ENGAGING IN INCLUSION:

CULTIVATING LGBTQ STUDENTS' SENSE OF BELONGING THROUGH A CRITICAL PLACE-BASED CURRICULUM

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Abstract

While recent literature has highlighted the importance of inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) topics in composition courses (Alexander & Wallace, 2009; Furrow, 2012), few have outlined how to include these topics. The purpose of this article is to detail how the inclusion of LGBTQ students and topics was achieved in a first-year writing course using a critical place-based curriculum. While most place-based curricula do not take into account LGBTQ students' unique lived experiences on a college campus, this article details how conversations and assignments were altered to take into consideration issues of power and privilege on campus. Implications suggest the need for adoption of critical pedagogical practices in the composition classroom.

Keywords: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, First-Year Writing, Curricular Inclusion, Critical Pedagogy

Sexual minority students experience higher education much differently than their heterosexual counterparts, primarily due to discrimination (Rankin, 2005). In fact, as many as one-third of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students face some form of discrimination or harassment while attending college (Rankin, 2003). These unique challenges that LGBTQ students encounter may hinder their academic potential. Despite LGBTQ students facing a "chilly campus climate" (Rankin, Blumenfeld, Weber, & Frazer, 2010, p. 9), there is a lack of information related to LGBTQ student retention and best practices related to supporting LGBTQ student persistence in higher education (Sanlo, 2004), including curricular interventions.

In their analysis of nearly 15 years of scholarship regarding how LGBTQ topics intersect with composition and rhetoric studies, Alexander and Wallace (2009) conclude that rhetoric and composition courses need to better attend to LGBTQ issues and problematize heteronormativity. They call upon those who teach and administer composition and rhetoric curricula to move beyond a "shallow multiculturalism" (p. 317) that leaves out discussions of power and privilege, systems of inequity, and the inherently political nature of education. Thus, there is a need for a shift in our pedagogies, our practices, and our curriculum so that we can better equip students "with a set of deconstruction tools that expose the operation of power in culture" (p. 317).

Heeding this call, in this paper I argue that participants in first-year writing courses can engage in discourse about LGBTQ issues, power, and privilege through a critical place-based curriculum. A critical place-based curriculum is a pedagogy that centers on attending to students' lived experiences on their campus, as well as examining the texts and artifacts they come into contact with on a daily basis that shape how they experience their place on campus. Within this curriculum, students and teachers pay particular attention to how power and privilege work to mediate students' experiences.

I came to use this critical place-based curriculum after several years of teaching first-year writing. As an out, queer faculty member, I had seen the effects of LGBTQ students feeling marginalized in the classroom. As I turned to the literature for guidance on incorporating LGBTQ topics and

issues into my classroom, I found that, in spite of calls for more inclusion of LGBTQ topics, few authors knew or detailed how to actually enact inclusion and emancipatory practices. While many agree that they should be equipping students with tools to deconstruct and analyze power systems, faculty struggle with the enormity of that task. Few studies have produced ideas or frameworks for how we can actually include LGBTQ students and topics into the curriculum outside of dedicated courses (e.g., Women's Studies courses).

LGBTQ COLLEGE STUDENTS & HIGHER EDUCATION

The need for curricular inclusion of LGBTQ topics and voices is evident in the literature detailing how LGBTQ students experience higher education. Within this body of literature, three primary themes emerge: (a) discrimination of the LGBTQ community, (b) the challenges of navigating identity, and (c) a portrayal of victimization.

Several studies have documented that LGBTQ individuals are often marginalized on college campuses both inside and outside of the classroom (Brown, Clarke, Gortmaker, & Robinson-Keilig, 2004; Gortmaker & Brown, 2006; Rankin et al., 2010). College campuses have been described as at best, not providing a welcoming atmosphere for LGBTQ students and at worst, as fostering an openly hostile environment (Rankin 2003; Rankin, 2005; Rankin et al., 2010; Sanlo, 2004). Certainly improvements to the campus climate have been made at many colleges and universities for LGBTQ individuals, however, "practically all research studies examining the perceptions and experiences of LGBT campus community members underscore negative experiences from subtle to extreme forms of discrimination" (Rankin et al., 2010, p. 8). The classroom is one place in particular where students experience discrimination (Connolly, 1999; Rankin et al., 2010; Renn, 2000).

