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A purpose of this dissertation is to understand how pre-service teachers locate and problematize their whiteness within teacher education programs. This dissertation studied and attempted to locate these curricular "interventions" by analyzing selected teacher education program curricula, interviewing pre-service education students and their teachers in UNCG ELC 381 and interrogating the researcher's positionality as a white student/scholar/researcher through a critical autoethnography. Employing a feminist and post-formalist framework, the researcher looked for self-reflective practices within teacher education curricula, opportunities to unlearn and examine student intentions, how teacher education programs can construct and facilitate the point of intervention and how these interventions are sustained towards an ongoing critical self-reflective practice. The research revealed limited opportunities for critical self-reflection of white pre-service teachers, thereby maintaining the status quo. Through a deeper examination of "ruptures" within the curriculum and through the critical autoethnography, the researcher proposes a move towards a pedagogy of conocimiento, in the tradition of Gloria Anzaldúa, to sustain initial confrontations of whiteness and inform the practice of anti-oppressive educators.

DISRUPTING THE BEST OF INTENTIONS. TOWARDS BECOMING AN ANTI-OPPRESSIVE EDUCATOR: LOCATING AND INTERROGATING WHITENESS IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

by

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Approved by

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Committee Chair

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To Kyle, Sam and Phoebe: You are the lights of my life.

Thanks for reminding me that love wins.

Always.

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation written by ERIN BROWNLEE DELL has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

> . . . the practice of critical teaching implicit in a correct way of thinking, involves a dynamic and dialectical movement between "doing" and "reflecting on doing" (Freire, 1998, p. 43).

> Educators who demonstrate critical consciousness have the ability and the will to theorize and politicize their experiences (Nieto & McDonough, 2011, p. 366).

A purpose of this dissertation is to understand how pre-service teachers locate and problematize their whiteness within teacher education programs. This study attempted to locate these curricular "interventions" by analyzing selected teacher education program curricula, interviewing pre-service education students and their teachers in UNCG ELC 381 and interrogating the researcher's positionality as a white student/scholar/researcher through a critical autoethnography.

Introduction

In the first semester of doctoral study, my very first written assignment asked us to interrogate our reading practices and examine our limits, following a close read of Deborah Britzman's piece, "Is there a queer pedagogy? Or, stop reading straight." It is not hyperbole to state that this piece and this assignment fundamentally altered my consciousness and became a turning point in my life. The very idea of Britzman's (1995) assertion, that "the limit of thought—where thought stops, what it cannot bear to know,

what it must shut out to think as it does--" (p. 156) left me dumbstruck. For the first time, I was being asked to critically reflect on my limits and what I *didn't* want to know. As a doctoral student, I was not intimidated by critical thinking exercises, but as I sat down to write, I struggled with this critical lens turning on *my* practices and beliefs. It was my habit to maintain an emotional and intellectual distance from self-reflection. However, this piece sparked a focus on the critical interrogation of self, giving me courage to uncover what I "cannot not bear to know" and continues to resonate with me and frames much of my experiences not only in the doctoral program, but also in my professional and personal life.

Up until this point, much of my education could be described as focused much more on "doing" and while there were moments of self-reflection, rarely did I examine my beliefs, habits and practices in a way that questioned my positionality and privilege as a white person. The Britzman assignment initiated some of what Gloria Anzaldúa (2002) calls "ruptures," the beginning of new ways of knowing and questioning who I am (p. 546). While I will explore these ruptures in subsequent chapters, it is important to state here that naming my positionality as a white, educated, middle class woman, I have the ability to be invisible. Initially, such invisibility seemed hard to confront because I benefit from it everyday. Heretofore, I was not challenged or scrutinized because privilege ". . . allows [one] to assume a certain level of acceptance, inclusion and respect in the world, to operate within a relatively wide comfort zone" (Johnson, 2006, pp. 32-33). However, by beginning to critically examine my positionality, I made a conscious

effort, still ongoing, to understand and live within a *dis-comfort* zone, one where my privilege and its benefits are constantly questioned and de-centered.

I began to shift towards the “dialectical movement” as described by Paulo Freire (1998) of the intersections of “doing” and “reflecting on doing” (p. 43). When I began to think about my dissertation, I first considered a research endeavor focused on the impact of a study abroad experience on future teachers. Much of my professional life has been focused on international education in college and university settings and I have always been fascinated by cross-cultural experiences of students retuning from a semester abroad. I wondered how these interactions shaped what students learned about themselves and how they would engage with their future students. Reading Lisa Delpit’s (2006) observation that “Learning to interpret across cultures demands reflecting on our own experiences, analyzing our own culture, examining and comparing varying perspectives. We must consciously and voluntarily make our cultural lenses apparent” (p. 151) made me more curious. How do we “make our cultural lenses apparent?” Does an institutionalized cultural “experience” reveal these lenses? For me, the “other” existed across literal boundaries, to be engaged and studied.

Simultaneous to this exploration, I was spending a lot of time in my coursework understanding more about the impact of No Child Left Behind legislation, the hidden curriculum and what Donaldo Macedo (2006) calls a “pedagogy of lies” (p. 34) framing the public school landscape. I began to see the intersection of my studies with events in my son, Sam’s kindergarten classroom. For example, Sam, labeled as a “handful” or a

"willful child," often found himself with a "red card"* along with the same 4 or 5 other students. In my meeting with the teacher, she assured me that she "could work with people like you and your husband," and that "Sam isn't as much of a problem as the others." She shared this sentiment on multiple occasions, making me somewhat circumspect. Upon further examination, I learned that the other students consistently on "red card" were all students of color. She could work with us because we were white? Heterosexual? Married? Sam was not as much of a problem because he was white? Her comments and their implications stuck with me; this was a teacher who could not or would not see her privilege as a white person and its impact as the construct framing her interactions with and impressions of students of color. For the first time, I began to view Sam's classroom and schools in general as sites of difference, of interactions across cultures.

Questioning the Culture of Power

While I had been entranced by the impact of crossing international borders as an institutionalized educational experience, I failed to understand the multiple cross-cultural interactions occurring on a day-to-day basis within a classroom, between teachers and students. This failure to truly "see" the culture of a classroom is rooted in my positionality and membership within what Delpit (2006) calls the "Culture of Power." As I continued to study and learn more about schools as potential sites for change and social

* Behind the teacher's desk and above the blackboard contained a list of all student names on individual pockets, each containing three cards: green, yellow and red. Red cards indicated disciplinary issues after multiple warnings.

justice, I began to understand the significance of the daily interactions within classrooms and wondered how teachers encounter their students, particularly if they are viewed as "other" within a school system controlled by a white, dominant culture.

I am not a teacher, nor am I formally involved in teacher education. So, why am I interested in how teachers know themselves? As I continue to confront my limits and privileged positionality, I wondered how individual privilege is named and interrogated so as to dismantle larger systemic issues. If 83% of teachers in the United States are white (nces.ed.gov, 2007), what kinds of intentional critical practices and pedagogies are offered to students in teacher education programs to engage in critical self-reflection? While many teacher education programs may attempt a course or two on diverse classrooms or multicultural education, there is little to no emphasis on how these future teachers confront their own beliefs and practices, rather than learning about the "other." Indeed, as Christine Sleeter (2008) writes about teachers, "As long as they see themselves as normal but not cultural, they use their own unexamined frames of reference against which to judge students, students' families and their communities" (p. 561). A lack of "sociological mindfulness" (Schwalbe, 2005) for future teachers continues oppressive practices in classrooms, intentional or otherwise. Without these reflective practices, we continue our complicity with an education that maintains and reifies an oppressive status quo.

Situating the Study Within the Literature

The focus of many teacher education programs remains on the standardization of learning, on classroom management and subject-specific courses. An obsessive testing and assessment culture pervades most schools, thereby demanding students and teachers to correctly fill in scantron bubbles rather than "be in the world, with the world and with others. . . " (Freire, 1998, p. 73) and working towards a critical pedagogy. Scholarship on teacher education is plentiful, particularly as it relates to what it means for teachers to be "prepared" for their future classrooms. Scholarship focused on preparing white pre-service teachers for diverse classrooms offers valuable perspective to my dissertation (Kumashiro, 2000, 2002 & 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2011; Landsman, 2011; Marx, 2006; McIntyre, 1997; Nieto, 2000 & 2011; Picower, 2012; Sleeter, 1996, 2004 & 2008). Several common themes emerge from these scholars, including education as a tool for social justice, diversity within teacher education curricula, critical examination of self and more specifically, whiteness.

Education as a Tool for Social Justice

As a review of these and other scholars' work reveal, many teacher education programs place a strong emphasis on subject-content knowledge with little or no critical examination of the purpose of education or the role of teachers. Sleeter has written extensively on the issue of pre-service teacher education, particularly as it relates to developing a social justice framework for white students and observes that, "schools teach young people not to pursue their own questions, but rather to pursue questions

defined by the teacher and the textbook" (2004, p. 93). This belief is often reified within teacher education programs, where the focus is on subject mastery and classroom management. Teachers are expected to remain apolitical. However, as Patrick Jenlink and Karen Embry Jenlink (2005), editors of *Portraits of Teacher Preparation*, observe, the significance of teacher preparedness to not only teach in a diverse community, but also to work for justice requires that "social justice is not an add-on to a curriculum—whether for the teacher preparation or public school classroom" (p. 23). What could teacher preparation really look like, beyond the ability to train teachers to function in the high stakes era of testing and results-driven decisions?

The work of Bree Picower (2012) addresses this question as she engages her students to, as she writes, "question taken-for-granted assumptions about power, privilege and various forms of oppression and how these impact education and the educational outcomes of their future students" (p. 2). This approach jars the status quo, asking students to critically examine the heretofore unexamined. It is a framework of questioning that leads to a disruption of what Kevin Kumashiro (2004) labels the "commonsensical definitions of good teaching" (pp.14-15). Pushing students to move towards anti-oppressive teaching must form a critical framework of teacher education programs. However, such practices must also include self-examination, particularly for white students. Indeed, as Tyrone Howard and Glenda Aleman (2008) write, "pre-service teachers need to examine their perspectives on schooling and ideology because their frameworks may play useful roles in the overall knowledge base that pre-service teachers develop" (p. 166).

Diversity in the Curriculum

Central to the development of this knowledge base is the framework of teacher education curricula. While this will be more deeply discussed in chapter three, scholarship on teacher education for social justice emphasizes an increased focus on preparing teachers, especially white teachers, to teach in diverse classrooms. Because, as Sonia Nieto (2000) writes, "schools and colleges of education have not been bystanders in the history of this educational inequality" (p. 181), curricula must be examined and developed for deeper inclusivity. How issues of diversity are incorporated into the curriculum is important, particularly if both faculty and students see it as an "add-on" rather than an integral component of a larger social justice framework. A s Gloria Ladson-Billings (2011) writes, students understand the "not-so-subtle message that issues of diversity, equity, and multiculturalism are not particularly important and they just have to endure these experiences because of state requirements" (p. 390).

This idea of "enduring" a mandated diversity requirement also persists because, for white students, classes on multiculturalism focus on "the other," those deemed different from the dominant, white culture. Sherry Marx (2006), in her work with white pre-service teachers observes, ". . . schools of education that regularly stroke pre-service teacher egos as they outline the needs of poor, 'at-risk' students, exacerbate this notion of 'teacher as savior'" (p. 74). This perception reifies the dominant culture, again situating pre-service teacher perspectives within privileged positionalities, normalizing their experiences and perspectives. Unexamined frames of reference for white pre-service teachers continue to support notions of "teacher-as savior" and privilege within these

programs. Unfortunately, as Sonia Nieto and Kathy McDonough (2011) observe, social justice educators struggle with disrupting this normalized framework, "Despite our best efforts to have them confront issues of racism, classism, and privilege, pre-service teachers' attitudes and beliefs and consequently their practice, may show little change" (p. 380). Sustaining this disruption of what is considered "normal" remains one of the major issues facing the education of teachers.

Self-Reflective Practice and Confronting Whiteness

Just as issues of diversity and multiculturalism cannot be deemed "extras" for teacher education curricula, neither can an emphasis on self-reflective practice. Critical self-examination provides a significant foundation in creating a social justice framework. Julie Landsman (2011) observes, "such self-scrutiny is exactly what white teachers must engage in if we are to make changes in our classrooms and in our institutions" (p.15). Such self-scrutiny lies at the center of the scholarship of Alice McIntyre (1997) and Sherry Marx (2006), focusing on the process of naming and confronting self and whiteness with pre-service teachers. Both McIntyre and Marx focus on not only the importance of self-examination on the part of the students, but also on the significance and impact of the *teachers* of future teachers. Marx (2006) writes, "Teacher educators interested in examining these issues with pre-service teachers must realize that they being this exploration from a very different perspective than their students" (p. 43). McIntyre (1997) takes this a step further, understanding the responsibility of teacher education programs to engage in this type of critical questioning and examination:

> It is unwise for us to theorize and reflect on the need to teach multicultural antiracist education if we ignore our own construction of what it means to be white and if we refuse to examine the ways in which we are implicated in the continued oppression of people of color in white society. We need to take responsibility for our actions – and inactions (pp. 148-149).

Taking responsibility by confronting whiteness and the dominant status quo means developing and sustaining a critical pedagogy-infused curricula with a focus on social justice education. Kevin Kumashiro's work towards becoming anti-oppressive educators serves as a significant influence on my dissertation. His belief in "resisting repetition, especially the repetition of what students believe they are supposed to be learning" (2002, p. 73) offers a challenge to students and teacher educators to critically examine the system as well as themselves. These moments of resistance allow for the beginning of a process towards awareness. While Kumashiro's work reflects the shared themes of the scholarship regarding teacher education, he takes it a step further, insisting we push students towards learning in an ambiguous and often uncertain space. He (2004) writes "maybe we need to start feeling very uncomfortable about the processes of teaching and learning" (p. 30) to frame a journey as one involving "crisis," denial and pain. It is through this discomfort where change may begin.

These scholars have identified moments of intervention with their students, whether it is an increased emphasis on diversity in the curricula, education for social justice or focused interrogation of self and practices. I am interested in these conscious moments of intervention within teacher education program, of interrupting the "expected" curriculum. This brief overview of some common themes from the scholarship on teacher education makes me wonder about these "crisis" moments and

about developing a social justice framework for future teachers. Kumashiro (2000) places emphasis on this exploration of self to resist the positivist frame of most schools: "in order not to reproduce normalcy, schools should engage students in the process of separating the normal from the self, significantly changing how they see themselves and who they are" (p. 45). I am interested in this exploration of self, of understanding how this practice might impact future teachers and classrooms.

However, why would a student, particularly a white student, voluntarily problematize her role in the dominant culture and begin to interrupt habits of privilege? What is a catalyst for this process? Critical whiteness scholars (Thompson, Hytten, Warren and Applebaum) engage their students in attempts to unravel the conditioning of resistance, understanding Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg's (1998) belief that "central to a critical pedagogy of whiteness is the development of a healthy, hopeful, justice-oriented response. . .with a rethinking of both white identity and the very nature of whiteness itself" (p. 20). Aiming towards activism, these scholars study their classrooms and reflect on student engagement with whiteness.

Particularly relevant is their engagement as teachers/scholars in this work; their research does not exist in a vacuum, but is reflective of their classroom practices. Their scholarship has immediacy to it, one that is enacted within their classrooms as living laboratories. Their approaches inform pedagogical practices as well as focus on elements for social change. Their studies reflect Frances Maher and Mary Kay Thompson Tetreault's (1998) observation that ". . . confronting issues of whiteness necessitates conscious interventions on the part of teachers that might challenge their commitments to

an uncomplicated classroom democracy" (p. 142). Their conscious interventions are central to their research.

Project Goals: Locating the Crisis

It is these conscious interventions I chose to study. Teacher education programs must provide a space to disrupt what is deemed "normal" and "fixed," instead moving towards a pedagogy of uncertainty. Kumashiro (2002) warns of the repetitive and ingrained beliefs and behaviors within teachers and insists "Learning to teach involves unlearning what they have already learned about teaching, and exposing and challenging the discourses that already frame how they think about and approach teaching and learning to teach" (p. 82). Interrupting repetitive privileged practices requires a rupture of these beliefs; it is only through this sense of "rupture" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 547) or "possible crisis" (Kumashiro. 2002, p. 74) that students may begin to examine practice, reflect on behaviors and move towards learning to embrace an uncertainty of sorts, rejecting an idea of being "fixed" towards what Freire names, "becoming."

This move towards uncertainty combines interests of self-reflective practice in teacher education programs, but does so within the framework of critical whiteness studies. Looking for new ways to "explore fresh possibilities of responsiveness" (Thompson, 2003a, p. 20), and disrupt traditional ways of being a teacher allows for a move towards a paradox. Gloria Anzaldúa's description of conocimiento implies a deeper knowledge of self; however, we arrive there through an acceptance of ambiguity, of a level of ignorance, as G.D. Shlasko (2005) writes,

> to overwhelm our capacity to "get it" to bring us to a point where we are absolutely ignorant, having neither knowledge nor resistance to knowledge. This kind of ignorance may represent a profound kind of wisdom. Lacking answers, we are able to embrace questions, engage with multiple understandings, and imagine new possibilities (p. 129).

I wanted to explore this idea of wisdom through ignorance. By examining the conscious interventions of teacher education programs, I wanted to understand how emerging teachers locate and problematize the culture of power as they continue their process of becoming anti-oppressive educators. This dissertation studied and attempted to locate these "interventions" by critically examining selected teacher education curricula, interviewing pre-service education students and their teachers and interrogating my positionality as a white student/scholar/researcher.

Research Questions

- What kinds of opportunities are provided to students in teacher education programs to be self-reflective about their positionalities and interrogate dominant culture?
- Where are opportunities to unlearn and examine student's intentions within a teacher education program?
- How can teacher education programs construct and facilitate the point of intervention or crisis as described by Kumashiro[†] (2002)?
- What is my role in this process as a white researcher attempting to locate, disrupt and dismantle privilege?

[†] Kevin Kumashiro (2002) describes student learning about oppression and often unknowing complicity with oppressive practices as an "emotional crisis." Such a state of crisis offers opportunities for change; ". . . educators have a responsibility not only to draw students into a possible crisis, but also to structure experiences that can help them work through their crises productively" (pp. 74-75).

- How does the work towards changed visions of education, discovered in "crisis," sustain beyond the classroom? How de we continue to confront and engage "what we cannot bear to know?" (Britzman, 1995).

Context and Theoretical Framework

Becoming an anti-oppressive educator is an ongoing process, one that requires disruption of the status quo and interruption of the privileged self. Indeed, as Kumashiro (2002) writes, "rational detachment is impossible: students' identities, experiences, privileges, investments and so forth always influence how they think and perceive, and what they know and choose not to know" (p. 76). Within this dissertation, it is important to situate my approach within studies of both critical pedagogy and critical whiteness studies, both of which I will explore further in chapters three and four as they relate to the study of teacher education programs. Also valuable is understanding how we know who we are. This element becomes particularly significant and personal in chapter five as I turn the lens on myself to investigate my process towards becoming an anti-oppressive educator.

Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy offers the possibility of an education that is liberating and transformative, demanding questioning and awareness of the world around us as well as a search for meaning in what we encounter. It is through a journey of both self and social understanding that critical pedagogy allows for the intersection of making meaning, including intellectual, embodied and spiritual ways of knowing. Critical pedagogy demands both critical thinking and questioning of the status quo, a process crucial to our

dialogue and actions, ultimately leading to awareness, freedom, hope and possibility for transformative education and a changed world. While this approach is significant, there are no guarantees of this change. Indeed, as Antonia Darder (2002) writes, such "resistance is often generated by internalized traditional expectations of schooling linked to the perpetuation of the status quo" (p. 136).

Possibilities of a transformative education and battling this resistance begin with a process of awareness and awakening, what Freire calls "conscientization" (1998, p. 55). Central to critical pedagogy, conscientization demands an interrogation of the world in which we live, emphasizing that education, and teaching in particular, are political endeavors. Indeed, "no one can be in the world, with the world, and with others and maintain a position of neutrality" (Freire, 1998, p. 73). Students are not permitted the space to question or challenge what is presented to them as fact, instead spending time on the "obstacle course" (Shapiro, 2006, p.21) of standardized tests and regurgitated learning. The very foundation of critical pedagogy is the necessity of questioning and becoming aware. Critical pedagogy rejects any notion of a fixed reality, instead focusing on dismantling positions of power and privilege. As Giroux (2011) writes, "critical pedagogy begins with the assumption that knowledge and power should always be subject to debate, held accountable and critically engaged" (p. 172). In such a space, the classroom becomes a place of discovery and of possibility.

Indeed, as Norman Denzin (2007) observes, "The instructional spaces become sacred spaces. In them students take risks and speak from their heart" (p. 138). Such a sacred space offers the opportunity, as Freire (1970) writes, ". . . to know how to teach is

to create possibilities for the construction and production of knowledge rather than to be engaged simply in a game of transferring knowledge" (p. 49). When test scores and standardized assessment dominate classroom spaces and police educational boundaries, students are not often afforded permission to explore other ways of knowing. Alternate forms of meaning-making must inform pedagogical practices, supporting Freire's (1998) observation, " I cannot be a teacher without exposing who I am" (p. 87). Experiences students bring to the classroom and who they are exists as central components of critical pedagogy's process. Classrooms must become both inclusive and nurturing spaces where, as bell hooks (1994) writes, ". . .we have to challenge and change the way everyone thinks about pedagogical process" (p.144). A pedagogy framed by critical thinking and questioning offers opportunities to guide students not only in the act of problematizing their world, but also working towards a critical hope. Without these tools, critical thinking and dialogue are neglected and the quest for a just and changed world is diverted.

Thinking about what is possible offers hope and is crucial to a transformative education. Hope and possibility are the most powerful parts of critical pedagogy, allowing for imagination and work to envision what our world could be. The classroom is the very place where the fire of hope is first sparked and students can see the possibility of a changed world before them. Critical hope and radical love born from critical pedagogy are revolutionary and a constant struggle in the face of a dominant status quo. There is freedom and possibility for change when recognizing "the struggle for hope is permanent" (Freire, 2005, p. 106). This struggle ultimately leads to action,

but within praxis, the “action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it” (Freire, 1970, p. 60). It is the idea of hope that sustains this ability to critically reflect on the status quo and then take action to change it. Instead of end of grade tests and assimilation tactics determining our individual worth within education, there becomes a collective process of searching together for what is important, allowing students to “reflect, critique, affirm, challenge, act and ultimately transform our collective understanding of the world” (Darder, 2002 p. 82).

Critical pedagogy demands the possibility of transformation. This possibility, of education as transformative, depends upon the intersection of the intellect, heart and spirit for students and teachers. Darder (2002) describes a “pedagogy of liberation” (p.37) dependent on teachers sharing themselves in the classroom and engaging students in a process of education for social justice. Possibilities for justice and change begin when we critically question what is around us and work to find, as Darder suggests, “sufficient autonomy and responsibility to struggle for an educational praxis and a way of life that could support democratic forms of economic and cultural existence” (p. 37).

Often this idea of transformation is viewed as a “Pollyanna” view of the world, one without any grounding in reality. Our culture does not reward this collective envisioning of a better world, often maligning visionaries, as hooks (2000) writes, “we are encouraged to see honest people as naïve, as potential losers” (p. 47). In a world demanding education to be a fixed commodity, one supporting the status quo, critical pedagogy demands otherwise. Embracing the ambiguity of being unfinished leads to this sense of liberation, of freedom to hope and work for social justice. Freire (2004) writes,

"the discourse on the impossibility of changing the world is the discourse of those who, for different reasons, have accepted settling for the status quo, either from despair or because they benefit from it" (p. 16). Critical pedagogy resists despair, challenges oppression and cultivates possibilities of hope, reinforcing Kincheloe's (2004) belief that "nothing is impossible when we work in solidarity with love, respect, and justice as our guiding lights" (p. 3).

Ultimately, the "solidarity" of students and teachers must continue to work for a transformative view of education, one that changes the world. Critical pedagogy is indeed a much-needed intervention to our current condition, a system dominated by a results-driven, capitalistic market, devoid of emotion and hope. Critical pedagogy awakens our collective conscientization to this dominant order, not only by interrogating unjust practices, but also by creating hope and dreams for a just future. Freire's work serves as a crucial reminder to the struggle for hope and change. Indeed, as Peter McLaren (2007) writes:

> It is important for teachers to return to the world of an educator who we still use as a compass for our pedagogical life, a life that does not end when the door to the classroom is closed for the day, but one which we have integrated into our hearts and minds, and adapted to the everyday rhythm of our lives (pp. 300-01).

Freire's "pedagogical life" reminds us of the constant struggle for change, a struggle framed by critical hope and possibility. It is through a process of critical questioning and conscientization that leads to a transformative education. Such an education privileges students and teachers' experiences as valid by celebrating many ways of knowing, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. Critical pedagogy ignites a critical hope, one that

"enables progressive educators and others to think otherwise in order to act otherwise" (Giroux, 2010, p. B15).

Critical Whiteness

Whiteness both permeates and dominates social structures and contexts. By relying on privilege and capital (both monetary and cultural), whiteness assumes a position of authority over "others" and demands conformity to its customs. Such authority positions whiteness as the dominant order, the "Culture of Power" (Delpit, 1988, p. 282). This power of positionality not only "normalizes" whiteness, it also creates 'the other,' ". . . assign[ing] everyone, not only people of color, differentiated places in complex and shifting relations of racialized . . . hierarchies" (Maher & Tetreault, 1998, p. 139). Whiteness supports these hierarchies of oppression and domination, whether through overt racism or what Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2006) names "otherizing softly" (p. 3) of color-blind racism. Indeed, ". . . the dominant group—like all dominant groups—has the power to define what is considered normal" (Johnson, 2006, p. 19). The constructed "normalcy" of whiteness discourages interrogation (on the part of whites) for fear of disrupting privilege.

Critically examining whiteness is a complicated endeavor. As Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) write, "the discourses that shape whiteness are not unified and singular, but diverse and contradictory" (p. 9). For individuals, there are intersections of gender, ability, socioeconomic status, religion and sexual orientation (among others), adding layers of complexity within the dominant framework of whiteness. Sherry Marx' (2006) definition of whiteness in her book, *Revealing the Invisible*, reflects my intentions within

this dissertation. She writes that whiteness "is much more than a racial discourse. Rather I understand it as an amalgamation of qualities including the cultures, histories, experiences, discourses, and privileges shared by Whites" (p. 6). While this "amalgamation" will not be identical for every white person, whites do share access to elements of societal agency and power *because* they are white. Within my dissertation, I'm interested in locating and interrupting the behavior and privilege afforded to whiteness, "because all whites are necessarily influenced by the often-invisible racial privileges intertwined with white culture, even as they/we benefit from them, whites cannot reject whiteness" (Marx, 2006, p. 6). Individuals/I cannot absolve themselves/myself of whiteness.

These "often-invisible racial privileges" maintain the pervasive nature of whiteness and reinforce its dominant positionalities and power, informing practices of individuals as well as institutions. Using the term "privilege" also reveals layers of complexity. For many whites, privilege is associated with economic status and larger issues of social class. Bree Picower (2012) names this resistance as a "tool of whiteness" designed to "maintain a colorblind outlook and to negate disparities" (p. 31). While I do not discount this intersection with whiteness, the racial privilege afforded to whites frames their/our interactions and, as Barbara Applebaum (2010) writes, : ". . . protect them from considering the unconscious habits and character traits that are manifestations of privileged experience and disregard how privilege is connected to one's very being constituted as white" (p. 30).

White privilege forms a seemingly impenetrable barrier of resistance to critical examination and shapes what Bonilla-Silva (2006) calls the "white habitus, a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites' racial taste, perceptions, feelings, and emotions and their views on racial maters" (p.104). Uninterrupted processes are fed by what Shannon Sullivan (2006) calls the "unconscious habit" of white privilege. Interrupting and problematizing these processes and habits remain central to a critical whiteness approach.

The study of critical whiteness aims to disrupt the normative construction of whiteness, problematizing the positionality of whiteness within curricula, classrooms and the larger society. Critical whiteness theory has shifted somewhat in the past two decades, moving from the act of naming and studying privilege (Peggy McIntosh and the *Invisible Knapsack* of the late 80s*)* to a deeper critical pedagogical examination of whiteness, questioning its power and dominance within the classroom and its broader cultural infiltration. Such an examination must be focused on how to de-center an ideology seen as normative. Indeed as George Yancy (2008) writes, "To allow whiteness the power to go unnamed is to reinforce its status as natural, as simply a site of being human" (p. 45). Critical whiteness theory not only names the Culture of Power, but also investigates the process of dismantling the position of whiteness through research and practice.

An ongoing process, whiteness must be continuously engaged as a way to dismantle its position of power and privilege. Studying the theory of critical whiteness is a challenging endeavor, particularly uncomfortable for most white students, a rupture of

their way of being in the world. Megan Boler (2004) describes the importance of a "pedagogy of discomfort," one where, "unlearning one's habits of being and thinking, and one's inscribed habits of emotional attention can be painful labor as well" (p. 131). The "pedagogy of discomfort" is important in this process, not to shame, but to be "willing to see yourself in the unflattering light of another's angry gaze" (Delpit, 1995, pp. 46-47). Such scrutiny is unfamiliar to those in the dominant culture, but a necessary part of the work. The study of critical whiteness must be one with a goal of working towards social justice, of relinquishing the dominant ideologies and positionalities secured by whiteness.

Because whiteness permeates so much, there is a barrier between how whites see themselves and how others see them. Interrogating their/our positionalities disrupts the realm of white privilege, leaving white students to grasp for comfort in their/our denial: "when we are challenged for our whiteness, our tendency is to fall back on our goodness, fairness, intelligence, rationality, sensitivity, and democratic inclusiveness, all of which are caught up in our whiteness" (Thompson, 2003a, pp. 16-17). This idea of being caught up in whiteness offers solace and a shield from problematizing the situation. Indeed, it is a choice for white students whether or not to confront complicity to a racist system; and, even if a student does cross that barrier, "the very acknowledgement of our racism and privilege can be turned to our advantage" (Thompson, 2003a, p. 12). Again, whiteness returns to the center. Audrey Thompson's work frames much of what occurs in classrooms. Because they/we are unable to confront their/our own racist practices,

whites cannot locate themselves/ourselves in these discussions, ultimately abdicating responsibility and protecting themselves/ourselves from further introspection.

This insulation and desire to be seen as a "good white" also surfaces when students wish to engage in anti-racist work. Rather then doing the work of naming their privilege and problematizing their actions in critical ways, whites instead continue to seek validation in their work, searching for their "progress." Julie Landsman (2011) writes,

> We want solutions, quick fixes, a shortcut to a place of enlightenment, or comfort. White people especially seem to think that if we just apply some rule or chart or system, we will solve the "race problem" and go on. This kind of work will not happen with one workshop or a one-week seminar. Rather, it is a process, a way of living with the world, that we can take in and make a part of our response to events and situations (p. 21).

Adding to their "discursive repertoire" (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 243) offers a false sense of accomplishment and leads some to believe that they can achieve progress through specific steps towards transcending racism. Thompson brilliantly outlines this belief in her piece, "Anti-racist work zones," acknowledging the anxiety whites feel in needing signs to know they are making progress. There is a struggle, when, as Thompson (2003b) writes, "educational change is measured not in terms of the kinds of relationships in which racism is taken on but in terms of the anti-racist mile markers that have been passed" (p.388-89). Rather than marking our progress as whites, we need to engage in the difficult work of the process, knowing that there is not an end.

Whites need to stop seeking validation and reject the notion that "we shouldn't have to be thinking about the journey all of the time" (Thompson, 2003b, p. 390). Such

actions reinforce placing self (whiteness) back at the center, even when attempting to engage anti-racist issues. We must move beyond the idea of being a "good white," or a finding a quick solution to racism. While an anti-racist pedagogy is important, there needs to be difficult and painful work done on the part of white students to engage in the process. This is not something that can just be "over" once the semester is complete and then they don't have to think about it again (see Hytten and Warren, 2003, p. 84). Again, privilege and comfort remain undisturbed. Thompson (2003b) calls on us to see this work as a "relational undertaking," (p. 393), one that requires shedding the "good white" narrative, in search for something more meaningful. The classroom is a space where such work can be engaged, a "space for intellectual intimacy, embodied performance of possibility, conversation that goes beyond the level of comfort and takes risks. . . " (Thompson, 2003b, p. 393).

Classrooms as spaces for possibilities will require abandoning the self-centered, "good white" narrative and report cards on progress. Instead, Thompson (2003a) suggests we move towards "accepting that we have to invent new forms of responsiveness" (p. 22), requiring "changing what is" (p. 20). Part of that process is critically examining a pedagogy of whiteness, both enacted and studied in a classroom. Disrupting this cycle of power and privilege involves naming and recognizing that whiteness does not represent the standard to which others should be measured. Students cannot be outside observers to this process. Essential to this pedagogy is a refusal to "reproduce such systems of oppression and privilege in the classroom, at least as much as possible" (Applebaum, 2010, p. 106) by being aware of the behaviors that support such

practices. Working towards a social justice pedagogy "requires that we recognize not only the system but also our complicity in it" (Applebaum, 2008, p. 406). Awareness is key to begin to disrupt the meta-narrative of privilege, framing actions, systems and practices.

Knowing Who We Are

Searching for one's identity remains an elusive quest, complicated by limits, self-imposed or otherwise. The idea of self is just that, an idea defined in terms of actions and reactions of others. Who we are depends on where we locate ourselves at any given time, in any given environment. We are uncertain in a "hegemony of certainty" (Britzman, 2006, p. ix). Contributing to this uncertainty is the sense that we are not definable, but a construct within contexts.

Our identities are comprised of definitions and perceptions of others in the groups and arenas in which we find ourselves. As a social construction, any sense of self is not permanent, instead we must rely on an "assumption of the possibility of identity" (Smith, 1999, p. 146). Such possibilities mean a constructed and re-constructed sense of self, creating and re-creating narratives of who we think we are, framed by who others believe we are or make us to be. Our identities become complicated, multi-layered and, "as subjects are not tied to or dependent upon some transcendental regime of truth . . .. [identities] are constitutive of the literacies we have at our disposal through which we make sense of our day to day politics of living" (McLaren and Lankshear, 1993, p. 386). Of course naming self, or identities, as constructs remains dependent on contexts in

which we find ourselves. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) remind us, “human beings cannot be simply separated from the contexts that have produced them” (p. 310).

