."*

As I read these memos, I reflected on why I perceived the project to have many elements go wrong – especially when looking at the final product. Yet, when I looked at the process moments that appeared in the student memo's more elements of success appeared. Further, if there were issues in the group project, it became apparent that it may have not been the actual project but the fact that students were assigned groups that may have not accounted for the diversity in personalities. My fieldnotes reveal this reflection stating:

> "*As you can see above and in my reflections, I didn't think people were really learning from each other – but maybe they were just in different ways. Maybe a skill they had to learn before getting to the "new consciousness" of race was simply learning how to interact and work and collaborate effectively as a group inside and outside of class. So maybe that was something that first needed to be part of the equipment in order to get to that learning place. I think other successful groups were groups that worked well together and so maybe this is a lesson that to be critical and have conversations about race you first need to have a group that negotiates and learns how to work together. Perhaps that is the first piece to the equation for this project and for the outcome that I was*

> *hoping would occur, which was dialogue amongst groups and students learning from dialogue and collaborating together how race operates at MSU.*"

While I tried to discuss teamwork and the professional need to know how to work with others of different backgrounds and experiences, it was clear that some groups simply felt more comfortable working together and other groups did not feel as comfortable.

This uncomfortably was clear in Anonymous, Changgyou, Di and Melissa's group. Not only did these students seem to struggle with their writing but the dynamics of this group was somewhat problematic. Anonymous was a strong-willed, anxious student. The anxiety she demonstrated in class often made her an outsider where few of her peers wished to work with her or entertain her thoughts. Changgyou and Di were both older international students that often sat at the back of the classroom and rarely participated. As ELL students, who struggled with writing in English, I often had the sense that they struggled to understand the content discussed in class, which was evident from the clarifying emails I would receive from them. Finally, there was Melissa who at this time of the semester rarely showed to class and demonstrated little interest in the projects. Together, these personalities really struggled to work together and create a space for dialogue to exist. Instead, Anonymous took the reigns of the project while Changgyou and Di followed her command to the best of their abilities and Melissa simply was not really a part of this group until the last day of the project when she came to class. Clearly this was a frustrating project articulated by the project memo's that were submitted. Changgyou articulates the group dynamic in his memo writing:

> *"In our group, there was a problem between Anonymous and Melissa about our video, because when Anonymous editing the video, she put Melissa's name as 'other'. It is because, Anonymous thought she has nothing in the video that is from Melissa and Melissa gave the source after Anonymous finished the video. I*

have been kept contact with Anonymous for the project, and I understand why she thought like that."

The issue between Anonymous and Melissa was not only discussed by Changgyou, but Melissa appears to be conscious of the apparent issue with the group and reveals in her memo:

"There were some problems with the group I believe. I know Anonymous was stressed because she wanted to have the video done a class period before it was due…I know I sound like I'm complaining; I am just worried that I wont get credit for the assignment."

For Melissa, the point of collaborating with her peers as a learning experience was completely missed on her. Instead, she was only concerned with her grade for the actual product that was produced but cared little about the process and learning that would take in the creation of the product. Groups, however, that recognized the learning goal as linked to collaboration and the process behind creating such a product, they tended to be more successful and more collegial towards each other.

Marisa's memo about her experience with her group represents a more positive reflection of this assignment, stating:

"*We really enjoyed working on this project and I thought it was a good way to end the class. I think doing this project was a really good idea because it allowed us to take what we learned from the class and go out into the real world and put the learning to good use."* She writes further "*What I enjoyed most about this project was that it wasn't the typical assignment for a writing class. I liked the fact that we had to go out and explore on our own to try to figure out the point we wanted to make in our video, based upon what we have learned in the class throughout the semester. It provided us with a lot of freedom to do what we wanted to do, and it allowed us all to express ourselves in the way we wanted."*

Compared to Changgyou's memo, Marisa reveals the positive affordances that collaboration offered her and her group. One, Marisa enjoyed the freedom of the assignment and the ability to explore a topic of diversity related to the institution. Two,

there was freedom in the ability to express oneself. That is, there was not a “correct” answer – instead inquiry was at the heart of the assignment and depended upon the collaborative knowledges of others in order to make a statement about that group’s inquiry project.

The digital component of the project revealed a moment of rhetorical visibility that was unexpected and unaccounted for in the design of this unit. Through Amanda’s memo, it is revealed that the ability to use visuals as representation was a powerful component in a race and ethnicity class. She writes:

> “*I enjoyed making a project instead of writing a paper because we were able to show things that we couldn’t just say in text. Also, I think the music, pictures, and voices capture a lot more about this topic and it is more interesting than just reading about it.”*

This ability to *“show things that we couldn’t just say in text”* is an important and unintended result of the project. For Amanda, it was clear that the other assignments simply did not afford the same ability to “capture” experiences of race and ethnicity. Yet, this assignment and its focus on “music, pictures, and voices” allowed groups to capture a different level of visibility – the color of race and ethnicity in those communities. Additionally, her memo reveals how the combination of using “music, pictures, and voices” as a collective produced a more interested and engaging product that in many ways was more meaningful than simply text.

