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INTEGRATING EMPATHY PEDAGOGY WITH FEMINIST THOUGHT AND SOCIAL

JUSTICE PRAXIS

by

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ABSTRACT

INTEGRATING EMPATHY PEDAGOGY WITH FEMINIST THOUGHT AND SOCIAL
JUSTICE PRAXIS

Ashlyn Elizabeth Brown
Old Dominion University, 2021
Director: Dr. Elizabeth Groeneveld

This thesis outlines the need for empathy pedagogy in higher education. It will examine

how empathy pedagogy can be integrated with feminist thought and social justice praxis. I argue

that when we integrate empathy pedagogy with feminist thought and social justice, we are

building the capacity for students to understand others' lives in oppression. Furthermore, an

integrated modality of teaching empathy will allow students to foster the traits of empathy within

themselves; students are then better able to act as agents of social change by utilizing the traits of

empathy to actively listen, self-reflect, and mindfully engage with other lived experiences of

oppression. As part of my thesis, I created three lesson plans that provide models for how to

integrate empathy into higher education spaces. The lesson plans I created house ideas of what

empathy pedagogy looks like in practice, as a modality for students to practice their empathetic

skills

This thesis is dedicated to the voices of those that are struggling to be heard and understood.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

EMPATHY PEDAGOGY IN PRACTICE, WITH FEMINIST THOUGHT AND SOCIAL

JUSTICE

Empathy pedagogy is not a new concept in higher education (Calloway-Thomas 2018; Damianidou & Phtiaka 2016; Daniel & Stephanie Xerri 2015; Eriksson & Englander 2017; Hall 2019; Marek 2020; v. Below 2016; Warren 2014, 2018; Willard & Buddie 2019; Zembylas 2012). Previous research addresses the use of self-reflection to transcend cultural boundaries, how active listening facilitates mindfulness and how emotion regulation can be useful for debates among those with differing opinions (Calloway-Thomas 2018; Damianidou & Phtiaka 2016; Gerdes 2017; Leake 2011; Warren 2018). Contemporarily, empathy pedagogy is making new headway in the fields of communication, gender and sexuality, and humanities, along with many more (Daniel & Stephanie Xerri 2015; Eriksson & Englander 2017; Hall 2019; Marek 2020; v. Below 2016; Warren 2014, 2018; Willard & Buddie 2019; Zembylas 2012). The need to transcend differences to create small-scale changes for communal balance has been a powerful theme in the past five years due to home-grown white nationalism and the fear it invokes (Jamal, Kircher & Donaldson 2021). When we actively listen to one another, we are allowing opportunities to practice mindfulness. This practice allows people to interact with those with whom they may be in oppositional rapport. This project is framed by a utopian impulse that sees the integration of empathy pedagogy as helping to build the interpersonal skills that are needed to make radical change in our society.

I define empathy pedagogy as a facilitation framework that can better build active listening, self-reflection, and emotion regulation in students who practice the lessons that correspond with these three basic tools of empathy. The goal is to build up our social empathy by

increasing individual interpersonal empathy. I believe that can start in the classroom. The facilitation framework I develop in my original lesson plans, of integrating empathy into higher education, will adopt feminist pedagogical methods to bolster the communal sharing and critical thinking that it invokes for empathy pedagogy.

I want to share my journey of discovering the ways empathy pedagogy can uplift a mind and change individual perceptions. As a woman of color, Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies contributed to my unlearning of societal norms that I had once perceived as unchangeable in my life. Growing up in Black elitism only persuaded me to cultivate an identity steeped in respectability politics (Higginbotham1993). I needed to learn that my most salient identities—being Black and a woman—are spliced. In my duality between race and gender there is peace—right there at the intersection. I never felt confidence in myself until I was in a classroom setting that allowed me to explore the domains of my mind and body. In those moments, I discovered that my mind and body have the capacity to change my perceptions. My perceptions influence my ability to hope, because my self-awareness prepares me with the strength for tough conversations. As resilient vessels, those of us who share the burden of oppression hold the power in our communities to spearhead these tough conversations that help to increase awareness. However, they can deplete the energy within us—the sum of we who are constantly raising our passion of interest to others. In my reverent class discussions, I pondered the relational effect of a classroom safe space to facilitate vulnerable conversation through active listening exercises. How are my humanitarian and feminist instructors facilitating classroom discussion based on a pedagogy they are not explicitly, or perhaps consciously, utilizing, and why are other disciplines not using similar approaches? To put simply, the integration of empathy pedagogy into humanitarian and gender areas of study is easily manageable with the

previous pedagogy approaches they utilize. My question aims to understand why humanitarian and feminist instructors are not calling the facilitation strategy an integrated empathy and feminist pedagogical approach, but more importantly, I ask: how can other areas of study utilize empathy pedagogy for their educational needs?

In my yearning for understanding how narcissism infiltrates our society, I came to learn that the powerful construct of empathy manifests an interpersonal connection. Instead of concentrating on the development of narcissism in our society, I pivoted towards studying the building of empathy inside higher education spaces. I wanted to transcend outside of the regular classroom teaching style, to institute a path for the development of empathy in individuals to persevere. Simply, the Institute of Humanities and the Department of Women's Studies is enmeshed with feminist pedagogy facilitation styles that favor empathy pedagogy frameworks. I needed to unpack the power to bridge the intersectional domains of difference with awareness, facilitated by empathy's skilled hand. The best place to start is to observe the classrooms the technique was flourishing in; the place critical reflection lives and personal testimony thrives. By engaging students in the discourse of feminist theory, students are able to understand their emotional feelings in relation to systemic societal oppression and the misgivings associated with their lack of power. bell hooks (1991) states that, "…personal experience is such fertile ground for the production of liberatory feminist theory because usually it forms the base of our theory making" (p. 8). Similarly, empathy pedagogy expands one's personal experiences to self-actualize their awareness of others to better understand other experiences outside of their own. Unbeknownst to our faculty and staff, we were always doing this form of communicating and discussing our personal plights between individuals in the classroom. I believe that empathy pedagogy bridges, and makes explicit, the tools of theory and practice, with understanding

others' personal experiences to evolve communal theory in narratives that pave the way for action to ensue. In addition, the empathy pedagogy I will explore looks into the power of storytelling as a tool for social change. Storytelling allows one to understand themselves through narrative. When integrating empathy into higher education spaces, self-reflection and personal experiences are shared through facilitations that allow for active listening on other experiences outside oneself. Overall, when students hear another's emotion in experience, outside themselves, they become connected in feeling. The ability to understand another outside oneself does not require analyzing sameness in experience; instead, the practice of empathy values understanding one's emotion to better understand others feeling in experience.

WHAT IS EMPATHY?

Some say that empathy is the ability to walk in another person's shoes; essentially, it is gaining another perspective by understanding another person's experience that differs from our own individual experiences. Empathy exposes people to different views and ideas in ways that allow for active listening. In *Assessing Empathy* (2017) Elizabeth Segal, Karen Gerdes, Cynthia Lietz, M. Alex Wagaman, and Jennifer Geiger assert that there are different forms of empathy that facilitate helping behaviors and further understanding in others; specifically, they found that "…being imitated makes people feel more similar to others and hence more connected. That increased sense of connectivity promotes prosocial behaviors towards others" (Segal, 2017, p. 9). In addition, Johanna M. Selles shares her research insights that empathy can be used as a mode for understanding another: "Empathy, defined as, 'vicarious introspection' mean(s) that only through introspection into one's own experience could one learn what it might be like for another person in a similar experience" (2011, p. 13). In other words, when empathy is utilized as a conduit for understanding material, students are gaining the tools to "vicariously inspect" their

experiences to empathize with another in a similarly felt life experience. With these definitions in mind, empathy, when used in higher education spaces, has the power to transcend social barriers.

      I define empathy as an aspirational humane pedagogical tool that can improve our ability to understand others outside of our perspective and cultural experiences. It is important for students to build the understanding that all people are connected through a web of experiences. In other words, we may not have the same experiences, but we can connect the same emotion in experience. Empathy pedagogy in practice situates students' understanding of others outside themselves as human and not as "Other." In the book, *How to be an Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi uses the term "racist categorizing" to describe how individuals generalize people's actions based on their race; he specifies that, "An antiracist treats and remembers individuals as individuals" (2019, p. 44). When integrating empathy pedagogy into higher education spaces, the ideology Kendi asserts is adopted when the pedagogy is in practice. Students begin to see others outside of themselves. They begin to realize societally Othered individuals deserve the respect they would want for themselves.

      Students have the capacity to build their skills of empathy. Higher education spaces can give them the ability to practice these skills when listening to the stories of others in class. When students understand individuals by investigating their emotional feelings from their own life experience to assess what life is like for others outside of those experiences, they are building social empathy inside the classroom. I believe social empathy has the ability to transcend outside of these higher education spaces into societal interactions. For example, students will utilize their skills of empathy to communicate and understand others outside of themselves in their daily lives. Essentially, over time, integrating empathy into class material is a small-scale change

initiative that can contribute to the building of a socially just world. Specifically, "social empathy is the ability to understand people by perceiving or experiencing their life situations and as a result gain insight into structural inequalities and disparities" (Segal, 2017, p. 25). By centering the focus on social empathy, educators can mediate their classroom tools around empathic concepts to build the components of empathy within students. When students start to perceive and actively listen to other life experiences outside of themselves, they can start to understand the system of inequality through the eyes of others.

Interestingly, when integrating empathy into classroom material, the in-class work involves emotional responses from one's own life experience. In order for empathy to be successfully integrated into higher education spaces, educators need to realign their position as teachers to a listening and sharing ear for students. Selles asserts that, "many professional schools would agree that one of the goals of professional and post-professional education is the formation of an empathic practitioner"; in other words, we want to build higher education spaces that encompass interpersonal relationships (2011, p.18). When students gain a sense of understanding others outside of themselves, from educators, they are more willingly to trust the process of pedagogical empathy. More importantly, when building empathy in higher academic spaces, one needs to focus on building interpersonal empathy; or as Segal states, "empathy between individuals" (2017, p. 24). When educators foster interpersonal relationships with students, a bond is built between teacher and student that creates communal trust in classroom spaces. I want to analyze the possibility that cumulative interpersonal empathy bolsters social empathy, creating a relationship that can undo the capitalist spread of individualism in our contemporary society. In exploring the possibility that cumulative interpersonal empathy bolsters social empathy, teacher-student relationships can be analyzed as creating a relationship that can

undo the spread of capitalist individualism in our contemporary society. To further this project, teachers need the skills of empathy to understand their students' individual needs and experiences to bond understanding with mutuality. If done successfully, students can transcend past neoliberal influences for full awareness of themselves and perceived others. The generalizable view of empathy is only addressed for the possible social transcendence of empathy that is developed in the classroom with empathy pedagogy.

When discussing the generalizable view of empathy, teacher-student relationships can be analyzed to interpret the concept of interpersonal empathy to examine empathy between individuals in a collegiate safe space. Furthermore, defining interpersonal empathy to, "mean empathic abilities of the individual in relation to other individuals" is the modality teachers foster with empathy pedagogy (Segal, 2017, p. 15). To put simply, students individually build the skill of interpersonal empathy while in higher education classroom settings. The action of trying to understand another through active listening (activating self-other awareness), mindful rapport (activating emotional regulation), and self-reflection (activating perspective taking) are grounded when students engage in the material with Othered experiences in mind (Segal, 2017, p. 15). In addition, facilitation strategies utilize the concept of social empathy when teacher-students discuss systemic inequalities that need social empathy as an intervention.

These spaces house communal discussions that organize ideals around the concept of social empathy. The building of interconnectedness between teachers and students creates an empathic community in higher education spaces. Selles connects research that asserts "the first relationality of humans where humans and all creatures deserve respect"; I believe this concept of respect is generated when empathy is integrated into higher education (2011, p. 140). When integrating empathy into class material, educators need to build communal empathy when

making interpersonal connections with students. Historical relevance connects the theory of communal empathy to collectivist cultures; "Tribes relied on their members for protection, collection of food, and rearing young. Without that mutual support, survival is much more difficult, if not impossible" (Segal, 2017, p. 79). Communal empathy is generated in higher education spaces to provide that support that encourages others to share their emotional experiences. Without communal empathy, interpersonal connections would not be made between others to perceive life experience outside one's own.

One knows the power of empathy to understand a student's situation that comprises their ability to complete work; however, this dynamic only situates a teacher in the power dynamic of educator overlooking student. A new revival of utilizing empathy in higher education classrooms will examine the teacher-student relationship of disclosure that builds upon lived experiences that bolsters understanding of Othered experiences. In other words, students are able to understand Othered experiences when their teachers share their lived experiences in connection to the material. As educators, we want to build communal empathy to foster interpersonal empathy between others in the hopes of students practicing the skills of empathy that facilitate social empathy. In other words, students understand each others' lives in these classroom spaces when these modes of empathy are utilized to understand class material.

WHY WE NEED EMPATHY PEDAGOGY: STUDENT INDIVIDUALISM AND DEMYSTIFICATION

When describing the generalizable term of empathy, one can analyze how everyone has the capacity to develop the skills of empathy with allotted care in a "safe space" classroom setting. Students are free to express their emotions in the classroom; this expressed emotionality can be built upon to sustain a space where empathy lives in higher education classroom spaces.

Without care, these expressions of emotionality are diminished to graded academic criteria. The latter limits a student's ability to express themselves without academic constraints. Specifically, students are only caring about Othered lived experiences because they are graded.

Contemporarily, students are increasingly falling into self-individualized patterns systematically created by neoliberal strain to succeed at all costs. Higher education teachers and students are often battling for comprehension of the material for different goals. This dynamic stymies the ability to understand others outside oneself. Neoliberal ideology proves successful for individual gains, but at the cost of fracturing solidarity between the concerns of racial minorities and privileged normative whiteness. Students have the capacity to understand others outside themselves; they just need to be willing to find the mutuality between themselves and Othered realities. In our self-absorbed society, the time for empathy pedagogy is now. Essentially, students need to understand themselves and the systemic inequities that create Othered realities. By analyzing the powerful connection between "safe space" classroom settings and empathic communities, teacher-student relationships will overcome the stymied relationship created by neoliberal influence. This chapter will overview the importance of empathy pedagogy, in our contemporary, when dissecting why we need empathy pedagogy in a time that is rotten with individualism.

It is disheartening to see our contemporary world consumed with expedited actions that are focused on individual successes. For example, when participating in social justice advocacy, new supporters will utilize the lived experiences of others to build their own credibility in the movement while commodifying others' experiences. Multicultural neoliberalism is the phenomenon that contributes to new supporters feeling like they are helping those who are affected by societal racism; however, these pro-social actions that are aimed to help only hinder

movement organizing progress. In an article entitled, *There Is No Such Thing as a Post-Racial Prison: Neoliberal Multiculturalism and the White Savior Complex on Orange Is the New Black,* Christina Belcher analyzes how multicultural neoliberalism is influenced by television programming aims for diversity for inclusion. She states, "…freedom of commerce and social freedom are collapsed in the neoliberal idiom of multiculturalism, as capitalism and democracy appear inseparable" (Belcher, 2016, p.493). Essentially, as we move through society with the veil of neoliberalism guiding our decisions towards success, there is no freedom without personal economic gain. One can see how this is problematic for movement organizing. As we move even further into this age of neoliberalism, our technological age increases our capacity to be more individually absorbed.

In our day-to-day lives, we are absorbed with having what we want as fast as we can get it. Our technological age is primarily to blame for our fast-paced nature and polarized opinions; "The post-2004 Internet—the user-focused sites some call Web 2.0—is the new Wild West…Web 2.0 and cultural narcissism work as a feedback loop, with narcissistic people seeking out ways to promote themselves on the web and those same websites encouraging narcissism even among the more humble" (Twenge and Campbell, 2009, p.107). Contemporarily, cultural narcissism can be addressed as a product of the influence of neoliberalism on our society. In our age of reclamation and "call out culture," it is important to reflect on how our overuse of technology has societal implications and, more importantly, how those implications are affecting our educational system: "Whatever differences there are in the moral psychology of today's college students, as compared to their elders, there is little doubt that technology is driving some of the worry about violating social norms, getting called out, and becoming objects of stigma" (Friedersdorf, 2017, para. 6). To put simply, our technological age

encourages students to call out others when they may not have all the facts. When calling others out, the urge to help overpowers one's logical thinking and empathetic feeling for another's situation. I believe that empathy pedagogy has the power to allow others to understand lives outside of their own. The main question that motivates this work, then, is: how is our individualistic thinking hindering our ability to understand others outside ourselves?