While some literature speaks to the lack of a welcome atmosphere for and the marginalization of LGBTQ students, other studies have pointed examined violence towards LGBTQ individuals (D'Augelli, 1992, 1998; Rankin, 2003, 2005; Rankin et al., 2010). In Rankin et al.'s (2010) study on campus climates, sexual minorities were reported to be twice as likely to be victims of violence. Moreover, these

students were far likelier to experience harassment and other forms of discrimination.

It comes as little surprise, then, that with these instances of harassment, discrimination, and even violence on their campuses, LGBTQ students are less likely to be focused on their learning and academic responsibilities (Renn, 2010). Due to the factors of marginalization, discrimination, harassment, and even violence, LGBTQ students often struggle with academic achievement, isolation, and feelings of invisibility (D'Augelli, 1993, 1998; Renn, 2010; Sanlo, 2004).

In addition to fears of harassment and discrimination, LGBTQ students often have the unique challenge of navigating a marginalized sexual and/or gender identity while attending college. As LGBTQ student are traversing their academic lives, they may also be establishing romantic relationships (Sanlo, 2004), deciding whether or not they should come out to parents and friends, and trying to figure out if they should be open about their sexuality on campus (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; Sanlo, 1998). For some LGBTQ students, having to navigate heterosexism and genderism on a daily bases takes a toll on their physical and psychological wellbeing.

In spite of the harm that can ensue from being closeted, some LGBTQ college students remain so anyway because of the conflict that may arise for them if they come out (Sanlo, 2004). Perceived or real consequences for coming out to parents might include being disowned and/or being cut off financially which would ultimately endanger a student's ability to pay for their college education, thus effecting their enrollment. Students may perform a seemingly heterosexual identity for parents and friends while also navigating "the new emerging sexual minority identity" (Sanlo, 2004, p. 101). Trying to maintain separate identities in different spaces can create additional stress for LGBTQ students (Evans & D'Augelli, 1996; Sanlo, 2004).

Importantly, within the literature, information about how LGBTQ people are discriminated against, harassed, and largely ignored paints this group of students as mere victims. That "no work was found in the literature that explores resilience, positive survival skills, and

academic success of sexual minority college students" (Sanlo, 2004, p. 102) represents an important gap that must be addressed as educators search for ways to include LGBTQ students and topics in general curriculum. As Sanlo implies, this victimization suggest that LGBTQ individuals are viewed through a deficit lens, that their experiences and indeed their identity are viewed as unfortunate and a cause of failure. While certainly there is more to LGBTQ students' identities and experiences than harassment, discrimination, violence, and academic struggles, the research often does not explore positives.

Borrowing from Museus et al. (2012), who reframe students of color as cultural assets, LGBTQ students, too, should be considered cultural assets due to their unique lived experiences and perspectives. In addition to framing culture as an asset to students' educational experience, Museus et al. (2012) argue for the integration of the academic, social, and cultural spheres so as to enhance student development, learning, and belonging rather than framing them as separate entities. In order to achieve this, college educators must make efforts to engage the voices and stories of all students and community members within the curricula.

As such, in addition to campus climates, issues of safety and inclusion, course settings and curricula need to be taken seriously. Connolly (1999) writes that "Gay, lesbian, and bisexual students are acutely aware of the myriad ways in which pedagogy and curriculum collude to force their silence" (p. 113). Noting that cultivating a safe and inclusive classroom is beneficial for everyone, Connolly writes further, "The act of curricular and pedagogical transformation requires bravery and dedication, but its central aim, naming and changing oppressive social structures, has the potential to create academic environments that are safe and inclusive for all students" (p. 126). According to Furrow (2012), composition instructors in particular should heed these concerns for safety and inclusion in their pedagogy, curriculum, and classrooms. First-year writing courses are typically required for most students and as such, often representative of campus demographics. Because of the required nature of these courses coupled with their content material, first-year writing courses

have a responsibility to be inclusive and reflective of the student demographics.