From the examples above the success of this project was mixed. Some groups simply produced great products that were developed out of a process-oriented approach. These were groups that spent time talking and thinking about diversity from multiple perspectives. Groups that struggled tended to have poor interpersonal skills, which stifled a process-oriented approach. Further, there was no doubt an issue of time.

Simply put there was not enough time given for this type of project that asked students to conduct ethnographic-like research and then formulate an argument around the discoveries of their research into a video presentation. These factors all contributed to the process of the final product. Understanding these factors, it was clear that certain aspects were productive while others simply failed. Yet this moment poses the question of how implementers of critical pedagogy expect to “see” and account for learning and consciousness in projects geared around critical pedagogy. By engaging in process-oriented collaborative projects students are focused around self-driven inquiry. Assumptions about what the teacher expects or wants are limited and instead there is a level of agency that can emerge (or at times, control and stifle). What then emerges are questions that ask, to what extent are best practices in general able to reach all learners and help them develop a critical consciousness? Nonetheless, by focusing projects around collaborative knowledge students who possess different levels of consciousness are able to interact with one another and perhaps be provided brief insight into lives and experiences of others from a first-person account. Doing so may assist in transitioning outward modeling (as seen in units one and three) to more inward development of critical consciousness.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS & TAKEAWAYS

In chapter two, I discuss the research questions that surrounded this project and how I anticipated that by using teacher-research as a method and situating myself as the teacher I could provide first-hand accounts of the resistance that has been documented around critical pedagogy and attempt through my actions as a teacher to respond to those moments in productive ways that "cut across" the debate of critical pedagogy in the discipline of rhetoric and composition. Reflecting back then on what I actually experienced as a teacher, I believe that those moments of resistance were harder to articulate and understand within the act of teaching. Actively engaging in praxis through teacher-research, I took time to try and better understand my student's frustrations in the classroom. But I also operated under a set of assumptions that I think blinded me to some of the actual moments that I should have been better cued-in on.

Take the example of Melissa. During the class I could tell that my dismissal of Melissa had set her off and had quite clearly upset her. Yet, I was too consumed with the others in the classroom to really fix that situation. As such, I wrote off her frustration as a minor loss and became determined to focus on the rest of the students that had not put up barriers. This situation however was not as quite clear to me then as it is now- from a distant and more analytical position. In many ways, the emotional connection of entering a classroom and performing simply is no longer part of my reflective process. It was however quite a large part of my process during data collection. I struggled quite consistently with negotiating the identities of both teacher and researcher and how I wanted those identities to inform my work in the classroom and in the results of the research. These were takeaways from the project that surprised me and has generated

more interest than what I previously anticipated. In reality, I did not think that applying teacher-research to this project would impact the methodology and implications of this project. Yet, in many ways teacher-research as a method became integral in this project – assisting in developing a narrative-based methodology as well as understanding the importance and impact relationships have in implementing and revealing the process behind critical pedagogy. These are points that I will continue to discuss throughout this concluding chapter.

What was the most unanticipated result that revealed itself in this project on critical pedagogy was how the theme of race and ethnicity impacted student consciousness. Designing this project, I had little control over the type of themed first-year writing class I would be assigned to teach. I indicated that I would be interested in teaching a class on race and ethnicity. However, this was the extent of the "control" that I had in selecting this course to be part of my research project. Additionally, I was not interested in teaching this course because of the connections I would make between student identity and critical consciousness. In reality, I was interested in exploring whiteness and discussing race for motives that were not connected to critical pedagogy. As such, the connections that were established through this project between race and critical pedagogy surprised myself greatly.

Throughout the course, it was revealed that students of color demonstrated a more developed critical consciousness of their own identity than their peers who were not of color. While as the teacher I tried to create an inclusive and dynamic learning space that welcomed the perspectives and experiences of others; it was clear that at points my pedagogy did not match and align with the theoretical engagement I was

trying to create. Specifically, while I designed the assignments to naturally be a place for students to voice their perspectives, insight and self-reflections – when looking at the interactions in the classroom there was inconsistency. Students would point out my overt attention to “black and white” themes rather than exploring race from a wide-array of views and perspectives. I argued that I would be happy to include outside perspectives that they wanted to explore if they let me know what those interests were. Additionally, I supplied my logic for focusing on such themes as the vast majority of the class identified as either white or Black. Notably, after discussing this, no students provided examples of other interests. Yet this moment reveals the assumptions that I allowed to drive my pedagogy in the classroom. I was focused on students discussing and self-reflecting on their own identities in the classroom. Therefore, while students expressed interest in broadening the discussions of race, I overruled such pleas and determined that the objectives of the class and of the research aligned more with a focus around black and white themes. Yet, such a move contradicts my attempt to create a space for agency to naturally exist. Instead, there was an underlying objective that was driven home for my students. They most likely understood this more explicitly at the time than I did and I suspect this is because I was consumed with managing and learning how to teach and research classroom for the first time.

