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This dissertation, PEDAGOGICAL DIALOGUE: A STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL DIALOGUE IN A MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION THEORY COURSE, by JEFFREY STUART MORRISON, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Education, in the College of Education and Human Development, Georgia State University.

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**PEDAGOGICAL DIALOGUE: A STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL
DIALOGUE IN MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION THEORY COURSE**

by

JEFFREY STUART MORRISON

Under the Direction of Dr. Joyce E. King and Dr. Jodi Kaufmann

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to gain a deeper understanding of how pedagogical dialogue functioned in a course on multicultural education theory in a college of education. The focus of the study was on the pedagogical dialogue that took place between a professor and students. The setting of the study was a classroom within an urban university located in the southeastern region of the United States. Data collection consisted of interviews, research field notes, and observations; the data were then analyzed for recurring themes. The theoretical foundation for this study was based on the communicative theories of Paulo Freire and Jurgen Habermas; that is, the manner in which their theories have restructured the praxis found in the dialogical learning processes.

The aim of the study was to investigate the manner in which dialogue mediates the realities of human need and an individual's capacity to reflect and act in liberating ways. Freire and Habermas position the act of communication (particularly dialogue) as the key to human understanding and personal/political liberation. The method of analysis focused on meaning

gained from thematic analysis sought through processes of feedback such as interviews and observations. It is hoped that this study will serve as a catalyst to spawn further research within the field of teacher education, pedagogy, and the impact that dialogue has on the instructor's relationship with his or her students.

INDEX WORDS: Paulo Freire, Jurgen Habermas, Communicative Action, Pedagogical Dialogue, Multicultural Education Theory

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by

JEFFREY S. MORRISON

A Dissertation

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Degree of

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Educational Policy Studies

in

Department of Educational Policy Studies in

the College of Education and Human Development

Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA
2016

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my best friend and wife, Erin. You have exemplified true friendship, support, and love at times when others did not. Sacrificing your time and placing certain aspects of our lives on hold for something bigger than us required extreme focus and commitment, I thank you for experiencing that with me and supporting me in the process.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

As the number of students from varying cultures increase in our schools teachers are faced with the challenge of teaching student populations whose cultures differs from their own. This challenge is especially visible in pre-service teachers' introduction to multicultural education theories, courses that focus on how society changes and develops. It is at the pre-service level that teachers must come to grips with reflecting upon cultural bias, then take on the responsibility of explaining social behaviors and social structures, such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, and numerous other ethical issues facing contemporary social life.¹

Within these pre-service courses, students are to learn not only the content of multicultural education theory, but also how to create a classroom space where students feel safe to speak, have equal opportunity to speak, and have their speaking voice valued. Geneva Gay argues that pedagogical dialogue is an educational strategy to foster the development of such spaces.² Pedagogical dialogue is the conscious use of dialogue as a pedagogical strategy to increase multicultural knowledge within the classroom. According to Paulo Freire and Ira Shor, pedagogy must be based on dialogue to promote the development of relational opportunities between teachers and students.³ Authority-based instruction is not valid within the framework of pedagogical dialogue; rather both students and teachers reciprocate knowledge and learn from one another through dialogic interactions in the classroom. Ira Shor advances that pedagogical dialogue encourages the teacher to merge his or her thinking into an ongoing dialogue that

¹ A. Harrington, *Modern Social Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2005).

² Geneva Gay and Tyrone C Howard, "Multicultural Teacher Education for the 21st Century," *The Teacher Educator* 36, no. 1 (2000).

³ Paulo Freire and Ira Shor, "What Is the "Dialogical Method" of Teaching," *Journal of education* 169, no. 3 (1987).

begins with the students' point of view.⁴ Paulo Freire suggests "to achieve this, [teachers] must be partners of the students in their relations with them."⁵ With this reconstructed teacher student relationship, pedagogical dialogue becomes the motivating element for the students' inquiries. Additionally, Paulo Freire viewed pedagogical dialogue as a means to elevate levels of moral reasoning within the classroom.⁶ A lack of pedagogical dialogue, according to Freire, situates students and teachers in a manner that inhibits their levels of understanding and possibility.⁷ Stated another way, without dialogue students and professors are unable to "speak true words" and overcome "silencing"⁸ at both communicative level and in the formation of their own identities.⁹

Deborah Britzman states, "any discussion on pedagogy should address the communicative processes in which knowledge is produced and the strategy for interpreting the knowledge that can and cannot be produced."¹⁰ Furthermore Britzman views pedagogical dialogue as a means to invite students and professors to partake in the "social negotiation necessary for the production and interpretation of knowledge."¹¹ Henry Giroux¹² contends that there is a need for teachers to engage in pedagogical inquiry methods such as dialogue in order to provide themselves the opportunity to take stances in their own practices as well as those of others and, thereby, reflexively and actively engaging in the development of their curriculum.

⁴ Ira Shor, "Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy," *Paulo Freire: A critical encounter* 23 (1993).

⁵ Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, vol. 1 (Continuum International Publishing Group, 1973). P.75

⁶ R.A. Morrow and C.A. Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change* (Teachers College Press, 2002).

⁷ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ronald David Glass, "On Paulo Freire's Philosophy of Praxis and the Foundations of Liberation Education," *Educational Researcher* 30, no. 2 (2001).

¹⁰ Ibid. P.54

¹¹ Ibid. P.54

¹² H.A. Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning* (Bergin & Garvey, 1988).

Pedagogical dialogue is inclusive in that every voice in a class is worthy and must be taken into account. Moreover, inasmuch as both the professor and students contribute to the process and represent multiple voices and mutually shared perspectives, dialogue is participatory.¹³ When dialogue is utilized as a pedagogical strategy the assumption is that all members of the course have equal opportunity to speak, respect other members right to speak, and feel safe to speak.¹⁴ According to Henry Giroux, “trust and sharing” are the key components to a participatory classroom that puts forth dialogue as its pedagogical foundation.¹⁵ When viewing pedagogy through a dialogical lens, teachers can be transformative educators who are in a position to transform classroom culture.

Jurgen Habermas’s theory of communicative action in consonance with Paulo Freire’s theory of dialogue adds depth of analysis of when studying pedagogy within communicative contexts. For Habermas, communicative action “designates a type of interaction that is coordinated through speech acts.”¹⁶ The interaction of speech acts as outlined by communicative action provides additional context when analyzing dialogue and pedagogy in a multicultural education theory course.¹⁷ Jurgen Habermas’s outlines a foundation for studying dialogue based on people coming together to examine social conditions while discussing how to improve them. This coming together is particularly relevant to the instruction of multicultural education theories to teachers, as they will be faced with such theoretical realities in their classrooms. It is important to note that for Habermas education lies in the realm of the public sphere, an arena where the social and political

¹³ P. Leonard and P. McLaren, *Paulo Freire: A Critical Encounter* (Taylor & Francis, 2002).

¹⁴ Elizabeth Ellsworth, "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy," *Harvard educational review* 59, no. 3 (1989).

¹⁵ Henry A Giroux, "Literacy and the Pedagogy of Voice and Political Empowerment," *Educational theory* 38, no. 1 (1988).

¹⁶ J. Habermas and T. McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Beacon Press, 1984). P.337

¹⁷ R.A. Morrow and C.A. Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change* (Teachers College Press, 2002).

life depends at some level and to some degree on society, or in this case the classroom, coming to agreement on how to improve social conditions.¹⁸ Habermas writes, "Communicative action designates a type of interaction that is coordinated through speech acts."¹⁹ It is this emphasis on the interaction of speech acts that is a foundational element of the development and maturation of the professor student relationship and is the primary interest when studying pedagogical dialogue in a multicultural education theory course. While teaching multiculturalism is seen as a theoretical approach for educating students on various cultural theories, the research on applied pedagogies to promote equality in such learning environments continues to be under-theorized and vague.²⁰

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The Purpose

Pedagogical dialogue has the potential to unhinge traditional relations between students and a professor in a course focusing on multicultural education theory.²² When educators better understand how this relationship functions within a classroom, they then possess the knowledge of how to collectively act and transform traditional classroom relationships that perpetuate the mechanisms that marginalize students.²³ Teaching can be viewed as a moral act. A professor's choice of course content is a moral decision, but so is the relationship they cultivate with students. The study of pedagogical dialogue has the potential to illuminate the moral choices of professor and "problematize the generative themes from everyday life, topical issues from

¹⁸ Jürgen Habermas and William Outhwaite, "The Habermas Reader," (1996).

¹⁹ Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. P.337

²⁰ Marilyn Cochran-Smith, "'Re-Culturing' Teacher Education: Inquiry, Evidence, and Action," *Journal of Teacher Education* 60, no. 5 (2009).

²¹ Morva McDonald and Kenneth Zeichner, "Social Justice Teacher Education," *Handbook of social justice in education* (2009).

²² P. Mayo, *Gramsci, Freire and Adult Education: Possibilities for Transformative Action* (Zed Books, 1999).

²³ H.A. Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning* (Bergin & Garvey, 1988).

society, and academic subject matter from specific disciplines”²⁴ which promotes student autonomy and a critical consciousness for change.

Although there is a limited body of research that addresses the manner in which pedagogical dialogue has been utilized within multicultural education courses in teacher education programs to promote the acquisition of such knowledge, there remains a paucity of research noting how this is being done. Studying pedagogical dialogue, this research is attempting to adhere to the principle first set out by Paulo Freire that situates students and professors in a manner that allows them to achieve higher levels of understanding and possibility.²⁵ Teacher education literature from the past three decades points out that there is a limited amount of research that examines the pedagogy of professors who teach courses such as multiculturalism.²⁶ The research goes on to note that because teacher education lacks “attention to definition, context, and assessment”²⁷ as it relates to multicultural educational concepts, it contributes to the gap in teacher education literature and pedagogical dialogue, specifically in regard to multicultural education theory. Therefore the question arises, how does pedagogical dialogue function within a course for pre-service teacher that focuses on multicultural education theory? The investigation of this question may not only illustrate how pedagogical dialogue functions in the a course on multicultural education theory, it may illuminate a better understanding by which students and professors collaboratively communicate so to better analyze, dismantle, and examine education theoretical concepts. The scholarship of Paulo Freire

²⁴ I. Shor, *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change* (University of Chicago Press, 2012). Quoted in Jodi Jan Kaufmann, "The Practice of Dialogue in Critical Pedagogy," *Adult Education Quarterly* 60, no. 5 (2010). P.458

²⁵ P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition* (Bloomsbury, 2000).

²⁶ Marilyn Cochran-Smith et al., *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts* (Routledge, 2008).

²⁷ *Ibid.* P.194

and Jurgen Habermas, has the potential to inform pedagogical strategies when teaching complex theoretical topics such as education theory.²⁸

The Study

This dissertation is presented in six chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the study, including the research problem, purpose, and rationale. Chapter 2 reviews the literature regarding the Freirian method of pedagogical dialogue, Habermas's theory of communicative action, critical pedagogy, and multiculturalism. The focus of this second chapter is on developing the theoretical meaning of pedagogical dialogue while positioning the theory of critical pedagogy and multiculturalism in the study. Chapter 3 presents the methodology, including an explanation of ethnographic methodology, data collection, and analysis techniques. Chapter 4 details the processes that lead to the results of the study and me as the researcher. Chapter 5 details the findings of the study and begins a discussion by exploring the manner in which the professor created spaces that allowed student and professor dialogue to be centered on theoretical concepts of multicultural education theory. The findings of the study highlight two themes that emerged when analyzing data, including new ideas that may lead to further inquiry and a better understanding of how to best utilize pedagogical dialogue in the multicultural education theory course. Chapter 6 concludes the study by reflecting on key themes that were identified from the data and making recommendations for further research.

²⁸ P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition* (Bloomsbury, 2000).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature related to Paulo Freire's theory of dialogical pedagogy and Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action. In this chapter I will also discuss scholarship related to teacher education and multicultural education theory. To provide a foundation for future research on pedagogical dialogue this study will examine the communicative theories of both Paulo Freire and Jurgen Habermas in the pedagogical dialogue within a multicultural theory classroom.

Although not the focus, critical pedagogy, has a presence throughout this study because within this approach education is viewed both as emancipatory change as well as the cultivation of the intellect. In this study, I explore how pedagogical dialogue functions in a multicultural education theory classroom in an undergraduate teacher preparation program. critical pedagogy is also present because of my focus on Paulo Freire's practice dialogical pedagogy. In addition to Freirian pedagogy, Jurgen Habermas' theory of communicative action provides a foundation for thinking about action based on people coming together to examine social conditions while discussing how to improve them.

What is Critical Pedagogy?

This is a study of pedagogical dialogue function within a course for preservice teachers that focused on multicultural education theory. Critical pedagogy is also present because of my use of Paulo Friere's theory of dialogical pedagogy. In addition to Freirian pedagogy, Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action provides a foundation for thinking about action based on people coming together to examine social conditions while discussing how to improve them.

Pedagogy is praxis, insistently perched at the intersection between the theory and the practice of teaching. In praxis there can be no prior knowledge of the right means by which students realize the end in a particular situation. For the end itself is only specified in deliberating about the means appropriate to a particular situation.²⁹ There is a continual interplay between ends and means. In just the same way there is a continual interplay between thought and action. This process involves interpretation, understanding and application in a unified process' as students and a professor engage in dialogue and pedagogy. Critical pedagogy suggests a specific kind of liberatory praxis. Critical pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning predicated on fostering agency and empowering learners.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire argues against the *banking model of education*, in which education “becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor.”³⁰ This model emphasizes a one-sided transactional relationship, in which teachers are seen as content experts and students are positioned as mere receptacles. The banking model of education is efficient in that it maintains control and is bureaucratically neat and orderly.

Critical pedagogy is concerned less with knowing and more with not-knowing. It is an ongoing process of discovery. For Freire, “Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.”³¹ Knowledge emerges in the interplay between multiple people in conversation brushing against one another in a mutual and charged exchange or *dialogue*. Freire writes, “Authentic education is not carried on by ‘A’ for ‘B’ or by

²⁹ B.B. Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

³⁰ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. P.87

³¹ Ibid. P.112

‘A’ *about* ‘B,’ but rather by ‘A’ *with* ‘B’.”³² It is through this impatient dialogue, and the implicit collaboration within it, that critical pedagogy finds its impetus toward change.

In place of the banking model, Freire advocates for problem-posing “dialogical education,” in which a classroom or learning environment becomes a space for asking questions and debating topics, a space of cognition, not information. Under this pedagogical model hierarchical relationships of teacher and student give way to those in which students and teachers co-author together the parameters for their individual and collective learning. Pedagogical Dialogue offers a space of mutual creation, not consumption. In *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks writes, “As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence.”³³ For bell hooks, another practitioner of critical pedagogy, the classroom is a lively and intimate space of creativity and inquiry. In other words, critical pedagogy opens the door to students and professors to a space for listening as much as for speaking and inquiry.

For educators to challenge assumptions about what teaching should be requires them to establish positions about learning and their role in teaching and learning in the context of a broader, value-based theoretical system. This process cannot be accomplished in isolation from a broader context. In other words, theory and practice are not dichotomous, isolated exercises; rather, “it is theory that permits students, teachers, and other educators to see what they are seeing.”³⁴ Theorizing one’s practice, that is, when converted to a form of action, potentially yields transformative outcomes for teacher educators and those they are preparing for service in

³² Ibid. P.109

³³ Bell Hooks, "Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom," (1994). p.8

³⁴ Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*. p.47

today's schools³⁵. Here I look to advance the "business as usual"³⁶ model of teacher education towards a pedagogy of education that can serve as a strong educative and transformative function.

Critical pedagogy challenges both students and teachers to channel their experiences of oppression into educating and empowering marginalized peoples. Critical pedagogues approach education as a process of social, cultural, political, and individual transformation, where social equity can be nourished or social inequity perpetuated. According to critical pedagogues, notions that define rational classification of people into categories diminish their social effect and importance, keeping them oppressed.³⁷ Marginalized cultures, therefore, require not only awareness of the inequities they suffer, but also an understanding of the ways that oppressive social mechanisms and beliefs endure, as well as the knowledge of how to make use of valuable resistance strategies.³⁸ The communicative nature of critical pedagogy challenges students and professors to ask how and why such knowledge gets constructed in the manner that it does. It is within this site of inquiry that Freire posits dialogue as the most significant aspect of critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy allows educators to rethink the manner in which they engage students while analyzing various forms of learning in marginalized communities so to refine pedagogical approaches in a multicultural education theory course.³⁹

The research on communicative action and dialogue as informed by Critical Pedagogy serves to benefit both educational practice and policy as a means to better the educational

³⁵ Christina N Berchini, "Learning to Teach and Critical Pedagogy: Struggling with a "Do as I Say, Not as I Do" Pedagogy," *English Education* 46, no. 3 (2014).

³⁶ Christine E Sleeter, "Culture, Difference and Power," (New York: Teachers College Press, 2001).

³⁷ Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*.

³⁸ "Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology on-Line," <http://www.sociologyencyclopedia.com/public/>.

³⁹ Scorza D'Artagnan, Mirra Nicole, and Morrell Ernest, "It Should Just Be Education: Critical Pedagogy Normalized as Academic Excellence," *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 4, no. 2 (2013).

situation for all students through reflection and action.⁴⁰ Unlike deterministic notions of schooling that focus primarily on the technical application of theory, the pedagogical interactions forged in dialogue and communicative action conceive of a praxis of ongoing reflection, dialogue, and action to illuminate a greater understanding of the world as we find it, and as it might be.⁴¹ Personal reflection of one's own experiences of oppression and the feelings of frustration, shame, guilt, and rage that accompany those experiences all help shape practices of critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogues redirect these feelings that can incite violent acts, submission, and/or ongoing repression into dynamic dialogue that defines literacy in terms of participatory citizenship. Methods of critical pedagogy are as diverse as the people who practice them.

Multicultural Education

This section briefly outlines the process in which multicultural education made its way into teacher preparation courses. The social theory class in which this study was conducted is a multicultural education course. The multicultural movement in education began after demands for school reform were articulated during the Civil Rights Movement. The political and economic disparities highlighted in the 1960s gave rise to an approach often referred to as multicultural education.⁴² Geneva Gay explains that multicultural education:

originated in a socio-political milieu and is to some extent a product of its times. Concerns about the treatment of ethnic groups in school curricula and instructional materials directly reflected concerns about their social, political, and economic plight in the society at large.⁴³

African American scholars collaborating with leaders in the Civil Rights Movement represented the main group fighting for educational reform during the 1960s, however the prefix “multi” was

⁴⁰ Darder, Baltodano, and Torres, *The Critical Pedagogy Reader*.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Christine E Sleeter and Peter McLaren, "Multicultural Education," *Critical Pedagogy* (1995).

⁴³ Gay and Howard, "Multicultural Teacher Education for the 21st Century." p.106

added as a means to bring together other racial and ethnic groups who suffered from similar oppressions. In addition to the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, other movements such as the women's rights movement and ethnic studies and women's studies departments began emerging in universities. The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) challenged more traditional views of teacher education through its first Commission on Multicultural Education in 1972. This commission argued that teacher education should incorporate multiculturalism as a valuable resource to be extended rather than something to be tolerated.⁴⁴ As a result of increasingly diverse populations in US public schools and the predominate white and female teaching force, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) began requiring teacher education programs to include multicultural education as part of the preparation process. The majority of preparation efforts highlight preparing teachers to improve learning for students of color, those living in poverty, and those whose first language was not English.⁴⁵ NCATE now embeds multicultural education as one of its standards for all institutions seeking accreditation are required to demonstrate evidence that they are including multicultural education in teacher education curricula.⁴⁶

Teaching for multicultural knowledge is an attempt by classroom teachers to promote equity and respect for diversity within their classrooms.⁴⁷ While multicultural teacher education scholarship does not use the language of "pedagogical dialogue," it can be argued that this

⁴⁴ Cochran-Smith et al., *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts*.

⁴⁵ McDonald and Zeichner, "Social Justice Teacher Education."

⁴⁶ Donna M Gollnick, "Multicultural Education: Policies and Practices in Teacher Education," *Research and multicultural education: From the margins to the mainstream* (1992).

⁴⁷ Alison G Dover, "Teaching for Social Justice: From Conceptual Frameworks to Classroom Practices," *Multicultural Perspectives* 15, no. 1 (2013).

communicative dynamic impacts the manner in which professors address multicultural issues in their classrooms.^{48 49 50}

This challenge is especially visible in pre-service teachers' introduction to multicultural education studies, courses which focuses on how society changes and develops, while illustrating methods of explaining social behaviors and social structures, such as race, class, gender, ethnicity, and numerous other ethical issues facing contemporary social life.⁵¹ According to Geneva Gay⁵² and bell hooks⁵³ students should be learning not only the content of multicultural education theory, but also how to create a classroom space where students feel safe to speak, have equal opportunity to speak, and have their speaking voice valued.

Multicultural education encompasses theories and practices that strive to promote equitable access and rigorous academic achievement for students from all diverse groups, so that they can work toward social change.⁵⁴ As a process of educational reform in higher education, and increasingly in out-of-school contexts, multicultural education challenges oppression and bias in all forms, and acknowledges and affirms the multiple identities that students bring to their learning.

Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant connect the role of sociopolitical power to define multicultural education. Sleeter and Grant's article in *Harvard Educational Review* provides an extensive review of the literature on multicultural education and explains varying approaches to

⁴⁸ Marilyn Cochran-Smith, *Walking the Road: Race, Diversity, and Social Justice in Teacher Education* (Teachers College Press, 2004).

⁴⁹ Christine E Sleeter, "Preparing Teachers for Culturally Diverse Schools Research and the Overwhelming Presence of Whiteness," *Journal of teacher education* 52, no. 2 (2001).

⁵⁰ Cochran-Smith et al., *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts*.

⁵¹ A. Harrington, *Modern Social Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2005).

⁵² Gay and Howard, "Multicultural Teacher Education for the 21st Century."

⁵³ Hooks, "Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom."

⁵⁴ Cochran-Smith, "'Re-Culturing' Teacher Education: Inquiry, Evidence, and Action." p

teaching multicultural education theory.⁵⁵ The approaches outlined below are closely aligned to the overall objectives of multicultural education course in this study.

The *human relations approach* consists of developing positive relationships among diverse groups and individuals to fight stereotyping and promote unity. The single-group Studies approach has as a goal to engage in an in-depth, comprehensive study that moves specific groups from the margins by providing information about the groups history, including experiences with oppression and resistance to that oppression. The hope is to reduce stratification and create greater access to power. The *multicultural education approach* is self-reflexively dubbed multicultural education. Sleeter and Grant use this seemingly redundant title to clarify this approach because so many other practices, such as those described in the other approaches, are sometimes referred to as multicultural education.⁵⁶ This approach points to the need for more attention to social structural inequalities and for teaching students the skills to challenge the disparities resulting from inequitable power structures. Education that reflects a *multicultural and social reconstructionist approach* describes a complete redesign of an educational program. Such a redesign recommends addressing issues and concerns that affect students of diverse groups, encouraging students to take an active stance by challenging the status quo, and calling on students to collectively speak out and effect change by joining with other groups in examining common or related concerns.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant, "An Analysis of Multicultural Education in the United States," *Harvard Educational Review* 57, no. 4 (1987).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Taking pedagogical dialogue into account scholars such as Cochran-Smith⁵⁸, Darling-Hammond,⁵⁹ and Nieto⁶⁰ agree that teacher education programs must focus on transformational pedagogies in order to affect existing multicultural practices in education. However, the practice of multicultural education in university settings is often characterized by token addition of diverse content into the curriculum. Cochran-Smith,⁶¹ Ladson-Billings,⁶² and Grant,⁶³ along with a team of researchers, examined over 1200 published articles regarding multicultural education and found that little pertained to pedagogy and that a majority of the literature was theoretical.

Furthermore, the research notes that teacher education programs have emphasized a shift away from social reform and a move towards individual agency through an emphasis on cultural competence as the major component of multicultural education. As multicultural theorists continue to advocate strongly for teacher preparation programs that increase cultural competence of educators in the field, the pedagogical communication of teachers in trying to implement this curricula should be considered.

Teacher Education

The literature on educational instruction as it relates to theoretical perspectives, such as multicultural education theory, indicates that educators bring their biases to their work and relationships with each other and with students.⁶⁴ Educators relate to people differently as a result of these unconscious biases. According to Joyce King these biases stem from dysconscious

⁵⁸ Cochran-Smith, *Walking the Road: Race, Diversity, and Social Justice in Teacher Education*.

⁵⁹ L Darling-Hammond, "What Happens to a Dream Deferred? The Continuing Quest for Educational Equality," *Handbook of research on multicultural education (2nd ed., pp. 607-632)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (2004).

⁶⁰ Sonia Nieto, *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education* (ERIC, 1992).

⁶¹ Cochran-Smith, "'Re-Culturing' Teacher Education: Inquiry, Evidence, and Action."

⁶² Gloria Ladson-Billings, "New Directions in Multicultural Education," *Handbook of research on multicultural education 2* (2004).

⁶³ Carl A Grant, Anne R Elsbree, and Suzanne Fondrie, "A Decade of Research on the Changing Terrain of Multicultural Education Research," *ibid*.

⁶⁴ Paulo Freire and Ira Shor, "What Is the 'Dialogical Method' of Teaching," *Journal of education* 169, no. 3 (1987).

racism, which is “a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges. It is not the absence of consciousness but an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness.”⁶⁵ Teacher education scholars such as Deborah Britzman points out the importance teachers have in guiding bias in the classroom when engaging with students due to the “complex relationship between learning to teach and our capacity to transform the experience of education through a deep commitment to social justice, personal thoughtfulness, and an openness to difference, contradiction, risks, and change.”⁶⁶

Building upon Britzman’s call for further investigation, the literature on pedagogy and multicultural education theory points out the need to understand both the practical and the political nature of education is more urgent now than ever before. This is compelled by demographic shifts in racial/ethnic diversity and increasing access to higher education opportunities for students of color, for now educators are challenged not only to prepare students to participate in an increasingly diverse democracy but also to respond to such diversity within their own sites of learning and teaching.⁶⁷ When viewing pedagogy through this lens, its demands and complex social relationships become clearer.

There has been little attention given in the literature to teacher education pedagogy and the relational dynamic between a university professor and K-12 teachers.⁶⁸ A myth holds that one learns to teach solely through experience, and those who have never considered or

⁶⁵ Joyce E King, "Dysconscious Racism: Ideology, Identity, and the Miseducation of Teachers," *The Journal of Negro Education* 60, no. 2 (1991). P.4

⁶⁶ Deborah P. Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice. A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*, Revised ed. (Albany: SUNY Press, 2003). 34

⁶⁷ Biren A Nagda, Patricia Gurin, and Gretchen E Lopez, "Transformative Pedagogy for Democracy and Social Justice," *Race, ethnicity and education* 6, no. 2 (2003).

⁶⁸ Avner Segall, *Disturbing Practice* (P. Lang, 2002).

contributed to this concept dismiss the complexity of pedagogical knowledge.⁶⁹ Scholars such as Avner Segall illuminate the contradiction that public schools have been the subject of investigation by external researchers and teacher education programs, while colleges of education have maintained an “extraterritorial status,” remaining free from such investigations.⁷⁰

In her ethnography on student teachers and teacher educators, Britzman points out that “a majority of university professors view knowledge, not pedagogy, as instructive,” and that professors often times consider themselves “trained experts in particular content areas subjecting teaching as secondary to the ‘real’ work of scholarly research.”⁷¹ According to Britzman pedagogy should be understood as⁷² “intimately shaping the subjective world.”⁷³ Pedagogy produces social interactions inscribed with power, desire, and a manner of becoming. According to Britzman, these are dialogic relations that determine the “very texture of teaching and the possibilities it opens.” The next section will consider how future teachers may be encouraged to engage in ideas and multicultural education theory with a professor and, more importantly, to illuminate how these ideas and theories function within the pedagogical dialogue of the course.

Pedagogy

To further our understanding of how we think and act in the world, it is important to not only understand where we currently situate ourselves in the larger society but also reflect upon how we got there, who we were in this process of “becoming.”⁷⁴ Thus learning about the journey is often more important than the destination itself. For this reason, pedagogy is of great importance when studying the complex process of “becoming” teacher or said another way, the

⁶⁹ Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*.

⁷⁰ Segall, *Disturbing Practice*.

