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2.

PRODUCTIVE DISRUPTIONS: RESILIENT PEDAGOGIES THAT ADVOCATE FOR EQUITY

Beth Buyserie, Rachel Welton Bryson, and Rachel Quistberg

When the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered universities in March 2020, many students and faculty were thrown into shifting uncertainties regarding course delivery and pedagogy. As the pandemic persisted, faculty and students experienced new stressors caused by social isolation, unequal access to technology and resources, economic distress, and many other factors. In addition, the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others in the Black community sparked widespread social unrest that added to and compounded the emotional and material weight of the pandemic. Amid this tumult, higher-education faculty began asking questions about how to move forward with pedagogies resistant to unpredictable and unprecedented disruptions. Might it be possible to design learning that is resilient to disruption? Can learning be more responsive to shifting material circumstances? These questions and others form the core of what many call “resilient pedagogy,” which the Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center (2020) defines as “an approach to teaching that takes into account the resiliency of course design, faculty, and students during uncertain times and changing circumstances” (para. 1). Values such as flexibility, adaptability, and stability inform this and related definitions, suggesting that ideal pedagogies can remain functional and productive even during times of great disruption.

At the same time, the combined disruptions of the global pandemic and ongoing protests against police brutality, along with a renewed emphasis on enacting antiracist pedagogies in higher-education learning spaces, demand a call to examine what we mean by words like “disruption.” Can disruptions, rather than being perceived as negative or undesirable, be a means of encouraging a productive, engaged pedagogy that places emphasis on individual lived experiences as well as structures of injustice or inequity? We suggest that the renewed dialogue on racial justice urges teachers to disrupt pedagogies that maintain inequity, even as we prepare for flexible approaches to our course delivery methods. Rather than seeking traditional resilience that can remain firm and unchanged in spite of external disruption, pedagogies of productive disruption seek to create learning opportunities and spaces that engage with and respond to evolving and unpredictable disruptions in the virtual, material, and psychosocial landscapes in which teaching and learning take place.

Throughout this chapter, we advocate for resilient pedagogical approaches that simultaneously attend to flexible practices in our teaching and acknowledge the complexities of disruption in order to deliberately

equitize education. While we teach composition and use the teaching of writing as our general reference, this chapter is written for any disciplinary teacher who wishes to foreground social justice as part of a resilient pedagogy. As Genevieve García de Müeller and Iris Ruiz (2017) emphasize, composition programs (and, we argue, all disciplinary programs) should attend to issues of racism, whiteness, and normativity within classes not as an afterthought, but as an integral aspect of the curriculum. Additionally, we argue that the discipline of composition, with its focus on revision and attention to multiple perspectives, can be a valuable, important aspect of a resilient pedagogy—particularly if we use writing to question what we do not and cannot know (Waite, 2017). These strategies create space for students to understand productive disruptions as integral components of how we teach and learn.

We acknowledge that deliberately embracing productive disruptions can lead to potential discomfort, both for those who would prefer that the classroom remain politically neutral and for those whose embodied experiences require them to continually navigate systemic oppressions. While the respective levels of discomfort are drastically different depending on the person, teachers committed to social justice must continually challenge both such supposed neutrality and systemic oppression in their pedagogies. We believe that the process of engaging with productive disruption challenges us to reconsider commonplace assumptions that may seem neutral or natural in dominant discourse but may actually create or reinforce structures of inequity in higher education. The challenge of disrupting ideas that appear neutral in dominant discourse urges teachers to engage in pedagogies that allow for greater flexibility in how students and faculty access teaching and learning in unpredictable material and ideological landscapes.

Resilient Pedagogies Defined and Disrupted

While some scholars consider how disruptions might create learning opportunities (Kinchin, 2017), we propose that practitioners intentionally use the spaces created by disruption to question and to challenge maladaptive systems that demonstrate disturbing resiliency and perpetuate inequity. By using such spaces to advocate for equity and inclusion, disruptions can not only be productive in achieving course outcomes, but also produce positive social change.

The work of resilient pedagogy involves critical reflection, praxis, universal design, and student involvement. Rebecca Quintana (2020) defines resilient pedagogy as having the “ability to facilitate learning experiences that are designed to be adaptable to fluctuating conditions and disruptions” (para. 1). Andrea Kaston Tange (2020) favors the term “resilient design” and in a similar vein explains that “resilient design is meant to be flexible, to anticipate disruptions, and to value social equity and community” (para. 6). Tange’s emphasis on pedagogies that not only anticipate disruptions but also consider equity is particularly insightful in thinking how pedagogies can advocate for inclusion. The Pew Faculty Teaching and Learning Center (2020) considers three factors that go into the creation of a resilient pedagogy: course design, faculty preparation, and student engagement. When resilient pedagogies anticipate disruption, we can begin evaluating our teaching practices.