An additional inconsistency was how my assumptions operated around evaluating critically developed assignments in the classroom. Reflecting back on this, I can attest that there can be a conflict of interest in evaluating assignments structured around narratives and self-reflection. Analyzing my treatment of assignments, it was clear that I tended to prefer assignments that included elements of struggle or a highly

emotional component. Typically, my students of color produced these. Yet, interestingly was that my students of color tended to struggle with writing components of the assignment. More reveling was that the rubrics to assess such assignments were focused more overtly on rhetorical skills such as audience, structure, and style and less on the content that was produced. Therefore, while my research was interested in how students revealed moments of self-reflection with their identity (content based), my teaching and evaluations were focused more on the actual writing and application of rhetorical skills. As such, there appeared to be a disconnect between what I was looking for in the research and what I was looking for in the teaching. This in theory I think is alright. By this I mean, the course I was assigned to teach was a writing course and thus my rubrics attempted to assess writing. However, what gets tricky is when your research and teaching begin to intersect and I think that there were moments when this was occurring in my classroom and while I thought them to be separate moments they were in fact informing my work as both a teacher and researcher. As a result, what occurred was that my students not of color and typically students that came from upper-middle class homes demonstrated more sophisticated writing skills and thus received higher grades despite issues with the actual content they were demonstrating while my students of color, most who came from lower-income homes, provided excellent content but had flaws with executing their writing. Therefore, what develops from this issue is understanding how to evaluate critical pedagogy in a writing classroom. As a writing teacher, my rubrics aligned with the writing and rhetorical skills that I wanted students to learn, yet as an educator and researcher also interested in critical pedagogy, I desired to see moments of deeper understanding in my student's work. How does one reconcile

development of writing and rhetorical skills with the development of self-consciousness? This question has arose out of this research and is something that I believe educators desiring to use critical pedagogy in a writing classroom need to consider in order to understand the set of assumptions that may guide the assessment and overall success of the course.

Praxis Drives Collective Knowledge-Making

An unanticipated result of conducting this study was the way I found Freirean praxis to intersect in several ways with this project. In the process of collecting this data and learning from it, new revelations about my own teaching practices as well as my understandings of critical pedagogy have been revealed. For Freire, praxis "can be defined as the action and reflection of people upon their world in order to transform it" as such it is "active reflection and reflective action" (Taylor, 1993, p. 56). Engaging in teacher-research as a method, I found that there were several occasions for praxis to actively appear as both "active reflection and reflective action". Specifically, through modes and processes of data collection, especially through my memos and reflective journal, praxis appeared via these tasks that required "active reflection". Upon actively reflecting on situations that would occur in the classroom and understanding my student's products through a research lens, I would then move into a teacherly perspective in order to intervene in these moments and thus attempt to produce "reflective action". These moments were constant. I found myself actively using my journal and memos as a log to not only mark moments of process-orientation but moments were I as a researcher voiced concerns about the effectiveness of my own

teaching. For example, in the first few weeks of class I often wrote about teaching concerns through the research journal writing:

> "*Moreover, this experience made me think about the challenges of teaching a themed class and critical pedagogy. I originally thought – oh great, teaching a themed class will really help to engage in critical discussions and thinking. But I feel this tension because teaching a class on race and teaching a class on writing. I thought that critical pedagogy (critical thinking, critical consciousness, critical writing) would be the bridge between these two aspects of the class and I think it can be still. But I think that the bridge is less accessible than I would have figured."*

After articulating this concern, a moment marking my active reflection, I moved towards a reflective action by making appointments with one of my advisors to discuss the tensions I often experienced and would be revealed to me through teacher-research. These moments functioned as reflective marks that provided insight into my teaching from a research perspective that I had yet to experience. However, applying teacher-research proved to be an effective tool that actively encouraged me to engage in Freirean praxis and experience "active reflection" and "reflective action".