⁷¹ Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*. p.55

⁷² Ibid. P.27

⁷³ Ibid. P.26

⁷⁴ Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*.

development of one's pedagogical identity is greatly influenced by the varying dimensions and relations of the classroom environment. Teaching is an interactive profession that brings together human beings who act in accordance to each other's behavior. Therefore studying pedagogical dialogue is useful when analyzing "how knowledge, texts, cultural products [and practices] are produced"⁷⁵ - as well as who they produce and what is used in that process. Henry Giroux challenges educators to consider, "How might pedagogy be understood as a political and moral practice rather than a technical strategy?"⁷⁶

Taking a cue from Giroux, it could be said that we live in a pedagogical society, not one where pedagogy is restricted to the classroom or a methodological approach to teaching. Rather, pedagogy is the process in which humans form relations with one another and we need to be aware that contained within such relations exists a structure of power that inevitably leads to conflict within the process of communication or discourse.⁷⁷ Viewing pedagogy through this lens one could conclude that it is a politicized analysis, dependent upon sociology, politics, and human relations. Paulo Freire was the one of the first scholars to broaden the idea of pedagogy to include "a learning to perceive, political, and economic contradictions developing a critical awareness so that individuals can take action against the oppressive elements of reality."⁷⁸ Social science research in Colleges of Education is quick to point out the external factors that lead to the oppressive features of the modern classroom. Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux contend that social science research neglects the pedagogical environment in which this subject matter is taught is absent in that conversation and more importantly, they ask: Does there exist a

⁷⁵ Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*. P.34

⁷⁶ Ibid. p.79

⁷⁷ Maurice Tardif, *Communication Technology and Pedagogical Power* (Canada: University of Montreal 2008).

⁷⁸ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*.

pedagogical dialogue between the professor and student that inhibits or encourages the possibility of forming counter narratives aimed at social justice?

Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire (1921–1997) was an educator born in Brazil and later forced into exile for many years, and perhaps the best-known figure internationally in postwar adult education. He is known primarily in educational circles as an expert on literacy training. He grounded his education methodology based on a distinction between what he refers to as banking education, through which knowledge is mechanically accumulated, and critical education, in which the learner becomes an active participant in the appropriation of knowledge in relation to lived experience.⁷⁹

The “banking concept of education” is a pedagogical construct that defines students as “receptacles” that are to be “filled” with the “content of the teacher’s narration.”⁸⁰ These “receptacles” are expected to regurgitate information on tests, quizzes, and anything that requires a clear-cut answer. In a banking classroom, the teacher is the authority and the students are to “work at storing deposits entrusted to them, thus developing little critical consciousness, which would result from their intervention in the world as transformers of that world.”⁸¹ Contrasting this, Freire posits a dialogical style of pedagogy, one where the pedagogical aim is for freedom, the status quo is challenged, and the myths of the official curriculum and mass culture are illuminated. Freire cautions teachers not to conceptualize dialogue merely as a technique that can be used to help educators get results. Educators, according to Freire, “must not understand dialogue as a kind of tactic we use to make students our friends. Doing so would make dialogue

⁷⁹ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid. p.76

a technique for manipulation instead of illumination.”⁸² Rather, dialogical pedagogy, according to Freire, “is part of our historical progress in becoming human beings. That is, dialogue is a kind of necessary posture to the extent that humans have become more and more critically communicative beings.”⁸³ Freire believed that dialogue is a “moment where humans meet to reflect on their reality as they make and remake the world.”⁸⁴ To the extent that we are communicative beings who communicate with each other we become more able to transform our reality, we are able to know that we know, which is something more than just knowing.”⁸⁵

Freire regards dialogue as the basic item in the knowledge structure. So, the classrooms designed in accordance with this model of education will become the meeting places where information is researched. Within this framework, it is apparent that Freire does not consider dialogue as a simple education technique leading to the attainment of certain results. But rather he considers dialogue mainly as complementary to human nature. When thought of in this manner dialogue is an existential reality and therefore according to Freire needs to be applied to the pedagogy, too. Freire does not consider dialogue only as a need of human nature. Dialogue is also a sign of the democratic stance of the educator. Therefore, a democratic educator is a dialogic by nature.⁸⁶

According to Freire, dialogue means sharing. Dialogue is as an essential element of pedagogical dialogue. Therefore, education must be based on dialogue, through which relational opportunities are nurtured and created. The educator learns from the student and the student learns from the educator in the process of dialogue; the roles of the educator and the learner

⁸² Freire and Shor, "What Is the “Dialogical Method” of Teaching." p.13

⁸³ Ibid. P13

⁸⁴ Ibid. p.13

⁸⁵ Freire and Shor, "What Is the “Dialogical Method” of Teaching." p.13

⁸⁶ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*.

interchange. Thus, in the process of dialogue, educators help the development of a process in which the educators and the learners can learn together.⁸⁷

Freire's theoretical theme of dialogical pedagogy focuses on a student-centered system of learning that challenges how knowledge is constructed in the formal education system and in society at large. Freire's student-centered approach stands in stark contrast to conventional educational practice, which he referred to as the "banking approach" to education. Freire's philosophy is valid and useful in the world today, for there is need for critical analysis of the situation, coordination, dialogue, intervention and action.⁸⁸

Paulo Freire writes that teaching and learning are not objective activities, rather, they can only be achieved when the subjectivity of both the learner and the teacher have been taken into account through the formation of communicative readiness and the development of relational bonds between the teacher and students. In ignoring the subjective position of the learner and in failing to acknowledge her or his own position, the teacher is acting as an oppressive agent in that she or he is imposing her or his consciousness on the learner.⁸⁹ This process fails to recognize the importance of fostering a pedagogical dialogue within the social space of a course.

Freire's dialogic theory emphasizes one's ability to transcend spaces of power and situate the learner within the context framework of the course while naturally informing the pedagogy of the instructor. According to Freire the "openness to dialogue" between the professor and students has the potential to develop transformative relations while erasing the boundaries of power subsumed in a traditional professor-student dynamic. It is within this transformative relationship that Freire expounds the need for continued teacher development based on the

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Freire and Shor, "What Is the "Dialogical Method" of Teaching."

⁸⁹ Paulo Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers - Letters to Those Who Dare to Teach* (New York: Westview Press, 2005).

experience of living out the dialectical tensions between theory and practice.⁹⁰ This study is an in-depth investigation of this tension, as it will be situated within a course that aims to illuminate social injustices in education. For Freire a learner and teacher are interchangeable; they are one interchangeable position. For it is the task of teaching that requires teachers to commit themselves to develop a pedagogical style that envelops not only a love of learning and knowledge, but also the formation of dialogical relationships implied in teaching. It is the development of these relationships that form the pedagogical dialogue, communicative strategies, and the manner in which we teach. This study adheres to Freire's call to "never dichotomize cognition and emotion"⁹¹ when investigating the pedagogical dialogue of the professor, as it lies within the potential to be emotional for various students in the class. Central to this is his notion of dialogue. Freire believes that knowledge is founded on dialogue characterized by participatory, open dialogue is situated within critical inquiry and linked to intentional action seeking to reconstruct and evaluate the consequences.⁹² This development of one's pedagogical style as it relates to the acquisition of multicultural education theory knowledge is worthy of study as a means of spawning further research within the field of pedagogy and of investigating the impact pedagogical dialogue has on one's instructional dialogue with his or her students.

Jurgen Habermas

Jurgen Habermas, born in Germany in 1929, is often acknowledged as the most influential German philosopher and social theorist of the postwar period. One of Habermas's greatest impacts has been in the development of his theory of communicative action, initially

⁹⁰ Freire.

⁹¹ Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers - Letters to Those Who Dare to Teach*. p.5

⁹² Glass, "On Paulo Freire's Philosophy of Praxis and the Foundations of Liberation Education."

utilized among specialists in social and political theory, but now applied in a number of professional fields, including education.

Cultivating conversation lies at the center of what educators do. It is not simply the form that their work takes, but also part of their purpose. Through conversation, students and professors test prejudices, search for meaning, and become more critical. The aim is to achieve consensus with regard to claims, norms, and expressive utterances, but also with regard to claims made to validity, whether truth, rightness, or sincerity. Language plays a decisive part by way of its representative, appellative and expressive modes, or in claims to validity by means of affirmation or denial.⁹³ Jurgen Habermas argues, that in dialogue there is a “gentle but obstinate, a never silent although seldom redeemed claim to reason.”⁹⁴ Dialogue requires mutual trust, respect, and a willingness to listen and risk one’s opinions, for this allows “a powerful regulative ideal that can orient our practical and political lives.”⁹⁵ This regulative ideal is what Habermas calls an ideal speech situation.⁹⁶ This speech situation is where each has an effective equality of chances to take part in dialogue; where dialogue is unconstrained and not distorted. According to this core principle of his communicative theory, “we understand a speech act when we know the kinds of reasons that a speaker could provide in order to convince a hearer that he is entitled in the given circumstances to claim validity for his utterance in short, when we know what makes it acceptable.”⁹⁷

For Habermas, communication is best understood as the achievement of mutual understanding. Communication is the outcome, rather than the process, of a verbal interaction

⁹³ J Rgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (The MIT Press, 1992).

⁹⁴ J. Habermas and J. Viertel, *Theory and Practice* (Beacon Press, 1974). P.3

⁹⁵ Basil Bernstein, *Pedagogic, Symbolic Control and Identity*, ed. Donaldo Macedo, Critical Perspectives Series (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 1996). P.163

⁹⁶ Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*.

⁹⁷ Ibid. p.232

oriented toward understanding. On one level, communication must account for what people actually and normally do, that is, communicate, that is, reach understanding with each other. On another level, it should lay out a pathway for improved, more ethical and effective, communication. Hence, Habermas's attempt to theorize communication begins with the pragmatics of communication: what do people actually and normally do when they reach understanding that provides a theoretical foundation for the purposes of this study.

Communicative Action Theory

Throughout the analysis of data, I used Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action. Communicative action, is when two or more subjects negotiate interpretations of their situations. The aim of communicative action then, according to Habermas is to obtain understanding with regard to claims, norms, and expressive utterances, but also with regard to claims made to validity, rightness, or sincerity. For the purposes of this study I searched for ways in which a professor's pedagogical interactions with the students solicit validity claims as outlined by Habermas. The analysis of data obtained from observations, professor debriefing sessions, and interviews were aligned to Habermas's theory of communicative action in which the professor and members of the class aim (see Chapter 3, Methodology, for details):

1. to reach an agreement as a basis of
2. mutual understanding so as to the
3. manner in which the professor attempts to achieve an unforced understanding about what to do with the content taught to students.

Habermas claims that through communicative action, people are free to choose for themselves, individually, and in the context of mutual participation. Communicative action

Theory provides a framework for analysis through the following questions.⁹⁸

1. Do the participants understand what each other said?
2. Are both individual knowledge and the shared knowledge represented in the class conversations?
3. Is there both individually and joint commitment to understanding what is being taught?
4. How does the professor engage the students in what they believe is morally right and appropriate in terms of their individual and mutual judgment about what it is prudent to do under the circumstances in which they find themselves?

Furthermore, Habermas wants to emphasize the intersubjective context necessary for reaching understanding as being primary to statements of meaning about the world. Language is world constitutive but also self-constitutive, and constituting the self through language always involves a conception of other and social context. It is in this world that rationality arises. “With the concept of communicative action there comes into play the additional presupposition of a *linguistic medium* that reflects the actor-world relations as such. At this level of concept formation the rationality problematic, which until now has arisen only for the social scientists moves into the perspective of the agent himself.”⁹⁹ For Jurgen Habermas communication is best understood as the achievement of mutual understanding, in that communication has little to do with the sending and/or receiving of messages or “information,” nor has it much to do with command hierarchies. Communication is the outcome, rather than the process, of a verbal interaction oriented toward an attempt at understanding. My purpose here is not to “test” the amount of information students retain from a particular course, and using a term such as “understanding” is used with caution. Rather communication exhibits an already present status:

⁹⁸ Siebren Miedema, "The Relevance for Pedagogy of Habermas' "Theory of Communicative Action", " *Interchange* 25, no. 2 (1994).

⁹⁹ J. Habermas and T. McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action* (Beacon Press, 1985). P.195

when two people understand each other, they have communicated. Despite that, however, communication is the most practical and natural thing in the world. Not to confuse natural and social categories, the point nonetheless is that people reach understanding with each other, and they do so with little training beyond the verbal competence already in place.

At the heart of Habermas's theory of communicative action is his concept of communicative action, which can be understood as "action oriented towards understanding."¹⁰⁰ Communicative action when viewed through a pedagogical lens focuses on teachers and students reaching understanding through language in order to proceed with a plan of action, and it underlies the possibility of human communication and learning processes:

Finally, the concept of *communicative action* refers to the interaction of at least two subjects capable of speech and action who establish interpersonal relations (whether by verbal or by extra-verbal means). The actors seek to reach an understanding about the action situation and their plans of action in order to coordinate their actions by way of agreement. The central concept of *interpretation* refers in the first instance to negotiating definitions which admit of consensus.¹⁰¹

With the rise of modernity, Habermas argues that the system has increasingly colonized the lifeworld, causing a breakdown in traditional communicative processes. The lifeworld is what must be assumed if there is to be meaning among students and educators. Habermas's lifeworld concept is difficult to define, for it is our lifeworlds that define us. Nor can it be known, since it serves as the vehicle of all knowing.¹⁰² In other words, we cannot step outside of our lifeworld any more than we can step outside our language or ourselves. But if the lifeworld as a whole cannot be interrogated, various aspects of it can. Given this concept of the lifeworld, one can picture that any two agents who share almost no linguistic or cultural background comprise a

¹⁰⁰ *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. p.56

¹⁰¹ Ibid. P.86

¹⁰² Ibid.

shared lifeworld if meaning in the communicative sense is possible.¹⁰³ This disjunction between the lifeworld and system threatens to “pathologize” the lifeworld. Drawing upon Durkheim’s and Weber’s work, Habermas discusses how worldviews develop which “offer a potential for grounding that can be used to justify a political order or the institutional framework of a society in general.”¹⁰⁴

A normative consensus develops, whereby the status quo is maintained. He argues:

What is of primary interest in analyzing the interaction between normative consensus, worldview, and institutional system, however, is that the connection is established through channels of linguistic communication.¹⁰⁵

To disrupt or challenge repressive system structures according to Habermas, people need to develop their capacity to communicate as rational human beings to explore alternative viewpoints and perspectives. Communicative forms of action can serve to challenge the dominance of “system imperatives” that diminish the effectiveness of the lifeworld.¹⁰⁶

On one level, Habermas’s theory of communicative action accounts for what people actually and normally do, that is, communicate, reaching understanding with each other. On another level, Habermas attempts to theorize about communication with the pragmatics of social interaction: what people actually and normally do when they reach understanding. His work results in a critique of social situations and institutions that operate to support or to undercut communication. In other words, people reach understanding by speaking and listening to one another, that is, they engage in discourse. Here agents engaged in interaction are in a position where they coordinate actions plans; however, when speech is used to resolve a

¹⁰³ J. Habermas and T. McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System : A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Beacon Press, 1989).

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. P.56

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. P.88

¹⁰⁶ *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society.*

problem it generates communicative action; Habermas claims, “With the concept of communicative action, the important function of social integration devolves on the illocutionary binding energies of a use of language oriented to reaching understanding.”¹⁰⁷ In other words, the binding of language through pedagogical interactions in the classroom has the potential to transform individuals into agents of advocacy for issues involving students.

Viewing instructional and learning goals through the lens of Habermas’s human communication directed towards instructional and learning goals holds that learning and teaching emerge from understanding and fostering learning activities that allow for communicative actions to guide the learner and instructor towards reaching and improving understanding through effective communicative actions. The implication for teaching and learning within this pragmatic view, are that learning experiences should not be designed not from only a single perspective. Instead, a rational curriculum recognizes the complexity of any learning experience. Thus, academic tasks, assessments, and course dialogue should be designed to encourage understanding from myriad perspectives; the curriculum recognizes the complexity of any learning experience. Thus, academic tasks, assessments, and course dialogue should be designed to encourage understanding from myriad perspectives. Learning stems from such activities and, principally, from the discourses that attend each.¹⁰⁸ In Habermasian terms, education relies on communicative action because it is a social process in which societies practical and theoretical knowledge is renewed and revised through communicative relationships. Action oriented toward understanding is the basic presupposition of how a professor approaches designing and delivering theoretical concepts to a class. Transmission of knowledge, development of

¹⁰⁷ *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. P.225

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

conceptual understanding, even skill development relies on an attempt between professor and student to reach mutual understanding.

Habermas observes that participants in communication by no means refer only to things that happen or could happen or could be made to happen in the objective world but to things in the social and subjective worlds as well.¹⁰⁹ He means that those acting communicatively with the intention of reaching understanding with another or others make three claims: (a) that they are communicating a true proposition about the objective world (b) that they are sincere in their claims, which relates to the subjective world; and (c) that they intend to express something justifiable, which relates to the social world. We can examine every utterance to see whether it is justified or unjustified, truthful or untruthful, because in speech no matter what the emphasis, grammatical sentences are embedded in relations to reality such a way that in an acceptable speech action segments of external nature.¹¹⁰ For Habermas, all grounds for hope in society today reside in the mobilization of the human capacity for communicative reason, which is “self-consciousness, self-determination, and self-realization” for individuals and collectives.¹¹¹

Habermas understands social evolution in terms of learning processes connected to interactive competences and he holds that socialization processes are centered in institutions, such as schools. He argues that modern lifeworlds possess strong personality systems that are the key to the successful reproduction of the lifeworld, and the dominant reproduction process is socialization.¹¹² Because Habermas understands socialization processes as crucial for sustaining and renewing the individual competences associated with personality systems, the pedagogical

¹⁰⁹ Habermas and Outhwaite, "The Habermas Reader."

¹¹⁰ Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System : A Critique of Functionalist Reason*.

¹¹¹ Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*.

¹¹² Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System : A Critique of Functionalist Reason*.

methods of a professor plays a vital role in the overall process of reproducing the lifeworld of the both the professor and the students in the course.

Freire and Habermas

Paulo Freire and Jurgen Habermas restructure the theory of praxis found in the theory of dialogical learning processes to mediate between the realities of human need for communication the capacity to reflect and act in liberating ways.¹¹³ Freire and Habermas posit communication and dialogue as the keys to human liberation. In Habermas's theory of communicative action where people are prepared to harmonize their plans of action through internal means, committing themselves to the pursuit of goals on the condition of agreement that exists or is negotiated by the collective.¹¹⁴ In his theory of communicative action Habermas focuses on the action orientations of society's members with an emphasis on how the action consequences are coordinated without necessitating the will or consciousness of the participants. Doing so gives rise to his concept of the lifeworld, based on social integration.

According to Habermas the lifeworld is always being renewed and recreated as we involve ourselves in communicative action. This is not to imply that the lifeworld of a classroom is isolated, for it would be impossible to separate the classroom from the world around it. In this study I combined the continual communicative renewal of lifeworlds specifically that of a professor and five students with that of pedagogic dialogue contained within a multicultural education theory classroom. Dialogue, according to Paulo Freire, is not a technique to achieve a result; dialogue is a means by which we transform the social relationships of the classroom. For Freire, dialogue is communicative binding (action) of the professor and the students in the "joint

¹¹³ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*.

¹¹⁴ Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*.

act of knowing and re-knowing.”¹¹⁵ Freire's pedagogic aim is to simultaneously strike three keys in the struggle for social justice: literacy, or as Freire says, the way we "read the word and the world," critical consciousness, and the creation of liberation. Both Freire and Habermas attempt to bridge theory with practice through communicative actions for the development of interpersonal relations, forming intersubjective alliances in the struggle to overcome oppressive forces. Both Freire's and Habermas's place emphasis on dialogical relationships between reflection and action, between theory and practice, which they align to social transformation. Both theorists claim that education must be "problem-posing" so that students can 'develop their knowledge to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves, thus providing a bridge connecting the theory practice divide.¹¹⁶

Peter McLaren says of Freire that his "work has been cited by educators throughout the world and constitutes an important contribution to critical pedagogy not simply because of its theoretical refinement, but because of Freire's success at putting theory into practice."¹¹⁷

Habermas states, "The vindicating superiority of those who do the enlightening over those who are to be enlightened is theoretically unavoidable, but at the same time it is fictive and requires self-correction: in a process of enlightenment there can only be participants."¹¹⁸

Freire exposes the nature of monological communication as one-directional "narrative character" of education. According to Freire, "education is suffering from narration sickness."¹¹⁹ Freire invokes the master-slave relationship to reinforce the one-way narration dominating education: "The students, alienated like the slave in Hegelian dialectic, accept their ignorance as

¹¹⁵ Freire and Shor, "What Is the "Dialogical Method" of Teaching."

¹¹⁶ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*.

¹¹⁷ P. McLaren, *Life in Schools : An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education* (Irwin Pub., 1989).p56

¹¹⁸ J. Habermas and J. Viertel, *Theory and Practice* (Beacon Press, 1974). p.27

¹¹⁹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. p.57

justifying the teacher's existence but, unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher."¹²⁰ For both Freire and Habermas this one-way narration is the point of departure from Hegelian dialectics in its suggestion that their education theory is an epistemological shift away from the "subject" and external "object"¹²¹ to one of communicative dialogue and collective agency.

The issue of the use of power and authority in classroom and educational contexts is important to consider. Dialogic theory attempts to mitigate questions of power and authority in the classroom through the social engagement with the material. Paulo Freire's work has inspired much research in critical pedagogy by examining power relationships and literacy teaching among oppressed populations. I use the theoretical affinities between Freire and Habermas to view pedagogy as seen through the lens of dialogue and communicative action.

According to Raymond Morrow and Carlos Torres, Habermas provides a theoretical foundation for Freire's pedagogy.¹²² This emphasis on dialogic learning and communicative competency are portrayed as the tools of transformative pedagogy:

The initial foundational premise of Freire and Habermas is that human autonomy and higher levels of cognitive and moral reasoning can be realized only through interactive learning processes. Rationality is not ultimately a property of an isolated ego, but rather the cumulative outcome of communities of inquiry and embodied social practices.

A second shared premise is that becoming self-conscious of educational activities marks a decisive phase of human evolution because it unleashes previously suppressed possibilities for reflexivity.¹²³

¹²⁰ Ibid. p.59

¹²¹ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*. p.116

For Habermas and Freire a monological relationship begins with an “isolated ego that initiates the process of knowing”¹²⁴ rather than a subject that is constituted within a world of communicative interaction. Both Freire and Habermas believe communicative dialogue is the means by which participants in a classroom come to define and interpret the meaning of the language. Through the development of a symbiotic classroom environment, oppressive monological communications are eroded and replaced with collective agency. Freire regarded teachers as learners and learners as teachers in the dialogical search for knowledge and the development of critical thinking. Likewise, even though Habermas wrote little specifically geared towards educational practice, his theory of communicative action reinforces Freire’s desire for collective agency. Habermas notes that communicative action is not the same as speech. One could interpret speech to mean a delivery of information; however, it is a form of teleological action, “that is, one where agents are in the continual pursuit of goals to bring about the states of affairs in the world.”¹²⁵ Habermas attempts to unify a theory of meaning with action. For Habermas the success of speech acts rests in the achievement of mutual understanding. In other words, theory is only relevant when its meaning is understood through dialogical processes and thus leveraged into action.

According to Habermas, “action is included in all human behavior when and insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it action is social insofar as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course.”¹²⁶ When viewing Freire through Habermas it is possible to reframe Freire’s theory of praxis in terms of a theory of

¹²⁴ Ibid. P.76

¹²⁵ J. Heath, *Communicative Action and Rational Choice* (MIT Press, 2001). p.24

¹²⁶ Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. p.250

communicative actions.”¹²⁷ The key for both Freire and Habermas in restructuring the theory of praxis is found within the dialogical learning process that mediates the capacity to act in liberating ways.¹²⁸ For Friere, “Dialogue must be understood as something taking part in the very historical nature of human beings. It is part of our historical progress in becoming human beings. That is, dialogue is a kind of necessary posture to the extent that humans have become more and more critically communicative beings.”¹²⁹ This position aligns to communicative action in that two or more subjects negotiate interpretations of their situations. Elements of the objective, the social, and the subjective worlds are under discussion within the communicative action theory proposed by Habermas. In a classroom, the dialogic is the manner in which the students and professor engage in conversation that illuminates topics within multicultural education theory.

Freire provides this study with the foundation for theoretic interpretation of such classroom dialogue. Communicative action narrows down the metatheory contained within dialogue in order to contextualize situations of collective learning while suggesting strategies for rethinking the relation between education and transformative change.¹³⁰ Both Freire and Habermas work within the broader tradition of critical hermeneutics in an attempt to understand and ground social inquiry while taking into account the social structures of action. Transformative action, or praxis, can only be carried out by participants who construct their own collective cognition as part of changing their relationship to the social world, according to the theories of both Habermas and Friere.¹³¹ Both Habermas and Freire philosophically converge in

¹²⁷ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*. p.29

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Freire and Shor, "What Is the “Dialogical Method” of Teaching." p.13

¹³⁰ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*.

¹³¹ Ibid.

their focus on a dialogical theory of knowing. Below I of have diagrammed a simple schematic that situates Freire's and Habermas's theories in this study (see Figure 1).

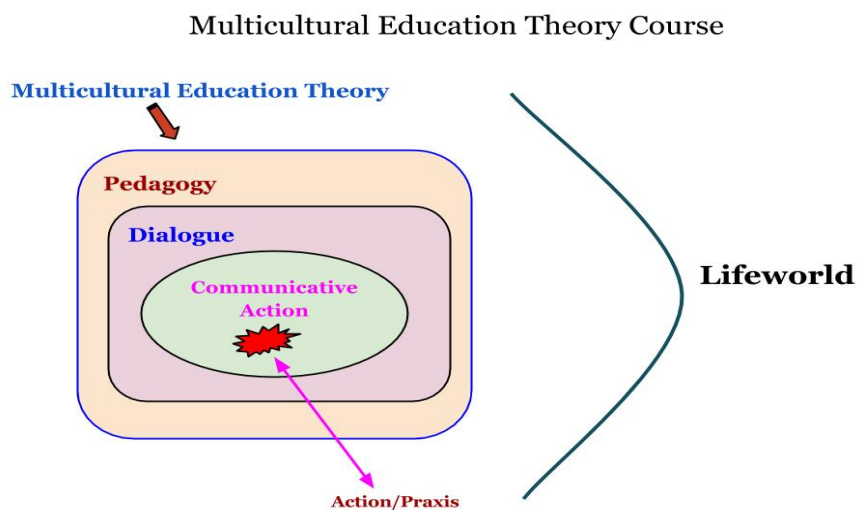


Figure 1. Schematic of Freire's and Habermas's theories in a multicultural education theory course

My goal is to shine a light on how future teachers may be encouraged to engage in ideas and multicultural education theory with a professor and, more importantly, to illuminate how these ideas and theories function within the pedagogy of the course. In an attempt to understand how pedagogy functions in a multicultural theory course, critical pedagogy will be used as the lens through which to view Freire's notion of dialogical pedagogy; which is also juxtaposed to Habermas's theory of communicative action as a "consensus achieving force of linguistic processes of reaching understanding becomes effective for the coordination of action."¹³² It

¹³² J. Habermas and T. McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Beacon Press, 1984). P.223

should be pointed out that neither Freire nor Habermas provide a comprehensive theory of learning or teaching; rather, they both situate the effects of marginality, dependency, and domination of education and everyday life that stunt human potential for learning within their work on dialogue and communication. The foundational premise in the work of Freire and Habermas is that human autonomy and elevated levels of moral reasoning can only be realized through interactive learning processes.¹³³ While Freire locates face-to-face dialogue as the original site of learning, Habermas focuses on subjects negotiating the interpretations of their situations through communication within the broader context of democracy as a learning process.

In addition to Freire and Habermas I draw from education scholars such as Henry Giroux, who calls on “transformative intellectuals to redefine cultural politics with regard to the issue of knowledge, particularly with respect to the construction of classroom pedagogy and student voice.”¹³⁴ Aspects of Giroux’s work frame the important need for teachers and professors to liberate theory from the halls of academia in order to trouble the concept of power in our classrooms and society. Theory, according to Giroux, must be practiced, its dimensions probed as a form of cultural production and interrogated for what it yields and conceals. Giroux asserts that professors engaged in this process of interrogation will transform” the pedagogy of theory” into an active social agent of “pedagogy of theorizing.”¹³⁵ The pedagogy of theorizing is the technique of approaching theory as an active agent for change. Doing so is not to be confused with a pedagogical method or recipe for utilizing theory; rather, it refers to the ability of the professor to recognize and decode theoretical signs and to critically appropriate them in ways that are useful in facilitating students’ critical thinking within the context of class and society.