When we think of the future, we often think of our technological advances aiding us in our quest for knowledge, but Lilie Chouliaraki (2010) offers a critical discourse on self-mediation in her introduction on new media and citizenship stating that, "self-mediation is a conception of the function of its publicness as 'performance' and a conception of the textuality of such publicness as discursive but not necessarily narrative" (227). Essentially, we are giving way to capitalist desires when we perform ourselves on our social media sites, since, by posting and generating a "cancel culture," we are further splitting our public sphere apart into political factions online that can be spread the cycle of calamity without discussions of differences of opinion. Furthermore, our curated social interactions on these platforms—as she defines—are a performance shown to other people to receive adoration for our efforts. We tend to curate our performances of actualized living that are not inherently narrative (or real) to our lived reality. Social platforms like Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram generate a space that makes university students easily susceptible to interpreting individual opinion as fact; more importantly, I will assert why educators need empathy pedagogy to cultivate different ways of encouraging allyship and understanding across differences and to combat instances of performative allyship and self-mediated knowledge in classroom discussion. In addition, by using technology in the classroom university academics and educators will be able to challenge self-mediated technology by examining ways to utilize it properly; or, in my case, how some of these social platforms may be

able to build interpersonal empathy in individuals when in unison with empathy pedagogy frameworks of facilitation.

Throughout my time at Old Dominion University, I have observed how university students utilize online platforms to uplift their individual opinion. I challenge that social media intercedes in university students' thoughts, relying on untested assumptions, and giving educators the grueling task of rectifying the self-mediated knowledge that keeps minds stuck in their opinions. Specifically, individuals are prone to watch something online that changes their whole perception of reality, which I believe makes it harder for educators to establish the curriculum to open minds. More importantly, our individual thoughts in opinions online contributes to in-person polarization through dismissive dialogue in conversation; in addition, political polarization can transform the classroom into a space of self-desired knowledge instead of trying to understand content outside of one's perspective. When students are unable to build relationships with others outside their perspective experiences, their lack of cultural competence only increases the contemporary polarization.

In university education, there is deficit for students to transition between self-mediated online and in-person dialogue; I believe this is contributing to the decline in empathy amongst university students, since their heavy reliance on social media has spurred a generation that has a tough time communicating with others outside themselves, and their identity group. We know this to be true, because we have all experienced the reactionary feelings of receiving adoration from an uploaded post that looks similar to a friend we have not spoken to in years. This generation's heavy reliance on social media—mine included—creates a rift in the way we communicate with others because we are not forced to interact, but we are managed to observe and perform. Yes, someone may have received adoration from a post they stole from a distant

friend, but that friend has played a role in generating a new persona that gets more love/likes for that individual. At the end of the day, online platforms are lethal not because they profit from vanity and opulence; they are detrimental, because they profit off of superficial love and adoration. Interestingly, everyone wants to be what others are, but no one wants to build a community of difference to establish conversation in our "app generation."

Howard Gardner and Katie Davis detail the shortcomings, "the app generation" have as they continue to further drift into the world of technology; specifically, app generation members have a tough time creating mindful conversations and building relationships with others (Gardner 2013). Furthermore, in a world where we look at our cellphones for immediate gratification fulfilled by a neurological dopamine high, something must be wrong. Everywhere I look, individuals are absorbed into the worlds inside their devices; always down and never up. Individuals are consumed with their technological devices creating a deeper void between their authentic selves and the understanding of others.

 I fear we are not kind to one another because we fear one another. When we bring it upon ourselves to make assumptions on others' lives due to what we read, heard, saw, or interpreted as fact, we isolate others and further dig ourselves into our self-curated pit of self-mediated knowledge. Social media platforms are not the sole ones to blame for our ascension into the app generation; however, the way we utilize and consume social media can be analyzed to influence the way we interact with others. For example, did you notice how some of the people you know posted images of black squares, on the social media platform Instagram, without knowing the significance—or lack thereof— of the square? I have found that our "self-enclosed individualism" is creating a society that is easily susceptible to succumb to the effects of social media; thus, spearheading a mass movement of performative allyship that hinders

radical movement organizing. Of course, the intentions were "good" as individuals were eager to show uniformity with a cause they felt needed more attention; however, the latter falls flat when we misappropriate squares without knowing the history of the mothers that created the movement, or the voices that are strained from telling/yelling/sharing their stories. I know, that with our current conditioning, we are indebted to observe and perform on social media, but this is only going to stagnate radical efforts for change.

Empathy pedagogy in practice can expand on the ideas discussed to create a conversation that moves beyond performative allyship; it just needs a space to expand and build communal resilience. Jean Twenge and W. Keith Campbell analyze what living in the age of entitlement is like for the development of education. specifically, how a lack of "emotional resilience" from increased self-idolized praise can lead society towards a path of "self-enclosed individualism." Interestingly, the authors stress to overcome this deficit by arguing, "…the focus should be on developing a love for learning, a sense of efficacy, the ability to get along with others, and a high level of self-discipline and emotional resilience" (Twenge and Campbell 295). I claim emotional resilience to be the product of empathetic skills that can build interpersonal empathy in an individual. I believe higher education houses the best space to leave "self-enclosed individualized" thoughts at the door. This ability to control one's emotions gives students the ability to build their capacity of understanding others outside of themselves, since empathy pedagogy facilitates mindful rapport.

THE NECESSITY OF SOCIAL EMPATHY

When discussing how social empathy can only be bolstered by communal and interpersonal empathy, one can perceive that teacher-student relationships are crucial to the development of skilled empathy in individuals. I believe empathy has the power to transcend in

the societal environment we have created. I will explore the phenomenon of neoliberalism's effect on the incoming generation of higher education students to address the necessity of social empathy. We live in a world where students are progressively learning that life is difficult on their own but are still actively trying to assert themselves as powerful individuals to live the "American Dream." This dream, in all honesty, has curtailed the beliefs of college students to pursue their educational degrees in subjects that do not drive their passions; sadly, only the economic will of a student's degree achievement is what sustains universities from going under.

At this point, I implore one to ask how knowledge-based systems produce the individualized society that we so detest and seek to critique as academics. I aim to discuss a root cause in neoliberalism and self-mediated technologies; these systems drive students in higher education to look inward instead of onward. The cyclonic stages of neoliberalism influence students and their drives towards success; most often, eliminating their desire for knowledge through a procurement of success by academic standards (grading scales). Academics and educators alike are tired of having to undo the effect of an unchanging mass individualized society. The stress of looking at the world and teaching students to execute humanitarian strategies, while realizing no real change is immediate, is exhausting. We need pedagogical empathy to assert the facilitation of a space to discuss and bridge interpersonal empathy between teachers and students. We need a space to talk about our structural inequalities, and our differences in opinion, while keeping students mindfully engaged in one another's experiences. We need to integrate empathy into higher education spaces in the hopes of building the necessary empathetic skills in students to stop the cycle of neoliberalism. The small-scale change initiative of empathy pedagogy begets radical change over time. Essentially, students utilize the skills of

empathy in their spaces. When empathy pedagogy is in practice, social empathy can take shape in society through osmosis.

THE INTEGRATION OF EMPATHY INTO FEMINIST FRAMEWORKS

We need pedagogical empathy now more than ever, since our contemporary society still deems empathy as an innate trait—something that cannot be learned—primarily in women. Of course, times are changing drastically: women are not the only ones who can actively listen, which allows discussion to commence over the cultivation of empathy and what empathy can do for our society. However, research on assessing empathy through gender finds that, "because of the strong link of empathy to nurturance and attachment, women often assumed to be more empathic than men" (Segal, 2017, p. 9). We know that socialization plays a role on the type of empathic careers women find themselves in, but this is not explicitly known to others outside the realm of academia. Students are still holding the stereotyped narratives that portray women as the carriers of a second shift in emotional labor. Empathy pedagogy builds interpersonal relationships that transcends individual experiences with the material being taught. In other words, once students are aware of others' experiences, the stereotyped narratives we assimilate with our realities will start to be demystified. When adopting the practices of empathy pedagogy, teacher-student relationships are in constant discussion over surrounding topics that affect their individual lives. Empathy pedagogy in practice can alleviate the misfortunes of academic literature that inadvertently casts women in second shift positions in emotionality.

Furthermore, empathy is the automatic neurosensory drive to understand someone through their perspective, by putting yourself in their perspective situation one can develop the tools of empathy that allows them to understand another. The latter is often conceptualized to mean that empathy is only present in one gender (women); since, our heteropatriarchal society

deems nurturing qualities as emasculating traits. Men are often the victims of our self-imposed societal norms, they are socialized into complacency, because they cannot go against the grain and be "feminine." Interestingly, we know our societal fabric is in place to keep the stigmatization of empathy as an innate trait in women due to the overwhelming community of women who express how difficult it is to have an emotional conversation with cis-gendered men. Westernized males in our Americanized culture believe it is their duty to protect women; specifically, white women. This knowledge comes as no surprise to Black feminist theorists who believe empathy could be the bridge to understand others outside of their cultural perspectives.

Sharon Freedberg unpacks the conceptualizations of empathy in social work to understand patients outside their own perspective backgrounds. Freedberg asserts a framework of empathy that is mediated by feminist relational theory; her ideas utilize an empathy framework that is, "mutual, interactive and humanist…" (2007, p. 252). Freedberg's analysis of empathy encompasses an approach that is flexible to the needs of clients since empathy has been conceptualized as an innate trait that some may have, and that others do not.

Her points align with an overarching goal to cultivate a more empathic society through understanding oneself to understand others. Citing Surrey, Kaplan, and Jordan's 1990 research, Freedberg outlines the different facets of empathy:

- affective attunement to the other
- the ability to maintain flexible ego boundaries and a well-differentiated sense of self
- comfort in a relational context of mutual understanding and reciprocity
- the ability and willingness to feel the presence of each other, and the impact each has made on the other (Freedberg 254).

Overall, her analysis illuminates that the goal of empathy is to understand another person using your own senses of experiences that builds a connection between yourself and the other person's perspective experience. The person who is empathetically facilitating conversation, between students or in other communicative relationships, ultimately needs to understand themselves before they begin empathizing with someone else's plight. Empathy is a great tool for bridging the gap between differing experiences; specifically, self-other awareness, perspective taking, and emotion regulation are the most crucial tools.

THE TOOLS OF EMPATHY PEDAGOGY

Earlier, I discussed the main components of empathy I will expand on: self-other awareness, perspective taking, and emotional regulation. These three components of empathy build up one's capacity to foster interpersonal empathy. For example, self-other awareness is being aware of oneself while simultaneously being mindful of the other person's perspective as well, "without other-awareness we are prone to project our individual-self thinking to that of another" (Segal, 2017, p. 43). Essentially, empathy requires the marrying of the self and other consciousness without mixing the two or superimposing the self over the other. That is why perspective taking is crucial for the development of empathy in others.

Perspective taking is the ability to perceive yourself in another's situations, even if you have not experienced it for yourself. Research says that perspective taking is a neurological function in the brain that takes time to develop or mature, since "we need to know ourselves and set aside our own interpretations" to do so (Segal, 2017, p. 44). The difference between self-oriented and other-oriented perspective taking should be noted; essentially, other-oriented perspective taking means perceiving another's situation from the listener's point of view, whereas self-oriented perspective taking perceives another's situation with their individual point

of view and experiences (Segal, 2017, p. 45). When putting empathy pedagogy into practice, we want to cultivate a classroom environment that nurtures both empathy tools in students. Since individuals who are discriminated against are defined by their personalities, identities, and bodies, those who are just starting out to empathize with another person may try a self-oriented perspective taking approach that hinders the effects of empathy to transcend conversation over self-experiences. By nurturing both tools of empathy (self-oriented and other oriented perspective taking) students are better able to actively listen by sharing their narrative-identities with others for a common understanding of emotionality in varied experiences; the latter builds the necessary interpersonal relationships that foster communal trust. Furthermore, other-oriented perspective taking diminishes that barrier between the self that is necessary for mutuality (or sameness that we will dissect further), since an individual in conversation with another would actively listen without steering the conversation to their own slightly similar experience— shifting of a conversation back to the self is different than understanding your self-inflicted experiences that transcend understanding. With empathy pedagogy in practice, students are having a conversation without inserting their own personal plight; student are interacting with one another mindfully. Mindful rapport is crucial to the building of interpersonal empathy in higher education spaces. However, what does one do if they have an empathy wall up; in other words, how do educators contain the flow of empathy in their classroom spaces?

Interestingly, emotional regulation, or "maintaining one's balance while unconsciously experiencing affective reactions and working to make sense of those feelings through neurological cognitive processes" is the last component of empathy that I suggest facilitates the mindful rapport necessary to continue the classroom flow of empathy (Segal, 2017, p.20). Before empathy pedagogy can be put into practice, students need to be aware of their emotions and how

they feel. Young adults are not always aware of their emotions; this leave them at the mercy of their feelings, meaning, young adults may act on their emotions when they are not in control of them. This tendency can leave students to solidify their opinions out of emotion instead of actively listening to others they are in opposition with. In my classroom observations, unregulated emotion only stops constructive conversation; intrusive opinions often derail students from the goal of learning from their counterparts. We need to foster trust and encourage conversation to transcend the understanding of others in students. In later chapters, I will discuss how assignments can measure the emotionality of the classroom space.

Even though there are many more components of empathy, I choose to focus on these three because of their power to be monitored, taught, and facilitated in a classroom space. In addition, I aim to assert the power of empathy pedagogy to build the capability of perspective taking in individuals through facilitator strategy and lesson plan. If we can teach the tools of empathy to students, then societally, we each would consciously try to understand one another better. I believe we have a need to grow together in our society, amid, the global pandemic aftermath, social justice reformation, and an undeniable individualism fed narcissism epidemic. Our societal awakening paves the way for the discussion of pedagogically teaching empathy. I know that empathy can be cultivated and learned, ultimately, building communal interpersonal empathy through knowledge-based institutions will uplift our global social empathy. We must start actively trying to understand one another. The best way to do that is the learn the ways of empathy pedagogy, but first, we must redefine the concept of higher academic spaces as "safe".

REDEFINING SAFE SPACES

Current rhetoric addressing the importance of safe spaces has been mixed. Specifically, I have read assertions that say safe spaces are not inherently safe because we cannot dictate the

opinions of others—not matter how bigoted the comments may be. Our country values free speech too much to censor a classroom space from hatred that threatens the construction of a "safe space." However, as journalist Jos Truitt outlines in her article, "There are no Safe Spaces," it is possible to reimagine "safe spaces" as spaces of accountability (accountable space) (Truitt 2011). I too think that in our contemporary society we should rename "safe spaces" as spaces of accountability, especially when in relation to empathy pedagogy. Personally, we want to foster accountability in students so they can be mindful in their self/other relationships when perspective taking. When I mention the facilitation environment, and the power of procuring a safe space to transcend conversation about experiences, I mean *accountable safe spaces*.

I find it is important to define a term when it has multiple meanings. For the purposes of this exploratory look into the possibility of empathy pedagogy to transform higher education into a space of understanding, I want to utilize this definition of accountable safe spaces. Our contemporary society is rotted with self-imposed goals and desires. When we allow students to be accountable for their words, we open the floor for discussion of differences in the classroom. My goal is to foster undeniable understanding of other's experiences outside our own. I ask: how we can do the former if we are not re-evaluating our own opinions in thought? This redefinition of safe spaces will allow students to be accountable for their actions in thought, creating a space that is reflexive with the opinions being asserted. Empathy pedagogy in practice will be stronger when we allow students to question their un-comfortability and take responsibility for their words that express that discomfort. In an active listening environment, procured accountability space, with individual self-reflection, building the capacity for empathy in students is inescapable.

CHAPTER OUTLINES

Chapter II will further review the literature surrounding empathy pedagogies methods of intervention in higher education spaces. Most often, empathy is the grounding agent when introducing topics of diversity and inclusion to students. When gathering the research on how empathy works in education spaces, we can interpret how empathy pedagogy can be utilized in higher education spaces. The integration of empathy into higher education spaces spearheads movement organizing within students; since, pro-social helping behavior is manifested when interpersonal empathy is fostered.