Additionally, I argue that praxis is not necessarily fixed. It occurs and re-occurs frequently and with new insight. The above paragraph provides a frame for how praxis was revealed in actually conducting and collecting research data. However, in the writing and processing of that data, praxis continues to inform my work and understanding of the project that I designed. Distancing myself from the class and operating now in a research mode, I have had to actively reflect on my experience as a teacher and in turn provide reflective action about what that all means through the writing of this piece. This distance has then raised interesting insight on how my actions as a teacher at points failed and at points succeed with implementing critical pedagogy. Moreover, this process and use of praxis reveals the assumptions that I operated with in

implementing critical pedagogy and with such knowledge how in many ways I was creating a landscape that I did not fully realize I was creating.

Further, engaging in praxis around the concept of Freirean critical pedagogy, insight not only on my teaching was revealed but on critical pedagogy as well. The use of praxis then allowed for process to be centered in this research. Praxis relies upon an understanding of what is occurring in the now and how to intervene or guide that knowing to create a larger, better product. Freire (2000) hints at this writing:

> Teachers and students (leadership and people) co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators. (p. 67-69)

Both teachers and students then are subjects within critical pedagogy. Through a praxis, and thus process-oriented approach, students hopefully gain deeper insight into their own positionality in the world. This does not imply that this was not student's first understanding about their positionality, but a more developed and critical insight. The same then is with teachers. There already exists, I argue, a level of consciousness. What level this is, weather it is transitive or naïve is to be determined. Praxis through allows for teachers then to better understand how their practices and understanding of the classroom are related to students developing a deeper consciousness of the world. Thus, it appears that critical pedagogy as a practice depends very much on the relationship between student's own reflection/action as well as the teacher's. In many ways then praxis fuels collective knowledge-making because of its relational dependence between teacher and student in its operationalization.

Pedagogical Tools for Facilitating the Process of Critical Pedagogy

In understanding the objectives of this project as articulated within my research questions, what are some of the tools that can be used when implementing critical pedagogy? The follow pedagogical points attempt to articulate the types of takeaways that may be of use when applying Freirean critical pedagogy to a first-year writing classroom.

Pedagogical Takeaway 1: Rhetoric As A Tool To "Read the Word and the World"

In the process of collecting and analyzing data for this project, Julie Lindquist, a committee member of mine during this project, proposed a key question to me. Meeting with Julie, I was concerned that some of the data I was collecting had little to do with critical inquiry and more about the social dramas of teaching. That is, the real, life, messiness of working with students. Thinking about my concern, Julie responded with a perplexing question: what if you then what you are trying to discover is actually in the messiness? That is, what tools do you need to navigate through the messiness and implement the process of critical pedagogy? In awe by a question that quite frankly was obvious yet I failed to see – I kept this question into my back pocket and frequently returned to it throughout the project.

Now returning to this project from a more distant and analytical position, I have found rhetoric actually to be a useful and integral tool to applying critical pedagogy to the first-year writing classroom. As I have articulated above, students struggled with using rhetorical skills in their papers and this impacted their grades. Yet, I do think that applying rhetorical concepts to the classroom fits well with Freirean critical pedagogy and assists in students reading and writing the "word and the world". If you take a rhetorical convention like audience for example, there are several ways that one can

manipulate the audience of a first-year writing classroom that can ask students to think about the assignment as both a personal reflective moment and a larger, worldly reflective moment. Many of my students of color were able to discuss their assignments from the level of the personal and many of my non-students of color were able to discuss their assignments from a more distant, worldly or historical perspective. These moments did not mean that one group of students had consciousness over other students. Rather, these moments simply marked different levels and versions of consciousness in my students. Further, it was clear in my interactions with the class that I tended to value the more personal and less distant assignments that revealed personal reflection on one's identity. Nonetheless, I argue that using rhetorical conventions may help to fuse these different levels of consciousness together to create a more complete understanding of what consciousness is for – not only for self-reflection, though that is important, but a doing with that reflection in order to make change in the world that constructs limitations on identity.

Take the courses focus on audience in their papers, as an example. Each paper asked students to critically think about how to structure and essentially "write to" a specific audience. For some papers, students could select their audience. For others this was assigned. The goal in doing so was to begin cultivating an understanding that the purpose of writing can extend beyond classroom purposes and in fact assist in "not just to make good citizens but to enable student-citizens to write for social change" (Coogan, 2006, p. 667). This was a conscious choice that I made to ask students to think about how their writing and personal reflection could potentially mean something to someone besides themselves – to write not only for themselves than but to think

about their lives as meaningful to others as well. However, this was a task that proved to be challenging to my students. Frequently, they struggled over the concept of "writing for an audience". Thus while the execution of writing for a specific audience frequently failed, there were hopeful moments when the class would spend time thinking about the relationship between audience and the assignment. Frequently what would emerge was a discussion around how audience impacts the purpose of an assignment. These discussions appeared to make sense to my students. Yet the actual writing for an audience was where many of them slipped. This does not imply that the act to connect rhetoric to critical pedagogy assignments failed. Instead, it may simply be that students needed more practicing with writing and thinking about writing. Further, in the process of thinking about an audience students were asked to think about how their thoughts and purpose of the essay would connect and be conveyed to an audience beyond themselves and their peers. It gave agency to the assignment and asked students to write about something that not only served the purpose of this class but a more worldly and relevant purpose. Rhetoric then that can serve as a tool to ask students to think both about themselves and beyond themselves – to see how such a relation constructs and informs one another and then to use writing to do something with such information. In many ways then it aligns with Freire's intention for students to read and write both "the word and the world".