¹³³ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*.

¹³⁴ Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*. xxxv

¹³⁵ Henry A. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education*, ed. Stanley Aronowitz and Roslyn Bolough, *Critical Perspectives in Social Theory* (Boston: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc., 1983).

Theorizing, according to Giroux, is a production of discourse that arises not only from the university professor, but also “from peasant communities, from workers’ councils, or from various social movements.”¹³⁶ Educators must recognize that different sites contribute to the development and practice of theory.

Being a Teacher

How does the complex process of being a teacher, along with one’s pedagogical style, which is influenced by the materials studied and discussed in class, intersect with the formation of relationships in the classroom environment? Giroux calls on the intellectual to be aware of the “cracks, tensions, and contradictions” in power relationships to better understand how power works on and through the students. Pedagogical discourse serves as both a vehicle of liberation and oppression. This cogitation commits the professor to reflect upon his or her actions and how power acts upon those actions.¹³⁷ Power, in this instance, becomes relational, not equal, but exercised through a resistance to domination. It is this relationship that informs the dialogical sovereignty of the classroom, subjugating traditional hierarchical relationships for the development of a pedagogy of possibility. This study is not attempting to define power as it is contextualized in an educational setting; rather, it attempts to develop a deeper understanding of how multicultural education theory and pedagogy inform one another to create a course that challenges the givens of our lives and the surrounding system that dominates our daily existence. Giroux’s theory places an emphasis on one’s ability to decode. Also, appropriate theory must be done in a dialogical environment. Giroux is cognizant of the necessity to foster an educational climate where professors and students work as critical agents, reflective of the language,

¹³⁶ Giroux, *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a Critical Pedagogy of Learning*. p. 119

¹³⁷ Britzman, *Practice Makes Practice. A Critical Study of Learning to Teach*.

experience, and oppressive conditions that afflict society in the mutual struggle for new possibilities.

David Kirk points out that teachers and teacher educators are the successful products of an educational system that has presented knowledge in this inert form. Kirk goes on to state, “teachers themselves have a vested interest in the continuing existence of the system as they know it that has provided them with careers and a particular lifestyle.”¹³⁸ Giroux and Freire argue that this is precisely the problem; it is only when teachers themselves become aware of the inert nature of the knowledge and its role in perpetuating inequality that there is any hope of overcoming the reification of inequality.¹³⁹

The literature points out that a key issue in discussion of any teacher education program is the nature of knowledge that forms the substance of instruction. In teacher education, this issue lies at the heart of the perennial problem of theory and practice. Theory, it is commonly thought, is only remotely related to the practice of teaching, often to the point of being redundant or even antagonistic. Practical knowledge that points to more scripted methods of teaching are considered to be more valuable than theoretical knowledge, and the research points out that this antagonism is evident the manner in which teachers are promoted in most school systems, where longevity of teaching experience or seniority is awarded priority over qualifications.¹⁴⁰ However, this gap between theory and practice is, in itself, a product of theoretical discourse.

Robin Barrow illuminates this point:

Theory and practice are distinct in the sense that they are theoretically distinguishable, just as love and lust or the constituent parts of water are theoretically

¹³⁸ David Kirk, "Beyond the Limits of Theoretical Discourse in Teacher Education: Towards a Critical Pedagogy," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 2, no. 2 (1986). p.161

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

distinguishable. But it is another matter to try and separate love and lust in practice, or to try to physically separate the elements contained in a glass of water.¹⁴¹

Scholars like Kirk and Barrow writing on teacher education point out that theory and practice are two separate components of the teaching that represents a false dichotomy.¹⁴² This literature points out that in teacher education, the problem of theory and practice has perhaps been that theory is often times combined with little relevance to the teachers lived experience of teaching, and has thus reinforced the idea that theory and practice in teaching inevitably exist in dysfunctional relationship to one another.¹⁴³

As graduates of teacher education programs, teachers are expected to perform many important functions in schools. They are charged, on the one hand, with the responsibility of producing literate and mathematically proficient students who possess a variety of skills that prepare them to contribute to an increasingly sophisticated technological society. At the same time, teachers are expected by some to be guardians of the social, moral, and political standards of the community.

Henry Giroux's critique of teacher education has pointed out some of the difficulties that continue to trouble teacher education programs. Giroux points to the detrimental influence of positivistic social science as a major perpetrator of many problems in teacher education. He argues that teacher education consistently fails to produce teachers who have a critical insight regarding their role and function as teachers in schools, of the value of the knowledge they teach, and of the role of schooling in society. Indeed, he suggest that in many cases teacher educators are similarly ill equipped to face these issues.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Robin Barrow, *Giving Teaching Back to Teachers: A Critical Introduction to Curriculum Theory* (Routledge, 2015). p.12

¹⁴² Kirk, "Beyond the Limits of Theoretical Discourse in Teacher Education: Towards a Critical Pedagogy."

¹⁴³ Barrow, *Giving Teaching Back to Teachers: A Critical Introduction to Curriculum Theory*.

¹⁴⁴ H.A. Giroux, *Ideology, Culture, and the Process of Schooling* (Temple University Press, 1984).

Giroux goes on to argue that teacher education works to reproduce and legitimate social inequality, not to ameliorate it. He suggests that a hegemonic ideology underwrites teacher education, appearing in the form of a technocratic rationality, which conceives of curricular problem solving as a sophisticated technical pursuit. Even when some form of critical examination does go on in teacher education programs, it involves "the language of internal criticism, it is confined to solving the puzzles in its own symbolic space, and as such cannot step outside of the assumptions that legitimate it."¹⁴⁵

The manners along which individuals align themselves accentuate the perception of similarities and differences between the self and others. This alignment is evident with those who think of themselves as 'student' in relation to those who think of themselves as 'professor.' This binary is present in "attitudes, beliefs and values, affective reactions, behavioral norms, styles of speech, and other properties that are correlated to intergroup categorization."¹⁴⁶ This study aims to understand the relational dynamic of the classroom, through the in-depth analysis of pedagogical dialogue within a "traditional" professor student binary that exists in the college classroom.

Defining pedagogy through a critical pedagogical lens expands classroom interactions to align more with social interactions and dialogue rather than merely a method of instruction. The demarcation of pedagogical interactions does not rely upon one's alignment to a social group or category; rather, it is the manner in which professors and students, who are both teachers, negotiate themselves in relation to one another. In contrast, when considering teachers it is important to frame the conversation around professional attitudes and skills that are closely related to one's personal and social history. The manner in which the profession is carried out

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. P. 154

¹⁴⁶ B.B. Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control: The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse* (Routledge, 2003).

is often a mixture between individual uniqueness and qualities of the social and cultural environment in which the education system is embedded.

As professors and students negotiate pedagogical interactions, they adopt, resist, and assert various pedagogies that align with their individual selves. An outcome is that discursive formations and social relations are formed, challenged, and adopted throughout the course that influences the function of classroom pedagogy. Professors have great jurisdiction over what happens in their courses in respect to their interaction with students, the power they exercise, and what knowledge they imbue upon the class. In this study I delve into a professor's and her student's perceptions of the classroom pedagogy. By examining the perspectives of both the student and the professor, the study provides a rich contextual analysis of multicultural education theory as it functions through and within the pedagogic dialogue of a multicultural education theory course in a college of education. To better understand the role multicultural education theory plays in a classroom, it is important to identify the position of the students and learn how they "define" the theory taught, their relation to the professor, and the pedagogical approach to the class. This process will better contextually frame the acquisition of the professor's instructional goals. Specifically, I investigate a classroom in which the professor and students interact with multicultural education theory while shaping the pedagogical dialogue of the professor and the subsequent dialogue in the class. Central questions throughout the study will be how pedagogical dialogue functions throughout a course designed to illuminate social ills.

This study is an attempt to contextualize and deepen our understanding of how pedagogical dialogue functions within a multicultural education theory course for pre-service teachers. By attempting to understand more thoroughly the function of pedagogical

dialogue in a teacher education course the further hope is to illuminate new pedagogical approaches in contemporary education courses.

Summary of Relevant Literature

This review described the importance of pedagogy, pedagogical dialogue, and multicultural education theory. It has also focused on the importance of teacher education and pedagogy when dealing with dialogue. In addition, the review has described the importance of being a teacher in our schools and the various relational aspects of power between professors and teachers. This review has discussed the manner in which pedagogical dialogue plays in the course focusing on multicultural education theory. Finally, this review illuminated the manner in which the communicative theories of Paulo Freire and Jurgen Habermas were used as a framework when to outline the pedagogic dialogue within the classroom.

Research that addresses pedagogical dialogue as it functions in a multicultural education theory teacher education program is needed. It is useful to address pedagogical dialogue regarding the instruction of multicultural education theory and if pedagogical dialogue has the ability to be the change agent's theorists see them as. The ultimate purpose of this research is to shed light on how pedagogical dialogue has the ability to inform the experiences of the students and professor in a education theory course for pre-service teachers. When viewed through this lens, pedagogy is an interactive, decision-making process that allows course content, objectives, and practices to be openly communicated among the students and professor.

This study is an attempt to contextualize a deeper understanding of how pedagogical dialogue functions through and within course informed by multicultural education theory. By attempting to understand more thoroughly the function of pedagogical dialogue, the further

hope is to illuminate new pedagogical approaches in contemporary education courses.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Participants

This study was designed to learn how pedagogical dialogue functions in a multicultural education theory course designed for pre-service teachers. Data collection took place throughout one 6-week, summer semester of a multicultural education theory course in a specific department of educational policy studies. This study also examined the role pedagogical dialogue has within the social space of the multicultural education theory classroom and how course dialogue informs the pedagogic style and approach of the professor. To develop a comprehensive view of pedagogy, the qualitative research design probed the professor's pedagogical dialogue, gathered student feedback, and collected data from observing interactions among students and the professor while aligning the data with the assignments. Texts were also read and works cited within the course.

The focus of this study was on the professor and her interactions with the students. Although the professor was the primary focus of this study, questions were examined from both the professor's and the students' perspectives to gain a better understanding of the context in which pedagogy is in concert with dialogical strategies within a multicultural education course designed to illuminate social inequities in educational environments.

On a more personal basis, given my experience as an educator, the study as a whole developed as a result of consciously choosing not to eliminate personal educational experiences and emotions. In fact, it would have been impossible to deny those past educational experiences or emotional ties to this topic. It was important to the study to identify how these experiences and emotions came about. A non-participant in the study, therefore, interviewed me as the researcher.

By being able to draw on personal experiences and emotions when collecting data, when participating in discussions, and when analyzing and writing up results, I gained insight into my personal bias and gave greater meaning to the data collected through the study. Throughout my career I have developed a deep commitment to social justice and the manner in which it is taught and modeled in education. Therefore, the ability to be completely distanced from this research topic would be impossible. By articulating and reflecting on my past, I drew on my knowledge of the topic in the research process

Conceptual Framework

This study is understood through the theoretical frameworks of Paulo Freire's pedagogical dialogue and Jürgen Habermas's communicative action, which provides meaning through processes of communication. A classroom culture is created through the interaction of a group's membership and through the dialogue they partake in with one another.¹⁴⁷ Dialogue in this instance is not merely a technique used in a class to convey knowledge or to make a statement. Dialogue for the purposes of this study was viewed through a Freirian lens as a process in which the students and the professor pose critical problems to transform learning into a collaborative process to illuminate and act on reality. This process was situated in the thoughts, language, aspirations, and conditions of both the professor and the student. Additionally, Habermas's communicative action theory is situated within dialogue in that it is a circular process in which the professor and students maintain control over the actions, during which he or she as the teacher is accountable while maintaining group cohesion based on solidarity and the process of socialization.¹⁴⁸ In other words, the group solidarity of being a teacher leads to dialogical understanding through language and various speech acts in class.

¹⁴⁷ Dvora Yanow, "Seeing Organizational Learning: A cultural view," *Organization* 7, no. 2 (2000).

¹⁴⁸ Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*.

A university classroom relies on social interactions to function. Expectations are placed upon its members for their respective roles in order to maximize learning. During the formative years in a student's process in learning to teach, personal identities are built and influenced by communicative interactions with his or her peers and professors. Pedagogical dialogue provided the framework for this study so to best understand this classroom environment, and in particular the manner in which pedagogy functioned while teaching multicultural education theory.

An ethnographic research design was chosen for this study. Ethnographic research does not begin with a predetermined hypothesis to be proved or disproved as an objective social fact; rather, it begins with open-ended exploratory attempts to learn as much as possible about the relational aspects of the participants and culture in the study. Ethnographic research enables the researcher to describe these interactions and the connections between and among them.¹⁴⁹

Ethnographic research renders a detailed contextualized analysis of a culture, be it the culture of a nation, a community, or a classroom. Those using ethnographic methods study lived experiences that exemplify a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal experience of the real through the examination of thoughts, actions, problems, and environments that readers had not thought about, been aware of, or taken time to examine before.¹⁵⁰ Unlike a study of teaching methods, where interests lie largely within the domain of pedagogy aligned with student outcomes, ethnographic research model is focused on the broad cultural contexts of multicultural education theory, where dialogue interplays within the professor and students.

Ethnography in this instance aligns with the conceptual nature of this study within the

¹⁴⁹ Tony L. Whitehead, "Basic Classical Ethnographic Research Methods," *Ethnographically Informed Community and Cultural Assessment Research Systems: Working Paper Series*. Maryland: Cultural Ecology of Health and Change (2005).

¹⁵⁰ Christopher John Pole and Marlene Morrison, *Ethnography for Education* (McGraw-Hill International, 2003).

complexity of the course and instructional materials as they inform the pedagogical dialogue of the professor.

Ethnography is an ideal method where a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed.¹⁵¹ Ethnographies are designed to bring out details from the viewpoint of participants by using multiple sources of data. Ethnography is an approach to the study of cultural systems that examines the interrelated components of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, and social relationships.¹⁵² The social behavior within this study is one of a shared educational culture. Professional educators at both the university and K-12 levels share a sense of community through lived experiences with students and the accompanied vernacular. This being said, it was imperative for me to be mindful of relationships with respect to their emergence, intensification, and possible reconstitution as participants of the study to attend to one another in their attempt to adjust to those with whom they associated.¹⁵³

Ethnographers also need to be aware of the interpretations that participants attach to themselves, other people they interact with, the ways in which the participants do things on both an individual and interactive basis, and the attempts that the participants make to influence others. The ethnographer must be cognizant of the bonds that the participants develop with others over time and the ways in which they attend to these relationships and the processes, natural histories, or sequences of interactions that the participants develop and experience over time.¹⁵⁴ This awareness resulted in me conducting this study in a naturalistic setting that permitted me to have access to multiple viewpoints through interviews, observations, and the development of detailed field notes.

¹⁵¹ Christopher John Pole and Marlene Morrison, *Ethnography for Education* (McGraw-Hill International, 2003).

¹⁵² Whitehead, "Basic Classical Ethnographic Research Methods."

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

Setting

The setting of the study was that of a under graduate course that focused on multiculturalism in a college education classroom within an urban university that is located in a metropolitan city in the southeastern region of the United States. This urban university has an enrollment of 32,000 students. The college for this study is one of six colleges within the university. The college houses six teacher education programs geared toward research, teaching licensure, and graduate studies in education. A chair who reports to the dean of the college heads the department for this study. This particular program was selected due to its focus on multicultural education theory instruction and research and also to its accessibility. The mission of the program is to develop educational leaders and scholars through innovative strategies with a foundation built upon relevant knowledge and effective practice. The crux of this study was to develop an in-depth understanding of “effective practice” as it aligns with the pedagogical dialogue of the students and professor. While the professor was the focal participant within this research study, the students in the class provided observational and interview data to add to the thick and rich context of the study.¹⁵⁵

The study focused on an undergraduate multicultural education course that covered issues of race, class, sexuality, ageism, and gender in education as the overarching objectives taught. The course description from the University webpage states points out that students enrolled in this program are encouraged to learn educational reforms in relation to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, and diversity within a democratic framework. Emphasis is placed on examining the economic, political, and social frames that affect the quality of education within a multicultural, social reconstructionist perspective. The course of study relied on multicultural education theory so as to draw comparisons of the language of critique and the pedagogy in the university

¹⁵⁵ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

classroom as it related to the teacher's pedagogy in his or her daily practices. As researcher, I observed every class session that lasted 3 hours, every Tuesday and Thursday night, for the entirety of the course for one 6- week summer academic semester.¹⁵⁶ The classroom was located in a twelve-story office-like building that was designed to be for teaching and learning, with classrooms, desks, and whiteboards. This building was located in the heart of an urban center. The building itself was architecturally modeled after most of the buildings it neighbored; nothing about this building made it stand out from the others. Inside the halls were stark white and the floors were stained, as was the case in all corridors. The classroom itself contained concrete walls, rows of desks, a whiteboard, projector mounted from the ceiling, all illuminated by the buzzing sounds of fluorescent lighting.

I arrived 30 minutes prior to the start of each class so to learn more about the students from their informal conversations with one another. I remained 30 minutes after the completion of each class to debrief with the professor, which was recorded and transcribed, to gauge her perspectives on instructional objectives for the night, to determine if she felt they were met, and why or why not. My pre-class observations were collected in an Evernote electronic notebook. My aim throughout the study was to immerse myself in the class. I did not participate in the class discussions, however, for I felt this would skew the data; rather, I did sit among the students, not separated as "the researcher." Being cognizant that there could have arisen potential issues due to my presence, my aim was to diligently work to reduce the possibility of any involvement. I consciously worked to reduce my presence in the classroom by sitting in the far-right corner for

¹⁵⁶ It must be noted that the course flow was quicker in this six-week course compared to full semester 12 week courses. The professor noted that the only aspect of course modified for the six-week format was the amount of reading required between each Tuesday and Thursday.

each observation, while seeking to become an unobtrusive researcher who saw without being observed.¹⁵⁷

Data Sources

As the primary researcher, I was solely responsible for the collection and analysis of all data. The data collected were stored electronically and password-protected in an Evernote Premium account, which is housed in a non-disclosed data center. All identifying information, such as the name of the university, course, professor, and students have been replaced with pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality of all those involved in the study. The data collected for this study came from four sources: (a) observations field notes, (b) interviews, (c) course debriefing sessions, and (d) researcher journal. This study was cross-validated through observations, interviews, and professor debriefings sessions. To strive for high quality, the study aligned with the research question, data sources and themes generated from the data collected. As ethnographer my goal was to understand the culture of this classroom on its own terms with the aim of provoking further investigation and dialogue in circles that discuss how dialogue informs pedagogy, specifically in colleges of education. See Table 1 for a simple schematic of data sources aligned to collection.

While analyzing the findings generated in the data, two key themes were identified, trust and autonomy. Each has been summarized and aligned to the theoretical perspectives of Paulo Freire's pedagogical dialogue and Jurgen Habermas's communicative action. These were analyzed through levels of analysis, such as organized and descriptive accounts, reoccurring thematic patterns that were identified repeatedly throughout the data, all aligned to the theory to aid in the explanation of the data gathered.

¹⁵⁷ S. Schensul, J. Schensul, and M. D. LeCompte, *Ethnographer's Toolkit*, vol. 2 (Walnut Creek: Sage Publications, 1999).

Table 1. Data Sources Collection Table

Data Sources	Data Collection
Interviews	Pre-course professor (60 minutes) Post course professor (45 Minutes) Post course three students (45 minutes each)
Observation Field Notes	6 weeks – Tuesday and Thursday- (2.5 each)
Professor-Debriefings Sessions	6 post class debriefings (40-45 minutes)
Researcher Journal	Weekly - post class (6 weeks)

This level of analysis involved using concepts developed from each theme to describe how pedagogical dialogue is woven throughout a course devoted to illuminating multicultural theory in educational settings. Throughout this phase of analysis I continually moved back and forth between the details and a landscape view of each theme.

Observations

Observing each class for a complete semester allowed for increased opportunities to note patterns in the professor's pedagogy. The primary focus of each observation was to determine how the professor pedagogically framed the course to promote dialogue with the students (see Appendix A for Observation Protocol). The observations did not have a set structure; rather, they focused on capturing several elements germane to this study, such as the class setting, interaction among students and professor, and the professor's and participants' verbal and non-verbal discourse. The aim was to discover class themes in the observational data. In arriving 30 minutes before each class began, a "flexible time" allowed for casual interactions with both the students and professor, so as to gather informal field notes on the upcoming class and collect feedback on the prior class. This flexible data collection was indicated in the informed consent (see Appendix E for Informed Consent).

Observations are usually associated with the sense of sight. But in the purest form of observation without participation, as ethnographer and researcher my intent was to sharpen my sense of sight and hearing as keenly as is possible in order to take in stimuli from all sources of the classroom environment being studied. In other words, my observations were sensitized in order to take in and process stimuli that might have meaning for members of the classroom community, or that provide insight regarding their classroom interactions and relations. The collection of observational data was broken down into manageable categories and then filtered into subcategories. I observed each class for a complete semester to allow for increased opportunities to note patterns in the professor's pedagogy and subsequent student engagement among themselves and with the professor.

By entering the classroom setting with a goal of recording as much information as possible, fieldwork began by conducting descriptive observations. This characterized an open-ended approach to ethnography. Through the sharpened awareness of my senses, observations were made of as much of everything as possible, with the general question, "What is occurring here?" carried out through all descriptive observations.

Noted throughout the observations I was keenly aware of who interacted with whom, how the students positioned themselves within the class, and whether these two conditions changed or remained consistent. In addition to the manner in which the students positioned themselves physically in the class through seat selection, proximity to others, and distance from professor, I also recorded how students positioned themselves ideologically in the class. Also observed were the interactions occurring in the setting, including who talked to whom, whose opinions were respected, and how decisions were made. I looked to see how students stood or sat, particularly those with more "observed" power versus those with less power. In addition, as

ethnographer I carefully listened to conversations, trying to remember as many verbatim conversations, nonverbal expressions, and gestures as possible. To assist in seeing events with “new eyes,” detailed jottings were turned into extensive field notes.¹⁵⁸ New insights were carefully and constantly sought out.

Observations included how people utilized the space of the classroom and what interactions occurred between the professor and the student(s). Interaction for this study focused on the mannerisms students displayed throughout each class period, the frequency or lack thereof, open dialogue with the professor, and student dialogue with peers during class. In addition to the types of communications, rhetorical questions, statements, open-ended questions, and closed-ended questions were the types of communication observed and recorded. In doing so it was imperative to distinguish communication from dialogue. Also observed was both how and when these interactions took place and the methods of the pedagogical dialogue that were present throughout the class. The routines and rules observed in the course added richness to the data.

To facilitate the transition to focused observations, fieldwork observations were conducted with the aim of integrating fully developing the conceptual categories and providing an organization for the categories identified. Conceptual categories articulated the point to account for both similarity and variation in exemplifying data incidents. This accounting was done through the use of focused coding.¹⁵⁹ Efforts at this point in the study were centered on comparing data incidents to the drafted conceptual category, reflecting, and noting its properties or dimensions.

The arrangement of observational categories established a set of coherent, reoccurring themes. The conceptual elements of data were compared to clarify the relationships between the

¹⁵⁸ K.M. DeWalt and B.R. DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (AltaMira Press, 2010).

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

categories and their properties.¹⁶⁰ At this stage, memo making was utilized to support the effort to articulate the significance of the categories, while allowing reflection on the notes in regards to the categories and relationships between categories.¹⁶¹

Field notes

The principal data generated from my observations in were produced from my field notes. Field notes were hand written during each observation to record descriptions of events, actions, and initial impressions made during each evening class. Because the goal was to portray the occurrences in the classroom, bullet points were recorded including key words, phrases, and actions observed. Over time, I learned each of the students' names, and developed codes for each student in the notes to maintain confidentiality; doing so this allowed for more detailed discussion of particular situations with Professors Erin during debriefing sessions due me getting to know the individual student's on a more personal level. After each observation, field notes were reviewed and notes added to create more complete descriptions of classroom interactions. Field notes were also one tool used to guide conversations during debriefing sessions with Professor Erin.

In addition to the collection of descriptive and focused observational field notes, a research journal was kept, along with field notes from informal interactions with the students and professor. Throughout the entire process of analysis I was engaged in memoing, recording notes, and outlining what was gleaned from the data. Through the creation of memos to myself I was able to capture ideas and insights; this served as additional data that was maintained in my reflective journal. The juxtaposition of memoing in my research journal with my field notes provided greatly added to the confidence of the data collected as it aligned to my thematic

¹⁶⁰ Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research* (Sage Publications, Incorporated, 2010).

¹⁶¹ Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.

analysis. Field notes provided an avenue to record detailed observations of the social and interactional processes that made up the classroom and the manner in which the class communicated about the topics being taught each night.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the professor and a selection of students (see Appendices D and F for Student and Professor Recruitment Letters). What was learned through observations was supplemented by two formal interviews with the professor: once at the beginning of the study and once at the conclusion. In addition, three students were interviewed at the conclusion of the study. While the observational data lent itself to informing the data on behavior in action, the interviews provided an opportunity to learn how the professor reflected directly on behaviors, circumstances, and events in the class. Interviewing the professor and students aided my descriptions and understanding of their unique experiences throughout the course. The interviews served as a means of deepening the understanding of the dynamics of pedagogical dialogue by eliciting accounts from participants as they related to the pedagogical style of the professor.

There are various forms of interview design that can be developed to obtain thick, rich data. For the purpose of this study a semi-structured and informal interview approach was used.¹⁶² The semi-structured interview method allowed for the development of new questions and ideas based on the flow and responses from the interviewee. Interviews were designed around questions that pertain to context and pedagogy. Informal interviews were aligned with the debriefing conversations held with the professor after each class observation.

¹⁶² Daniel W Turner, "Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators," *The Qualitative Report* 15, no. 3 (2010).

Prior to the start of the course the professor was interviewed for one 45-minute session. This interview provided insight into her past as an educator and additionally provided the path she had embarked upon as an educator.

All in-person student interviews were conducted at a site and time determined by each student. Interviews were arranged through email; a digital device recorded the ensuing one-on-one interviews. Each student interview was electronically tagged with the name of student, date, time, and location of the interview. Subsequently, transcriptions of each interview took place as immediately as possible so to maintain integrity of the data. A copy of the transcribed interviews was offered to each student and shared with them upon their request. All three students denied this offer.

It was important to establish rapport with each interviewee in order to obtain authentic responses throughout the interview. Each interviewee was made as comfortable as possible. The interview process was approached through a contextualized conversation. In utilizing this approach the interview was still aligned to the research question: however, it required me as the interviewer to pause and reflect on the context of the conversation and include participants in a reciprocal process.¹⁶³

Interview material required that attention be given to the contextual nature of any particular statement made by the subject.¹⁶⁴ The questions asked throughout each interview were malleable in relation to any given situation and setting of the interview. In other words, questions asked were reflexive based on the interviewee's responses: the interviewee, not the researcher, guided the route of each interview. As researcher, I set the framework in which to navigate.

¹⁶³ R.P. Clair, *Expressions of Ethnography: Novel Approaches to Qualitative Methods* (State University of New York Press, 2012).

¹⁶⁴ Phil Francis Carspecken, *Critical Ethnography in Educational Research* (New York Routledge, 1996).

While reading through the interview transcripts themes were identified as they fell in line with research questions (see Appendix G for Student Interview Protocol).

Informal conversations generated questions in a natural interaction, this typically occurred prior to the class starting.¹⁶⁵ These informal conversations were not recorded or transcribed; rather the information gleaned from them was recorded in the field notes. Questions were asked of the participants in order to learn more about their social interactions within the classroom without having a predetermined set of structured questions. These questions came from ‘in-the-moment experiences’ as a means of furthering understanding or clarification of what was witnessed or experienced at a particular moment.¹⁶⁶ This type of data was beneficial to the overall study due to its lack of structure, which allowed me greater flexibility in learning about the pedagogical interactions in the class. This approach was not without some idea of what was desired in the setting, for it was not possible to isolate my research concerns entirely, even though the conversation or the activity was primarily social or informal. Because some form of research paradigm was part of my consciousness, I was not only alert when something emerged in the conversation, but this data was captured in field notes when the conversation seemed to be moving into an area related to the research focus. Throughout the study I strived to be an alert listener, looking to insert any appropriate natural inquiries what, how, who, where, when, and why that were mentioned in the informal discussions of descriptive observations.¹⁶⁷

Contrasting with the informal conversational interview was the semi-structured interview approach used with the professor, which is more structured than the informal conversational

¹⁶⁵ Herbert J Rubin and Irene S Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (Sage, 2011).