In Chapter III, I will discuss the concept of mutuality as a binding theory that grounds the claims of empathy pedagogy in practice. Gloria Anzaldúa's ideology establishes the webs of identity. Essentially, our identities are interconnected. This concept establishes that our experiences may not be the same but our emotions in varying experiences are. When we value the concept of mutuality, as educators, we are favoring commonalities over differences between bodies. The concept of mutuality illuminates how students are able to build interpersonal empathy with one another by sharing their emotions in experience.

In Chapter IV, I will examine how empathy pedagogy works in action. I have created lesson plans that have integrated empathy into the gender studies unit material. The integration of empathy into class material will showcase how these lesson plans build one's capacity for empathy. The skills of empathy will be outlined with each lesson plan. The in-class assignments, and outside class materials illustrate the skills of empathy students need to develop. In addition, I will discuss how willing students are to participate in emotion work. I conducted a survey for students to complete after I gave a lecture to my Black Women Poetics class with an integrated empathy approach.

The conclusion of the thesis will overview the importance of empathy pedagogy for social empathy's transcendence into society. When discussing the importance of empathy pedagogy for society, I will discuss future research considerations to further the study of empathy pedagogy. I believe in the power of empathy pedagogy to establish small-scale change overtime. When empathy pedagogy is validated with future research, the teaching methodology will be able to spread its wings to other areas of study. Hopefully, empathy will be able to take shape in other disciplines outside of humanitarian study.

CONCLUSION

I have explored the power empathy pedagogy has to transcend differences in higher education or "safe space" classroom environments. It is important to know that empathy pedagogy has the ability to facilitate discussion that can generate radical small-scale changes to incorporate thinking about others experiences over our own. The increasing contemporary problem of individualism has rotted our ability to think about others outside of ourselves. I believe we need to exponentially change the pattern of "self-enclosed individualism" we are in by learning the ways we can build our listening, emotional regulation, and perspective. Contemporary empathy pedagogy methods have outlined the ways we can do this, but it is in much need of a remodel.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW: PREVIOUS EMPATHY PEDAGOGY METHODS AND ROOM

FOR IMPROVEMENT

Empathy pedagogy has created a buzz in higher education (Calloway-Thomas 2018; Damianidou & Phtiaka 2016; Gerdes 2017; McCusker 2017). Empathy pedagogy, as I define, utilizes these three tools of empathy: perspective taking, emotion regulation, and self-other awareness to foster the skills of empathy in students. Our public sphere is circulating ideas about how pedagogy can facilitate the skills of empathy in students; however, educators may be wary of a new pedagogy claiming to teach empathy, particularly if the framework is seen as malleable and open to interpretation (Gannon 2018). In addition, public sphere rhetoric does not outline the overall goals of empathy pedagogy in practice. The discussion surrounding empathy pedagogy in practice is that it is a malleable facilitation framework of care theorized to improve the teaching effectiveness of educators; essentially, the academic rapport is focused on visibility for others in multicultural classroom spaces (Warren, 2014, p. 396). However, the visibility of others in classroom spaces denotes a student's ability to find commonalities between emotion with differing life experiences. To put simply, educators are utilizing a diversity approach when putting empathy pedagogy into practice. This approach reduces empathy to an action meant to coddle and not a skill aimed to understand another outside oneself. As I have observed, the educators aim at integrating empathy with a notions of care approach are similar to the goals of the facilitation framework of feminist pedagogy. Feminist pedagogy advocates for others by including their experiences in identity in class material. Feminist standpoint theory critiques the tokenism inherent in some diversity for inclusion initiatives, through its broader claim that institutions are socially situated against marginalized bodies (Ann 1992). The similarity between

empathy and feminist pedagogy is the acknowledgement of a socially unjust world that complicates othered lived experiences that affect emotion. This connection prompts the question: is there a link between these two pedagogy methods that could build the capacity for the skill of empathy in higher education students? What might that facilitation framework look like? And what does the research say already about empathy pedagogy in connection to feminist pedagogy?

I want to address how empathy pedagogy has the potential to build the capacity for empathy in students, when in connection to feminist pedagogy. In this chapter, I will consolidate the findings of various empathy pedagogy methods into a stabilized facilitation framework. Throughout this chapter, we will see how to use reading, self-reflection, and improvisational gameplay as pedagogical tactics that influence empathy within classroom spaces. I believe empathy pedagogy can be used in higher education classrooms to share the perspectives and experiences of others, creating a transition from individual thought to collective understanding. Students have the ability, in higher education, to build their capacity for empathy; they just need to be willing to examine themselves while being introduced to the ideas. To start, this chapter identifies the findings of contemporary empathy pedagogy scholars. Then, I will draw on Johanna M. Selles's approach to educating for justice through fostering empathic communities in higher education spaces. The empathic space educators curate for students allows them to develop empathy through reading narratives, role-playing, and immersive experiences with others lived experience. As educators, we want to build a student's capacity for understanding another outside themselves. The future work of integrating empathy in feminist pedagogy teaching frameworks will finally be addressed. I know empathy has a place in higher education, educators just need to analyze what method works best for their practice.

CONTEMPORARY EMPATHY PEDAGOGY

Empathy pedagogy is the leading edge of scholarship aimed at harnessing the idea of building the capacity of empathy in another. Current research on empathy pedagogy addresses the strength of self-reflection in writing responses to bridge the differences between others and ourselves, by situating the classroom environment using a "three step process" that involves "…constant teacher–student interaction, evident communication, and attentive listening while emphasizing an interchange of roles (with students 'so as to foster empathy')" (Damianidou and Phtiaka, 2016, p.239). This description of the process of fostering empathy within students develops an empathy pedagogy practice, which allows students to take themselves out of their normative societal roles. When teachers unlock their humane qualities, students acknowledge their privileges—slowly detaching from the neoliberalism embedded in our education system. However, students may still lack the knowledge as to why their individualism causes reluctance to embrace the skills of empathy. The first step is to acknowledge our empathy walls, otherwise known as our unregulated emotion.

Arlie Russel Hochschild (2016) coined the term "empathy wall" in *Strangers in Their Own Land*; specifically, our empathy walls are, "an obstacle to the deep understanding of another person, one that can make us feel indifferent or even hostile to those who hold different beliefs or whose childhood is rooted in different circumstances" (p. 5). Our empathy walls are what hold us back from understanding others outside of ourselves. The fear of the unknown can stem from our childhood trauma, or parentally taught embodied knowledges we hold onto. The relevance of empathy walls to Gender Studies is important to note. Feminist standpoint theory allows students to examine the social system of oppression that keep our empathy walls up, but it does not allow students to examine their own empathy walls. The lesson plans I have created allow students to

self-reflect on their lived experiences to find commonalities in their emotion with others. For example, my in-class activity from Lesson Plan One encourages students to build mutuality when retelling a story from another's perspective (Appen. Lesson Plan One). My hope is that students will begin a dialogue between themselves and those that they define as "Other." Furthermore, the idea of expanding our channel of communication between teacher and student can be analyzed to improve the integration of empathy into gender studies advocacy work. In other words, if teachers started participating in the classroom emotion work, students may feel more empowered to share their lived experiences in higher education spaces. Hochschild's suggestion of "deep stories" allows students to examine their stories in lived experience. When students start to self-reflect on their identities of self, they can begin to find commonalities in emotion between other's lived experiences. Through interconnected deep stories, Hochschild emphasizes the need for listening that can dismantle empathy walls in the classroom. When our ability to listen is improved, one can put aside their own kneejerk emotional responses and mindfully engage another person. When educators allow students to mindfully engage in discussion, it improves the possibility to transcend differences in opinion. In practice, empathy pedagogy is the key to that door of possibility. It has the power to facilitate the channel of communication that can bolster the narrative deep stories that evoke emotion to bind understanding outside oneself.

Sean Blenkisop and Charles Scott share similar views in understanding others outside oneself to cultivate a self-actualized humanity. The article focuses on the works of Martin Buber. Blenkisop and Scott analyze Buber's concept from his novel that asserts "I/Thou" interactions are possible with others outside oneself. Blenkisop and Scott suggest that "other-than-human" relationships are tangible when one works on their relationship with themselves (Blenkinsop &

Scott, 2017). Furthermore, these interactions with others are reiterated when Blenkisop and

Scott analyze Buber's words with contemporary meaning, "…the concept of 'presencing,' which

refers to individuals, through the continuing development of the I, becoming better able to make

themselves available to the other, to honor the other as separate from oneself, and to recognize

the other as an agent in its own right" (Blenkisop &Scott, 2017, p.457). Essentially, both authors

reiterate that self-reflection is a necessary component to building one's capacity for empathy.

Once we self-reflect on our lived experiences, we can understand the emotions we feel. When we

understand our own emotions, we can understand the emotional feelings of others without having

their lived experience. To put simply, when we honor the other as separate from our own

experiences then we are able to emotionally understand others by discussing our experiences in

emotion and not life.

  The relationship between ourselves and others outside our lived experiences illustrates

the need for empathy in our public life that enhances our knowledge of our true selves. Other-

than-human relationships have the capacity to shape a community, since the ability to understand

another outside oneself transcends felt experiences through mutuality—we understand

individuals when we realize there are more commonalities than differences. Empathy pedagogy

has the capacity to create these "other-than-human" relationships in higher education classrooms,

by facilitating an environment that enhances our actualized perceptions of ourselves and not our

performed or misinformed interpretations. For example, in my lesson plans I encourage students

to share their thoughts on class materials during facilitation questions. The question I ask in

Lesson Plan Two allows students to think about their position in social justice advocacy, "When

advocating for others, how might we promote, in solidarity, the identities of others?" (Appendix,

Lesson Plan Two). When educators ask students about their motivations toward advocacy,

students analyze their willingness to fight for others outside themselves. Most often, this self-awareness requires reflection to uncover what we can realistically contribute to social justice causes. Lastly, Buber calls attention to the importance of the teacher when pedagogically introducing these concepts of "other-than-human" interactions.

In the authors' analysis of Buber's work, Blenkinsop and Scott specify the description of the "great actor" as an educator who creates an engaging experience for the student with their experience; "…an educator is able to build a relationship with another and then offer the resulting relation to the students". (Blenkisop & Scott,2017, 464). As Blenkisop and Scott define, a "great actor" is an educator who facilitates conversation in their class environment with their own lived experience and interactions. For example, the lesson plans I created give educators the opportunity to share their lived experience with their students. In Lesson Plan Two, I encourage students to understand the perspective of others by drawing themselves; through sharing their drawings with one another, students start to see other identities that may align with their likes or dislikes. Educators have the possibility to participate in the activity with students. The influence of class participation in sharing vulnerable experiences may be spearheaded by an educator's willingness to share their experiences in life. Interestingly, we will see later how trust is built between teacher and student when educators share their lived experiences.

In addition, creating a "great actor" experience can encapsulate the identity transformation of ourselves that is needed to understand another. When we transform our identities we are analyzing our lived experiences in emotion and self-reflecting on the embodied knowledge we carry. When educators become the "great actor" for their students, they are facilitating communication between others using their life experience as examples for added dialogue. One needs to transform their identity in emotion when transitioning into the role of a

"great actor" for students in higher education. The "great actor" generates the role, in higher education classrooms, to facilitate acting and role-play behavior to build one's capacity for empathy. However, one cannot start to act in another's experience until they understand the role their memory plays on their perceptions of others.

Richard Ned Lebow describes the role of memory as it pertains to building empathy. In *Stretching Selves Through Empathy: The Role of Collective and Official Memories* (2019), Lebow analyzes the memorialization of identities that formulate our notions of wanting to perceive what a subjugated other may go through. Our embodied knowledges curate our idealized realities when we sift through our versions of the norm. It is challenging for students to overcome their embodied knowledges in a classroom space, since they may not know they hold onto these memorialized versions of themselves or others. In addition, Lebow analyzes the memorialization of collective memory that may encourage individuals to reject "horizontal identities" in favor of "vertical ones" (Lebow, 2019, p. 252). Essentially, horizontal identities are our embodied knowledge that we absorbed through life interactions; in contrast, vertical identities is our transformed identity when self-reflecting on lived experiences to understand others. It is important to note what Lebow asserts concerning our vertical identities, "Recognition of our own multiplicity and conflicts among identification can lead to the recognition that the self-other dichotomy lies at least as much within us as it does between us and others" (Lebow, 2019, p.255). This quote holds a connection to the integration of empathy in higher education. When students start to realize that their identities are connected by webs of differing experience, then they can start to reflect on others lived experience in emotion to understand another outside themselves.

In a classroom space, students are bound to regurgitate knowledge from their own educational backgrounds. Most often, these are "vertical" notions of history that neatly fit into the dominant perceptions of heteronormativity and whiteness; due to this background, students may be unable to understand that the experiences of others are intersectional and horizontal to their lived reality. Before we begin giving students the tools of empathy, we must first help students understand that historical precursors affect everyone, not just the outgroup. Lebow's theory of horizontal and vertical identities identifies the power of mutuality; specifically, when students shine a light on their multiplicities in identities, they find commonalities in what they share with prospective stigmatized groups; "Recognition of our own multiplicity and conflicts among identification can lead to the recognition that the self-other dichotomy lies at least as much within us as it does between us and others" (Lebow, 2019, p. 255). For students to locate empathy, they must find their perceived differences and analyze the similarities in othered human experiences. Essentially, this work involves self-reflecting on one's individual experience to find mutuality between others' lived experiences.

Emily Hall addresses the importance of locating empathy in students by allowing them to analyze the discontinuities between inequality, marginalization, race, and oppression through the practices of self-reflecting on the material provided (Hall, 2019, p. 553). Self-reflecting is a useful assignment tool; it allows the teacher to assess the student's understanding of the material with their perceptions of othered experiences. However, Hall's practice of locating empathy in students implies that we outline differences between ourselves and others. Her approach limits the conversation to our embodied knowledges of the socially constructed problem at hand. If we only outline differences between ourselves and others, we diminish the possibility to find commonalities; since students are examining the issue from a one-sided lens, there is no

opportunity for other voices, outside of academia, to share their actualized experiences in their identities. This problem can be remedied by examining the ways empathy pedagogy can manifest when married to feminist pedagogy in practice.

Interestingly, Women's and Gender Studies scholars have cultivated a space that allows students to feel safe to express their experiences in their identities (i.e., sitting in circles, active listening, creating an environment for critical thinking); in addition, "Feminist pedagogy is a pedagogy of liberation" (Ann, 1992, p. 367). It is no surprise that these facilitation strategies align with the framework of empathy pedagogy. Empathy pedagogy, in theory, utilizes critical thinking techniques so students can locate the skills of empathy when analyzing class materials. The compiled goals for empathy pedagogy, as elaborated by Erik Leake, are as follows: moral virtue or taking the role of another person with critical reflection, victim empathy or putting yourself in the shoes of those you hurt/potentially can hurt, empathetic teachers or a pedagogy of self-disclosure between students and teachers; and reading and analyzing characters in books or perspective taking of other individuals experiences, and creating an atmosphere for active listening; "Pedagogies of empathy—as rhetoric and as disposition—offer a way to educate the emotions at the juncture of the cognitive and the affective, the personal and the social, where emotions can be investigated, held accountable, and put toward action" (Leake, 2011, p. 176). Leake's analysis of empathy pedagogy calls for further examination into what feminist and empathy facilitation frameworks can accomplish for students in higher education. When we dignify a space for students to freely connect their lived experiences with others, higher education is allowing empathic communities to flourish. The power of teacher-student relationships to spearhead the skills of empathy is related to the building of empathic communities in their classroom spaces.

EMPATHIC COMMUNITIES

Empathic community is a termed coined by Johanna M. Selles to address the need for empathy in communal spaces. Selles imagined that educating for social justice would be achievable if students had a space that housed empathic ideals when discussing concepts of difference. Furthermore, the role of empathic communities to educate for justice is explained by Selles; specifically, the classroom should be a place where collective bodies can bear witness to othered suffering for a transformation of knowledge that facilitates emotionality (Selles, 2011, p. 78). Selles describes the concept of bearing witness to another lived experience as empathic witnessing within our communities of care; however, they address that this skill cannot be taught. This viewpoint insinuates that the skill of empathic witnessing is innate (Selles, 2011, p.79). However, developing the skills of empathy through higher education is still achievable. For example, in my lesson plans I encourage students to share their experiences with one another in the hopes of building an empathic community within the classroom space. If we collectively participate in empathic witnessing in classroom spaces, over time, the skills of empathy will be developed in students.