Pedagogical Takeaway 2: Process Acknowledges the Always, Already Consciousness of Students

Looking at process of critical pedagogy may better position teachers to find new ways of "seeing" critical pedagogy. Many of the debates against critical pedagogy argue

that it is flawed in that instructors cannot “see” moments of critical consciousness. This may be true. However, what this project designed around process has revealed is that a process-orientated approach to critical pedagogy may allow educators to better understand what it is that they are seeing when they apply critical pedagogy to the classroom. What I discovered through my own process-oriented approach was not that my students lacked a consciousness. It was clear that my students understood a variety of issues about race and how it affected them. Yet, given their own identities and how I constructed the classroom space, different levels and different varieties of critical consciousness appeared to be evident in my students work. It was not necessarily that some students had more consciousness than others, but really different kinds of consciousness and I think very much different levels of comfort when discussing such consciousness.

If I were better tuned in to this and a more experienced teacher, I think I could have picked up on this issue sooner and opened the space up to discuss perhaps why there were these disparities in my students of color papers versus my non-students of color papers. It is clear from my own experience that it takes time and the ability for the teacher to be conscious of their own actions and how that effects the construction and implementation of critical pedagogy in the classroom. As a graduate student, my teaching experience is still developing and being informed by research, mentorship and general confidence. Yet, the ability to take time and examine my teaching from both a teach research perspective as well as look at the processes that occurred in my classroom better informed my understanding of arguments against critical pedagogy. It was not that I was providing students consciousness. Clearly they understood race to

be a discomforting and political discussion. However, the range of racial identities in the classroom positioned different levels and types of consciousness to exist and positioned some students to exert their own consciousness more overtly than other students.

Additionally, my own handling and interactions with students and the issues they wrestled with could have been more inclusive and less emotionally driven. Nonetheless, teaching is an emotional activity (Lindquist, 2004; Trainor, 2008). It is also how one learns to manage and use those emotions in the classroom that I think could have been better handled in my situation. I was operating under a set of underlying assumptions that were always there and the same was with my students. The ability to examine these assumptions through process however provided an opportunity to move them to a more surface-level and conscious raising arena. This is what a process-oriented approach over a product-oriented approach in critical pedagogy provides. It allows for the always, already consciousness that exists in students and teachers to be raised to a more visible level in order to be pushed upon and developed.

Pedagogical Takeaway 3: Critical Pedagogy Shifts Landscapes

Critical pedagogy is a situated pedagogy. It shifts and changes with the landscapes it encounters and the participants within that landscape. In many ways then, to implement critical pedagogy one should rely less on a product-based version of critical pedagogy and more on a process-based version. This reason for this is that products are influenced not only by those that create them but by whom they encounter in the process of making them, the instructions of making them, and the places were they are made. Take for instance this research. Situated within a first-year writing classroom, there are clear objectives and goals that are very different from even an

upper-level writing classroom. Additionally, as a themed first-year writing course, discussions and assignments about race ask my students to think about content that is very different from discussions about science and technology, another first-year writing course theme. Further, the makeup and identities of the classroom impact the types of experiences and content that is shared and discussed in the classroom. Even the teachers own identity is something to be considered as it can reflect to students a type of "underlying" objective to the course. All of these factors situate the landscape in which one implements critical pedagogy. It is not something then that is a universal concept but a pedagogy that is place and space-based. What many fail to recall is that Freire even suggests the "situatedness" of critical pedagogy articulating that so-called "Freirean method" should not be reduced to one set model. Instead, by design it "must be recreated or reinvented in order to be meaningful for those involved" (Kirylo, 2011, p. 120). When discussing critical pedagogy and its effectiveness then it needs to be understood that this effectiveness will change depending upon the landscape that it interacts with in the process of facilitating critical consciousness. Therefore, the intention of the research I have presented is not to be used as insight into all classrooms using critical pedagogy. In actuality, my research is extremely situated. Nonetheless, the larger takeaways of this project I think and hope do extend the critiques of critical pedagogy to a more useful light than simply negative critiques. As a teacher who believes in liberatory education like critical pedagogy as, "valuing student knowledge, enacting a reciprocal teacher-student relationship, enriching critique with both compassion and action, and participating in ongoing reflection and revision" (Stenberg, 2006, 288-289), I continue to desire to use critical pedagogy. Yet, what I now

realize from this research are the tools and awareness needed to use this pedagogy well.