As we evaluate, the disruptions we experience can provide opportunities to question our normative teaching practices.

Resilient pedagogies respond to disruptions so that success is achieved because the disruptions are regarded as productive. A disruption can be productive when it reveals inequities that were disguised by practices went unquestioned. As Ian M. Kinchin in *Pedagogic Frailty* (2017) explains, pedagogies can go further than anticipating disruptions by reframing problems and crises as opportunities (p. 6). An example of this is the disruptions caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many instructors turned to resilient pedagogies to ensure their students still achieved course outcomes when external factors disrupted the physical classroom. As many classes were moved into online formats, the virtual classroom was not the same for all individuals. In traditional face-to-face classes, the physical space used to conduct class appeared to be “equitizing” because students had access to the same physical space, when in reality this equitizing classroom space concealed the inequities many students experience, such as access to technology and internet. As Tange (2020) explains, “Students tried to stay motivated in situations exacerbating the systemic problems that create inequities in accessibility” (para. 1). The removal, or disruption, in the classroom’s physical space brought to the forefront the need to address inequity and exclusion.

Rather than simply returning to the supposed equitizing space of the physical classroom, practitioners of resilient pedagogies can use disruptions, such as an unprecedented move to online classes, as opportunities to address inequity. Considering disruptions as opportunities, as Kinchin (2017) suggests, can prove key in redirecting the focus of resilient pedagogies to productive disruptions that can create lasting change in advocating for equity and inclusion. Kinchin concludes that “an increasingly consumerist higher education agenda” encourages individuals “to become routinized experts when it comes to teaching practice” (2017, pp. 12–13). These routine models may lead to success “within a stable environment,” but Kinchin points out that “stability is an illusion” (2017, p. 13). Resilient pedagogies can help us move beyond the illusion of stability and instead consider how we can use that instability, or disruption, to address more systemic inequities that might be disguised by education practices that have gone unquestioned and become routinized.

When disruptions are perceived as productive, we can question and challenge the systems that these disruptions upset. In “Transformative, Transgressive Social Learning,” Helia Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2015) explain that “resilient” as a word with an assumed-positive connotation is problematic. They explain that when a system is unhealthy, its ability to be resilient can be quite disturbing (2015). The authors assert that “[t]here are many ‘unhealthy’ systems that are very resilient” (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2015, p. 74). Routinized practices in both education and government often support unhealthy systems, such as structural racism, that show a disturbing amount of resilience. Disruptions in these routines provide opportunities to break cycles of harmful resilience. In order for change to occur in teaching and learning, higher-education institutions should adopt more socially transgressive forms of learning that have the potential to disrupt maladaptive

resilient systems (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2015). The use of transgressive and transformative pedagogies must be transdisciplinary and involve the coproduction of knowledge and the decolonization of thinking. We must disrupt to create change.

The creation of resilient pedagogies can be one way to advocate for more equity and inclusion in our teaching practices. Critical race theory scholars might emphasize the importance of antiracist approaches to resilient pedagogies that seek transformation rather than stagnant reification of structural oppression (Inoue, 2015). Due to structural racism's ever-present and myriad organizing structures, resilient pedagogies must also be responsive to changes connected to systemic racism. As Ratcliffe (1999) argues, such a pedagogy must foreground the antiracist practices of rhetorical listening, which she defines as a means of hearing “discursive intersections” that can “facilitate cross-cultural dialogues about any topic,” most specifically those connected to gender and race (p. 196). As Asao Inoue emphasizes, “[an] antiracist pedagogy . . . demands that we listen compassionately and carefully. . . changing . . . [practices] to help our students” (2017, para. 13). Inoue's emphasis on listening is a key concept in creating resilient pedagogies that use disruptions productively rather than as a way to maintain the status quo. As faculty and administrators develop resilient pedagogies, their practices consider how the external disruptions can provide opportunities to create inclusive and equitable spaces.

Productively Disruptive Pedagogies: Questioning What We Do Not Know

Because resilient pedagogy, if not critically examined, can unintentionally reinforce the systems we wish to disrupt (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2015), teachers must continually question how their disciplinary contexts uphold systems of oppression. Current conversations within many disciplines highlight how the intersecting systems of racism, heteronormativity, and ableism implicitly shape classroom practices. For example, critical composition scholars expose the underlying and overt whiteness and normativity entrenched in our language, writing, and research practices (Baker-Bell, 2020; Dolmage, 2012; Waite, 2017). These often-unquestioned structures of power present in all disciplinary classroom contexts promote fixed ways of knowing the world, as well as maintain systems that ultimately harm students and teachers. As environmental scientists Lotz-Sisitka et al. (2015) argue, we instead need “a paradigm shift and a transition towards doing better things differently (transformation) rather than doing what we [currently] do better (optimization)” (p. 73). Teachers who seek to be resilient must find creative ways of challenging both these power structures and our own fixed knowledge.