Empathic witnessing is theoretically an innate trait in individuals. Students can still develop the skills of empathy to build their capacity for empathy. Once students are given a space to address their life stress, they can practice their skills in the hopes of building their active listening skills to that of empathic witnessing. As educators who integrate empathy into their class curriculum, we can explore the possibilities of building empathic communities in the classroom. Essentially, empathic communities are spaces of emotional connection between individuals. I draw on Selles's approach to educating for justice through fostering empathic communities to discuss areas of difference between bodies of knowledge we hold onto. Seles

asserts, "The story of suffering is told through the suffering body; in fact, the body bears witness to the story" (2011, p. 80). When said in this way, educators must ask what needs to be incorporated for students to emotionally share their experiences. The work of bearing witness to another's suffering is emotionally draining, especially if one has to reflect on their traumatic experiences to understand another.

Higher education spaces need to be aware of this when integrating empathy into class curriculum. By fostering empathic communities, educators will ensure that students have a comfortable space to share their feelings with others. Trust is necessary when developing the skills of empathy in others. Feminist pedagogy establishes integrative teaching practices that foster safe spaces to discuss difference. The framework of feminist pedagogy instills that empathic communities will work when empathy pedagogy is in practice. When we establish a place for students to share their emotional trauma, stress is alleviated from their daily life interactions. Students are more open to discussing their issues of social injustice with others they feel safe around. By fostering empathic communities in higher education spaces, students will build their capacity for empathy by evaluating their own emotionality to find commonalities with other's experiences outside their own. This dynamic of fortitude in care for others' emotional responses is not a new concept.

Empathy pedagogy's value of mutuality allows students to find emotional commonality when sharing and/or listening to other's experiences. The value of empathic communities gives students an understanding that eliminates the need to just acknowledge diversity; instead, these developed communities in higher education can transform into spaces of empathetic understanding despite issues of difference in experience. As educators, we want to build a student's capacity for empathy. If empathic communities are valued in classroom spaces, then

students will start to understand others' lives outside of themselves by listening and connecting their emotions in experiences with others.

DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY THROUGH SELF-REFLECTION

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi addresses the optimal experience understanding oneself through a state of "flow" that highlights the energetic relationship between individuals, even without having a relationship of direct dialogue. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* is an influential text that sheds light on the importance of cultivating peace in flow states to build mindfulness to illuminate knowledge. The author illuminates the role of self-reflection in relation to oneself when addressing how, "writing gives the mind a disciplined means of expression. It allows one to record events and experiences so that they can be easily recalled and relived in the future" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008, p. 131). The importance of understanding ourselves, in order for us to understand another person, is present when we are self-reflecting. Our disciplined means of expression are illuminated when students analyze the mutuality between themselves and othered lived experiences. The author articulates the relationship between writing and the formulation of memory that allows us to bridge commonalities between perceived others. Interestingly, self-written reflection uplifts empathy in our conscious thought when integrating empathy into classroom spaces with poetry analysis (Daniel & Stephanie Xerri, 2015, 73). Specifically, when teachers create limitations in the assigned written reflections, they allow the positionality of empathy to take hold in conscious thought because students need to find mutual understanding between themselves and others when self-reflecting on the material provided. Within the context of privilege, teachers can influence the student's ability to reflect on the causes of limitations—that define othered realities—to center one's thoughts on the identity of another besides themselves. Self-reflection is important for higher education classroom spaces

because it fortifies a bond between our actualized selves and others' lived reality. When students successfully overcome their perceived identities in self, they are able to understand how the lives of others are shaped by systemic inequities. With empathy pedagogy in practice, students are willing to see how their perceived memories culminate their embodied knowledges of othered lived experiences.

Written reflection binds our memories of recollection together; the absence of thought generated while in a procured state of writing flow is just the glue that frees our inhibitions that build our ability to understand others. The facilitation technique of self-reflection is powerful enough that it creates emotionality that changes the way one views various situations (Csikszentmihalyi 2009). The conceptualization of flow generates an absence of thought that allows for uninhibited emotionality when self-reflecting. Csikszentmihalyi concept of flow as a connection to our unconscious states, projects my claim that an absence of thought creates knowledge that allows one to create new feelings of understanding. These new feelings create the empathic arousal that we aim to convey in the classroom. Specifically, teachers ultimately curate the space for students to feel all they want to feel when learning the material provided. Emotionality translates in students' minds the feelings of expressed empathy when reading othered lived experiences. The role of memory, when self-reflecting, encourages us to stretch ourselves through empathy by finding the mutuality between our and others' lived experiences. Essentially, students have to know themselves first—embodied knowledges and all—before reading other's narratives for the skill of empathy to stick.

DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY THROUGH READING/NARRATIVES

In relation to Hochschild theory of tearing down our empathy walls through deep storytelling, Jennifer Willard and Amy Buddie address the possibilities of enhancing empathy

through reading. Specifically, Willard and Buddie describe that when we read, we become the other in the perspective story we are engrossed in. With this analysis, the authors assert that reading creates empathy in individuals and empaths can understand the emotions of subjugated others after they have read (Willard & Buddie 2019). This integration of reading to build one's understanding of an othered lived experience can be incorporated to influence empathy in the classroom. Interestingly, narrative deep storytelling and reading those stories activates our ability to actively listen to another person's experiences. By reading the narrative stories of others, students are using their imagination to infer what another's situation may be like for their life; however, this idea of inference may be problematic since a student is using their life landscape to evaluate another experience. I suggest that by allowing students to read the narratives of others, students find commonalities between themselves and the perceived other that normative society situates itself against. In addition, students are able to read the emotionality in the prose of an author's work; this notion allows students to practice emotionally regulating their emotions while examining the similarities in emotionality with the characters experiences.

Chandra Mohanty's revisitation of "Under Western Eyes" speaks to the urgency of putting empathy pedagogy into practice. Mohanty's essay, "Under Wester Eyes Revisited," has a strong theme of self-reflection; in addition, her reexamination of the past transnational feminist calls to action illuminates the need for students to understand others' lives outside of themselves (page ref would be helpful here). Mohanty's situating framework around feminist solidarity is one that is foundational to building one's capacity for empathy. When we are connected to one another, our vision is clearer to see our similarities more than our differences. With further analysis, I began to realize that an anti-capitalist transnational feminist framework used in addition to the feminist solidarity framework establishes the need for feminists to allow their

students to understand the narrative experiences of others outside themselves. Radical change begins with small-scale changes. By addressing the importance of anti-globalization rhetoric in feminist theory, feminist educators begin to explore the perspectives of women outside the dominant Western culture. With the exploration of these cultural narratives, commonalities begin to form, and the bridge of empathy is drawn between self-other relationships.

Mohanty's vision has a strong capacity to facilitate the skills of empathy within students. The attention to the narrative experiences of others, I believe, focuses on the theory of perspective taking—or understanding the perspective experiences of another person. Her attention to the narrative stories of others exposes an opportunity to reevaluate feminist pedagogies possibility to work in unison with empathy pedagogy frameworks (page ref would be helpful). Research on empathic communities addresses how "Story engages both the listener and the teller in acts of mutuality as they listen and imagine the world through the experience of the other" (Selles, 2011, p. 131). The notion of mutuality is similar to Mohanty's discussion of discovering commonalities in identities, through narratives to enrich feminist solidarity.

DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY THROUGH ROLE-PLAY

Empathy reinstates this grand sense of knowing yourself, through others, that creates an optimal experience naturally through understanding our emotionality while one is in a flow state. One can analyze how a state of flow can be enabled through play to create an optimal experience that naturally builds a student's capacity for empathy. Research in this area is budding in the field of teaching empathy, specifically, the possibility to enhance the connection to the development of empathy through role-play behavior. Teacher-student relationships are a foundational part of building empathy in higher education spaces. The connection to role-playing

the lived experiences of othered realities facilitates an environment of fun, while allowing students to build on the mutuality between themselves and perceived others.

A TED Talk given by Heidi Boisvert illuminates the problem of self-mediated technology that unconsciously influences a person's thoughts and opinions; she found that:

> The web, mobile devices, virtual and augmented reality were rescripting our nervous systems. And they were literally changing the structure of our brain. The very technologies I had been using to positively influence hearts and minds were actually eroding functions in the brain necessary for empathy and decision-making. In fact, our dependence upon the web and mobile devices might be taking over our cognitive and affective faculties, rendering us socially and emotionally incompetent, and I felt complicit in this dehumanization. (Boisvert, TED Talk 1:00)

Instead of scrapping her work, Boisvert used her information to measure the processes for which our technological use was influencing our lived experiences in reality; with this new work in place she aims to, "…translate the mechanisms of empathy, the cognitive, affective and motivational aspects, into an engine that simulates the narrative ingredients that move us to act" (Boisvert, TED Talk, 1:40). Her research work grounds the ideas of role-play behavior/s inclusion in empathy pedagogy. As individuals, we are unconsciously aware of the systems that influence our patterns of behavior; by switching the mode of understanding through the informational output, Boisvert is fostering the skills of empathy in others through AI technology—also known as, role-playing. For example, in my Third Lesson Plan I encourage students to practice the skills of empathy through role-play behavior. My in-class activity asks students to imagine themselves in the shoes of others from their past to present (Appendix, Lesson Plan Three). My hope is that students will start to reflect on past interactions to

reconstruct positive ways to communicate in the future. I believe role-playing is the medium that may allow students to understand others outside of themselves. By analyzing the affects role-play behavior has on our individual realties, we know the capacity the facilitation strategy has to influence interpersonal empathy within these procured empathic community spaces.

In *The Reflexive Project: Reconstructing the Moral Agent* (2005), Alfred Tauber analyzes the theory of "reflexivity," which identifies the components of self-introspection and self-awareness to moral individualism (Tauber, 2005, p. 65). The utilization of their definition of "reflexivity" is cohesive when aligned with students' comprehensive self-introspection of othered experiences. Specifically, students' awareness of othered experiences is facilitated when they partake in gameplay: specifically role-playing and improvisational gameplay. In addition, improv (improvisational gameplay) can be used in a role-play behavior modality to convey a sense of false individualism that allows one to self-actualize from their perceived embodied knowledges about individuals outside the perceived norm. In connection to the absence of thought that is enabled through a state of flow, students are able to unmask our normative roles in society when they act out the roles of others' lived reality. The phenomenon of role-play allows self-other relationships to flourish when students reenact a role of another person outside their perceived norm. Absence of thought, and the willingness to wear the mask of another identity, allows reflexivity to permeate. In addition, the enhancement of one's self-introspection of reality can be seen through written self-reflections after role-play behavior. The articulation of thought will grow as groups play together through improvisational game play. Ian Bogost describes how mastery is the link toward learning; through repetitive notions of playing behavior students can start to understand others; "Flow may help us optimize experience, but viscosity is needed to understand where such optimizations might take place" (Bogost, 2016, p.81). By

attaining this knowledge, we are able to rectify empathy in higher education classrooms through facilitated improvisational play. Students start to untether themselves to the societal implications of the world. Understanding is illuminated when we are in a state of play, because when we are in play states we are in a state of flow. When we ebb and flow with others in a shared space of understanding, communal self-reflection on lived experiences is established. To put simply, we can influence fun in our everyday lives while developing the skills of empathy.

Previous research highlights the modes of empathic arousal that can be pedagogically taught. For example, Madeline Adelman, Karen Rosenberg and Margaret Hobart address the significance of teaching empathy through game simulations. Specifically, the authors delve into the historical analysis of simulations and social empathy; the authors address instructional simulations have been used to teach since the 1960s (Adelman, Rosenberg & Hobart 2016). The pedagogical notions of gameplay allow the capacity for empathy to grow in the classroom. Their conceptualization of "social empathy" is used "to help (them) close the gap between cultural perceptions and lived realities." (Adelman, Rosenberg & Hobart, 2016, p.1452). Mastery, through gameplay, is established after set limitations are in place; with this, we know that learning is possible through gameplay (Koster 2013). Through the emotionality of fun, I suggest we may be able to harness empathic arousal, which may raise the rates of adults enjoying play and learning new skills. Interestingly, these observations of play are a key tool to building connections that allows one to trust the group without knowing their counterparts. In follow, Adelman, Rosenberg and Hobart translate the pedagogical teaching tactics of role play that I analyze in improvisational energetic play.

THE POSSIBILITY OF TENDING EMPATHY THROUGH IMMERSION

I have discussed the strength of role-play behavior to uplift the skill of empathy in individuals. Similarly, placing students in an environment where they must bear witness to the lived experiences of others uplifts the notion of empathic communities, while building students' development of empathic skills. The research on this method of building empathy through immersion is still ongoing. However, my personal experiences while observing a Refugee Studies class for a semester can illuminate on the power of building empathy within students through immersion. Self-mediated technology poses a problem for educators trying to deliver a message of inclusion. A feminist solidarity framework was utilized in this classroom dynamic to introduce the concepts of the refugee resettlement process to higher education students. The approach used included students undergoing a community service component to the course. With a collaboration with Commonwealth Catholic Charities (CCC), students were able to partake in an immersive experience with others in the refugee resettlement community of Newport News, VA. Interestingly, I observed that this component to the course alleviated the embodied knowledges students carried about refugees. I found myself wondering, "how are students undergoing a change within themselves that could not be cultivated in a classroom?" I came to realize that the material assigned in class was guiding students to actively hear the lived experiences of others for added understanding.

Selles's work contributes to the ideology of bearing witness to others' lived experience to gain insight on life outside ourselves. She draws on the work of Rita Charon from "Narrative Medicine" to support her claim that bearing witness provides individuals with an "interhuman nature of storytelling that demands both listening and telling" (Selles, 2011, p. 79). More importantly, protecting oral histories and acknowledging trauma within ourselves illuminates

that bearing witness does not foster violence towards the sharer/speaker/storyteller; instead, listeners are cultivated when others tell their truths (Selles, 2011, p. 75). In other words, when students are given the opportunity to listen and bear witness to other experiences, students are building their interpersonal empathy by orchestrating their "listening sel(ves) to be open to narratives that change their moral obligations to interrelationships over autonomy" (Selles, 2011, p. 80). Students need to make these choices to advocate for others' voices outside of their own. I believe integrating empathy pedagogy into feminist frameworks will cultivate the shift in personal advocacy to communal understanding that leads one to advocate for all.

WHAT IF EMPATHY AND FEMINIST PEDAGOGY WERE MERGED?

As a higher education student, immersed in the field of Women's and Gender Studies, I have observed a lot while sitting in my various classroom spaces. For one, feminist thought relies on critical thinking strategies to illuminate the topics of oppression felt by others. According to Ann Manicom, "(f)eminist pedagogy concerns itself with transformation both of relations among people in classrooms and of relations of power in the world at large (1992, p. 367) In higher education spaces, feminist pedagogy in practice is standing with the goals of social justice activism, in that "…feminist pedagogy is to take a political standpoint that seeks to transform relations of domination and oppression"; however, I believe these goals in social justice successes can be accomplished with an added lens of empathy pedagogy (Manicom, 1992, p. 367). To put it simply, students are referencing their embodied knowledge about topics that concern those at the margins of oppression—this is not inherently bad—but, by leading with an empathy focus, students can learn to reflect on their perspectives about the experiences of others. Empathy pedagogy builds the tools of empathy in students. I believe with empathy and feminist pedagogy in practice together, students need not rely on their embodied knowledges to fill in the

blanks about others' perspective experiences; instead, students actively listen to others'

experiences in oppression and analyze their emotional thoughts on class material in their higher

education spaces to fill in the blanks. As educators, we must examine how feminist pedagogy

can blossom and meet educational goals exponentially with another method of teaching to assist.

From my observations, I have found that feminist pedagogy would benefit from the industrious

facilitation style of empathy pedagogy. This section will discuss how feminist and empathy

pedagogy will look when married into practice with one another. It will also examine how each

pedagogy's goals are met by the other method of teaching.