Further reflection is also needed in considering the relationship between critical consciousness and a writing course, specifically around how these two concepts work together, especially in a college entry-level writing course. While much of the data above suggests that many of my students of color were able to exhibit more characteristics of a transitive consciousness compared to my white students, the students of color typically received lower grades. The reason for this is reflected within the grading rubrics that I used for this course. Instead of incorporating measuring specific aspects of critical pedagogy, I focused in the rubrics on the structure, style, and sophistication of writing. This occurred in order to align the course with the goals of a first-year writing course. As the data began to highlight this finding, questions arose for other writing teachers interested in incorporating critical pedagogy into a writing course. What types of characteristics should be used to measure a critical consciousness? How are those measurements indicative of students engaging with various stages of critical consciousness, transitive or naïve? Under what type of category should the measures of consciousness be incorporated into writing rubrics? How do educators make a case for critical consciousness being measured in our writing classes? How does critical thinking relate and transfer to critical, developed writing? In a college institution dedicated to asking students to think more broadly and critically, how does a writing class assisted with these larger institutional goals?

The answers for these questions I do not have. Yet, I think they are questions that need to be further considered in the composition and rhetoric debates about critical

pedagogy in writing classrooms. Instead of abandoning the use of critical pedagogy for its flaws, how can the institution renew a use of critical pedagogy to assist it in meeting its goals, especially in a global economy? And further, in departments housing first-year writing and other writing courses, how can critical pedagogy be employed as a tool to assist students in learning not just how to ask questions but to communicate those questions and make a case for questions to be asked, encouraging student voice and agency? In understanding critical pedagogy as a situated and shifting pedagogy, scholars who have critiqued critical pedagogy may be able to renew some insight into thinking about how to revise critical pedagogy for their specific interests, objectives, and goals.

Pedagogical Takeaways for Teacher-Research

Unknowingly when I began this project I did not anticipate I would learn much about the actual methods used to research critical pedagogy. To my surprise however I found teacher-research to be an appropriate tool to examine the multiple accounts of process that revealed itself through critical pedagogy. Positioning myself then as a teacher and researcher I was able to capture data that brought light on the products that I was creating the classroom and, at the same time, positioned myself to actively engage in Freirean praxis in this work. Additional insight on teacher-research is provided below.

Pedagogical Takeaway 1: The Vulnerability of Teacher-Research

Throughout this project, the collecting of data, the teaching, the researching, the writing – I felt vulnerable. I became acutely aware of how my failings or missteps would eventually be revealed in the writing of this project and exposed to a variety of

audiences. The thought and dread of this loomed and continues to loom within this project. As a result, I have every desire in my body to want to argue against teacher-research as an exposing and humiliating tool to collect research. Yet despite these urges, I have found that I really value teacher-research as a tool that provides insight not only to one's own work in the classroom but as a tool that can expose moments of teacher frustration and even missteps that many teachers can relate to in an honest and candid way. Teacher-research allows for pedagogy to be a messy and confusing concept. As a teacher, I found that I really want to provide a facade that pedagogy is something that a good teacher has and a developing or poor teacher does not have. Yet, what I have learned from this process is that pedagogy is actually something that is messy. This is ok too because pedagogy's are not just abstract theories but interact and at times conflict with very real people with real lives and real experiences. They shift and change depending upon those situations. In realizing this, I have learned to be ok with exposing my vulnerabilities. I have learned that as a teacher, and someone who desires to be a good teacher, these vulnerabilities do not mark moments of failure but rather key learning experiences that when reflected upon can be responded to in positive ways to better one's teaching. It is my hope then that as readers of this piece educators can see or think about moments in their own teaching and see how vulnerability can be positioned to better inform one's pedagogies and classroom practices in dynamic and productive ways. What teacher-research is a tool for then is really praxis. It asks for teachers to think about their practices and then to act reflectively on those practices. This was a connection I did not make until nearing the end of my research. Nonetheless, I think it is a valuable tool for teachers to use when

asking questions about the “how” or the process components of their teaching. Engaging in praxis during these moments can then allow for the potential shift in the understanding of how a landscape impacts the classrooms educators create and how their pedagogies become an alive and shifting component of their classroom.