Questioning what we know—and do not know—is one method for engaging in productive disruptions that might promote these paradigm shifts. In *Teaching Queer: Radical Possibilities for Writing and Knowing*, Stacey Waite (2017) asks students to write responses to the statements “I do not know” and “I cannot know”

(p. 69) as a way to begin their research, emphasizing that “all knowledge is partial knowledge” (Waite, 2017, p. 69). Teachers in all disciplines must therefore ask themselves what they think they know about teaching and be prepared to question their knowledge and expertise. In arguing for antiracist pedagogies, April Baker-Bell (2020), García de Müller and Ruiz (2017), and Inoue (2015) emphasize a predominantly White teaching faculty still do not know—or perhaps refuse to know—the ways in which predominantly White disciplines, including composition, are complicit in racist teaching practices. These scholars do not simply call for temporary and localized changes, but a complete shift in the way teachers construct their pedagogy. Importantly, a productively disruptive resilient pedagogy should not return to normal when the disruption ends.

Instead, resilient pedagogies should seek disruption by questioning how commonplace classroom practices perceived as desirable may in fact work against the goals of equity and inclusion. In the following sections, we question two such commonplace classroom practices central to many disciplines: student participation and writing. In engaging in this (imperfect) disruption, we hope that all faculty, including us as authors, may question what we do not know and continue to revise our practices toward resilient pedagogies grounded in equity.

Disruptive Participation: Inclusion in Virtual Classrooms

Classroom participation is one area where faculty might consider productive disruptions. While various pedagogical practices value and elicit different forms of participation, in face-to-face classes participation is often marked, at the very least, by physical presence in the course along with related behaviors such as asking questions, taking notes, participating orally in group work, and engaging in nonverbal communication such as nodding or looking confused. Faculty are able to perceive face-to-face participation primarily through visual cues; a student who is visibly present in the classroom is achieving a baseline form of participation.

However, relying too heavily on physical presence and visual cues as indicators of participation may reinforce (and reify) expected norms that may seem innocuous but may actually be harmful as they rely on ableist assumptions about how students’ bodies can and should be able to perform. Dolmage (2012) argues that “normalcy is used to control bodies; our normate culture continuously reinscribes the centrality, naturalness, neutrality, and unquestionability of the normate position; our culture also marks out and marginalizes those bodies and minds that do not conform” (p. 110). In fact, even seemingly commonplace strategies such as attendance policies, designed to solidify physical presence and participation, may bear questioning. While having students physically and visually present in class can lead to desirable learning outcomes such as forming a class community and being able to visually “read” student understanding, many physical attendance policies also reinforce norms like those Dolmage describes.

The shift to online and virtual formats precipitated by the global pandemic offers an opportunity to productively disrupt commonplace assumptions about students' visual presence in a course as a prerequisite of learning and participation. In particular, the use of synchronous learning platforms such as Zoom allows for a more nuanced approach to fostering student presence and participation in virtual classes, particularly with regard to camera preferences and policies and the affordances of tools like Zoom to expand participation to more types of student bodies than might feel comfortable participating face to face.

The emerging conversation about Zoom policies from university teaching and learning offices, individual faculty, mental health experts, and others offers insights about the possible effects of, for example, camera-on policies in online spaces. Some faculty may prefer for their students to have their cameras on for multiple reasons, including reducing the sense of isolation, encouraging discussion, monitoring student attention, and responding to nonverbal cues, just as they might be able to do in a face-to-face classroom. In addition, faculty might presume that if they cannot literally see their students through their cameras, the students may not be fully present and engaged in the learning activities of the course. However, examining definitions and practices of presence and participation may work to productively disrupt our emphasis on visual cues as proof of participation.

While Zoom and other synchronous virtual meeting spaces are far from perfect, they do offer certain affordances that can help us value multiple means of participation in a classroom space. Where traditional face-to-face classrooms often favor students who feel comfortable and adept speaking in front of people, Zoom spaces can de-emphasize the dominance of those visual cues and open up opportunities for more students to make substantive contributions to class discussions and activities. For example, regardless of whether cameras are on, students can participate orally, by unmuting their microphones, or they can type questions, comments, and ideas in the chat space. Students can also share their own work in large or small groups, or they can work collaboratively on electronic documents easily shared through Zoom. In many ways, Zoom offers more students the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to class learning, thereby providing the potential for more inclusive participation practices.