Of course, we know, feminist pedagogy can stand on its own. This pedagogy style is

grounded in feminist theory to illuminate the concepts of oppression that affect those outside the

dominant norm; however, as Brenda Lyshaug asserts in "Solidarity Without Sisterhood…"

feminist thought has taken a position on "coalitional solidarity" that favors unity by added

diversity—which often means, inclusion based on race (2009, p.78). With the concept of

diversity for inclusion in mind, Lyshaug is aware that this method of connection through

difference does not connect women's experiences; instead, it divides women by their

experiences. In relation to feminist pedagogy, when students examine the lived experiences of

others, the lens of feminism may take root and students may favor a means of "coalitional

solidarity" over empathetic understanding. Lyshaug argues for, "…the cultivation of 'enlarged

sympathy,' in which individuals claim a kind of kinship across differences, can facilitate the

establishment of political ties that honor both the differences that separate women and the shared

humanity that unites them" (Lyshaug, 2009, p. 79). The call for "enlarged sympathy" references

the need of compassion for others experiences to establish interpersonal bonds that build mutual

connection across difference. When mutuality is formed, by listening and acknowledging all

experiences, communal trust is built in classroom spaces. Empathy pedagogy in practice puts faith in the student's ability to understand the experiences of others; by connecting with others to build a common bond, students are able to acknowledge their innate prejudices or privileges and try to help others the best way they can. In this way, empathy pedagogy can assist feminist thought analysis by building the necessary tools of empathy within students—as I define as, perspective taking, emotion regulation, and self-other awareness. As educators, we need to be willing to explore these opportunities to expand our teaching methodology to effectively meet social justice and feminist practice goals.

By exploring the opportunities empathy and feminist pedagogy have when in practice together, empathy pedagogy would facilitate the individual emotional work necessary for students to fully understand the experiences of others. In addition, the structural analysis of feminist pedagogy could situate the facilitation of empathy pedagogy while in practice; since both methods of teaching have the same goals—foster teacher-student relationships, while illuminating the system of oppression that affects others outside our purview, in the hopes of getting students to understand others outside themselves. With the educators in mind, empathy pedagogy will bolster the goals of feminist pedagogy to illuminate systems of oppression for students. In other words, when both methods of teaching are in practice together the goals of the facilitation strategy are exponentially met.

Interestingly, the facilitation style of empathy pedagogy is similar to feminist styles of teaching; however, as I have observed, the two teaching strategies are rarely in conversation with one another; "(t)he esoteric nature of professional language makes it difficult to communicate with other professions or to convince others that (empathy) work is important…as a whole (Selles, 2011, p.99). In other words, educators are having different conversations about what

empathy means to them for their disciplines. A comprehensive pedagogy of empathy may clarify how cultivating empathy fosters the mutual connections we aim to make with the method in practice.

Sharon Freedberg addresses the concept of "mutual empathy" when re-examining empathy from a relational feminist point of view; she situates the concept of "mutual empathy" to building interpersonal connections between patient and client for added understanding (Freedberg, 2007, p. 254). Mutual empathy can be connected to the concept of interpersonal empathy—otherwise known as, relationships formulated by empathy. When fostering the tools of empathy in students, teacher-student relationships must cultivate interpersonal empathy to bolster communal trust so empathy can thrive in a classroom space. Similarly, feminist thought utilizes teacher-student relationships to establish a bond of trust between hard concepts taught in class. To put simply, the two pedagogy styles have harmonious needs when it concerns the building of teacher-student relationships. Furthermore, empathy pedagogy has the capacity to make these teacher-student relationship bonds stronger, since mutuality is the binding agent that connects teacher-student emotional experiences when discussing personal commonalities to class material. The building of interpersonal connections with empathy fosters communal trust between teacher and students; mutuality is fostered between experiences and connections between student and teacher are made to illuminate understanding. I propose, the notion of trust is a safe haven for students, or a safe space to discuss material that affects them personally. However, what happens when students are outside of a classroom space? When in unison, empathy pedagogy and feminist pedagogy can transfer the goals of understanding others in cultural environments to improve helping behavior in students.

Empathy pedagogy spearheads movement organizing by allowing students to understand the lived experiences of others outside themselves. Students are then more willing to immerse themselves in others' experiences and help in respectful ways— "students become more aware of oppression; see it as structural, enduring and pervasive; locate themselves as oppressed; locate themselves as privileged; understand the benefits that flow from privilege; and understand themselves as implicated in the oppression of others. The final step allows students to declare intentions for future actions" (Selles, 2011, p. 103). Students are better able to be directional with their intentions concerning advocacy. They want to help others in the future with transformative awareness. The facilitation method of empathy pedagogy cultivates culturally responsive teaching strategies. When in practice, empathy pedagogy utilizes the concept of "culturally responsive teaching" asserted by Chezare Warren to diminish the gap between students and othered experiences; her application of empathy pedagogy posits that empathy utilizes self-reflection to ease the gap closed (Warren, 2018, p. 170). Interestingly, feminist pedagogy methods have the same goals. Ann Manicom asserts their goals of feminist pedagogy as a "standpoint"; she further suggests that "the standpoint of a feminist teacher is political: to develop feminist analyses that inform/reform teachers' and students' ways of acting in and on the world. Central here is (a) feminist movement toward social justice, and a pedagogy that fosters this movement" (Manicom, 1992, 365). I propose, empathy pedagogy will illuminate a cultural understanding to students that fosters adheres to the goals of feminist social justice and more. The crucial skills of empathy allow students to self-reflect on othered experiences; this creates a mindful self-environment for students before they engage with othered experiences. In other words, instead of students voyeuristically asserting their goals for other's spaces, students can mindfully engage with others to establish communal goals for the space. When students

mindfully engage with others outside their cultural identity, they are engaging in perspective taking and self-other awareness—crucial tools for empathy pedagogy. However, one may be asking, "what about the third skill of empathy? How does emotion regulation fit into a feminist pedagogy framework?"

Regulating one's emotions is a crucial skill outside of cultivating empathy for oneself. When one engages with another person, they must be mindful of their own emotions before speaking to another person. For example, if one were in a bad mood but still needed to participate in a political debate, unnecessary, and often times, hurtful things can be said or misconstrued about their perceptions of the issues at hand. When one engages in regulating their emotions, they are essentially doing what Elizabeth Segal et al. analyze as emotion regulation; that is, "maintaining one's balance while unconsciously experiencing affective reactions and working to make sense of those feelings through neurological cognitive processes" (Segal, 2017, p.20). To put simply, when students engage in emotion regulation, they are slowly removing their embodied knowledges about others. When this is done successfully, students start to unconsciously experience the feelings of others and start to mindfully engage with others about their lived experiences or emotions. With the latter in mind, this concept of emotion regulation can manifest to spear head tough classroom discussions that pertain to feminist thought. We previously discussed Brenda Lyshaug comments about reorganizing feminist solidarity without a coalitional politics framework; it was here that she called for the cultivation of "enlarged sympathy" (Lyshaug, 2006, p. 79). I want to challenge this as enlarged empathy. Lyshaug's assertion of enlarged sympathy outlines a need for regulating our emotions when discussing concepts with others. If one were to couple this need with empathy's ability to manifest understanding outside of oneself, then the goal to reorganize feminist solidarity would be met

while integrating empathy pedagogy frameworks into feminist thought. To put simply, when students engage with others, utilizing the tools and skills of empathy and feminist thought, students are then mindfully discussing topics to bridge understanding between themselves and others. Furthermore, when students engage in this skill of empathy (emotion regulation), they are diminishing the need of sympathy to understand others. With empathy pedagogy in practice, students will have the skills of emotion regulation, perspective-taking, and self-other awareness that foster empathetic action over sympathetic action. Overall, feminist pedagogy needs empathy pedagogy to thrive and meet their goals in successes.

This discussion has highlighted how both feminist and empathy pedagogy benefit from each teaching practice. As educators, we need to be willing to examine our teaching practices. If we are not self-reflecting on what needs to change, or what we can utilize to make our strategies better, than we are just stagnant in our goals toward radical justice. By integrating feminist and empathy pedagogy, educators will foster the skills of empathy in their classroom spaces, build longstanding relationships with students, while on the road toward radical social justice thought.

CONCLUSION

Empathy pedagogy is an integrative teaching technique that has the power to raise higher education students' awareness on issues outside of themselves. The components of empathy pedagogy allow educators to evaluate what techniques they want to utilize when integrating empathy into their class spaces. We now know that students can develop empathy through role-play behavior and reading narrative/stories; these crucial avenues to building one's capacity for empathy allow students to self-reflect on their own experiences to find commonality in emotion with others' experiences. This chapter reviewed the previous empathy pedagogy methods of intervention in classroom spaces. As educators, we need to develop a conversation with the

existing literature to define how empathy pedagogy lives in higher education spaces. My hope is that once these conversations are established in varying department spaces, the integrations of empathy into class materials will develop new research avenues that lead to the development of a metanalytic analysis of what empathy pedagogy is definitively. The literature upholds the claims I make on empathy pedagogies integration into social justice class material. Interestingly, empathy pedagogy has the capacity to build individuals empathetic skills; however, the integrative teaching methodology still needs a grounding agent to bind the concept to other emotional experiences. In other words, I aim to examine, how does the concept of mutuality build on the ideas of empathy pedagogy in practice?

CHAPTER III

THE BINDING THEORY OF MUTUALITY

David Sauvage has created an interesting elemental space that channels empathetic

energy to people in need. His idea of an empathy pop-up shop is one where energy transfers are

done between others to unpack the load of trauma others may carry. Unconscious interpersonal

connections are built within the space Sauvage has created. Dynamics are created between the

empath teacher and the receptive trauma sufferer that allow for mutuality to grow those bonds in

a trusting environment. In his essay on the empathy pop-up, posted to Medium.com, Sauvage

explains below his interactions with customers who walk past his pop-up:

> 'Want some empathy?' I'd ask folks ambling by. Most ignored me or said no thanks, as if
>
> I were handing out free samples of vegetables. But some people stopped dead in their
>
> tracks. "Wait. What?"
>
> "It's a place to hang out and connect."
>
> "For real?" they'd exclaim.
>
> "Just take off your shoes."
>
> - (Sauvage, 2019)

The notion of building connections and "hanging out" with others that have similar struggles to

that of one's own is the concept of mutuality. At its core, mutuality can be defined as finding

similarity; in this chapter, I will define mutuality as the analysis of commonalities between

ourselves and others that build interpersonal empathy. The ingredients that lead towards the

transcendence of empathy in society would not be made possible without the binding agent of

mutuality to build trust between our interpersonal connections. In other words, when we create

spaces for building interpersonal connections, opportunities to connect through similar

experiences emerge. The building of interpersonal connections is an integral part of establishing trust to foster empathy in a shared space. These connections create opportunities that allow one to understand another through shared emotionality.

Sauvage created a space that procured the components necessary to build mutuality between others. In his empathy pop-up, he has built connections that allow strangers to empathize with the trauma of others by bonding them through trust exercises that share emotionality and feeling energy. I want to explore the concepts he subliminally utilizes to transcend empathy in society. With empathy pedagogy in practice, mutuality can be the bonding agent that fosters the communal trust and awareness of one's emotional self that is necessary for an interpersonal connection with another.

In the previous chapter, I briefly discussed the concept of mutuality; we now know the strength in finding our commonalities amongst our differences to facilitate empathy. However, individuals may be unwilling to discuss their traumas with others. The intricacies of life cause us to fear the other we perceive; our embodied knowledges curate our willingness to talk about our traumas with others outside the perceived norm. By dissecting the components of mutuality, higher education instructors can orchestrate a classroom relationship that shares the values of commitment to one another in the classroom. To put it simply, educators can curate higher education spaces that build interpersonal relationships to bond teacher-student connections in supportive emotionality. Higher education workers have an opportunity to broaden their definition of safe spaces by adding the concept of mutuality to their standard requirements. It is not enough to say, "we need to bring students together to create an environment of shared knowledge." As educators, we need to be actively seeking ways to facilitate discussion that leads to humane understanding. Empathy pedagogy has the ability to provide the framework for

students to gain the humane skills needed, but there is no way to decipher if the students are connecting to the narrative of others in their shared spaces. The concept of mutuality, embedded into the framework of empathy pedagogy, ensures that students are gaining a transnational understanding of what we construct as the perceived other. This chapter will overview the concept of mutuality in higher education spaces. I argue that mutuality is the binding agent of building one's capacity for empathy. The concept of mutuality generates similarity in emotion between individuals lived experiences. Interpersonal connections, or interpersonal empathy is built when the concept of mutuality is in flow. These built connections allow individuals to discuss areas of difference through commonality in emotion. As educators, we want to cultivate similarity, between students and their narratives, to transcend understanding outside of individual perceptions.

The definition of mutuality might be simply described as our diverse relationships, built by evaluating the sameness we have with one another. An article that illuminates the value of mutuality to build interpersonal relationships between mentor and mentees states a definition of mutuality that is pertinent to building one's capacity for empathy; Ashlee Lester et al. use the summated words of Jordan (1991) to explain how mutuality self-actualizes an individual to think about others' experiences, "…mutuality (is a term) of willingness and ability to reveal one's inner states, needs, and experiences, and valuing of the process of knowing and learning about the other" (2019, 148). The researchers examine how the concept of mutuality is difficult to measure; the researchers' comments on mutuality are as stated: "despite its centrality to relational models of mentoring, few have empirically studied mutuality, in large part because it is difficult to describe and measure" (2019, 148). With the previous quote in mind, one can analyze the concept of mutuality as a binding factor to the building blocks of empathy; in other words,

individuals need mutuality to build interpersonal relationships that foster empathetic trust between peers in higher education spaces.

For the purposes of this chapter, the methodological approach will develop how the concept of mutuality can be bound to the pedagogical assertions of empathy to further enhance the facilitation of understanding others outside oneself in higher education. Mutuality is the building of interpersonal relationships to strengthen the skills of empathy in students. The article's concluding arguments state that mutual relationships foster, "…all parties (to being) open and receptive to the impact another may make on them and in which there is a sense of shared emotional availability and an active and shared initiative" (Lester et al., 2019, p.148). Empathy pedagogy is the glue that fosters this shared emotionality; when the pedagogy is in practice, students can build trust in higher academic spaces by sharing their experiences with those they perceive would not understand their plight-- their embodied knowledge about those inside their classroom spaces starts to lift.

With mutuality embedded into the safe space built inside our higher education classroom structures, students are connecting the class material to similar aspects in their lives; students are better able to understand the trauma of others when illuminating their connections. Mentor and mentee relationships are improving backed by the concept of mutuality that influences both parties' ability to connect their personal emotions with the emotions shared by others in their spaces or shared narratives. These interpersonal relationships are built within the dimensions of mutuality that transcend the skills of empathy: "shared relational excitement and experiential empathy" (Lester, 2019, 152). This "shared relational excitement" is explained as a genuine desire to be present in relationships with others; in addition, "experiential empathy" was described as mentors sharing their relevant experiences with mentees to normalize their

experiences (Lester, 2019, 152-154). In other words, mentors are utilizing their position in the power dynamic of educator. Mentors are sharing their experiences with students to foster a trust that urges students to connect their emotions with others emotional experiences. This methodological analysis of mutuality can be examined to address the need of building interpersonal connections with students to strengthen empathy in classroom spaces. With empathy pedagogy backed by relational mutuality (or experiential empathy), students are spearheading movement organizing efforts that reach others outside their in-groups. Furthermore, the connections I make in this chapter--between mutuality and empathy-- can broaden the need of empathy pedagogy in higher education spaces.

Research between mutuality, empathy, and relational empowerment has found that these concepts are associated with one another (Evans, 2002, p. 89). One can infer that these concepts are influenced by one another to fulfill the student's goals of humane understanding that inadvertently uplifts empowerment in students. Furthermore, with this inference in mind, mutuality is the theoretical relationship that needs to be built within the classroom space to create trust amongst students. Students need to be willing to speak their truths to understand others outside their identities; mutuality and empathy facilitate the relational empowerment that allows students to share their narratives with others. The special relationship mutuality creates in classroom spaces still needs to be explored. Within the realm of empathy pedagogy, mutuality can create classroom relationships that urge a collective coalition politics that builds on the trust fostered.

POWER OF MUTUALITY IN CLASSROOM SPACES: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND

COALITION POLITICS

Research around coalition politics' inclusion into feminist solidarity politics is asserting

that the meshing of the two concepts is detrimental to feminist theory. Research by Brenda

Lyshaug outlines why a coalitional framework diminishes an individual's opportunity to build

interpersonal relationships in *Solidarity without "Sisterhood? Feminism and the Ethics of*

Coalition Building;"… (the framework of coalitional feminism created a historical fallout)

subsequent emphasis within feminism on women's diverse racial, cultural, and sexual identities

has made it difficult to account for the possibility of broad-based feminist activism; it has also

helped to suppress difference by entrenching existing identities at the expense of nascent and

hybrid identities"(Lyshaug, 2006, p. 78). To put simply, feminist solidarity frameworks that

institute coalitional politics have historically positioned issues from the lens of white women.