CULTIVATING BELONGING THROUGH PLACE-BASED CURRICULUM

Given the challenges LGBTQ students face and the lack of inclusion in curricula and classrooms, it is clear that explicit attention to the cultivation of space and inclusion is necessary so that they can not only participate but also succeed in their education. While there is little literature to date about employing one specific method or theory to help cultivate these spaces for LGBTQ students, literature has documented best practices that may help LGBTQ students. Sanlo. Rankin, and Schoenberg (2002) as well as Sanlo (2004) recommend staff education and trainings such as Safe Zone. Sanlo et al. (2002) also advocate for the creation of LGBTQ centers, and others promote inclusionary policies with language specifically addressing sexual orientation, sexual identity, and gender identity (Beemyn, Curtis, Davis, & Tubbs, 2005; Patton, Kortegast, & Javier, 2010). Some call for pedagogical and cultural shift in higher education aimed at fracturing the silences, queering our spaces (Renn, 2010), and challenging dominant systems of heteronormativity (Rankin, 2005) and gender binaries (Bilodeau, 2005).

Each of these best practices have one thing in common—the need for inclusion so that LGBTQ students can fully participate and cultivate a sense of belonging on their campuses, which may result in improved outcomes for students. Strayhorn (2012) defines this sense of belonging as a "perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group (e.g., campus community) or others on campus (e.g., faculty, peers)" (p. 3). While there is little literature detailing how a sense of belonging paradigm may directly affect LGBTQ students' experiences on campus, there is literature documenting the importance of a sense of belonging for first-year students and other marginalized student groups such as students of color. According to Hausmann, Schofield, and Woods (2007), a sense of belonging can positively influence

not only academic achievement but persistence, as well. Because of the importance of social support, community, and how those two things connect to identity, it is important that students feel a sense of belonging within their environment. Strayhorn (2012) writes, "the takeaway point seems clear: To excel, students must feel a sense of belonging in school (or college), and therefore educators must work to create conditions that foster belongingness among students" (p. 9). These findings likely transfer to other marginalized groups, indicating that in order to help LGBTQ students excel, campuses and classrooms must cultivate and foster spaces that encourage a sense of belonging for LGBTQ students.

PLACE-BASED CURRICULUM

One way to cultivate a sense of belonging is through the exploration of place through a place-based curricula. Blakely and Pagnac (2012) provide a springboard and framework for understanding place-based curriculum for first-year composition courses. In their work detailing Iowa State University's first-year writing program curriculum, Blakely and Pagnac use a place-based curriculum and a pedagogy of place to engender multimodal communication, opportunities of sense making, and most importantly, a sense of belonging on their campus. They describe a place-based curriculum as one that "operationalizes campus place not as a generic, neutral backdrop...but as a purposeful and rich assemblage of physical, verbal, and natural artifacts that play an important role in students' adjustment process and in their higher education journey" (p. 12). That is, a place-based curriculum recognizes that place is inherently political and that it directly influences how students transition into, as well as experience, their education. Their curriculum, which asks students to explore features of the campus and how those features serve to mirror the land-grant university's mission, uses an instructional scaffolding approach so that students can build their communication skills.

However, though it understands space as political, Blakely and Pagnac's (2012) curriculum does not specifically account for ways that students from non-dominant groups, and LGBTQ students in particular, experience space, safety, and power differently. As such, in order to design a place-based curriculum that promotes inclusion

and a sense of belonging for all students, a critical pedagogical lens may be necessary to scaffold students through their examination of the politics and power structures inherent in studying space. Critical pedagogies highlight and disrupt disproportionate power structures and inequities within the social world through classroom discourses, curriculum, and teaching strategies (Giroux, 1998). In combining a place-based curriculum with critical pedagogy, critical place-based pedagogy emerges as a lens through which teachers and students can engage in their surroundings, ask critical questions regarding systems of power and privilege, and encourage each other to do something transformative that creates change. According to Ball and Lai (2006), critical place-based pedagogy, "listens to the locals by paying close attention to local students' interests … and it empowers the local by legitimating local cultural production…while confronting the marginalizing effects on places of the spatial politics of culture" (pp. 261-262).

APPLICATION OF CRITICAL PLACE-BASED CURRICULUM

Over the course of three years, while I, too, was at Iowa State University, I implemented a critical place-based pedagogy with my first-year writing students. This curriculum, whose formation and execution I detail in this section, allowed my students and I to attend to what was important to them, take into consideration how they navigated campus, and explore how power and privilege mediated that. We examined how individual, institutional, and social aspects helped shape those places. Using critical place-based curriculum as a framework, my students and I were able to thoroughly analyze and critique campus as a place and work to transform it. While the focus of this article is on the inclusion of LGBTQ students in particular, all students can benefit from this curriculum. Because I asked students to explore their lived realities and the spaces they frequented and examine where they "fit" and did not "fit," all students were able to fully participate and learn more about campus. The curriculum created space to discuss issues of power and privilege that directly influenced the local campus.