Our contexts and their locations impact formation of self. Relationships to others frame these contexts and remain interdependent because, “. . . self-understanding is constructed by considering the other’s influence as an emotional experience, with ideas, associations and theories of life” (Britzman, 2009, p. 93). This influence allows for our identities to remain vulnerable to shifting dynamics within relationships to others. Often our identities are shielded from outside examination, protected from threats, instead focused on allies. Amin Maalouf (2000) writes, “Every individual is a meeting ground for many different allegiances, and sometimes these loyalties conflict with one another and confront the person who harbours them with difficult choices” (p. 4). When loyalties conflict, our identities come under scrutiny. Or, when we are challenged for who we are or who we claim to be.

It is within this space where an interrogation of self begins and we learn, “consciousness itself is spurred by difference in that we gain our first awareness of who we are when we gain a cognizance of our difference from . . . another’s ways” (Kincheloe, 1998, p. 140). This consciousness of identity is broadly defined by what philosopher Richard Rorty (1989) names, “vocabularies” (p. 21), or ways to both describe and define the construct of self. Because “identities are fashioned from the limited repertoire of understanding ourselves and our lives made available to us in public discourse,” (Bettie, 2003, p. 195), vocabularies shape our emerging identities, becoming active participants in how we define ourselves and others. To engage “a world we have

not made" (Britzman, 2007, p.11) and to attempt to understand ourselves in relationship to that world, we employ different vocabularies to create and maintain self.

Allowing this disruption of our fixed selves remains a challenge, a barrier; however, it is through the exploration of "alternative descriptions" that we might understand who we are. Britzman (1995) writes, "the possibility that reading the world is always already about risking the self" (p. 165). Moving beyond our self-constructed limits permits an openness to examination of self, realizing that confronting new vocabularies forces a vulnerability of sorts. Outside the boundaries of heretofore protected identities, we encounter challenges and discomfort, understanding what Gloria Anzaldúa (2007) writes, "Our greatest disappointments and painful experiences—if we can make meaning out of them—can lead us toward becoming more of who we are" (p. 68).

Making meaning requires what Anzaldúa (2002) calls "conocimiento. . . question[ing] conventional knowledge's current categories, classifications and contents" (p. 541). Conocimiento reflects multiple ways of knowing, offering alternative vocabularies to an otherwise fixed identity. Once boundaries are crossed and investigated, there is pain of disruption, of examining who we are underneath our carefully constructed facades. To engage in this work, to investigate our own self-creation, "we are obligated to create conditions for learning to live in this time that is out of joint, in discontinuous time and the disjuncture of self/other relations. This means taking responsibility for the discomforting fact of our dependency on the unknown" (Britzman, 2007, p. 11). Depending on the unknown requires us to move towards the

uncertainty, towards Freire's idea of "becoming" (1998, p. 39). Old definitions can no longer apply to who we are.

While further analysis of conocimiento and unlearning will be explored in the final chapter of the dissertation, I introduce Anzaldúa's (2002) seven stages of conocimiento, excerpted from her work "Now let us shift…the path of conocimiento…inner work, public acts." These stages inform the work of interrogating whiteness:

- Stage 1: El arrebato. . . rupture, fragmentation. . . an ending, a beginning
- Stage 2: Nepantla. . . torn between ways
- Stage 3: The Coatlicue state. . . desconocimiento and the cost of knowing
- Stage 4: The call. . . el compromise. . . the crossing and conversion
- Stage 5: Putting Coyolzauhqui together. . . new personal and collective "stories"
- Stage 6: the blow-up. . . a clash of realities
- Stage 7: shifting realities. . . acting out the vision or spiritual activism

Imagining a path of conocimiento as an alternate way of thinking about identities means a disruption as we critically examine our limits. Conocimiento must "shift" our path into territories we may not know or that intimidate us; this is the space we must hope to inhabit. What we discover in this space may contradict perceptions of our fixed selves, revealing ignorance, privilege and pain. These elements encapsulate alternate ways of learning, of knowing. Britzman (2003) writes:

> Mistakes, misrepresentations, confusion, conflicts, and little gifts of error are all crucial to the stuff of understanding and constructing knowledge, as are the small and large adjustments and insights we make from these events. And the oddest conditions and circumstances of *not learning*, it will turn out, will be extremely significant to the matter of who we think we are . . . (p. 2).

We must engage revised vocabularies, becoming comfortable with uncertainty. Such engagement emerges from a willingness to critically reflect on the context that produces our identities.

As we become accustomed to uncertainty, we must move towards what Anzaldúa calls the state of nepantla. Envisioned as a "overlapping space between different perceptions and belief systems" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 541), the nepantla becomes a location within our consciousness where we have the freedom to confront our limits, and ignorance. Serving as a space for a revised self-creation, ignoring the constructs of fixed boundaries and identities, the nepantla represents liberation from societal constructs and contexts, ultimately knowing that for identities, "transformations occur in this in-between space, an unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundaries" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 1). Such transformation depends on encountering self and engaging the practices and constructs imposed by others. It is here where our limits and fears appear and we begin to understand "the knowledge that exposes your fears can also remove them" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p.553).

Investigating our identities asks for a questioning of self and practices through reflection. Self-examination will reveal some elements of our identity; however, as Smith (1999) reminds us, "identity is still linked to a profound *desire* for identity, and there is something neurotic, something of the nature of tail-chasing at work in the whole enterprise" (p. 461). We are on a constant search to know ourselves, but which self? In what context? Such reflection must proceed with caution, with the understanding of identity's many facets, knowing that a "true" self is non-existent. There is a danger of

retreating to limits of Britzman's idea of "thinkability." Instead, any search for identity or sense of self must be framed by recognizing that, "Learning means understanding that knowledge does not exhaust what is unknowable, that we act from not understanding. We may then become receptive to what has not been thought or understood without evacuating the uncertainty" (Britzman 2007, p. 9). This is how we re-discover "new descriptions" (Rorty, 1989, p. 29), ultimately "becoming awake to what sustains us is a form of realization of what it is we already are" (Smith, 1999, p. 466).

Our identities are constructed through social contexts, self-created boundaries and limits, shielding us from knowing who we are. Although we are constructed from the contexts in which we live, we can critically examine those contexts to know more about ourselves, particularly through conocimiento, alternate vocabularies and acceptance of uncertainty. By crossing boundaries and breaking them down, we examine and disrupt limits. We can know ourselves, but not in a static, confined way. Smith (1999) writes, "To find myself I have to lose myself" (p. 471). Accepting that our identities may shift in diverse locations, we are opened to possibilities of multiple descriptions (Rorty, 1989). Though our identities emerge from constructed social realities, we can know who we are if we are willing to engage limits and question our identities towards a deeper awareness of Maxine Greene's (1981) idea of "being in the world " (p. 288). This idea of "being in the world" challenges us to engage in the process of knowing ourselves, a process that most resist because it is a difficult and constant struggle. However, achieving a critical praxis demands we interrogate and cross boundaries reified by a dominant culture. It is through deep introspection and questioning that we might begin to know who we are.

Next Steps

It is through a close examination of teacher education programs and practices that I hope to locate the "crisis" moments and understand how they impact critical self-reflective practices in future teachers. For students immersed in the culture of power, it is not acceptable for teacher education programs to "do diversity" in one class, check the proverbial box and ignore critical self-reflection. I look towards the ongoing process of learning and of understanding Kumashiro's (2000) observation that, "an anti-oppressive teacher is not something that someone is. Rather it is something that someone is always becoming" (p. 15). While the idea of consistent and sustained interrogation of privilege within the culture of power seems unlikely, those of us committed to this endeavor must build communities to continue this work. We must move towards the hope envisioned by Freire, where we understand that "to transform the experience of educating into a matter of simple technique is to impoverish what is fundamentally human in this experience: namely its capacity to form the human person" (Freire, 1998, p. 39).

The remaining chapters of the dissertation focus on this process, this idea of "becoming" and forming the "human person" as it shapes future educators and as we work towards new ways of understanding the world and meaning-making. Chapter two explores my epistemological and methodological choices as I engage this work. Approaching this research through a feminist lens offers the opportunity to challenge the status quo of teacher education programs as well as disrupt the "traditional" research process itself. Therefore, my research and its representation are situated within the

methodological framework of the bricolage, understanding Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg's (2012) observation that:

> The critical researcher-as-bricoleur abandons the quest for some naïve concept of realism, focusing instead on the clarification of his or her position in the web of reality and the social locations of other researchers and the ways they shape the production and interpretation of knowledge (p. 21).

In my attempt to locate and interrogate privilege, I investigate self-reflective practices and "rupture" or "crisis" moments within educational settings by employing three approaches or methods:

- Overview and examination of selected teacher education/preparation programs (chapter 3);
- Narrative case study of student and teacher experience in one such program based on interviews and class assignments (chapter 4); and
- Critical, reflexive autoethnography of locating and examining my "crisis" moments within a framework of self-reflective practice (chapter 5)

Chapter 3 is an overview of selected teacher education/preparation programs and their curricula. This chapter critically examines the mission and curricula of these programs, relying on critical pedagogy as a significant framework. Some best practice examples are useful in informing my study and as steps for future action and possible best practices for other educators seeking to work for justice.

Delving more deeply, chapter four is a case study of a required undergraduate teacher education course at UNCG focused on the foundations of education. Student and teacher interviews examine their reflections on this course and its possible impact on

future teaching. Chapter five turns the critical lens on me as the scholar/researcher and investigates my positionality by representing my research through a critical autoethnography. The sixth and final chapter revisits the research questions posed at the beginning of the dissertation and looks towards the future of self-reflective practice, of these crisis moments within teacher education programs. What does this mean for teachers, both new and experienced and how can we maintain and tend to a developing conocimiento or conscientization?

Writing this dissertation is an act of resistance for me, to challenge the dominant culture, of which I am a member, and the notion of what an "effective" teacher education program should be to create and sustain schools as sites for social justice and hope, not deferred dreams and despair. What does transformative education really mean? What is a liberating education? How can we make this subtle shift? This is an ongoing process, one that is essential to future possibilities. I begin with these words from John Warren and Deanna Fassett (2002):

> And it is to that end that we look at how our research works to remake and rebuild the very oppressive structures we seek to undermine. We ask these questions because to realize our own participation in these systems of power only leaves us as researchers accountable for fostering a new language that serves possibility" (p. 588).

It is this new language of possibility I want to explore and understand as I move forward.

CHAPTER II

EPISTEMOLOGICAL CHOICES, METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

> Feminist researchers call attention to the partiality, fluidity, and situatedness of knowledge and seek new ways to approach knowledge building. Who can know, what can be known, and how we can construct the most authentic view of the social world are at the center of feminist concerns (Heese-Biber & Piatelli, 2007a, p. 144).

> All research, whether willing to admit it or not, carries the hopes and desires, imperatives and motivations of the researcher as an embodied and socially located being. These epistemological conditions within which research is conducted must be acknowledged up front and honestly if any legitimacy for the findings of that research can be claimed (Hickey, 2012, p. 172).

Introduction

Engaging this study required a nuanced and qualitative approach, one framed through a feminist lens. Situating my research from a qualitative perspective offered an opportunity to interrogate a "normalized" environment of schools, and this approach, writes Glesne (2006), "says something about your views on what qualifies as valuable knowledge and your perspective on the nature of reality" (p. 5). Because my interests lie in locating and interrogating privilege within teacher education programs, my research methodologies and design must reject any dominant notion of "valuable knowledge." I understand that through my approach, multiple meanings emerge. If, as Hesse-Biber (2007) writes, "feminist research disrupts traditional ways of knowing to create new

meaning," (p. 3), my epistemological choices, methodology and methods must focus on embracing such new meanings.

Feminist research must disrupt the normative representations of experience and offer possibilities for change. I hope my work disrupts the status quo in terms of how pre-service teachers, as representatives of the dominant culture, problematize their whiteness and privilege through a curricula designed to challenge and confront that dominant positionality. As a white person, I belong to the culture of power. However, I must use my insider status to problematize the education system, knowing, "I cannot resolve it, but I can certainly complicate it" (Khan, 2005, p. 203). It is by complicating positionalities of privilege where we can imagine possibilities for change and make, as Delpit asks, "our cultural lenses apparent." Anzaldúa's (2002) work inspires my own as she writes "internal work coupled with commitment to struggle for social transformation—changes your relationship to your body, and, in turn, to other bodies and to the world. And when that happens, you can change the world" (p. 574). Locating crisis moments in teacher education, thereby naming and interrogating whiteness, offers a chance to the possibility of movement towards a changed and hope for a just world.

In some ways, writing this dissertation is an act of resistance for me, working against the more "traditional" approaches to both research and its representation. This chapter begins with my epistemological choices and a post-formalist framework as I create the bricolage (Kincheloe and Berry, 2004). Using the bricolage as a methodological tool not only allows for a layered approach to my methods as I seek multiple perspectives, but also serves as a way to locate my study in a social context,

understanding that “the bricolage exists out of respect for the complexity of the lived world and the complications of power” (Kincheloe, Steinberg & McLaren, 2012, p. 21). These complexities and complications are further explored through specific methods, including program evaluation of select teacher education programs, a case study of a required teacher education course and an autoethnography, turning the critical lens on my privileged positionality and practice.

Epistemological Choices and Frameworks

Approaching this research inquiry through a feminist framework of critical self-reflection and post-formalism allows for a critical examination of teacher education curricula, problematizing privileged positionalities with the hope of positively impacting future classrooms. A critical focus on these epistemologies reveals my tendency to approach research with a poststructural lens, one that offers “sites of doubt” (Gannon & Davies, 2006, p. 97) as it relates to the production of knowledge. It is through mapping my epistemological choices and critical self-reflection that I understand the construction of knowledge as a fluid process, dependent upon the experiences and positionalities of those creating and re-creating it.

Rather than settle on one way of knowing, I am drawn to postructuralism’s emphasis on the re-imagination of language and discourse, "subject to constant revision and contestation to flux and flow" (Gannon & Davies, 2006, p. 82). Such fluidity requires a constant practice of self-reflexivity, one that encourages ambiguity and uncertainty. By constantly creating and re-creating knowledge, dominant ideologies and

binaries may be dismantled and re-imagined. This kind of research, according to Hesse-Biber and Piatelli (2007b) requires "attentiveness to how the structural, political, and cultural environments of the researcher, the participants, and the nature of the study affect the research process and product" (p. 496).

The construction of knowledge is a fluid process, one dependent upon the experiences and positionalities of those creating and re-creating it. Central to my approach is the belief that knowledge does not exist in a positivist framework. Western, white and privileged voices too often assume the role of knowledge-producer to maintain the status quo of oppressive educational systems and practices. Privileged positionalities and assumptions must be problematized and substituted with alternate ways of knowing and approaching research. It is here where there are possibilities for change. Exploring the self-reflective practices as well as curricular interventions in teacher education programs requires a focus on my own reflective practices, understanding how this practice influences my work and research. Indeed, I must be a "*thoughtfully present* participant in [my] analysis" (Leckenby and Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 282).

My research process must begin in pre-service teacher education programs, especially as they relate to issues of knowing self and interrogating privileged positionalities. Similar to Paulo Freire's idea of conscientization, Gloria Anzaldúa's notion of conocimiento demands an awareness, an awakening of consciousness. While not labeled as a "traditional" research methodology, Anzaldúa's focus on conocimiento and critical examination of self is integral to my research because it challenges the dominant order. As Anzaldúa (2002) writes, "Skeptical of reason and rationality,

conocimiento questions conventional knowledge's current categories, classifications, and contents" (p. 541). Questioning the "conventional" requires an ongoing process of critical self-reflection.

Essential to this process is self-reflexivity, requiring consistent examination and questioning of my positionality. As a white, heterosexual woman, I am at once visible and invisible both inside and outside the academy. However, my role in the dominant culture is particularly apparent when discussing education. Whether willingly or not, I must accept my membership in what Delpit (2006) calls the Culture of Power (p. 24). This means a constant process of naming and problematizing my whiteness. It is through this critical examination that I better understand the relationship between my self and my research, constantly questioning my privilege while simultaneously attempting to disrupt its oppressive dynamic and discourse. Awareness of my positionality as a member of the dominant culture reminds me of Delpit's (2006) charge, "it is those with the most power, those in the majority, who must take the greater responsibility for initiating the process" (p. 46). I understand as a white woman investigating identities of self and "other," I must also confront power and privilege associated with whiteness.

Whiteness, especially situated from a Western stance, both permeates and dominates global structures and contexts, thereby determining what is considered "normal" and therefore, "right." The constructed "normalcy" of whiteness discourages questioning (on the part of whites) for fear of disrupting privilege. Nowhere is this more apparent than in school curriculum, where the culture of power hopes to maintain its status quo of systemic oppression. While I cannot escape my privilege, even in my

approach to research, I must name it and engage it. Indeed, "engaging critically with dominant paradigms" (Weber, 2007, p. 672) begins the process of change.

This exercise of critical examination is ongoing, part of my "becoming space" (Derrida in Lather, 1991, p. 101) as a feminist researcher. Since my research interests focus on disruptive moments in teacher education and subsequent reflective practices, I must move across borders and boundaries determined to interrogate the status quo. However, because a white, Western culture draws and polices those boundaries, and writes school curricula, I must remain vigilant about my approach as I engage others. Failure to turn the lens on my positionality is not only disingenuous, but also reifies the very oppressive constructs I hope to dismantle. Indeed, "reflexivity under feminism is not only about investigating the power embedded in one's research but is also about doing research differently" (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). With a postmodern lens, I appreciate this process of research, understanding that as Alvermann (2000) writes, "Looking for middles, rather than beginnings and endings makes it possible to decenter key linkages and find new ones. . . " (p. 118).

This "middle" space is where I hope to move away from certainties and explore. It is in these uncertain and ambiguous spaces, free from the strict subject categorization and assessment tests, where we might encounter self-reflexivity on the acts of teaching and learning as well as possibilities for change. Indeed as Lather (1991) reminds us, " a politicized postmodern shifts the debate to a questioning of what it means to know and be known, how and why discourse works to legitimize and contest power, and the limitations of totalizing systems and fixed boundaries" (p. 85). Navigating this space

with a postmodern frame requires problematizing these “fixed boundaries” and discovering a new way. A teacher, similar to a feminist researcher, in naming an “other,” must confront and challenge elements of the self.

A Post-Formalist Approach

Ultimately, it is Kincheloe and Steinberg’s (1993) post-formalist framework that most resonates with my research as it problematizes any notion of a fixed reality and, as they write, “is always concerned with the expansion of self-awareness and consciousness, never certain of emancipation, definition, and perpetually reconceptualizing the system of meaning” (p. 298). This approach, informed by four features of post-formalism (etymology, pattern, process and contextualization), frames my epistemological choices. Using a post-formalist lens provides an important framework to my research and informed the choice of methods and analysis of data. Such a framework offers an opportunity to explore these systems of meaning, understanding Kincheloe’s (2003) observation that, “postformal thinkers/inquirers seek insight into how their own assumptions (as well of those of the individuals they research) came to be constructed” (p. 69).

Etymology

As researchers, educators and teachers, we do not exist separately from the world around us. Indeed, as Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) write, “We are never independent of the social and historical forces that surround us—we are all caught at a particular point in the web of reality” (p. 302). Such a web allows for a more fluid interpretation of self.

However, such a postmodern notion of reality clashes with the current operations of schools, dedicated to high-stakes testing and “right” answers. If, as Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) write, “social and educational knowledge is vulnerable to the ebb and flow of time and the changing concerns and emotional swings of different eras” (p. 302), how we make meaning must also be subject to this change. This is particularly important when examining teacher education curricula. If teachers do not have crisis opportunities to interrogate their own realities, how do they encounter students within their classrooms? Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) stress the need for “ a constant conversation with self” (p. 304), viewing education as a process, not a fixed set of steps or a prescribed rubric to follow.

These “constant conversations with self” could offer a sense of freedom to teachers, to know this is all a part of Freire’s notion of “becoming” (1998, p. 39). If “social forces shape our understanding of what constitutes knowledge” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1993, p. 303), then it is imperative to reflect and unpack those social forces, particularly in the lives of teachers. This idea of exploration of self, to the “origins of our consciousness” (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 303) remains at the center of my research. Pushing against formalist constructs of school and what it means to be a teacher allows for change. An interruptive course or curricula , as described by Kumashiro (2004), requires that rupture, to question who you are and how you encounter others. Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) write that “White people are sometimes shielded from forms of self-reflection that might reveal the origins of condescending views of “the other.” (p. 305). There is an awakening of sorts, an awareness that we are not immune to

social forces. How liberating to know that knowledge is not fixed, but rather subject to "flux and flow" (Gannon & Davies, 2006, p. 82), an in-between space.

Pattern

The second feature of post-formalism builds upon this understanding of knowledge as a fluid entity. Indeed, post-formal thinking teases out what Kincheloe and Steinberg refer to as the implicate order, the subtle patterns of the institutionalization of the dominant culture within the school system (1993, p. 306). Particular ways of knowing are privileged and are considered "normal" within school systems. Kevin Kumashiro (2004) writes, "We have learned that having certain kinds of knowledge matters in school and society, and it is hard to let go" (pp. 41-2). A frame of post-formal thinking interrogates those patterns, looking past the obvious to deconstruct systems. Developing a curricula of self-reflective practice should interrupt the explicate order and bring alternate meaning forward. As Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) write, "Post-formal teachers work to create situations that bring hidden assumptions to our attention and make the tacit visible" (p. 306). Disrupting the privileged nature of the dominant culture, perhaps teachers could better engage classrooms as spaces for freedom. As Kincheloe and Steinberg observe, "Understanding derived from the perspective of the excluded or the culturally different allows for an appreciation of the nature of justice, the invisibility of the process of oppression and a recognition of difference that highlights our own social construction as individuals" (1993, p. 308).

This recognition allows for a rupture of the certainty prescribed to schools, one not measured on a standardized test, limited by formalist and modernist viewpoints on

education. If pre-service teachers can resist their education "with its emphasis on bulletin board construction, behavioral objective writing, discussion skill development, and classroom management" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 309), perhaps they can move beyond the surface and find a deeper meaning. Indeed, as Kincheloe (1998) writes "Consciousness itself is spurred by difference in that we gain our first awareness of who we are when we gain a cognizance of our difference from another or another's ways." (p. 133). To study reflective practice through this disruptive curriculum or Kumashiro's (2002) observation of "crisis" (p.74) help pre-service teachers to become more culturally responsive through questioning and reflecting on their privilege. Shifting away from prescribed curriculum allows for this disruption, understanding that boundaries between self and "other" may become fluid. Naming and interrogating patterns allows for the deconstruction of these boundaries, recognizing "Human beings cannot be simply separated from the contexts that have produced them" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 310). The contexts must continuously be problematized, making as Gannon and Davies (2006) observe "the structures and practices of everyday life opened to scrutiny" (p. 82).

Process

Once patterns are exposed, post-formal thinking engages this scrutiny through process, a Freirean way of reading the world. This deep examination of the world demands further exploration into the implicate order. By applying a post-formalist lens to my study, I hoped to identify the areas of uncertainty and discomfort presented by process. Teaching should not be a formulaic process, one scored through a mandated rubric and evaluated on a scale of certainty. Instead, as Darder (2002) writes, it must be

"predicated on our willingness and ability to grapple with the complexity and ambiguity of the present" (p. 50). These complexities and ambiguities interrupt the dominant order of knowledge production and support Kincheloe and Steinberg's (1993) assertion that "post formal thinkers are not uncomfortable with ill-structured problems with ambiguous answers" (p. 311).

It is within this ambiguous space where teachers may blur the boundary between logic and emotion. Pre-service teachers must include emotion as part of their reflective process because it informs their perspectives and knowledge. To reunite the intellect and emotion is a challenge for individuals who have been socialized to believe that "feeling is designated as an inferior form of human consciousness. . ." (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 312). The ability to understand how emotion informs logic allows for a deeper sense of self-examination and reflection. This practice is crucial for teachers. Indeed, who we are is just as important as what we teach. Failure to explore how teachers encounter both self and "other" in the classroom leads to the "banking concept of education" (Freire, 1970, p. 53), one bereft of both imagination and questioning. How do we disrupt the notion of the "other"? How do we critically examine self and "other" in the context of a classroom? Self-reflection is crucial to awareness because, "In such a context, teaching and learning would be considered acts of meaning-making and subvert the technicist view of teaching as the mastering of a set of techniques" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p.301).

This sense of subversion demands a different approach to how we teach and make meaning. Rather than subscribe to the formalist way of learning, process requires our

emotions to be intimately linked to our education. It is the lack of emotion in classrooms that produces rote learning. Allowing emotion to permeate teacher consciousness provides space to "tap into a passion for knowing that motivates, extends, and leads them to a union with all that is to be known" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 312). Once again, teaching and learning form a process, an ongoing relationship. In self-reflective practice, teachers must explore emotion, their feelings, questioning themselves as part of becoming a teacher; indeed, as Kumashiro (2004) writes, "the process of troubling the foundations of 'becoming a teacher' can be similarly discomforting when we find ourselves departing from commonsensical discourses of what it means to prepare teachers to teach" (p. 42). This practice does not often "fit" into the conventional boxes encompassing curricula. Instead, Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) assert the need for emotion to "disorganize" these structures, as a way to "critically accommodate our perceptions of ourselves and the world around us" (p. 313).

Contextualization

Classrooms should be no different than other spaces of meaning making and understanding the world. However, they exist as sterile spaces, requiring conformity to a dominant culture's norms and knowledge. Post-formalism rejects the formulaic classroom, understanding the larger context. Indeed, the "contextualization of what we know is more important than content" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 314). Such assertions arouse suspicion from a culture of power focused solely on content delivery and regurgitation. However, teachers engaged in self-reflective practices may contradict assimilation and the dominant order. They cannot be measured or graded, instead

understanding what Kumashiro (2004) writes , "teacher education, like the rest of the academy, does not seem to acknowledge the partial nature of what it requires students to learn, and in consequence, often remains disconnected from the everyday realities of students" (p. 40). These practices could dismantle the structure of knowing and learning prescribed for students since the dominant culture "insidiously blocks our ability to critically accommodate. . . undermin[ing] our attempt to modify our assimilated understanding of ourselves and the world" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 316).

Ultimately, contextualization both addresses and exposes issues of power within the dominant culture. A crisis moment or moments within a teacher education program should initiate this exposure, in an act of questioning the contexts that attempt to define us. This is particularly important for teachers because, as Delgado (2001) writes, ". . . we rarely challenge our own preconceptions, privileges, and the standpoint from which we reason" (pp. 73-4). Privilege enables power within the classroom and without critical self-examination and questioning, the status quo remains. Through self-reflection, the post-formal thinker and teacher recognize the culture of power and attempts to dismantle it. As Kincheloe and Steinberg (1993) write, "Post-formal teachers realize that in school, power often silences the very people that education purports to empower" (p. 317). As long as these practices continue, schools will continue to produce students as marginalized products rather than valued, critical thinkers. Teachers must understand who they are and how they encounter others. By challenging the status quo and living in the realm of the possibility rather than the pre-determined, we are able to work towards a just and caring world.

By applying these elements of post-formalism to my research, I was able to approach a methodological framework and methods selection as elements of meaning-making on multiple levels. Just as I chose to study the crisis moments in teacher education, so too is this disruption reflected in my dissertation, questioning the traditional ways of knowing and representing research. Using the post-formalist lens gave me permission to exist in the ambiguous space, knowing that I would not always find one answer, but rather understand the complicated nature of all of the answers. Such diverse representation allows for possibilities of Gannon and Davies' (2006) notion of "thinking differently," (p. 97) thereby challenging oppressive systems and practices. I worked with methods as layers, to weave a tapestry of research, a bricolage positioned to contribute to the "social transformation" (Kincheloe and Berry, 2004, p. 15) of education.

The Bricolage

The bricolage allows for a nuanced and multilayered approach, one accepting of uncertainties and questioning of any one fixed reality. While this approach does offer the flexibility of incorporating multiple methods, the concept of bricolage allows for an interrogation of the research process itself. It remains an intricate and interconnected process as the bricolage demands constant critical self-reflection on the part of the researcher, ". . . uncovering the invisible artifacts of power and culture, and documenting the nature of their influence not only on their own scholarship but also on scholarship in general" (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 2). It is not enough to just examine pre-service teachers' curricula and practices; I must know and name my "self" as researcher and my relationship to this process.

As a feminist researcher, I accept there are no definitive answers within my research; indeed I may (and should) encounter additional questions. This rejection of certainty remains central to the process. As Kincheloe and Berry (2004) write:

> . . . the rationalistic and reductionist quest for order refuses in its arrogance to listen to the cacophony of lived experience, the coexistence of diverse meanings and interpretations. . . Much to the consternation of many, there exists no final, transhistorical, non-ideological meaning the bricoleurs strive to achieve (p. 5).

As an emerging bricoleur, experimenting with these different layers provides an important framework for my research interests. This process of meaning making requires a fluid approach, one without rigid research boundaries. Bricolage allows for a complexity of examining my methodology as well as my positionality as a researcher. I am comfortable with not having definitive answers and understand the need to be "comfortable with the unfinished, unresolved nature of the multidimensional, ever-changing constructions of reality they produce" (Kincheloe and Berry, 2004, pp. 89-90).

This unresolved nature of the bricolage has a significant impact on my research. Engaging this process allowed for a deep investigation of positionalities and practices, allowing me to be a "methodological negotiator" (Kincheloe, McLaren & Steinberg, 2012, p. 22) in examining teacher education programs, a specific course within a teacher education program and my own practices and beliefs. I chose to construct my research process with an emphasis on diverse perspectives and ways of knowing, creating a collage of sorts, one designed to represent and privilege meaning-making. Shirley Steinberg (2012) writes, "Bricolage does not draw upon diverse theoretical/methodological traditions simply for the sake of diversity. Rather, it uses the

different approaches to inform and critique each other" (pp. 184-5). These multiple ways of knowing are at once part of the process and the process itself, allowing for diverse realities to be revealed. Because bricolage is itself a disruptive methodological approach, it, as Kincheloe, McLaren and Steinberg (2012) observe, "becomes a failsafe way in which to ensure that the multiple reads create new dialogues and discourse and open possibilities" (p. 27).

Methods

To critically examine self-reflective practices and crisis moments within teacher education programs necessitated a layered approach. Within this section I will detail these layers of methods, including the following: program evaluation of selected teacher education programs, a case study of UNCG's ELC 381 course, based upon interviews of students and instructors from the course and, finally, a critical autoethnography examining my positionality as a white researcher and scholar engaged in this process. By employing a multiple method approach, I rely on triangulation (Glesne, 2006) as a way to validate my data drawn from diverse locations such as document analysis, interviews and self-examination. I begin this section by examining my positionality and its impact on the process and representation of this research.

Researcher Positionality

As a white researcher examining the reflective practices of others engaging privilege, I must remain vigilant in my own practice, constantly engaging and reflecting on process and my reaction to participant data. Barbara Applebaum (2010) writes "in

order to know, one must pay attention" (p. 41). Paying attention means naming my privilege, problematizing my positionality and assuming responsibility to not only study dominant culture, but also to disrupt it and de-center it. Within this work, I see myself as somewhat of an undercover operative because of my membership in the Culture of Power. As an insider, I have to remember that "it's one thing to make white privilege visible. It's quite another to make oneself accountable for privilege by choosing to collectively explore strategies for redistributing resources" (Bailey, 1999, p. 101). Being accountable means making myself subject to the "gaze" Delpit describes, critically engaging whiteness in my research, future teaching and my community. This is a continuous process, and I am reminded of Gloria Anzaldúa's (2001) words:

> Transformation does not happen unless we explore what threatens us as teachers and students; what we sweep under our desks; what we silence; what we're angry about; what causes us anxiety; what brings us into open conflict and disagreement, and what cultural prescriptions and cultural teachings we're rebelling against (p. 241).

I must be aware of my fears and limits and confront them, searching for new responses, remembering Thompson's (2003a) words, "we cannot rely on procedures and blueprints geared to what we know at present; we have to start by changing what is" (p. 20).

There is a danger in the study of privilege, of re-centering a dominant ideology. There is a responsibility of a teacher/researcher to name challenges in these areas, to look at it as a "question of engagement, critique and active examination of how our very talk about our subject continues to reify it" (Hytten and Warren, 2003, p. 88). In this examination, I often worry about my engagement with critical whiteness, thinking about

Patti Lather's (1991) question, "How do we explore our own reasons for doing the research without putting ourselves back at the center?" (p. 91). Of course, putting myself at the center, as a white person, causes me great worry. Who I am as a researcher means interrogating my positionality, but how do I ensure my work is not a "white redemption fantasy" (Roman in Thompson, 2003b, p. 17), located in the privileged realms of a dominant culture? I need to locate my work in the "in-between" space (Warren and Hytten, 2004) describe as well as remember "a different way of thinking and relating to others. . . and not depend on traditional categories or sameness" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 570). As an emerging scholar and teacher it is important for me to understand and realize that there must be a responsible praxis in this work, and it must frame both my scholarship and my personal journey.

Program Evaluation

To better understand the landscape of teacher preparation, I evaluated selected teacher education programs at colleges and universities across the United States. My research sample represents a broad overview of such programs as I focused on undergraduate programs, particularly teacher education for the elementary school level. Before providing a more detailed explanation of the sample for the evaluation, it is important to problematize the notion of what it means to "prepare" a teacher. Certain values and priorities are assumed; indeed, as Mills (1959) writes, "To formulate issues and troubles, we must ask what values are cherished yet threatened, and what values are cherished and supported by the characterizing trends of our period" (p. 11). In an age of No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top legislation, many programs reflect an

emphasis on subject and content knowledge, hoping to create teachers as "experts." While some programs purport a social justice framework, the majority of them focus on skill preparation.

Although I am suspect of "rankings" of any kind, I did reference the 2013 *U.S. News and World Report* rankings on the top-rated schools of education to identify half of my sample. I decided to study the top five programs from their evaluation because it does offer a common reference point and the rankings are seen as recognizing "quality" in programs and conceivably might attract future students. *U.S. News and World Report*'s ranking methodology depends on multiple factors, including a peer institution evaluation, superintendent evaluation, standardized test scores, student/faculty ratios and faculty research, among others. In addition to the *U.S. News* rankings, I also studied a report released by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ).