Pedagogical Takeaway 2: Teacher-Research Facilitates The Researcher’s Own Critical Consciousness

Part of this vulnerability naturally lends itself to reflection in one’s work. Navigating this duel identity as both teacher and researcher in the classroom one is asked to think about positionality. As a result, I found myself thinking about my own position as a teacher and researcher and how these identities influenced my understanding of the classroom. I was reflecting upon myself not only in terms of the moves that I was making as a teacher, for I think that all teachers to some degree to this in their practice, but the moves that I was making as a researcher and how those moves interacted and influenced the steps and tasks I assigned as a teacher. Thus part of the irony of this project was that as I was trying to understand how a teacher facilitates through process students developing a critical consciousness, I, as a researcher was developing my own critical consciousness of the project and my identities that impacted the project. And so in doing, this was a key takeaway that I learned from this project. Teacher-research is a type of method that demands reflective understandings about identity, positionality, power, and inherently incorporates a level of responsibility and commitment to the project and its participants.

Teacher-Research as a Tool to Instruct A Critical Consciousness

When I first began this project, my focus was upon critical pedagogy and its facilitation. Yet, as the project progressed and as I finished collecting and analyzing the data, and eventually transitioned to the writing of this and teaching a completely different course, I began to understand that not only did I learn about critical pedagogy in this process but much about the importance of teacher-research. As a method, teacher-research, especially autobiographical teacher-research, provides opportunities to survey the multiple landscapes of teaching. When teachers become teacher-researchers, the "traditional descriptions of both teachers and researchers change. Teacher-researchers raise questions about what they think and observe about their teaching and their students' learning. They collect student work in order to evaluate performance, but they also see student work as data to analyze in order to examine the teaching and learning that produced it" (MacLean & Mohr, 1999, p. x). That is, teacher-research I think turns the attention of the classroom with a focus solely on students to a relational understanding of the classroom and its interactions between teacher and student. Thus creating a layered landscape, a topography of the classroom. And as a topography, my understanding of the process of critical pedagogy became much more dynamic as it crossed and traversed the layered landscape. Looking at this landscape through a layered lens directly impacts the teacher's own critical consciousness of his/her relationship with their class. That is, one's own teacher-research as an actively reflective practice naturally creates praxis. By participating in praxis, there is a new awareness of students needs. That is, I found myself by participating in praxis, actively thinking and noting the development of my students. Doing so then positioned me to individually meet the needs of these students in terms of their own grappling with the

content that was being discussed. This then better positioned my students and facilitated the development of their own critical consciousness especially as I found all students entered with a level of consciousness, yet, all developed differently due to their backgrounds and life experiences.

Pedagogical Takeaway 3: Systems are Vital to Capturing Data

As a project designed to look at the relationship between student and teacher within the process of critical pedagogy, I struggled to make a space for myself in the data. The use of documenting my general reflections after class became a vital tool to collect data on the moves I was making as a teacher. Yet, what did not get captured in that data set was my identity as researcher in relation to the grades that I was assigning my students. Instead, the journal functioned as a day-to-day recollection and analysis of the class time. Yet, there was nothing in place to document the work the teacher does outside of the class time such as emails, grading assignments, and planning for the unit. During my weekly meeting with Julie Lindquist, I voiced this concern. Brainstorming ways to ensure that my own thoughts emerged in the data, Julie suggested the use of memos. These memos would serve as moments that actively reflected on the teaching practices that occurred outside of the classroom. For example, in regards to grading student assignments, I created a separate document that captured my observations of their process in engaging with critical pedagogy in the assignment. These observations took place from the perspective of the research and attempted to answer the question "how did the student engage in aspects of critical pedagogy within this assignment?" As a teacher grading the assignment for a first-year writing course, I did not necessarily have such a question built in to my rubric. This was either due to lack of experience of

thinking about the need to do so or the assumption that such a question was built into the rubric. Nonetheless, this did not occur to me until after the course was complete. These documents however became my memos and allowed for me to successfully navigate both positions of authority – teacher and researcher. They compiled together over the course of the semester, and lent themselves to capturing individualized student's experience with the process of critical pedagogy. This understanding of the importance of systems was not an expected pedagogical takeaway. Yet, upon conducting this research I found not only understanding critical pedagogy an important piece to this project but the need to strategically negotiate teacher-research another key moment within my research.

Pedagogical Takeaway 4: Teacher-Research as a Process Continues to Lead to New Insight

From understanding this project as a layered learning project, learning not only about critical pedagogy but also teacher-research as a method, it revealed the multiple moments of learning within this project. Specifically, in the collecting of data and reflection of myself as a teacher and a researcher within the audio recordings and journal, I found myself continually reflecting on the project from a lens of a researcher and one of a teacher. Here I saw how teacher-research can lend itself seeing the classroom landscape from two different perspectives and by doing so asking new questions of a teacher and new questions of a researcher. Moreover, in the writing of this project and now being removed from the collection of data and teaching of the course, I found that the actual writing asks an additional layer of reflection – one that is much more cumulative and collective in nature. Removing oneself from the data

collecting and teaching, provides a new distance and space to see the classroom from perspectives of teacher, researcher, and now by writing about the project – the identity of teacher/researcher. Within this new identity, perspectives are being revealed about my own experience as a whole in regards to this process that otherwise I do not believe would have continued to been revealed without the ability to write and share about this experience. In so doing, new insights have been generated in the writing of my experience within these identities of conducting teacher-research.