Current discussions about cameras and camera policies in Zoom often focus on the many valid reasons why faculty might allow students to leave cameras off in virtual classrooms, including mental health strain, "Zoom fatigue," competing obligations, privacy concerns, and access issues (Moses, 2020). But in addition to these valid concerns, allowing students to choose whether to have their cameras on also allows for deliberate consideration of what participation is, why we value it, and how we can expand its application in the classroom. These practices can help us reconsider not only participation in virtual classrooms but also in our return to face-to-face instruction to create lasting social change.

Disruptive Writing Practices: Challenging a Mainstream Notion of Error

In addition to participation, disciplinary teachers can review the way they engage with writing as an opportunity to create productive disruptions. While disciplines have various contexts and purposes for writing, Waite (2017) emphasizes “writing as a transformative, self-reflexive, and exploratory act” (p. 69) rather than writing as the static transcription of knowledge. We argue that the practices promoted within our discipline of rhetoric and composition—such as revision, flexibility, self-assessment, and questioning normative power structures embedded within language and writing (Baker-Bell, 2020; Dolmage, 2012; Waite, 2017)—provide possibilities for continually reevaluating our teaching practices. For example, Patterson (2013), who teaches a Religion and Ecology class, intentionally includes writing and revision as part of a resilient pedagogy. Because the sustainability of the planet is in question, Patterson writes, “I came to view the course as a living system” (2013, p. 281) and, as a result, “had to grow, adapt, and change my pedagogies, texts, and field-based exercises” (p. 281). Patterson notes how, “As we upended ‘business as usual’ through observation and reflective and analytic writing, we realized how trapped our learning can become” (p. 282). For Patterson, writing made space for productive disruptions and facilitated resilience.

That said, writing, like any disciplinary content, is not neutral but carries ideological connotations based on power and privilege. As composition teachers and writing program administrators, we take this opportunity to make our own productive disruption to the commonplace, and often deficit-based, assumption that strong student writing should be error-free. Critical language scholars trace the connections between error, language, and racism (Baker-Bell, 2020; Canagarajah, 2006; Inoue, 2015), which force us to question how our everyday language practices and expectations maintain dominant ways of knowing. Additionally, in their work on race and silence within writing programs, García de Müller and Ruiz (2017) critique terms such as “basic writer” or “marginalized writer” that often equate raced identities with deficit or marginalized positionalities, assumptions that have been harmful to students of color “because these tropes reduce them to metaphors that connote deficits rather than assets” (p. 21).

In her article entitled “*We Been Knowin: Toward an Antiracist Language & Literacy Education*,” Baker-Bell (2020) argues instead for an antiracist pedagogy that “critically interrogates White linguistic hegemony and Anti-Black Linguistic Racism” (p. 9). Baker-Bell intentionally uses the phrase “been knowin” to emphasize the power of Black Language and lived experiences. As Baker-Bell clarifies, the word “been” in this context is a feature of Black language that “is used to mark the remote past” (p. 3) and to emphasize the Black community’s long-term knowledge surrounding oppression, survival, and resilience. In privileging the phrase “been knowin,” Baker-Bell not only describes resilient practices, but also argues that transformative change cannot happen unless pedagogies are attentive to the collective knowledges and lived experiences of those

most marginalized and oppressed by society—a stance we argue must be incorporated into any resilient pedagogy.

While this use of “been” would traditionally be considered an error if interpreted solely through White standardized academic discourse, Baker-Bell (2020) intentionally makes this productive disruption to interrogate racist language practices—a vital practice, we argue, in resilient pedagogies that seek to do more than maintain oppressive systems. Those who have been taught to value primarily White mainstream English may initially reject or (mis)interpret this challenge to “error-free” writing, not understanding that scholars who argue for more flexibility in language are actually asking students to draw more intentionally on their own lived experiences with language—and to be more rhetorically aware (and resilient) in their writing, not less (Canagarajah, 2006). In other words, as critical language scholars (Baker-Bell, 2020; Canagarajah, 2006; Inoue, 2015) remind all teachers of writing, linguistic negotiation often creates more powerful discourse than language conformity, and an emphasis on speakers’ linguistic assets can disrupt colonial and racist tropes of language deficiency. To be clear, we are not suggesting that writers (whether they be students or teachers) submit final drafts that have not been revised, nor are we suggesting that all moments of error are rhetorical. However, we do suggest that teachers focus less on error and more on rhetorical intent as a way of disrupting standard expectations. We suggest that disciplinary teachers, rather than responding to students with the comment “please correct,” instead respond with “please analyze” to emphasize students’ linguistic agency. By interrogating the connection between race, racism, and error-free expectations, critical language scholars create a productive disruption in the pedagogical practices of all who assign and teach writing.