Diversity for inclusion was the historically instituted mechanism for advocacy for women.

Contemporarily, this mechanism for advocacy is still being instituted when addressing feminist

solidarity. To counteract the problematic meshing of coalitional politics and feminist solidarity,

educators can integrate empathy into their methods to develop solidarity for understanding

instead of inclusion advocacy.

When one is building interpersonal relationships, they are addressing their differences

more so than their commonalities; "coalition politics, as it is typically portrayed by its

proponents, does not reconcile the claims of diversity and the need for unity in a satisfying way.

Indeed, it simply inverts the central failing of second-wave sisterhood: It honors the claims of

diversity among women while ignoring the importance of commonality" (Lyshaug, 2006, p. 78).

When connecting these concepts to a social justice framework, the concept of a meshing between

a coalitional and feminist solidarity politics is problematic; especially, if those outside the identity of the movement are aligning differences to introduce concepts solely for inclusion. Feminist solidarity can be improved with an integrated empathy framework. Advocacy should be about finding commonalities between lived experiences in emotion to raise awareness. It should not be about, finding differences between one another to highlight issues outside of ourselves. At the end of the day, we should live by understanding our webs of identities interact with one another. We may not have the same experiences, but we do have similar feelings in emotion when it concerns different experiences. In other words, when we develop mutual connections in emotional experiences, we can begin to understand others outside of ourselves.

Furthermore, in Chapter One, I discussed the concept of the role of empathic communities to educate for justice. Educational spaces need to be evaluated to alleviate the traumatic pressure students feel. When building empathic communities in educational spaces, the concept of mutuality needs to be addressed to encompass that communal trust is being built between those in the classroom space. In addition, by addressing and nurturing the concept of mutuality the adverse meshing of coalition politics with feminist solidarity will not take effect. Students need to know that they are heard in their spaces of knowledge. When we share our voices in experience insights bloom inside ourselves that illuminate the experiences of others outside ourselves. With this is mind, the power of mutuality in classroom spaces in an important concept to examine for framing social justice material.

When discussing power, we often think of power dynamics that affect relationships between individuals. An article by Muldoon et al. addresses how sexual relationship power dynamics correlate to increased intimate partner violence with sex workers; "women's subordinate position within relationships, and society in general, have been identified as risk

factors for IPV…" (Muldoon et al., 2015, p. 513). We often forget the power of spaces to change

the social dynamics we conform to. One can utilize the concept of mutuality to examine the

power dynamics that affect the social interactions of those living under oppression. Within

classroom spaces, I have witnessed an overwhelming share of personal narratives that drive

others to helpful behavior; however, this helpful behavior can transition into a white savior

domain that ignores the colonized efforts that brings culture to its knees. For clarity, a white

savior is someone who enters the lives of others for personal gain. Most often, they are white

activists seeking credit for their endeavors in advocacy through recognition; however, advocacy

is not about commodifying experiences for individual gain. Christina Belcher discusses how

multicultural neoliberalism is influencing white savior mentalities in her article entitled, *There Is*

No Such Thing as a Post-Racial Prison. She claims, "Multiculturalist rhetoric in the

contemporary United States lays claim to post-raciality, ironically erasing difference as it

purports to promote social justice. The multiculturalist commitment to "color blindness" is

thought to be achieved through an open market, rather than the acknowledgment and destruction

of structural inequalities" (Belcher, 2016, p. 493). To put simply, the current rhetoric tied to

social justice activism encourages white saviorism that ignores differences in pursuit of diversity

for inclusion. Color-blindness informs the rhetoric that supports the claims of a white savior

complex. This ideology is detrimental to social justice activism. We need to find and nurture our

commonalities instead of acknowledging our differences for individual gain. Without shared

action there is no advocacy.

　　　　The practice of finding the similarities and connections across cultures alleviates the

potential for white saviorism; when sharing our traumas, we create a shared emotionality in

classroom spaces that transcends othered embodied knowledges. In other words, students are

better able to understand others' experiences with their shared view of emotional experience. This work can be done through sharing narrative "deep stories," which, as I discussed in the previous chapter as "…a feel-as- if story—it's the story feelings tell, in the language of symbols" (Hochschild, 2016, p. 135). The "language of symbols" is the analyzed emotion in experience to reach understanding. It is not, analyzing experiences for similarities that are situated for students as an aim for understanding. Mutuality in classroom spaces lays the ground for the shared emotional work needed to understand others' physical day-to-day life. Students are better able to generate coalitional frameworks that address their and others' traumatic needs. When we share our experiences, our identities start to mesh with one another. This is relational empowerment; students are connecting with each other to form a relationship that empowers one another goals towards social justice successes. Mutuality bonds students together to find their intersectional grievances; in other words, the facilitation of mutuality contributes to bonding classmates together through their narrative experiences that sheds light on their intersectional traumas.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND NARRATIVE IDENTITY

Emily Esfahani Smith goes into the intricacies of narrative identity in her TED talk entitled, "The two kinds of stories we tell about ourselves." Her talk utilizes the concept of narrative to build positivity in our lives by cultivating our belonging through our relationships with others. The research states that prosocial helping behavior is influenced when we share our narrative identities, since "meaning comes from belonging to and serving something beyond (oneself) (Smith, TED Talk, 2:01). By curating our own narrative, we are able to see our lives in our self-realized image—things start to become clear. Over time, one can start to weave a different story; our individual edits to stories change others' lives, since we start to identify their emotionality with our mutual experiences in emotions. Lastly, Smith stresses that, one "won't

change their story overnight"; we must be willing to embrace painful memories that bridge new insights and understanding within oneself (Smith, TED Talk, 8:40). In addition, this concept of changing our individual narratives to influence positivity in our lives carries significant meaning in relation to empathy pedagogy in practice. When it concerns narrative identity, the concept of changing our individual narratives to influence positivity in our lives is grounded when we share our reconstructed stories with others; in other words, when we share our narratives with others, interpersonal empathy is built between others when emotion in experience is analyzed. Smith claim leads one to believe that the sharing of our narratives solidifies the multiplicities of our identities. Interestingly, when we restructure our narrative stories, new insights emerge within us. By restructuring our narratives, we influence the building of interpersonal relationships through sharing our curated reality; that is, relationships that bridge understanding and communal trust with commonalities in emotional strife between one another. The building of interpersonal empathy is a necessary ingredient for mutuality. If we want educators to transcend empathy in society, we need to allow them to explore the transcendence of empathy in higher education classroom spaces. I believe this cannot be possible without the binding theory of mutuality. Lastly, when we acknowledge our narratives and how they culminate our experiences in our identities we are influencing mutuality by sharing our narrative identities with one another in higher education classroom spaces.

HOW MUTUALITY IS INFLUENCED BY NARRATIVE IDENTITY

When we share our narrative experiences with others, we are building the necessary interpersonal empathy skills that foster mutuality in trust between ourselves and others. Our experiences curate our narratives of identity. Our web of experiences determines our lived realities in our various identities. At this point I ask: what happens when students are stuck

behind their own empathy walls; and how can educators overcome the trap of opinion that inhibits mutuality from forming in higher academic spaces? Mutuality can strengthen the concept of narrative-identity within empathy pedagogy; students can live their narrative experiences in the procured spaces of vulnerability, while sharing their narrative-identities with one another to bridge their commonalities in difference. With the latter in mind, mutuality is influenced by the sharing of our narrative identities when empathy pedagogy is in practice.

Gloria Anzaldúa outlines the categories of identities we align and fit into our definitions of individual identity. She asserts that the multiplicities of our identities are caused by a web of interactions; "this new tribalism…recognizes that we are responsible participants in the ecosystem (complete set of interrelationships between a network of living organisms and their physical habitats) in whose web we're individual strands" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 67). This web is developed through experiences that shape our individual multiplicities in our identities. With this web of identities in mind, she calls for a "new tribalism" that takes shape when one tells their story of experience to others; to put simply, when others share their stories of experience, they are exploring their commonalities rather than their differences—one is aware of their responsibility in the nexus of life, or web (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 67). By utilizing the methodology of narrative identity, Anzaldúa is organizing her assertions around the concept of mutuality; "the point may not be to move beyond a nationalistic search for (cultural) roots but rather to undertake transformative work that processes and facilitates evolving as a social group, becoming an extended tribe, and developing a new tribalism (Anzaldúa, 2015, p.75). In other words, as educators we need to cultivate spaces that facilitate mutuality between students so they can develop movement organizing together in support of others outside themselves. Anzaldúa's methodological approach to connecting individuals' experiences through storytelling is an

example of empathy pedagogy in practice. Specifically, when letting students analyze the narrative stories of others for commonalities, they are understanding another person's experience through their own experiences.

Dan P. McAdams states, "Narrative identity is a special kind of story—a story about how I came to be the person I am becoming" (McAdams, 2018, p.364). Students need to be willing to explore their individual stories so they can evolve with one another in their classroom spaces; furthermore, narrative identity is a profound concept when narratives are exchanged between others. When narratives are exchanged, differences are transcended between students in the hope of building strong interpersonal connections for empathetic understanding. One can examine how Anzaldúa is utilizing narratives to change individual perceptions of identity stereotypes; "We discover, uncover, create our identities as we interrelate with others and our…surroundings" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 75). In other words, when we build interpersonal empathy with others, we illuminate new identity categorizations within ourselves.

When integrating empathy into higher education spaces, students have the capacity to learn that they are "…each comprised of information, billions of bits of cultural knowledge superimposing many different categories of experience (Anzaldúa, 2015, p.69). Students have the capacity to learn about themselves when practicing the skills of empathy to understand others outside themselves. The quote signifies the possibility our webs of identity have when we are interrelated with one another's emotion in experience. Specifically, students have the capacity to bridge their differences when analyzing similar struggles between cultures with their comprised cultural knowledge and categories of experience. When giving students the opportunity to examine other narratives, outside their own identity categorizations, they will be able to explore the similar trajectory of systemic violence others have endured over time; students have their

own personal journeys to share that can illuminate class material while exposing the systemic violence outside one's own realm of experience. By outlining the concepts Anzaldúa asserts, one can connect the notions she claims to that of empathy pedagogy in practice.

Anzaldúa essentially states that students are better able to identify with one another's experience if they are receptive to the new insights that flash between the cracks of one's unconscious; "If I'm receptive, a new… insight will flash up through the cracks of the unconscious, what I call…a subterranean reservoir of personal and collective knowledge" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 66). In other words, the sharing of narratives has the power to produce emotionality within students when they are engaged in emotion work; emotionality can change an individual's perceptions of one's surviving situation, if educators specify that students find the commonalities in the othered narratives/stories. Empathy is built within the classroom space when emotional responses to material are involved and nurtured. Anzaldúa specifies, throughout her text, that individuals can learn from others by sharing their experiences with "deep feeling", "…intimate listening is more productive than detached self-interest…" (Anzaldúa, 2015, p.77-79). If educators were to align their classroom spaces with her values, empathy pedagogy would be in practice and its transcendence into society would be possible. When students are aware of their individual impact on othered experiences, they realize new insights about their privilege that was not pertinent to them before. More importantly when students are aware of their voices impact, change ensues.

Further research analyzes how students who know the power of narrative-storytelling have improved helping behavior, since "empathy transforms moral principles into pro-social cognitions…giving them motivating force" (Selles, 2011, p. 85). In other words, students who understand others' emotional reactions are willing to help because the emotionality is similar to

their own. Once students are aware of their impact on others, they start to mediate their rapport. Students are then mindful of others' identity categories, due to narrative-storytelling's ability to transmit feelings that share our individual emotions with other's leading to a change in individual perceptions of othered experiences. Anzaldúa captures how our lived experiences comprise our identities into separate categories that interact with one another. The concepts she outlines are a direct line to building one's capacity for empathy. It is up to us; we must be willing to share and acknowledge others' narrative experiences in their identities—we all deserve to be seen and heard in our various geographies of self.

HOW STORYTELLING BUILDS MUTUALITY

Narrative is known as telling one's story. It is also known as the stories that are told about others. When one is in control of their narrative-identity, they have a special type of agency that allows them to change the dominant narrative that births stereotypes about their culture. However, not many know the power they hold. When fostering social justice action within students, educators need to be wary of aligning their materials with a master narrative that disguises personal experiences in discrimination. Storytelling gives students the ability to harness their narrative identities through the act of storytelling. Humane understanding is illuminated when others share the stories that culminate their lived experiences; "…the interhuman nature of storytelling as narrative ethics demands both listening and telling" that are crucial to the development of student's moral obligations to their peer experiences with trauma (Selles, 2011, p. 79). By sharing one another's personal stories, students are bridging their vulnerabilities with mutuality for a binding communal trust that is necessary for the birth of interpersonal empathy. Furthermore, students are more aware of their control over the master narrative when they rewrite their own narratives—conceptualizing their personal experiences into stories of self.

An article entitled "Visible: Women Writers of Color: Faith Adiele" by Deesha Philyaw highlights the importance of curating our own narratives to build agency within ourselves for protection against oppressive experiences. When we feed into the narrative stereotypes situated against our discriminated bodies, we are continuing the cycle of oppression. Deesha Philyaw interviews the storytelling guru Faith Adiele to see how storytelling can build empathic communities when others cultivate a space to share their narratives; specifically, Adiele states what storytelling can do for a community of people, "…storytelling is how we connect with people and change. It's how we collect and add to and complicate the master narrative" (Phiyaw, 2018). When we share our stories with others, our voices are heard; interestingly though, when we take control and rewrite the narratives designed to other us, we are building an empathic community that heals.

When students are put in an environment to share their lived experiences, vulnerability manifests, and mutuality is formed between others. Furthermore, when we build these spaces for empathic connection between members of a curated community, a transaction of active listening between others is created in vulnerable spaces of emotion. Selles describes this active attention to the others story as an "emptying of the self…to become an instrument for receiving the meaning of the other"; in addition, "A listening self that is open to narrative chooses interrelationship over autonomy" (Selles, 2011, p. 80). To put simply, when students interact with one another's narrative identities they are engaging in the tools of empathy: perspective-taking, active listening, and emotion regulation. These tools build the capacity for empathy in an individual, but they also transfer the elements of empathy onto another. Interpersonal empathy is built in active listening spaces, when we leave our self-identity categories at the door of conversation. Empathy pedagogy allows students to empty their embodied knowledges about the

perceived other in a reflective space, since "…emptying is more than mere detachment or removal of the personal from the picture; rather, it is a disciplined, reflective regard" (Selles, 2011, p. 80). In other words, students are activating their moral obligations (or pro-social helping behaviors) to their peers with a communal restructuring of the master narrative when narratives are shared and heard. Students are then rewriting master narratives that may not be applicable to their own narrative identities, when listening to other perspectives of emotional experience. The capacity for storytelling to influence the tools of empathy is resounding. The binding of mutuality, within the actions of sharing and voicing our narratives, builds interpersonal empathy within classroom spaces. Storytelling gives students the ability to rewrite the dominant narratives situated against them. In these empathic community spaces, students are building the interpersonal empathy necessary to foster trust between others that values commonalities rather than differences.

CONCLUSION

We now know more about the concept of mutuality, as a binding communication phenomenon, which builds the necessary trust to foster empathy in students through higher education spaces. When in connection to empathy pedagogy, mutuality is formed through the development of interpersonal empathy. Once trust is built, students interact with one another's emotional experiences to find commonalities in emotion rather than differences. The concept of mutuality can be built within empathic community classroom spaces though narrative identity exercises. Our webs of identity validate our connections with others who do not have the same experiences as us. Fascinatingly, the concept develops a positive connection in classroom spaces that values commonalty over difference when talking about lived experiences. We need this

grounding ideology as educators before we start to integrate empathy pedagogy into our areas of

teaching.

CHAPTER IV

EMPATHY PEDAGOGY IN ACTION

Empathy pedagogy has the capacity to greatly enhance social justice teaching

methodologies. In Chapter One, I briefly discussed how the dominant empathy pedagogy

material favors a passive approach to empathy pedagogy. In other words, the emotional work

designated as assignments for students looks at others through is a self-lens rather than a

collective (or shared) understanding of others' experiences. Students need to imagine themselves

outside of their lived experiences to successfully empathize with another person's experience.