In the following subsections, I detail certain elements and assignments within the curriculum and analyze the effects that this work had on students' senses of belonging and understandings of power and space. The examples are from one section of our first-year writing course that was part of a piloted LGBTQ-themed learning community (Jaekel, 2015). The section enrolled 18 undergraduate students, several of whom identified as part of the LGBTQ community and many who identified as allies.

DEEP MAPPING ASSIGNMENT

Students began the course by completing a two-part assignment titled "Sharing Experiences," in which they were first asked to visually represent their experiences on campus by mapping how they spend their day. Students were asked to identify and map spaces they found salient or meaningful in their first few weeks on campus. For example, they could map their dorm rooms, specific routes to classes they took, and particular places they found relaxing or inspiring on campus. These "deep maps" served as a depiction of students' "emotional and daily relationships" (Blakely & Pagnac, 2012, p. 24) with their everyday surroundings.

As I began this assignment, I also completed a map, as a model for my students. Not only was I modeling the assignment so that students could better understand how to complete it, I was also modeling that LGBTQ issues and topics were not taboo in my classroom. In her article, Furrow (2012) describes how one student was greatly impacted by a faculty member coming out in class, as it made the student feel "less alone." Moreover, Furrow details the importance of setting the tone in the classroom from the very beginning by emphasizing that the classroom will be a space where LGBTQ issues, as well as other topics, are discussed in a respectful manner. Thus, modeling my own map for students allowed me to both I come out as queer and demonstrate for students that we would be talking about these issues in a safe and respectful manner.

In my map, I detailed the route that I often took on campus, highlighting the spaces I frequented: the LGBT Student Services Center, our Women's Center, and any gender-neutral bathrooms

available on campus (there were not many). In short, I explained to my students that I experienced this campus a particular way because of my identity. I did not just go anywhere; there were some places that I did not always feel safe. I detailed the places that I found that did allow me to feel safe and do what I needed and then gave a short list of places on campus that were there to help me. I encouraged the students to do the same, utilizing research, a little exploring, and by visiting different spaces on campus.

While I did not imply that campus was inherently unsafe for me, I did detail that there were specific spaces set aside for me. I advised, however, that there may or may not be spaces set aside for them. One of the most important things they could do for themselves, as well as for their classmates, was to locate spaces that existed and, more importantly, spaces that did not exist for them. It was not too long ago, I reminded them, that gender-neutral bathrooms did not exist on this campus, or any other campus for that matter. I discussed with them that because many of us who identify with the LGBTQ community indicated that we needed that space, campuses finally accommodated us. Perhaps, I said to my students, we could expect the same if we found something that was lacking on our campus. Several of my students took advantage of this opportunity, some even making more than one map—one for how they walked if it was daylight and one where they walked during the evenings. One genderqueer college student, in particular, drew a map that followed our campus's emergency phone booths, citing that he often felt unsafe walking home from the library at night. Thus, he said, he altered his route to make sure there was always an emergency phone nearby. This opened up discussion about who feels safe on campus and who does not in the evenings. From this, we discussed how masculine-bodied individuals often had the privilege of feeling safer than feminine-bodied individuals.

Blakely's and Pagnac's (2012) "Deep Mapping" assignment required little alteration to uphold my goals for the course. Students found their "emotional and practical attachments" (p. 25) on campus while simultaneously seeking out spaces such as the LGBT Student Services Building. Had it not been for this project, students may not

have known about these resources or had no "good" reason to seek them out.

LETTER WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The second part of the "Sharing Experiences" assignment was to write a letter to a friend or relative detailing one of the places they found on campus. This part of the assignment allowed students to "understand and communicate to others what it's like to be here" (Blakely & Pagnac, 2012, p. 26). In regards to these letters, Blakely and Pagnac found that students "wrote about the security, comfort, and community of particular locations on campus" (p. 26). Students, according to the authors' pilot study, took time to write about how they felt like they belonged on campus.