Disrupting Beyond Our Present Moment: A Framework for Resilient Pedagogies

Soon after the pandemic began affecting our daily lives, people began asking when we would return to normal. However, the political unrest sparked at the time by the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others in the Black community highlighted and problematized any uncritical desires for normalcy. As we, the authors of this article, strove to respond to both the immediate shift to virtual course delivery formats and the renewed calls for sustained racial justice and antiracist approaches in our teaching and program practices, we realized that we needed a framework to guide us in this work—one that could help push against our natural tendency to want to return to normal. Because resilient pedagogies should do more than respond to the current moment, we also sought a way to encourage productive disruptions as a long-term, recursive process. Therefore, we began developing a framework that provides opportunities for both short- and long-term evaluation of pedagogical practices. In developing this framework, we asked ourselves the following questions: How can we use pedagogical revisions as opportunities to disrupt inequity? How can our first-year composition program further engage in the renewed conversations on racial justice? And how can we prepare for flexible approaches to our course delivery methods? The questions raised within the framework encourage

us to prepare for a variety of disruptions, some productive to challenging dominant perspectives and others that might potentially distract us from this important work. In the face of challenging circumstances, sometimes all we can do in the moment is seek what was once normal. However, a resilient pedagogy is, or should strive to be, purposefully responsive rather than a default to the normative. Our goal is to lay frameworks of responsiveness that productively disrupt commonplace practices that may reinforce inequity, regardless of the current moment.

In this section, we provide a framework for how teachers committed to pedagogies of equity and inclusion might disrupt their curriculum in productive ways. Rather than create a traditional resilient pedagogy that (relatively) smoothly anticipates all disruptions, we instead focus on the kinds of disruptions that challenge maladaptive systems that perpetuate inequity. We frame our examples in this section around the ongoing evaluation of the everyday programmatic, curricular, and individual classroom practices within our composition program. We recognize that these types of evaluations are part of an ongoing revision process, and we invite all disciplinary faculty to take this moment to intentionally focus on possibilities for disrupting their everyday practices. We connect our composition-based examples to other disciplines to challenge the disciplinary siloing that often occurs in academia—a practice that reinforces dominant ways of thinking since the structure ensures teachers have fewer opportunities to question their practices and engage with multiple perspectives. In contrast, we suggest that intentional dialogue between disciplines can encourage and facilitate productive disruptions across the university. Additionally, we hope that by describing key features of our own field we can provide all faculty with a better understanding of the work we do in first-year composition.

The framework we describe below, rather than being linear, should be understood as cyclical and recursive. It consists of five actions that teachers likely already practice: question, seek, pause, reflect, and revise. Rather than claim a brand-new framework for resilient pedagogies, we instead highlight familiar practices so that teachers can begin making immediate changes, even small ones, to their pedagogies. While the commonplace definitions of these actions are easily understood, we complicate their initial simplicity by analyzing them through the lens of power and equity. For ease of reading, we follow the same pattern for each of the five actions: First, we include a theoretical paragraph to contextualize the concept. Next, we apply the theory to teaching and describe our attempts to disrupt our own teaching of first-year composition, which we describe broadly enough so that teachers in various disciplines might connect our efforts to their own teaching. Finally, we end each section with three to four questions teachers can ask as we all continue to engage in resilient pedagogies grounded in equity.

Question

Questioning what we do not know is key to making space for productive disruptions and should be engaged in frequently and recursively. This questioning should help both faculty and students seek multiple perspectives that can aid in the dismantling of harmful resilient systems. A resilient pedagogy is about

questioning in order to navigate the unexpected. Such questioning involves an element of trust—trust in our students, trust in ourselves, and trust that the systems we are in should continually be questioned. As Patterson (2013) and Inoue (2017) emphasize, a resilient pedagogy must involve students, which simultaneously requires that we give up some of our control in the classroom. Courses that involve discussion and that invite students to contribute their voices to ongoing conversations offer one way for both teachers and students to question the standard practices in their disciplines. Through promoting questioning in our composition courses, we can productively disrupt by asking students to question what they commonly believe to be true about writing, research, and other forms of communication. Waite (2017) describes a lesson in which they take their students through the process of questioning the standard names we have given to describe writing: thesis statement, conclusion, and body paragraphs. Waite emphasizes that this process of creating productive disruptions, of being disruptively resilient, can be uncomfortable. By embracing this discomfort and allowing students to think more critically about language, they are better able to analyze the relationship between language, equity, and power.