The NCTQ is an organization and self-proclaimed advocacy group focused on teacher quality. Released in the summer of 2013, their report examined the "quality" of over 1000 teacher preparation programs with the goal "to provide comprehensive guidance to prospective teachers across the country" (Rickenbrode and Walsh, 2013, p. 33). A more detailed discussion of this organization and its influence and impact follows in chapter three, but their evaluations of teacher education programs consist of a star ranking system, based on data collection and internally determined assessments. As a point of comparison, I also studied the top four programs in their rankings. In 2011, the NCTQ announced a partnership with *U.S. News* in an effort to share rankings and resources to aspiring teachers.

Along with the "ranked" programs, I selected programs specifically for their emphasis on education as a tool for social justice and their work in preparing future teachers with this lens. In my review, I apply elements of the post-formalist framework, remembering Kincheloe's (2005) words, "Teacher education provides little insight into the forces that shape identity and consciousness. Becoming educated, becoming a critical practitioner necessitates insight into the construction of selfhood and personal transformation" (p. 155).

Selected programs are:

From *U.S. News and World Report*
Michigan State University
University of Wisconsin, Madison
Vanderbilt University*
University of Georgia*
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

From NCTQ Report
Furman University
Lipscomb University
City University of New York, Hunter College

Selected for Social Justice focus:
University of California, Los Angeles
Montclair State University

**Also ranked in the NCTQ report on highly ranked teacher education programs*

For each of these programs, I reviewed websites, college/university catalogs and course syllabi, where available. My examination consisted of evaluating these resources as documents, understanding my responsibility to ". . . establish the meaning of the document and its contribution to the issues being explored" (Bowen, 2009, p. 33). I also

understood that these data are, what Hatch (2002) names “unobtrusive data,” document that “are powerful indicators of the value systems operating within institutions” (p. 117). Because these documents are also considered marketing tools for prospective students, I also followed Bowen’s guidance that “. . . documents can provide data on the context within which research participants operate. . . “ (p. 29). Specifically, I studied programs to understand required curricula for students studying to be teachers. Within the required curricula, I asked the following questions:

- Does the mission statement of the program identify social justice as part of the program?
- What kind of coursework is required? Do required courses include multicultural education or a diversity focus?
- Are there courses examining the foundations of education?
- Are there courses with opportunities for self-reflection?
- Are there courses or experiences that offer Kumashiro’s idea of crisis or resistance to the status quo?

Following this initial questioning, I coded mission statements as well as program requirements, creating, as Bowen (2009) writes, “category construction, based on the data’s characteristics, to uncover themes pertinent to a phenomenon” (p. 32). What emerged from my coding was a clearer understanding of the following within the selected teacher education programs:

- Mission (use of words such as just, justice, change, equality, critical pedagogy)
- Encounters with the idea of “the other” within required coursework
- Self-reflective practice within required coursework

Where available, I also examined course syllabi of required coursework, studying frameworks of the class, as well as assignments. In particular, I applied a critical constructivist framework to this process, understanding Kincheloe's (1997) assertion that, "A critical constructivist pedagogy of representation grapples with the relationship between the production of an image and the mode of its presentation to an audience" (p. 67). A critical examination of these programs and their curricula offers a broad overview of teacher education preparation, particularly within the larger social context of the standardization of education. Such standardization contributes to what Kumashiro (2002) describes as repetition of an oppressive system, observing that ultimately, "People often desire repetition and resist anti-oppressive change" (p. 69).

Narrative Case Study

The second layer of my research closely evaluates a required course with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's (UNCG) teacher education program, ELC 381, The Institution of Education. This course examines the foundations of education within a social justice framework focusing on, as the UNCG undergraduate bulletin describes, "School as a social institution concerned with transmission of ideological, moral, and cultural values; social reproduction and change; and competing philosophical visions of education with particular focus on democratic citizenship" (UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin, 2013-14). My study took place over the course of the 2013 spring semester and originally focused on two sections of this course, taught by doctoral

students Diane Smith[3] and Martha Price. Appendix A contains the spring 2013 syllabus from Martha Price's section.

Participant Selection and Data Collection

Although I recruited students from both of these sections, only four students from Martha Price's section consented to be a part of the study. These students were enrolled in ELC 381 as part of their teacher education requirement and identified as white students. I analyzed the syllabi for Martha's section as well as Diane's section, applying the critical lens used in the program evaluation. Over the course of the semester, I interviewed these students and had access to their weekly reading reflection assignments, located on the Blackboard system. I evaluated seven of these assignments with a focus on understanding their impressions of weekly readings and looking for possible crisis moments provoked by a particular reading or class discussion, remembering Bowen's (2009) words that, "the process of evaluating documents in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced and understanding developed" (pp. 33-34).

In addition, I interviewed the participants at three different points within the semester. My goal in this process was to, as Hatch (2002) writes, "capture participant perspectives" with questions designed to "get informants talking about their experiences and understandings" (p. 102). Initially, all four participants responded to my questions; however, only three participants answered subsequent questions. Interviews with the student participants took place over email during the course of the spring 2013 semester. The questions were designed to be open-

[3] Pseudonyms.

ended so that they could answer as much as they felt comfortable. Interview questions included:

- Tell me about who you are.
- Who do other people think you are?
- What made you decide to become a teacher?
- What makes a good teacher?
- What is the responsibility of a teacher?
- Tell me about your impressions of the 381 class.
- How do the readings make you feel? Class discussions?
- Tell me about the greatest challenge you face in this course.
- Do you think the readings/discussions are relevant to your development as a teacher? Why or why not?
- How would you define privilege?
- Do you have privilege?
- How has this course impacted you personally?
- What impact do you think this course will have on your teaching?
- Why do you think 381 is a part of the curriculum for teacher education?
- Some say education is necessary for social justice. What do you think?
- What should schools be?

Interviews were conducted via email and Google Drive because I was away from Greensboro and unable to interview participants in person. Initially, I was concerned about developing rapport with the participants in this study because our communication was solely via email. I understood that “rapport, like access, is something to be continually negotiated” (Glesne, 2006, p. 115). I received detailed answers from the participants and while I will never know what kind of answers I would have received in a face-to-face interview, I found this method did present some benefits. As McCoyd and Kerson (2005) describe, these electronic interactions offered “a sense of privacy or safety that allows greater disclosure of intimate and stigmatizing information” (p. 397). Along with a sense of anonymity, I discovered other advantages of email communication also

identified by McCoyd and Kerson (2005), including allowing participants to "complete the interview at their convenience, written text responses and less social pressure, few visual cues to create judgment" (pp. 396-7). As I continued in this process, I also wondered if students agreed to be a part of my study because of some of these advantages, particularly in terms of flexibility as well as "a computer in a personal environment. . . .offer[ing] both privacy and familiarity" (Mann and Stewart, 2000, p.79).

I also interviewed two instructors of ELC 381, both of whom had taught this course in previous semesters. These interviews were conducted over email and I contacted each instructor once. My rapport with each of them was strong; I know both of them through the doctoral program at UNCG. Martha and I were in a number of classes together and I met Diane through a mutual graduate student colleague and she and I have developed an ongoing friendship. Questions for the instructors focused on their positionalities and possible disruptive moments for their students, understanding Kumashiro's (2000) observation that such a focus has students "engage with relevant aspects of critical theory and extend its terms of analysis to their own lives, but then critique it for what it overlooks or for what it forecloses, what it says and makes possible as well as what it leaves unsaid and unthinkable" (p. 39).

Questions for the instructors were:

- Tell me about who you are.
- Who do other people think you are?
- How many times have you taught ELC 381?
- What is your impression of the course?
- What is the responsibility of a teacher, in your opinion? Both for you and for the future teachers in your classroom?

- Describe some of your “highlight” experiences in this course.
- Describe some of the challenges.
- Kevin Kumashiro writes about crisis moments in the pursuit of anti-oppressive education –describe to me where/when those happen for students in your classroom.
- Any particular reading/topic that provoked the most response?
- How do you design your assignments?
- What do you think students think of ELC 381?
- What is your overall impression of the course?
- How do you see questioning of self and positionality for your students?
- Do you think this process continues when it is not a required class or part of an assignment? Why or why not?
- What have I not asked you that you would like to tell me about?

My data analysis involved reviewing data immediately following each interview submission and, as the semester progressed, I was cognizant of the possible “theoretical saturation” (Glesne, 2006, p. 152) and re-visited questions prior to subsequent checkpoints with participants. Using participant responses, instructor responses and reflective reading assignments, I coded the data (Glesne, 2006), sorting for emergent themes.

The following themes emerged:

- Role of Teacher
    - as missionary
    - as role model
    - as caretaker
- “We all deserve to be treated like people”
- Got Privilege?
- Classroom as community
- Emerging Awareness

These themes will be explored in greater detail within chapter 4. As I interpreted the data collected, I remembered that "the ethnographic text is not a transparent account of reality but a product of the interaction and negotiation between researcher and researched" (Bettie, 2003, p. 22). Such interaction and negotiation informs a post positivist approach to research, one where meaning is not set, nor controlled by the researcher. Because "meaning-making" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) is central to my approach, I validated my process and data through Glesne's (2006) definition of triangulation, one relying on multiple methods of data collection (participant (students and instructors) interviews and document review of submitted assignments. This case study depends on a context through "thick descriptions, " with the goal of "providing understanding of direct lived experience instead of abstract generalizations" (Glesne, 2006, p. 27).

Remembering Glesne's (2006) observation that "research is a political act involving power, resources, policy and ethics" (p. 192), I must continuously engage my positionality and subjectivity as I represent my research of these participants. While self-reflexivity is very important as an approach to the focus on the students and teachers of ELC 381, there are responsibilities as a researcher in this situation. What I choose to represent is very political, particularly as it relates to my positionality and my study. In a study of locating and naming privileged positionalities, I think of Warren and Fassett's (2002) observation that,

> If we use scare quotes, does that make it alright? If we call attention to the construction, the normalization of that naming process, does it alleviate the problem? Are we off the hook now? Can we rest easy in the belief that we are the critical ones, that we are the ones who know better? (p. 581)

This idea of "knowing better" is one that must be constantly questioned. While I engaged this study as a process, one of meaning-making with others because it "is the meaning-making activities that shape action" (Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 167), such action must be informed by remembering that "I am implicated in this work, never neutral" (Warren, 2002, p. 587).

Critical Autoethnography

Understanding and acknowledging my implication in this work informs the third layer of my research, the critical autoethnography. In describing autoethnography, Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) write, "Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience" (p. 273). As a white scholar/researcher it is imperative that I not only examine and interrogate my positionality, but also reveal this struggle as it relates to my scholarship *and* my personal life. This approach offers alternate ways to represent research, a way to present, as Spry (2001) writes, "a provocative weave of story and theory" (p. 713). In my review of other studies of locating and confronting privilege with white students (McIntyre, Marx, Thompson, Hytten), a deep examination and interrogation of researcher positionality seemed absent. If I am to locate, name and disrupt privilege and whiteness in others, I must know and name my positionalities as a researcher, understanding Kincheloe's (2003) observation that, "researchers who do not understand themselves tend to misconstrue the pronouncements and feelings of others" (p. 69). I cannot be [a]part from this study without turning the critical lens on myself.

And while interrogating my privilege is a deeply personal process, locating my whiteness is also reflective of the larger, societal impact of whiteness and the dominant culture. As Mills (1959) writes, “It is the political task of the social scientist—as of any liberal educator—continually to translate personal troubles into public issues, and public issues into the terms of their human meaning for a variety of individuals” (p. 187). The personal is relevant in this study; it speaks to my positionality as a researcher and frames much of my approach to the study itself. My struggles and experiences are not unlike challenges facing others. Indeed, as Denzin (2003) observes, “The autoethnographer functions as a universal singular, a single instance of a more universal social experience” (p. 234).

There is a risk inherent in this kind of approach, leaving the work entirely in the personal and not connecting it to the larger, systemic issues of oppressive practices present in institutions, particularly schools. Although the autoethnography remains an interrogation of my positionality and privilege, it is not a confessional and should not remain in the realm of the personal. This personal interrogation revealed my role as an “actor” and relationship to larger social systems in what sociologist Anthony Giddens (1984) describes as the theory of structuration. He writes:

> Analysing [sp] the structuration of social systems means studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction (p. 25).

I am not isolated from social systems and structures, and, according to Giddens (1977), these systems “only exist as transactions between actors” (p. 134). Systems and

structures of oppression depend on the privileged practices of their members. As Bonilla-Silva (2006) observes, "Systems of privilege are defended by most of their beneficiaries in a variety of ways. . . most do so by following the normal customs and practices that help keep the system in place" (p. 132). Disrupting such systems depends not on my personal process, but the application of such an interrogation to avoid "abdicating responsibility for determining strategies to work against racism" (McIntyre, 1996, p. 69).

Essential to an effective autoethnography is researcher vulnerability. Sharing my personal struggles, while at the crux of such an approach, evoked feelings of trepidation. Ellis (2004) writes, "In autoethnography, we're usually writing about epiphanies in our lives and in doing so, we open ourselves up for criticisms about how we've lived" (pp. 33-4). While this remains a challenge of constructing the autoethnography, I must not avoid this interrogation of self and have the courage to engage such a confrontation. It is important to distinguish between what could be deemed a tell-all confession and the critical frame and rigor demanded of such a method. Behar (1996) writes, "Writing vulnerably takes as much skill, nuance and willingness to follow through on all the ramifications of a complicated idea as does writing invulnerably and distantly" (p. 13).

Perhaps my biggest fear was sharing experiences, feelings and actions that might make me look like a bad person. In many ways, it was a classic response to such close self-examination, one couched in the desire to be seen as a "good white" (Thompson, 2003a, p. 9). Constructing the autoethnography forced me to confront these fears and constantly check myself and my writing. Often, this created a very real challenge for me. Even with all of my work in this area, I had to continuously confront my limits and

resistance to such a critical examination. As Magnet (2006) writes, "Resistance work is possible only when we consider our own impulse to 'race to innocence' and acknowledge our contested places within these hierarchies" (p. 747). I also worried about re-centering whiteness in my efforts to name and dismantle it. However, the autoethnography offered the space to situate my experiences within a rigorous framework. I have a deeper understanding for Warren's (2002) observation that, "I realize that I have spent very little time reflecting on how I have been constituted in this research site—that my ethnographic Self is inexorably tied to the work I do" (p. 586).

For the dissertation, I created a series of vignettes, focusing on selected educational settings and moments where I encountered crisis as well as a disruption to my privileged positionality. To re-create these moments, I relied on personal memory, personal journals as well assignments from different classes during my doctoral study. And, while "personal memory is a marvelous and unique source of information for autoethnographers" there is a danger that "self-indulgent introspection is likely to produce a self-exposing story but not autoethnography" (Chang, 2007, p. 217 and p. 216). Therefore, I analyzed specific artifacts including an autobiographical film, reflection papers and end of term papers, all from my coursework at UNCG. Because the autoethnography comprises a part of my research, I approached this analysis in similar way, coding documents as well as personal memories recoded in journals, thereby "complement[ing] 'internal' data generated from researchers' memory with 'external' data from outside sources" (Chang, 2007, p. 217). Coded themes included fear, ignorance and avoidance, among others, to be analyzed and discussed in chapter five.

To guide my writing process, I consulted Richardson's (2000) five criteria for evaluating *Creative Analytical Practices (CAP) Ethnography*, including substantive contribution, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, impactfulness and expression of reality (pp.15-16). These criteria provided an important structure, ultimately revealing as Richardson (2001) writes "What we know about the world and what we know about ourselves are always intertwined, partial and historical" (p. 36). The complicated nature of autoethnography creates an excellent site for locating, representing and creating meaning.

Conclusion

If, as Hesse-Biber & Piatelli (2007a) write, "research is political work and knowledge building is aimed at empowerment, action, and ultimately, social transformation" (p. 151), I hope my research has some level of impact. Approaching the research with a feminist and portformalist lens informs the bricolage, allowing for a layered approach, one critically examining the crisis points for future teachers. How they are exposed to the "conscious interventions" (Maher and Thompson Tetreault, 1998, p. 142) is critical towards developing anti-oppressive educators, and ultimately, re-imagining the educational landscape.

CHAPTER III

PROGRAM EVALUATION

> The traditional pedagogy views the teacher as a neutral, objective, and benevolent agent of the state who is there to impart solely the basic information required for students to survive within capitalist America (Darder, 2002, pp. 134-5).

> As a fundamentalist hyper-capitalism has invaded . . . all of society (in the U.S. and probably globally), so too has higher education been transformed. Even culturally historical knowledge is now being commodified, patented, labeled as "wonderfully entrepreneurial," and sold for a profit (Canella and Lincoln, 2012, p. 110).

Introduction

As one layer of the bricolage, this chapter evaluates eight teacher education programs at universities across the United States. As described previously, these programs were selected based upon their rank as determined by the *U.S. News and World Report* and the National Council on Teacher Quality. I provide a brief overview of each of these programs and then critically examine themes gleaned from a review of program mission statements and curricula. This chapter re-visits the significance of critical pedagogy within teacher education programs and the importance of this pedagogy as a way to frame the purpose of education. Teacher preparation programs are also subject to the market forces dictating other areas of society; indeed, they seem to serve the needs of a more capitalistic society. Rather than existing at the heart of teacher education programs, such "revolutionary" approaches are discarded in favor of "experts" creating

and marketing lists of "quality" programs, deemed excellent. Such a notion of "quality" is measured in ways that remain suspect.

Teacher Preparation

To meet the increasingly demanding assessment culture and goals set by state and federal agencies, teacher education programs are subject to the pressures of outside market forces. Many teacher education programs are focused on these pressures, emphasizing subject-based learning and training teachers as subject "experts." From a 2004 Title II report from the Department of Education entitled, *Preparing, Training and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals*, teacher education programs must "increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom" (http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg20.html). This idea of highly qualified teachers is defined within a positivist framework determined by a preconceived notion of "academic achievement." According to the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), "teachers who make a positive difference in their students' learning" comprise the following characteristics:

- Strong general intelligence and verbal ability
- Strong content knowledge
- Knowledge of how to teach others in their content area
- An understanding of learners and their development
- Adaptive expertise that allows teachers to make judgments (2009, p. 1).

Such characteristics are not without merit; however, to not question these attributes within a dominant cultural framework is highly problematic. In 2010, 78% of

undergraduate students enrolled in teacher education programs and the same percentage of faculty teaching in these programs were white, (Ludwig, Kirshstein, Sidana, 2010, pp. 16 and 26). If close to 80% of students enrolled in public schools are children of color, how are teachers prepared to know their students if critical examination of their own assumptions and privilege are not prioritized within teacher preparation programs? Continued saturation of white teachers and faculty, without an infusion of critical pedagogy and practices, will do little to problematize an educational system framed by a dominant determinism. Indeed, as Nieto and McDonough (2011) write, ". . . to overlook implications of the overrepresentation of white teacher educators is, in and of itself, a blindness to whiteness" (p. 377). This blindness must be disrupted though a carefully cultivated awareness, one aimed at critically examining the status quo.

Critical Pedagogy, Revisited

Mainstream American culture is bereft of the awareness required of an engaged citizenry, lulled into what Cornel West (2004) calls ". . . a form of sleepwalking from womb to tomb" (p. 27). And while the Culture of Power appears immune and even indifferent to a critical questioning of its beliefs and practices, it is this very questioning that cause its own kind of rupture and may awaken some. However, for others, society remains jaded by the hypocrisy emanating from those who make the laws as well as control the market and media and instead of receiving a vision of hope or justice from these outlets, most Americans are overwhelmed by determinism and the fact that:

> our politicians have sacrificed their principles on the altar of special interests, our corporate leaders have sacrificed their integrity on the altar of profits; and our media watchdogs have sacrificed the voice of dissent on the altar of audience competition (West, 2004, p.28).

Individuals lose hope when systems idealized to be positive forces of change, reveal themselves to be shallow and without meaning. Rather than challenge this status quo, individuals retreat from community engagement to focus on special interests.

These individual interests are largely influenced by capitalism. Unfortunately, as Americans, we live in a culture of “me-firstism” (Lerner, 2006, p. 55), a society distracted by greed, materialism and competition. Such distractions lead to a cynicism and emptiness as well as fear of feeling insignificant and powerless to affect change. The ever-present market holds a major influence on our daily lives. In a world where “every single activity becomes a transaction” (de Graaf, Wann, Naylor, 2005, p. 114), material possessions become more important than people. Competition, rather than cooperation becomes a priority. As Americans, we are deemed successful based on our material wealth in essence because we “. . . are told to focus on the economic bottom line, to value money and power above all else, and to see [our]selves primarily as rational maximizers of [our] own self-interest” (Lerner, 2006, p.44). Our self-interests become the focus of our lives and the greater community loses its relevance. This reliance on materialism becomes “. . . a choice that disconnects us from community life and causes even more consumption and more disconnection” (de Graaf, Wann, Naylor, 2005, p. 71). We are left feeling empty and insignificant, powerless to transcend the reality of such a culture.

Problematizing the privilege of a market-driven, competitive environment disrupts power and control held by a select few. The pervasive sense of transactional relationships permeates our educational system as well, again reflecting the influence of capital markets. How we interact with the world is met with constant challenges and obstacles from a structured, dominant system, designed to maintain the status quo. Critical questioning becomes a constant challenge when, as Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg (1993) write,

> The way we make sense of the world around us is not as much a product of our own ability to assimilate information as it is the result of dominant ideologies or forces of power in the larger society. This dominant power insidiously blocks our ability to critically accommodate. . . . it undermines our attempt to modify our assimilated understandings of ourselves and the world (p. 316).

Resisting this "dominant power" becomes particularly significant in an educational system designed to promote what Donaldo Macedo (2006) labels a "pedagogy of big lies" (p. 12), as ways to "distort and falsify realities so as to benefit the interest of the power elite" (p. 34). While both teaching and learning should be recognized as political activities, schools strive to make education as apolitical as possible. However, an educational system mirroring a capitalistic societal structure of test scores as balance sheets and students as products is very much political and must be problematized.

Educational historian and former educational policymaker Diane Ravitch questions the obsessive testing culture. A former advocate for No Child Left Behind and mandated testing through her work with George W. Bush's Department of Education, Ravitch (2010) now believes otherwise, writing, "American education has a long history

of infatuation with fads and ill-conceived ideas. The current obsession with making our schools work like a business may be the worst of them, for it threatens to destroy public education" (p. 222). Critical examination of NCLB's impact evoked a crisis or rupture moment for Ravitch who now argues for a richer, more holistic curriculum, one that encourages critical thinking and questioning. She writes, "Without knowledge and understanding, one tends to become a passive spectator rather than an active participant in the great decisions of our time" (2010, p. 223).

Passionate teachers and students are essential to the interrogation and disruption of practices and structures designed to marginalize those outside of the dominant culture. Indeed, ". . . schools are significant sites of struggle and . . . teachers, who embrace an ethical responsibility as citizens and subjects of history, are in an ideal position to collectively fight for the reinvention of the world" (Darder, 2002, p. 31). This "reinvention of the world" begins with the teacher engaged in a pedagogy that transcends the current realities of worksheets and tests. Such standardized learning permits passivity and acceptance, not activism and change. Contrary to the stereotypical American democratic "ideals" in education, a lack of critical thinking is lethal to a true democracy. A populace of individuals educated in this environment with an emphasis on self-interest cannot overcome the many challenges facing our society. Such a commitment to critical pedagogy demands questioning of the status quo, supports the search for meaning and celebrates human connectedness. Henry Giroux (2010) observes, "Critical pedagogy is about offering a way of thinking beyond the seemingly natural or inevitable state of things, about challenging "common sense." It is a mode of intervention" (p. B15).

Supporting this holistic idea of education is Freire's resistance to the forces of determinism, instead focusing on the individual as unfinished. "Because the condition of becoming is the condition of being" (Freire, 1998, p. 39), individuals are not complete; we are all in a constant process and open to ideas and possibilities for the future. Such a way to be in the world confounds a dominant culture wanting to assign roles and scores to determine intelligence and success, to determine who we are. However, as Freire (1998) writes, "Education does not make us educable. It is our awareness of being unfinished that makes us educable" (p. 58). This awareness provides a freedom, a hope for possibilities not determined by benchmark data and "school of excellence" designations, rejecting the traditional mode of teaching, instead viewing classrooms as communities, of collectives of learning and teaching together. Critical pedagogy offers a space for honing critical thinking and questioning, a space to make meaning and to allow for the cohabitation of the intellect, heart and spirit. Ultimately, this approach ". . . recognized the legitimacy of a pedagogy that dares to subvert the mind/body split and allows us to be whole in the classroom" (hooks, 1994, p. 193).

As is discussed within the program evaluations, this notion seems unwelcome in most educational settings, as if one's own experiences and reflections do not "count" as much as rote memorization of facts. Diverse ways of knowing allow us to hone our critical thinking and questioning practices. Freire recognized the teacher's role as one of facilitator and guide in the collective creation of knowledge, resisting the "banking concept of education" where "education becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositer" (1970, p. 53). Teachers

must engage this process, to learn with their students and remember, as Felman (2001) observes, "knowledge is a shared experience . . . not located solely in a single authority figure; and that the classic dominate/subordinate binary as a form of instruction [is] totally outmoded" (p. 195). Knowledge and learning as a shared experience celebrates what teachers *and* students bring to the classroom. Critical pedagogy frames such interactions, allowing for a shared experience, one of community and collective meaning making, of "being *with* the world and *with* others" (Freire, 1997, p. 33).

National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ)

While I argue that critical pedagogy is an essential component of teacher education programs and must be the framework for classrooms and teacher education, "quality" and rankings are often determined otherwise. Here, I include a critical examination of the NCTQ because of its influence on the rankings of teacher education programs and its support for "quality" represents another example of the standardization and commodification of learning. An education advocacy group, the NCTQ works, according to their website, "for reforms in a broad range of teacher policies at the federal, state and local levels in order to increase the number of effective teachers"(www.nctq.eu). To that end, the organization serves as an information clearinghouse of sorts, colleting data on school systems, teacher quality and teacher education programs. While presented as an advocate for education, much of what the NCTQ represents reflects both the capitalistic and competitive nature of the market. Language used on their website and in published reports focus on the "consumer" findings on quality programs based on data collected by an internal research team.

In June of 2013, the NCTQ published a report, *Teacher Prep Review* that evaluated over 1000 teacher preparation programs within the United States. According to the report:

> As the product of eight years of development and 10 pilot studies, the standards applied here are derived from strong research, the practices of high performing nations and states, consensus views of experts, the demands of the Common Core State Standards (and other standard for college are career readiness) and occasionally, just common sense (Greenberg, McKee & Walsh, p. 1).

The irony of using "common sense" as a methodological framework aside, this review of teacher education remains problematic. All programs were evaluated through eighteen standards, with each program receiving a final rating on a scale of 1 to 4 stars. Standards are grouped into the following categories: selectivity of admission to teacher education programs, content preparation, professional skills and learning outcomes (Greenberg, McKee & Walsh, 2013, p. 8). A clear emphasis is placed on training pre-service teachers in area of content and classroom management. Of all the standards, only one seems to depart from the standardization; standard #13 is labeled as "equity," defined by the NCTQ as "the program ensures that teacher candidates experience schools that are successful serving students who have been traditionally underserved" (Greenberg, McKee & Walsh, 2013, p. 8). Defining equity in this way underscores a framework of a dominant status quo and privileges a definition of school equity as one where students encounter the "other" during fieldwork or other required coursework. Curiously, the equity standard was not applied in the majority of the teacher training program evaluations included in the 2013 report because of a "need both to standardize data on

student teaching placements submitted by programs in many different forms and formats" (Greenberg, McKee & Walsh, 2013 p. 55). Because the NCTQ cannot standardize equity within its positivist lens, issues of equity, diversity or any social justice framework are cast aside and deemed irrelevant for the larger evaluation of "quality" teacher education programs.

Also troubling in this report is language used to evaluate programs. This report relies on communicating quality through words and phrases found most commonly in the market place. These word choices and frameworks are deliberate and must be problematized. As Kincheloe (1997) writes

> Too rarely do we analyze the deep social assumptions and power relations embedded in everyday language. School in general and the study of research in particular fail to question the ways unexamined language shapes education, the research about it and the narrative format that transmits it to the reader." (p. 61)

The "narrative format" of this 2013 report reveals the transactional nature of such an evaluation within a larger capitalistic framework. Resembling a consumer guide, the report claims to be a necessary resource so that "consumers will finally have the information they need to act in an informed way" (Greenberg, McKee & Walsh, p. 7). Programs deemed of high quality receive a three or four star rating, while those not meeting expectations are indicated by an exclamation point in a yellow triangle, labeled "Consumer Alert!" Because certain standards or knowledge are privileged, this report reinforces Kumashiro's (2004) observation that, "We have learned that having certain kinds of knowledge matters in schools and society, and it is hard to let go" (pp. 41-42). For the purposes of NCTQ's evaluation, what "matters" is an emphasis on teacher

training as a “product”. Indeed, this report purports that “Good programs will thrive. Weak programs will either improve or wither. Market forces are indeed powerful, far more powerful than a myriad of policy attempts have proven to be in this regard” (Greenberg, McKee & Walsh, 2013, p. 7).

This explicit statement on the power of the market again reveals a devotion to the dominant culture’s status quo and a desire to influence teacher education programs, and by extension, schools and curricula. As the report states, “We are setting in place market forces that will spur underachieving programs to recognize their shortcomings and adopt methods used by the high scorers” (Greenberg, McKee & Walsh, p.4). The NCTQ views its work as one of influence, working to institutionalize the standardization and commodification of teacher preparation. To that end, they partnered with *U.S. News and World Report* to gain a larger audience and, in their words, because “None actively sought to engage the power of the marketplace as the engine for change” (Greenberg, McKee & Walsh, 2013, p. 57). This partnership further reinforces the consumer guide model. As the editor of *U.S. News and World Report* writes, this partnership:

> give[s] consumers a clear, factual way to evaluate important institutions. This information is useful to students who might be considering a career in teaching, and also to school districts looking to hire the best candidates. But it should also be of interest to parents of schoolchildren, and the policymakers charged with improving education, who want to know if we're getting the best trained teachers (Kelly, June 18, 2013).

The NCTQ has established itself as a “one-stop-shop” for information and recommendations regarding teacher education programs for prospective students, schools and policymakers. As the report states, “We’re betting on the consumer, and there’s

plenty of evidence within education and in other economic sectors to indicate that is a pretty good bet to make." (Greenberg, McKee & Walsh, 2013, p.57). Though still in its infancy, the work of the NCTQ has already impacted the landscape of teacher education programs. In fact, two of the programs evaluated in this chapter, Hunter College within the City University of New York and Lipscomb University, list their NCTQ rating on the landing page of their teacher education program website. It is a marketing tool for them. While it appears the NCTQ will continue to peddle its influence within teacher education programs specifically and education in general, it is imperative to maintain both a critical perspective and vigilance.

Program Evaluation

To evaluate the selected programs, I used Bowen's (2009) approach to document analysis, keeping in mind his advice that "documents should not be treated as necessarily precise, accurate, or complete recordings of events that have occurred." (p. 33). Understanding that these "documents" are websites and electronic documents, designed to market programs and recruit future students, I analyzed mission statements, curricula and course syllabi, where available. What follows is a brief overview of the selected undergraduate elementary education programs and then a critical examination of what these programs offer. My analysis reveals a disconnect between the mission of these programs with what is actually required and taught. What I discovered mirrors Ladson-Billing's (2011) observation:

> Majority of teachers are prepared in programs that include the following elements: general education or introductory courses, a major concentration (for secondary teachers) or a minor concentration (for elementary teachers), and a professional sequence that consists of foundation courses such as history, philosophy, sociology or psychology of education, teaching methods courses, and field experiences (that may include observations, practica and student teaching (p. 388).

Attempting to locate Kumashiro's crisis moments, or places to spark and nurture conscientization, yielded few results. Most of the programs studied did contain at least one course devoted to multicultural education or the foundations of education, though self-reflective practice was absent. Many programs with mission statements towards justice and schools as sites of struggle only have one curricular component designed to engage these issues. Indeed, as Kumashiro (2004) writes, "Because certain people asked certain questions and used certain frameworks to produce the answers. What counts as official knowledge in teacher education cannot help but be partial, regardless of how it is defined and by whom" (p.8).

Michigan State University

Ranked as the top teacher preparation program in the United States by *U.S. News and World Report*, Michigan State's approach incorporates a combination of a responsibility to content knowledge as well as the importance of developing self-reflective practices for future teachers. The program's mission statement reads, in part:

> . . . . prepares critically reflective and responsive teachers who continue to learn across their careers. These teachers are well prepared in their content areas and with the most recent research-based knowledge of instruction and curriculum. They work to improve schooling in a democratic society and build a more just, sustainable world. They strive to help all children and youth develop conceptual understandings and fluency in content, become active citizens, and make significant contributions to society (http://www.education.msu.edu/te/Elementary/Prospective-Students/Welcome.asp).

Perhaps the greatest strengths of the program are an emphasis on field-based work and required coursework designed to critically examine and question the foundations of education as an institution. There are also specialized programs for students interested in global and urban education issues. For example, the Urban Educators program has a decidedly more socially conscious framework with goals of the program to focus on diverse learners, schools and examining "structures of power privilege and poverty" (http://education.msu.edu/urbancohort/). This program works with urban school systems throughout Michigan.

Within required coursework, students enroll in "Reflections on Learning" as a precursor to "Human Diversity, Power and Opportunity in Social Institutions." Taken during the first year of the curricular sequence, the Human Diversity course appears to offer an opportunity to infuse elements of critical pedagogy within the study of education. From a sample 2010 course syllabus: "This course introduces prospective teachers to the ways in which social inequality affects schooling and schooling affects social inequality. . . . it is not a celebration of difference" (Andrews, p. 1). Along with a critical framework, this course also focuses on the practices of the future teachers by "questioning the way things are in our society and challenging our assumptions, biases, and stereotypes and

those of our colleagues" (Andrew, 2010, p. 1). This approach, more than any of the other programs evaluated for this dissertation represents an opportunity to question dominant and privileged positionalities within educational practices, perhaps offering opportunities for a rupture to white privilege. Indeed, this course seems to support Nieto and McDonough's (2011) assertion that, "Having opportunities and guidance to explore beliefs and values will assist all teachers in critiquing their own practice and may prompt critical consciousness" (p. 369). Although only one course within the larger curriculum, such an explicit exercise of critical questioning of both self and the status quo does reflect the mission of the program.