For LGBTQ students, these feelings of belonging and security may not exist. With this in mind, I altered the original assignment and instructed students to write a letter detailing a particular place they either did or did not find and why that matters to them. Many of my students (many of whom did not identify as LGBTQ) wrote their letters similar to what Blakely and Pagnac (2012) found in their study, describing their sense of belongingness within distinct, beautiful locations. My LGBTQ students, however, often used their letter to come out to whomever they chose, explain how they found gender-neutral restrooms in their respective residence hall, or share how they had recently joined an LGBT Alliance Club meeting. By allowing students to question the place around them, as well as showing them various places that were safe, LGBTQ students begin to articulate who they are and how they might fit in on campus.

CAMPUS PROGRAM OR ORGANIZATION ASSIGNMENT

The second assignment in Blakely and Pagnac's (2012) place-based curriculum adopted a scaffolding approach and asked students to examine a campus organization or program of their choosing. The "Exploring a Campus Program or Organization" assignment went beyond students' personal analysis and began to look at institutional spaces within the university. The assignment, which also asked students to consider how the organization or program utilized and upheld the land-grant mission of Iowa State University, was meant

to illustrate how the university served local and global communities, fostered research, and improved the quality of life for current and future generations.

There were two goals for this assignment. First, students would learn how to engage in research and begin using citations. Second, students would find more out about the campus as a place, thus bolstering their sense of belonging. Unlike the original version of the assignment, because my students were using a critical place-based curriculum, they also had the opportunity to critically question who, exactly, were the "local and global communities" served in the university mission, as well as exactly whose quality of life it affected. Students questioned these seemingly value-neutral statements because, from their place-based research, they found that while some communities are directly supported, others are often left out entirely.

In particular, a queer student of color attempted to select an organization for queer students of color for this assignment. The student realized, however, that no such organization existed. Out of over 800 organizations on campus, there was no organization for students of color who also identified as queer. The closest organization she could find was the LGBTQIA Alliance on campus. After attending meetings, she noted that few people of color participated in the meetings and there was no mention of racial identity or intersection. Thus, for this assignment, the student wrote a paper about how the LGBTQ groups on campus were overwhelmingly White and did not discuss racial intersections with sexuality. The student additionally did some specific research on the university's racial demographics. She ended her paper with a proposal discussing the need to have LGBTQ groups that included different forms of diversity in their discussions and meetings. The student met the goals of the assignment—she applied both primary and secondary research, explored and analyzed her topic, and wrote a paper about a space that was not inclusive but needed to be. The student went on to become the founding member of a Queer Students of Color group on campus. This action element exemplifies the ultimate goal of critical pedagogy. Not only should we work to identify exclusionary places and practices, we should strive to transform these things to be more socially just (Giroux, 1998).

In completing this assignment, students were able to see that some places on campus did an excellent job serving local and global communities, per the university's mission. They also saw, however, that some groups were underserved. By identifying who the underserved populations were, students in the class were given space within the assignment to create a transformative action plan on how to ensure that those underserved individuals could get what was needed.

VISUAL COMMUNICATION ASSIGNMENT

Perhaps the most powerful assignment students completed was the visual communication assignment. The assignment, which helped students engage in multimodal forms of communication, asked them to produce or repurpose a visual from the research they conducted in the previous assignments. Again I adhered to Blakely and Pagnac's (2012) overarching goal, which was to have students repurpose a visual, create a brochure or poster, and give a presentation about their visual. But instead of having students use previous research on their campus organization or program, I asked students to return to their first assignment, "Deep Mapping and Letter Writing." I asked students to document why they had found a particular place on campus comforting or uncomfortable. I asked students to use their cellphone cameras to capture something that showed a feature of a place on campus that showed their comfort or discomfort. Many students used this as an opportunity to take pictures of things that they had found particularly helpful, beautiful, or inspiring; in short, places that had cultivated a sense of belonging for them. Some students, however, took this as an opportunity to document the lived realities they face every day: homophobic slurs on residence hall walls, racist etchings in library desks, misogynistic drawings found on the lap boards in their lecture halls.

After documenting these artifacts, students were asked to share the photos with the class. As each student showed their photo, we engaged in conversation about the pictures—what they represented, where they were taken, and what feelings emerged from viewing them. We talked about the difference between students who shared beautiful or inspiring pictures and students who documented hurtful or

discriminatory artifacts. In this discussion, I asked students to examine how particular groups might encounter the spaces where each photo was taken, how it might affect their engagement within those spaces, and if they would ever return to those spaces again.