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ J.A. Hatch, *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings* (State University of New York Press, 2002).

interview, although there was still flexibility in its composition.¹⁶⁸ The advantage to this approach was that it ensured that the same general areas of information were collected from each interviewee, providing more focus than the conversational approach, while still allowing a degree of freedom and adaptability in gathering information from the interviewee. Using the semi-structured interview approach allowed for more of an open-ended approach that is characteristic of classical ethnographic research. In conducting a semi-structured interview a list of questions was compiled and a particular order was followed, although there was set list of response possibilities found in structured interviewing. Using this approach to interviews allowed answers to be elicited from the perspective of the study participant in an attempt to gain a greater understanding of the context and meaning of those responses through various forms of probing. More control over the data could be maintained and collected with this type of interview approach; but flexibility takes precedence based on the prompts garnered from participants.¹⁶⁹ When eliciting interview responses about the class and the interactions in the class, scene sequencing was developed within the analysis to break up the stories within each interview for better cross comparisons of various interviewees. The interview guide was developed to target information relevant to professor and student pedagogical dialogue (see Appendix B for Professor Interview Protocol).

Professor-Debriefing Sessions

Upon the completion of each class observation a thirty-minute debriefing session was held with the professor. Through analytical probing, these debriefing sessions helped reveal any granted biases, perspectives, or assumptions inadvertently made through the collection of observational data during the class (see Appendix C for Professor Debriefing Session Protocol).

¹⁶⁸ Rubin and Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*.

¹⁶⁹ Turner, "Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators."

The debriefing sessions allowed for the professor to provide in-depth discussion and reflection on her pedagogical approach, student interactions, and overall dialogue of the class, aiding the development of coding decisions and categories. Relying on one professor for the crux of data collected, the debriefing sessions were able to yield high-in-depth information regarding the professor's motivation, emotions, concerns, and behaviors. The quality of data gathered from the professor was vital for the study and having time to debrief with her helped solidify the organization and interpretation of data collected. In addition, debriefing clarified any misperceptions gathered regarding events that took place in the class.

Clarification in each of these sessions was sought for any over- or under-emphasized points, vague descriptions, and the identification of bias or assumptions made during the class observation. Lastly, the debriefing sessions provided valuable insight into her experience of what happened and her thoughts on each class. Transcripts from the debriefing sessions were read and coded into categories, then subcategories, eventually themes were identified that aligned to the theoretical underpinnings of the study. Questions that arose during each debriefing session were associated with the events, dialogue, and interactions that took place through the evening's class. The debriefing sessions allowed for greater detail and explanation of observational data collected during the course observations. Each debriefing session was conducted immediately upon completion of each class observation so as to best utilize the debriefing data to offer explanations of convergent and divergent data within the explanatory of the overall data analysis.

Student Interviews

The students were asked to provide feedback upon the completion of the course (see Appendix G for Student Interview Protocol). Interviewing a selection of three students provided a better understanding of their experiences objectively without the effect of being actively

involved in the class. In other words, student responses were not unduly influenced by their ongoing participation in the course or by their relationship with the professor while the class was in session. The students were a part of the pedagogical relationship with the professor and therefore contributed to the data collected.

The post-class student interviews served as a member check for the perceptions made of the professor's pedagogical dialogue as it related to the research question. Student interview data also added another facet to the understanding of dialogue informed the pedagogical approach of a professor. Student interview data was coded into specific themes regarding clarification of terminology and the perceptions the students had in relation to the pedagogical approach to the class. Student data collected in conjunction with the other identified data sources was used to aid the overall iterative data analysis process. Student feedback data offered explanations within the analysis of convergent and divergent data. The three students were selected on the following criteria:

1. Upon completion of the course all students in the class were given a form to solicit if they were interested in being interviewed. They were asked to check yes or no to the question of participation. Students who checked yes were asked to provide his or her most frequently checked email address.
2. Three students who indicated interest by selecting yes were then randomly selected, through blind selection of the forms submitted, to participate in the study.

Upon completion of the course 3 student volunteers were interviewed one time to gather post-course feedback from a student perspective. Students were confidentially asked if he or she would like to volunteer to be interviewed, through the completion of a document that asked for their name and an indication of: yes, I would like to participate, or no, I would not.

At the beginning of the semester the professor shared details about the study with the class. Three students participants were interviewed at the conclusion of the study. The students were selected from teacher certification program who were enrolled in this course on multicultural education theory. After I made initial contacts with potential participants as the researcher, I allowed the students to voluntarily contact me via email or phone. From these contacts three students came forward and volunteered to be interviewed upon completion of the course.

Once selected each of the student volunteers received an informed consent form that outlined the nature of the study, informed him or her that the information collected through the interview would be used as data in the study, provided the time needed to complete the interview, outlined his or her rights as a participant, and explained the steps taken to ensure the confidentiality of his or her identify and the information he or she provided. The student participants were asked to review their data and my analysis and provide feedback to ensure I did not misconstrue his or her information. Table 2 reflects the demographics of the students in the course and the specific students who were interviewed for this study.

Table 2. Student Gender and Race Demographics

Total Students	Male	Female	African American Male	African American Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	White Male	White Female
19	6	13	0	4	1	2	5	7
Students Interviewed	1	2		1			1	1

Researcher Journal

In addition to the field notes recorded during observations, I also kept a research journal to track my own reactions and the affective experiences I had during this study. In my journal I reflected on the process of collecting data as well as question the biases I held. Going through the observation process, I was cognizant of my past experiences and how these experiences shaped

my views and philosophies of education. My researcher journal I aided me is identifying biases in ways that lessened tainting my overall analysis of the class.¹⁷⁰

The researcher journal provided an outlet for me to record specific words, phrases, summaries of conversations, and insider language I observed that was captured in my initial observation notes. I recorded notes in my researcher journal and those notes were written immediately upon the completion of each class I observed. In addition, I recorded questions about the course, people and/or behaviors that help guide my interview questions and coding structures in my researcher journal. In both the journal and the field notes I gave special attention to the relational dynamics of the class and recorded the concerns of those being studied. My researcher journal provided a space for me to capture data that contributed to a broader and more coherent account of the participants in the study. In addition to recording additional instances of data, I utilized the research journal to record my subjective positions that aligned with the observations made throughout the study so to lessen the subjectivities in reporting the themes identified.

The Researcher

To aid in the identification of my personal educational subjectivities so they minimized my perspectives throughout data analysis I utilized a reflexive approach to the research process. Through the use of such an approach I was interviewed by a non-participant of the study and asked the same questions I would be asking the professor in our first interview together (For the interview protocol, see Appendix G). This process teased out and aided in identifying my “presuppositions choices, experiences, and actions” that could have arisen during the research

¹⁷⁰ J.A. Hatch, *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings* (State University of New York Press, 2002).

process.¹⁷¹ Having taught in the university setting I brought my own pedagogical perspective to this study. I had taught undergraduate students social theory as a graduate teaching assistant and in doing so developed a pedagogical framework in which I began to understand, at a very basic level, what it means to teach theory in a university setting. So rather than attempting to control these values through method or by bracketing assumptions, my aim was to consciously acknowledge those values. In addition to keeping a self-reflective journal, this self-interview allowed me to examine “personal assumptions and goals” and clarify “individual belief systems and subjectivities”¹⁷² My subjective concerns related to what refers to as “the interpretive crisis” in qualitative research.¹⁷³ In interview-based qualitative research such as this study this crisis is a particularly pertinent issue (see Figure 2 and Table 3).

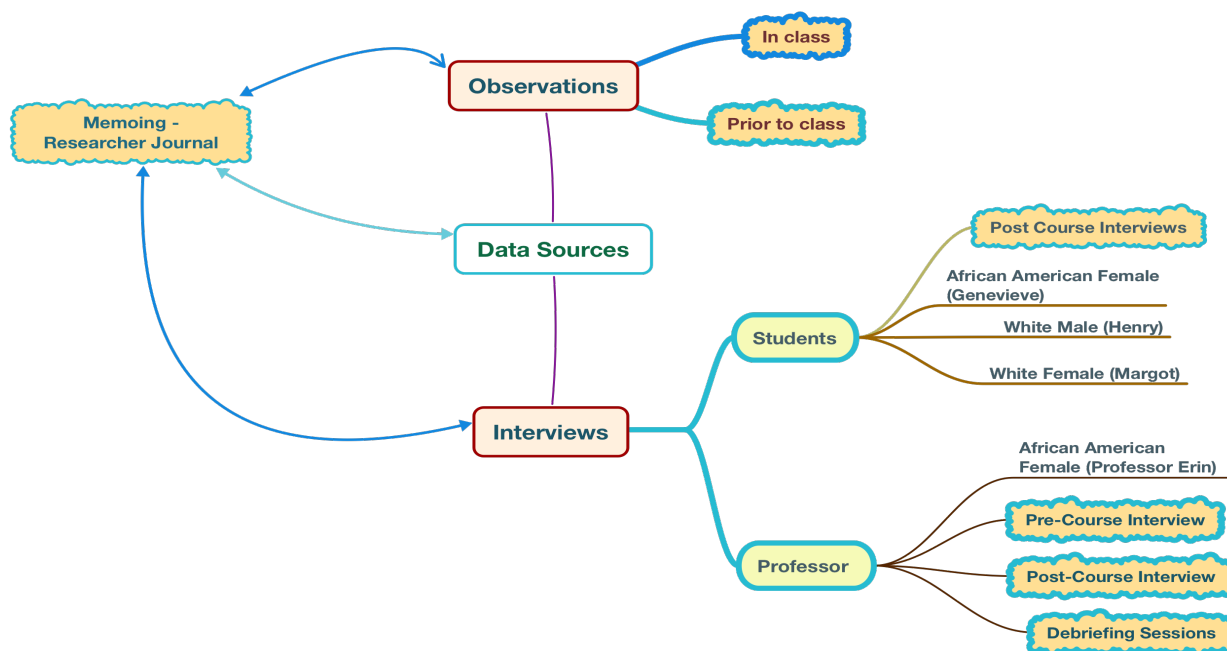


Figure 2. Sequence of data sources and collection

¹⁷¹ Michelle Ortlipp, "Keeping and Using Reflective Journals in the Qualitative Research Process," *The qualitative report* 13, no. 4 (2008).

¹⁷² Ibid. P. 2

¹⁷³ Norman K Denzin, "The Art and Politics of Interpretation," (1994). P. 510

In sum, Figure 2 is a representation of the sequential flow of the data sources and data collection that informed this study.

Table 3 represents the time line associated with data collection from May 2015 through September 2015.

Table 3. Research Timeline

Detail	May	June	July	August	September
Course observations and debriefing session					
Professor Interviews					
Professor Debriefings					
Student Interview					
Data Transcription					

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data moved from the immediate understanding of teaching and learning associated with teaching praxis, to understanding relational experiences as mediated by a multicultural education theory context of the course. Throughout the analysis I was able to increase the complexity of pedagogical interpretations that arose from each topic discussed in class. This complexity was achieved when the topics discussed transcended the immediacy of the lived experience of the classroom and came to be understood as the result of pedagogical dialogue within the class.

Through hermeneutic inquiry, meaning and the development of interpretive explanations are sought through processes of feedback (i.e., interviews and observation). There were many

values to going out into the “field,” collecting data (interviews and observations), then subjecting this data to determine ‘what is going on,’ to build a picture of emerging data, and guiding me on to the next set of data collection. This iterative approach within the hermeneutic tradition required me to go back and forth through the data while relying on preliminary data analysis as a guide. Doing so involved rethinking of aspects of each question asked and collecting and cross-questioning all the data until no new data emerged.¹⁷⁴ The thematic organization of the data required moving back and forth through the data. This dialectic between category and data occurred both during and after data collection.¹⁷⁵ It was important to observe and record how the experiences changed throughout the course of the study; doing so allowed me to seek guidance with analysis while eliminating areas of intuition that arose in the data. Throughout the process of coding, comparing, and initial memo making, I moved from descriptive to focused data categorization. Areas were identified in which categories were integrated and their properties moved from focused to selective subcategories so that specific themes were identified within the data.

Descriptive observations of the research setting transitioned to observed interactions and behaviors that were categorized for interpretive purposes. This categorization was the first phase of my analysis. Without some type of categorization, neither interpretation nor analysis could be done, and the information remained meaningless, or incoherent.¹⁷⁶ To facilitate the transition from descriptive, observing everything, through the heightened awareness of the senses, to focused observation, typified by short-term focused observations, with an interest in a specific research question,¹⁷⁷ open coding was used as the first step in developing conceptual categories,

¹⁷⁴ C. Grbich, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction* (SAGE Publications, 2006).

¹⁷⁵ Pole and Morrison, *Ethnography for Education*.

¹⁷⁶ Whitehead, "Basic Classical Ethnographic Research Methods."

¹⁷⁷ Karen O'Reilly, *Ethnographic Methods* (Routledge, 2013).

as open coding raised analytic questions about the data.¹⁷⁸ The subsequent data collection and coding provided ongoing validation checks on previous established codes that were initially established and aligned through subsequent observations.

Throughout the study I was constantly engaging with and asking questions of the data and noting these in my field notes. In addition to engaging with the students and professor, the correspondence between thematic relationships and experiences was noted. Thematic categories were developed in order to articulate both similarity and variation within the exemplification data incidents. Throughout the study the data were coded inductively. This coding was accomplished by close readings of text and consideration of the multiple meanings that were inherent in the text. Text segments were identified that contained meaning and a label was created for each new category into which the text was assigned. Additional text was added to each category when it was relevant. This inductive approach allowed categories to be identified from the frequent themes that were inherent in the raw data. The categories were identifiable after studying the data repeatedly while considering possible meanings and how these fit within developing themes. Transcripts were also read to group segments of text by theme. Toward the end of the study no new themes were identified, suggesting that the developing of major themes had been exhausted.

I focused on comparing data incidents to the thematic category while reflecting on its properties or dimensions. This thematic categorization facilitated the iterative process of further inquiry development throughout the study.¹⁷⁹ Patterns were matched across data sources throughout the study to better illuminate various data trends and similarities that emerged

¹⁷⁸ Robert M Emerson, Rachel I Fretz, and Linda L Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

¹⁷⁹ Greg Guest, Kathleen M MacQueen, and Emily E Namey, *Applied Thematic Analysis* (Sage, 2011).

(see Figure 3). Codes were organized into memos that lead to the development of the conceptual ideas that aligned and grew in clarity and accuracy as the research progressed (see Figure 3).

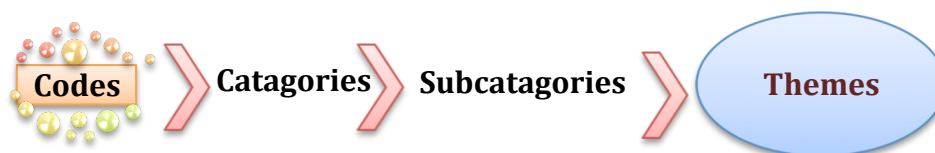


Figure 3. Thematic Flowchart

After leaving each observation session field notes were recorded in order to focus on the key observations, conversations, and experiences of the classroom.¹⁸⁰

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis provided the analytical framework and process for post-data reduction. Thematic analysis led to identifying themes, concepts, and categories within the data. This method of analysis provided a view of reality via systematically working through text to identify topics that are progressively integrated into higher order themes, via processes of decontextualization and recontextualization.¹⁸¹ Thematic analysis focuses purely upon meaning, thus my analysis is a more discursive interpretation of codes that are cross-reference though the two identified themes. Through cross-referencing code patterns overarching themes within student communication structures were identified. This identification led to the development of framework in which to view such communicative relationships within the course.

Thematically, dialogue was identified within the codes and from there analyzed further and aligned to the text segments within the transcripts. This method allowed for patterns and

¹⁸⁰ J. Saldana, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (SAGE Publications, 2012).

¹⁸¹ Nigel King, "Using Templates in the Thematic Analysis of Texts," *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research* (2004).

explanative narratives to develop. These themes captured the importance of the data in relation to the research question and represent some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.¹⁸² From the patterns identified in preliminary data analysis, a fairly clear idea of what the data categories might be identified. Through the use of thematic analysis I was able to focus on words or phrases that represented identified themes and I then linked these to raw data for later analysis. Such analyses included the following: comparing code frequencies and identifying code co-occurrence within the data set. The literature points out that therein lies a concern with thematic analysis compared to word-based analysis due to more interpretation going into defining the data items (i.e., codes), as well as applying the codes to chunks of text.¹⁸³ Thematic analysis can be misinterpreted to mean that themes within the data “emerge” like Venus on the half-shell. If I had not clearly articulated how I went about analysing the data it would be difficult to evaluate this study, which could impede other researchers carrying out related projects on pedagogy in the future.¹⁸⁴ Despite this shortcoming, a thematic analysis was most useful in capturing the complexities of meaning within a large data set for this study.

Data Organization

The analysis of the data collected was reliant upon efficient organization of categories and themes. Prior to the categorization of data into themes, the data were read and re-read in order to organize them into manageable bits that were thematically indexed. The data were ‘tagged,’ so it could be determined where to best categorize it. The data tags were then aligned to the data codes through the computer program Evernote (see Figure 5). Evernote allowed me to facilitate the organization of thematic codes into individual notebooks while still being able to

¹⁸² Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative research in psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006).

¹⁸³ Greg Guest, Kathleen M MacQueen, and Emily E Namey, *Applied Thematic Analysis* (Sage, 2011).

¹⁸⁴ Jennifer Attride-Stirling, "Thematic Networks: An Analytic Tool for Qualitative Research," *Qualitative research* 1, no. 3 (2001).

tag the individual data codes into sub-codes to be cross-referenced; thus, in effect, imperceptibly moving from coding as labeling to coding as analysis. Figure 5 outlines these processes of “tagging” and organization of data with the Evernote notebooks.

A key aspect to the integrity and rigor of the study was the attention given to the patterning and ordering of the data collected. Through the development of such patterns I was able to thematically organize the data so that connections between the categories developed to arrive at a qualitative account of the research.¹⁸⁵ Once categorized patterns in the data were identified the process of data ordering established logical connections between categories. From the patterns thematic regularities were then tagged. In essence, this process is an iterative spiral where I was able to move to and from data collection, data description, and categorization, as well as the making of connections between categories to identify themes. This iterative spiral was utilized as a way to develop a point of saturation and no new emerging data were seen or heard. Once saturation was met and the themes were identified the data illuminated the relational dynamics that informed the pedagogical interactions of the class.

Through the organization of data into manageable themes I was able to elucidate the social structure of the classroom through the identification of webs of social interactions that emerge as evidence throughout the study. This approach allowed for greater flexibility in viewing the dynamics, linkages, and contexts for the change nature of cultural networks, such as a university education course that specializes in the instruction of multicultural education theory. In an attempt to identify linkages between the professor and students it was useful to identify patterns of interaction and how individual and class behaviors changed through the semester.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Pole and Morrison, *Ethnography for Education*.

¹⁸⁶ Grbich, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction*.

The observed interactions between the professor and the students were assessed as they aligned with and were informed by the professor's pedagogy in relation to social theory taught throughout the semester. This graphical representation outlines how the data related back to the research question throughout the process of analysis, in addition Figure 4 clarifies how the key areas of relational dynamics and changes were identified throughout the study.

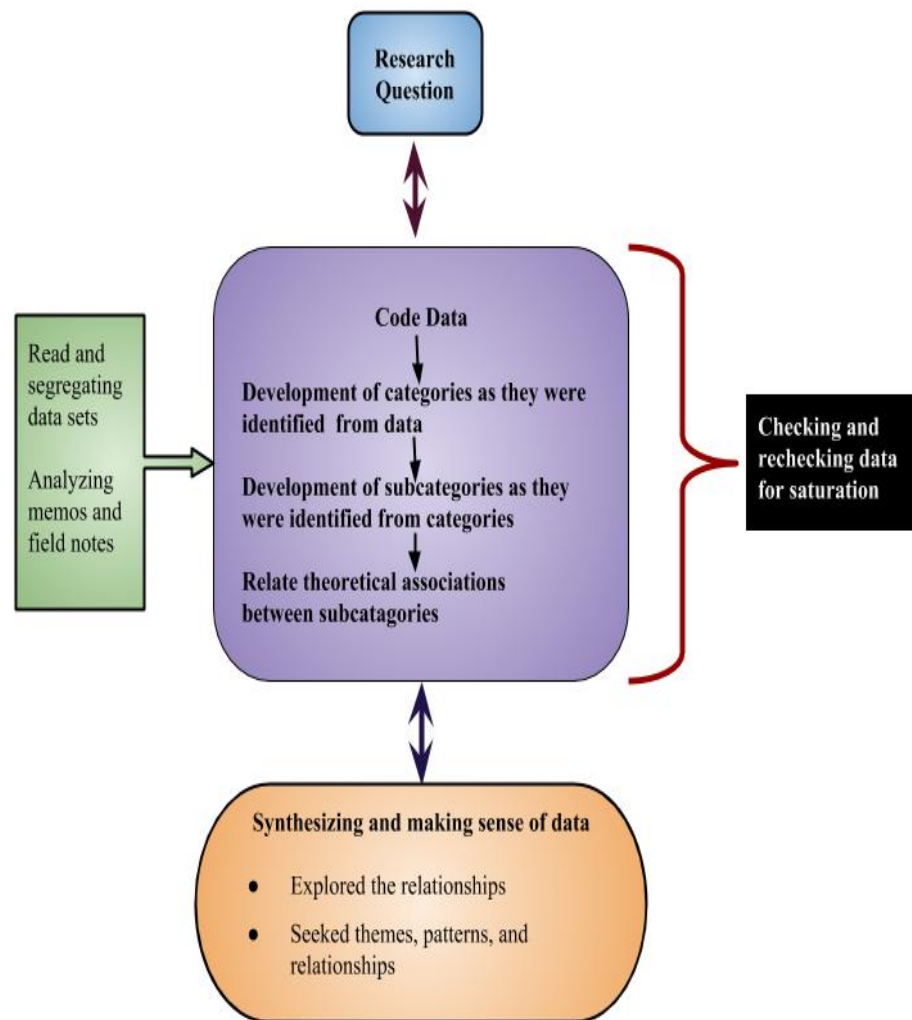


Figure 4. Data organizational flowchart

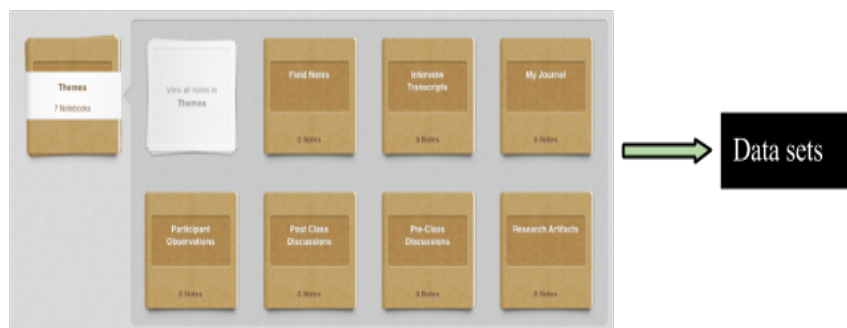


Figure 3. Organization of thematic notes in Evernote notebook

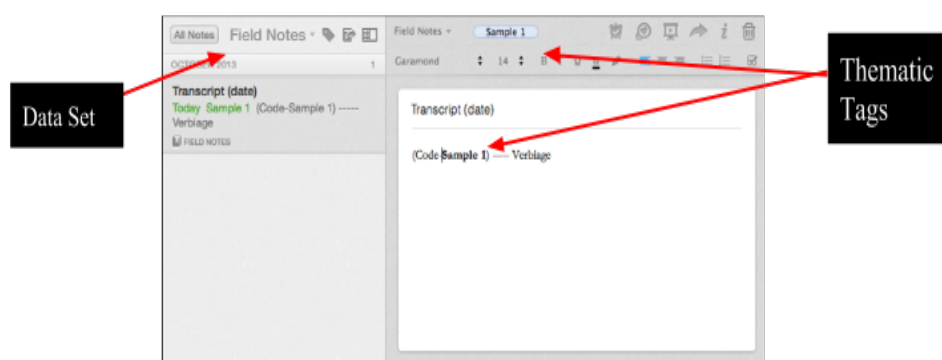


Figure 4.

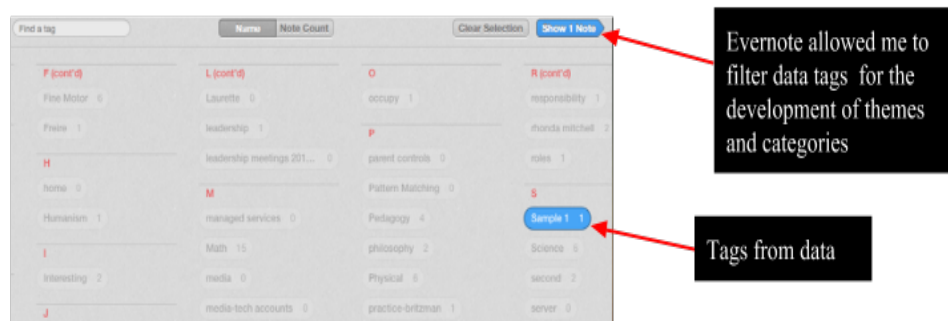


Figure 3. Cross-referencing codes and sub-codes through tag organization

Figure 5. Organization of data through Evernote

Ethical Considerations

Conducting ethnographic research is much more than the mere collection of data; it is the construction of meaningful relationships. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that both parties define these relations. From the participants' point of view, more than the simple

decision of participating or not, they will be involved in the shaping of their own participation. As ethnographer I focused on developing a trusting relation with participants to ensure that a high level of trust was established and maintained throughout the study. In order to establish and maintain that trust, honesty was required in all dealings with the participants, explaining and answering all questions they had about the informed consent forms and other aspects of the study. The intended use of all forms of data, especially audio recordings, were explained and permission received prior to collection to ensure that each participant's privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity were preserved. To ensure data confidentiality and safety the digital recordings could only be accessed through a two-step passcode authentication process. User authentication could be performed over SSL and uses 1024-2048 bit RSA and a symmetric key that would be negotiated between the browser and Evernote's server.¹⁸⁷

The process of informed consent was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and was followed when obtaining consent from the students. My field notes were devoid of identifying labels, pseudonyms were used in written reports, and the names and locations of places or organizations were concealed. Finally, to align with the activism and social justice of the study, I intend to play an advocacy role by disseminating findings beyond the academic arena so that educators whose actions are currently impacting the lives of students are made privy to the results. Throughout the course of the study I conducted myself so as to minimize interference while striving to collect data that would produce the knowledge that justified my presence.

¹⁸⁷ "Evernote," <http://evernote.com/contact/support/kb/#/article/23480996>.

CHAPTER 4

DATA REPRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Research Positionality

It is important to speak to my background and the path I have embarked upon to arrive at this study. It is my wish to inform the reader about my personal and professional perspectives, as well as any other matters that might bear on the process of data collection and analysis and the question itself while studying a course on multicultural education theory. It is essential for the purposes of this study, therefore, to provide the context of my past, as I believe my family background has given me a particular perspective through which to view relational interactions in academia. My experience has led me to a life significantly different from that of most of my peers in the University. I am not unique among all members of the University, however, for there are others who share my experience. There are many students who acknowledge the importance of coursework that positions them to critically examine their racial and gendered identities. It has been vital for others and me like me to understand how class has shaped their lives.¹⁸⁵

I cannot speak for the entire rural, working class community where I grew up. I do, though, have firsthand experience *being* working class and everyone I grew up around sounded like an Irish dockhand. I didn't grow up around people with college degrees and *The Atlantic* on their coffee tables. I grew up around waitresses, plumbers, mechanics, and teachers who worked to live rather lived to work. I no longer live that life. This does not imply that I am a success story, nor am I attempting to claim a life of hardship. Many children have struggled far more than I have. I am a 45-year-old white male who has been teaching in both informal and formal education settings for the past 21 years. I was raised by working-class, blue-collar

parents who ended their education with a high school diploma. I went to public school in a rural community in the southern tier of Buffalo, New York, where only 15% of my classmates went on to college after graduation. It is this upbringing and the experiences that accompanied it that have significantly influenced my perception of power, stereotyping, and the labeling of others. I grew up relatively poor, which continues to have an effect on what I think about and perceive, as well as how I approach ideas and other people.