Interestingly, abolitionist teaching methodology demands to employ a "radical imagination

focused on intersectional justice through community building and grassroot organizing" (Love,

2019, p. 12). This "radical imagination" educators aim to inspire in students can be

accomplished with the assistance of empathy pedagogy. In addition, empathy pedagogy

addresses the limitations of passive approaches to the emotional work required. For example,

Alison Grove O'Grady discusses their observations while teaching literary works with empathy

pedagogy. O'Grady focuses on, "discussing empathy as a newly framed pedagogy that moves

from passive to active given appropriate, considered conditions and developmental spectrum"

(O'Grady, 2020, abstract). To put simply, empathy pedagogy in practice needs active

participation in one's emotions for empathy to be fostered. Without a designated safe space, and

personal mindful awareness, students will be unable to build upon the necessary traits of

empathy needed for the societal transcendence of empathy. This chapter will overview the

instructional lesson plans I created to alleviate the passive approaches, and spearhead movement

organizing, when empathy pedagogy is in practice. In addition, I will be integrating empathy

pedagogy techniques within feminist teaching unit frameworks. I believe this will further ground

the idea that feminist and empathy pedagogy generate desirable goals in educational success when the methods of teaching are in practice together. When empathy and feminist pedagogy are married, the goals of each teaching strategy are exponentially met.

In the previous chapters, I discussed the importance of empathy pedagogy for the transcendence of empathy into society—otherwise known as social empathy. I want to illuminate this claim by introducing the potential for empathy pedagogy to build the capacity of empathy in higher education students with assignment interaction. The potential for empathy pedagogy to nurture the traits of empathy in students is measured by the assignment response and/or interactions within the assignment requirements. Students are better able to empathize with others outside the dominant norm when they have the route to do so. Similarly, Bettina Love asserts how abolitionist teaching can revolutionize social justice activism when educators share the societal truth, In *We Want to do More Than Survive…*, Love outlines how educators share their political stance in classroom spaces with students: "the intentionality of these words demonstrates these educators' deep sense of understanding how structural inequality is reproduced and how education that does not hide the truth from students is one of the first steps of freedom dreaming and fighting for freedom" (Love, 2019, p. 112). When students engage with educators on their stance on social justice issues, mutuality is formed to further bond interpersonal empathy to teacher-student relationships. Assignments create an avenue to start these conversations and build the necessary relationships to foster empathy in students. Abolitionist teaching works in tandem with empathy pedagogy to mindfully engage with social justice material with an empathy lens. When we connect abolitionist teaching methodology and empathy pedagogy, when creating assignments, students receive an intersectional understanding of the social complexities of others' lived experiences. Assignment preparation and delivery is

the necessary route that fosters the traits of empathy I assert (re: perspective-taking, emotion regulation, and active listening). Interestingly, the abolitionist teaching strategy of "freedom dreaming"—"dreams grounded in a critique of injustice" —is similar to the self-reflection elements of empathy pedagogy (Love, 2019, p. 101). I believe when the concept of "freedom dreaming" is integrated, when creating assignments with an empathy focus, students will become passionate about advocating for others outside their identities. Furthermore, when students participate in these assignments, the bonds of trust are built between teacher and student. These bonds allow the teacher-student relationship to flourish. When interpersonal empathy is built between teacher and student, the bond allows both parties to share assignments; when assignments are shared, mutuality is nurtured.

This chapter will discuss how examining assignment design reveals the emotional work that my lesson plans facilitate for the development and measurement of empathy pedagogy. In addition, within the world of empathy pedagogy, teachers are enhancing their creativity by creating their own assignments, while keeping students engaged since the assignment styles differ. With this in mind, it is important to discuss the possibilities for the assignments offered to put empathy pedagogy into practice.

This chapter will also discuss how assignments bolster empathy within students. I will explore the assignments of educators who utilize empathy pedagogy and observe how willing students are to accept this emotional work in their lives. It is not enough to say, "I want to be empathic, or more empathetic." As a result of our complacency in unjust systems of oppression, educators have resorted to using empathy pedagogy in a passive approach. This will just not do. In order to undo various embodied knowledges that we carry into higher education, we have to examine the ways others are curating their own space. As educators, we must be willing to listen

to others' approaches to identify what approach we are willing to utilize for our pedagogical style. I believe empathy pedagogy offers educators the opportunity to build their own identity of self when creating their assignments intended to foster the skills of empathy in students. To start, let us explore how willing students are to express their emotions in higher education spaces.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS: WHAT DO STUDENTS WANT?

In my classroom observations in 2021, I surveyed students to whom I lectured on the topic of identity categorization. At the end of my lecture, I asked these students the following questions to assess if they would be interested in the emotion work of empathy pedagogy: what is one important thing you learned in class today? Are you more trusting, vulnerable, and in tune with your identity after sharing personal stories? Why or why not? Do you think you will participate in analyzing and mindfully engaging in emotion work (sharing self-reflected experiences and emotional feelings) in classroom spaces? Why or why not? I received six open-ended responses back to the questions I asked above. I found it interesting that all six students were willing to mindfully engage in emotion work; however, their personal healing journeys need to be accounted for. For example, one student responded, "Yes, (I will mindfully engage in emotion work), but it depends on the context. Some emotional experiences I don't know that I would ever want to share those. Maybe in the future." With this in mind, it is important to nurture students' healing journey by allowing them the space to participate at their own pace. Empathy pedagogy is a teaching strategy that facilitates emotional conversation to bridge understanding through mutually felt experiences. Emotional work is tough and needs to be gradually introduced to students as teacher-student relationships evolve. Students have to feel they have the trust of their peers and teacher before they share vulnerable information. With empathy pedagogy in place, students can start to unpack their emotional experiences through the

assignments that are aimed toward getting students to understand themselves first so they can empathize with others outside themselves.

Interestingly, another student felt that the opportunity to mindfully engage with emotion work gives the classroom space the ability to build solidarity with one another; "Yes! I think it's useful for students to have spaces to debrief and build solidarity." I believe the ability to debrief allows students to see they are not alone in their emotional thoughts. Students need to be aware of their self-other interactions before others feel comfortable to share their personal experiences. The opportunity to debrief creates an atmosphere that builds trust in conversation that fosters this classroom solidarity for others' emotional experiences. In other words, vulnerable information can be shared in the classroom space when we lead topics of interest with an empathy focus. Educators can curate a space that allows students to feel comfortable to share their experiences. In addition, another student out of the six added that mindfully engaging with emotion work "…provides a greater sense of community with peers." This sense of community is intertwined with the concept of solidarity. Communal solidarity is built in these classroom spaces when we integrate empathy pedagogy into topics that analyze unjust systems of oppression. As educators, and advocates, we need to establish this communal solidarity, so students understand that when we support one voice, we support all voices. Abolitionist teaching strategy utilizes the concept of intersectionality to establish the interconnection between issues of oppression within the community (Love, 2019, p. 12) With this framework, students are able to analyze unjust systems of oppression together. Students understand the lived experience of their peers when they hear their stories of shared experience. The radical energy of the classroom space is established when students stand in communal solidarity with one another; students advocate for their rights and the

rights of others, in their shared space, when they participate in assignments of understanding together.

When students understand concepts together in a group, they are mindfully engaging in emotion work. One student wrote, "(emotion work is) extremely helpful in personal growth and raising group consciousness." Students are collectively self-reflecting on their embodied knowledges in connection to the integrated empathy material. New insights are illuminated when students share their connections to the material together. In this way, group consciousness is raised towards issues one may have not been familiar with or had surface knowledge of before. This practice is very important for a student's personal growth into building their capacity for empathy; more importantly, students are understanding others' experiences outside themselves when shared knowledge is explored together. In other words, group consciousness being raised in the classroom space suggests that the goal of empathy pedagogy is being met. Since students are collectively understanding each other's experiences in emotion to understand other's lived experiences in oppression.

Furthermore, when the six students were asked, "are you more trusting, vulnerable, and in tune with your identity after sharing personal stories? Why or why not?", they agreed that they were more in tune with their identity after sharing personal stories. One student answered, "Yes, because I learn more about myself when I share with others," while another student replied, "Sometimes, because I still overthink people's reactions and sometimes, I do not care at all". Though differing in their responses, both students identify a need to connect with others' experiences to illuminate their own perceptions of their identity. The comment about caring or not caring about others' reactions to their personal story suggests an element of fear. This element of fear can be washed away as students participate in the assignments integrated with an

empathy focus. Gradually, students start to realize that their peers' emotions are similar to their own. This realization provides an understanding that other's perceptions of themselves may not be how they perceive them. To put simply, students are better able to connect with other classmates, when empathy is at the forefront. Students can gradually share vulnerable information when they realize their peers feel as they do. In addition, another student from the six shared their answer to the question, "are you more trusting, vulnerable, and in tune with your identity after sharing personal stories? Why or why not?", as, "Yes, I am, especially if I am not judged. I become more trusting of that community." The experience of trust grounds the students' ability to be more vulnerable in these curated spaces of classroom empathy. When students are not judged by their personal experiences, they understand that their lived experiences are "normal"; their feelings are validated by the group, making it easier for students to be more vulnerable in the classroom space. This is important to note, because when we build empathy in classroom spaces, we need to ensure communal solidarity is being fostered. Students want to feel secure in their classroom spaces. The only way to do that is to lead topics of interest with an empathy focus.

With empathy pedagogy in place, students can have the opportunity to find themselves. By sharing personal stories that illuminate the topics of interest, students are spearheading communal solidarity to understand others outside themselves. I believe communal classroom solidarity needs to be nurtured in order for students to feel comfortable sharing vulnerable information. Students need to feel comfortable sharing information with others to build the necessary interpersonal empathy in higher education spaces. The building of an empathic community in higher education spaces is possible when students share vulnerable information with one another. As educators, we need to foster the sharing of vulnerable information to build

connections between students that allow them to understand one another's emotion in experience. I believe, the analyzing of commonalities, when sharing vulnerable information, is what sustains the interrelationships built within empathic community spaces. When we integrate empathy pedagogy into our individual learning curriculum, students understand themselves and understand the perspective experiences of others when they hear their stories in their voices. The power of story is influential to empathy pedagogy in practice. Let's examine how I integrated empathy pedagogy techniques into feminist teaching frameworks.

LET'S TALK LESSON PLANS: PODCASTING AND OUTSIDE CLASS MATERIAL

Creating lesson plans for facilitation of discussion or learning critical material can be interactive, in order to alleviate the passive approaches to empathy pedagogy. For example, research suggests students gain more information from the material when they connect with it kinesthetically than when they read or recite items verbatim; the building of critical thinking and enhanced learning retention is developed when movement strategies to learning are in place (Wagner 2014). When generating material to facilitate both mutuality and recall, educators need to be receptive to all the tools at their disposal. Interestingly, podcasting has been a useful medium to disseminate information about personal topics ranging from political interest to true crime dissections. Deoksoon Kim and Seung Eun Jang conducted a study that evaluated ESOL educators and English learner students' use of podcasting and blogging as a teaching tool. They found, after "reviewing the various case studies of English learners which were posted by their classmates offered them insight into both the social and cultural backgrounds of the English learners and their second language literacy processes" (Kim & Jang, 2014, p. 227). To put simply, after students listened to the podcasting assignments of the other students, students were better able to understand to lived experience of their peers. When creating my lesson plans, I

utilized podcasting as a main element for at-home self-reflection on the material being learned. My hope is that cultural understanding will be fostered after students hear the lived experiences of others from others. In my observations, I have found that the building of commonality between lived experiences flourishes when students listen to others' lived experiences. For example, when I created my lesson plan on the unit of intergenerational feminism, I utilized podcasting so students could hear the individual stories of women who lived through each wave. The establishment of connection between each wave, as opposed to separate tiers, is present when students listen to how contemporary feminism utilizes a multigenerational approach to topics of interest—if it is your war, it is my war too. When students listen to the experiences of others, they are analyzing those experiences to find commonalities between their viewpoints and the viewpoints of feminists from a different generation. This practice allows students to build mutual connections with the class material, as opposed to ostracizing the material from the students' lives; for example, students learn about the waves of feminism in historical perspective and about how these waves interrelate. The difference between feminist pedagogy and empathy pedagogy is that empathy pedagogy focuses on connection or collective existence, whereas feminist pedagogy focuses on raising one's awareness on issues of concern. Both concepts are generating a change in one's previous perceptions of reality. When both concepts come together, information is disseminated to build connections with others outside oneself and raise awareness about social complexities. When empathy pedagogy is integrated into a feminist pedagogy framework, social justice activism can be radicalized in these combined methods of teaching.

Abolitionist teaching prioritizes radical social justice activism through critiquing racial injustice; when educators align their views of feminist solidarity, with an empathy focus, they are understanding the critiques of racial injustice. The educator's ideas then create the flow of

influence for the classroom space to foster ideas of justice for all. It is important to create a space for solidarity in higher education for mutuality to form so understanding can be illuminated. Outside class materials, reading and podcasting, provide students with the space to assess their own identity in solidarity. For example, in all my lesson plans I mix op-ed articles, podcasts that connect to the lecture, and general literature that describes the lecture context. I believe, by mixing outside class materials in this way, students are analyzing their own thoughts based on their experiences with the issue we intend to cover. By allowing students to come to ask their own questions and develop their own opinions, classroom spaces become spaces of facilitation through learned experiences. To put simply, students are sharing their lived experiences after reading articles that pertain to the topic of discussion; therefore, students are transcending past individuality to express their concern to a collective. We know that mutuality builds the necessary interpersonal empathy between persons that fosters empathy. I believe outside class materials prepare students to analyze their own embodied knowledge about topics. In one of my outside class materials for lesson plan two, I asked students to watch a TED talk entitled "Real Talk: Mapping our Identities Through Personal Narrative." The speaker, Diana Moreno, focuses on the power of narratives to enlighten our awareness of our identity interactions within ourselves and others. Moreno's educating strategy facilitates vulnerability within students. Essentially, Moreno states, vulnerability is necessary for the sharing of narratives to build trust and mutuality between individuals in classroom spaces. By sharing our personal stories, we are understanding others and their experiences; when this is done successfully, students can start to collectively see the multiplicities of their identities. The TED talk's importance was to show students the web of their identities when interacting with others outside themselves. My selection of outside class materials invites students to reflect on themselves before they enter the shared

classroom space. My hope is that before facilitation questions begin, students will recognize their embodied knowledge so we can keep the shared higher education space communally trusting and safe. When educators situate their classroom space to cover core concepts that revolve around single issue topics, students lose sight of the web of connection between single issue topics and lived experience. To build a students' capacity for empathy, educators need to allow spaces for active listening and reflection to illuminate the complexities behind societal injustice.

When educators utilize the tool of podcasting, students are building the traits of empathy through actively listening to others' lived experiences and self-reflecting on their own identities of experience. In other words, students are better able to understand the lived experiences of others when they hear their stories; "Narratives, argue (Lewis and Sandra Hinchman, 'explain a group to itself, legitimate its deeds and aspirations, and provide important benchmarks for non-members trying to understand the groups cultural identity'" (Selles, 2011, p.131). For my outside class materials in my first lesson plan, I utilized an article that shares a story of experience between OBOS (Our Bodies Ourselves) volunteers Melanie, a twenty-three-year-old feminist, and Norma, an eighty-five-year-old feminist (Floyd, 2017, para. 1). Their dialogue illuminates the importance of utilizing the term intergenerational waves of feminism. The term spearheads important conversation to continue and teach different aspects of experience to different generations of feminists. In other words, when different waves of thought in feminism converge, understanding is illuminated and connections are made to fight the necessary fight. Students need to hear these stories to build commonality over difference. When we teach students the waves of feminism from a tiered perspective, students often decenter themselves and examine the tiers from a historical point of view. When we integrate empathy pedagogy, students are centering their thoughts on the material provided to find their place in the ideas presented. As educators,

we want to facilitate self-reflection and active listening to foster the skills of empathy within students. Podcasting can do just that, while connecting the elements of storytelling to generate components of narrative identity within the self; it essentially raises one's awareness about others at the margins of oppression from their voices.