From that conversation, students were then asked to take what they had learned and either create a new visual that served to foster a sense of belonging for all students or to take a new photo that would serve to foster a sense of belonging for all students. Some students who had documented photos of hurtful and discriminatory graffiti decided to utilize the artifacts as an educational tool for their classmates, detailing how this form of graffiti is actually hurtful and created unsafe spaces. Others re-created or altered what they found in order to portray something positive or inspirational. One student's project, which began by showing a photo of "Your [sic] Gay" on a campus building, was transformed via Photoshop. The student changed his picture to say, "You're Gay, and that's Okay!" The student explained that while he did not identify as gay, he did not want someone seeing that graffiti to think it was shameful or something to be embarrassed about. Instead, he said, he wanted to make it into something positive. This assignment allowed my student to learn about the rhetorical nature of visuals, repurpose a visual for his audience, and provide an oral presentation about his process, which was the overarching goal of the initial assignment. In addition to those goals, however, this assignment allowed students to literally transform hurtful words and images into empowering and transformative ones.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

What began as an attempt at LGBTQ inclusion, grew into something much more substantial. Students in the class, some identifying with the LGBTQ community and some not, engaged in transformative practices. Not only did we explicitly discuss the idea of "belonging" and how that intersected with social power structures in campus spaces, but I also encouraged students to propose changes on their campus and take actions that would create a more inclusive sense of belonging. Students were able to explore campus as a place, explore who the campus served and who it did not. Most notably,

students seemed more dedicated to making the campus a more just and inclusive place. This series of assignments also allowed students to explore places that they may not have visited had we not employed a place-based curriculum. As a result of these experiences, I offer two recommendation and one note that may be helpful for other educators looking to implement a critical place-based pedagogy.

First, I found it essential to begin the semester by establishing a positive atmosphere and "warm" climate within my classroom. This recommendation is echoed by Furrow (2012) when she indicates that students must be shown from the start that the classroom would be one where tolerance is demonstrated. I assured students that they did not have to agree with what I, or their classmates, thought, but they did need to be considerate of everyone's opinions and lived experiences. By explaining to my students that they all encountered campus differently, and that we needed to believe and respect each student's voice, I found that the students were far more open and supportive during our discussions.

Second, as I taught this curriculum in my classes, many of my colleagues had a fear of student resistance and student backlash. These fears included students saying hurtful comments or not being "mature" enough to handle the discussions. However, I would argue that in every course, whether it discusses LGBTQ topics or not, there are a risks of resistance. When resistance does arise, those disruptions and hurtful comments must be dealt with immediately. In my course policy sheet, I wrote that the classroom would be a safe space for everyone and that hate language, personal attacks, and intimidating behavior would not be tolerated. Because I took steps to establish the atmosphere of our classroom from the very beginning, I experienced very little resistance or disruptions from students.

Finally, I want to note that it is not necessary for instructors who utilize this curriculum to identify as part of the LGBTQ community. While I found it helpful to come out and model for my students how I engage in activities and tasks on campus as a queer individual, heterosexual instructors can employ this curriculum too. What is important is the inclusion and validation of how LGBTQ individuals may experience campus. Thus, faculty who do not identify as LGBTQ

could bring in different perspectives by asking LGBTQ students, other faculty, or staff members to share their lived experiences on campus. Faculty can also do some research about what resources are available on their campus and share that with students. Additionally, this curriculum is not only for LGBTQ students. Many student communities can benefit from this critical examination of place. This curriculum allows for marginalized students in particular to critically examine their campuses and their place on those campuses. Importantly, this curriculum allows for students to better understand not only their place, but the place of their classmates, too.

With the implementation of this critical place-based curriculum, students were able to interact with their own lived reality, learn more about the lived reality of their classmates, and perhaps most importantly, discover inequities on campus and work to transform them. In moving beyond "shallow multiculturalism," (Alexander & Wallace, 2009, p. 317), our students can engage in a discourse that not only asks them to contribute to the conversation, but to transform it. Moreover, by participating in this curriculum, students discovered that place is not value-neutral. With the conversation and exploration of place should come critical questions of who is most served, who is excluded, and who should belong. This transformative curriculum not only grants students the ability to explore, it actively demands that everyone be given a place to belong.

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