While we promote questioning as a framework for creating productive disruptions in a resilient pedagogy, we also recognize the ways in which questioning is often used to delegitimize the lived experiences of people who are marginalized by society (Baker-Bell, 2020). When we encourage faculty to question what they know to be true, questions that invoke harm or promote a fixed perspective do not create productive disruptions, as is often the case when significant scientific concepts like climate change or historical events like the Holocaust are questioned in ways that maintain systems of power. Teachers who intentionally seek productive disruptions should be aware of the ways in which even their most useful approaches can be appropriated.

We suggest that practitioners of resilient pedagogies begin to engage with questions in the following areas:

- **Question the Field of Study:** What is true in your field? In what ways might it not be true?
- **Question the Practices:** What are some of the most unquestioned practices of our disciplines? Why are these practices promoted? What practices go unnoticed? How do these practices connect with issues of equity and inclusion?
- **Question the Privilege:** Who do our disciplines and classes privilege? How can we more intentionally privilege student knowledge and lived experience?

Seek

When designing resilient pedagogies, teachers need to intentionally seek places of productive disruption, spaces that include discomfort and dissent, and that challenge fixed ways of knowing. As Carr & Micciche (2019) argue, “To imagine or insist on action that does not expect dissent is to overwrite the possibility of

change from the start” (p. 212). Being open to such change requires that we seek multiple perspectives that challenge dominant narratives—including the narratives we ourselves might tell. Baker-Bell (2020) provides one example of the importance of this practice, an example we highlight for disciplines that study the media, communication, or culture. After the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2012¹, images in White mainstream social media demeaned 17-year-old Martin and cast his killer in a positive light. In seeking alternate perspectives and privileging a variety of sources, Baker-Bell “witness[ed] the ways that Black people were using antiracist critical media and Black digital activism (Mcilwain, 2020) to disrupt the media’s role in anti-Black racism, racial violence, and the maintenance of White supremacy” (2020, p. 4). Intentionally seeking multiple perspectives, privileging lived experiences, and relying on a wide range of sources in our teaching can facilitate these disruptions.

In applying this framework and responding to Baker-Bell (2020), we sought additional possibilities for disrupting the way we teach research. Because we were also simultaneously revising our composition program outcomes, we underscored in our outcomes the importance of emphasizing critical information literacy practices, which require students to do more than simply find and use sources to support an argument. Our curriculum now specifically asks students and teachers to consider issues of power and equity in the research process; deliberately seek alternative perspectives that challenge dominant narratives; and consider additional forms of credibility, including lived experience and personal authority, in a wide range of sources and texts. In disrupting the teaching of research, teachers from all disciplines can ask students to intentionally seek, rhetorically listen to, and incorporate these multiple perspectives—not as an add-on, but as a foundational part of the assignment and research process.

As teachers seek to disrupt dominant ways of thinking and knowing, they might consider the following questions to guide their resilient pedagogy and curriculum design:

- **Seek Missing Perspectives:** What perspectives in my curriculum, readings, and background knowledge am I missing? How can my students and I more intentionally seek out and apply these perspectives? Is my discipline overlooking cross-disciplinary conversations?
- **Seek Multiple Perspectives:** How can I frame my class so that students are guided, challenged, and supported as they seek multiple perspectives? How can I create curricular content that seeks marginalized perspectives?
- **Seek to Disrupt Traditional Notions of Credibility:** What practices challenge traditional notions of credibility? How can my pedagogy seek and recognize the credibility of sources and groups that are often

1. Trayvon Martin was an unarmed teenager who was shot and killed by George Zimmerman in Florida in 2012. Zimmerman was acquitted in 2013 (Bates, 2018).

ignored, dismissed, or silenced?

Pause

As Carr and Micciche (2019) argue, “Resilience, through a feminist lens, signifies sustained, collective readjustment aimed at liberatory change with no end point, no resting posture. For this reason, duration and pacing are important to acts of resilience” (p. 211). Here we introduce rhetoric’s concept of *kairos*, or timeliness, into this conversation. A resilient pedagogy framed within normative concepts of time might always expect teachers to respond productively in the moment; such a version of a resilient pedagogy would be expected to be engineered to predict potential disruptions and defuse them, rather than open them up as places of growth. But a resilient pedagogy that highlights frameworks of responsiveness is not only focused on the present moment. Rather, it also responds to past—and future—moments of tension in order to effect productive change.