University of Wisconsin, Madison

The elementary education program at the University of Wisconsin, Madison Michigan places emphasis on the preparation of teachers to help students from all backgrounds achieve academically, while also understanding how their own beliefs and practices may impact their teaching. The overview of the program also names social justice as a component of education, and reads, in part:

> to prepare teachers who can foster high academic achievement in all students—particularly learners from diverse racial, cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic backgrounds and abilities. Teacher education students learn to recognize how their own background and experience shape their thinking and actions, to reflect on their practices, and to develop and adapt practices that serve the needs of their students.
>
> Through their preparation, students gain awareness of how schools reflect both the strengths and inequities of our increasingly multicultural society and become more committed to advancing social justice and equity through their classroom practice and community interactions. (http://pubs.wisc.edu/ug/education.Overview.ElemEd)

Although this overview implies a commitment to education as an endeavor towards social justice, the curriculum does not offer requirements aligned with this mission. Pre-service teachers are required to fulfill general education requirements of the university; included in this requirement is coursework in Ethnic Studies and Global Perspectives. Recommended courses for early childhood education include, Introduction to Social Policy and the Implications of Poverty on Early Childhood Education. The School of Education does have a diversity requirement for all students enrolled in teacher education and certification programs. According to the requirement as stated on the website,

> To help insure that program graduates are prepared to teach all students, at least one of the field-based experiences . . . . must be completed in a school that has demographic characteristics qualifying it as "culturally diverse." Diverse schools are designated by the school district as having numbers of children at or above the average percent of children in the district who are racially/ethnically diverse and/or who qualify for free/reduced lunch. (http://pubs.wisc.edu/ug/education_ProfEd_ElemEdProfSeq.htm)

While the diversity requirement is focused on the fieldwork requirement, it leaves a question as to where and how within the curriculum students are prepared to question their own beliefs and positionalities prior to working with students in communities. The program's commitment to engaging diversity must also be reflected in the curriculum or risks becoming an administrative hoop for students to jump without critically engaging this experience.

The University of Wisconsin at Madison is of particular interest to my study because of some of the current faculty within the curriculum and instruction department and their scholarship related to critical pedagogy and education for social justice. For

example, current faculty members include Gloria Ladson-Billings, Michael Apple and Carl Grant. And although their department does not have undergraduate majors, their doctoral program graduated Christine Sleeter and Kevin Kumashiro, two scholar/activists working towards anti-oppressive education within teacher education programs and public schools and significant influences on my work.

Vanderbilt University

Vanderbilt's elementary education program is housed within the Peabody College of Education and Human Development. One of the few private schools named in the top rankings of both *U.S. News* and the NCTQ report, the mission of Peabody College, according to the school's catalog is "to create knowledge, to prepare leaders, to support practitioners, and to engage with and strengthen communities at local, national, and international levels" (http://www.vanderbilt.edu/catalogs/undergrad/peabody.pdf). Similar to the University of Wisconsin, Madison, students are required to complete a liberal core requirement as part of their teaching degree. Issues of diversity, multiculturalism or social justice are noticeably absent from the program materials and the course catalog.

Required in the elementary curriculum, beyond the liberal core requirements, are courses within three areas: Foundations, Pedagogical courses and Field experiences. Within the Foundations requirement, one course, Society, the School, and the Teacher appears to be the only required course with a possible critical examination element. The catalog describes the course as one that "introduces the relationship between society's goals and those of the school. Studies the community setting and the school, the social,

political, and instructional organization of a school, and the roles and values of a teacher" (Peabody College catalog, 2013). And, while field experiences are required, there is no mention of how pre-service teachers are prepared for this experience, nor where they will teach. Pedagogical courses are focused on subject areas, including literacy and math instruction. Lack of published commitment to social justice issues and diverse classrooms remains troubling and suggests what Ladson-Billings (2011) writes ". . . . that issues of diversity and social justice are tangential to the enterprise" (p. 42).

University of Georgia

The Early Childhood Education program at the University of Georgia has a clear commitment to both multicultural education and to education as a tool for social justice. In 2010, the College of Education faculty adopted a school-wide mission statement on multicultural education and social justice. This statement applies not only to the instruction of future teachers, but also outlines specific goals for research, service and administration within the College of Education. In part, the statement reads:

> The College of Education is committed to multicultural education as a foundation for working towards a more just and equitable society. The scholarship, practice, and activism of critical multicultural education focuses on examining and transforming inequitable societal structures, policies, practices and values. As critical multicultural educators we work simultaneously to increase our own awareness of power, privilege, and positionality, as well as collaboratively with stakeholders to enact social change. As educational professionals we identify and challenge oppression and work for social justice, generally, and in local educational settings, specifically.

> The imperative for social change arises from inequity based on systems of social, historical, economic, and political structures that influence and are influenced by culture, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, language, religion, national origin, educational and socio-economic status, and community (ww.coe.uga.edu/diversity/about/mission).

Particularly powerful is the naming of the need to for self-awareness of "power, privilege and positionality" as well as the commitment to working for societal change. This commitment is also evident in two required courses for early child education pre-service teachers, "Investigating Critical and Contemporary Issues in Education" and "Exploring Sociocultural Perspectives on Diversity."

While these courses are required of pre-service teachers in the early childhood education program, a critical examination of course syllabi reveals a somewhat disjointed presentation of these issues. For example, "Investigating Critical and Contemporary Issues in Education" course is described, in part as examining "the teaching profession, the meaning of education and schooling in a diverse culture, and the moral and ethical responsibilities of teaching" (http://www.bulletin.uga.edu/CoursesHome). Because the syllabi were available publicly, I was able to compare sections. From my review of three syllabi from the fall of 2010, there is a clear distinction between course sections focused on diversity as a study of the "other" and those demanding critical examination of self within social and political contexts. This distinction is apparent through syllabus statements and assignments for students. One syllabus, within the course description states,

> Each of you come to this course with a cultural frame of reference, the ingredients of which include a kaleidoscope of characteristics . . . that has developed (and will continue to develop) from your experiences, practices, interactions, understandings, and impressions.
>
> We are attempting to make a difference at the level of practice. To do so, we will consider how your individual views on diversity influence what you do in the classroom, how your teaching practices create possibilities to further opportunities for disenfranchised groups, and finally how the issues discussed in class can expand your understanding of diversity and the possibilities for positive change (Woodruff syllabus, 2010, page 1).

Assignments for this course include readings by Lisa Delpit, discussion of critical pedagogy and the work of Paulo Freire and a written cultural self-reflection requiring self-reflection in relationship to the readings and class discussions.

In contrast to this approach are two other sections of the same course. Emphasis in these sections is on diversity as a study, something separate from the emerging teacher. Critical self-examination is left out. Select course objectives include:

- To cultivate an awareness of the complexities of education in the United States, drawing from personal experience and course material
- To examine the diverse roles, purposes and outcomes of education throughout the history of the American education system.
- To consider a variety of critical perspectives on education and schooling (Carr, 2010, p. 1).

And, from the other section:

- understand and be able to apply disciplinary knowledge from the humanities and social sciences to interpret the meanings of education and schooling in diverse and contemporary contexts.
- understand and be able to apply normative perspectives on education and schooling in contemporary contexts.

- understand the full significance of diversity in a democratic society and how that bears on instruction, school leadership, and governance.
- understand how philosophical and moral commitments affect the process of evaluation at all levels of schooling practice, leadership, and governance (Holmes, 2010, p. 1).

Also troubling is the lack of critical self-reflection in these sections, particularly within assigned work. For example, as assignment on an issue critique asks for a four to five page paper on an issue critique within education. Possible issues suggested included:

- Should homework be abolished or at least limited?
- Should teacher assigned grades be based on averaging grades including zeroes?
- Should class size be "small?"
- Should attendance be part of the grade?
- Should schools have uniforms or dress codes?
- Should students be allowed to complete high school with credit recovery?
- Should gifted and talented students be taught in separate programs?
- Are "pop quizzes" effective tools?
- Should alternative routes to teacher certification be encouraged?
- Should schools move to year round calendars?
- Does the school have a role in students' health (i.e., fitness, obesity, sex ed., etc.)?
- Should character education be a focus of public schools? (Holmes, 2010, p. 2))

The noticeable absence of assignments and objectives aligned with the mission statement of the College indicates a portrayal of these issues as wither studying the "other" or ignoring issues of diversity altogether.

Also required is "Exploring Sociocultural Perspectives on Diversity." Building on the previous requirement, this course focuses on the "Examination of the nature and function of culture, development of individual and group cultural identity, definitions and implications of diversity, and the influences of culture on learning, development, and

pedagogy" (http://www.bulletin.uga.edu/CoursesHome). As with the course listed above, sections of the course are presented quite differently. For example one course clearly anticipates and confronts possibilities of challenging discussions with this statement (outlined in **bold)** within the syllabus:

> PLEASE NOTE: This class provides a critical examination of multicultural issues in America. Content in this course may cause you to feel uncomfortable. This course requires a level of maturity among students as controversial issues related to racism, sexual orientation, white privilege, and religious diversity will occur. Courses in higher education are generally intended to focus on critical thinking and questioning your preconceived notions. Stated differently, courses in higher education are expected to expand your knowledge, which may or may not confirm your pre-existing ideas and beliefs (Watts, syllabus, 2010, p.2).

Other sections of the course appear to be presented in much more sanitized fashion, with an emphasis on developing awareness of different perspectives, not confronting issues of privilege within oneself. Indeed, the only examination of self and positionalities within the course objectives is avoiding discomfort when talking about issues: "Create a comfortable personal vocabulary for discussing difference" (Gemici and McFadden, 2010, p. 1). There is a danger in looking for "comfort" when discussing difference. As Dickar (2000) observes "Race-evasive discourses and discourses of reflection prevent the deep questioning of our assumptions and fears and ultimately protect white people from confronting their own racism and positions of power.. . . These discourses operate not so much to deny the meaning of race, but to displace uncomfortable feelings and anxieties" (p. 177).

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

The teacher education program at the University of Michigan proclaims itself dedicated to education as a force for social good. Their mission reads: "to prepare elementary and secondary teachers and school leaders who are capable of and committed to a powerful education for all students. We believe that public education is a vital element in a dynamic and just democracy" (www.soe.umich.edu). Within the elementary teacher preparation program, there are nine published ethical obligations of education and of future teachers. These ethical obligations emanated from a working group within Teaching Works, a research institute within the College of Education. The nine ethical obligations are listed on the elementary education website, along with definitions of the obligations and examples of how the obligations are represented in the program/curriculum. While I will not examine each in detail, I am particularly drawn to "difference and diversity." (As an interesting side note, the ethical obligation pertaining to power and authority is related to classroom management and behavior).

Nine Ethical Obligations:

- Care and Commitment
- Competence
- Equitable access
- Difference and diversity
- Capacity for Learning
- Personal Responsibility
- Power and Authority
- Respect
- Subject matter integrity

> The "difference and diversity" obligation is defined as the need to be self-aware of their own culture, habits, and ways of being, and the ways in which those factors may affect how others perceive or respond to them, and to learn to adjust those sensitively in tune with the context in which they work. Being a 'good person' is not enough to ethical teaching practice (http://www.soe.umich.edu/academics/bachelors_degree_programs/uete/uete_obligations/)

While this is an important statement within this framework, there is only one required course within the sequence that addresses these issues. Schooling in a Multicultural Society is a course designed to study the impact of difference on schools. From a 2005 common course syllabus, course objectives and assignments are focused on outward study, with a clear absence of critical self-reflection. Indeed, some of the language in the course objectives is particularly problematic, including an emphasis on morality within teaching. From the syllabus:

> This course assists the prospective teacher to understand the forces that shape the system of schooling in the U.S. and how those who govern, manage and teach in the schools work to promote education that is just, democratic, and morally centered.
>
> Our attention will be directed to the *reasons for* and the *ends of* teaching and learning. We will be giving special attention to how a nation dedicated to democracy and the equal and just treatment of all its members undertakes the education of its younger members. Thus in addition to the usual concerns about teaching subject matter effectively to children and youth, we will be concerned with the nature of their moral formation, their personal and social identity, their readiness for citizenship, and their sense of well-being and purpose (Fenstermacher, 2005, pp. 1-2).

Nowhere is there a focus on problematizing schools as institutions focused on the "moral and identity formation" of students, particularly students of color. The influence of a dominant, white culture must be questioned here, but is conspicuously absent. As

McIntyre (1997) writes, “It is unwise for us to theorize and reflect on the need to teach multicultural antiracist education if we ignore our own construction of what it means to be white” (pp. 148-9). It seems unlikely that students will critically examine their moral foundations and practices, particularly as they study to be teachers.

Furman University

Furman University’s approach to teacher education is similar to those of other institutions mentioned in this chapter. Beyond a departmental mission statement to “prepare teachers and administrators to be scholars and leaders who use effective pedagogy, reflect thoughtfully on the practice of teaching, and promote human dignity” (http://www2.furman.edu/academics/Education/Pages/default.aspx), the education department also clearly outlines their conceptual framework for the department and the preparation of future teachers. This framework describes the philosophy of the department and emphasizes the importance of both technology and diversity in schools:

> The teacher education program at Furman recognizes the continuing role that schools and teachers play in fostering acceptance and celebration of diversity, both individually and collectively. . . . . we believe that exposure to diversity will enable candidates to confront and, if necessary, modify their own attitudes toward different cultures (2012, p. 3).

Once again, diversity is viewed as something to be “accepted” or “exposed to,” indicating its separate nature from education, something on the outside to be studied, but not in partnership with learning about self. To that end, one course, taken in the student’s senior year is a requirement related to diversity. Called “Diverse School Cultures,” the catalog describes it as:

> Deepens understanding of diversity in elementary and middle school cultures. Classroom and school communities that embrace diversity studied through analysis of attributes and practices of successful educators. Instructional and management strategies that encourage learning, sensitivity and socialization developed through integrated clinical and field experiences. (http://www2.furman.edu/academics/catalog/Pages/default.aspx).

As with other universities, a commitment to diversity appears to be in name only, something to observe rather than critically examine and engage. This is one required course in a field of many. The diversity framework and lack of social justice orientation is staggering.

Lipscomb University

Lipscomb University is highly ranked in the NCTQ ratings for its teacher education program and markets their ranking to prospective students. Of all the schools analyzed in this study, Lipscomb is the only one with an overarching Christian framework, infused into all aspects of university life. Indeed, one sentence of the College mission is "What will never change, however, is our commitment to intentionally, courageously, and graciously obey God's will." (http://www.lipscomb.edu/about/mission) This distinction is an important one because of how it frames the teacher preparation program and its required coursework. The mission of the College of Education is "to serve and inspire students so that they master the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to become caring and competent educators in a diverse and technological society" (www.lipscomb.edu/education/undergraduate-programs). Heavily influenced by Christian ideas, much of the teacher education program is framed in a missionary context, one of "helping" others.

All teacher education students must have eighteen credits of bible courses and studies to be able to graduate from Lipscomb. The student teaching seminar counts towards this requirement as well. In a promotional video on the website, a current education professor believes her teaching and the formation of teachers is a part of the "mission of loving God and loving others" (http://www.lipscomb.edu/education/undergraduate-programs). The only required course in the sequence that engages issues of difference is Cultural Perspectives in Education, described as:

> This course is to develop an appreciation of the cultural differences in classrooms; a sensitivity to the needs of students and families living in poverty; and relationships with peers, teachers and students in schools. Significant time will be spent in school settings. Journal writing, readings and reflection papers will be assigned to develop reflective practitioners. The course may be taken during Maymester as a trip into a culturally diverse environment. This course offers Bible credit in the study of Micah and James as candidates articulate the meaning and application of social justice (2013-14 catalog, p. 170).

This course requires a trip to either Rockyford School, located on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, or to local schools in Lima, Peru. A sample syllabus for the Pine Ridge Reservation trip indicates one required reading, *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee* and required reflections before, during and after the trip. The glaring absence of any critical examination of such a course, one designed around encountering the "other" reveals an ideology of teacher as missionary. This is particularly problematic given the history of missionaries and their influence on schooling on first nation reservations and in so-called developing countries around the world. In an article on his students' recent trip to the Pine Ridge reservation, Coby Davis, an assistant professor of education, comments

"The goal of this trip is for students to open their eyes to diversity. . . and to introduce them to ways of dealing with diversity in the classroom" (www.lipcsomb.edu/news, 9/28/13). These culturally essentialist attitudes disguised within a cultural perspectives framework continue to promote the Culture of Power's view of the "other."

City University of New York, Hunter College

Also a highly ranked NCTQ teacher education program (displayed prominently on the School of Education homepage), Hunter College School of Education is

> dedicated to the preparation of deeply thoughtful, knowledgeable and highly effective teachers, administrators and counselors. Our commitment is to educating future professionals who will make a significant impact on the academic achievement, as well as the intellectual, social and emotional development of their students (http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/school-of-education).

Known as QUEST (Quality Urban Elementary School Teacher), this program prepares students to teach in grade 1-6 in urban school settings. While fieldwork is available to students throughout the QUEST program, absent from the curriculum is a course or courses with discussions of multiculturalism, diversity or study of self as a future teacher. In fact the required "Art of Effective Teaching" is a methods class, an

> introduction to the basic pedagogical practices of teaching, the connection between theory and practice as it relates to the role of teachers, instructional methods for teaching diverse student populations, effective classroom management practices, organizational strategies, motivation techniques and methods of assessment (http://catalog.hunter.cuny.edu/preview_program).

Other required courses are subject-focused, particularly in the areas of literacy and math for elementary students. Unfortunately, there remains a deep disconnect between a

mission statement to prepare "thoughtful, knowledgeable, and highly effective teachers" without a critical examination of self or questioning of educational systems and practices.

Teacher Education Programs as Sites for Social Justice

As a contrast to these "ranked" programs, I also include two teacher preparation programs that have a social justice focus, solidly framing their mission and activities, with students and in the community. There is radical scholarship occurring at these institutions, aimed at changing what is, interrogating the "commonsense" practices named by Kumashiro. Indeed these programs stimulate discussion and scholarship towards education for social justice. These programs offer examples of an approach to teacher education with clearly defined mission for social justice and connections to the community, embodying a Freirian vision of praxis. As Howard and Aleman (2008) write "Today's teachers should have the capacity to challenge students to question the world around them, including issues in their communities, topics in the nation, problems in the world, and problematizing ways to identify interventions for these occurrences" (p. 167).

Montclair State University

The teacher education program at Montclair State University is grounded in an idea that education is a tool for social justice. My inclusion of this program within the dissertation is, in large part, due to the scholarship of Bree Picower, an assistant professor of education that works with her students to interrogate privilege and power within teacher education. In her 2012 book, *Practice what you teach: social justice education in the classroom and in the streets*, Picower emphasizes the importance of teacher

activists in the formation of social justice educators. She writes, "Without teacher activists helping students negotiate such life choices, students will experience only the injustice of education without knowing the liberatory potential it holds" (p. 109).

This idea of "liberatory potential" is reflected in the mission and the coursework of the teacher education program. A cornerstone of Montclair State's program is their "Portrait of a Teacher." Among the twelve elements detailing a successful teacher, the following excerpt represents the program's commitment to academic excellence and social justice. These include:

- Understand the practice of culturally responsive teaching. They understand that children bring varied talents, strengths, and perspectives to learning; have skills for learning about the diverse students they teach; and use knowledge of students and their lives to design and carry out instruction that builds on students' individual and cultural strengths.
- Plan instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, families, communities, and curriculum goals and standards; and taking into account issues of class, gender, race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, age, and special needs in designing instruction.
- Understand critical thinking and problem solving, and create learning experiences that promote the development of students' critical thinking and problem solving skills and dispositions.
- Are reflective practitioners who continually inquire into the nature of teaching and learning, reflect on their own learning and professional practice, evaluate the effects of their choices and actions on others, and seek out opportunities to grow professionally.
- Build relationships with school colleagues, families, and agencies in the community to support students' learning and well-being, and work to foster an appreciation of diversity among students and colleagues (http://www.montclair.edu/media/montclairedu/cehs/documents/Portrait-of-a-teacher.pdf)

These priorities in the development of a teacher are also reflected throughout the required coursework in the curriculum. Courses include Pedagogy Perspectives on Early

Childhood and Elementary Education in a Democracy, Social and Cultural Context of Families and Communities and Integrating Elementary Curriculum and Assessment for Equity and Diversity. These courses examine the social, political and cultural contexts of education and views families and communities as partners is education. Within the Assessment course, students engage in self-reflection as they "investigate and discuss issues related to their teaching and learning experiences focusing on inclusion practices, assessment, classroom management, and culturally responsive teaching" (http://www.montclair.edu/media/montclairedu/cehs/documents/UG_K5_prof_seq.pdf). Additionally, the Center for Pedagogy at the University is dedicated to the study and practice of education as a collaborative endeavor. This work is framed within a critical framework, one with a focus on social justice:

> Our work is informed by the belief that public education is critical to creating and sustaining a political and social democracy. We believe that schools, universities, and communities must engage in simultaneous and collaborative renewal in order to make our vision of education for social justice a reality (http://www.montclair.edu/cehs/academics/centers-and-institutes/cop/about/)

Montclair State University's approach to teacher education combines the more "traditional" approach to teacher preparation within a framework of education for social justice, building critical communities for future teachers.

An example of this commitment to building critical communities is in Picower's involvement in the New York Collective of Radical Educators, co-editor of *Planning to Change the World: A plan book for social justice educators* and her facilitation of *Using their words*, a blog featuring contributions from her students on social justice education.

However, it is her work and research on Critical Inquiry Projects (CIP) that facilitates the transition for her students from the theoretical of their graduate studies to the practical application within urban classrooms. Picower (2007) describes the project as helping her former students realize that, "for morally responsible schools of education that are truly committed to developing socially just educators, our work is not done at their graduation" (p. 13).

Over the course of a fourteen month period, Picower facilitated group meetings of six of her former graduate students, meeting two hours every two to three weeks. These meetings offered space for new teachers to share their experiences in the "real world" as social justice educators. While the group did offer the space for sharing, Picower is clear that the goal of this group was to focus on "strategies for equity and social justice" (p. 13), knowing that "the support they provided each other served to remind them that they were not the only people who shared their perspectives on educational justice" (p. 6). Opportunities to work together towards a shared goal of social justice within education lead to shared resources for classroom projects and a community of colleagues committed to similar goals. Indeed, as Picower (2012) writes, "rather than buying into the nagging sense that they were crazy individuals who were alienated at their schools, they begin to understand that they were part of something bigger a professional movement of caring educators committed to similar goals of social justice education" (p. 62). Initial ruptures or crises identified in coursework are cultivated and focused on "real world" classrooms.

University of California, Los Angeles

While Center X at UCLA does not offer undergraduate programs, I chose to include it within this study because of its role in determining and building critical communities around social justice. Center X serves a model for other programs because of its commitment to Freire's (1998) idea of "communitarian praxis" (p.36), a shared vision for what education can be. Through partnerships with students, local schools, parents and faculty, the Center facilitates a critical community focused on transformation of public schools within the greater Los Angeles area. This approach does not privilege one group over another; in fact it is a collective endeavor. Founded in 1992, following the Los Angeles riots, the Center's mission statement states:

> Together, we work to transform public schooling to create a more just, equitable, and humane society. We believe that this work is an enduring feature of our democracy and that it occurs within and across multiple communities—of teachers, students, parents, community members, elected officials, researchers and others engaged in democratic life. Together, these communities transform public schooling through inquiry and change, by asking questions and solving problems, fueled by passionate resolve and persistent effort. (http://centerx.gseis.ucla.edu/our-community)

Center X oversees two graduate certificate programs, one for urban teaching and the other for principal development.

Because of its social justice focus, Center X partners with local communities and schools throughout Los Angeles to create a "hub" of scholarship and practice. In some ways, it represents a radical incubator of sorts, one drawing on the resources of the local community, faculty and students to engage issues of critical pedagogy. For example, Center X facilitates the parent project, an initiative aimed at parents and teachers working

in partnership to help students succeed. Faculty and students at Center X are also involved in curricular projects, ranging from math to geography to science. The mission and activities of Center X reflects a commitment to engaging the community as partners, not outsiders. Indeed, it is this commitment that leads to, as Darder (2002) writes, “the revolutionary practice of problem-posing education” (p. 102). This “revolutionary” commitment reflects critical pedagogy in action, one where schools and communities may be re-imagined as sites for social change and justice. The work of Center X is focused on these projects and partnerships to link university resources (students, faculty) to community resources (parents, teachers and local schools). Center X is fostering a community to sustain their work.

Of particular interest is the XChange (http://centerx.gseis.ucla.edu/xchange-repository), an online resource serving not only as a journal, but also as an interactive resource within Center X. This critical community is a virtual one, bringing together faculty, students and Center alumni to share ideas, strategies and struggles related to teaching and learning in the public schools. Sections called, “Teacher Workroom,” where current teachers write on issues impacting their classrooms and “Voices from the Field,” where students and teachers involved in Center X projects share their experiences and insights, help to form this community of teaching and learning. This online hub mirrors Freire’s (1998) idea of “teaching space,” one that “is a text that has to be constantly read, interpreted, written and re-written. In this sense, the more solidarity there is between teacher and student in the way this space is mutually used, the more possibilities for democratic learning will be opened up in school” (p. 89). This virtual

“teaching space” offers an alternate form of critical community, one where social justice educators may continue to sustain their practice.

Social Justice, Diversity and Self-Reflective Practice

Many of the programs analyzed in this chapter did claim, within their mission statements and program materials, some level of commitment to education as a tool for social justice, using words and phrases like, “just democracy,” “active citizens,” equitable society,” “just and sustainable world,” to name a few. However, within most programs studied, there remains a disconnect between those ambitious words and the realities of required curricula and classrooms. Most of what comprises teacher education programs is the curriculum of “commonsense” or repetition about the purpose of education and school, with coursework focused on subject knowledge and “professional practice” like classroom management. Indeed, education for social justice requires interrogating the status quo, resulting in crisis moments and spaces for reflection and growth.

Outside of the work of programs like Montclair State and Center X at UCLA, my evaluation indicates an effort on the part of some programs, like Michigan State and the University of Georgia to question the status quo and demand critical self-examination as an integral component of teacher education, though there is work to be done to sustain these efforts. However, other programs, such as Vanderbilt and Hunter College, as two examples, ignore these critical examinations within their teacher preparation programs, choosing instead to focus on what constitutes “effective” teaching. Unfortunately, without a social justice infusion into teacher education curricula, we are left with, as

Bartolomé (2004) observes, students "ever-more bound to their unquestioned ethnocentric ideologies" (p. 117).

Disrupting these ideologies should mean engaging diversity and multicultural issues throughout a teacher education curriculum. As my analysis reveals, too often these issues are seen solely as a study of the "other." Self-reflective practice is absent in many cases as white students look upon diverse learners and communities as different from the hegemonic classrooms of teacher education programs. Again, mission statements of these programs focus on working with diverse classrooms or diverse learners. However, rather than engaging this work in a critical way, it appears, as Ladson-Billings (2011) writes, "students take away the not-so-subtle message that issues of diversity, equity, and multiculturalism are not particularly important and they just have to endure these experiences because of state requirements" (p. 390). White pre-service teachers may "endure" these requirements for a semester or two, yet there is a deep failure to turn the critical lens on positionality and privilege within these environments. Indeed, as Nieto and McDonough (2011) write, "it is not enough for them to be able to identify patterns of whiteness; they must also learn to challenge these patterns" (p. 370).

Whether or not programs contain a "diversity" requirement, all programs evaluated require extensive fieldwork experiences for students. However, in the programs studied, too often this results in the notion of teacher-as-missionary (Lipscomb University, among others), where, as Chapman (2011) writes "the white student helps the unsuccessful person of color become successful" (p. 249). Coursework continues to support the belief in this "otherization" of the non-dominant culture. Without a critical

self-reflection and an interrogation of positionalities, pre-service teachers are not prepared to teach diverse student populations. Indeed, "no amount of external focus on diverse others can ameliorate the challenges that will occur if one does not also understand the impact that one's own life experiences have had on expressions of behavior, thought and belief" (Ishii-Jordan, 2011, p. 318).

Understanding and interrogating these behaviors, thoughts and beliefs must frame teacher education curricula. Such a process remains challenging, particularly because students are asked to write and reflect about their encounters with the "other," indicating non-white students and their families, not challenge their perceptions or experiences. Because whiteness dominates classrooms and curricula, white students must interrupt this sense of what is deemed "natural" or "normal," instead focusing on Kumashiro's (2000) directive: "In order not to reproduce normalcy, schools should engage students in the process of separating the normal from the self, significantly changing how they see themselves and who they are" (p. 45). We need to remember that if the majority of public school teachers are white, teacher education students are white and their faculty members are white, it is imperative to create these crisis moments, to interrupt the Culture of Power. Whether deliberate resistance or aloof indifference to this effort, "the unexamined life on the part of a white teacher is a danger to every student" (Howard, 2006, p. 127).

Critical self-reflection towards awareness, or conscientization can and should begin in teacher education programs through self-reflective assignments and critical questioning from faculty and fellow classmates. However, as reflected in the University

of Georgia program, even required courses, designed to interrogate self and confront issues of racism and power, shy away from the critical questioning of self. Programs focused on the study of self as a becoming teacher struggle with sustaining the work after class is finished. How can a crisis moment spark this ongoing process, this sense of understanding that, as Sleeter, Torres and Laughlin (2004) write, "Conscientization rarely is a onetime awakening, but rather it is a process with multiple avenues of insightful moments as well as difficult times of denial and pain. This process might be characterized by gradual as well as revolutionary changes at multiple levels ranging from alienation to liberation" (p.83). From the review of these select teacher education programs, there is much to be done to nurture and encourage these "revolutionary changes."

Conclusion

It is the essence of being human that supports an education that is liberating and inclusive of all of our experiences. Luis Huerta-Charles (2007) writes "It seems that the most revolutionary act in these times is to place the human being as the center of every politic and every action we take as a society" (p. 251). Indeed critical pedagogy is a dangerous endeavor; it cannot be controlled by dominant forces and centers the betterment of the world around the collective struggle for humanity. Co-creation of knowledge depends upon the development of self, combining critical intellect and emotion, supporting Freire's (2005) observation that "Whatever I know I know with my entire self: with my critical mind but also with my feelings, with my intuitions, with my emotions. . . I must never disregard them" (p. 54).

The program evaluation reveals that some of the more "highly ranked" programs do proclaim some sense of the purpose of education as one towards social justice, though many fail to realize it curricularly. While students are offered opportunities to engage with those different from them, they remain sheltered in their privileged positionalities. Teacher education programs would be better served to emphasize Freire's idea of the "entire self" as a way to question the status quo, examining long-held beliefs and practices. The task ahead is daunting, as Nieto and McDonough (2011) write, "It is humbling to realize that realistic and comprehensive change may take more than changing individual courses and programs; indeed it will probably take an overhaul not only of teacher education but also of the priorities and goals of our nation" (p. 380).

Such an overhaul will be difficult, particularly given our country's obsession with testing and other "measurable outcomes" not only for K-12 students, but also for their teachers. This push towards outcomes is evident in curricula offered to future teachers (subject content and classroom management) as well as outside evaluators, like the NCTQ, who determine "quality" of how future teachers are prepared. In our cultural obsession with measurement and quantitative data crunching, we lose sight of what education should be. Freire (1998) writes, "the freedom of commerce cannot be ethically higher than the freedom to be human" (p. 116). Future teachers and their students, deserve a curricula within a critical framework for justice, one focused on confronting the dominant culture and problematizing its systems and practices, allowing for the ruptures or crisis moments to emerge. Without this framework, the "sleepwalking" continues and opportunities for ruptures and critical questioning vanish.

CHAPTER IV

ELC 381

> The consequences of our actions and choices as white educators matter more significantly than our intentions (Hytten and Adkins, 2001, p. 433)

> Rational detachment is impossible: students' identities, experiences, privileges, investments and so forth always influence how they think and perceive, and what they know and choose not to know (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 76).

Introduction

Following the review of selected teacher education programs, the second layer of the bricolage focuses on ELC 381, a required foundations course for students in the elementary education program at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro (UNCG). Of the required courses in the curriculum, ELC 381 is the only one designed to study the foundations of education and to develop a critical lens to examine positionalities of themselves as future teachers. This course explores diverse issues as a means to frame education within a critical framework towards social justice. Although this course is designed to, as Marx (2006) writes "send the message that the dominant white perspective is not the neutral, normal state of things" (p. 158), this case study reveals a detachment from white privilege on the part of the student participants. While they can identify systemic racism and oppression, whiteness is visibly absent from their critical examinations.

This chapter explores this detachment from their positionalities, along with their experiences in the class. Through interviews with students and critical analysis of their reflective reading assignments, I present my findings within the following categories:

- Role of Teacher
    - as missionary
    - as role model
    - as caretaker
- "We all deserve to be treated like people"
- Got Privilege?
- Classroom as community
- Emerging Awareness

Further study of these categories indicates students who do benefit from exposure to a diverse range of social and political issues and their impact on education and schools. However, many dominant culture practices and ideas of teacher roles and responsibilities remained intact, seemingly immune to the attempted rupture. Also relevant to this study is the interview of two ELC 381 instructors and learning from their experiences and impressions of the course.

The Study

Because I am interested in the crisis moments in teacher education programs as well as locating whiteness, I approached this case study in a couple of ways. My findings are based upon document review of syllabi from two ELC 381 sections (spring 2013), interviews with two ELC 381 instructors, interviews with four students enrolled in the

course and an analysis of their reading reflection assignments. I am mindful of my positionality as a white researcher as I interpret and represent data from a study of white students, situated in a context of white privilege. Remembering Warren and Fassett's (2002) words that "I am manipulating their words and their bodies in order to make my ethnographic point. This is not to erase the ways those white students actively created their own privilege in these classrooms, but rather to insist that I am implicated in that production" (p. 587).

ELC 381 is an opportunity within the teacher education curriculum to critically engage issues impacting education. From the course syllabus:

> We will explore not only the larger societal factors that contribute to the climate of schools but also our own values, beliefs, and biases. This will help us better understand what we, as well as our students, bring to the classroom. Essentially, this class is an opportunity to reflect critically on the profession of teaching and the institution of education. . . . . Throughout the course we will discuss topics that address issues of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and religion. At times this may make some students uncomfortable. That is okay. I hope that each of you will push yourselves (Price, 2013, p. 1).