In my own life, I spent my formative years as a poor kid trying to cultivate the voice of my more privileged peers. I recognized that if I wanted to leave my station in life, all paths to advancement hinged on learning to sound and act like those whose parents went to college. It wasn't authentic for me and admittedly awkward. But suppressing my own identity and embracing the culture of someone else's good fortune got easier over time, and I ended up convincing enough middle-class teachers that I was a "smart kid" who could go on to a college and from there go on to graduate school.

I have spent my time in graduate school cultivating mediated credibility so that the cultural authority would see me as legitimate and worthy. The incentive was to narrow myself to appease the privileged in educational settings. There are many scholarships and prizes to be won by poor kids who will dedicate their energy, time, and sanity to legitimate the delusion that this system is somehow meritocratic, balanced, and fair. But students like me punish themselves to fit an ideal that in no way services their class origins.

I have 21 years of teaching experience in both formal and informal educational settings. My education career started in the Education Department at the Buffalo Zoo in New York and has ranged from Assistant Curator of Birds at the Reptile Gardens in Rapid City, South Dakota,

to teaching history at a private school in Atlanta to being an adjunct professor at a local university. My current role in education is managing a large technology department. As the Director of Technology and Media Studies, I am responsible for managing teams of educators and engineers that support the instructional technology and technical infrastructure of a large private school.

By way of personal illustration of my interest, upon entering the Ph.D. program, like many new students I felt isolated. Through my own fear of developing a negative relationship with the professor, I did not contribute substantially during class discussions; after all, I had entered into a foreign environment. Even though my professional life was spent in various educational settings, being a Ph.D. student was completely foreign to me.

My understanding of racism and racialized experiences came through an evolution, perhaps a revolution, of trials and reflections and a deep personal search for what it really meant to be White. As with many White people who struggle with a racial identity, I have had to learn what it means to be a member of the White race and the White majority. My struggle for a racial identity began with shame as I came to understand the role that white people played in the subjugation, exploitation, extermination, and enslavement of people of Color. Though my coursework, I came to realize I lacked a multicultural consciousness, I had been instilled with dysconscious racism.¹⁸⁶ Dysconscious racism, as define by Dr. Joyce King, is “a form of racism that tacitly accepts dominant White norms and privileges. It is not the *absence* of consciousness but an *impaired* consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness.”¹⁸⁸ Not having lived my formative years in a diverse setting I

¹⁸⁸ King, "Dysconscious Racism: Ideology, Identity, and the Miseducation of Teachers."

came to take for granted my whiteness without acknowledging the privilege that it instilled in me. Throughout my years in the PhD program I have been able to study and work with issues that arise from whites, like myself, having an absence of a racial conscious. My work with the United States Commission on Civil Rights shed a light on the issue of the gross disproportion of school suspensions of African-American students compared to their white peers. This experience brought the theories of racial inequalities that I had studied to an actual practice of dysconscious and conscious racism facing many of our nations African-American students. Through the juxtaposition of this experience with the theories being taught and how they were being taught in my course work, I became intrigued by the relational dynamics that existed between my peers, those students who were also professional educators, and their professors. Those many educators and their dynamics led me to this study.

Through my studies and experiences working with race scholars and African-American peers and through my years as a PhD student, I have become cognizant of the privilege I bring to all social settings due to my Whiteness. Because I was studying an African-American female professor in a multicultural education theory course, not being aware of my white privilege at the outset of this study could have skewed how I viewed her and the course in general.

Throughout the entire study, it was imperative that I understood the impact my life experiences had on the data collection and analysis.¹⁸⁹ Locating myself was important to better understand the research project; however, I had to take this idea one step further and become self-reflexive. Reflexivity involves understanding how my positionality is embedded in power

¹⁸⁹ Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Sage Publications, 2005).

and domination and the effects that resulted from the hierarchy of researcher and participant.¹⁹⁰ I had to be aware of the effects of my research design in producing an interpretation of events through my cultural lens.

Exposing the subjective nature of this study follows a Freirian philosophy.¹⁹¹

Detailing my personal subjectivity began the inquiry from a place that embraced the theoretical framework of critical pedagogy, in which all truth is constructed through the lived experience of the researcher and is therefore expressed through dialecticism as both truth and myth. Pursuing an advanced degree in Social Foundations of Education opened new understandings of the complex social issues I experienced and through my transformative experience I believe pedagogical communication is the most promising method of transgressing current oppressive educational structures. Prior to the study I was interviewed by a colleague in order to aid me in identifying subjectivities that were related to the study. When being asked what I felt was the most important aspect to my education I responded:

Thinking back as a student I often juxtapose the knowledge I have gained throughout all my years in formal education and to which teachers truly inspired me to learn. I always come back the ones that gave a shit, oops sorry, cared about me as a person. You know, the ones who asked how you were doing and really meant it and listened if you needed them to. I was good at the school game and from my early days in high school I remember being cynical to “why this really matters.” It was the teachers who were “real,” the ones who listened to you no matter the sport you played or the GPA you had that made the most difference in my life. I guess you could say the seed of this study was planted when I was 15 years old.

Reflecting on my identity through my years as a student I came to see how my experiences influenced my reality and how all realities have a foundation in an individual’s experiences.

¹⁹⁰ Pole and Morrison, *Ethnography for Education*.

¹⁹¹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*.

Connecting these ideas to my passion for education led me to explore Paulo Freire and Jurgen Habermas.

Interviewer: So tell me more about your pedagogical style when teaching undergrads.

Jeffrey: (laughing) I wouldn't call how I teach a style. Rather I view teaching young adults, as undergrads are, as a way of communicating and learning complex topics alongside them. I am not a big fan of rules, I think it's really dumb to hold undergrads accountable to attendance policies, page limits, and syllabi in general. I know full well that a syllabus is necessary, but we have conditioned professors and students to want and expect control, even when teaching about controlling oppressive theories.

Interviewer: Let me interrupt, you don't believe in attendance policies?

Jeffrey: I don't, if I am teaching a class and no one shows up, I feel it's on me to determine what I am doing to cause students to not want to be there. We want freedom but really don't want freedom.

I now understand my teaching style throughout those years was a small form of critical pedagogy. Coming to know my identity as produced by my years as a student and beginning to see myself as a subject with the ability to act upon my circumstances, as opposed to an object waiting to be acted upon, was a liberating concept during my transformative experience as a teacher/professor.¹⁹²

Gaining a deeper understanding of the theory of critical pedagogy and its transformational abilities, combined with my transformative experience within the doctoral program, piqued my interest in continuing to learn more about Freire and Habermas. I have found much solace in

¹⁹² Ibid.

Freire's call for action through praxis. Although I appreciate meta-theory and its ability to inform practice, my life has been focused on "doing" and not just "talking." Therefore, Freire's idea of critical pedagogy through a problem-posing education and praxis led me to pursue a study that focused on pedagogical communication.¹⁹³

Furthermore, I fundamentally believe any research based on Freirian ideas must involve action. Claiming to follow Freire, but adhering to conventional research paradigms reinforces the status quo.¹⁹⁴ Research not aiming to produce social change through praxis is theorizing about social change and therefore not acting to influence social change. I interpret the act of not acting as a fundamental political action rooted in acquiescence to the status quo; therefore, no action is still a political stance. This idea is the foundation for explaining how pedagogical dialogue's transformative aim is the impetus for the selected methodology.

Field Study Methods

After completing the study, transcripts from the one-on-one interviews, professor-debriefing sessions, and observation notes built an information database. From this database, I explored the data to get a general sense of the material through "a preliminary exploratory analysis."¹⁹⁵ After reading and re-reading all of the transcripts and observation notes I began to code the data. These codes were not limited to any number and it was imperative to allow the codes to fit the data and not vice versa.¹⁹⁶ Information relevant to two or more categories was included in all possible categories. Furthermore, outlier information was not discarded, but

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Freire and Shor, "What Is the "Dialogical Method" of Teaching."

¹⁹⁵ John W Creswell et al., "Qualitative Research Designs Selection and Implementation," *The Counseling Psychologist* 35, no. 2 (2007). P.250

¹⁹⁶ S.J. Taylor, R. Bogdan, and M. DeVault, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource* (Wiley, 2015).

rather categorized to protect against bias.¹⁹⁷

The data sources for this study were aligned to provide information that informed the research question, specifically the function of pedagogy within a multicultural education theory course for pre-service teachers. Each source of data was informed by other data throughout the study and were coded and condensed into categories leading to the development of the two major themes of trust and autonomy. The use of transcripts and observations, which produced codes, categories, and subcategories, coalesced to provide a rich analysis of the data and the development of themes.

The initial organization of data produced codes that were placed in categories, which were centered on the main storylines that were identified from the study. Subcategories were then developed to explore data within each category.¹⁹⁸ These subcategories were more specific in regard to how Professor Erin pedagogically communicated and engaged with the students. The sub-categories allowed for the development of themes. Within the development of categories aligned with the development of the "trust" theme I observed and noted the following: (a) Professor Erin and the students encouraging mutual sharing of personal and expressive stories related to content, (b) Professor Erin and students sharing how personal and cultural experiences influence how they and others construct knowledge, (c) Professor Erin and the students using information about their families, cultures, and communities to connect to multicultural concepts, and (d) Professor Erin providing information to refute misconceptions and prejudices about ethnic groups members. Based on these observations I then noted the frequency of each and specifically the pedagogical communicative strategies utilized by Professor Erin, which allowed

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

me the funnel large categories into subcategories with the eventual development of the theme “trust.”

The analysis was approached inductively as is the nature of an ethnographic study in order to identify categories, which were subsequently filtered into subcategories that were condensed into two overarching themes that represented how pedagogy functioned within this course. The data collection process and analysis are conditions of ethnography that were ongoing throughout the study which allowed themes that answered the research question through student professor interactions and words of the participants. During the analysis of the data, a series of coding cycles of the text were used to filter the relevant information to form categories and subcategories.¹⁹⁹ In other words, several stages were used to go from taking codes from the raw text to the final stages in which the codes led to categories, subcategories and then themes; these stages were outlined in Figure 6.

From the initial categories, subcategories were identified from the groups of codes using the conventions from the data collection methods. For example, the classroom observation data involved classroom space, students and professor communication, and pedagogical activity. The data from the interviews were grouped into categories, as well as the data from the professor-debriefing sessions. The text was then taken from the transcripts and placed appropriately within the categories. The categories represented reoccurring patterns within the text that answered the research questions. From the categories, subcategories were developed that led to the development of themes identified from the data that were salient to the study. Throughout this process it was important to memo each night after class so as not to miss any observed

¹⁹⁹ D.M. Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step-by-Step* (SAGE Publications, 2010).

behaviors, communicative interactions, dialogue, and ideas gleaned from the debriefing session with Professor Erin. This reflective practice greatly aided in the development of subsequent codes and categories throughout the study.

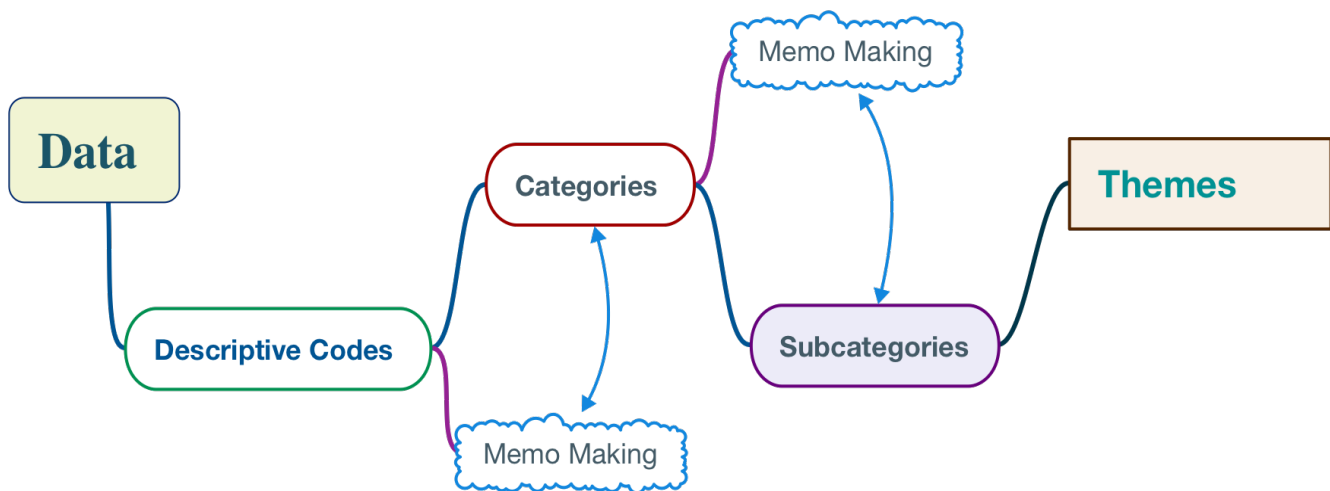


Figure 6. Stages of data organization and development

Throughout the coding of data, I was constantly comparing data sets across sources to account for the multiplicity of data collected for this study. In this ethnographic study, the transcription data from the students' and professor's interviews provided some overlap or reemergence of information that represented similar viewpoints regarding pedagogical communicative experiences of each participant. This overlapping of information contributed to

ensuring accurate representation of the group members in order to most effectively describe each participant's view on how pedagogy functioned in this multicultural education theory course.

Throughout the initial coding of the data I continually grouped codes into categories. This process was a form of descriptive coding. Following this initial coding in which categories of codes were formed, I condensed data from the initial codes into clusters or chunks that revealed subcategories or more focused codes in the data. Throughout this ethnographic study, coding data into categories and then subcategories was both explanatory and inferential. It was through this process that two major themes were identified, trust and autonomy. The categories represented reoccurring patterns within the text that answered the research question. Categories and subcategories of codes were taken from the observation field notes. Furthermore, transcripts from interviews and professor-debriefing sessions were focused by the research question in order to explain the value of personal experiences of class participants while each was engaged in a multicultural education course. Figures 7 and 8 illustrate how the network descriptive codes were grouped into categories, then subcategories, with the eventual funneling into the development of the themes autonomy and trust. This visual display highlights the process in which codes were processed through continual noting from memoing. The Evernote software used for this organization of data was a powerful tool that housed large sets of data that were used to extract and organize codes used to form categories that were developed during the initial cycle of descriptive coding.

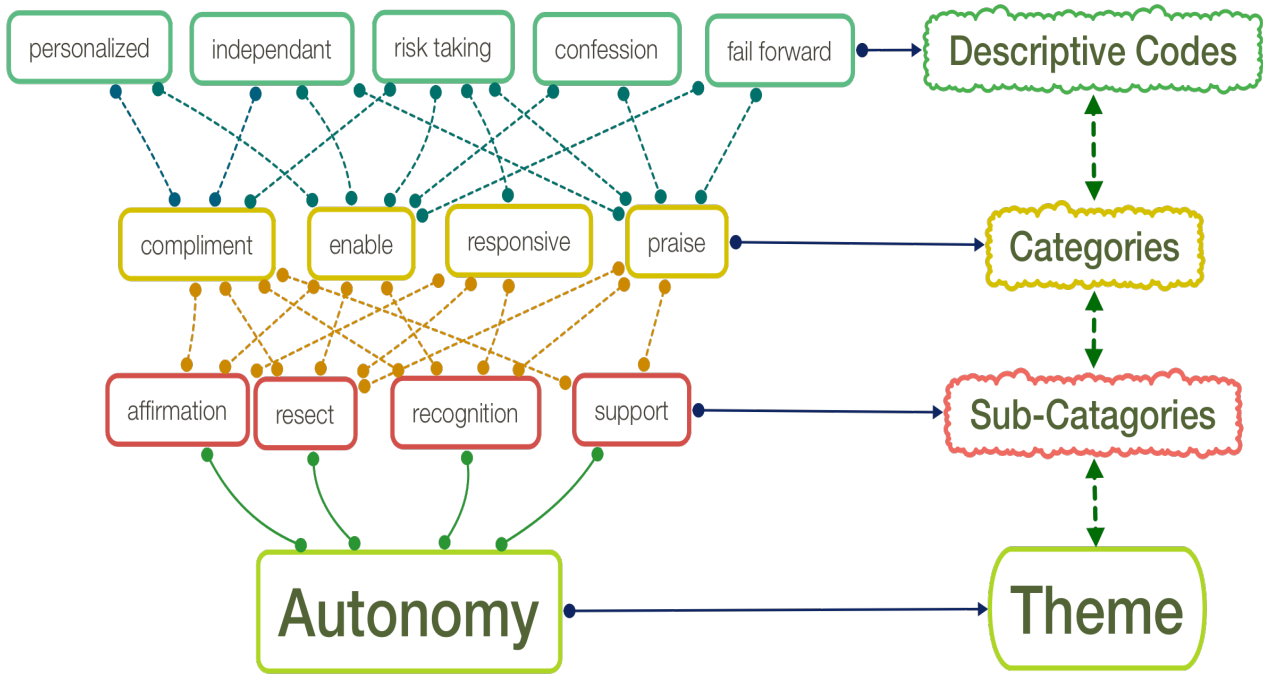


Figure 7. Thematic code tree – Autonomy

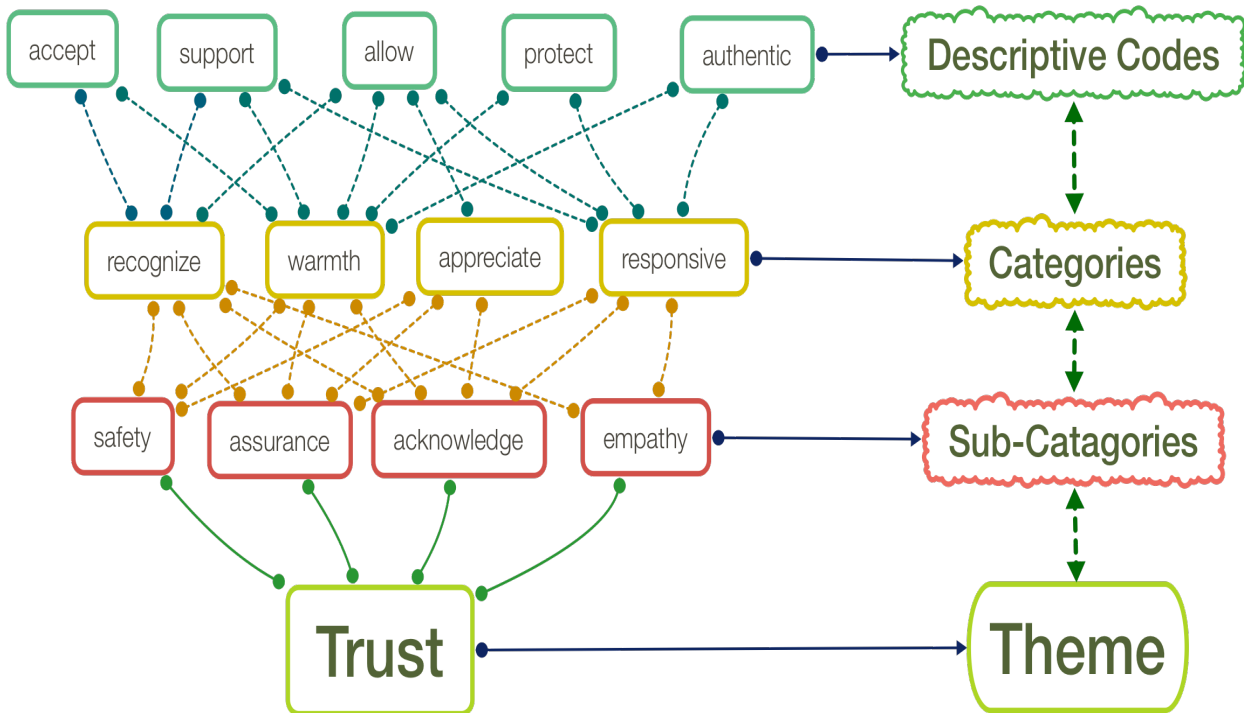


Figure 8. Thematic code tree – Trust

The data were further analyzed through the theoretical frameworks of Paulo Freire and Jurgen Habermas to gain a deeper understanding of how pedagogy functioned in a multicultural education classroom. Theoretical concepts were aligned to categories as they related to transcriptional and observational data. Figure 9 illustrates the alignment of transcription data with the notes, text coded in red, the theoretical alignment to Freirian dialogical theory and Habermas Communicative Action. The data coded from my interviews with Margot and Genevieve, expressed the manner in which Professor Erin “personalized” and “shared her own stories” with the class and how they perceived this as an acceptance to take greater chances when sharing personal stories. This was first coded as “acceptance,” “safeness,” and “assurance” in my review of the data set. These codes were narrowed down to “trust” as the study progressed and aligned with Habermas’ theoretical concept of “privileged access” and Friere’s belief that education must provided a safe place for students to take a risk.

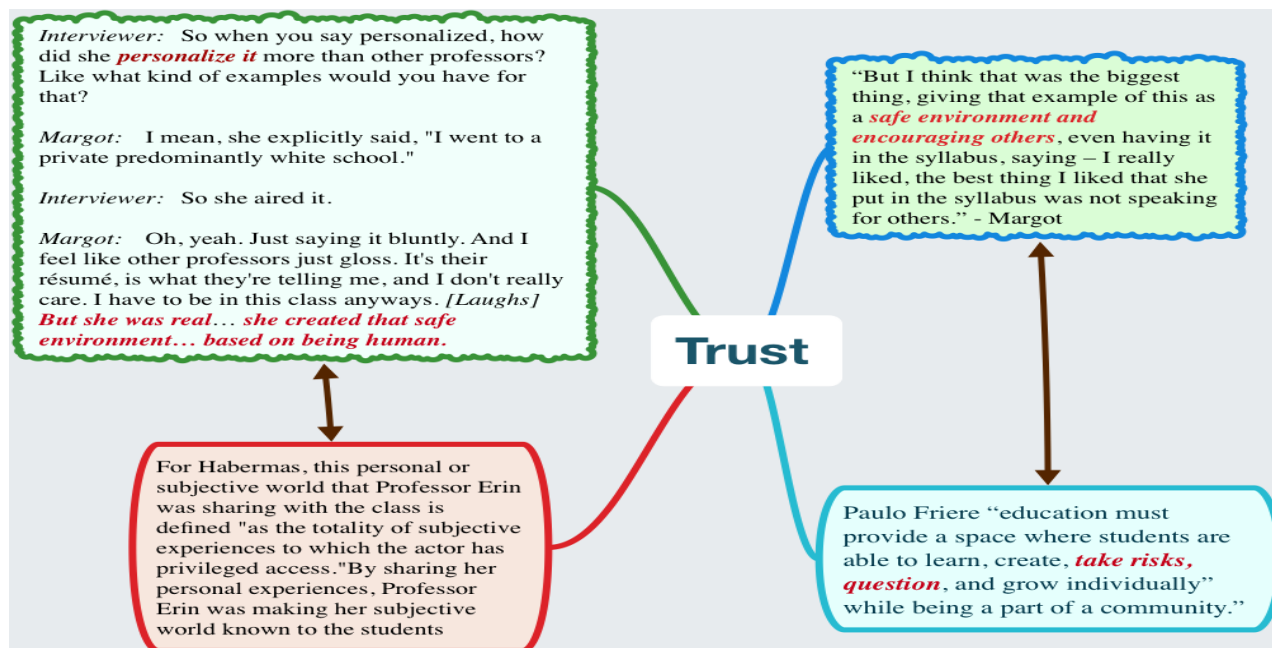


Figure 9. Theoretical alignment of data

Data analysis continually focused on the study's research question, which gave insight into the pedagogical communication of the professor. Analyzing the data to better understand the function of pedagogy was then used to further understand how the identified categories functioned within the pedagogy of the course.

Through the initial organization of my observation field notes and researcher journal I was able to assess and organize broad categories based on student and professor interactions and dialogue. One example of this is included in my observation notes, Figure 10, and the formation of the descriptive code "Accept," which was an early category that led to the development of the theme trust. During this observation the professor "P" was validating a student's perspective during a class conversation and while a student, coded as "SFW" (student-female-white), was openly offering her personal experiences to the content being taught at that moment. The student was offering her personal experiences as it related to the material and it was categorized due to Professor Erin's acceptance of this exchange. This interchange particularly significant in that this experience provided context in collaboration between Professor Erin and the student and how her pedagogy functioned within the course with the outcome of learning and discussing real and complex problems deriving from the practical experiences of the learner. Theoretically Freire highlights this in his scholarship as follows:

I believe that a professor loses his or her role when he or she leaves the role of teaching and its content up to the students. However, I am convinced of something: in a course students should have much to show from their experience and social practice. And this has a lot to do with the scientific task. If professors are not able to find in the students' practice and experience something that has to do with our scientific discipline we will not be qualified to hold two or three days of dialogue with the students about experiences outside the university and from that create

some programmatic content that would extend the curriculum needed in their studies. In fact, if we are not able to do this - that is, if we are not able to talk about their common experience, turning it into philosophy - then we do not know what to do with our science.²⁰⁰

P	Validating All student perspectives with subtle "yes", "uh-huh"	
P	Share personal experience with students about their children	* Humanize herself with those who share sensitive experiences
P	Using text to discuss cycle of identification Book 2	- needs to reference Book
Sfw	Offers answer without being asked	DIALOGUE
Sfs	Offers answer / perspective	
SFA	Offers perspective	
P	Engages in a conversation with class	
Sfw	Focuses class to offer perspectives	

Figure 10. Observation notes – “Accept”

The educative potential of accessing and utilizing this student’s experience in a dialogical process is useful when considering the development of knowledge through redeeming validity

²⁰⁰ M. Escobar, *Paulo Freire on Higher Education: A Dialogue at the National University of Mexico* (State University of New York Press, 1994). P.128

claims according to Habermas.²⁰¹ My notes reflected this and the occurrence of this interaction were coded initially during the observation as dialogue. I noted that this exchange between Professor Erin and the student was a “humanizing” behavior and that was later changed to “acceptance” as more interactions aligned to interactions where students opened up and shared personal stories during class discussions, but veered toward the professor’s acceptance of such behavior that would encourage a student to share his or her own personal experiences. Humanizing in this context is a two-way communication, which takes account of ideas, feelings, and total situations; in this instance it was the student being able to relate a personal experience to the overall class discussion. Dialogue can be a bodily, intellectual, or emotional process. According to this line of thinking it was important to identify the ways Professor Erin pedagogically developed a space that allowed for communication aimed at reaching understanding among all students.

The factors that contributed to the complex relationship between the student and Professor Erin was revealed through observational data and their words captured through interviews and professor debriefing sessions. The data collected from classroom observations was a foundation used in an inductive analysis that incorporated several cycles of coding of the text to identify themes to represent how pedagogy functioned in a multicultural education course.²⁰² In other words, a series of coding techniques were used to filter and eventually classify the text from observation field notes and transcripts into categories and subcategories with similar characteristics and eventually themes that answer the research question on how pedagogy functioned throughout the semester.

²⁰¹ Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System : A Critique of Functionalist Reason*.

²⁰² Creswell et al., "Qualitative Research Designs Selection and Implementation."

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

The Professor

Professor Erin is an African-American woman in her early 40's. She is married to an African-American man and they have two children, one boy age ten and one girl age six. She acquired her Ph.D. from the same university that she currently works for as a part-time non-tenured track professor. Alluding to the fact that she is not a tenure track professor worked well for this study because she was able to focus on the course she was teaching and was not unduly influenced by the pressures of having to publish and meet tenure requirements. In addition to working as a part-time instructor at the university, she works full time managing a small business. Having to maintain so many roles as mother, professor, and manager has been challenging, but has provided her with multiple life experiences, as will be pointed out through this analysis. It has helped shape her as a person and a professor.

Professor Erin comes from working class parents. Her father was a policeman and her mother worked in elementary education. Both parents are still actively engaged in their professions. They placed a high value on education and sacrificed so Erin could attend a well-known private boarding school in the Northeast. Her high school experience and subsequent acceptance in college not only informed her early views of education, but also shaped how she perceives education in light of her racial identity. She stated:

I went to a private school, and no one asked me what I wanted. So, I'm just being lectured to. I was told what colleges to apply to. I was told which college to accept

when they accepted me, because you're a person of color, you came from Urban-town²⁰³, you should probably go here.

Erin's experience of not being "asked" what she wanted and being pigeonholed into a specific college because she was a "person of color" would later inform her decision to change her educational journey to one that she had control over. While attending college Erin felt as though something was missing from her educational experience. She stated:

Yeah, so, I knew something was missing from my educational experience – because something was missing for Erin. Nothing that I was learning resonated with me.