As we approached the possibilities inherent in revising our first-year composition curriculum, we began by deliberately pausing to consider how we could both build upon existing practices and foreground equity. As we began to revise, we also sought to create space for students to pause; to rhetorically listen to perspectives, voices, and arguments that may be different from their own. We provided readings that ask students to consider the intersections between race, language, power, and identity. Rather than simply ask students to respond to these readings, we first asked students to summarize them as part of a major assignment. Summary, a process practiced by many compositionists, can be conceptualized as a means to encourage rhetorical listening. Rather than moving immediately to respond, argue, deflect, or defend, we intentionally ask students to carefully, ethically, and accurately reflect the author’s perspectives using words and ideas the author would likely recognize as their own. Summary asks instead that students pause; to pay attention to the author’s argument and what the author is actually saying—a crucial practice to engage in, particularly when reading authors and texts whose voices and perspectives challenge dominant narratives and which are therefore often dismissed or silenced by society. Summary is not the end goal, of course, as students still need to analyze a text and incorporate their summary and analysis into their argument—but without careful attention to summary and rhetorical listening, teachers and students risk ignoring or silencing critical perspectives. Teachers from all disciplines can emphasize the importance of summary as a rhetorical strategy when reading challenging texts in order to put into practice meaningful pauses between reading and responding.

Questions teachers might ask when pausing are:

- **Pause to Encourage Openness:** Where in my classes can I create time to pause? What strategies will encourage rhetorical listening and openness to multiple perspectives?
- **Pause to Disrupt Dominant Perspectives:** In what ways can I use pauses to disrupt normative

perspectives? How might my own deliberate pauses create space to reconsider my pedagogies and practices?

- **Pause to Examine the Curriculum:** How can my curriculum make space to listen closely to marginalized arguments and perspectives? What resources might/should be provided by my institution to support teachers as we pause?

Reflect

A resilient pedagogy requires frequent and critical reflection on our teaching practices. While not all disciplines share the same definition of reflection, rhetoric and composition utilizes reflection to promote metacognition on a process, to question what we believe we know, and to provide possible spaces for change and revision. However, here we draw from interdisciplinary conversations on reflection to disrupt our own understanding of the concept. In connecting science studies, physics, philosophy, queer theory, and feminist studies, Karen Barad (2007) complicates many disciplinary definitions of reflection. According to Barad, uncritical reflection acts as a mirror: “To mirror something is to provide an accurate image or representation that faithfully copies that which is being mirrored” (p. 86). When framed this way, reflection becomes “a pervasive trope for knowing” (Barad, p. 72), which can suggest fixed meanings and knowledges, rather than the productive change we seek. Barad instead argues for practices based on “differences that matter” (p. 89), that do not seek neat and tidy representations of reality, but that are grounded in “accountability and responsibility” (p. 90) for one another. We highlight this conversation as a productive disruption to our own understanding of what reflection, meta-cognition, or self-assessment might do in our teaching, so that reflection can more intentionally become “a critical practice for making a difference in the world” (Barad, p. 90).

In composition, teachers routinely build in opportunities for students to reflect on their composing and revision practices. These reflections come in multiple forms: in-class writing prompts in which students self-assess their own understanding of a text, weekly reflections in which students analyze their engagement with course content, and reflections that accompany major writing assignments in which students discuss the metacognitive process of composing. When framed within the context of seeking multiple perspectives and rhetorically engaging with texts that argue for antiracist practices (e.g., Kendi, 2019), reflection asks students to connect everyday lived experience with the structures that influence and inform their perspectives. Collectively, reflection also serves as a form of dialogue between student and instructor, ensuring that the student and their lived experience remains a central focus of the class. As we reflected on the need for engaged dialogue on antiracist and critical pedagogies, our composition program began monthly professional inquiry sessions so that teachers could come together as a community to pause and reflect on our teaching, supporting and challenging each other in our continued efforts to disrupt dominant teaching practices. Our

goal in these classroom and program reflections is for students and teachers to do more than simply mirror what they already know, but to utilize reflection as an ongoing means of engaging in critical work.

Questions teachers might ask to encourage critical and ongoing reflection include:

- **Reflect to Challenge Current Practices:** In what ways does my curriculum and pedagogy mirror what I already know, or believe I know, about a particular concept? In what ways do I hope my pedagogy might become a space for critical practice?
- **Reflect on Meaningful Differences:** How can my pedagogy be accountable to differences that matter? How might our pedagogies reject the need for neat and tidy representations and seek meaningful and disruptive differences?
- **Reflect on Structural Influences:** How do racism and normativity shape my disciplinary context? How do issues of power and privilege influence my everyday teaching practices?