Reflective in nature, this is the course within the curriculum that might offer possibilities of crisis for students as they engage with difference and interrogate self. These opportunities can be sites for growth, as Kumashiro writes, (2008) "Teachers need to come to view discomfort as a part of learning that is not only unavoidable, but also potentially productive" (p. 240). Martha Price[§] shared her impression of the course as one that "interrupts the 'methods' types of approaches to educating pre-service teachers."

[§] ELC 381 instructor names have been changed.

Although I solicited all of the ELC 381 sections for student participation in this study, only four chose to participate, all from Price's section.

My interactions with the participants were through email and evaluation of their reading reflection assignments, available on the BlackBoard learning system through UNCG. While I have already established that electronic communication did have advantages within this study and provided reliable data, there were challenges. For example, the ability to probe for more "explanation, clarification, description and evaluation" (Glesne, 2006, p. 96) was limited in electronic communication. While I did ask more probing questions, it was not as immediate as an in-person interaction. Indeed, for the participants, I think it was easier to leave questions blank without the interviewer sitting in their space, pushing them to answer questions. One participant provided only brief and cursory answers to my first set of questions, while another left questions blank on the third and final list of questions. I will address those unanswered questions at the end of the chapter.

The Student Participants

The four student[**] participants in this study were enrolled in ELC 381 in the spring 2013 semester. These four students are white; this is an important distinction not only in terms of locating crisis and interrogating whiteness, but also in how they chose to describe themselves to me. My two questions related to identity were: Tell me about who you are and who do other people think you are?

[**] Participant names have been changed.

- Kelsey: After indicating her hometown, she described herself in physical terms "average height, a bit pudgy and have brown hair and green eyes." She also mentions hobbies "I enjoy singing, dancing anything artistic, animals and making people laugh." She believes others see her either as "outgoing, hysterical, obnoxious individual" to "anti-social, awkward and shy."
- Sarah: Sarah had the exact same answer for both of the questions. "I am a white female, age 20 with brown hair and blue eyes." Sarah chose to respond to only one prompt during the study, answering questions with one sentence or just a couple of words. Her reflective reading assignments provided more insight into her experiences with the class.
- Carol: Carol described herself as a transfer student and an active volunteer at a local elementary school. She shared her home city and that she loves babysitting. As to how others would describe her, "Other people think I'm bright and very caring and that's because I am. I'm a good student and am known to be polite and respecting of others."
- Jane: Jane provided close to half a page single-spaced of who she thinks she is. She is 26 years old. She mentions her mother as an influence on her to become a teacher. She also mentions her boyfriend, his family and how they are nice to her. She indicates "I am very insecure. I know it's from an upbringing not so good for a child." As for others' impressions "too talkative, loyal, impatient, smart, funny, sarcastic, silly insecure, determined, argumentative, weak, strong, pretty."

I include these descriptions here because it represents a dominant culture where whiteness is invisible or "normal" to them. They don't see themselves as different. Indeed, they chose to "step outside of the collective white identity and define themselves individually" (McIntyre, 1997, p. 102). Only Sarah identified herself as white in response to this question; the others used adjectives and descriptors to tell me who they are. This reflects Mahoney's (1995) observation that "Because the dominant norms of whiteness are not visible to them, whites are free to see themselves as 'individuals' rather than as members of a culture. Individualism in turn becomes part of white resistance to perceiving whiteness and indeed to being placed in the category 'white' at all" (p. 331).

Invisibility of Whiteness

Because whiteness is seen as "normalized," it is often not named or identified. We must pay attention to this assumption and problematize it. In much of the data I gathered, through both interviews and document analysis, the participants rarely spoke about being white or about how their whiteness might impact others. As Hytten and Adkins (2002) write, "We position our whiteness as the natural or normal state, synonymous with humanness" (p. 438). While there is an absence of "naming" whiteness, it frames all of their interactions and reflections, insignificant to them and how they view the world. As members of the Culture of Power, they do not have to think about or engage race; people who look like them are everywhere. In analyzing and interpreting the interview data and reading reflections, I often thought of whiteness as the proverbial elephant in the room, it is there, but no one will identify it nor engage it. Indeed, as Sleeter (1996) writes "white silence about white racism is a silence that roars,

not only from the white pre-service students but also from white people in general" (p. 147). This "roaring silence" is palpable and influences the many themes to emerge from this research.

Teacher as Missionary

All participants viewed the role of teacher as an important and significant influence in the lives of children. Central to this identity is this idea of a teacher as a "helper," reflecting Hytten and Adkins' (2001) observation that, "future teachers concepts of themselves as powerful social agents in education" (p. 436). This idea of "social agent" informs the role of teacher as missionary, a student that frames her role as one of a privileged helper to the "other." Influencing this role is a belief that a teacher is responsible for shaping the moral lives of students. Kelsey believed her responsibility as a teacher was to serve as a guide towards a better moral path: "I just want to be someone who goes into work everyday and tries to make a difference in someone's life." Of a teacher's role she wrote "someone who truly cares for their students and wants to not only teach them curriculum material, but teaches the students how to be good people." When I asked what she meant by a good person, she responded "someone who knows what is morally right."

This idea of a teacher as a moral guide for students is a complicated one, particularly as we examine the positionality of a white teacher. It holds the possibility to frame the student-teacher interaction as one with the "good" and "moral" white teacher helping the poor and underserved "other." Indeed, Kelsey also believes a good teacher to be "a guide, a light in the dark." Such a perspective indicates a moral superiority of sorts,

of what Marx (2006) calls the "teacher as savior mentality" (p. 74). Even Kelsey's use of the words "light in the dark," evokes images of the enlightened teacher reaching out to illuminate the supposed ignorant lives of those in the dark. Also informing this image are the religious overtones to this language. While Kelsey focused on moral righteousness and being "good," Jane described teaching as "a divine profession." Jane used the word divine in other contexts as well: "This course is a divine part of the curriculum for teacher education" and "We have the divine privilege to be teachers; to have this as our profession." The danger of words like "good person," "morally right," and "divine" is a metanarrative where, as Marx (2006) writes "the construct of the helper necessitates that that the person helped is constructed as needy, dependent and incapable of achieving on his/her own" (p. 72). Situating students in this role of "needy, dependent and incapable" posits teachers as lauded individuals and removes accountability.

Teacher as Role Model (Marx, 2006)

Similar to the teacher as missionary is the perception of teacher as role model. For these participants, a teacher is a person for students to look up to, someone to trust and someone to shepherd them to academic and personal achievement. This vision of a teacher reflects McIntyre's (1997) observation that such a vision focuses on "values, attitudes, expectations, 'loving kids' and creating safe spaces where students could feel protected from the outside world" (p. 121). Participant responses also mirrored this observation. Carol described a teacher as "someone who doesn't give up on students" and Sarah agreed, writing, "A good teacher works hard to better their students in every way that it is possible." Kelsey also expressed lofty goals as a future teacher, "I believe a

teacher creates a good person when he/she inspires students to want to make a positive change in our world." This idea of "creating a good person" assigns a decidedly moral marker to this statement, reflecting her teacher as missionary beliefs. This vision of self is not problematic from their viewpoint because they see the "inevitability of seeing themselves constructed as role models" (Marx, 2006, p. 68). From the perspective of the participants, teachers offer support and encouragement, a continued validation of their role model status.

However, this altruistic view of a teacher as the students' cheerleader and role model again places the teacher as the "all-knowing" expert, molding students in her image. For example, Jane understands her role as a teacher as one where "as teachers we are expected to know what is best for our students. We are the authority figures and they are our subordinates." With this clear delineation of authority, Jane sees her responsibility "to lead by example. We get to instill knowledge, we get to set examples, we get to nurture minds and we get to encourage greatness." Sarah's observations are similar to Jane's perspective as she believes that a teacher has the responsibility to "care and build character" in her students. And while the participants model Hytten and Adkins's (2001) idea of "sufficiently good intentions," critical reflection on these intentions is absent. Because they enjoy kids or have had positive volunteering experience, they feel as if they would make excellent role models. There is no critical examination of self and problematizing the very idea of serving as a role model. Without this critical lens, the dominant culture norms and expectations inform this positionality.

Indeed, this sense of self-satisfaction feeds the idea of teachers as those who will inspire students, to look beyond current circumstances and make a difference. For example, in a reading reflection assignment related to a critical examination of media influence, specifically Disney films, Carol acknowledged that one of her friends believed *The Little Mermaid* to be harmful to her daughter because of a literal loss of voice in exchange for marriage. She wrote, "It's weird to process that and realize, Oh gosh, they're right in a way." While there appears to be a hint of awareness to this new perspective, she remains in support of the idea of dreams coming true, writing, "We all want fairy tale endings and we want our students to follow and believe in their dreams. We should be searching for stories to illustrate how real people in history chased after their dreams and achieved them." Although this appears to be yet another example of teacher "good intentions," there is a continued lack of critical perspective on these intentions, understanding the influences of the dominant culture.

Teacher as Caretaker

All of the participants saw schools as a safe space for children, with teachers as their caretakers. Kelsey commented that "schools should be a safe haven for children." Sarah concurred, using identical language to Kelsey, that it was important to "make school a save-haven." Participant comments portrayed teachers as both missionaries and trustworthy role models; the third "role" revealed through my research is the role of teachers as caretakers. Once again, the participants focus on their specific actions and responsibilities for helping students, inspiring students and caring for students. Indeed, Carol commented in one of her reflective assignments that "the teachers I didn't like were

the ones who didn't show me that they cared. I could tell when a teacher really loved their job and really loved their students." Such an observation emphasizes this idea of a loving relationship between teacher and students, reinforcing the idea of a teacher as a caretaker.

Within some of the language used by participants, this role of caretaker assumed character traits of a parent, particularly a stereotype of a motherly figure. For Jane, a teacher represents a nurturer, someone who loves her students: "I find it important to have dedicated and loving teachers who can teach the curriculum well, but who can also teach children lessons they will take with them outside the classroom. That is what I want to do for those children." Jane continuously mentioned motherhood and teaching in her comments on education, equating raising her own children to teaching children in a classroom. For example: "I want the children I raise and the children I teach to know they can amount to great things" and "if I am able to allow my own children and the students I teach to know they can amount to great things in their life." Absent from their comments and reflections are any comments on who their students might be and what they might bring to the classroom. Kumashiro (2012) writes "White women teachers even today symbolize the goal of public schooling to assimilate difference, all couched in the image of nurturing and care"(p. 13). Teachers desiring care and concern for their students is not problematic in and of itself; however, when this idea remains informed by privileged positionalities of white teachers, we must continue to interrogate those assumptions.

Describing these roles (missionary, role model, caretaker) provides an important perspective as to how these participants view themselves as future teachers. Their focus on self is not a critical one, instead ascribing admiration to the roles of teachers as helpers and guides. However, this admiration supports privileged positionalities, particularly as participants think about future students, or as “the other” in relationship to their elevated roles. Hytten and Adkins (2001) write, “when whiteness remains invisible, all of our efforts to support the achievement of minority students are focused on what we can do for “them” and we ignore what we, as white teaches need to do ourselves” (p. 436). This stance remains problematic and serves to maintain a deficit view of future students, and ultimately, as Picower (2012) writes, “places the blame of educational failure on communities of Color rather than on the institutions that are inequitably serving them” (p. 41). Continued analysis reveals their encounters with difference, privilege and their emerging awareness.

“We all deserve to be treated like people”

The readings and discussions within ELC 381 cover a wide range of social and political issues impacting students, teachers and education in general. For the participants in this study, they had weekly readings with required written reflections. Their instructor, Martha Price said a major goal of the course is requiring students to engage the material as a way to “practice having opinions but having to contextualize them within the larger scope of schools, politics, and the ethical implications for the choices, statements and opinions they make.” Indeed, this approach, according to Sarah, “helped me become aware of the extent of what the students go through.” For other

students, the course offered them opportunities to engage and comment on difference. This engagement is always separate from participants' whiteness; they do not name or problematize it in connection with difference. For example, Carol framed her impressions of the material by reminding herself of her role as a future educator. She writes "we need to teach our children that the stereotypes aren't always correct and shouldn't dictate our opinions of other people" and that "we know how important it is to encourage students and other people in our lives to harness their talents and be proud of their differences."

While Carol focused on celebrating difference, Kelsey expressed the importance of equality of people "Homosexual, heterosexual, black, white, polka-dotted or striped, a person is a person and deserves to be treated as one." Her belief that "a person is a person" reflects Hytten and Warren's (2003) discourse of connections within their larger study of discourses and appeals related to engaging whiteness. As they write: "Making connections can provide a powerful way of beginning to more fully understand the experiences of others. Yet, there is also a real danger in this discourse, and this is in the relativizing of all differences and putting them on some sort of equal footing" (p. 71). Kelsey's whiteness and positionality remain invisible. Her reflections offer a Pollyanna view of difference:

> I believe that people of all races and ethnicity are and should be treated as equals. We're all people whether we're black, white, American or not, and we all deserve to be treated like people. Racism, no matter who it is aimed at, is something that is unacceptable. To teach our children to be acceptable members of society, we must first be acceptable members of society and this involves accepting things outside of what we know and not giving people flack for being different.

Kelsey sees a "core human experience" (Hytten and Warren, 2003, p. 71) framing her ideas of difference and acceptance. Because she does not name her own whiteness as apart from this greater idea of difference, she sees people as people, ignoring greater systems of oppression.

Of all the participants, Jane writes the most, particularly around the issue of diversity. She describes a good teacher as one "who loves her children and who doesn't discriminate no matter what the teacher feels personally." And that

> It is our responsibility as teachers to appreciate diversity, promote equity, create openness within our classrooms and encourage expression. Teachers have an important responsibility to have open minds and to set diverse cultural value systems within their classroom environment and integrated within their daily curriculum.

Jane's approach to issues of diversity appears similar to Hytten and Warren's (2003) description of the "enrich me discourse." Her statement about having an open mind and setting cultural value systems seems to reflect *her* desire to be seen as a progressive teacher. Indeed, the "enrich me" discourse describes "when students trivialize the importance of racial issues and seem to reduce exploring diversity to simply providing themselves with a broader enriching cultural experience" (p. 78).

Her further expressions about keeping an open mind seem to shift somewhat as she provides more specific examples of engaging or confronting difference. Indeed, it appears that her whiteness creates a "form of social amnesia" (McLaren, 2000, p. 149). For example, Jane provides a possible scenario as a "teachable moment." She offers the

example of what should happen if one student makes fun of another student's skin color. She writes:

> If a teacher avoids that issue, they are wasting a great opportunity and teaching moment. A teacher can construct that issue into something having to do with the curriculum, using history or science to facilitate their students understanding of how or why someone's color is a certain way, or when they eat a specific food why their skin may change.

Her reliance on curriculum or other teaching methods to confront an act of racism indicates a privileging of certain kinds of dominant knowledge, reinforcing the "othering" of this child and intellectualizing racism. Even though Jane might believe she is approaching this situation with the "best of intentions", she, as Hytten and Adkins (2001) write, does "not fully understand the context in which [she] might find herself." (p. 422).

This lack of understanding continues to be revealed as Jane explores the impact of discrimination. For Jane, there are limits in terms of how far her open-mindedness extends. She writes: "I feel it is important to encourage students to criticize forms on inequality within our society, but not to the point in which they become cynical and they find themselves reading into every aspect of society looking for the negativity." She doesn't want discussion of racism or any other kind of oppression to make her feel badly about herself. Her statement reflects the discourse of "yes, but. . ." as described by Hytten and Warren (2003) as she claims to "cognitively understand the experiences of nonwhites, does not fully appreciate (or in some cases believe them) because they are inconsistent with the way she individually experiences the world" (p. 81). Studying difference and professing the importance of equality allows Jane to shield herself from

interrogating her positionality as white. For a final example, I include her written reflection on the influence of the media, particularly Disney films:

> I do not agree that ignorance is bliss, however I feel that turning off cartoons does not stop racism or sexism. It is everywhere around us and to a certain extent, I want my children and students to be aware that discrimination is all around us and it is virtuous to have open minds to things and people, which are different than they are. However, it is up to them to make a difference by choosing to not discriminate toward others because they are different. I definitely want to express that message that others who are different deserve the same respect even though they are different. I do what I can to see everyone equally, but to me, a Disney movie is just a Disney movie, even though I agree there are some negative connotations behind it. I grew up with theme movies and children's books and I will always love them.

Jane is unwilling or unable to critically examine and include herself in this process. She resists and disruption to her habits and history. Diane Smith, a four time teacher of ELC 381 comments that these kinds of students "will be quick to use their beliefs as reasons for them to continue walking through the world in the ways they always have."

Got Privilege?

Since the participants in this study were all white, I was curious as to their awareness of their racial privilege as well as their personal definition of it. I asked, "How would you define privilege? And do you believe you have privilege? Why or why not?" These questions were in the second round of interviews and only three of the participants answered this question; Sarah did not answer questions after the first interview. Their answers reveal decidedly different levels of self-awareness as it relates to their whiteness, reflecting Warren's (2003) observation that "the ability to be both everything and

nothing, always present and always absent, grants whiteness extraordinary cultural power" (p. 46).

Kelsey recognized and named her privilege and positionality up front. She wrote, "I'm white and a college student, so I'm more inclined to be offered better jobs and such. I also believe I have privileges that are overlooked." She referenced being allowed to speak her mind, attend whatever school she wants and understands, as she writes "People fall into racial privileges without even noticing or acknowledging them (for example: being able to purchase "flesh" shaped bandages that match your skin color)." Awareness of her privileged positionality because of her race is unique among the participants interviewed. However, I did not see her apply that awareness within her written reflective assignments, nor in her responses to my other questions.

In contrast are the responses from Carol and Jane. Both see privilege as fluid, a concept that can be assigned or re-assigned depending on circumstances and personal achievement. Carol defined privilege as "a sense of entitlement, almost like an honor or an ability in some cases." She framed her definition in transactional terms, indicating that her privileges ("going to a friend's house, watching TV, staying up late") could be taken away if she misbehaved. She wrote, "Privilege is something that we earn as we become individuals in society" and understands she will acquire more and more privileges "as long as I am responsible and follow the laws of the world."

Jane expresses similar feelings, equating privilege with success and that such success is "an individual achievement." For Jane, privilege also signifies socioeconomic status and writes, "there are those who have more money and luxury than I do." And,

while Jane does feel she has privilege, she frames it as her experience in relationship to others. She writes, "I feel that I have a lot more privilege than others, especially when I take in account all of the social justice I learn from sociology." She uses examples of others lacking privilege as those involved in sex trafficking and those suffering through bombings in Afghanistan. Her comments evade self-scrutiny, particularly if she has had prior exposure to social justice in a sociology course.

White privilege, particularly for Carol and Jane, remains invisible. While Kelsey recognizes her whiteness and some of the privilege afforded to her because of it, she does not connect this privilege to her future role as a teacher. Their comments are particularly interesting because they were assigned Peggy McIntosh's famous *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* six weeks before I began my initial interviews with them and supports Marx' (2006) observation that "obliviousness characterizes much of whiteness" (p. 42). In asking them these questions, I believed I would receive different responses, some more directly tied to McIntosh's work and their personal experiences.

Classroom as Community

For the participants in this study, their teacher, Martha Price, created and fostered a classroom community that had a significant impact on their experiences. Martha described the appeal of ELC 381 for students:

> Students seem to enjoy 381. I think they feel fairly free to share thoughts whether in class or in their writing. . . because the course isn't strongly wedded to a particular curriculum, opportunities to shift course readings and points of discussion are easier to accommodate and in this way I think can make for a meaningful experience for students.

Kelsey commented, “As a class, I feel we’re able to talk about (literally) everything. We’ve laughed, cried, and even gotten into a few minor arguments.” Carol wrote about the class setting, commenting on sitting in a circle and liking “the intimacy of the class.” This intimacy allowed for open dialogue, on which Martha commented “it doesn’t feel quite like their typical class” and offered a sense of community for the students; as Jane remarked “She allowed us to be ourselves and established a safe and comfortable environment where we all felt we could share our honest ideas.” Carol’s reflections on the class indicated a diverse and welcoming community: “In our own class, we had a diverse group of students; different home states, different dialects, different upbringings, different cultural backgrounds, different thought. Since this class had an atmosphere of sharing, we were able to learn about each other and share our views from personal experience while students.”

Such an “atmosphere of sharing” allows for more difficult and challenging discussions. Martha said:

> It was in this class that I feel like we approached some of the most sensitive topics (for this group those seemed to center around race and sexuality). While we did not come up with “answers” to all of our problems, the use of humor seemed to allow people to make contact with “taboo” topics and feelings. It felt like we touched on some delicate moments without things feeling like they were spinning out of control.

Martha’s intentionality offered opportunities for students to openly share, even on the most difficult topics. Marx (2006) calls this the “trusting environment,” understanding that “any white person invited to talk about race, ethnicity, and racism, in many ways, would be asked to speak a new language” (p. 24). Creating this space provided

participants to be open to alternate viewpoints. As Jane wrote, "Our instructor facilitated amazing discussions which strongly feel helped open minds, including my own."

Emerging Awareness

ELC 381 is a course designed to critically examine the foundation of education, particularly within social, political and cultural contexts. Perhaps the most significant outcome of a course like this is providing students with the tools to critically examine and question the status quo of their everyday existence. Indeed, "developing critical consciousness isn't an exercise to get people to think in a certain way; rather, it is intended to get them to think more deeply about the issues and relations of power that affect them" (Leistyna, 2007, p. 117). Participants in this study did comment on the impact this course had on their perspectives, particularly in their roles as future teachers. Kelsey commented that the class "really taught me about the things I feel strongly about and find out more things about myself. I stepped outside of my comfort zone." Similarly, Jane observed "our society is a lot more corrupt than I thought, and unfortunately that corruption seeps into our education system more than I realized." Ultimately, Carol thought the class did not present "any real challenges" to her, but felt like she was "taught to see beyond my own scope of thought."

The only participant to specifically comment on whiteness was Sarah, in one of her written reflective assignments. I share her response here,

> Changing something doesn't always mean that it will actually change. For example, in history whites have been seen in society as the "superior" individuals and though there has been substantial and necessary change towards equality among individuals, there is still this notion of whites being superior.

> Few whites recognize the impact that such racism has had on shaping their values, beliefs, personal and social interests and actions. Most whites ask how such identities are passed down from generation to generation. Taking part in this view, history has been distorted to only see the limited, often distorted, and uncritically assimilated as fact. Whites are ignorant in the facts of others' history.

Sarah's observations are reminiscent of Hytten and Warren's (2004) "Cynic" in the Faces of Whiteness, viewing racism as "infused into the very fabric and foundation of our lives" (p. 328). There is no implication of self in this reflection; she writes about whites as "the other." This is particularly interesting given her statement: "Few whites recognize the impact that such racism has had on shaping their values, beliefs, personal and social interests and actions." She names the power of racism without applying the critical lens to herself. There is an opportunity for a crisis moment here; instead she is noticeably removed in her observation of other whites. As the "Cynic," there is no "reason for personal investment, for any effort to locate themselves in the question of racism results in wasted time. . ." (p. 328). She writes this reflection as if she is not white, not complicit in what she names as racist practices.

In pursuing the research for this case study, I was interested in discovering the "crisis" moments, moments where students would begin to engage in critical examinations of educational practices as well as of themselves as future teachers. In searching for the crisis, I found an interruption in some of their beliefs and practices. Indeed as Kumashiro (2000) writes:

> Rather than aim for *understanding* of some critical perspective, anti-oppressive pedagogy should aim for *effect* by having students engage with relevant aspects of critical theory and extend its terms of analysis to their own lives, but then critique it for what it overlooks or for what is forecloses, what it says and makes possible as well as what it leaves unsaid and unthinkable (p. 39).

Some of the participants applied these critical perspectives as they reflected on their own observations following the course sharing their fears and limits. For example, Sarah shared:

> Ignorance is not something I don't like to admit to, but throughout this course I have realized that I am quite ignorant in ways. Through reading these articles and in the past I am glad that I am being educated on such issues so that I have the capability to demolish that ignorance that I too learned growing up.

It is the impact of this course, through readings, discussions and reflection that interrupt a dominant way of thinking and approaching the world. Sarah allows herself to be vulnerable as she admits her ignorance. Similarly, Jane wrote:

> I feel strongly that our society is increasingly becoming more judgmental and negative. I feel ashamed of myself and our society for our tendencies to judge others based on their race, ethnicity, or sex. I would like to say that I am a fairly open minded, non-judgmental person, but even though I try to look at everyone equally, there are times where I feel it is impossible not to see the gap between social class structures and to develop assumptions.

Admitting shame is one piece of this vulnerability, particularly as she also admitted she learned "how much I take for granted simply because of my race." While these vulnerable moments do not absolve Jane from her privileged positionality, it reveals, at the very least, a momentary interruption to her beliefs and practices.

Although these interruptions are important moments in the development of a teacher, it remains clear that the insidious nature of whiteness and its "silent roar" were ever-present in this course. And while I accept that it is difficult to locate and name rupture points, I could not find the moments where the dominant positionalities sustained interrogation, where future white teachers studied *themselves* in preparation for their classrooms. They have learned more about themselves, but in what ways? McIntyre (1997) writes, "The lack of self-reflection about being a white person in this society distances white people from investigating the meaning of whiteness and prohibits a critical examination of the individual, institutional, and cultural forms of racism" (p. 14). Exposure to difference and engaging in critical questioning of the system is important and perhaps is the initial step towards critically examining self and working to dismantle racist beliefs and practices.

For the participants, the end of the course evoked feelings of wanting to, as Kelsey wrote "learn to apply what I learned in this class." Her focus was practical, wanting to know how to engage the next steps and make progress: "Sure, everyone can learn about the problems we're about to face as educators, but what are we going to do about it?" Carol shared frustration with understanding what lies ahead, "we learned about many challenges in the education system which was a bit discouraging at times, because it makes me wonder about how I will deal with these issues in the future." What remains a challenge is how to sustain these critical practices. How do we support those students who wish to be change-agents: ". . . the question that remains is what supports pre-service teachers receive after participating in courses such as those reviewed above"

(Nieto and McDonough, 2011, p. 374). Discovering this support requires engaging their communities both inside and outside of the classroom, remembering that "teachers need to develop political and ideological clarity" (Bartolomé, 2004, p. 99), to continue this work. Central to developing that clarity is the ELC 381 instructor.

Reflections of ELC 381 Instructors

Because, as Nieto and McDonough (2011) write, "pre-service teachers cannot be expected to independently and effectively work with or through experience designed to unsettle their assumptions" (p. 367), the role of the ELC 381 instructor is crucial. Facilitating the difficult dialogues and navigating possible "crisis" moments remain an important part of the course, even beyond the readings and assignments. As Diane Smith, told me:

> Oftentimes, I see it as the first time a lot of the students in the course have been challenged to think about identity, oppression and privilege. For me, I really challenge my students to analyze the ways in which they are a part of a system of privilege and oppression and how that affects how they carry themselves in the world and as an educator.

Martha's impressions are similar, telling me "it provides an opportunity for students to consider the larger picture of the profession they are entering and to practice reflexivity about their practice and situates the profession of teaching (and schools in general) as part of the social." Indeed, ELC 381 models Freire's (1997) belief that ". . . educators should always analyze the comings and goings of social reality. These are the moments that make a higher reason for hope possible" (p. 107).

While possibilities for hope do exist within ELC 381, there are sites of resistance among some students related to readings as well as the teacher. Although my study did not reveal explicit resistance to course materials or discussion, Diane described her experience as an instructor of the course, "I tend to definitely feel challenged by students who describe themselves as Christian. Not always, but quite often, this also comes with their condemnation and constant challenging of who I am as an out genderqueer." Diane believes in a "responsibility to be open and transparent to confront and challenge the system" and pushes students to question their positionalities and beliefs. And though the impact may not be immediately apparent, Diane says "I've planted a seed that, although I may not see it, will grow into something that strives for justice and equity in education."

Martha described one of the main challenges and discomforts of teaching 381 as "there are not a lot of answers." She helps her students to understand that "Many things involve sitting in the messiness of trying to the best you can despite the fact that the system is messed up. It is hard to prescribe a set of rules for those situations." She believes that the "questioning of self and positionality are important for students. I try to get them to poke at themselves and challenge each other." Her approach to this course was incredibly impactful, according to the participants in my study as she successfully facilitated challenging discussions.

Resistance and "White Talk"

The challenging nature of ELC 381 provides sites of resistance for some students. Diane provided an example of student resistance to her positionality as an out genderqueer and also names other sites as "students confronting whiteness for the first

time, students who realize the ways in which they have been oppressive to others and students who struggle with their beliefs, recognizing the realness of religious oppression." In my interaction with the four participants, I encountered a form of resistance with two participants. Carol, in one exchange, shared with me that she thought the readings in the class provided a "one-sided view." When I asked her to explain what she meant by one-sided, she did not answer that question, nor did she answer my question about the impact 381 had on her views regarding education. Sarah only responded to the first set of interview questions, though her reading reflections offered tremendous insights into her feelings. It is difficult to know if the questions left unanswered were deliberate or not. Were they worried about their responses? Were they afraid I was judging them? Of course, I was also mindful of how the students responded to me, drawing on what Kincheloe (1997) writes, ". . . an individual does not *discover* a voice that was there all the time, but *fashions* one in negotiation with his or her environment" (p. 60).

This notion of fashioning a voice reflects McIntyre's (1997) work with white pre-service teachers, resulting in what she names "white talk." She defines this stance as "derailing the conversation, evading questions, dismissing counterarguments, withdrawing from the discussion, remaining silent" (p. 46). My direct questions were not answered, leaving me to reflect on their intentions and if, according to McIntyre, they "consciously articulated or unconsciously spoken, resisted interrogation" (p. 47). Sarah's written reflection on whiteness indicated a glimmer of critical reflection, but written from a distanced perspective, following Sullivan's (2006) theory that the habit of privilege can

"actively thwart the process of conscious reflection" (p.6). The lack of evidence of critical self-reflection and interrogation on the part of all the participants in this study reveals protected habits of privilege.

Post-Formalist Analysis

Fashioning a voice in negotiation with one's environment is very much a part of the post-formalist framework I described in chapter 2. Here, I provide a brief analysis of this frame applied to teacher education programs, specifically ELC 381. If students do indeed "fashion" their voices based on their environment, perhaps an alternate discourse for anti-oppressive teaching is possible following a course like ELC 381. On some level, this course serves as a required "disruption" to a methods-based teacher education curriculum. Students' "webs of reality" should exist in multiple metaphorical locations following this course, as they understand and explore diverse points of view. McIntyre (1997) writes, "the data suggest that when our teaching fails to illuminate the past, present and future consequences of white racism, we limit the construction of knowledge and privilege the dominant discourse" (p. 135). By confronting these issues, the purpose of an ELC 381 disrupts the dominant discourse by engaging alternative ways of knowing and dismantling racism.

Such a disruption interrupts an engrained pattern, offering new perspectives. Students in this course trouble the notion of what both students and education should be. By applying this interruption, the privileged constructions may be taken apart. As Warren (2002) writes, "The most damning thing one can do to these naturalized structures is point out the constructedness" (p. 588). As patterns become more fluid, so

too does the process of learning. Rather than privileging one way of knowing through a dominant order, students may now see teachers as co-creators of knowledge, as Felman (2001) observes "knowledge is a shared experience and that it is not solely located in a single authority figure" (p. 195).

With an emphasis on the co-creation of knowledge, these future teachers are better able to locate power and privilege in school settings. What remains is the need for a deeper examination of self. As Kincheloe (2005) writes, "understanding of the social construction of self is a key purpose of a rigorous and critical education. Postformalists imagine teacher education to provide teachers the skills for assisting students in the analysis of their interpretations of cultural meanings" (p. 161). While the term "skills" evokes ideas of a positivist teacher toolkit, it instead means that teacher education should prepare students to engage in the critical examination and questioning of self within their "web of reality" (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1993, p. 302) and encourage their future students to do so as well.

Conclusion

A closer examination of ELC 381 indicates a course designed to disruption to the standardized teacher education curriculum. By examining the very foundations of education within social, political and cultural contexts, students are provided an opportunity to critically examine the status quo. While they are challenging to locate, ELC 381 does present small moments of "crisis" to students, pushing their limits to engage difference. However, a deeper critical-self reflective practice of whiteness and privilege is noticeably absent for the study participants. Whiteness of these pre-service

teachers presents itself in relationship to other issues, but troubling this dominant positionality remains elusive.

I realize that my study of these students is a snapshot of their encounters with difference, but am left wondering how they will sustain this critical questioning when they begin student teaching and eventually enter a classroom as the lead teacher. What are they prepared to do? Where will they turn for support if they need it? However, with just one required semester, will students abandon this "awareness" if their privilege allows it? The importance of a course like this within a teacher education curriculum cannot be ignored. Critical examinations of the Culture of Power troubles this idea of the dominant culture as "normal." Indeed as Kumashiro (2000) writes, "By changing how we read normalcy and otherness, we can change how we read others and ourselves" (p. 45). While courses such as ELC 381 are designed to interrogate the "normal," it is not without struggle, particularly when students resist, unable or unwilling to engage this process.

CHAPTER V

AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

> When criticality meets auto/biography we research ourselves not simply for self knowledge but for a transformative outcome (Kincheloe, 1995, p. 166).

Introduction

The third and final layer of the bricolage is a personal one. As a white, heterosexual woman, the classroom, curriculum and most spaces, both within and outside education, are considered "normal" for me. I am visible, yet invisible. As a white researcher, it is absolutely crucial to turn this critical eye on myself and my practices. Locating whiteness and privilege in teacher education programs allowed me to examine curricula and practices on a larger level and then more specifically within ELC 381 at UNCG. Knowing that ruptures may occur in many places, I offer my story and experiences as one way to locate myself within the research by critically examining my actions, beliefs and practices. By engaging in this kind of critical self-reflection, I might begin to "know the self I am shaping" (Freire, 1998, p. 120). This idea of knowing self is critical when studying whiteness, though according to Hytten and Adkins (2001) it is missing from the work of some critical whiteness scholars:

> one of our concerns with the whiteness literature is that scholars working in this area imply but do not reveal their own understandings with regards to whiteness, privilege and racism. Any of us working in this area must recognize the extreme difficulty of coming to see whiteness—not to celebrate our accomplishments of doing the difficult, but to represent the cognitive struggle it requires in order to offer a model for our students (p. 446)

This chapter is not presented as a self-congratulatory exercise on confronting whiteness, but rather a closer examination of my process.