Her lack of input in her education, by not only being told where to go to school, but also her complacency in the classroom of just being "lectured to," helped shape her future pedagogical methods and beliefs. Erin was not actively engaging in her educational experience at any level at this point in her life. She explained that she was merely "playing student" but not genuinely being one. Professor Erin was experiencing what most students learn very early in their schooling, that is, one must adapt to the workings of the system that is void of criticality, while not challenging its mechanics.²⁰⁴ Freire terms this as a dehumanizing situation that denies students the ability to fully become human. In Freire's opinion, schools, in the name of the "preservation of knowledge and culture," have developed into a system that achieves neither knowledge nor culture.²⁰⁵ Throughout her early years of school Professor Erin was suffering from what Freire terms "narration sickness." This sickness according to Freire is "the relationship that involves a narrating subject (i.e., teacher) and patient, listening objects (i.e.,

²⁰³ For purposes of confidentiality the name of Erin's hometown has been changed.

²⁰⁴ N. Florence, *Bell Hooks Engaged Pedagogy: A Transgressive Education for Critical Consciousness* (Bergin & Garvey, 1998).

²⁰⁵ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. P. 68

students).”²⁰⁶ Professor Erin did not relate school to her life or culture, but this changed dramatically when she was introduced in a high school history class to *Things Fall Apart*, by Chinua Achebe. She notes:

We read Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, because the history class was Africa, Middle East, and China. It was constructed in that way throughout the full year. And when we were in Africa we read Chinua Achebe's piece. And I was mind blown.

This book, coupled with having a teacher who encouraged the class to engage in conversation, was a transformative experience for Professor Erin.

That was the first time that my voice mattered because it felt so good to be encouraged to have a conversation. And to this day, that is one of my favorite pieces of literature, because I grew up in that space. I literally found my voice.

Professor Erin experienced the development of a bridge of educational relevance through each of these educational events. Reading literature that connected at a cultural level allowed her to realize that she did not have to accept the teachings contained within the walls of her high school. Reading *Things Fall Apart* planted in her a new pedagogical seed, one that would eventually grow into a method that emphasized individual autonomy and trust. Professor Erin discovered a horizon and an optimistic perspective from which her educational and pedagogical philosophies began to evolve and were imbued as instruments of liberation and social justice. Drawing from Habermas, Professor Erin would learn from her early educational experiences. She applied pedagogical methods that focused on engaged communicative actions and provided both her and her students with opportunities to communicate toward the goals of acquiring and constructing understanding.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ Paulo Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, vol. 1 (Continuum International Publishing Group, 1973). P.57

²⁰⁷ Habermas and Viertel, *Theory and Practice*.

Upon graduating high school Professor Erin attended a wealthy private university for her freshman year. She pointed out that the sense of self and the voice she had discovered in that high school history classroom, however, did not carry over to the university. Again she found herself being complacent in her learning. In her words: “I was being lectured to and talked to and partied too much. And I then realized that this is not resonating with the way that I’m supposed to be taught.” So she left and enrolled in a nearby public university in an African Studies program. This program placed dialogue at the center of its teaching and continues to have a profound impact on her pedagogical approach to her classes:

I chose a program where dialogue is at the center, which was African-American studies. I stayed there for my bachelor’s and my master’s degree. And over time, I started realizing this is the way you’re supposed to teach a class. You’re supposed to teach a class based on dialogue.

Prior to obtaining a Ph.D. and teaching at the university, she worked in education at the high school level for 8 years. She held a variety of positions in K-12 from teacher to administrator. This experience provided Professor Erin with skills that have greatly aided her ability to pedagogically and dialogically engage with a wide range of students. In our pre-course interview session she noted:

My experiences in teaching from high school to university have taught me that there does not exist one type of learner. Every student brings something new and exciting to the classroom and this keeps me energized to approach class every semester not knowing what to expect.

Erin’s varied educational and life experiences have played a pivotal role in how she approaches her classroom. Each time we spoke throughout the study Erin projected the traits she has gleaned from her past educational experiences as a student. She is self-confident, and yet soft-spoken, listening intently before speaking. She is strong-willed but understands that people

come from different places and carry different opinions. Especially admirable is the manner in which she explained a difficult student she encountered in her past.

I had a student that was a tough one. Well, he wasn't racist. He was oblivious. And I think that that's worse, to live in a world where you don't see anything that's happening around you, that you can't articulate someone else's experience, at least listen to it, and tell me what you just heard.

The way she referred to the student as not a “racist,” rather he was “oblivious,” speaks volumes on how she takes into account the person prior to passing judgment on what is being said. While this student might well have been exclaiming racist remarks, Professor Erin, rather than rushing to pigeonhole him as a racist, realized that he could not get beyond himself to view the experience of others.

After sitting in her class every week for a semester it became clear that Professor Erin's past life experiences had shaped her approach to her classroom, regardless of the subject matter being taught. This returns us to the question how pedagogical dialogue functioned within her class. The answer is not straightforward, rather, it can be said that the multicultural education theory she taught had a profound effect on her as a person and this informed her pedagogical interactions with the class. Through the analysis of the data, two major themes emerged that Professor Erin developed as her pedagogical foundation to dialogically engage the students in learning the myriad theories and perspectives within the multicultural framework of the course.

The Students

Margot

Margot is a White woman originally from Boston, Massachusetts. During our interview she mentioned her upbringing in a poor community raised by her single mother. Additionally, she identified herself as an “at-risk” child in school, treated differently by her teachers and peers because

she had a “weird name” that was different from her mother’s and she moved a lot. She explained how her mother instilled a love of education in her and sent her to the best schools available. Margot is working towards a degree in Early Childhood Education, with the goal of getting a masters degree in Speech Therapy. She worked for a year in retail before deciding to return to school to obtain her teaching credentials. She was not initially thrilled with the idea of a teaching career and mentioned this during our interview:

I actually resisted the idea of being an educator for the entirety of my undergraduate career. Right after graduation, I got a summer teaching position at [college] working with inner city students of [city]. I loved it! I got to create lessons, manage a class, and see students learn from me, and I fell in love with teaching. I learned very quickly that the best way to show my love for my subject was to share it with young minds. My passion to teach young children led me to the field that I know I belong in, despite my early rejections of teaching.

Margot believed that being able to work with children through this project had sparked her to think about things in a different way and embedded in her a calling to teach. Lastly, Margot was a very vocal participant throughout the course, which I believe speaks to her personality. She is warm and friendly, making talking to her a pleasure.

Henry

Henry is a White man originally from Nashville, Tennessee, who grew up in a middle-class home with both parents and his brother. He attended a diverse high school that was about 60% Black, 30% White, and 10% Hispanic. During our interview he revealed that his mom paid a tuition fee to have him take a bus to another high school that was better than the one he was zoned for. This school offered an International Baccalaureate (IB) program that attracted many great teachers who fueled his desire to teach:

I had great teachers in a not so great environment. I didn’t feel or understand

their influence on me until late in my college career, but when it hit me, I knew this is what I had to do. I feel like I owe it to them.

Henry shared his attraction to the social studies content area because he felt, “there is much to do in terms of reading, writing, and critical thinking.” During our interview he referenced his introduction to cultural studies courses and how this influenced him. Henry had been exposed to ideas of social justice in a multicultural education course that he took. He learned about “shared responsibility” and “shared authority” as well as discussed his knowledge of achievement gaps and how this class served as the impetus for his final action research project starting,

[There’s] really good stuff in [my multicultural education text] that led to the action research stuff. As far as [my background in] social justice, [that] really came from multicultural ed and issues [discussed in that class].

Because of Henry’s introduction to those ideas, he indicated he would like to conduct an action research project on “shared responsibility” with his students, when he received a full time teaching position.

Next to Margot, Henry was a very vocal participant during class discussions. He had a certain charisma and charm that made listening to him very easy. Looking back at my reflection notes, he was the participant that I felt most struggled with how he would implement ideas of multicultural educational theory in his classroom. Often, however, he seemed to be optimistic about how he could apply social justice in his classroom someday.

Genevieve

Genevieve is an African-American woman originally from Valdosta, Georgia. She attended a high school that was approximately 85% Black, 10% White, and 5% other. Her grandparents raised her because her parents passed away when she was young. She also lived with her two aunts, two

cousins, and younger sister. Genevieve explained why she entered the field of education:

I was inspired to be a teacher because I enjoy being around children, and helping them become successful. I started helping my little cousins with their schoolwork once they entered elementary school, and it made me want to help other children in the way that I helped them. I also wanted to serve as a mentor to younger children as well.

Genevieve has a passion for her family and stated that she was a “daddy’s girl.”

In our interview she mentioned how, “Mentors in my life are definitely my grandparents. I know that I look up to them both so much...I know they would do anything for me.” Coming to college was difficult because leaving her family was hard. Genevieve noted financial concerns often and explained that her grandmother had planned to pay for college until her death shortly before her arrival at University. After her grandmother’s death, Genevieve had to turn to financial aid to support her in college. She described the financial aid process as grueling because her parents could not help her like her roommate’s parents who had attended college. She stated, “All summer it was just like ‘oh I hate this. I don’t even wanna finish this financial aid stuff. I just want to stop and like wish it was done,’ and all that stuff.” Genevieve said she would like to teach third or fourth grade in an urban community upon graduation. She was very friendly and eager to share her thoughts and perceptions about the course.

Students’ Response to Pedagogy

Participants of the class responded in a variety of ways to the use of Professor Erin’s pedagogy. They indicated several times throughout the semester that this course was not like many of their other courses and stated that they enjoyed coming to class. A major theme throughout the data was how the course was based on dialogue among students and teacher.

Student experience was the most frequently mentioned component within the data.

The students' statements regarding this element demonstrated their capacity to articulate what was interesting and how Professor Erin pedagogically creates a classroom atmosphere that promoted dialogue. When asked about what motivates people to come to class, Henry answered, "[s]he involves them, by asking them to share their personal experiences she created in a class where it's 50/50. Basically the course focuses on the content but also involves our experiences and perspectives. This made her course so different from others I have taken."

By gaining insight into what motivated students to want to attend class is important because it helped me gain insight of how Professor Erin's pedagogy was functioning in the course and how this motivated students to want to be there and participate. This attendance demonstrated that students know when a course includes and respects their perspective, and that doing so led to increased engagement with one another and Professor Erin. These are salient examples of student responses to Professor Erin's pedagogy and specifically how she created an environment through her methods that created a trusting space where student autonomy was valued. These responses stood out because of the impact that an appreciation for student experience can have on creating a course that places pedagogical dialogue at its forefront. The quote from Henry displayed how astute students are at articulating methods for getting them involved in classroom dialogue.

During our interview I asked Genevieve to respond to the question, "How do you feel about being asked to express your own opinion during class?" She stated how much she appreciated her experience and opinion being not only included, but also valued within the course. Furthermore, I was saddened, but not surprised, that she does not always feel this way in other classes. I asked her to elaborate more on this and she stated:

Other courses I have had professors claim to have a policy where everyone's opinions are valued. But it became very clear early on in the course that the course is focused on their thoughts and how they view the material being taught. Once this happens I am not encouraged or even want to for that matter contribute my opinion, because what if I am wrong or worse upset them with my opinion? It's tough to have opinion when you are being graded.

Genevieve's words are piercing in the way they speak to that issue, because it occurs in many classroom situations. However, her statements also relay the message that something can be done to remedy this situation: pedagogical dialogue has the potential to be a transformative force once student experience and perspective become an integral element in a professor's pedagogy.

Another response related to the inclusion of student experience was made by Margot during the second interview. Margot's proclamation that she planned to drop the course, but remained enrolled because of the collaborative tone on the first day. These statements stemmed from the question, "So how comfortable do you feel sharing your opinions during the class?" After probing Margot's answer she began to talk about how she had planned to drop the class. I asked why she then decided not to drop the course and she responded:

Professor Erin talked about how everybody should participate...she gave us the chance to share our personal experiences as it related to the content being taught. She asked the question of: what do you expect from me? So that told me she wanted to do something not only for herself but for the students. If she didn't ask those questions, then I would have thought, "Oh, she talked the whole class time, and now I'm going to have to expect more of that every day"...to get us to open up she shared her personal life stories as it related to what was being taught...It was weird...I rarely have had a teacher or professor open up and share so much about their personal lives with the class. We learned about her struggle being an African-American Woman. We learned about her children and their experiences at school. She was just so real and honest with us that it made it so much easier to participate and feel valued.

Margot's statements demonstrate the effectiveness of shifting the pedagogical focus to eliminate the traditional professor and student roles to a class in which everyone is a student and each person's experiences are valued as a contributing factor in the course. Ira Shor explains this method as a way of instantly letting the students know that they are valued in the classroom by focusing on increasing student participation and voice while decreasing teacher power.²⁰⁸

My observation journal from the first class substantiates Margot's statements,

It was very interesting that out of majority the students in the class, sat close to the front Professor Erin and were engaged easily in dialogue with...the few students sitting towards the back kept mostly to themselves and only engaged if called upon to do so.

From my observation journal it was apparent that Margot was one of the student who was not verbally engaged on the first day of class. However, I learned later in our interview that she was extremely engaged in evaluating her value in this course from the very first day. This was an extremely important point to understand: although students may not be outwardly involved during class, they are constantly making observations and judgments about their acceptance or resistance to the course based on the manner in which pedagogy is functioning in within the course, starting on the first day of class.

The data from the students indicate that professors should value, listen, and respond to student experiences and contribute his or her own experiences to aid in the creation of a trusting classroom that places value on student autonomy. The knowledge that is gained from student insight is irreplaceable. These students' words indicate that the inclusion of student experiences can lead to increased student involvement and class attendance.

²⁰⁸ Shor, "Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy."

The Course

The class met on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week for six weeks during the months of June and July. Class sessions lasted from 4:00 p.m. to 6:55 p.m. each of those two nights. There were fourteen students: two African-American and five white females, six white and two Latino males in the course. A majority of students were under 30 years old, with one white female in her 40s. The course met in the same room each night. The room was plain, with nothing on the walls and traditional desks arranged in rows. In a relatively traditional educational model, Professor Erin chose to sit near the front of the room albeit to the side and with the students, but it was still in the front of the class. Traditional here is meant that this is the typical format teachers have employed in class placement in order to manage the class. For each class the students moved to work in small groups to discuss and eventually present a topic related to multicultural education. The students were free to sit where they liked each class session.

An observation made was that every night after the first night the students maintained a form of self-regulated seating arrangement. Most every student sat in the same seat or near proximity each night, even though they were free to sit anywhere they wanted. This seating arrangement had no particular pattern to it. For example, they did not group themselves according to age, race, or gender. As we progress through school starting in kindergarten and moving through high school we, as students, are conditioned to be told where and when to sit. It was striking that these students, who for all practical purposes were adults, still had a remnant of that conditioning that followed them all the way to graduate school. I recorded in my field notes that this behavior may represent a form of familiarity that each of the students had with “schooling” and that this familiarity provided a form of safety for them.

Each night I arrived at the class 10 to 15 minutes early. Professor Erin arrived when class began and most nights the door was locked until her arrival. The door locked allowed me to sit in the hall among the students and learn more about them as individuals. Each night I quietly sat in the halls and listened as the younger students spoke to one another about jobs and, more specifically, finding a teaching job. This being June and July they were most cognizant of the lateness in looking, but this was a given because many had just finished their undergraduate requirements which allowed them to become certified to teach.

Constructing relations of mutual interdependence emerged from the data as an important priority from the beginning of the semester. Through fostering an open communicative context in which everyone's contributions were vital for maximizing the value of the course experience, Professor Erin encouraged students to assume responsibility for shaping the social circumstances of the class and defining the dynamics of the student's collective discourse. She did so by continually inviting student participation in class and focusing students' interactions on reasoning and independent thinking rather than answers.

Throughout the semester, Professor Erin continually tried to involve as many students as possible by providing opportunities for them to offer perspectives and shape the direction of the class deliberations. She stated during our second debriefing that, "Once we [allow] students to voice their say, then critical thinking can begin." Professor Erin continually used a range of open-ended prompts to invite student participation. I noted the following prompts in my observation field notes:

- What are some other ways of thinking about this topic?
- Does this topic speak to anyone else's experiences?
- Any other questions or comments about anything?
- What else is confusing, concerning, puzzling, problematic to you in any way?

Each of these questions was intended to elicit additional participation, provide opportunities to shape the discussion agenda, and broaden the base of participation in the course so that a few people would not automatically dominate the discussions. Such actions promoted equitable distribution of participation, shared control of the discussion agenda, and broad representation of students' interests.

Through inviting students to voluntarily contribute their perspectives and openly express themselves in the presence of others, Professor Erin extended opportunities for the students to include their views and exercise control over the direction of the course. Her continual questioning and inviting suggested that students were welcome to introduce topics of personal concern at any time. Their perspectives were important in keeping the course focused on their concerns while fostering processes of mutual association in which all students collectively interacted to advance the initiative and ideas of everyone involved.

Students recognized that one of the ways in which Professor Erin invited them to participate was by encouraging independent thinking and reasoning rather than forcing them to converge on predetermined answers. Margot commented in her interview, "I love the way she wants to hear your opinions, there's no wrong answers in this course." Pedagogy in this instance functioned as a result of students being encouraged to critically examine conventional multicultural educational theories while opening up the class for all to participate in on-going processes of collaborative dialogue.

Professor Erin would discuss the role of language in shaping the ways particular groups of people are perceived. To alleviate the discomfort brought on various topics Professor Erin

shared her personal experiences related to topics of discussion. This personalization of a theoretical topic provided encouragement for students to share their prior experiences with multiculturalism and diversity as they related to their own lives. The observational data suggests that she did not come out and ask for these experiences, but rather modeled a humble approach to her pedagogical dialogue that promoted participation through the listening and sharing of her own relevant experiences as a mother and African-American woman. I noted throughout my observational data that Professor Erin supported her students to discuss sensitive topics with multicultural theory by first having the students share their own experiences and in essence to question themselves. Gloria Ladson-Billings terms this “instructional scaffolding when teachers help students move from what they know to what they need to know.”²⁰⁹ In our second debriefing session about her pedagogical choices, Professor Erin commented, “I feel you have to first go there with your heart and mind before you can do authentically good work.” This authentically good work she references is the instructional scaffolding alongside Professor Erin’s humbled approaches to pedagogical dialogue. The students benefited from her humbled practice and throughout the observational data it was noted that once the students were comfortable, they began to share personal feelings. Those experiences then led to rich pedagogical dialogue about multicultural theory in educational settings.

As evidenced by students' engagement, her pedagogical efforts to relate course content to the lives of students were effective with many of the students, but comprehensive inclusion of all students sharing experiences was a challenge. Professor Erin’s pedagogical reflections during our nightly debriefings illuminated her humility with regard to being relevant with

²⁰⁹ Ladson-Billings, "New Directions in Multicultural Education." P.134

everyone in her course. Additionally, she echoed sentiments of faculty of color who find that working with students of varying ethnicities and races causes them “to reconsider [their] common approaches to the coursework characteristic of teaching primarily Euro-American students.”²¹⁰ Drawing on student experiences was central to how pedagogical dialogue functioned in Professor Erin’s course. Research supports this pedagogic approach of Professor Erin, because as students’ funds of knowledge are incorporated into the course curriculum, learning becomes more relevant.²¹¹

Despite Professor Erin’s efforts to be relevant while teaching about multiculturalism amidst diversity, some students noted a “hierarchy of oppression” that rendered select groups as under-served.²¹² Reflexive praxis led her to adopt an inquiry stance where she deliberately invited students outside of traditional binaries (e.g., Black/White, poor/rich) to contribute to class discussions. Throughout the semester Professor Erin worked to diversify course discussions to be more representative of the class demographics. She altered course readings, facilitated broader discussions, and invited personal student perspectives. However, she noted frustration in the fourth debriefing session about the semester limitations, stating, “Two and a half hours two times a week just isn’t enough.” Although she did demonstrate, that even contained within a shorted time frame, her approach to pedagogical dialogue made it possible to adapt to the needs of the her students and support them in their contributions in the course.

²¹⁰ Patricia Prado-Olmos, Francisco Ríos, and Lillian Vega Castañeda, ““We Are Multiculturalism”: A Self-Study of Faculty of Colour with Pre-Service Teachers of Colour,” *Studying Teacher Education* 3, no. 1 (2007). P.2

²¹¹ Luis Moll et al., “Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms,” *Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities, and classrooms* (2005).

²¹² Paul C Gorski and Rachael D Goodman, “Is There a “Hierarchy of Oppression” in Us Multicultural Teacher Education Coursework?,” *Action in Teacher Education* 33, no. 5-6 (2011).

As the course progressed it was apparent that the students became much more comfortable discussing things in their lives with one another. The safe space Professor Erin was creating, with a focal point of autonomy and trust in the class, was transferring to student interactions outside of the classroom. Professor Erin's pedagogical ability to develop a trusting classroom space enabled the students to view theoretical concepts from different cultural perspectives than their own. This environment allowed for an infusion of perspectives, frames of reference, and ideas that expanded the students' understanding of the multicultural theories being taught. My observational data pointed to the students' willingness to deconstruct their own existing knowledge, while exploring alternative perspectives and addressing their own role in perpetuating cultural stereotyping.

When interviewing a student upon the completion of the course she mentioned that the students were so engaged in the course topics and discussions that they planned to meet after the semester and continue the conversation.

Interviewee: So on next Thursday, 5:00, because everyone's like, We just had such a good time and we just got really close, which is like crazy, right?

Jeffrey: Wow!

Interviewee: So that's something to take note of. We're actually still meeting, even though the class is done.

The students' desire to keep the course together even though the semester was complete was a testament to Professor Erin's pedagogical method that allowed them to explore and reflect upon multiculturalism in a deeply meaningful way. Professor Erin's pedagogical interactions with her students were imbued with a value of the multicultural education theory that

transcended the boundaries of the classroom walls. Students were moving from thinking about theoretical concepts toward real praxis. In this shift from students seated in a classroom to humans engaged in dialogic interactions that were presented in the class represented an attempt to deepening their understanding of multiculturalism. Dialogue in this instance can be viewed as the process that enhances one's community to act in ways that make for justice.²¹³

Though as interviewer I did not attend any of the after-course meetings, the very nature of their existence point towards toward praxis. Students were engaging in practical action informed by the theory taught in the course. Praxis in this instance could be summed up as informed action, the action of engaging with material more deeply with one another. Students were in the process of taking action while interacting within a theoretical framework of thought. Professor Erin's pedagogical approach to theory aligned with practice so students could begin to view multicultural theory and its use in the class. In praxis, abstract theorizing is only useful so long as it informs action, but deep thinking and justification must inform action as well.²¹⁴ The students were taking the theory from Professor Erin's class and moving in this direction.

The Syllabus

I selected a course that focused on multicultural educational studies. Also, this course was developed to create a "sound philosophical, theoretical and personal rationale for multicultural education."²¹⁵ In meeting with Professor Erin, she discussed how her pedagogical style was informed by the underlying principles of critical pedagogy. This was crucial because my intention was to study a professor who was guided by passion and principle and whose aim

²¹³ Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers - Letters to Those Who Dare to Teach*.

²¹⁴ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*.

²¹⁵ Taken from the course syllabus objectives.

was to help students develop consciousness of freedom, because those are the foundations of a pedagogical method.²¹⁶ While a number of scholars have informed critical pedagogy theory, I subscribe to Giroux's view that critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming relationships within the classroom and the production of knowledge.²¹⁷ This aligns closely to the manner in which Professor Erin viewed her pedagogy as a means to empowerment to allow her students to learn the possibilities of social transformation through communicative action and dialogue.

As my experience as a student dictates, syllabi more times than not reflect the mundane, bureaucratic requirements of the University are at risk of setting an equally banal classroom atmosphere. While administrative personnel may argue otherwise, the syllabus is not simply a contract between teacher and student. Rather, a syllabus should be a manifesto that serves as a founding document detailing the rights of the students and the pedagogy of the classroom.

Over time, the syllabus has become perfunctory. University policies and classroom expectations are the first impressions that a professor makes in his or her classrooms. Using such a prescriptive approach to classroom culture, however, damages the social, cultural, and educative potential of that course. To undo this harm, professors must redefine the form and repurpose the syllabus as a space of cultural exchange with their students. Only then can the artifact begin to enhance teaching-and-learning relationships within the classroom.

The listing of general course information is, of course, obligatory, and necessary for legal liability. Thus, syllabi typically include a course overview, prerequisites, grading and attendance

²¹⁶ Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers - Letters to Those Who Dare to Teach*.

²¹⁷ Peter McLaren, *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education* (Routledge, 2015).

policies, office hours, and an increasingly long list of “learning objectives,” too often inscribed by distant administrators. The problem with the form arises when professors share this information without taking into consideration the cultural contexts of the students. Under such circumstances the content appears isolated and meaningless. And while a professor may quickly jot down that “participation is worth 20% of your grade” or “office hours by request,” it is a wholly different experience to consider this rhetoric in relation to its implied ideologies, specifically in this instance the study of multicultural educational theories.

Professor Erin was bound to the same university regulations, but took it upon herself to attempt to trouble the notion of the bureaucratic syllabus. Upon reviewing Professor Erin’s course syllabus, her critical pedagogical methods were outlined in her four thought-provoking ground rules for the class:

- Listen actively and thoughtfully – consider perspectives different from your own.
- Speak from your own experience or from the readings – avoid interpreting for others.
- Respectfully challenge others’ ideas: attack the idea – not the person.
- Diverse views are always welcome.

Even though these were considered “Ground Rules” on the syllabus, it was apparent that her intent was not to control the students, but rather to provide them with a framework of dialogical engagement.

A course syllabus has the potential to articulate the power that solidifies the hierarchal relations between the professor and student. A course syllabus specifies the evaluative components that constitute the most direct means of domination over the students: its content precipitates power relations.²¹⁸ Within education, a person's self-concept is dynamic, fluid, and

²¹⁸ Eli Thorkelson, "The Silent Social Order of the Theory Classroom," *Social Epistemology* 22, no. 2 (2008).

varied. For instance, a person can be a teacher and a student at one time. However, the social context determines which group one identifies with at a particular point in time. Professors, therefore, have multiple social identities and a self-consciousness at different levels. Professor Erin made use of the syllabus to trouble these notions of power binaries between the student and professor.

As noted, Professor Erin's syllabus was not designed to control or maintain her authority over the course; rather, it was developed to set the a tone that eroded bureaucratic structures, such as grading and attendance policies, in favor of student empowerment and engagement. Professor Erin aligned herself with Freire's repudiation of bureaucratization in education and the effect it has upon the development of pedagogic relations between professor and student. Freire writes, "It is essential that educators learning and learners educating make a constant effort to refuse to be bureaucratized" for it is "bureaucracy that annihilates creativity and transforms people into mere repeaters of clichés."²¹⁹ By setting a pedagogical foundation that encouraged students to "speak from your own experience," she set a framework that each student possessed a unique voice and perspective, one that would add to the overall multicultural theory being taught. For multicultural education to function, according the Professor Erin, one must illuminate his or her own individual perspectives and experiences so as to add to the collective theories that would be taught throughout the semester.

Professor Erin's emphasis on dialogue, individual experience, and respectful challenging of ideas as outlined on her course syllabus aligns with Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action. Habermas points out that through a reciprocal exchange of conflicting ideas,

²¹⁹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea-Bissau* (New York: Continuum, 1983). 12

communicative action voices a plurality of perspectives towards an orientation of a new consciousness and being. Reinforcing communicative action presents a shared language and integration of various perspectives that leads to action.²²⁰ The teaching of multicultural theory for Professor Erin was more than the transmission knowledge, for her multicultural theory was a vital tool needed by a classroom teacher when confronted with experiences that were not aligned to his or her own life experiences. She states:

How am I to know what my students bring to the class? Multicultural education is one that needs to be inclusive of each student's own experiences to add to the 'multi' part. It is a collection of everyone's experiences... that adds the content and guides the class. It is important for teachers to learn and grow from others' experiences...they will face multiple cultural perspectives every year of their career.

Professor Erin's thoughts on the subject align with Habermas' communicative action theory in that a central idea of his model is one that serves as a collective or community of individuals who jointly partake in discussions on issues of general interest.²²¹ Professor Erin offered a safe, structured space for the students to interact, ask questions of each other, and find out about their concerns, experiences, and perspectives. She anticipated that this would be difficult, but pedagogically she wanted them to work through this with minimal input from her:

It is really interesting to see how peers interact with each other...so in our first class I was happy and surprised that we had such a great conversation. So that made me feel like they would welcome their peers in a neat way and a respectful way but I was really excited too – what I love is being able just to sit and to listen to their thought process. Did I agree with everything that they said? No, there were some moments that I jumped in because I didn't want us to forget something really good.