Revise

Revision in writing is often conflated with editing or proofreading. Writers may consider revision as the act of tidying up or fixing errors rather than considering nearly every step of the writing process as part of an ongoing revision of ideas. In fact, some writers may consider revising as a concrete step or moment in time that marks the period just prior to completion: once writing is revised, writing is finished. But revision is most usefully practiced as a process of reconsidering meaning, complicating thinking, and questioning what we originally knew. Cathleen Breidenbach (2006) describes how writing can become more than mere editing and, in fact, become illuminating and rewarding. She writes that as we revise, “the words we write reveal truths we didn’t know we knew; language can create knowledge; revision can facilitate discovery. This business of revising can be revelatory, inspiring, and deeply satisfying” (p. 200). Revision can help us recognize new insights as well as the potentially fraught realization that we might be wrong. As a result, revision is an investment in understanding and in the creative process—one that may require great effort in a search for forms, ideas, and structures that productively disrupt previous knowledge and understanding.

Revising our composition curriculum to foreground equity and respond to the pandemic was, at its core, an exercise in the recursive, complex process of revision, one that faculty in many disciplines engage in regularly as they reconsider course delivery and instruction. While our revised curriculum included practices common to composition, the process of revision allowed us to make explicit and deliberate moves to respond to the exigencies of the current moment, in addition to embracing established practices within composition and rhetoric that are designed to enact equity in the classroom (Baker-Bell, 2020; Inoue, 2015; Waite, 2017). In addition to reconsidering how the work we assigned fit into the learning outcomes of the course, we also

needed to revise how and whether our curriculum promoted the principles of equity and inclusion we value as a program. Reading lists became more flexible and diverse. Assignments included more opportunities for collaboration and drafting. And our final assignment for the class became an opportunity for students to engage in a more complex revision process that asked them to “remix” a previous essay to connect with new audiences and genres. As a result, revision continues to be part of the implicit and explicit work of the course, encouraging students to reconsider their own work as part of an ongoing conversation that understands knowledge as socially constructed and inherently collaborative.

Questions teachers might ask as they revise include:

- **Revise to Consider Inclusion:** How do current disciplinary practices allow for equity and inclusion? How can I embrace flexible design principles to increase equity in my course delivery?
- **Revise to (Re)Design Learning:** How do I model the effort and reward of revision in the course materials and assignments I teach? In what ways do I purposefully engage in ongoing revision to reconsider how I might disrupt commonplace practices that can equitize learning for my students?
- **Revise to Promote Revision:** How might my current teaching practices benefit from including opportunities for students to meaningfully revise their work?

Recursive Resilience: An Ongoing Conclusion

A resilient pedagogy that makes space for productive disruptions must be recursive and grounded in equity. Because the systems that create and reinforce structure oppressions are continually shifting, so too must any framework be flexible enough to respond to these ongoing shifts. As such, the framework we describe above—question, seek, pause, reflect, and revise—is not intended to be static, but instead designed to be fluid and responsive to more than the current moment. Carr and Micchiche (2019) “theorize resilience as processual, recursive, and creating incremental changes that move toward culture change, one hesitation at a time” (p. 210). As a result, resilience is not something to be achieved but a process to continually undertake. Therefore, we must also allow for failure. As Carr and Micchiche note in their own conclusion, “resilience strategies also make space to acknowledge that we are going to get it wrong a lot of the time” (p. 221).

Yet we also acknowledge that engaging in resilient pedagogies can be exhausting, particularly for those whose identities and positionalities require that they stay continuously engaged in this work. Kalish et al. (2019) argue that resiliency is often forced onto teachers and students with the fewest resources, and so, while we encourage resilient pedagogies grounded in equity, we also seek to complicate the expectations of resiliency. Because resilient pedagogies can also be sources of emotional labor, teachers must have resources and springs of renewal. Teachers who seek productive disruptions should also seek the support system of

critical friends, allies, or accomplices who can collaborate with them in this work—and then pause together to reflect on their collaborative work. As Carr & Micciche (2019) emphasize, “Resilience is a response to systemic, structural problems rather than individual ones. It is a group activity, a protracted, evolving response to evolving situations or problems” (p. 211). We hope our emphasis on interdisciplinary dialogue underscores the importance of challenging systems of inequity together, drawing on the strengths of each teacher and discipline as we continue this work. As Patterson (2013) reminds us, classrooms can be framed in terms of an ecosystem wherein all parts of class—teachers, students, cultural influences, and present and future moments—are connected. This model of thriving ecosystems may help us define what resilient pedagogies are and can be—not practices immune from change, damage, or failure, but instead adaptive and collaborative in process, and grounded in inclusion and equity.

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