It is intimidating to share these personal moments, some of them particularly painful. However, without examining my positionality as a white researcher studying critical whiteness, how can anything I write be considered valid? Using autoethnography is perhaps the best tool to both locate and interrogate myself in the social and political context within this study specifically, and in my life as a researcher/scholar generally. It demands vulnerability. As Ellis and Bochner (2000) write: "honest autoethnography exploration generates a lot of fears and doubts – and emotional pain. Just when you think you can't stand the pain anymore, well, that's when the real work has only begun" (p. 738). Turning the critical lens on myself reveals my struggles and identifies my "crisis" (Kumashiro) moments and "ruptures" (Anzaldúa). This chapter begins to unpack them through three "vignettes," spanning close to twenty-five years. While they do not represent all of my confrontations with my privilege and positionality, they illustrate key moments in my process of "becoming" (Freire, 1998, p. 39).

* * *

Wilmington Friends School, 1988

It is a warm, late spring day and I am looking forward to heading home for the afternoon. The SATs are this weekend and I'm anxious as I think about taking them for the first time. Ugh. Why do colleges need these stupid tests anyways? Yet another hurdle to navigate this year.

I glance at the clock as the last moments of Spanish class are wrapping up. During this time of year, we are all restless, as high school students are in the last weeks of the school year. Exciting times are ahead, I think, as we prepare to become seniors and think about all of the adventures awaiting us. I'm looking forward to the summer. My Spanish teacher had convinced me (and my reluctant mother) that a summer in Spain to strengthen my language skills would be a great experience and helpful for future college applications. Mrs. Penn had recommended me to take this enormous leap and along with some generous grandparents, I would be on my way in just a month or so.

Leaving Spanish class, I head down the two flights of stairs to my locker. On the way down, I overhear other students talking about a required meeting for all of the upper school students. Odd. Rarely did we have anything happened that was unannounced, not pre-scheduled. Hopping down the last two steps, I see the handwritten sign hastily taped to the door:

"ALL UPPER SCHOOL STUDENTS **REQUIRED** TO MEET AT THE KICKBOARD"

The kickboard was a large, wooden billboard-like structure that the soccer team used to practice their ball handling skills. Before big sporting events, it was often painted blue and white (school colors) with excerpts from school cheers. Sometimes, art classes would use it to make large community murals. It sat in between the football and soccer fields and was a gathering place during the homecoming events each autumn. It seemed quite strange for all of us to be called to an all-upper school meeting at the kickboard. What gives?

The hallway is a buzz with chatter of curiosity. I see John among a sea of people and wave. We have been classmates and friends since the first grade . As we make our way out of the building, we make plans for our group of friends to go to a movie Saturday night after the SATs. John isn't nervous like me. He loves tests and sees them as puzzles or codes to crack. Whatever. He asks me if I know what is going on, why we are all supposed to gather by the kickboard. Some big announcement? We are perplexed as we cross the parking lot and the soccer field, and see the large group gathered in a half circle around the kickboard.

Joking, talking, and all noise stops.

Silence.

I look at the kickboard.

Disbelief.

Shock.

Anxiety.

Anger.

Nausea.

Fear.

Painted on the 15 foot tall kickboard were multiple racial slurs and images. Violent. Sickening. I feel lightheaded and wonder what the hell is going on. . . .

* * *

I attended a Quaker school from kindergarten through the 12th grade. As a Quaker, I felt extremely comfortable in this place. Small classes, personal attention, an education framed within a tradition of social justice and individual responsibility towards a larger community. Quakers have a history of working with social justice issues and this history framed my educational experiences; indeed, early champions of women's rights, central figures in the Underground Railroad and Abolitionist movement and many conscientious objectors for nearly all armed conflicts were Quakers. I was proud of this heritage. Friends School was my home, my safe place, my family. However, I never thought about difference. We were all equal, right? At least that is what I understood about Quaker testimonies and our history.

* * *

"Down with the Jews"

"Save the land, join the Klan"

"Kill the tar baby"

These words, along with spray-painted images of white hooded figures, swastikas, a burning cross and a gun pointed at an African-American child's head cover the kickboard. I can't catch my breath, feeling like the wind has been completely knocked out of me.

Silence.

Mr. Bickley, my advisor, teacher and principal stands in front of the kickboard and in a shaking voice addresses all of us,

> "*Do not look away from this*;" his voice quivering. "*I want all of you to remember this day and this moment for the rest of your lives*."

But I want to look away. Looking at this confirms that this is real. Here. In my beloved school and community. Who had done this? As we stare silently at these images, I hear the squeals of laughter from middle school students, playing tag on a nearby lawn. I want to be them. I want to be innocent again.

* * *

Within a matter of hours, we learned that four male students, current seniors, had done this. Students who had been at the school for years. I knew their names. I walked by them in the hallway everyday. They were supposed to know better. Our community was

supposed to be different, better than this. But it wasn't. What made us different was not what I thought. It was not just the incident itself, but our reactions to it.

* * *

The next few days remain a blur. Classes are cancelled so the school can engage the community in Meeting for Worship so all students can share how they are feeling. The boys first tell school officials and then the school community that this is a huge misunderstanding. It was a joke gone horribly wrong. As we walk in to Meeting, I turn to my friend Toni, to check in with her. Toni is one of the few African-American students at the school. How must she feel?

"*How could this happen here? I still can't believe it*.," I say to her.

"*Of course it happened here, Erin*" Toni replies. "*It always does*."

We enter Meeting and I say nothing, but I keep thinking about what Toni said. Who are we as a community? What does she mean "it always does?"

* * *

The Head of School, backed by the Board of Trustees, makes the decision to expel the students, four weeks from graduation. All four of the boys are seniors. They will not graduate. All hell breaks loose. A majority of parents, students and outside community members, all white, are furious at the administration. Suddenly, this story is in the newspaper, on the radio and on television. In school the day after the decision is announced, huge numbers of students refuse to go to class, staging sit-ins and protests

against the administration. Parents interviewed on television believe the school administration to be, in their words, "*Too sensitive*" and "*Reactionary*."

I was disgusted by fellow classmates and their parents' words and actions. These were acts of BLATANT hatred and racism. Of course they should be punished. Of course they can't graduate from our school. Do our values mean NOTHING?! What was wrong with all of these people? Racism was not just something that existed in history texts, it was alive and thriving in the hearts and minds of those around me.

* * *

"*Erin*?"

My mother knocked gently on my bedroom door. She had given me space these past few days, offering to talk when I needed to, though I was spending most of the time in my room, listening to U2 and R.E.M. trying to avoid contact with anyone.

"*Yeah?*" I responded.

"*There's an all-school meeting tonight, honey. To talk about the expulsion and ways to begin to repair the community."   "How are you feeling?"*

Hmmmm. Pissed off, scared, ignorant, unsure.

"*Fine, I guess."*

Although I was nervous and wanted to avoid continued confrontation and shouts of protest most certainly guaranteed at an all-school meeting, I agreed to attend. My mother reminded me that we had a responsibility to show support to the administration, to show that racism would not be tolerated in our community. My stomach was in knots as we

walked into the packed school auditorium and sat down. My mother reached over and held my hand, something I would have normally recoiled at given my 16-year old self, but I felt comforted. I begin to cry, and angrily wipe away tears.

The Head of School rose to the microphone to open the Meeting, asking for calm dialogue and inviting those who wanted to, to come to the front to speak in the microphone. Parents and students booed her as she spoke, even heckling her. Parent after parent, and some students, mostly seniors, approached the microphone and said things like:

"What's the big deal?"

"No one was physically attacked."

"Can't we all agree that boys will be boys?"

"When I was a senior here, we turfed the football field with our cars. We weren't even punished."

"You know, the real victims here are those four boys. What will happen to them? Their lives are ruined."

"After all, nobody got hurt. Is it worth sacrificing these boys and their futures over a silly prank?"

"They apologized! What about forgiveness?"

"You better believe I'm pulling my kids and my money from this school."

"How dare you do this."

After each comment, a majority of voices in the auditorium shouted in agreement. I was afraid. And silent.

Then, two parents approached the microphone. The final words of the evening. The woman was well known in the school, she was the school gossip of sorts, always in the middle of something or another. This was a rich family with three boys who were currently enrolled at the school, all stellar students and athletes. I had never seen her husband before. They held hands and he began to speak very quietly.

> *We love this school and the community it has provided for our boys and our family. We have been at the school for a long time. The kickboard and surrounding events are troubling to us. We are Jewish and came to this community because of the Quaker values of respect, equality and integrity. These words and images are devastating. We lost family members in the Holocaust. I ask that you think carefully about the impact of hateful words and images on a community, whether this one or any one.*

Silence.

"Of course it happened here. It always does"

Re-visiting this experience evokes a myriad of emotions for me. This vignette paints an accurate picture of white privilege and dominant culture in action. The private school, filled with white kids feeling self-satisfied with our knowledge and history of social justice as well as condescension towards "others," could not fathom this kind of incident. We learned in a heterogeneous environment focused on teaching about social

justice, but without any interrogation of our whiteness, not to mention the contradictory nature of our environment. I think of Barbara Applebaum's (2010) words "privilege is not *only* a matter of receiving benefits but also consists in ways of being in the world" (p. 30). We regularly congratulated ourselves on our status as "good whites." My lack of awareness makes me cringe; I was sixteen years old and in a fog of privilege. Even as I re-visited this experience, there is such a focused desire to feel like and be seen as a "good white," to purposefully distance myself from those other white students.

Also significant in my analysis is how I almost immediately assumed the role of a victim, reacting to the "bad whites." Their actions had interrupted *my* privileged world; I thought things were suddenly complicated and messy, not realizing that as a white person *I* was complicit in this event and in racism. As Anzaldúa says, "We need to realize that the pictures of reality imposed on us can't be made only by those in power, they have to come from us" (2005, p. 51). I attempted to elevate myself to some more evolved state of "good white," as evidenced by my silent outrage at classmates and community members. It seems impossible when I look back on that as to how completely naïve I was, believing that racism not ever-present in my community and somehow suddenly appeared with the images on the kickboard. I think about my friend, Toni. I never thought about what it must be like for her to attend this school, a PWI if ever there was one. It only concerned me when the kickboard incident happened. With my current critical lens, I am amazed that I had never thought about this before. What was I thinking? Everyone around me was white and this was my world; an inability to even recognize any level of privilege reflects the greater white narrative, white is normal, white is the status quo.

Similar to the reflections of the ELC 381 students in this study, I was firmly entrenched in the habits of white privilege. Sullivan (2006) writes about the "unconscious commitment" to white privilege, a commitment to the status quo of a dominant culture. Such a commitment fuels resistance to self-questioning and reliance on McIntyre's (1997) "white talk." In reflecting on this experience and others, my actions at the time and my writing reveals elements of "white talk," insofar as they represent "repeated attempts to gain control over the discourse and to keep the discourse safe" (p. 46). Even with my supposed outrage at classmates and parents acting in racist ways, I retreated to silence, as did my mother. Our anger was expressed in private, not in the public spaces of the school community. I think of Kincheloe and Steinberg (1998) "Those who are privileged struggle to control representations of themselves" (p. 18). Although silence may have provided us some semblance of control, it also revealed our complicity with an oppressive, privileged environment.

* * *

<u>Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1998</u>

I rush to class, hoping not to be late this time. I'm in my first full semester of graduate school and hope that I am up to all of the work ahead. Christina walks with me. She is one of my work colleagues and we signed up for this class to take together. Arriving just as Dr. de los Reyes walks to the podium, I pull out my notebook and look around. The class is at least 75 people and easily the largest class I have ever taken. Dr. de los Reyes welcomes the class.

We are a huge group this semester, folks. There are 10 teaching assistants and in a moment, I will ask each of you to join a group of 10-12 students. This will be your discussion group for the semester, your community in our educational endeavor.

One of the teaching assistants walks around the class, passing out blank, white index cards. The professor asks us to fill out an index card, one that she and the TAs will have. She asks for our name and a sentence or two describing who we think we are. I am stumped at the direction. Does she mean gender? Race? Where we went to College? Where we are from? If we work? I struggle to fill out the index card. What does she want?

Erin Brownlee Dell

My card has my name, but is otherwise blank. Vanilla. Boring. Once our card is filled out, she asks to walk around and forms groups, to create our community. Apprehensive, I take my card and start walking around the room. Ugh. I hate these kinds of exercises. I look over to my friend, Christina, and see she has joined a group that formed quickly. Folks are laughing and making introductions. I glance at my blank card and take a deep breath. I walk over to one group.

"Hi, I'm Erin. Could I join your group?"
"Ummm. Nope. We already have one of you."
"*Ok, thanks*." One of me? What does that mean? I turned back to her and asked,
"*I'm sorry, I don't think I understood what you said*."
"*We already have a white person*."

* * *

T-128, Education for Political and Social Change was an exciting class for me. The majority of classes in my Master's program were focused on case studies in higher education. I signed up for T-128 because it reminded me of courses I took back at the Friends School, looking at education in a broader social context. I've heard from others in my cohort that this kind of class was so "beneath" our program and a real non-intellectual, touchy-feely course. I could not have disagreed more. The first few weeks of class were amazing. Cornel West was here one week, and spoke for three hours on the liberatory possibilities of education. Three hours, no notes. What a presence. I've never heard anything like this before and am intrigued. I am intoxicated by this place and the access to such incredible scholars. As in most of my educational experiences, I am intimidated by my classmates. Their prior experiences and credentials are impressive. In a lot of ways, I feel like an outsider here. Oh, but I love the readings. Delving into the works of hooks, Freire, Greene and others for the first time is incredible.

* * *

Once smaller discussion groups are formed, we meet with our group members and teaching assistant facilitator on alternate weeks. Karen, our TA, begins each session with questions to think about related to the readings. Often she asked us what had been happening in our lives the week before, was it related to class, and did we want to share.

"What do you have for me today? What's been going on?"

James says he wants to share something that happened over the weekend, while he was visiting one of his friends who attends Harvard Law School.

> *I was leaving his dorm, and got stopped by campus police. He asked me what I was doing here, in the middle of the law quad, in the dark. He told me to go back to where I belonged, assuming I didn't belong there. I told him I was visiting a friend, that I am a Harvard student. He laughed in my face. It's 'cause I'm Black. No one EVER questions the intentions of white people. I deserve to be here and I'm sick of this shit.*

James' anger startles me. I feel uncomfortable and don't know what to say. I remain silent.

* * *

It's another small group discussion. I've grown to dread these days. I love the readings, but don't know how to contribute in meaningful ways. I'm worried I will offend someone or do something wrong. I don't fit in with my group. Today I will say something. I can't sit silent the entire semester. I want to contribute, though I'm nervous as to how to enter the conversation. I don't know how to do this the right way. As I raise my hand to begin to speak, Angela, a quiet, reserved student sitting across from me, crosses her arms, looks over at me and says,

> *I went to high school with white girls like you. I know all about you and I am not interested in what you have to say. I know what you are about.*

I feel the blood rush to my face and I feel hot. I don't say anything. As I look around, two other students are nodding in agreement with Angela's statement. I'm confused.

Just the week before there was outrage in this group at what happened to James, and now Angela just made a sweeping generalization about me as a white person. And no one questioned it. Not even the teaching assistant.

I don't understand this. I've never done anything to her. I am furious and hurt. She doesn't even know me. I'm sorry that she was treated badly by white girls at her school. I am not like those white girls. She doesn't even know me. I am different.

After class, I email Karen and ask if I could meet and talk with her. The next week, we met for lunch.

I was hesitant to tell her why I wanted to meet. I took a deep breath.

"Karen, I wanted to ask you about our small group session last week".

"What about it?"

"Angela had a pretty severe reaction to me, even before I said anything at all. I don't understand, she doesn't even know me. Why is she judging me against some white people from her past? Isn't that racist or something?"

Karen stared at me across the table.

Erin, you have to accept this as part of being white. I know your feelings are hurt, but as a white person, you need to hear these things. You have to take it.

Again, as with the kickboard incident, I made this all about me and about how I am a nice person, a "good white." I re-centered my whiteness, employing many of the appeals and discourses described by Hytten and Warren (2003). There is such an intense desire for me to exist as a "good white." It is the only way I knew how to understand my

positionality, to be better than others who were not as aware as me. The irony is, again, my awareness is minimal in this vignette. I thought if I could be myself without interrogating whiteness that I should be accepted. However, Leslie Roman (1993) writes, we need to go "beyond the usual confessions (e.g., I am a white, middle-class, heterosexual, feminist) that functions as little more than disclaimers of privilege" (pp. 77-8). I felt like an outsider and because I was used to my insider status as a member of the Culture of Power, I did not know how to act in this setting. I was angry and astonished at how Angela spoke to me and that Karen did not intervene. In my meeting with Karen, I wanted her to share my outrage or to have some sympathy for me. Like the kickboard incident, I focused on myself as the victim, reflecting McIntyre's (1997) observation of her students "privileging their own feelings over the conditions and feelings of people of color was a strategy for the participants to ignore their own whiteness" (p. 76).

Unaccustomed to this kind of discomfort, I retreated, again, hiding within my privilege and taking refuge in silence. I was shocked this happened within a classroom, reminded of Audrey Thompson's (2003b) observation, "our pedagogical thinking about race, racism and classroom relationships often betrays an assumption that classroom relationships are generic and untroubled until racism suddenly erupts into the classroom as if racism had not been present throughout until, suddenly, there it was" (p. 387). I wanted to remain in an intellectual realm, reminiscent of Hytten and Warren's (2004) Intellectualizer, "actively investigating the literature. . . . they never locate the study and analysis of whiteness is their own experience" (p. 329).

I can see the image of myself in those class sessions, withdrawn, arms crossed and silent. I was both indignant and afraid. No wonder Angela confronted me; I needed to be vulnerable, willing to open myself up and begin a dialogue with her rather than cast her aside. I needed to engage Karen, to tell her I was both angry and afraid, that I didn't know how to talk about race. Instead, I remained silent for the majority of the semester and was relieved when the course was over. In this vignette, I am aware of Anzaldúa's (2002) idea of desconocimiento, of not wanting to know, avoidance, hiding "in ignorance, blanking out what you don't want to see" (p. 551).

* * *

<u>University of North Carolina, Greensboro, 2008</u>

I don't know what to do about the reading for class this week. It makes me feel confused and upset. I can't wrap my mind around this idea of confronting whiteness. Thompson writes about whites desperately wanting to be "good" in direct contrast to the "bad, racist" whites (Thompson, 2003a, p. 9). This is personal. I feel like I have done everything I'm supposed to, to work towards social justice. Will I always be lumped in with all whites, along with actions/beliefs that accompany that label? Is this just a part of being white? I find myself struggling to write the response paper related to the reading and hope I can avoid talking in class. I feel like my insides have turned upside down.

* * *

I had been in the doctoral program for a year, feeling confident and comfortable. For the first time, I participated a lot and felt as if I had discovered my voice. I had finally found my niche within education. In reading Audrey Thompson's piece, *Tiffany: friend of people of color*, I was first introduced to critical whiteness studies and the intense work behind the interrogation of whiteness. Although we certainly problematized whiteness and the Culture of Power in other classes, this was different. Reading this article took me right to my limits, as described by Britzman. I shut down.

* * *

Break is over and we settle back in our desks to discuss the reading for this week. As we do in every class, we are in a circle, facing each other. Silvia Bettez, our professor, asks us about the Thompson piece, along with another critical whiteness piece for that week. Travis, looks up and says

> *I am so sick and tired of reading about how white women feel about race. This is just another example.*

I suddenly feel angry, irrationally so. How dare he judge me. I feel my face flush. I glance over at Travis and I see Dawn nodding in agreement. Dawn starts to speak, but I don't hear her. Weren't we friends? What about the agreement we had on other issues, related to social justice or otherwise? Does she see me like this, like the whites in Thompson's article? I pick up my pen and start writing. My pen presses so hard on my notebook that it almost breaks through to the next page. I write,

It will never be enough. Does this ever end?

Am I a fraud? Are my relationships with people of color in this classroom or otherwise phony? I don't understand. I've read Delpit and others. I know I have privilege, but I am different from other whites. As soon as class is over, I rush outside, not wanting to talk to anyone.

* * *

Dr. Bettez emails me my corrected response paper. After class the other night, I don't want to think about Audrey Thompson or critical whiteness ever again. I'm still trying to figure out how to go back into class and not look like a racist to my classmates who were so quick to judge what a white woman has to say about race. I read the comments. My heart begins to beat a little faster. She's called me out. She knows. Throughout the paper, I refer to whites as "them." Never "me" or "us." One of the sentences from the response reads "I refer to whites as "them" in this reflection when I should refer to "me." However, I offer no explanation or follow-up.

At the end of my paper, Dr. Bettez writes:

> *The way you distanced yourself was notable. Curiously, this essay lacks some of the critical self-reflection and personal connections that I have seen in other pieces. I would encourage you to reflect more on why that might be. What does all that you read mean for your work and your life? Where are the places that you have excelled in your journey and what needs more work. You don't need to share your thoughts with me, but at least think them through for yourself.*

I feel ashamed. I don't know how to do this. Who am I, anyway?

* * *

I meet Dr. Bettez for coffee. I'm nervous. I think about what I'm going to say the whole way over to Elliot Center. She must think I'm stupid. Or a racist. Or both. I hate to admit it, but I want to know more about why this article has turned me inside out. What is there that has made its way under my skin?

I see Dr. Bettez and we sit down. She begins the conversation:

> *You are distant in your writing. You have removed yourself from the text. What's up?*

I don't know what to say. She looks at me intently across the table. I wonder if she knows how much I respect her and want to impress her, please her by being a great student. She's going to think I'm a fraud and not worthy of doing this work.

She gently, yet firmly talks to me about sitting in the fire, opening myself up to work that will be hard. We talk about Delpit and the angry gaze. Reading and writing about the "gaze" and experiencing the "gaze" are entirely different experiences.

> *"Remember the learning edge we talked about in multicultural education?"*
>
> *"Yes."*
>
> *"Well, sitting in the fire is somewhat like that, though perhaps a little more impactful and painful. It's hard to sit there, but I want you to consider it. Erin, this is hard. There are no 'right' answers here."*

* * *

Dr. Bettez was not going to let me off easy. In fact, she was going to push me to my limits and beyond. In the beginning, it was my admiration of Dr. Bettez and the community she created that sustained my efforts and gave me courage to interrogate myself and "sit in the fire." She allowed me to take a risk, to continue my journey in this process, for feelings and experiences for which I did not yet have words. I am a good student, but I can't hide in texts or theories anymore. Confronting this would be hard, but she encouraged me to keep at it, to not retreat.

* * *

The "good white" narrative frames all of these vignettes; this is palpable for me as these experiences span 25 years. This shows me how ingrained my privilege is, even with honing my critical lens over the past seven years in the doctoral program. I am again amazed at my belief that I was still immune to this scrutiny and examination by my classmates and my professor. Although I often participated in class discussions, I was looking for validation, that I was different from other whites. More and more I understand Bonilla-Silva's (2006) observation that "individual treason without a political praxis to eliminate the system that produces racial inequality amounts to racial showboating" (p. 213). This is not work to be left at the classroom door; it requires a constant state of being, of challenging and interrogating my thoughts and actions. I have to heed Yancy's (2008) words "White people who are sincere about anti-racism need to pay critical attention to the ways in which they can relinquish white power. Merely re-

articulating whiteness beyond white guilt and deep feelings of angst is not sufficient" (p. 238).

Indeed, "the very acknowledgement of our racism and privilege can be turned to our advantage" (Thompson, 2003a, p. 12), like writing about it in a dissertation. And although this class led to my interest in critical whiteness as a scholarly pursuit, I am aware of its personal impact as well. It continues to challenge me to not want to look like I'm the good white, both inside and outside of the classroom. This is a constant state for me, to name it, to talk about it. I struggle because like the ELC 381 emerging teachers I studied, I feel like I have the best of intentions. But these too, deserve examination. I continue to confront these issues of whiteness, to embrace the rupture; too often, there is a danger of coddling folks, of a "don't feel so badly, you didn't know" vs. angry confrontation. Within my Sociology of Education course, Dr. Bettez struck a balance between these approaches and challenged me, both through my intellect and my heart. I believe this is a way to not only cause the crisis, but also build upon it. As Thompson (2003b) writes,

> Classrooms are not primarily a space for friendship (although they may happen to be that), but they are potentially a space for intellectual intimacy, embodied performances of possibility, conversation that goes beyond the level of comfort and takes risks within a context of support and inquiry. Potentially, at least, they may provide room to feel our way together towards something new (p. 393).

The incident in Dr. Bettez' class was a watershed moment for me because I did not ultimately retreat and disengage from the critical self-examination as I had previously. What changed for me in this class? What was different from the other

experiences described here? There was a framework I could understand, a combination of theory and a teacher who showed care and concern but who did not accept complacency or excuses. My initial reactions to confronting whiteness were similar to the ELC 381 students, particularly Sarah, who wrote about whiteness as if she was exempt from it. I, too, resisted the interrogation, the close examination of my privilege and practice. However, I learned from Anzaldúa's (2007) observation that, "confronting anything that tears the fabric of our everyday mode of consciousness and that thrusts us into a less literal and more psychic sense of reality increases awareness" (p. 61). My increased awareness and journey began to have a significant impact as my scholarly interests shifted to critical whiteness studies. More importantly, my awareness cultivated in the classroom began to impact my personal and professional life in very real ways, which I will explore in the final chapter.

Further Analysis

Choosing to include an autoethnography as part of my bricolage was intimidating for me. I worry about the feelings it will evoke in others. Will I disappoint people? Will they see a side of me that is not smart or intelligent? However, situating myself and my positionality remains critical if I am to study the same in others. Often, without my theories and analyses, I feel lost, vulnerable to criticism and, at times, unexpectedly paralyzed and confused. Questioning my own privilege and positionality within the context of the study of whiteness revealed complexities and self-realizations often suppressed for fear of what I would encounter. Confronting this fear required me to

unpack these complexities and critically examine my own whiteness. By engaging in this process, I hoped to ". . . think and rethink that which [I] thought [I] knew" (Hytten & Adkins, 2001, p. 442). I began to feel a "sense of urgency" (Behar, 1996, p. 19) as I wrote this chapter, understanding that "No one is 'outside society'; the question is where each stands within it." (Mills, 1959, p. 184).

There is a danger in the study of critical whiteness, of re-centering a dominant ideology. There is a responsibility of the scholar/researcher to name challenges in these areas, to look at it as a "question of engagement, critique and active examination of how our very talk about our subject continues to reify it" (Hytten and Warren, 2003, p. 88). In this examination, I worried about my engagement with critical whiteness, thinking about Patti Lather's (1991) question, "How do we explore our own reasons for doing the research without putting ourselves back at the center?" (p. 91). Of course, putting myself at the center, as a white person, causes me great worry. Who I am as a researcher means interrogating my positionality, but how do I ensure my work is not a "white redemption fantasy" (Roman in Thompson, 2003a, p. 17), located in the privileged realms of a dominant culture? I needed to locate my work in the "in-between" space (Warren and Hytten, 2004) as well as remember "a different way of thinking and relating to others. . . and not depend on traditional categories or sameness" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 570).

These experiences provided an initial glance of myself in the mirror, revealing the tension between protecting myself or engaging the work required for self-awareness and change. Although I had a lifetime of Quaker influence both in and out of the classroom, I did not know how to proceed because "living an *impatient patience* or *insecure security*

is predicated on our willingness and ability to grapple with the complexity and ambiguity of the present, despite the heightened level of tension we may experience" (Darder, 2002, p. 48). While I possessed a framework for critical thinking and reflection, I feared the uncertainty of problematizing myself. Examining these experiences revealed that I did not know how to problematize my positionality—not in high school, not in graduate school. In my first class with Dr. Bettez, Critical Multicultural Education, we wrote an autobiography, describing ourselves and positionalities. In this assignment, I began to understand the privilege afforded me because of my race, "I was a white woman in a world where power was never spoken of but assumed" (Landsman, 2001, p. 94). An excerpt from that assignment reveals some of my struggles and what I wanted to accomplish; however, I did not act on them:

> I also struggle with feelings I sometimes have in conversations about race. I am afraid of being blamed, afraid of the anger I might receive from people of color. Often, I do not know what to say; I do not want to hide in my privilege. I want to openly recognize my responsibility. I want to reject the dominant culture, but as a white woman, can I ever truly be rid of it?

I was in a "holding pattern" of sorts for a long time, thinking highly of my intellectual "awareness," but not taking action to change the issues I named. I liked to think I was taking a stance against racism and oppression, but as the vignettes reveal, I chose silence in these situations. It took the "crisis" moment of reading Audrey Thompson, the classroom exchange and Dr. Bettez' guidance for me to really interrogate myself and to begin to dismantle the binary of being a "good" vs. "bad" white.

Good White vs. Bad White

Framing much of Audrey Thompson's work is the analysis of white students protecting our ideas of self in such a manner as not only shield ourselves from critical questioning, but also to continue the practice of claiming whiteness as the center of discussion. Specifically, Thompson exposes the clear distinction between roles of "good whites" and "bad whites" as expressed by white students in dialogue surrounding racism and other oppressive practices. This "being good" narrative offers whites a protection from the ugliness of racism, allowing us to name racism as a practice engaged by "bad whites," as she writes, "the desire to be and to be known as a good white person stems from the recognition that our whiteness is problematic, a recognition that we try to escape by being demonstrably different from other, racist whites" (Thompson, 2003a, p.9). By assuming this protection, whites both reify our privilege and deny complicity.

In my experience, the collective lens of critical thinking focused solely on other individuals and institutions. Indeed, in my beloved Quaker school, the act of questioning whiteness was limited to studying the "bad" whites. Learning about diversity involved looking at the experiences of the "other" and reinforcing our beliefs that "we are not that sort of white; we are good whites" (Thompson, 2003a, p. 8). I think of Megan Boler's (2004) observation, "if education is a commitment to growth and change, then that change will require facing up to our investments and experience the discomfort of new thinking" (p. 119). Indeed, such a commitment should require the critical lens to turn on oneself and experience the discomfort of what may be discovered. Avoiding this self-disruption cemented the good white/bad white binary I am still working to shatter. My

privilege offered a way to place blame on others, denying my complicity in issues of oppression. I saw what had happened within the kickboard incident as well as the stories from my Harvard classmates as bad white behavior. I was shocked because I didn't think it existed in my realm of privilege. I could not acknowledge that I was a part of this privileged system, instead ascribing "bad white" status to others.

In my Sociology of Education class, reading Audrey Thompson's article, *Tiffany, friend of people of color: White investments in antiracism* was shocking to me. This was the first time that I had ever considered my whiteness in this manner. I was dumbstruck at the thought that I could really be some sort of antiracist poser. Was I trying to be a good white? Was I really a phony? Prior to this article, my own self-examinations remained very much at the surface level. Reading the Thompson piece forced me to delve deep within myself. Quite honestly, I was afraid of what was there, afraid that I was a bad person, not genuine enough to talk about issues of racism, let alone be an effective agent for change. I had been "stand[ing] in a place that [was] hypocritical" (hooks, 2000, p. 161). Indeed I had to realize as Boyd (2008) describes "a disconnect between my supposed commitment to racial justice and the details of my every day life" (p. 213).

Acknowledging this hypocritical stance has been one of the most challenging processes of my life. The failure to *really* understand and accept how my whiteness informed my own positionality was, and still is incredibly difficult for me. In a very real way, I "refuse[d] to doubt the ideas that hold it together" (Schwalbe, 2005, p. 17). I was willing to be sociologically mindful, but only up to a certain limit, a limit that protected me. Why did I hesitate to turn the lens on myself in a more significant way? I think this

hesitation stems from having to dismantle my own self-identification as a "good white." Feeling like a progressive, antiracist white and surrounding myself with individuals possessing similar beliefs supported the notion of this kind of whiteness as the norm. I modeled my identity from my own beliefs and what I viewed as the positive whiteness around me. In choosing the discourse of the "good white," I rejected any notion that I was a participant in the beliefs and actions of others. I believed in a binary among whites—good vs. bad. It was simple to me, a "process from which we cannot escape—a process of creating and acting on appearances" (Schwalbe, 2005, p. 170).

Both the Harvard and UNCG vignettes reveal my feelings of anger, hurt, disbelief, guilt and frustration. Why did I feel this way? I had heard criticisms of white people and dominant positionalities before—I had added my voice to those dialogues. Did I feel like my colleagues were talking about *me*? This "space[s] of dissonance" (Chacón, 2006, p.391) terrified me. I felt attacked because I viewed myself as a "good white," and felt that "when we are challenged for our whiteness, our tendency is to fall back on our goodness, fairness, intelligence, rationality, sensitivity and democratic inclusiveness, all of which are caught up in our whiteness" (Thompson, 2003a, p. 16-17). My sense of goodness was false; I was unable and unwilling to recognize the complexity of my relationship to whiteness.

While these situations were difficult, both the opinions expressed and my reactions were very real. With all of my preparation in critical thinking, I remained silent. My retreat ". . . allow[ed me] not to know, not to see, and not to act. Privilege provides moral insulation against the cold winds of reality and awareness" (Howard,

2006, p. 65). I avoided the dialogue necessary to unravel my privilege, instead focusing on the text and matters of the intellect. I didn't have the courage or the language to confront this without disrupting my identity as a good white. Indeed, I was prepared to engage on an intellectual level, I was not able to offer the "emotional willingness to engage in the difficult work of possibly allowing [my] worldviews to be shattered" (Boler, 2004, p. 128). I was afraid to be vulnerable.

I had to confront that pain because ". . it means turning [myself] inside out, giving up [my] own sense of who [I] am, and being willing to see [myself in the unflattering light of another's angry gaze" (Delpit, 1988, p. 297). I was disappointed in what I saw in myself. Sitting "in the fire" made me realize that my self-examination was not dependent upon ". . . some reassuring ideal of goodness" (Thompson, 2003a, p. 22). Through this process I realized that the questioning of my identity development is ongoing; by interrupting my pattern of intellectualization, I understand that "categories of identity and structures of inequality are not automatic but must be constantly reproduced in practice, and so there is a moment of possibility for social change" (Bettie, 2003, p. 55). Through this interrogation, I can engage the process of interrupting these practices and habits.