Through this experience students were able to garner information that they knew and were able to manage, and in turn, reduced their uncertainty, their self-consciousness, and their

²²⁰ Habermas and Viertel, *Theory and Practice*.

²²¹ Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*.

stereotypes on their own terms. The white female student (for confidentiality purposes she will be known as Margot) interviewed at the completion of the class reinforced how this pedagogical style provided a safe class environment.

But I think that was the biggest thing, giving that example of this as a safe environment and encouraging others, even having it in the syllabus, saying – I really liked, the best thing I liked that she put in the syllabus was not speaking for others. I think we have a tendency if someone's trying to explain something, someone else saying, "Oh, I think what they mean to say." No, no, no, that's not your place. Let them work it out. Let's ask some questions. But don't say what you think they're trying to say, because you don't. So I like that she acknowledged that and put that, saying it's a safe environment, we have to be respectful.

Professor Erin was not going to assume that one's outward physical characteristics were aligned with his or her cultural beliefs and/or identity. Pedagogically it was important for Professor Erin to provide an environment that allowed students to open up and define themselves. By that kind of defining, many times we are outwardly judged by various components of skin tone, height, weight, dress, age, and so on relationship to what we say or how we act. Teaching a course that focused on multicultural education, Professor Erin felt that it was pedagogically relevant to allow each individual student to situate himself or herself within their own personal context, thus laying the foundation for future course discussions that would prove to be difficult. In other words, Professor Erin wanted the course to derive what multicultural meant from the social interaction the students had with one another, not from how she defined it. She was not merely instructing them to become knowledgeable on the tenets of multiculturalism; rather, she was providing students with a path each would have to walk in an effort to create an awareness of their own culture, how they define it, and how it relates to others so everyone could develop an understanding of their own reasonability as students in a multicultural world.

By positing the classroom as a site of social interaction, pedagogy was analyzed here from a micro-sociological orientation. From this perspective, the foundation of pedagogical processes could be characterized, much like all social encounters, as the exchange of communicative practices.

The data included many examples the students placed on the importance of knowing their classmates, more specifically, how knowing their classmates contributed to being comfortable expressing their opinions during class discussions. I had not anticipated how important this would be to the students. The three students interviewed expressed the importance of being comfortable with their classmates. They also expressed an appreciation of having different cultures represented in the class. This point further advances the idea that trust and student autonomy provides successful avenues in implementing pedagogical dialogue.

The students' statements regarding their comfort level with their classmates demonstrated a strong rationale for taking time and allowing the students to share personal experiences which led to everyone getting acquainted with each other on a personal level. Each interview participant made statements about the importance of being comfortable. I noted that the development of trust within the class had a sizable impact on the students feeling comfortable with each other and Professor Erin. Margot's quote below implied that the more comfortable students are with their peers the more likely they are to engage in discussion. Margot's explanation of her comfort in class leading to more dialogue was typical of the feedback: "...you feel more comfortable to get involved with class, like answer questions and stuff, instead of with a class where you don't know anybody."

The comfort level the students spoke about did not involve any specific lessons, but it is apparent that future course design utilizing pedagogical dialogue should consider including this component. Nowhere in the literature regarding critical pedagogy or pre-service teacher education was this point explicated, but the students indicated that this might assist in increasing student involvement in courses on multicultural education theory.

Students also voiced their appreciation of those who shared different culture experiences with the class. The students interviewed implied that the course was made better by valuing their classmates' cultures and experiences. Genevieve was particularly eloquent in providing insight into how the promotion of diverse viewpoints added to the learning environment. In responding to the question, "What did you find most interesting about the course?" she explained:

I thought it was interesting the other people in class shared personal stories ...I just thought it was cool to know where they came from and how far they got and all that...coming from different backgrounds and going through college and stuff...I think that's pretty cool. It was just interesting to hear about their stories.

This comment supported Professor Erin's inclusive aim. The students indicated that being surrounded by students who shared stories about different cultures than one's own improved the class experience.

By viewing the observational data through the lens of pedagogical dialogue, students continually defined and interpreted social events of the course through meaningful interactive communication with both Professor Erin and the other students in the class. Course activities included the students "owning" the material by teaching it "back" to the class and small group discussions where they would further "jigsaw" and lead conversations on multicultural education theory. Through these interactive activities, the students were able to make meaning of

multicultural education theory being taught through personal experiences and also aligning that theory and those experiences with others in the social group. In this manner students were able to create reciprocal bonds and establish relationships with classmates by making sense of the self through meaningful interactive activities within the group. It was from this perspective that Professor Erin created a learning environment that supported the pedagogical dialogue between her and the students in order for them to learn the theoretical tenets of multicultural theory.

Having taught this course before Professor Erin was cognizant that many of her students approached the course based on preconceived notions. This awareness allowed her to reinforce trustful engagement in a mutually supportive social interaction. Professor Erin reinforced her reliance on student autonomy within a trusting classroom environment in order to validate the behaviors and experiences of each individual student in the class. The meaning of things, including the classroom, the role of professor or student, and the course material, are not intrinsic or inherent; rather, according to Habermas the communicative processes of learning are supported by the emphasis on an awareness of the place and roles in the classroom that frame the background understanding of educational content. Professor Erin noted in one of the debriefing sessions that it would be “difficult to give voice to the experiences of the students if there was resistance in understanding from where the students align his or her own experience to the theory being taught” and that, “as individuals we have the potential to change what it means to be students and teachers just as we can change the meaning of teaching and learning.” Habermas’s theory reminds us that professors and students alike enter the educational setting with a set of preconceived connotations, but these meanings are not rigid. The observational data points of various instances where interactions transpired in the classroom influenced understanding of

multicultural educational theory. Henry, a white male student, reflected this notion in his post-course interview:

I hadn't heard of white privilege until relatively recently in the course of my life. However, this particular class has very much opened my eyes when it comes to the various aspects and topics and 'isms' that we've been discussing throughout the six weeks. So I definitely feel that I have become even further empowered, but in a different sense, because I have the knowledge, a greater extent of knowledge, of how my future classroom will be constituted.

Genevieve, an African-American female student, had a very similar response in our course interview when she stated:

I didn't know Asians went through this type of oppression, I didn't know Mexicans and Latinos and Hispanics, I didn't know Native Americans – so it was just more so like, okay, it's just not Black and White racism. There's other racism out there and it just kind of made me more aware of it. So yeah, I don't know, I definitely will take it like everything we learned, but it's not only that because also, not only do I come from a pro-black family, I come from a family who is Christian-based. And just to hear different religions, because I never thought that I had Christian privilege until I sat in that classroom and I was like, 'Oh, I do have this privilege.'

Thus, these students formed meaning in the context based on the preconceived roles; put another way the pedagogical dialogue that was informed by the experiences of each student and were openly expressed due to the trusting classroom that developed out of Professor Erin's pedagogy. The students were able to established individualized meaning of multicultural education theory. In the end, the use of the theoretical meaning by the students occurred through a process of interpretation of their lifeworlds.

The Class Themes

Trust

For the purposes of this study, *trust* is defined as a belief in the character, ability, and strength of someone, or in other words, trust is instilled in a person in whom confidence is placed. Trust emerged as a theme throughout multiple observations, pointing to the creation of a space in which Professor Erin engaged with all members of the class and provided opportunity for each individual to contribute. Through the continual reinforcement of student feedback in the early stages of the course, Professor Erin established a confidence in her students to best guide them through the instruction of multiculturalism. Constructing relations of trust emerged from the data as an important priority from the beginning of the semester. She spoke to this after the first class debriefing session:

For me it's allowing that process to happen and what I try to do – and I think I mentioned this in my previous interview, one of the scholars that I truly admire is Paulo Freire, and he has said in his writings, and others have echoed this, that the act of teaching is the act of giving up control in classroom so – and it's really not even the act of teaching, it's the act of educating.

She continued to elaborate on what is meant to “give up control” and how it was important for her to model this form of pedagogical interaction for her students. They too will be teachers who will have to negotiate this in their classes one day.

When they're going into the classroom with their kids that they have to give up something in order for their students to see how powerful they are, to see how useful their voice is. They may not always say the right things, they may not always do the right things, but at least they were empowered and given the space to be creative and to take those risks and make those mistakes, so that is why I construct the class in this way to give them – to give the students – an opportunity.

These statements align with Freire's claim that teachers/professors “need to change the face of schools.” He writes that education must provide a space where students are able to “learn,

create, take risks, question, and grow individually” while being a part of a community.²²² By establishing a relationship of trust with her students Professor Erin was pedagogically situating the course where the students and their perspectives come first, rather than structuring the student perspective as it related to multicultural education theory. By doing so she was conveying the importance of their voice and input, setting the stage for a dialogue rather than lecturing as a means of knowledge acquisition. Freire repeatedly describes the essential responsibility that transformative educators have to start “where the people are.” He writes:

You never get *there* by starting from *there*, you get *there* by starting from some *here*. This means, ultimately, that the educator must not be ignorant of, underestimate, or reject any of the “knowledge of living experience” with which students come to school.²²³

Professor Erin knew that not all students were going to be comfortable enough in a classroom to open up and share with others their cultural identity. She too had to become vulnerable and share her experiences as an African-American woman. By “humanizing” herself and stripping away the role of a “professor,” she was inviting her students to do the same. The very nature of a trusting relationship is based on both parties being authentic and trusting of one another. The students were keenly aware of this and commented how Professor Erin was unique compared to other professors they had. She established a classroom environment where trust was a cornerstone of the pedagogical dialogue for all those in the class. Again Margot explained:

Jeffrey: So when you say personalized, how did she personalize it more than other professors? Like what kind of examples would you have for that?

Margot: I mean, she explicitly said, "I went to a private predominantly white school."

²²² Freire, *Teachers as Cultural Workers - Letters to Those Who Dare to Teach*. P.39

²²³ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. P.58

Jeffrey: So she aired it.

Margot: Oh, yeah. Just saying it bluntly. And I feel like other professors just gloss. It's their résumé, is what they're telling me, and I don't really care. I have to be in this class anyways. *[Laughs]* But she was real... she created that safe environment... based on being human.

For Habermas, this personal or subjective world that Professor Erin was sharing with the class is defined "as the totality of subjective experiences to which the actor has privileged access."²²⁴ By sharing her personal experiences, Professor Erin was making her subjective world known to the students. When interviewed, another student, African-American woman (Genevieve) alluded to how effective this was in creating an open and honest atmosphere within the class. She stated:

I mean, you have professors who say, 'This is a safe haven, you could say what you want,' but it doesn't really have that culture of it and I think she did in a way that no one was even noticing it, because she shared her own stories. So I guess because she made it more realistic for us and saying, 'Okay, I'm being honest with you, I'm being truthful, this is me, I'm not some professor who just says this, I'm a human,' and I think it just kind of made it more acceptable for people to share.

This mutual humanness goes to the heart of Habermas's theory of communicative action, which can be understood as "action oriented towards understanding." Professor Erin was intentionally tearing down the mantle of the 'professor' to establish a foundation of trust. This tearing down enabled the class to feel more comfortable reaching understanding through everyone's thoughts and dialogue. In other words, the concept of communicative action was the interaction of all participants in the class whose speech and actions established trusting interpersonal relations. Throughout the course the students and professor sought an

²²⁴ Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. P.100

understanding of each theory presented as one community and discussed their plans of action in order to coordinate their understanding by way of agreement. Professor Erin, as a practical orientation of trust, employed communicative action pedagogically, thus it was distinguished from professor to student dialogue in the class.

By tearing down the mantle of “professor” and all the power dynamics that are associated with this title in a college classroom, Professor Erin was pedagogically developing a trusting environment that allowed the students to add and modify, based on personal experiences, to the multicultural education theory taught. Both Habermas and Freire agree that knowledge acquisition is best accomplished through means of open communication and dialogue among students and teacher. In conjunction with this humble openness to learn from one another, Freire describes dialogue as being marked by intense faith in the inherent capabilities of all people to name their realities and to transform them. He writes, “Faith in people is an a priori requirement for dialogue; the ‘dialogical person’ believes in others even before he meets them face to face.”²²⁵ Likewise, in Habermas’s theory of communicative action the participants aim to attune individual orientations to each other in order to form meaning that is collectively developed, and in doing so they act with one another. Dialogue in this context is the ability for students to share, reflect, and question personal subjective experiences as they relate to the others in the class and multicultural education theory. The multicultural education theory in Professor Erin’s course necessitated an open exchange of ideas not only to learn the material, but also to be able to align each student’s own experiences with it, thus developing a bridge of relevance from theory to practice.

²²⁵ Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 1.

To further instill the sense of trust among the students and herself, Professor Erin utilized a cooperative pedagogical strategy that had the students working in small groups, guiding the class discussion, and teaching what they learned on each topic to the entire class. Research on allowing students to flip their role and become the teachers has demonstrated that engaging students in this form of learning process increases their attention and focus and motivates them to practice higher level critical thinking skills.²²⁶ Professor Erin's adoption of a student-centered approach to instruction not only increased opportunities for student engagement, which helped everyone achieve the course's learning objectives, but it also demonstrated to the class that she trusted them to take the lead and engage their classmates in what they learned about their topic. This pedagogical practice aligns with Habermas's communicative theory in that the participants entered into a communicative process, presented information learned, and examined critically what was presented. When there was a lack of understanding within the class Professor Erin would help the students reset the communicative process until understanding was established. She could have easily corrected these misperceptions through direct instruction, which would have been the quickest way to convey the correct information. She would not do this, however; instead she presented them with guiding questions related to the topic they were struggling with, reinforcing her trust in them to learn as a group. Professor Erin made a point of emphasizing that each topic presented was open to criticism. This pedagogical dialogue allowed for misunderstandings to be identified and for the class to work together to learn as a group rather than as a mere individual.²²⁷

²²⁶ Robert E Slavin, "Synthesis of Research of Cooperative Learning," *Educational leadership* 48, no. 5 (1991).

²²⁷ Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*.

Methodologically, Professor Erin blended two instructional methods within cooperative learning strategies that were designed to engage student interdependence as they navigated the complex theories in multiculturalism. She blended strategies from jigsaw and peer instruction to accomplish the shared learning goals of the course. Within her method students could achieve his or her learning goal if and only if the other group members achieved theirs. In the jigsaw portion, the class was divided into several small groups consisting of two students. Each group picked from a list of topics related to multiculturalism provided by Professor Erin. After researching and collaboratively working as a team each group then taught the rest of the class about that topic. This was the peer instructional element. The students interviewed upon completion of the course found this method productive. Henry, a white male, stated,

I liked how we did – a lot of times we did a small group thing first and then came together as a bigger class. I think that was definitely helpful for a lot of people that aren't ready yet to talk to 30 people. But when they know the few people, kind of like their desk mates in the first few days, and then by the end of it we're all just walking around the room, kind of talking to everyone.

In essence, the students took control of the class. Professor Erin provided the students with the topics and guided them when needed, but starting with the second class, each student became the 'professor' and Professor Erin became the 'student.' Through the implementation of this instructional strategy Professor Erin was doing what research has shown about such methods, in that the students were more likely to make friends in class and trust one another more than students who were learning individually.²²⁸

Freire's comments underscore Professor Erin's pedagogical method when he states that "the people must find themselves in the emerging leaders, and the latter must find themselves in

²²⁸ David W Johnson, *Cooperative Learning: Increasing College Faculty Instructional Productivity*. *Ashe-Eric Higher Education Report No. 4, 1991* (ERIC, 1991).

the people.”²²⁹ Freire goes on to state that, “Solidarity is born only when the leaders witness to it by their humble, loving, and courageous encounter with the people.”²³⁰ By joining in union with the students, Professor Erin avoided paternalistic efforts to tell the class what they need and instead worked with them toward an understanding of multiculturalism.

The development of trust within the class empowered the students to contribute their perspectives and openly express themselves in the presence of others. Through her continual questioning Professor Erin suggested that students were welcome to introduce topics of personal concern at any time. Their experiences were important to keeping the course focused on their concerns while fostering processes of mutual association in which all collectively interacted to advance the initiative and ideas of everyone involved.

In an effort to empower her students politically, Professor Erin regularly explained her agenda and mission in the course. As recommended by Geneva Gay, doing so allowed students to consciously invest in the course, thereby reducing instances of resistance. For instance, my field notes pointed out that during class session four of the students were learning about Paulo Freire and becoming enchanted with his pedagogical theory, she reminded the class:

Each of you has the power to do the things that Freire was doing. You can change your classroom, your school and the community around you. You can speak back to larger systems.

Knowing her class was populated with future teachers, I noted in my observation field notes, again from the fourth class session, that she also commented, “Teachers don’t always realize they are going in the field to change things. Teachers don’t always understand

²²⁹ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. p.164

²³⁰ Ibid. p.129

the larger context.” Overt centering of sociopolitical contexts affecting teaching spaces facilitated critical consciousness development as students maintained simultaneous conversation with macro and ground level multicultural issues in education. Moreover, her students were forced to orient and rationalize their positions.

The “I don’t know—but I want to find out attitude” that Professor Erin consistently promoted throughout the course resonates with Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s inquiry as stance theory, whereby teachers are called to explore “how to change things and what needs to be changed.”²³¹ Cochran-Smith and Lytle conceptualized teachers as knowledge holders, researchers, and change agents able to make “visible some of the many personal, professional and political decisions and struggles practitioners face every day in their work in classrooms, schools, and other educational contexts.”²³² While Professor Erin did not explicitly require formal research, the emphasis on being informed (e.g., “You have to go out and know your information”) and being critical (e.g., “I’m going to read this critically”) are at the heart of her inquiry as stance. In essence, inquiry as stance is grounded in the problems and the contexts of practice in the first place and in the ways practitioners collaboratively theorize, study, and act on those problems in the best interests of the learning and life chances of students and their communities.²³³

Professor Erin commented after the fourth debriefing session that “it’s easy to get caught up with let’s be nice.” I noted that she was referencing complacent practices of multicultural education approaches that uncritically celebrate difference, but fail to bring about

²³¹ Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan L Lytle, *Inquiry as Stance: Practitioner Research for the Next Generation* (Teachers College Press, 2009). P.229

²³² Ibid. P.334

²³³ Ibid.

social justice and equity. Regularly, throughout the course students were reminded of the larger objective put forth by historical and present day disparities in schools. Professor Erin made an effort to explain both the need and difficulty of taking up justice work, always couching it in professional ethics. Contesting niceness, complacency, apathy, and neutrality, her declarations standardized sociopolitical engagement. To empower her students' developing consciousness, she modeled inquiry, opposition, and community-based action.

Professor Erin fostered an open communicative context in which everyone's contributions were vital for maximizing the value of the course experience. She encouraged students to assume responsibility for shaping the social circumstances of the class and defining the dynamics of their collective discourse. She did so by continually inviting student participation in class and focusing interactions on reasoning and independent thinking rather than answers. Going back to the research question on how the multicultural theory functioned within this course, the data time and time again pointed toward how the theories taught informed Professor Erin as a person and which was then translated through pedagogical interactions with her students. The development of trusting course where all the students felt safe to share, reflect, and teach classmates on the complex theories of multiculturalism was rooted in Professor Erin transforming her knowledge of the social and moving it to praxis. Praxis in this instance can be summed up as informed action, the process of taking action in practice while acting within a theoretical framework of thought.²³⁴ In this concept, theory and practice are melded together as one. Even though Professor Erin did not script out 'this is how you use this in your class as a teacher,' her ultimate goal was for the students to utilize the knowledge gained in her class and

²³⁴ Ronald David Glass, "On Paulo Freire's Philosophy of Praxis and the Foundations of Liberation Education," *Educational Researcher* 30, no. 2 (2001).

apply to his or her practice as a teacher. She pointed this out during one of our debriefing sessions:

When they're going into the classroom with their kids that they have to give up something in order for their students to see how powerful they are, to see how useful their voice is. They may not always say the right things, they may not always do the right things but at least they were empowered and given the space to be creative and to take those risks and make those mistakes so that is why I construct the class in this way to give them – to give the students – an opportunity.

These sentiments coincide with Freire's revolutionary politics in that he did not make a distinction between the importance of theory and the importance of making a concrete change in the world. Professor Erin embodied the instruction of theory so to allow it to inform concrete action, but likewise deep thinking and justification also informed her action. Professor Erin's pedagogical method substantiated Freirian logic in that it guides the oppressed, or in this case, the students, so they may find his or her own path to intellectual and social freedom, rather than simply repeating the mistakes of the past.

Autonomy

For the purposes of this study autonomy is defined as the ability to have control over the processes of one's own learning. Recognition of autonomy in this context was identified from class observations, professor-debriefing sessions, and student interviews as a dominant theme related to the instruction of multicultural education theory as aligned with Professor Erin's pedagogical method. Throughout the study the theme of student autonomy reshaped the professor and student relationship that was conducive to a radical change in the distribution of power and authority in the classroom. With an autonomous perspective the students were expected to assume greater responsibility for critical reflection, decision making, and independent action in regard to his or her own learning. However, this autonomy did not mean

that Professor Erin became redundant, abdicating her responsibility in the learning process. She was engaged, not just as the professor, but also rather as an individual, with them as the students.²³⁵ During a debriefing session she mentioned how much she enjoys this form of pedagogical interaction:

It is really interesting to see how peers interact with each other, so in our first class I was happy and surprised that we had such a great conversation, so that made me feel like they would welcome their peers in a neat way and a respectful way but I was really excited too – what I love is being able just to sit and to listen to their thought process.

Through the development of an autonomous learning environment the students were allowed to act from within his or her individual lifeworld, as Habermas identifies it, in terms of individual cultural assumptions.²³⁶

The concept of the lifeworld within the study was one that is aligned with a classroom environment that felt familiar and safe to the students, as opposed to a systematized classroom, which may give rise to feelings of alienation. To put it another way, the students were able, through the development of trust, to engage in authentic discussions that reinforced individual autonomy. Without a foundation of trust the students would not have been unable to take control or make choices about their learning. Trust and autonomy are interlinked throughout the study, for one could not have happened without the other. In our pre-course interview Professor Erin spoke to the importance of students “being who they are” in the course, which would allow for each student’s story to complement and added depth to the course. Even though she did not directly use the word “autonomy,” her statement clearly has the underpinnings of the importance of learner autonomy, she states:

²³⁵ D. Little, *Definitions, Issues and Problems* (Authentik, 1991).

²³⁶ Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System : A Critique of Functionalist Reason*.

Well, I'm looking forward to hearing more of their personal story and that's a nice balance with the literature. Let's talk about what these concepts are. Let's talk about what we're reading but then I love to hear when people bring in who they are.

Professor Erin's desire to understand her students from their perspective, to 'hear..who they are,' reinforced the conceptual importance of each student's lifeworld. For in Habermas's conception of the lifeworld the observer assumes the participant's stance based on what is gleaned from his or her views and perspectives. The implication for this study are that the students acted from within his or her own lifeworld in terms of background cultural assumptions even when seeking to bring into critical reflection those background assumptions throughout the course. The student's lifeworld is the extent to which each student is an autonomous participant in the development of multicultural knowledge as related to his or her perspective. Given this concept of the lifeworld, the students, who may not share similar cultural backgrounds, can comprise a shared meaning out of complex material. This building meaning together allowed the students to identify structures of dialogue that assisted or impeded cultural reproduction. But more than this, each student's lifeworld was a source of autonomy that allowed them to reflect empathically on the differing views inhabited by their classmates and Professor Erin. She made note of this during one of the debriefing session when she stated:

I think that I – when I was preparing I – was hoping that. Well, I'm looking forward to hearing more of their personal story and that's a nice balance with the literature. Let's talk about what these concepts are. Let's talk about what we're reading but then I love to hear when people bring in who they are. Like William in the front has no problem blurting out stuff, you know

The complement to this communicative action is the lifeworld, because it provided the students with the resources to facilitate mutual understanding. The lifeworld constitutes a reservoir of interpretations, of background beliefs actualized in communicative action by means

of intergroup dialogue. This complementary relation means that communicative action needs the lifeworld as its recourse. This means that communicative action processes cultural traditions and renews personality. Professor Erin's promotion of an autonomous learning environment is the symbolic reproduction of the lifeworld by means of communicative action.

For Habermas, the lifeworld is the shared context of understanding among a group of people from which all utterances and speech acts are given meaning, and to which lifeworld participants add and transform meaning.²³⁷ The students' lifeworld when viewed in this manner is related to autonomy and the ability of the students to take risks as a pedagogical measure of one's personal knowledge of multicultural theory. Professor Erin provided the students with the means to become the instructor and created learning activities that encouraged them to find ways to move beyond the confines of the classroom and to incorporate this new knowledge into their professional lives. The challenge in this was for Professor Erin to continually locate a balance between students' autonomy, while still providing support with multicultural education theory. She elaborated on this during one of our debriefing sessions after a class that focused on sexuality:

I was nervous a little bit in coming in here today. I was nervous because it just – you know, this is -- aside from racism this is – the most heated. That and we'll be heated. I hope there'll be emotion for other topics, too, but yeah I was worried but I mean I had no idea that it was gonna go as well as it did. I wish they had a little bit more moving around for us because, you know, I did. I nodded to the students to have, to give us break, to stretch but, beyond that, I mean I was excited about it.

Relinquishing control of the class was more pedagogically difficult for Professor Erin than having control and dictating what was taught and said by the students. She was circumventing a learning environment that is traditionally bound by systematic controls to allow

²³⁷ Ibid.

the communicative procedures of the students through which lifeworld rationalization was achieved in order to ground the emancipatory potential of the material being taught. The challenge was for Professor Erin to create a dialogical environment where students learned to conceptualize their world in different ways. Notably, bell hooks points out this difficulty, noting that there is never a truly “safe” place where people can learn, given that power always intrudes upon relationships.²³⁸ Yet Professor Erin was able to “think the practice” as Freire argues, creating a learning context that was ideally situated on a foundation of trust and allowed for autonomy among all participants of the class. Habermas’s theory of communicative action, like Freire’s parameters on dialogical inquiry, set the criteria for developing a context where such ideas were able to be shared, contested, and mediated, among the differing view points and cultural perspectives of the students. One student, an African-American woman, Genevieve, noted this in our post-course interview:

I would have to say her approach was different, but it was different in a good way, because she didn't take on a role as a professor. It wasn't more so, 'these are my thoughts, these are my words, this is what it is,' it's more so, let's have this discussion and let's kind of guide our discussion based on our comments and our questions and how we propose it. So she was there, her presence was there, but it wasn't like, 'this is my class, this is what we have to talk about and we have to stay on topic.' I felt like a lot of times we would go on a tangent, but our tangent would be purposeful. So I think however she set the class up, it allowed us to say what we wanted to say and have people say, 'yeah, I agree,' or 'I don't agree.' So I just thought that was just a very cool way to have that peer discussion, to kind of guide the class, all of our sessions, it was pretty much that way.

Consistently throughout my course observations it was noted the manner in which the students guided the class while Professor Erin “sat on the side.” During one class session two students were leading the class on the topic of ageism and when asked about how its theoretical

²³⁸ Hooks, "Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom."

concepts applied to individuals with disabilities it became evident that they were having difficulty finding a way to connect the two. Professor Erin did not intervene, and the two students stood in front of the class for two minutes in silence. I noted in my observations that as they stood there it became increasingly uncomfortable for them and the class. It seemed as though Professor Erin may have been upset with their lack of knowledge, as she too sat there in silence. Eventually they found a way to address the question and continued their lesson without issue. During our debriefing that night I asked Professor about the silence incident and if it frustrated her, her response reinforced the trust and autonomy concepts that continually resurfaced in the data:

I was not upset at all with the group tonight. Maybe it's the mother in me but I do not mind if a group struggles to find an answer or to completely understand the topic. It's a process we all have to embark on when learning complicated topics. I was proud they found a way to continue; rescuing them would have been more counterproductive to their learning process if I jumped in and saved the day.