In many ways, the practice of writing this research asked for me to create an internal dialogue around the intellectual space of my classroom. As such, in not only the analysis of the data but in providing a narrative around this data, I developed an internal dialogue that engaged in active reflection about my role in the classroom and the experiences that my students had in this course. By dialoguing with myself about this space, I found myself with new insight about the classroom, my role in the classroom, and critical pedagogy. Ironically, I see this process similar to the experience Freire discusses about the importance of dialogue in fostering a critical consciousness. That is, without the experience of analyzing and creating narratives around the data, it is possible that such my heightened consciousness about the class and critical pedagogy may have never been developed. As such, while I was analyzing for moments of dialogue leading to critical consciousness in my class, I was producing my own dialogue and critical consciousness of my class from a research perspective. From this realization, I began to see how teacher-research and the narration of teacher-research leads not only to new insight but a more developed understanding of a teacher and researcher's identity and roles in the classroom. Thus, as I found myself trying to

understand the role of dialogue in critical pedagogy, I began to participate in the application of dialogue developing my own critical consciousness. This was an unintended result of the study but one that implies how researching critical pedagogy, especially using teacher-research as a method to do so, assists in not only documenting the process of critical pedagogy but actively engaging in it as well.

Story as a Pedagogical Tool and Methodology

If pedagogies are alive and shift between the landscapes and participants it encounters, there is great promise then in the ability to narrate the shifts and tensions that exist within these pedagogies. Narratives provide the ability to give life and personalities that these pedagogies encounter. What is gained from a detailed account of a pedagogical narrative are stories rooted in process and an understanding of how those processes yield a larger product – weather that product is something to be lauded or criticized.

In several ways this project was a compilation of pedagogical stories. As a course themed around “stories of race”, students were asked to engage in questioning and composing stories of race that have influenced their larger understandings of race in American culture. As a teacher, I was asked to model my own stories of race that I had experienced and contributed to my own view on race. Methodologically, as a researcher, I began to see the research process very much as a story. I began to see these individual moments collecting into one larger story revealing my skills as a teacher, researcher, and how I negotiated these positions when I interacted with my students. As a teacher and researcher I was provided access to all of these stories and given a responsibility to them. In the writing and sharing of these stories, it only seems

appropriate to share it as another story. Therefore, I find that within this document what lives are really a bunch of stories that have cumulated into this one larger story, revealing the lessons learned through teacher-research. As such, story can be a powerful and responsible methodology. It can provide a natural space for stories that may counter, refute, complicate can all exist. And this is important because in writing up this larger story, I have found that there really is not one set version of my course and critical pedagogy to tell and share. But rather several, that is what examining the process and looking at it in terms of landscape has revealed. In many ways then story as a methodology allows for looking at landscapes with a constellated lens. Each story has its own angle, its own perspective, and its own history. Yet, compiled together these stories at different points ask for a reorientation of the reader and allows for an constellation, or mapping, of ideas instead of set trajectory.

In the writing of these stories and compellation of these stories, a picture is painted of a critical pedagogy landscape – one that is shifting as it meets and interacts with its participants and gets shaped by the backgrounds and knowledge's of the participants. Through this representation a larger story gets constructed that outlines the new knowledge that was created in this project and revealed through the collection and sharing of these stories. Very much though these stories are rooted in a specific moment and as such have most likely shifted and altered since then. Nonetheless, through story, one can understand critical pedagogy as a process that depends on its relationships and interactiveness – never a static, fixed pedagogy – but something that truly needs to be mapped in order to understand. It is my hope then that this project and the sharing of these stories represent various landmarks and roadways to critical

pedagogy. Some areas clearly have road blocks and need to be pondered in more detail in order to respond to them but it is the ability to understand these narrative moments as something more than an inconsequential moment that contributes to seeing critical pedagogy in a process-oriented approach. This I argue gives light to humilities and dignities that exist within critical pedagogy. Viewing critical pedagogy then from a process orientation that depends upon narratives paints a humanizing perspective that attempts to acknowledge the shortcomings and at times successes of teachers and students. Overall it shows how engaging in praxis one can begin to become better teachers and better students that are working for creating a more humanizing world that recognizes one's own dignity. That is my hope at least, and the reason why I first developed an interest in Freirean critical pedagogy.

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