Discourses and Appeals

Kathy Hytten and John Warren's ethnographical study of their classroom, *Engaging whiteness: how racial power gets reified in education* offers an important perspective to my described experiences. Building upon Hytten and Adkins (2001) previous work with the pedagogy of whiteness, Hytten and Warren's study examines how whiteness inscribes itself within the classroom and categorizes the resistance of students

to critically think about their positionality and relationships to race. Detailing student reactions, termed appeals and discourses, allows a micro-level examination of resistance and protective practices within their one classroom. Hytten and Warren's (2003) ethnography is an essential snapshot into the life of a classroom, and serves as a valuable resource for others engaged in this work, hoping "that when others read these ideas, they too will find ways of becoming newly accountable in their own lives and actions" (p. 70). Indeed, I see myself and my experiences reflected in their research.

By labeling the reactions of students as appeals and discourses, there is yet again, a sense of the need for white students to rely on their privilege as a protection against being complicit with racism. Student appeals to "self, progress, authenticity and extremes" (Hytten and Warren, 2003, p. 70) represent different levels of resistance, indicating:

> Race-evasive discourses and discourses of reflection prevent the deep questioning of our assumptions and fears and ultimately protect white people from confronting their own racism and positions of power.. . . These discourses operate not so much to deny the meaning of race, but to displace uncomfortable feelings and anxieties (Dickar, 2000, p. 177).

Such anxieties reveal a sense of vulnerability on the part of students facing challenges to their protected identities and, as Christine Sleeter (1993) writes, "Whites so internalize their own power and taken-for-granted superiority that they resist self-questioning" (p.167). Indeed, as described in my vignettes, I never thought to question myself and my practices. However, these appeals re-centered whiteness.

Within the appeal to self, there is an obsessive-like quest to show "how enlightened or open-minded they are by comparison" (Hytten and Warren, 2003, p. 73); again, as in Thompson's work, a distinction is made between "good whites" and the racist, "bad whites." This binary remains a dangerous smokescreen to distract personal responsibility as students continue to rebuke critical examination because, as Thompson (2010) reminds us, "the idea that they would be distrusted "just because I happen to be white" is a violation of a deeply held expectation that they should be judged as individuals" (p. 32). This appeal is reflected in both my Harvard and UNCG experiences; I could not understand how my classmates could pass judgment on me as a white person when they did not know me. I wanted to be evaluated on my merits as a "good white" rather than as a member of the dominant group.

Resisting the idea of complicity in an oppressive system, the appeal to progress includes students superficially embracing diversity by naming historical achievements and focusing efforts on action against racist practices. Again, such actions support the image of a "good white" and "seem to reduce exploring diversity to simply providing themselves with a broader enriching cultural experience" (Hytten and Warren, 203, p. 78). Within this appeal, students again focus on discourses of "fix-it," wanting to take immediate action against racist practices. Unfortunately, "reflection is not seen as an integral part of action, or worse is seen as getting in the way of action" (Hytten and Warren, 2003, p. 75). Bypassing reflection avoids the possibility of a critical self-reflective practice, one that might disrupt the dominant narrative of whiteness. Again, I see this appeal to progress as I framed the kickboard story. I focused on historical

achievements of Quakers involved in social justice issues, as a way to present the situation in a better way.

Avoiding reflection allows white students to turn to students of color to authenticate experiences. Called the appeal to authenticity, white students expect "non-whites to do the hard work of understanding for us, and, consequently, telling white folks how to act" (Hytten and Warren, 2003, p. 80). Essentializing experiences of "others," white students relieve ourselves of critical engagement and responsibility. When white students encounter information which denies our validation and dominant positionalities, there is additional resistance, "somewhat dismissing, perspectives that do not comport with one's own" (Hytten and Warren, 2003, p. 81). By dismissing contradictory narratives to their privileged place of power, students do not acknowledge the experiences of non-white students.

For example, following my conversation with Dr. Bettez about sitting in the fire and confronting whiteness, I turned to my friend and colleague Holly for advice as I engaged this process. She is African-American, former director of Multicultural Affairs, and over the years, we have had many conversations about race and racism, acting as sounding boards for each other. However, when I wanted to confront my own complicity and work though it with her, Holly said, "*Erin, I love you and support you as you do the work you need to do. However, I am not going to process your journey with you. You need to find a white friend to do this*." I was hurt and angry, but Holly was right. Too often, whites look to people of color to validate our process, to congratulate us on our realization that there is racism and our roles within it. Indeed my request, in the words of

Thompson (2003a), "may seem to people of color like nothing more than new ways for whites to get comfortable with our whiteness" (p. 16). I began to truly understand the role of an ally. This did not need to be about me and my shame for being a "bad white." I had to work through this, questioning all of the way. When I did turn to white friends and colleagues, I was met with resistance and denial, many of them believing, "This is a phase. She'll get over it eventually." However, once we recognize our complicity in matters of racism, privilege and power, there is no return.

Problematizing the Critical Democrat

Building on their ethnographic study of critical whiteness engagement within their classroom, Hytten and Warren continued their examination in an additional piece, *The faces of whiteness: pitfalls and the Critical Democrat*, (2004) providing descriptive labels encapsulated by many of the levels of appeals and discourses outlined in their ethnography. Warren and Hytten create a hierarchy of sorts on a continuum of how their students engaged whiteness. Calling them the "pitfalls" or "faces of whiteness," Warren and Hytten name them as the *Torpified* (paralyzed by inaction; shock that whiteness harms others), the *Missionary* (desires action and progress, but lacking in self-reflection), the *Cynic* (aloof to issues of race; no belief in change) and the *Intellectualizer* (familiar with theories; not able to locate themselves within those theories) (Hytten and Warren, 2004, pp. 327-239). These faces of whiteness highlight the many forms of student (and others) resistance to whiteness and issues of race. While these identities or faces represent different levels of engagement and understanding, I often found myself in the description of the Intellectualizer:

> The Intellectualizer is actively seeking information, actively working toward becoming more familiar with the theories and arguments made by the researchers. And while they are actively investigating the literature, they do so in a very distanced manner; that is, they never locate the study and analysis of whiteness in their own experience (Warren & Hytten, 2004, p. 329).

This definition directly related to my own experiences. Too often, I attempted to analyze and intellectualize theories without including myself in that process.

Rising above these pitfalls is what Warren and Hytten (2004) name the Critical Democrat, a position "balancing the opposing tensions and negotiating meaning betwixt and between multiple positions" (p. 330). By existing in an in-between space, Critical Democrats are active participants in the engagement of whiteness because "They recognize that all knowledge is partial and that there are experiences and understandings that White people cannot readily access" (p. 332). Although the Critical Democrat embodies the critical engagement and awareness so desired by critical whiteness scholars, this label, at the top of the hierarchy, remains somewhat problematic. At this point in my process, I could probably claim the Critical Democrat stance, but I wish to problematize this. While Warren and Hytten acknowledge the pitfalls as a "temporal space that one enters into and speaks from (2004, p. 323), the Critical Democrat is clearly lauded as the most "evolved" of all the representations. Do these faces of whiteness and their pitfalls result in the anti-racist markers that Thompson tells us to avoid? Again, do "we remain at the center of our anti-racist projects" (Thompson, 2003b, p. 391)? By assigning myself as a Critical Democrat, it could provide me with a false sense of accomplishment, that I achieved a "gold star" in my interrogation of whiteness, achieving the ultimate "good white" status. I prefer to remain in the ambiguous space, knowing that at any given time,

I may be experiencing or performing one or more of *all* of the Faces of Whiteness. Accepting this ambiguity is significant in understanding the responsibility to the process as an ongoing endeavor, remembering that "acknowledging white complicity does not rule out responsibility, but instead demands a rearticulated notion of responsibility" (Applebaum, 2010, p. 176).

This "rearticulated notion of responsibility" permeates Barbara Applebaum's work by guiding her students to understand their complicit relationship to the study of whiteness. Being a "good white" fosters a level of ignorance, one which Applebaum disrupts by linking the ideas of "benefiting from and contributing to racism"; she writes, "connecting systemic privilege to practice of ignorance helps us to understand how systems of oppression are protected from critique and how white people deny their complicity to safeguard self-understanding of moral goodness" (2010, p. 46). Students need to not only name their privilege and complicity to racism, but also accept and internalize responsibility, understanding that, "no white person is morally innocent, that no white person can stand outside of the system" (Applebaum, 2010, p. 46). Dr. Bettez facilitated this process for me, helping me to understand my complicity in a larger system and not allowing me to retreat a place "outside of the system."

Just because a student like me takes responsibility for complicity, there is no absolution. There is continued work for social justice. Those students retreating to "good white" roles may attempt to undo or deny their complicity, as Chris Mayo (2010) writes:

> People whose complicity in structures of bias derives from their unintended social and political position cannot undo their complicity through intentioned action individually. These are social and political issues and as much as individual attitudes and actions are part of the process of changing social and political arrangements, one cannot "feel" better until there is a better context in which to feel (pp. 216-17).

For Applebaum, white complicity pedagogy engages the social and political contexts. She engages student privilege and subsequent appeals, problematizing them, understanding "Whiteness cannot and should not be studied apart from white racism and racialized social systems" (Doane, 2003, p. 17). She argues that by focusing on the complicity and the pedagogy of social justice, there is action to be taken, action that must be taken. Indeed, studying and situating myself in the scholarship of critical whiteness reveals the answer to the question I so forcibly wrote in my notebook in 2008; this process is ongoing and requires vigilance, never complacency.

This sense of vigilance begins with the personal work and interrogation of self; however, it must not stop there. Critical self-examination must lead to broader action if we are to work for social justice, particularly within classrooms. The ELC 381 students questioned how to apply what they had learned to their future classrooms. As Kelsey said, "Sure everyone can learn about the problems we're about to face as educators, but what are we going to do about it?" For white students, there is confusion as to what comes next with this work. As McIntyre (1997) writes about her study participants, "It was much easier for them to describe personal experiences related to issues of racism and their constructions of whiteness than it was for them to think about realistic and effective strategies for taking individual action, collective action, or both against racist practices,

behaviors, and institutions" (p. 69). The practice of locating and interrogating whiteness cannot be confined to the classroom, abandoned at the end of a semester.

Barbara Applebaum (2010) writes "in order to know, one must pay attention." (p. 41). Paying attention means naming my privilege, problematizing my positionality and assuming responsibility to not only study whiteness, but also to disrupt it and de-center it. Within this work, I see myself as somewhat of an undercover operative because of my membership in the culture of power. As an insider, I have to remember that "it's one thing to make white privilege visible. It's quite another to make oneself accountable for privilege by choosing to collectively explore strategies for redistributing resources" (Bailey, 1999, p. 101). Being accountable means making myself subject to the "gaze" Delpit describes, critically engaging whiteness in my research, future teaching and my community. This is a continuous process, and I am reminded of Gloria Anzaldúa's (2001) words:

> Transformation does not happen unless we explore what threatens us as teachers and students; what we sweep under our desks; what we silence; what we're angry about; what causes us anxiety; what brings us into open conflict and disagreement, and what cultural prescriptions and cultural teachings we're rebelling against (p. 241).

I am aware of my fears and limits and confront them, searching for new responses, remembering Thompson's (2003a) words, "we cannot rely on procedures and blueprints geared to what we know at present; we have to start by changing what is" (p. 20).

Conclusion

As an emerging scholar and teacher it is important for me to understand and realize that there is a responsible praxis in this work, and it frames both my scholarship and my journey. It is only then where I might begin to change what is and locate possibilities for social change. I have to resist the urge to live my values too comfortably, to reside in the fortress and protection privilege can provide. As a tool, the autoethnography offered the opportunity to see myself in this way, to understand that it "is both a process and a product" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011, p. 273). By putting a critical lens to the three vignettes, I see my crisis moments, where I retreated to privilege, supported the good white/bad white binary and employed the many appeals to distance myself from any acknowledgement of complicity with the dominant culture. Indeed, as Anzaldúa (2007), writes, "awareness develops when we participate in the "act of seeing" ourselves as both the "subject and the object" (p. 64).

This process is an essential part of studying whiteness, particularly on the part of a white researcher. However, I heed Applebaum's (2010) words, "Acknowledging white complicity entails more than just a facile confession. It involves understanding of how whiteness works through white bodies and the discourse practices of well-intentioned, caring and even progressive white people" (p. 180). Continuing to engage critical whiteness means deepening my understanding, not only of myself and practices, but also how this awareness can be applied towards changing what is. How do I sustain and grow from these and other crisis moments in my life? It is not enough just to study the theory as an interesting topic, research a dissertation, write articles and make conference

presentations. As Ellis (2004) writes, “In this space, we learn to live meaningfully in the stories of our lives. In this space, we learn to see and feel the world in a complicated manner and then reflexively turn that lens on ourselves” (p. 98). This lens remains a constant in my personal and professional practices, following Kincheloe and Steinberg’s (1997) direction that “examining whiteness can be viewed-not as something to be endured or mastered—but in a very real sense, as a continuous discourse and struggle to enact liberation and justice” (p. 140). Such a struggle will require a commitment to be vulnerable, to be comfortable with ambiguity and to be willing to sit in the fire.

CHAPTER VI

TOWARDS A PEDAGOGY OF CONOCIMIENTO

> The question researchers need to ask themselves is "What are we doing with the knowledge we produce to challenge oppression in schools and society?" Research cannot be anti-oppressive if it continues to repeat the desire among researchers to be detached (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 89)

> If we are to pursue as yet unimagined possibilities, we cannot rely on procedures and blueprints geared to what we know at present; we have to start by changing what is. (Thompson, 2003a, p. 20)

Introduction

The possibility of a "crisis" or "rupture" within teacher education programs should serve as an interruption of the status quo, the beginning of critical self-reflection and knowing self in relationship to a perceived "other." Such an interruption serves as an intervention, one to interrogate the privilege and positionality of the Culture of Power as an initial step towards possibilities of change. Teacher education programs have opportunities to create initial ruptures and sustain the engagement with critical self-reflection in a process towards impacting institutional and systemic transformation. Indeed, pre-service teaching, as Kumashiro (2012) writes, "has the potential to change common sense in teaching, and in so doing, to better prepare teachers to teach our increasingly diverse student population" (p.48). Changing common sense calls for a re-imagined approach to teacher education, one initiated by critical self-reflection and analysis. In this dissertation, the teacher education program evaluation, the ELC 381 case

study and my autoethnography reveal both curricular and personal attempts at ruptures or crises, locating the pedagogical spaces where they might occur. My autoethnography also revealed is the resistance to deeper interrogation, resistance fueled by "unconscious commitments" (Sullivan, 2006) to my white privilege and dominant culture practices and systems.

Alice McIntyre (1997) writes, "What is necessary for white teachers is an opportunity to problematize race in such a way that it breaks open the dialogue about white privilege, white advantage, and the white ways of thinking and knowing that dominate education in the United States" (p. 15). Creating these opportunities should be a priority for teacher education programs as crisis moments may evoke an initial awareness or conscientization, requiring a sustained challenge to the privileges and positionalities of whiteness. This requires fostering within students a vulnerability, a willingness to confront difficult and painful elements of white privilege and complicity heretofore unexamined and unknown.

This final chapter revisits the research questions posed at the beginning of the dissertation, identifying pedagogical interventions within teacher education programs and ELC 381 to locate the crisis moments within teacher education curricula and possibilities for further disruptions and continued analysis. Building on the foundation of Hytten and Adkens' (2001) pedagogy of whiteness, I propose a shift towards Anzaldúa's conocimiento, influenced by Britzman's work on limits and unlearning. By using Anzaldúa's seven stages of conocimiento as a framework, I examine the sustained commitment and work required after initial confrontations and interrogations of

privileged positionalities and practices. Such a commitment moves the personal to the public, potentially impacting structural oppressive practices. Following this analysis, I trouble the idea of the "good white," with a focus on future practices within teacher education programs and curricula. Finally, I explore the implications of my crisis moments described in the autoethnography and the impact of this work in the public sphere, on my professional and personal life.

Research Questions, Revisited

I approached this study through a feminist and post-formalist framework informing the creation of a methodological bricolage. The bricolage offered the opportunity to create layers of research and multiple meanings through an evaluation of selected teacher education programs, a qualitative case study of ELC 381 and a critical autoethnography. Engaging the bricolage in this way afforded me opportunities to approach the study of becoming an anti-oppressive educator through a combination of the larger, more general context of teacher education curricula along with a more specific focus on student practices in ELC 381 and my own practices, detailed in the autoethnography. Locating my research within these social contexts and forming the bricolage allowed for an interruption of the more "traditional" approaches to research, supporting my desire to, as Anzaldúa (2002) writes, "generate subversive knowledge" (p. 542), a knowledge to inform and problematize the Culture of Power. My research questions were:

- *What kinds of opportunities are provided to students in teacher education programs to be self-reflective about their positionalities and interrogate dominant culture?*

- *Where are opportunities to unlearn and examine student's intentions within a teacher education program?*

- *How can teacher education programs construct and facilitate the point of intervention or crisis as described by Kumashiro (2002)?*

- *What is my role in this process as a white researcher attempting to locate, disrupt and dismantle privilege?*

- *How does the work towards changed visions of education, discovered in "crisis," sustain beyond the classroom? How de we continue to confront and engage "what we cannot bear to know?" (Britzman, 1995).*

My review of selected teacher education programs as well as UNCG's ELC 381 course revealed courses where self-reflective practice is encouraged, though they are often not incorporated consistently throughout the curriculum. Often, these opportunities appear in courses asking students to reflect on "the other," with "the other" most often signifying a person or people of color or framed as different from the dominant status quo. Students focus on the external work of studying difference, rather than the internal critical work focused on self. While my research revealed selected teacher education programs with social justice frameworks, they are more focused on the preparation of graduate students and appear to have limited impact on pre-service undergraduates. And, it is important to remember that even though students may be offered these opportunities within their course of study, whiteness informs their spaces of resistance, reflecting Darder's (2002) observation that: "resistance is often generated by internalized

traditional expectations of schooling linked to the perpetuation of the status quo" (p. 136).

Opportunities to unlearn and examine students' intentions remain elusive. Unfortunately, as the evaluation of teacher education programs revealed, curricular spaces devoted to this work remain limited. Instead, programs focus on the study of diversity designed to study and objectify the "other" through a dominant cultural lens, often supporting the portrayal of teacher as missionary or savior. This idea of teacher as missionary emerged from the ELC 381 participants as well, with their focus on being "the light in the dark" for future students. Picower (2012) questions this approach of her own students, observing, "rather than questioning or changing conditions that cause structural inequality, [they] worked within a system of oppression without questioning why they themselves were more advantaged by that system than the children they wanted to 'save'" (pp. 39-40). Such an approach contributes to a continued perception of white pre-service teachers viewing their future students as deficient rather than shifting priorities towards critical self-reflection and problematizing whiteness with an overarching commitment to teaching and education as sites of social justice. Prioritizing curricula focused on disruption of a dominant culture and its influences traditional narratives of teacher as missionary, role model and caretaker, as revealed in ELC 381, will require courage on the part of teacher educators and their universities.

In my interviews with students from ELC 381, while they expressed appreciation for exposure (through readings and discussion) to the social, political and cultural issues impacting education, rarely did they turn the critical lens on themselves. Their whiteness

and its associated privilege provided a shield to this kind of critical self-examination. As Applebaum (2008) writes, “one of the privileges of being privileged is not to have to notice that privilege” (p. 410). A struggle I faced in interviewing the ELC 381 students was their complete lack of engagement with their whiteness, their positionalities. Within their responses and reflections, they mirrored McIntyre’s (1997) “white talk” practices which “actively subverts the language white people need to decenter whiteness as a dominant ideology” (p. 47). While curriculum can be designed to create and foster crisis moments for students, the ELC 381 participants represented a larger challenge in terms of nurturing the crisis, leading to productive self-reflective practice. Ruptures and crisis moments in this class were not immediately obvious.

And while white students may continue to resist these confrontations of self and privileged practice, it is a crucial part of becoming an educator, understanding Britzman’s (1998) observation that “for there to be a learning there must be conflict within learning” (p. 5). Presenting these conflicts within learning is a complicated endeavor. Within the study of the four students in ELC 381, their reflections and responses lacked a sense of self-awareness, resisting deep analysis of their practices as part of a frame of privilege, of not seeing themselves as the dominant culture, but instead as “normal.” The constructed “normalcy” of whiteness discourages interrogation (on the part of whites) for fear of disrupting privilege. This sense of white as “normal” provides a false illusion that both supports and encourages racism. Entrenched in the realm of power and privilege, once again the dominance of whiteness “form[s] an impregnable yet elastic wall that barricades whites from the United States’ racial reality” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 47). As

whites, unless we choose to question this reality, our wall of privilege permits a continued state of ignorance and maintenance of oppressive practices, intentional or otherwise.

Disrupting this cycle of power and privilege involves naming and recognizing that whiteness does not represent the standard to which others should be measured. Hytten and Adkins (2001) write,

> Whiteness must be studied, named and marked so as to uproot it from its position of normativity and centrality. Only then can we conceptualize diversity in ways that are not assimilationalist or merely additive, but instead aim to dismantle social practices and structures that perpetuate white privilege and white racism (p. 439).

As a white scholar, it is imperative I confront my privilege and critically examine my whiteness to participate in the "uprooting" of its dominant positionality. Writing the autoethnography forced me to re-visit experiences that evoked feelings of disbelief and shame. However, even as I wrote that chapter, I continued to distance myself from the immediate analysis and critique these experiences demanded. Privilege fosters these bad habits and I found myself resisting critical examination of my actions, worried about my desire to be seen as a "good white." It reminded me of McIntyre's (1997) observation of the "infinite ways we manage to 'talk ourselves out of' being responsible for racism" (p. 45).

Writing and re-writing the autoethnography forced me to interrogate my desire to conform to this idea of a "good white." I had to push past my resistance understanding Sullivan's (2006) words, "a person cannot merely intellectualize a change of habit by

telling herself that she will not longer think or behave in particular ways. They key to transformation is to find a way of disrupting a habit through environmental change" (p. 9). It is not sufficient to *only* participate in self-reflective practice without also engaging the larger "social practices and structures" as named by Hytten and Adkens. The personal must be tied to action; critical self-examination informs personal practices and behaviors that have larger societal implications.

Audrey Thompson asks for "new forms of responsiveness," (2003a, p. 22) of ways to engage this work, moving beyond our appeals, discourses and resistance to interrogating the Culture of Power. Hytten and Adkins name the "pedagogy of whiteness" as an approach that "requires scholars, teacher educators, and teachers to unpack deeply embedded cultural assumptions about our identities—it demands that we come to see ourselves as "white" and to see the unearned privileges that accrue to that identity" (2001, p. 440). This pedagogy both identifies and pushes the rupture, the initial moments of awareness. These ruptures test the limits of what Britzman labels as "what we cannot bear to know," contributing to a process of "unlearning" (2006). Britzman's question "How can one introduce unusual ideas that seem to go against consciousness without also calling forth the resistance?" (p. 11). The act of unlearning resists being defined by the dominant culture, instead imagining alternative possibilities. In this way, unlearning what is considered "normal" or "common sense" means confronting these constructs and exploring other ways of knowing. Britzman (2009) writes:

> It becomes impossible to wonder how the work of the unconscious, itself an index of our affective history of learning desire, leads us to what we look for and hope to re-find in the world of others. But is as if this index is always being written in invisible ink, referencing what is illegible in experience. We must read between the lines for the advent and vicissitudes of our emotional world; but to do that, we need a language and an educational setting unafraid to write a story different from the one anticipated (p. 82).

Like conocimiento, unlearning exposes an emotional, sometimes ambiguous existence.

Towards a Pedagogy of Conocimiento

Britzman's notion of writing a story "different from the one anticipated" reflects the hopes of conocimiento. Following up on confronting the habits of privilege, our stories, as whites are revised, a *re-vision* of our practices and how they interact with the greater societal institutions. Throughout her work, Anzaldúa uses the bridge as a metaphor—to cross to another, unknown realm, to connect to something new and unknown as well as space to exist in the middle. A pedagogy of conocimiento to de-center whiteness should not subscribe to positivist notions of learning. Building on Paulo Freire's notion of becoming, conocimiento challenges the status quo, often bringing pain, disruption and confusion. However, it also offers tremendous opportunities for growth, connection to others and possibilities for change. Providing the critical framework for this process, Anzaldúa places conocimiento and alternate ways of knowing at the center, spaces to question privilege and certainty within the dominant culture and its complicit inhabitants.

I struggled with the idea of using Anzaldúa's writings as a frame to disrupt whiteness. I questioned my intentions and myself repeatedly, reflecting on Thompson's

observation that “When white scholars strategically quote material by scholars of color . . . we colonize the work of the Other to enrich our writing and enhance our authority” (Thompson, 2003a, p. 11). As a white woman, was I colonizing Anzaldúa’s words for my own gain, again reinforcing my position as a “good white”? Was it appropriate for me as a white woman to apply her work to elements of critical whiteness? Anzaldúa (1981) writes, “We cannot educate white women and take them by the hand. Most of us are willing to help, but we can’t do the white woman’s homework for her. . . . “ (p. 29). Remembering Audre Lorde’s (1981) admonishment of Mary Daly from *This Bridge Called My Back*, was I using her words to “legitimize” my work (p. 96)? Thompson writes, “Taking the work of people of color seriously requires studying their projects, not just quoting the occasional point that coincides with what we were going to say anyway” (2003a, p. 13). As a white woman, I do not claim ownership of Anzaldúa’s vision or her words. Instead, I put her words at the center of my project.

In the spirit of Thompson’s hope “to initiate an open-ended conversation” (2003a, p. 9), Anzaldúa offers a bridge to span the space between the initial disruption of whiteness to a space of possibilities for connections and transformation. My intent is not to offer a guaranteed pathway for antiracist whites that can be saved through an Anzaldúan seven step program. Instead, we imagine the path of conocimiento as a way to build upon the ruptures, of sustaining initial confrontations and inform practice of emerging anti-oppressive educators. For whites, conocimiento “shifts” our path into territories we may not know or that intimidate us. As Anzaldúa (2002) writes, “These conocimientos challenge official and conventional ways of looking at the world, ways set

up by those benefiting from such constructions" (p. 542). Being a part of this process disrupts conventionalism on every level, including whiteness and ways of creating and framing knowledge. While I am arguing for conocimiento as pedagogy, this is not a dominant culture pedagogy; it seeks to rupture traditional ways of learning and knowing, questioning "conventional knowledge's current categories, classifications and contents" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 541). Exploring the critical framework of her seven stages of conocimiento not only disrupts dominant beliefs and structures, but also provides a path towards critical hope and a new vision for the future.

The seven stages of conocimiento come from Anzaldúa's piece "now let us shift. . . the path of conocimiento. . . inner work, public acts." They are:

- Stage 1: El arrebato. . . rupture, fragmentation. . . an ending, a beginning
- Stage 2: Nepantla. . . torn between ways
- Stage 3: The Coatlicue state. . . desconocimiento and the cost of knowing
- Stage 4: The call. . . el compromise. . . the crossing and conversion
- Stage 5: Putting Coyolzauhqui together. . . new personal and collective "stories"
- Stage 6: the blow-up. . . a clash of realities
- Stage 7: shifting realities. . . acting out the vision or spiritual activism

A pedagogy of conocimiento offers opportunities to develop a deeper analysis of the privileged self in the work towards structural change. Although each stage is distinct, they do not necessarily occur in prescribed order; in fact, we may inhabit multiple stages simultaneously. Of particular significance is the title of her piece, an emphasis on the inner work as it leads to public acts. Giddens (1984) writes, "It is always the case that the day-to-day activity of social actors draws upon and reproduces structural features of wider social systems" (p. 24). Altering the "activity of social actors" must interrupt

privileged habits *and* inform influence on systems of power if there is to be a move towards anti-oppressive practices. Here, I will describe each of the stages in greater detail, using examples from the case study of ELC 381 as well as my autoethnography.

Stage 1: El arrebato. . . . rupture, fragmentation. . an ending, a beginning

Locating and creating the rupture initiates this process. However, as I discovered in the evaluation of teacher education programs and participants in ELC 381, possibilities for ruptures may be limited. Acknowledging responsibility for oppressive practices is a challenge for those in the dominant culture because, as Allan Johnson (2006) writes, "the oppressive effect of privilege is often so insidious that dominant groups complain whenever it is brought up for discussion" (p. 65). However, it is these discussions that initiate the shift. However unsettling, these ruptures may begin as fissures in the surface of our existence, but eventually must crack down to the foundation, to the core of our identity.

For the students I interviewed in ELC 381, it was exposure to issues they had not previously considered, like Kelsey, who said the class "really taught me about the things I feel strongly about and find out more things about myself. I stepped outside of my comfort zone." Identifying the moments of ruptures may come from a more direct questioning of student positionalities. For example, Tyrone Howard, a faculty member at UCLA's Center X, designed a course called "Identity and Teaching" where students spend the semester reflecting on their relationship to race and its impact on their future teaching. He (2003) writes, "teacher educators will be ineffective in this process if they

are not equipped with the appropriate skills, strategies and questions for teachers to use to reflect on race and ethnicity" (p. 10). This direct approach sparks the "inner work" of this process.

Unfortunately, as we have seen in ELC 381 examples and from my own stories, this stage is often the most difficult one, understanding Anzaldúa's (2002) words, "You are no longer who you used to be" (p. 547). However, the path of conocimiento demands the recognition of the rupture and avoidance; guilt and denial related to a privileged positionality must be problematized constantly. Being pushed in a way that is uncomfortable and painful, the whiteness narrative moves away from the center and hopefully leads to an alternative story. For me, the rupture that "stuck" was in my class with Dr. Bettez. This experience forced me to relinquish my prescribed ways of knowing, heeding Anzaldúa's words to (1980) "throw away abstraction and the academic learning, the rules, the map and compass" (in 2009, p. 34). And although "white talk" attempts to derail critical self-examination, ruptures can and do occur.

Stage 2: Nepantla. . . torn between ways

Rather than retreat from these "blow-ups," Anzaldúa suggests the nepantlera (of the nepantla space, p. 567) to navigate between these factions, a way to connect across difference. The role of the nepantlera is one that "shifts from their customary position to the reality of first one group and then the other" (p. 567), in the space between factions. Existing in this space allows nepantleras to work towards mending the community, not to promote self-interest. There is a danger, however, of nepantleras being appropriated by

whites wanting to further their positionalities and agendas, rather than work towards shared visions for change

Anzaldúa (2002) writes about the space of ambiguity and its contradictory nature, "Now you flounder in the chaos, now feel cradled in la calma" (p.548). There is safety and comfort in the old ways of knowing and framing the world because we know how to work within that framework. The unknown is frightening. Those comfortable ways do not work for justice, for being a part of something greater. This existence in an in-between space borders isolation and uncertainty, indeed "the zone between the outer expression of change and your inner relationship to self'"" (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 549). The dominant culture relies on certainty as a framework. However, it is this ambiguous and uncertain space, "torn between ways" that may become a site for transformation. Existing in this uncertainty effectively de-centers whiteness; a certain uncertainty surfaces. Antonia Darder (2002) writes that this ambiguous space is necessary for change and is "predicated on our willingness and ability to grapple with the complexity and ambiguity of the present, despite the heightened level of tension we may experience" (p. 50).

This complexity and ambiguity can make it difficult to determine where we really belong. There is a risk in this in-between space, one of possible paralysis, not knowing the next steps to take or complacency, a retreat back to pre-rupture habits. Prior to my UNCG experience, ruptures caused inaction and/or silence (complacency) on my part or intense anxiety on not knowing how to respond (paralysis). Anzaldúa (2002) writes, "You can't stand living according to the old terms—yesterday's mode of consciousness pinches like an outgrown shoe" (p. 549). Where do we belong when this happens? In

my experience, I found that I didn't belong anymore in the confines of my familiar white circles. Nor did I belong with my friends and colleagues of color. When I did turn to white friends and colleagues, I was met with resistance and denial, many of them believing, "This is a phase. She'll get it over it eventually." However, once I recognized my complicity in matters of racism, privilege and power, I knew I did not want to consciously retreat to that space.

Stage 3: The Coatlicue state. . . desconocimiento and the cost of knowing

White privilege exists as a form of desconocimiento, an unwillingness to know. Rather than confront the complexities of whiteness, we embrace privilege, an act that "allows us not to know, not to see, and not to act. Privilege provides moral insulation against the cold winds of reality and awareness" (Howard, 2006, p. 65). Once this ignorance is ruptured, the inner struggle continues. Understanding your complicity in a systemic oppressive structure can be overwhelming. Anzaldúa (2002) writes, "On the edge of awareness, you seek comfort by blanking out reality and retreating into fantasies" (p. 552). For me, this often means retreating to privilege, the shadow-beast of critical whiteness.

Naming this shadow-beast is crucial in the journey towards conocimiento. I think about my reaction to the Audrey Thompson article in Dr. Bettez' class or my Harvard experience. Although I did not interrogate it at the time, I was faced with the knowledge that my privilege made me complicit in a system causing pain and oppression to others. Within ELC 381, Sarah came close to confronting this shadow-beast in her commentary on whiteness, though she did not implicate herself as she writes, "Few whites recognize

the impact that such racism has had on shaping their values, beliefs, personal and social interests and actions." Anzaldúa (2002) writes, "seeing through these cracks makes you uncomfortable because it reveals aspects of yourself you don't want to own" (p. 553). For whites, it means interrogating privilege and confronting those situations when they arise, of calling out those who think you are playing along with them, that you are similar to them in terms of their complicity to the Culture of Power. Confronting desconocimiento allows for a painful awareness. However, I remain aware of Anzaldúa's (2002) words, "you begin to own the bits of yourself you've disowned, take back the projections you've cast onto others, and relinquish your victim identity" (p. 554). Through my work in Dr. Bettez' course described in chapter five and in subsequent courses, I continued my exploration, not allowing myself to retreat to the role of victim.