In this manner Professor Erin's pedagogy was functioning through the Freirian lens focused on problem-posing educational methods where the professor does not interrupt the actions of the students. With problem-posing education, students negotiate their perceptions of the multicultural education theory, not as a stable reality, but as a reality in the process of transformation.²³⁹ The students during the presentation were finding difficulty in linking theory to the reality of a related topic, or put another way, guiding the class from the stable topic of ageism and transforming it to individuals with disabilities. According to Freire, for the implementation of problem-posing education, it is necessary to abandon the thoughts that educators hold absolute knowledge, or in this case, the professor being the keeper of the

²³⁹ Shor, "Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy."

knowledge.²⁴⁰ For Freire the implementation of the problem-posing education, it is necessary to abandon the premise that educators hold absolute knowledge. Within problem-posing educational models, the educator needs create learning environments that facilitate dialogic relations with his or her students.²⁴¹ Professor Erin allowed the students this space to negotiate this among themselves in an autonomous way, and they were able to self-regulate the manner in which they solved this problem and convey it back to the class.

One can easily misconstrue that providing an educational space where learner autonomy is developed and reinforced is equivalent to self-instruction, making the role of the teacher redundant. The misperception lies within the fact that learner autonomy is not the same thing as autonomous learning. Autonomy is not a matter of learners working on their own. Like all other culturally determined human capacities, it develops in interaction with others.²⁴² This development of student autonomy through social interaction is closely aligned with communicative action in that both assert that it is important for the socialization and development of each individual. Additionally, Habermas argues, “communicative action provides the medium for reproduction of lifeworlds.”²⁴³ In other words, according to Habermas, communicative action is necessary to maintain a healthy and productive society. By empowering the students to teach various aspects of the course and not interfere with this process, even when it did not go well, Professor Erin was fostering communicative action. In doing so, she was sustaining

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Freire and Shor, "What Is the “Dialogical Method” of Teaching."

²⁴² David Little, "Learning as Dialogue: The Dependence of Learner Autonomy on Teacher Autonomy," *System* 23, no. 2 (1995).

²⁴³ Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System : A Critique of Functionalist Reason*.

the lifeworld of each student.²⁴⁴

Summary of Class Themes

Both Freire and Habermas exhibit fundamental continuity in their communicative theories; they both share a concern with a dialogical understanding of learning that has profound implications for the pedagogical interactions between professor and students of education. Their central thesis is that various forms of dialogue and communicative actions are necessary for the development of individual autonomy and collective educational practice. This notion of communicative learning not only underlies their respective conception of individual student development, but also extends multicultural theoretical knowledge acquisition.²⁴⁵

Professor Erin's pedagogical approach closely mirrored the communicative priorities of Habermas and Freire in that her course was centered on the development of relation's between the students, themselves, and her. Through her development of a safe, trusting classroom space the students were able to freely express his or her thoughts, which emphasized learner autonomy. Both Freire and Habermas stress the priority of knowledge acquisition as a communicative process in which there are no absolutely privileged knowers, and where knowledge claims are grounded in the dialogue with multiple perspectives.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION

Avner Segall said it best, “Teacher education matters.”²⁴⁷ It can also be said that colleges of education and the communicative interactions that take place within each class have the potential to positively or negatively impact the theoretical understandings of perspective of teachers - especially new teachers. This study illuminates the need for current and future teachers to be critical and reflective in a multicultural theory classroom. It also highlights the importance of providing students with opportunities to share and communicate within an environment that promotes communicative interaction. The insights into pedagogical dialogue provided here demonstrate that the process of cultivating a classroom community of trust and autonomy presents a framework for negotiating the instruction of multicultural theory in teacher education. This study further points toward the importance of cultivating an open communicative classroom context that welcomes student experiences as a means of enhancing established theory being taught in the class, while allowing the students themselves to participate in ongoing processes of collaborative dialogue.

The pedagogical interactions that take place throughout a course on multicultural theory constitute a form of social and cultural critique, for all knowledge is in essence mediated through communicative means.²⁴⁸ Monica McLean points out that if professors are able to self-reflect and examine their own practices, then the turbulent environment of university education will contain the grounds for hope and be more likely to lead to construction of a pedagogical model which

²⁴⁷ Avner Segall, *Disturbing Practice* (P. Lang, 2002). P.167

²⁴⁸ Escobar, *Paulo Freire on Higher Education: A Dialogue at the National University of Mexico*.

may contribute to “solving current and looming social problems.”²⁴⁹ Paulo Freire goes one step further when speaking to the value of pedagogical dialogue in the university:

Education is not the lever of transformation, of revolution, and yet revolution is pedagogic, and I am not playing with words. There is a pedagogic testimony in the practice of social transformation; it is the process of mobilization, which is automatically also a process of organization.²⁵⁰

For Freire, pedagogy is the key to social transformation. The contextualization of pedagogy through this means is not merely a form of teaching, but rather the process of developing a relationship with one’s students. Pedagogical dialogue in this instance is the process, in which one communicates and interacts, to be pedagogic through a Freirian lens; one must be reflective of how various spaces are approached and what is brought to that space. For it is this reflective practice that “humanizes education though which men and women become conscious about their presence in the world.”²⁵¹ According to Freire, it is this conscious way of knowing that allows teachers and students to “take into consideration their needs, but also the needs and aspirations of others.”²⁵² This study has pointed out the manner in which a professor utilized her own experiences and interaction with multicultural theory to inform her pedagogical approach with her students. The professor’s knowledge and experiences with the theoretical concepts taught in the class played a pivotal role in the way in which pedagogical dialogue functioned in this class. For the professor the theoretical concepts were more than information to be taught. This multicultural theory provided an avenue and a space as she stated in the pre-course interview, “I want students to find their voices.” Pedagogy in this form places dialogue and communication at the forefront. Professor Erin outlined the manner in which trust and

²⁴⁹ M. McLean, *Pedagogy and the University: Critical Theory and Practice* (Bloomsbury, 2006). P.3

²⁵⁰ Escobar, *Paulo Freire on Higher Education: A Dialogue at the National University of Mexico*. P.34

²⁵¹ Freire, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, 1. P.14

²⁵² Ibid. P.14

autonomy allowed for authentic engagement among all participants of the class. Her pedagogical interactions with the students allowed for theories to become real, and viable options were experienced while the students' experience contributed to the theory. In other words, Professor Erin's course was a place where the students not only learned about multiculturalism, but also proved to be a space where they actively and publicly engaged their own education of multicultural theory as it related to each of them individually.

As a result of the development of a trusting and autonomous classroom environment, the students and professor were able to enrich their understanding of the multicultural theories discussed while profiting from the different perspectives of everyone in the class. The data points out that through the combination of constructing relationships of mutual interdependence and being able to openly communicate personal experiences, the class developed a pedagogical strategy that promoted a critical analysis of the theories taught.

Through continual dialogue within a trusting environment that promoted student autonomy the students were able to develop knowledge about multicultural theory through personal experience. Professor Erin's pedagogical interactions were consistent with this purpose and helped foster processes of mutual renewal and reconstruction rather than unilateral transmission. While Professor Erin and the students were not equals in knowledge, skill, or status, she supported and guided the students by trusting their experience as an authoritative source of knowledge about teaching.

Another major theoretical premise of Freire and Habermas is that human autonomy and higher levels of cognitive and moral reasoning can be realized only through interactive learning and communicative processes. Rationality, they claim, is not the property of an isolated self, but

rather the cumulative outcome of communities of communicative inquiry and embodied social practices.²⁵³ The concrete basis for Professor Erin's pedagogical interactions was the manner in which her students discussed generative themes in multicultural studies that had significant context within their lives. These theoretical themes were analyzed through communicative interactions between her and her students. The relevant natures of the theories discussed in class were illuminated by each individual student's experiences, which set the foundation for dialogue within the class. As students decoded these representations, they recognized them as situations in which they themselves were involved as subjects.

Problematizing Dialogue

It is important to point out that there exists a criticism of dialogue in the classroom and whether it is sufficiently sensitive to conditions of diversity, that is, the different forms of cultural communication, the different aims and values held by members of different groups, and histories of oppression and harm that have excluded marginalized groups from educational conversations in the past.

Dialogue does have the potential to run up against difficulty in encounters with diversity. The literature points out that the use of dialogue and communicative pedagogies requires some fundamental questions educators should ask before embarking on this pedagogical strategy.²⁵⁴ Are the ground rules for participation actually substantive restrictions on what can be talked about, on how things can be talked about, and, thus, who can or will be part of the conversation? What are the limits within dialogue? Are the dialogical aims of consensus and even understanding

²⁵³ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*.

²⁵⁴ Nicholas C Burbules, "The Limits of Dialogue as a Critical Pedagogy," *Revolutionary pedagogies: Cultural politics, education, and the discourse of theory* (2000).

based upon ideals of harmony and community that are always on somebody's terms, and so threaten the maintenance of separate, self-determined identities? Finally, are there some differences in dialogue, or gaps of understanding or belief that cannot be bridged, but which, in the attempt to bridge them, put some people more at risk more than others?²⁵⁵

Although this study has pointed out the benefit dialogue had within a course on multicultural theory, it is important for future research and for those who utilize this pedagogical strategy to acknowledge and understand that there exist some areas that need to be troubled and analyzed.

Implications

As Shor and Freire state, "The lecture-based, passive curriculum is not simply poor pedagogical practice. It is the teaching model most compatible with promoting the dominant authority in society and with disempowering students."²⁵⁶ For Freire and Habermas the key to learning is the human capacity to pursue a more just society through dialogic interactions. For them, dialogue and communicative action are necessary to make meaning and reach understanding with others about these meanings and that dialogue has the potential to orientate toward agreement and understanding rather than conflict and alienation. This ability to make meaning and come to agreements with others is the communicative reason for group dialogue and communicative action.²⁵⁷ Constructing communicative trust through a focus on student autonomy was evident throughout the data as important priorities for Professor Erin. Through fostering an open communicative context in which everyone's contributions were vital for

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Freire and Shor, "What Is the "Dialogical Method" of Teaching." P.10

²⁵⁷ Morrow and Torres, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*.

maximizing the value of the course experience, Professor Erin encouraged students to assume responsibility for shaping the social circumstances of the class and contribute to the theoretical concepts of multiculturalism through personal experiences. She did so by continually inviting student participation in class and focusing interactions on reasoning and independent thinking rather than answers. In order to build a trusting class environment Professor Erin placed a priority on building authentic relationships with her students throughout the course by exhibiting a genuine concern for listening and being responsive to the needs and inquiries of the students. In such situations Professor Erin's pedagogical dialogue functioned to bridge the theoretical divide between multiculturalism and the students' lived experiences so they could be better prepared to utilize this knowledge in their own classroom in the future.

Throughout the research on teacher education resides the perennial "problem" of this theory and practice dichotomy.²⁵⁸ Theory, it is commonly thought, is only remotely related to the practice of teaching, often to the point of being redundant or even antagonistic. Practical knowledge is often considered to be more valuable than theoretical knowledge. However, this apparent dysfunction of theory and practice is, in itself, a product of theoretical discourse.²⁵⁹ This study points to a manner in which professors can bridge the divide between social theoretical perspectives and the manner in which students of education process and utilize such theories in his or her or practice.

In developing pedagogy of teacher education, there is a crucial need to look beyond the ability to perform particular skills and procedures and to aim to critique and analyze the nature of practice in both teachers and students of teaching. Such a stance, though, requires a

²⁵⁸ Kirk, "Beyond the Limits of Theoretical Discourse in Teacher Education: Towards a Critical Pedagogy."

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

need to accept that it carries inherent vulnerability, because learning through such means can be a risky business. However, if teacher educators do not see teaching as comprising specialized skills, knowledge and practice; if there is not a serious commitment to confront one's own assumptions in order to better align actions and beliefs; and, if the possibilities for understanding derived from experience are not purposefully sought and grasped, then there is little likelihood that teacher education will be more than the transmission of information about practice and the pursuit of technical competency.

This study illustrates that by providing students with a trusting space that allows them to come to their own conclusions and think for themselves through philosophical inquiry and collective deliberation, professors can foster a pedagogy that is fundamentally democratic, equitable, and nurturing.

Modern Implications

As professors advance their work in an age of new and innovative technologies, it is imperative that they adapt to open digital platforms in order to facilitate pedagogical dialogue and to stay abreast of the way in which their students are communicating and gathering information. In the same way professors have engaged students in traditional, non-technical methods, professors can also achieve instructional goals with the move to a digital educational landscape, where the interaction of students and professors can be mediated across the media frames of the Internet. Professors need to learn how to engage with students on their level, this happens between computers and smartphones in modern learning communities. But this does not happen by accident. It is the product of a professor is willing to take chances to understand that blending traditional methods with an interactive modern social landscape has the potential to

unlock new measures of pedagogical dialog that is more suited to their students' needs rather than their own.

Open source digital platforms are developed, enriched, and best experienced by students and professors working together. Through the utilization of virtual environments, professors are able to continue to develop opportunities for problem-posing educational opportunities, and students can continue to accept those challenges and work along side professors to seek solutions. Through an open source digital landscape professors are able to move towards the realization of Paulo Freire's co-collaborator dynamics and to foster the flexibility to bring in and develop other expertise.²⁶⁰ Very often though, students do not experience the benefits of learning in Freire's co-collaborator model and do not understand that they have the authority and the responsibility to develop content for their courses and to shape their college community. Open source digital pedagogy has the potential highlight these paths for students to learn as co-investigators so that they can participate in new models of pedagogical dialogue.

The pedagogical value in using open source digital platforms is creating dialogue on the students' level, which can deconstruct the teacher-student binary. Also, open source digital platforms and the facilitation of pedagogical dialogue can function as a form of resistance both within and outside the walls of the university. Open education, however, is no panacea. Hierarchies must be dismantled, and that dismantling must further become part of the process of education if its potentials are to be realized.

Using open source digital tools in the college classroom allows students to bring in their lived experiences and prior knowledge more readily, working against the banking concept

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

of education.²⁶¹ Open source digital pedagogy moves the expertise away from the front of the classroom and distributes it among the students and professors. Students and faculty have opportunities to interact with the world beyond an individual classroom, course, or college, and to more easily learn from and have an impact on it.

Open source digital tools can enter the classroom or its adjoining virtual spaces both by introduction from the students or from the instructors. When students bring technologies to the class they make visible their expertise, which they share with professors and students alike. This sharing not only expands the group's knowledge, it offers the presenters of the information opportunities to practice effective communication, either in writing or speech. When instructors bring technologies to the classroom they are conveying a desire to pedagogically connect with his or her students through a means more authentic to them.

Suggestions for Further Research

For future research there is a need to know more about how social theory is negotiated in different classroom contexts in colleges of education. There is a need to understand in greater detail the pedagogical strategies teachers use to trouble authority relations with their students in social theory courses and how these strategies are fostered and implemented. Future research could focus on providing insights on how social theory taught at the university level is manifested and constructed in classrooms at the elementary and secondary levels. Lastly, and I feel most importantly, we need to know how teacher educators who are taught social theory in trusting and autonomous environments transfer this to their students in the kindergarten through twelfth grade classroom.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

Concluding Thoughts

In this study, I examined the pedagogical interactions between professors and students and the resulting outcomes analyzed using Freire's dialogical pedagogic stance and Habermas's communicative action. My study attests to the pedagogical value in dialogue is that it has the potential to create trust and student autonomy, and can deconstruct the teacher-student binary, by increasing access and bringing together at once disparate learning spaces. Pedagogical dialogue can function as a form of resistance both within and outside the walls of institutions. But open education is no panacea. Hierarchies must be dismantled and that dismantling made into part of the process of education if its potentials are to be realized. In *Pedagogy of Hope*, Paulo Freire writes, "I am hopeful, not out of mere stubbornness, but out of an existential, concrete imperative."²⁶² The simple truth is that educators must be hopeful, for in hope lies possibility. But, also like both Freire and Habermas, it is important to recognize that hope must be balanced with action. There is no use in mere hopefulness. Ceding authority is an active endeavor. Pedagogical dialogue requires an engagement with reality that is persistent and demanding, and that engagement must result in real action, even if that action is exemplary and minute.

More than any other field, the teaching of teaching must not only encourage pedagogical dialogue, while encouraging student autonomy within a classroom of trust, it should overtly display it in practice. There needs to be an expectation that students of teaching will examine their teacher educators practice while being provided the space to authentically contribute to the class discussions and pedagogy so they will see that their

²⁶² P. Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014).

teacher educators and similarly examine their own practice. In developing a pedagogy of teacher education, there is a need for professors to critically examine their own practices so to better develop a pedagogy that will contribute to solving current and future issues that face pre-services teachers and their future students.

Teaching can very well be considered a moral act. The relationship professors cultivate with students is a moral decision. Pedagogical spaces require professors to practice a politics of teaching, whether we're conscious of it or not. However, traditional relationships between students and teachers come laden with a model of interaction that often impedes learning.²⁶³ They are hierarchical. Pedagogical dialogue, informed by a critical attention to trust and student autonomy, resets the variables and insists on the classroom as a site of moral agency.

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire writes, "It would be a contradiction in terms if the oppressors not only defended but actually implemented a liberating education."²⁶⁴ This work cannot originate from teachers alone. Participation is key and must be presented always not as an injunction (for participation that is forced is mandatory, not emancipatory), but as a call toward invention, self-invention, and humanization.

To protect academic freedom in education, both professors and K-12 educators must start by fostering agency and inviting dissent through the engagement of pedagogical dialogue. The first step in advocating for students is to be one. Teacher Education cannot demand that this is when students will learn *that*; instead, we must approach learning as collaboration. This collaborative effort is at the heart of what Freire calls "co-intentional education," in which "Teachers and students (leadership and people), co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed: 30th Anniversary Edition*. P28

in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge.”²⁶⁵ The collective knowledge of a group of students will almost always exceed the expertise of one instructor. It is this simple conclusion that seems, from my experience as a student, that professors and even K-12 educators have the most difficult time grasping when attempting to adhere to a more “democratic” or Freirian classroom. It is a challenge to put aside the meritocratic foundations of professor titles, professor vita lines, for they worked hard to earn the right to be at the front of the classroom or put “Dr” in front of their names. Through the very juxtaposition of the terms “professor” and “teacher” is in essence adhering to the principals of the neoliberal, competitive ethos that so many in colleges of Education write and present against. At the end of the day it’s about teaching children. It’s about instilling in children a manner of knowledge acquisition in a classroom environment that will motivate their quest for more learning. This study can be easily summoned up as a study that reinforces the mantra “practice what you preach”, for its conclusions point to the manner in which Professors can align with their future comrades in the K-12 classroom and model a pedagogical environment that reinforces trust and student autonomy with the hope of pre-service teachers transferring this model of pedagogy to their own classes.

²⁶⁵ Ibid. P.32

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A
Observational Protocol

Date: _____	
Notes from previous data collected:	
<i>Descriptive Notes</i>	<i>Reflective Notes</i>
Physical setting: visual layout	[Reflective comments: questions to self, observations of nonverbal behavior, my interpretations]
Description of participants Description of informal class discussions Description of participants engaged in communication Topics Discussed Sequence of class events Class interactions verbal and non-verbal Unplanned events Participants comments: expressed in quotes	[Reflective comments: questions to self, observations of nonverbal behavior, my interpretations]
[The observations of what seems to be occurring]	

APPENDIX B

Professor Interview Form

Introduction

- Thank you for coming today
- Introduce myself
- Purpose of the Discussion

o The purpose of today's interview is to examine the pedagogical relationships among the participants in a graduate education course that focuses on social theory.

- Informed Consent
 - a. The purpose of the study is to examine the pedagogical relationships among the participants in a graduate education course that focuses on social theory.
 - b. Your identity will not be linked to your responses. That is, I will not report any information that could potentially make you identifiable, like your name or personal characteristics.
 - c. The data I collect will remain confidential- only I will have access.
 - d. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
 - e. You can choose to leave or not answer any questions asked should you feel uncomfortable at any time during our discussion of your experiences.
 - PAUSE: Are there any questions about the informed consent document?
 - COLLECT: If there are no more questions about the informed consent document, please sign. Participants retain a copy
- Confirm permission to record the session
 - o Only I will access audio-recordings. Transcripts will only be available to me.
 - o I will use descriptors rather than names in the transcripts.
 - o As I reflect on what you've shared, summarize it, and report about it, I will never, ever share information that would allow you to be identified.

There are no right or wrong answers—I am only interested in your experiences.

- Please remember that what’s said inside this room today must stay here.
It’s important that you respect the privacy of this study
 - Any questions?

I. Content Area #1 – Personal Pedagogy

Question: Please explain your pedagogical style when teaching students.

Potential Probes:

- a. *Factors that influenced your teaching methods.*
- b. *What types of teachers in your school do you most respect and why?*
- c. *Explain the characteristics of a professor who teaches well.*

Question: How do you help your students to think critically and synthesize information?

Potential Probe:

- a. *Your thoughts on:*
 1. *Collaborative learning*
 2. *Designing lessons with students*
 3. *Asking more questions than giving statement’s in class*

II. Content Area #2 – Thoughts on Critical Pedagogy

Question: What are your thoughts on being taught educational theories as they relate to race, class, and gender?

Potential Probes:

- a. *Do you believe social inequalities impact a student’s educational experience – if so how?*
- b. *What your thoughts on the idea of “social construction?”*
- c. *Do you feel your studies in education and the university level have prepared you to teach diverse students? Why or why not?*

Question: What roles do you feel schools should play in helping identify and alleviate social inequity in society?

Potential Probes:

- a. Do schools have an obligation to teach more than defined academic content?*
- b. In your opinion what role do schools have in teaching the subjects of race, class, and gender?*

Wrap-Up

- Remember that the thoughts you shared with me today will be used to examine the pedagogical relationships among the participants in a graduate education course that focuses on social theory. Specifically, this study will ask the following questions:
- Remember that your identity will remain private. What was said should remain confidential.
- Reiterate contact information—if they have questions or concerns.

APPENDIX C

Professor Debrief Form

Question: What was your impression of the students in tonight's class?

Potential Probes:

- d. *What verbal cues did you pick-up on?*
- e. *What Physical cues did you pick up on?*

3. Question: How did you think the class went tonight?

Potential Probe:

- a. *What would have you changed if anything?*
- b. *Do you think your communication in tonight's class was effective? Why or why not?*
- c. *Do you think the students felt comfortable talking about tonight's content with you? Why or why not?*

Question: What were some comments made by students that surprised you?

Potential Probes:

- f. *Do you think the students felt comfortable in sharing tonight? Why or why not?*

Question: Did you think this class gave the students strategies to help deal with some the issues discussed tonight? Why or why not?

Potential Probes:

- c. *Do you think it is important to provided the class with specific ways to handle the issues in his or her class that were discussed tonight? Why or why not?*

APPENDIX D

Professor Recruitment Letter

Hello Dr. _____

My name is Jeffrey Morrison and I am currently a PhD. Candidate in the Department of Educational Policy Studies with a concentration in Social Foundations. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to participate in a qualitative study focusing on Pedagogical Relations in an Education Course Focusing on Multicultural Theory . The course, _____ matches the criteria I have outlined for this study.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how pedagogical relations in a social theory course in a College of Education are influenced by the content of the theory taught. The focus of this study is on the professor and how he or she uses pedagogy to achieve his or her goals of justice.

You are invited to participate because you are a professor in the College of Education who teaches a graduate course with social theory as its key curricular component. In addition to yourself, four students will be recruited for this study. Professor participation will require 45 minutes of your time a week for the duration of the course you are teaching. The four student volunteers will be chosen upon completion of the course and will be interviewed and asked to share their perspectives of the material and pedagogy of the course.

If you are interested in participating I will forward you the informed consent form and follow-up email with a time to meet in person.

Best Regards,

Jeffrey Morrison

APPENDIX E
Georgia State University
Department of Educational Policy Studies
Informed Consent

PEDAGOGICAL DIALOGUE: THE STUDY OF PEDAGOGICAL DIA-
LOGUE IN AN EDUCATION COURSE FOCUSING ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION
THEORY

Principal Investigator: Dr. Joyce King

Student Principal Investigator: Jeffrey Morrison

I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. A total of four students will be interviewed for this study. The purpose of the study is to investigate how pedagogical relations in a social theory course in a College of Education are influenced by the content of the theory taught. The focus of this study is on the professor and how he or she uses pedagogy to achieve his or her goals of justice.

You are invited to participate because you are a student in a College of Education who was enrolled in a graduate course with social theory as its key curricular component. You are one of four students who have volunteered to be interviewed for this study. Student participation will require 45 minutes of your time at a time and location of your choosing at the conclusion of the course.

II. Procedures:

If you decide to participate, the student principal investigator will interview you one time for 45 minutes at a location of your choosing. The interview session will be digitally recorded and securely stored in a secure Evernote Premium Account. The account password uses a PBKDF2 (Password Based Key Derivation Function 2) with a unique salt for each credential. All your personal information will be changed so to protect your confidentiality.

III. Risks:

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life.

IV. Benefits:

Participation in this study may not benefit you personally. Overall, we hope to gain information about how the professor's pedagogical approach to the class informed your understanding of the social theory taught.

V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

VI. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Dr. Joyce King and Jeffrey Morrison, student PI, will have access to the information you provide. Information may

also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)). We will use study number rather than your name on study records. The information you provide will be stored will be stored electronically and password-protected in an Evernote Premium account, stored in a non-disclosed data center. This account is password protected. Evernote derives my AES key from the password entered and does this using a well-recognized method called PBKDF2 (Password Based Key Derivation Function 2). My password, along with a unique salt, runs through an HMAC/SHA-256 hashing function 50,000 times. The result is a 128-bit AES key. This key, along with an initialization vector, is used to encrypt all the data from this study in CBC (Cipher Block Chaining) mode. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be summarized and reported in-group form. You will not be identified personally.

VII. Contact Persons:

Contact Dr. Joyce King at 404-413-8265 or jking@gsu.edu or Jeffrey Morrison at 678-637-6921 or jmorrison@studnet.gsu.edu if you have questions, concerns, or complaints about this study. You can also call if you think you have been harmed by the study. Call Susan Vogtner in the Georgia State University Office of Research Integrity at 404-413-3513 or svogtner1@gsu.edu if you want to talk to someone who is not part of the study team. You can talk about questions, concerns, offer input, obtain information, or suggestions about the study. You can also call Susan Vogtner if you have questions or concerns about your rights in this study.

VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

I will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research and be audio-recorded, please sign below.

Participant Name (Please Print)

Participant Signature

Date

Student Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX F

Student Recruitment Letter

Dear Student:

As you know I have been observing your professor throughout this semester with the aim to gather research data on how the course content informed the pedagogy of your professor. The focus of my observations was on the professor and how he or she used pedagogy to achieve her goals of justice.

I would like to ask if you would be interested in participating in this study. I will be selecting four students to participate in this portion of the study. If chosen to participate I will interview you one time at a time and location of your choosing for 35 minutes. Participation in this research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time.

By interviewing you upon completion of the course your responses are not unduly influenced by your ongoing participation in the course or by your relationship with the professor while the class was in session. You are a part of the pedagogical relationship with the professor and therefore are an integral part of the overall the data collected for this study. The interview will be digitally recorded and the audio from each session will be securely stored in a secure Evernote Premium Account. The account password uses a PBKDF2 (Password Based Key Derivation Function 2) with a unique salt for each credential. All your personal information will be changed so to protect your confidentiality.

If you are willing to participate in this study please indicated by checking the “yes” box below and provide your most frequently checked email address. I will communicate with you through this email address to set-up our interview. If chosen to participate I will provide you with an inform consent form at the time of our interview.

I appreciate your time and consideration.

Yes, I would like to participate in this study.

Print full name

Email Address



No, I am not interested in participating in this study.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Morrison

PhD. Candidate

professorjrm@gmail.com

678.637.6921

Georgia State University

Educational Policy Studies

APPENDIX G

Self-Interview Form

Content Area #1 – Personal Pedagogy

2. Question: What was the most important aspect to your education while a study?

4. Question: Please explain your pedagogical style when teaching undergrads

Probes:

- *Factors that influenced your teaching methods.*
- *What types of teachers in your school do you most respect and why?*
- *Explain the characteristics of a professor who teaches well.*

Content Area #2 – Thoughts on social inequalities and education

5. Question: Do you believe social inequalities impact a student’s educational experience – if so how?

Probes:

- *What your thoughts on the idea of “social construction?”*
- *Do you feel your studies in education and the university level have prepared you to teach diverse students? Why or why not?*

4. Question: What roles do you feel schools should play in helping identify and alleviate social inequity in society?

Probes:

- *Do schools have an obligation to teach more than defined academic content?*
- *In your opinion what role do schools have in teaching the subjects of race, class, and gender?*

5. Question: Do you feel your studies at the university have prepared you to teach a diverse classroom? Why or why not?

Probes:

- *Does your whiteness create a barrier to teaching students of other races?*
- *In your opinion what role does class play in the teaching of students of all ethnic backgrounds?*