Stage 4: The call. . . el compromiso. . . the crossing and conversion

Crossing thresholds is important and necessary in the process of conocimiento. With an increased practice of self-reflection and time in the nepantla state, whites may cross the bridge from entrenched dominant practices to another space, as yet unknown and undefined. However, this is perhaps the most challenging of the stages for the Culture of Power; whites do not have to cross the bridge, content to remain in the land of privilege. Often it takes others to coax and guide them/us across. Their/our resistance remains an enormous obstacle to conocimiento. Significant in this crossing and conversion is the conocimiento of self not limited to the intellect; there is a sense of knowing, different from before, one that incorporates emotions and the inner spirit. Anzaldúa (2002) writes, "Nothing is fixed. The pulse of existence, the heart of the

universe is fluid" (p. 556). Anzaldúa's observations resonate with Freire's notion of "becoming" (1998) when she writes, "You begin to define yourself in terms of who you are becoming, not who you have been" (2002, p. 556). Again, the process is ongoing, subject to the acceptance of uncertainty and an evolving sense of self.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the crossing is the element of change, of possibilities. The idea of something that connects one path to another can indeed be a barrier because there is fear of leaving the familiar. Again there is a question of belonging. Am I alone on this bridge? What will happen when I cross? Within this journey, it is vital for whites to understand that people of color should not have the responsibility to take us across this bridge or act as our guides as we navigate this path. We cannot look to them to validate us. As Gloria Yamato (1990) writes to her white colleagues,

> Do not expect that people of color should teach you how to behave non-oppressively. Do not give into the pull to be lazy. Think, hard. Do not blame people of color for your frustration about racism, but do appreciate the fact that people of color will often help you get in touch with that frustration. Assume that your effort to be a good friend is appreciated, but don't expect or accept gratitude from people of color. Work on racism for your sake, not "their" sake. Assume that you are needed and capable of being a good ally. Know that you'll make mistakes and commit yourself to correcting them and continuing on as an ally, no matter what. Don't give up (pp. 23-24).

Such a message offers *possibilities* in the path of conocimiento, not the solution. Conversion and change is difficult, but crossing this threshold and relinquishing previous fixed identities allows us to be open to others. Openness is essential for the pedagogy of conocimiento of whites as we must break away from our more traditional and

conventional frameworks. Once the initial shock of a rupture or pedagogical crisis occurs, there are new habits to be formed, new ways of being in the world. The challenge remains to continue interrogating the unconscious habits of privilege.

Stage 5: Putting Coyolzauhqui together. . . new personal and collective "stories"

There must be new narratives, new ways of relating to others as a part of this threshold crossing. The image of the Aztec goddess Coyolaxuhqui offers "an attempt to heal the wounds. . . a search for inner completeness" (Anzaldúa, 2003, p. 292). Part of arriving at this place of healing removes whiteness from the center of the story, becoming part of a greater collective narrative, rather than personal redemptive practice. Indeed, as Thompson (2003) writes, if whites focus on redemption and feeling "good," possibilities for change are lost because "that guarantees we will feel growth without loss—we refuse the possibility of a response" (p. 23). Conocimiento moves us beyond guarantees craved by the dominant culture, though creating new stories can be a frightening endeavor.

Rejecting the traditional narratives requires Anzaldúa's (2002) observation that "Challenging the old self's orthodoxy is never enough; you must submit a sketch of an alternative self" (p. 559). This requires deep self-reflective practices in the nepantla realm, understanding that any notion of fixed identity must be problematized. Anzaldúa writes, "Reflexive awareness and other aspects of conocimiento if practiced daily overrule external instructions transmitted by your ethnic and dominant cultures, override the internal mandates of your genes and personal ego" (p. 559). Without challenging our traditional identities, we will fall back on the familiar white stories framed by privilege

and protected from critical questioning. Thompson writes, "because white moral principles tend to return us to our standing assumptions about our goodness as individuals, significant change in our perceptions is slow" (2003, p. 19). For example, ELC 381 participant Jane resists disruption to what is familiar as she describes a reading focused on critical examination of Disney films. While she acknowledged inequality issues within these films, she resists acceptance "I do what I can do to see everyone equally, but to me a Disney movie is just a Disney movie. I grew up with theme movies and I will always love them."

Change in perceptions comes from an increased reliance on the "sketch of an alternative self" as described by Anzaldúa. The healing of oneself from the initial work of conocimiento reveals new ways to approach ourselves and connect with others. Conocimiento offers a way for this alternate self to incorporate healing, not absolution, to move beyond traditional boundaries of whiteness to a more complex and rich mixture of the combined body, mind and spirit. Anzaldúa writes, "Tu autohistoria is not carved in stone but drawn on sand and subject to shifting winds" (p. 562). Within Dr. Bettez' course, I began to re-think my relationship with fellow students, opening myself up to their experiences and perceptions, though different from mine.

Stage 6: the blow-up. . . a clash of realities

The path of conocimiento offers deep self-reflective practices, a combination of the mind, body and spirit as well as an acceptance of uncertainty. However, there is a danger of individuals rejecting this work as a way to re-center whiteness and the dominant framework. Conocimiento remains a necessary and ongoing challenge. This

approach cannot be seen as an optional developmental tool, one that helps us to be "good whites," solidifying our positionalities. The "blow-up" occurs when we fall back into habits of complacency. This happened for me throughout my vignettes; who I thought I was and how I interacted with others clashed.

This work requires necessary risk, but it is a tremendous obstacle to begin the journey. Remaining entrenched in privilege is easy. For those who work towards conocimiento, facing your reality and transformation will be painful. While the initial disruption may be very personal, it may be in the connection with others where the clash occurs. What happens when you change and others have not? Anzaldúa writes, "You think you've made progress, gained a new awareness, found a new version of reality, created a workable story, fulfilled an obligation, and followed your own conscience. . . . Your story fails the reality test" (p. 567). I am reminded of the third vignette from chapter five. I was comfortable in my "awareness," only to have that disrupted by classroom discussion. Anzaldua writes, "Though they may lip service to diversity issues, most don't shift from positions of power. The privilege of whiteness allows them to evade questions of complicity with those in power; it gives leave to disrespect other peoples' realities and types of knowledge" (p. 565). I see this reflected in the curricular designs of teacher education programs studies, even some of those framed by a social justice framework. My vignettes revealed an unwillingness to relinquish my position of power as a white person. I was content to silently criticize racist practices without the necessary critical self-examination.

Stage 7: Shifting realities. . . acting out the vision or spiritual activism

To work towards the possibility of transformation, we acknowledge the complexity of the process both within and outside our experiences and ourselves. Conocimiento allows us to shift away from conventional ways of thinking and to remove whiteness as the architect of knowledge. Anzaldúa writes, "Conocimiento of our interconnectivity encourages white women to examine and deconstruct racism and 'whiteness'" (p. 570). This interconnectivity remains key to what is possible when whiteness is not at the center. Thompson (2003b) writes about the need for whites to think about anti-racist education "in terms of a relational undertaking. . . .focusing on how our lives are caught up together, how possibilities are made together" (pp. 392-393). Possibilities to forge connections across difference emerge from the stages of conocimiento. Indeed, as Anzaldúa observes, "When you relate to others, not as parts, problems, or useful commodities, but from a connectionist view compassion triggers transformation" (p. 569).

Relating to the "Other" is central to Anzaldúa's notion of conocimiento. Working across boundaries, the nepantleras cultivate connections and a shared sense of community for change. By crossing these boundaries, there is hope to dismantle them as this stage "permits an expansive awareness that finds the best instead of the worst in the other, enabling you to think of la otra in a compassionate way. Accepting the other as an equal in a joint endeavor, you respect and are fully present for her" (2002, p. 572). This work depends on conocimiento informing actions, both intellectually and spiritually. Whites engaged in this process are not in the center, nor have fixed identities, instead working to

transcend boundaries. Listening and learning from the experiences of others provides spaces for connection and though conocimiento have “flexibility to swing from your intense feelings to those of the other without being hijacked by either” (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 569).

This final stage of conocimiento stresses the necessity of spiritual activism, one that emerges through self-reflection and connection to others. Anzaldúa writes “This conocimiento gives you the ability to listen, to want to know the other point of view—not so it reinforces your positionality, but actually creates a community, a relationship” (2002, p. 569). Moving beyond the individual process, conocimiento builds community for change, especially important in the critical examination of whiteness. This is the continuation of the inner work becoming public acts, because, “internal work coupled with commitment to struggle for social transformation—changes your relationship to your body, and, in turn, to other bodies and to the world. And when that happens, you can change the world” (Anzaldúa, 2002, p. 574).

Such possibilities exist within Anzaldúa’s seven stages of conocimiento. While Thompson (2003a) rightfully worries “We are trying to fix racism with tools that were constructed, in part, to rationalize and /or correct for racism, not tools that are organized around ideas that we have yet to fully understand” (p. 26), Anzaldúa offers a reimagined blueprint, a new way forward towards transformation. Her seven stages of conocimiento offer ways to be in the world, focused on deep self-reflective practice, trust in uncertainty, honoring the whole self (mind/body/spirit) and connections across differences. These practices shape the pedagogy of conocimiento, a critical framework to

sustain the work initiated by disruption and problematize the Culture of Power. What begins as a rupture of common sense shifts to redefine the systems and contribute to real change. Indeed, as Anzaldúa (2002) proclaims, "When one person steps into conocimiento, the whole of humanity witnesses that step and eventually steps into consciousness" (p. 573), a consciousness to change what is.

Classrooms as Critical Communities

Changing what is requires an ongoing process, a cultivation of the initial rupture. While this work may begin with crisis in an educational setting for pre-service teachers, how can it develop into conocimiento, eventually informing anti-oppressive practices? Classrooms are natural spaces for this kind of exploration and investigation. However, once a particular class ends, or a student graduates, alternate locations must be found and the work sustained; as Bettez (2011) writes, "they need support networks—critical communities—to sustain them in their practices and the inevitable resultant struggles" (pp. 76-77). Establishing critical communities is an essential part of developing initial ruptures into sustained critical self-reflective practice. This is a collective endeavor, one that requires building relationships around a shared goal of social justice. According to Thompson (2003b), "To become ethically and relationally responsive to one another, we may need new, emergent and asymmetrical conceptions of listening, learning, humility, generosity and caring" (p. 393). It isn't enough to just create the ruptures; it is what we do once they happen. The focus on the inner work must exist within teacher education programs, ideally framing the program in general. Then, the public acts must be

connected to that inner work. Otherwise, examining whiteness and privilege risks becoming self-indulgent, self-congratulatory exercises.

It remains challenging to name what is "common sense;" indeed, as Sleeter (1996) writes, "Fish do not see water, not because it does not exist, but because it surrounds them constantly" (p.112). The influence and authority of whiteness and the dominant culture continues to mandate "standards" within education and determines what is necessary for emerging teachers to learn to be "effective." Teacher education programs need to include courses like ELC 381, but also infuse other required courses with critical self-reflective practices and critical questioning. It is not enough to be an "expert" in content and classroom management; knowing self and interrogating beliefs and practices must become central elements of teacher education curricula if we are to work for a re-imagined world, understanding Freire's (1998) vision:

> It is essential that during the experience of teaching preparation, the prospective teacher must realize that a correct way of thinking is not a gift from heaven, nor is it to be found in teachers' guide books, put there by illuminated intellectuals who occupy the center of power. On the contrary, a correct way of thinking that goes beyond the ingenuous must be produced by the learners in communion with the teacher responsible for their education (43).

My interviews with the ELC 381 students and my own examination of beliefs and practices within the autoethnography reveal the pervasive, yet invisible power of whiteness and privilege. Even with crisis moments to awaken us, what prevents us from being lulled back to a proverbial sleep? A continued commitment to this work, fostered by teacher educators can be sustained through critical communities, framing teacher preparation within critical pedagogy and education for social justice. Yes, some white

students will reject any interruption of their privileged positionalities because confronting their limits will be too painful, too difficult. Others may diligently work towards the false construct of the "good white," in an attempt to be "enlightened." Could we really engage a pedagogy of conocimiento, informing and infusing all curricula within classrooms? What would it look like to see this in practice?

I think of Picower's Critical Inquiry Projects and imagine an ongoing reflective journal or portfolio throughout a teacher education program, offering students queries (like UCLA professor Tyrone Howard, for example) for critical self-reflection under the guide of a mentor and pushing them to interrogate beliefs and practices informed by a dominant culture. Such a process could develop the conocimiento described and could "take teacher's hegemonic thinking to task, and require them to reflect on the effects of their practice on the students they teach" (Howard and Aleman, 2012, p. 166). For the future, I would like to study the longer-term impact of courses like ELC 381 and interview students during student teaching as well as in their first jobs after graduation. Do these courses inform future practice as an anti-oppressive teacher? Where are the continued rupture points for white students? Would a critical inquiry project, similar to the model facilitated by Picower, maintain a higher level of engagement with critical self-reflective practice?

Troubling the "Good White"

In his 1999 book, *Moral Outrage in Education,* David Purpel observes, "we find ourselves engaged in maintaining and revitalizing a social structure in the form of a social triage in which some flourish, many struggle and far too many perish" (p. 73). Fifteen

years later, his observations remain accurate, particularly in the high stakes testing environment pervasive in many schools. Throughout the dissertation, I detailed the behavior of the ELC 381 participants and myself as we appealed to being the "good whites." What if we turned the teacher as missionary, role model and caretaker into agency for change, pushing ourselves to engage the internal work of confronting privileged practices, making a public commitment to education for social change?

Applebaum (2010) writes, "the required notion of responsibility must be able to aim a critical gaze on white desires for moral goodness and innocence" (p. 179). Preparing students for this work requires tremendous responsibility, particularly in teacher education programs where faculty mediate for students the tension between guiding painful discoveries and disrupting complacency. The danger of "white talk" is ever present, displacing deeper reflection on the part of students. Teacher education programs need more opportunities like ELC 381 and others mentioned within the program evaluation. However, ruptures in this study were few. Teaching students to hone their lenses around issues of power and privilege will help them to detect it, name it and begin to think about how to dismantle it. Boler's "pedagogy of discomfort" is a good example of working with students on these issues, understanding "There is hope if we are willing to step beyond our known selves. The educator has a compassionate responsibility to show students others who have walked down this path" (p. 129). I think of Paulo Freire's words, "My role in the world is not simply that of someone who registers what occurs but of someone who has an input into what happens" (1998, p. 73). Students should be pushed to examine their practices, not just internally, but what

tangible actions will support their work? It is this combination of Anzaldúa's (2002) "inner works and public acts" that has the potential to alter oppressive structures.

Personal Implications

The process of writing this dissertation illuminated just how deeply ingrained my habits of white privilege are. These "unconscious commitments" are difficult to battle; I initially resisted a deeper analysis, wanting to leave my work in the personal realm. If there is only a personal investment in this work, there can be no action associated with it. I aspire to be what Anzaldua (2002) calls a "nepantlera," to facilitate the in-between state and, as she writes:

> By attending to what the other is not saying, what she's not doing, what isn't happening, and by looking for the opposite, unacknowledged emotion—the opposite of anger is fear, of self-righteousness is guilt, of hate is love—las nepantleras attempt to see through the other's situation to her underlying unconscious desire. Accepting doubts and ambiguity, they reframe the conflict and shift the point of view. (p. 567)

Failure to act on my reflections leads to more appeals towards "good white" behavior, but only in the abstract. My "inner work" has had a broader impact, "reframing the conflict" both personally and professionally as I think about Bonilla-Silva's (2006) words, "the networks of social interaction matter" (p. 141).

I work at a small, private liberal arts college and hold a position within the upper levels of administrative hierarchy. My "networks of social interaction" allow me to have access to decision-makers not only through the institutions's organizational chart, but also through regular face-to-face interaction. My "public acts" combine both the subtle

and more direct action. Among other responsibilities, I work with students in academic trouble. I spend a lot of time talking with them about their classes and with them, co-creating strategies for improvement. Through my ongoing process of critical self-reflection and interrogation, I apply a critical lens to this work. Often, when students come to meet with me, there is an issue with a professor or classmate; because of this work, I can identify issues of white privilege and Culture of Power habits framing interactions, engaging in deficit thinking. I am able to better address and facilitate these mediations. I advocate for learning more about learning environments for students and ask how our professors approach their diverse classrooms. Are all student voices heard both inside and outside of the classroom?

I also supervise the multicultural education department. In recent years, I worked with other staff and faculty to write Guilford's diversity plan, a more formalized commitment to issues of diversity on campus. However, this plan is often represented within a positivist framework by other individuals and offices, particularly in enrollment meetings and strategic planning meetings, among others. Presentations focus on the percentage of students, staff and faculty of color and if we have met diversity goals or reached a "quota." On more than one occasion, I have repeatedly emphasized the focus on substantive change, asking questions about what kind of environment are we providing to students of color in a PWI? How are we valuing them in a structure designed to serve a dominant culture, imparting to others that this work is not solely the responsibility of the multicultural education staff members.

I also engage in more immediate "public acts," many of them in informal situations. As one example, I attended an enrollment-related meeting where we discussed increasing future enrollment of international students. Someone in the room mentioned a current student, named Osama. One staff member in the room snickered and asked if he was a terrorist, like Osama Bin Laden. Some others in the room chuckled. I looked to a vice president in the room, to see if he would address this racist comment. Because he remained silent, I spoke up, saying "that comment is completely inappropriate and unacceptable." While my immediate and visceral reaction confronted this remark, it did not address the larger issue. I could have asked her what informed her comment, why she labeled a student in this way, initiating a dialogue. I wondered how often this happens in other arenas, where no one confronts these acts of oppression.

In another example, the directors of study abroad and the career development center recently shared copies of their latest brochures designed to increase student participation in their programs. All the students in these brochures were white. What kind of message is conveyed to students of color when they are not represented? In addition, there is an upcoming presentation for the faculty on student retention. In reviewing a colleague's PowerPoint presentation, the leading image is a white male at graduation. This is particularly ironic since we are focused on the low retention of African American males. Because I am white, I use my cultural insider status to disrupt these institutional practices and infiltrate circles of power.

On a personal level, I am a parent, raising two white children, Sam (13) and Phoebe (10). It is important to guide them away from "white talk" and to foster habits of

questioning their privilege as well as the dominant culture. They attend a private Quaker school, similar to my educational experience. I see some of the same issues repeating themselves; once again, there is learning about social justice issues and equality in a homogeneous realm of whiteness. For example, their school has a "Diversity Day" once a year in the spring. I have met with teachers and the administration repeatedly to express my concern about the essentializing of difference and the danger of a community of white people talking about diversity in these ways. In many ways, it reminds me of the teacher education programs I studied; diversity is something to study in one class, or in a day-long presentation. For the first time this year, the school changed the name to "Unity Day" and I have been invited to informally work with them on engaging diversity and anti-oppression issues in more substantive ways.

Sam and Phoebe ask a lot of questions. Last year, Phoebe volunteered in a local kindergarten classroom. She came home talking about how kids were in reading and math groups, placed by ability, but also noticing that the students in the lowest level were children of color. She asked her teachers and me about this because she noticed the contrast between that group and the higher level group populated by white students. While she may not yet have the vocabulary to name deficit thinking and practices, she was able to recognize a larger issue. When he was in the sixth grade, Sam was at lunch table when a couple of classmates began to tell racist and sexist jokes. He confronted his peers, told them they were wrong and reported their actions to teachers. In writing a research project on post Civil War Reconstruction efforts, Sam looked up from his book and said to me, "Mom, if I were an African-American person, I would be angry all of the

time, at everyone and everything." He recognized structural racism and the personal impact of oppressive practices.

I don't provide these examples to reinforce a semblance of "good white" status, but rather to convey that my personal work has ripples in a larger pond. This does not mean I have all of the answers or do not struggle with these issues. I share my struggle with Sam and Phoebe, encouraging them to be vulnerable and critical. We openly talk about racism, sexism and homophobia in our house and ways to combat what they see. As a white parent raising white children, I want them to ask questions of the society around them and of themselves. Critical thinking about the world around them remains a major priority for me as their mother. And while this was always important to me, it has a deeper meaning and significance now. It is my hope that Sam and Phoebe will also engage the tough inner work to influence their public acts, in their classrooms, with their peer groups and in the larger world.

Inconclusion (with a Nod to Audrey Thompson)

In *Tiffany, friend of people of* color, Thompson ends the piece with "Inconclusion." It remains an appropriate way to frame the conclusion of this dissertation. There is not a resolution, no guarantees that ruptures and subsequent interrogation of privilege will yield increased work towards social justice. It is clear that the rupture is important, if not vital in the process of becoming an anti-oppressive teacher. These moments of rupture open up new possibilities if we are willing to turn inward and explore them. Intentionally creating these crisis moments and expanding upon them can de-center whiteness and interrogate its power. Freire (1998) writes "Education

never was, is not, and never can be neutral or indifferent in regard to the reproduction of the dominant ideology or the interrogation of it" (p. 91). Unfortunately, convincing the dominant status quo to be subject to such interrogation remains a serious challenge, one that cultural insiders must tackle. As a white researcher and future teacher, I remain in the fire and continue to my process of knowing self, understanding it is an ongoing journey of transformation, both within the "inner work and public acts."

Working towards transformation means crossing the metaphorical bridge, willing to move outside of what we know. What lies on the other side may not be fully formed or identified, but it is a new way to engage, to transform. Anzaldúa (2002) writes,

> The bridge. . . is both a barrier and a point of transformation. By crossing, you invite a turning point, initiate a change. And change is never comfortable, easy, or neat. It'll overturn all your relationships, leave behind lover, parent, friend, who, not wanting to disturb the status quo nor lose you, try to keep you from changing. Okay, so cambio is hard. . . Doesn't life consist of crossing a series of thresholds? Conocimiento hurts, but not as much as desconocimiento (p. 557).

"Inviting the turning point" requires resisting the definitions and expectations. It may be isolating and lonely to cross the threshold, but it is an important path to follow and essential for conocimiento. For the white, dominant culture, a crisis means a way to problematize or positionalities, particularly as emerging teachers. By engaging in an ongoing pedagogy of conocimiento, we learn to exist on the bridge from what was and what could be, understanding this work as a continuous process towards a critical hope.

For Freire (1998), a critical hope allows for imagination and an opportunity to envision what our world could be; indeed, "hope is an essential component and not an intruder" in our existence (p. 69). Love and hope form the foundation of our search for

meaning whether in the classroom or not, fueling work for a changed world. It is where we hone the "reciprocity of performance" where "that eternal flame is lit" (Felman, 2001, p. 36). We depend on each other to keep the fire burning. Sometimes it will flare up or individuals will attempt to extinguish it. The fire's upkeep is an ongoing process.

Because we are all unfinished, there is not an end to this process, but many beginnings. Boler (2004) writes, "critical hope entails a responsibility—a willingness to be fully alive in the process of constant change and becoming" (p.128). Reflecting upon such a process reveals the necessity of possibility and the journey we must take together to create change. Maxine Greene (1983) asserts," To undertake a search, is, of course, to take an initiative, to refuse stasis and the flatness of ordinary life" (p.123). Refusing the "stasis" and "ordinary life" offered in our classrooms leads to a search for meaning and hope that lay at the very foundation of a transformative education. The search is what is meaningful and fulfilling, the possibility and hope of what is yet to come. Hytten and Warren (2004) write "Where the bridge ends, we do not know. That location is still being imagined, still lying on the other side of possibility" (p. 337). As anti-oppressive educators, we can work together to collectively imagine these possibilities, those of justice.

I am left with more questions than answers. Although I am engaged in the process of conocimiento, shifting between stages, I continue to struggle with interrogation of my privilege and practices. For example, in writing my autoethnography, I initially resisted ruthless analysis of my experiences, afraid of the vulnerability required. Such engagement with my whiteness and confronting my own limits has been both

challenging and exhilarating. Relinquishing the need to control meaning and analyze everything, I continue to understand that this work ". . . entails talking about risk, vulnerability, unlearning, and possibly even crisis" (Hytten & Adkins, 2001, p. 443). I understand that there is no "definite destination" (Thompson, 2003b, p. 390) on this journey and that I must remain certain of my uncertainty as I go forward.

A pedagogy of conocimiento does not offer guarantees of the end of oppressive practices. Habits of privilege are deeply ingrained in whiteness and subsequent resistance. Because "educational structures and practices are some of the most effective ways by which habits are formed and transformed (Sullivan, 2006, p. 27), there are opportunities within teacher education programs to initiate ruptures and sustain them. Kevin Kumashiro (2012) writes, "Education reflects and shapes our very ways of making sense of who we are and the world in which we live, and therefore can teach people either to self-regulate themselves in a system that privileges only some and/or to challenge that very system" (p. 35). Reflecting on my process and work within this dissertation, I continue my journey towards conocimiento, combining my "inner works and public acts" for a re-visioning of education.

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APPENDIX A

SYLLABUS FOR ELC 381

ELC 381-05: The Institution of Education
Spring 2013
MHRA 3208
Tuesday, Thursday 11:00-12:15

Instructor Information:
Martha Price
Office Hours: By appointment

Required Text:

• Shapiro, S., Latham, K., and Ross, S.N. (2006). *The Institution of Education, 5th* ed. Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing
-available in the campus bookstore
- a copy is on reserve in the library

• Additional readings will be on Blackboard

****Please bring the readings that are due with you to class****

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is an introduction to the foundations of education; that is, the social, historical and philosophical perspectives and events that play a role in the institution of education. We will explore not only the larger societal factors that contribute to the climate of schools but also our own values, beliefs, and biases. This will help us better understand what we, as well as our students, bring to the classroom. Essentially, this class is an opportunity to reflect critically on the profession of teaching and the institution of education.

Additionally, this class views education as a locus for social change and social justice. Therefore, I hope that we challenge each other to be reflective about our own practices, thinking critically about issues of equity and inclusion in schools. As such, this is a space in which it is important for all of you to bring forth issues and concerns you see pertinent. We will have class discussions, group work, film viewing and other types of classroom setups throughout the semester.

EXPECTATIONS:
Throughout the course we will discuss topics that address issues of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and religion. At times this may make some students uncomfortable.

That is okay. I hope that each of you will push yourselves. It is imperative that we allow different perspectives to be heard and to be respectful of the diversity of opinions, backgrounds, and viewpoints we may encounter throughout the semester (disrespectful comments will not be tolerated).

ATTENDANCE/PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance at each class (and for the duration of the whole class session) is mandatory. Each student will be allowed **two misses without penalty**. This means you can take them for whatever reason you need (e.g. illness, religious holiday, don't feel like coming). You should keep in mind, however, that if you choose to take your misses early on in the semester for fun and end up getting sick later in the semester you will have to accept the consequences. Anything beyond two and your grade will be affected. If you are going to miss and know ahead of time, an email is appreciated (you do not, however, need to give a reason—you are adults and I trust you to do what you need to do). Excessive absences or tardiness will result in a lowered participation grade. Please talk to me if extenuating circumstances occur.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments are due the day listed on the syllabus. Late assignments will be penalized— ***20% off each 24 hour period that they are late****. If you cannot turn in your assignment on time, please talk with me ahead of time. Under extenuating circumstances we can come up with an alternate due date.*

Reflections:

Each week students are required to hand in (via blackboard) a summary and reflection on the readings for the week. The format is as follows:

(1) **one paragraph** for **each** article or video in which you offer a concise summary of the issues discussed.

(2) **one paragraph** that offers your own critical reflection on the reading(s) (i.e. one paragraph total, NOT one paragraph per article/video as is the case for the summaries). For this paragraph you may choose to focus on one particular issue that spoke to you or a general reaction to the theme of the articles.

[e.g. for week 2 you will write a summary paragraph for the Cowhey piece, the McCarthy piece and the online video. Then you will write a final reflection paragraph. You will end up with a total of 4 paragraphs for that week]

Reflections must be handed in by 11:00 AM each Tuesday. Late submissions will be penalized (20% off for each 24 hour period they are late).

Philosophy of Education: Due end of the semester

This will be a running reflection that we will work on each week in class and will build over the course of the semester.

Autobiographical Poem: Due February 21

Who are you? How has the social world around you played a role in the person you are today? What parts of your identity do you feel shape how you see the world and how the world sees you? This is a reflective analysis of the history of you—things that have shaped your life. These may include your schooling, your regional identity, social class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, etc.

The template for this assignment is based on the poem, *Where I'm From*, by George Ella Lyon. We will discuss this in more detail in class.

Photo essay: Due April 23

For this project you will combine text and image (self-taken photographs which may be altered, i.e. collage, mixed media) in a way that constructs a narrative/commentary on an issue of interest/a question of yours concerning education related to the material we have worked on throughout the semester. This narrative is a critical synthesis and/or exploration of your thoughts about the readings/discussions during the course.

Possible guiding questions may include:
How are schools a microcosm of the larger social world (i.e. issues of society are also issues of schools)?
What makes education meaningful?
What is missing in schools today?
What kind of teacher do you want to be?
How are classroom spaces constructed and how does that contribute to power differentials?
What does an "accessible" classroom look like?

Exact page length will vary. Cite ***at least 4*** *articles from the semester to support your argument.*

Presentation:

Each week 2 students will facilitate an activity/class discussion based on one of the readings for that week. You can use this as a chance to (1) present further research on an issue a reading brings up (2) a chance talk about further implications you see for education (3) discuss why this is a particularly interesting/important topic to you (4) tie in some current events. The options are open, but you are required to present me with a **copy of your lesson plan**. We will discuss further details about what the discussion/activity can look like together as a class. Feel free to use media/group activities/discussion questions etc. Typically, Tuesday will be student presentation day. Because two students will present each Tuesday you have the option of (1) each choosing

a different article and splitting the class time; (2) combining forces and work together on 2 articles for the presentation.

GRADING:
Attendance/Participation: 20%
Reflections: 20%
Presentation: 15%
Philosophy of Education: 10%
Autobiographical Paper: 15%
Photo essay: 20%

Major Assignment Due Dates:

Thursday, February 21: Autobiography Due
Tuesday, April 23: Photo essay Due
End of Semester: Philosophy of Education Due

***Academic integrity**
All students are expected to uphold the University Academic Integrity Policy. Please see http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/ for more information.
Helpful online resources for APA style guides can be found at the following address http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/. There are also handouts available next to the reference desk in the UNCG Jackson library.

***Accommodations**
Please notify me of any special needs in order to best suit your learning experience. Some accommodations may need to be arranged through the Office of Disability Services.

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1: Introductions, Course Overview and Jumping Right In

Readings: [NO REFLECTIONS DUE THIS WEEK]
- Postman and Weingartner, *What's Worth Knowing* (Ch. 13)
- Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed* (Ch. 12)
- Armstrong, *Eight Lessons: Becoming the Great Teacher You Already Are* (on Blackboard)

Tuesday, January 15
Thursday, January 17

Week 2: Obedience and Education

Readings:
• Cowhey, *Going against the grain* (on blackboard)
• McCarthy, *Why Johnny can't disobey* (Ch. 6)
• *Remember My Lai* (available on You Tube—4 parts; also available through the University library). (for your reflection, just summarize the video as a whole, not each part)

Tuesday, January 22
Thursday, January 24

Week 3: Media and Schools

Readings:
• The Council on Interracial Books for Children, *10 Quick Ways to Analyze Children's Books for Racism and Sexism* (Ch. 41)
• Christensens, *Unlearning the Myths that Bind Us: Critiquing Fairy Tales and Films* (Ch. 38)

Tuesday, January 29
Thursday, January 31

Week 4: Social Class in America Its Impact on Schools

Readings:
• Zandy, *Decloaking Class: Why Class Identity and Consciousness Count* (Ch. 20)
• Allison, *A Question of Class* (Ch. 21)

Tuesday, February 5
Thursday, February 7

Week 5: Gender and Sex in Schools

Readings:
• Flood and Shaffer, *Safe Boys, Safe Schools* (Ch. 34)
• Johnson, *Looking Pretty, Waiting for the Prince* (Ch. 35)
• Asher, *Girls, Sexuality, and Popular Culture* (Ch. 36)
• Pharr, *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism* (on Blackboard)

Tuesday, February 12

Thursday, February 14

Week 6: Patriarchy and Privilege

Readings:
- Johnson, *Patriarchy* (on Blackboard)
- hooks, *Come Closer to Feminism* (on Blackboard)
- McIntosh, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* (Ch. 26)

Tuesday, February 19
Thursday, February 21: **AUTOBIOGRAPHY DUE**

Week 7: The Hidden Curriculum and Racism in Schools

Readings:
- Loewen, J. *1493: The true Importance of Christopher Columbus* from Lies My Teacher Told Me p. 29-65 (on Blackboard)
- Leistyna "*Racenicity: Whitewashing Ethnicity, Education, and the Public Mind* (Ch. 29)

Tuesday, February 26
Thursday, February 28

Week 8: Teaching Queerly

Readings:
- Gould, *The Story of X* (on blackboard)
- Sears, *Teaching Queerly: Some elementary propositions*
- Harbeck, *Invisible No More: Addressing the needs of lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth and their advocates*

Tuesday, March 5

Thursday, March 7

*******************SPRING BREAK*********************

Week 9: Systemic Inequality and tragedy

Readings:
- Cowhey, *Responding when tragedy enters the classroom*

• *Trial By Fire:*
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/09/07/090907fa_fact_grann
(link on blackboard)
****MULTIPLE PAGES—MAKE SURE TO CLICK "NEXT"****

Tuesday, March 19
Thursday, March 21

Week 10: Inclusion and Schools

Readings:
• Lashley, *Educating All Students: Including Students with Disabilities* (Ch. 45)
• Knoll, *Feminist Disability Studies Pedagogy* (on blackboard)
• selection from Cain's *Quiet* (on blackboard)

Tuesday, March 26
Thursday, March 28

Week 11: Size-ism and Bullying

Readings:
• Bornstein, K. *Hello, Cruel Bullies* (on Blackboard)
• Adios Barbie: http://www.adiosbarbie.com/2012/02/size-activists-shed-light-on-fat-shaming-campaign/
• XO Jane: http://www.xojane.com/issues/whats-wrong-fat-shaming
• Wann: http://www.feminist-reprise.org/docs/wann1.htm
(links on blackboard)

Tuesday, April 2
Thursday, April 4

Week 12: Pedagogy of Caring

Readings:
• Igoa, *Immigrant Children: Art as a Second Language* (Ch. 37)
• Zimmerman, *Bilingual Education as a Manifestation of an Ethic of Caring* (Ch. 43)

Tuesday, April 9
Thursday, April 11

Week 13: Looking to the Future

Readings:

- Peterson, *Planting Seeds of Solidarity* (Ch. 52)
- Brooks & Thompson, *Social Justice in the Classroom* (Ch. 53)

Tuesday, April 16
Thursday, April 18

Week 14: Presentations Begin

Tuesday, April 23: **PHOTOESSAY DUE:** Presentations
Thursday, April 25: Presentations

Week 15: Presentations and Wrap up

April 30: Final day of class **Presentations**