Podcasting prompts the self-reflection and active listening necessary to foster the traits of empathy in students. The avenue of storytelling can be examined here when we dissect the components of what makes podcasting a critical tool that facilitates the crucial skills of empathy. In, *How One Professor Uses Podcasts to Teach Empathy and Social Justice*, Ashley Neglia interviews Dr. Jessica Calarco, an assistant professor at Indiana University Bloomington, on how she generates the skills of empathy within her students while teaching her sociology course content with the teaching tool of podcasting (Neglia 2019). Furthermore, to generate an understanding of lived experiences outside oneself, Calarco taught her sociology course as a "listen and learn experience." She states:

> "There is a real value in the human element for students who are willing to talk to people they don't know. Conducting podcast interviews and assembling them into a cohesive story helps students understand societal problems from the inside out. They learn to communicate effectively with different groups of people around the same topics. This may mean talking with people from 'both sides'—or many sides—of a single issue." (qtd in Neglia, 2019, para. 9)

Dr. Calarco utilizes her role as educator to instill a sense of understanding other human experiences through the tools of podcasting. In this way, podcasting is one conduit in the teaching tool bag that fosters the skills of empathy in students. Students are better able to interact with groups outside themselves when they listen to other experiences through a podcast network.

Multigenerational boundaries are shattered when students listen to the experiences of those that came before them. When we shift the focus of understanding from a single issue to the complexities that compound issues, students begin to connect the aspects of socialization that create margins of oppression. Social justice conversations begin to commence. When educators curate a safe space for students to assemble/listen to podcasts, they are manifesting communal trust for shared emotionality to flourish. Interestingly, Calarco mentions the importance of storytelling, but not in the context I have previously mentioned. She utilizes other's stories through podcasts instead of relying on others to share their stories through narrative, or written expression. I want to adopt her framework but include other's narratives through written expression to facilitate the skills of empathy gradually in students. I believe this is the best approach; especially, if students need to adjust to the vulnerable environment empathic community's foster.

When students engage in narrative identity work, as previously discussed in Chapter Two, they are telling their own stories to demystify stereotypes about identities outside the dominant norm. Calarco expresses that when students use the medium of podcasting to hear and gather others stories educators need to engage them with, "Opening (their) eyes as to why; Let them choose what moves them; Design and assign specific roles; Provide students with time and resources; Encourage them to share their feedback—and their work" (Neglia, 2019, para. 14). To put simply, when integrating empathy into higher education we need to change the approaches to disseminating information. When students are engaged in the assignment work, they are excited to learn more. Students pro-social helping behavior is improved when they hear the voices of others share their emotion in experience. Podcasting is a tool that facilitates the

storytelling elements of narrative identity, so students and other personal voices can be heard. This classroom work is social justice activism!

Abolitionist teaching strategies focus on the importance of sharing other voices outside one's own identity. Love aligns her ideology with the theory of intersectionality born from Black feminism: "Black feminism is concerned about the lives of those deemed most disposal in society: dark children, dark queer and trans folx, and women all along the gender spectrum" (Love, 2019, p. 140). When educators utilize this thought process with an integrated empathy focus, silent voices are heard, outside the margins of oppression that we often miss or neglect to see. To put simply, the world of podcasting can help put empathy pedagogy into practice, further encouraging students to spearhead social justice causes they feel connected to. Humanitarian solidarity evolves when abolitionist teaching strategies intermingle with empathy podcasting assignments. For example, future lesson plans could incorporate assigning podcasting creation to students that advocates for voices outside the margins of oppression. Interestingly, podcasting is not the only tool that facilitates the fostering of the skills of empathy in students. In-class activities can also manifest the goals of empathy pedagogy, within students, as they share their lived experiences with others in the space.

LET'S TALK LESSON PLANS: IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

In all my lesson plans, I utilize in-class activities to build the necessary skills of empathy. I title the in-class activity with a hashtag to signify that the activity will build the skill mentioned; for example, "In-class activity #PerspectiveTaking, #Self-Reflect" (Lesson Plan 2). This allows students to mindfully prepare for the lesson or activity planed. Students are better able to enter the empathy stage of emotion regulation when they are aware of the emotion-work they are going to partake in. The unit materials utilized podcasting and personal narratives to

convey understanding to students about differing identity categorizations; specifically, students analyzed how they can see emotionality in differing identities through poetics. The first in-class activity asked students to draw themselves using identifiers that make up their personality. I found that this exercise allows students to connect with themselves. In Chapter One, I discussed how one's development of empathy is built when a person knows themselves; self-other awareness is grounded when a person understands who they are in connection with others. When students participate in this first exercise, they are building their critical self-awareness skills of their identity. As educators, we want students to understand themselves so they can nurture bonds that build mutuality between others. To put simply, if students were to act like others outside of themselves, they would try to convey a pseudo-empathy that sympathizes but does not truly understand the other's lived experience. That is why these in-class activities are so important; they gradually prepare students for the emotion-work they engage with throughout the semester.

Integrating empathy pedagogy into rigorous material can be a daunting task; however, it allows creativity to blossom and community to flourish in classroom spaces that utilize this method of teaching. The second in-class activity I utilize in my second lesson plan addresses the building of mutuality between students. In my template, I ask students to partake in a self-reflection in-class activity. The exercise guides students to recreate a short personal story or a formative incident that helped to shape who they are; at the end of the exercise, students are then asked to write a word of emotion to describe how they felt in that experience. As a class, we share the words of emotion with one another in the hopes of bridging commonalities between felt experiences in our different identities. To put simply, "the goal is to look for commonalities in the words that define one's feeling. Experimentally, the students will realize their classmates

share their similar feelings in emotion; the only difference is the experience that fostered those emotions" (Lesson Plan 2). When students hear the similar words that convey their personal emotion, they understand that their peers' feelings in emotion align with their own. The exercise helps students to see that others may be different from them—outwardly—but we are all connected in our experience of emotion. The concept bridges the understanding of narrative identity, from Gloria Anzaldúa, that grounds our webs of identity for mutual connection in the narrative retelling of personal experience. However, some students may not be comfortable sharing personal experiences with their peers. In my hope to alleviate the pressure from students to share their emotional experiences, I ask them to share the single word of emotion. By sharing the one word of emotion, students are intersecting different identities of experience to build interpersonal empathy between peers.

Similarly, in my first lesson plan, I created an activity that facilitates the building of mutuality with multigenerational feminists so students can understand the intergenerational waves of feminism. I asked students to self-reflect on what we have discussed in class, by writing a letter to a person they admire. In the letter, they are to address how this person has shaped them into the person they are today. They are to include their viewpoints or quotes that resonate with them in the moment. After they have finished writing the letter, they are to answer the question, "is this person a feminist?" with a yes or no answer. At the end of the activity, they explain below the letter why they believe they are a feminist in a sentence. I then ask them to only share the yes or no answers at the end of the write up. I only ask students to share their yes or no answers because personal material can be difficult to discuss in a class space. In my observations, students are willing to explain their yes or no answers—or their word of emotions—without me having to definitively ask to share their stories of experience. Overall, the

protocol to share the single answers explores the possibility of emotional experience between students for the building of mutuality. Interpersonal empathy is fostered when these one-word answers are shared since students need to discover more about one another with one another. Empathy pedagogy only facilitates the connection between our lived experiences. Students need to do the emotional healing work necessary to comfortably share their experiences with peers. Overall, leading class material with an empathy focus creates a safe space to share experiences, but it does not force others to share those experiences.

In my third in-class activity, I signify with a hashtag that students are going to be building the skills of empathy through role-play. The activity I created is intended to facilitate understanding another's perspective outside of one's own. I ask students to, "Try to imagine yourself in another's shoes. It could be anyone from your past, to the present, and reflect on your experience as that person. How would you positively communicate with someone you did not identify with?" (Appendix Lesson Plan Three) This assignment is geared towards immersing oneself in the experienced identity of another. I found it easier for a student to imagine someone they know personally, before a they can begin to understand the perspective of someone they do not know. These exercises are personal in-class reflections. They can be shared, but their intention is to allow a student to mindfully engage with different opinions. The second half of the assignment asks students to analyze the following: "What are the challenges involved (with communicating with differing opinions)? Reflect on a situation where you were at odds with someone in an argument. Try to write from their point of view." Ultimately, when students write from another's point of view, students are trying to learn to walk in the shoes of another person. From Chapter One, we know that role-play behavior has a huge impact on building one's capacity for empathy.

Current research addresses how integrative emotional regulation is crucially linked to empathy which could predict the development of prosocial helping behavior (Benita, Levkovitz, and Roth, 2017, p.15). In their study, Moti Benita, Tal Levkovitz, and Guy Roth found that, "…people who are routinely engaged in exploring their emotional experiences, specifically unpleasant emotions, may be more aware of the possibility that others may experience these same emotions; this may heighten their ability to sympathize with others" (2017, p.18). Benita, Levkovitz and Roth analyze research that asserts, the notion of having students analyze and reflect on their emotional experiences with others "heightens their ability" to empathize with others; "… researchers have suggested that well-regulated individuals' abilities to modulate their negative emotions and to maintain an optimal level of emotional arousal enable them to enhance their attention towards the other's situation" (2017, p. 15). In other words, when students build their emotion regulation skills, they are better able to listen to others outside of themselves through maintaining their emotional arousal. When students retell their experiences from the perspective of another, empathy begins to bloom before sympathy can flourish. Once students role-play their emotional experiences, they can understand the perspective experiences of another mindfully, since students are more aware that the perspective person may share their same emotions after a difference of opinion. All of the in-class activities, I created are personal reflections intended to build commonality over difference, in the hopes of fostering mutuality for grounded interpersonal empathy.

CONCLUSION

When empathy pedagogy is integrated into higher educational material, students are better able to understand others outside themselves. In-class materials work to build interpersonal empathy through sharing complex experiences that build mutuality. Pro-social

activism is spearheaded when students hear the perspective experiences of their peers and share those similar feelings of pain. When students actively listen to marginalized stories, through the medium of podcasting, they are hearing the sides that are often silenced. Abolitionist teaching strategy works in tandem when empathy pedagogy is integrated into class topics. As educators, we want students to understand the world around them while creating a space that makes them feel secure to share their thoughts. In a book review of, *The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning*, Tom Bowers discusses the work of James Zull. Zull believes, "… that teachers cannot get inside a brain and rewire or rearrange the neuronal networks that make up knowledge. Instead, teachers can create conditions that lead to changes in a learner's brain" (Bowers, 2004, p. 199). To put simply, as educators we hold the power to "create (the) conditions" that build the capacity for empathy in student's brains. In addition, Zull further believes that, "Concrete experience leads to reflective observation, which leads to the formation of abstract hypotheses (;) which leads to the active testing of those hypotheses through speaking and writing" (Bowers, 2004, p.200). When we integrate empathy pedagogy into higher education class material, we are giving students the opportunity to speak and write their own truths. When in the process, students can acknowledge where there is societally wrongdoing. It is here, in this analytical thought process, that students want to test—through speaking and writing—how they can raise awareness for the silenced voices they listen to. It is vital that, as educators, we explore future research opportunities to ground the healthy integration of empathy pedagogy into higher education classroom spaces.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Empathy pedagogy has a place in higher education spaces. This conclusion will reiterate the need for empathy pedagogy and acknowledge the need for future research on this teaching strategy. To further study on the work of empathy pedagogy, I will illustrate how empathy pedagogy can work with other units of material outside of humanitarian study. Furthermore, as educators, I argue that we need to give this teaching strategy room to breathe in our independent disciplines.

I know we can broaden higher education to encompass emotional understanding between individuals that leads us to enlighten one another. A poem by Mary Oliver titled, *Praying* speaks to the mindfulness of which higher education is in dire need:

It does not have to be

The blue iris, it could be

Weeds in a vacant lot, or a few small stones; just

Pay attention, then patch

A few words together and don't try

To make them elaborate, this isn't

A contest but the doorway

Into thanks, and silence in which

Another voice may speak.

-Mary Oliver (The poetry remedy, p. 51)

Oliver is pleading that we collectively listen to one another. There is a dire need for a semblance of peace in our action towards social justice praxis. I believe educators are tired of stitching words and theory together to address the problem that leaves us at an impasse in our radical efforts for change. Students need to show up and pay attention. Their pro-social choices to help others outside themselves requires active listening, emotion regulation, and understanding the perspective of another. Currently, our students are inundated with outside sources of information; this makes it harder to sift through the underserving rhetoric and fight for voices outside their own. Students could begin movement organizing outside of performative justice motivations influenced by neoliberal ideology. They just need a pedagogy that influences and builds their capacity to do so.

The components of my chapters reiterate the teaching methodologies' importance for the transcendence of empathy into society. I believe when students develop the tools of empathy, they will share them with others. The thirst for knowledge fuels the drive to share the wisdom learned. The spread of understanding others outside oneself will ensue; who wouldn't want to build their understanding to listen to a co-worker, or regulate their emotion when in a heated discussion? Talking to others with differing opinions may be possible when empathy is integrated into higher education curriculum. It starts with understanding oneself in emotion (self) and interacting with another by listening to their experience in emotion (other) to form a relationship in understanding respect (self/other relationship). Essentially, in order to gain the skills of empathy students have to self-reflect on their lived experiences—they have to hold onto their lived experiences when in conversation with others; hence, the severing of the self to build other relationships influences one to actively listen. Pseudo-empathy, as addressed in the introduction through the research of Elizabeth Segal, is a common threat to establishing a

foundation for empathy. Most often, individuals utilize their own life events to console another in a similar situation; however, this pseudo-empathy only leaves the other to compare their situation to the listeners. The difference between empathy and sympathy is silence. Students need to allow others the space to be vulnerable and share their emotion in experience to build trust to understand others. How can that be possible if students interrupt or overtalk when others try to share, or try to defend their claims for justice? As educators, we cannot demand students show up and pay attention but, we can encourage it—be an example of it. Contemporarily, I see there is a call to reclaim the old ways of radical social justice practice.

　　Burn it Down: Feminist Manifestos for the Revolution by Breanne Fahs encapsulates a litany of manifestos from past to present. In the book, she describes "…manifestos emphasize the political qualities of both reading and writing, as the writer (who often lacks social and institutional power but insists on taking it anyway) demands to be heard, and the reader (who often feels at once seduced or perhaps insulted by the text) is absorbed into the writers urgent and impatient language. This play on marginality allows people typically without voice to assert and emotionally cry out for radical social change (Fahs, 2020, p. 10). To put simply, writing, reading, cultural immersion and sharing our thoughts collectively establishes a conversation that allows understanding to flourish and social change to ensue. Communal solidarity is influenced when empathic communities are nurtured. Higher education spaces have the capacity to build the drive within students that allows them to demand that others outside themselves be heard. I believe when students understand the mission, they show up to advocate for awareness.

　　Students need to develop the skills of empathy to build the communication of understanding we all need in the world today. I have observed how self-centered individualism makes a home in our heads and causes us to make selfish decisions. With empathy pedagogy's

integration into discussion of issues relating to social change, the ability to transcend thoughts into understanding others' lived experiences is possible. We need to be willing to examine how we want to orchestrate our teaching curriculum to advocate for others' voices outside our own. Students are willing to do the emotional work necessary to understand themselves in the effort to understand others. The roadblock lies within us, as educators, to accept and change the way we have taught these concepts of diversity over mutuality. To start, let us discuss the future research possibilities in relation to the empathy pedagogy strategies addressed.

FUTURE RESEARCH CONSIDERATIONS

I believe when students are given the tools of empathy it helps them be better people when transitioning into society. Future research I am willing to explore is how the integration of empathy pedagogy into higher education has the potential to alter diversity for inclusion initiatives. Diversity for inclusion could be focused on the improvement of initiatives to adopt understanding cultural differences, instead of adding culture to ignore differences. In addition, companies would want to build empathy within their employees to help them to regulate their emotional responses when talking to others. Other future research opportunities that need to be explored include: how mindfulness could lead to life longevity and increased happiness as a prolonged effect of integrated empathy in class curriculum; collective empathic communities effect on students happiness and mood; and, are empathic communities an outlet for student stress—I find that students have a lack of trusting friendships due to competition increased by the drive for social clout. Future research encourages the application of my thesis work to improve lives.

In addition, abolitionist teaching strategies have proven to be an influential tool when in unison with empathy pedagogy in practice. Future research could consider this question: how can

abolitionist teaching strategy foster pro-social helping behavior in students when empathy pedagogy is in practice? Students show interest in participating in emotional work with others; however, some students may utilize the stories of others to share the advocacy they have learned in the empathetic classroom space. With abolitionist teaching strategies' inclusion into empathy pedagogy teaching practices, students will understand the lives of others outside of themselves. The integrative techniques aligned to build one's capacity for empathy creates a space for self-reflection that negates assumptions. Once students have this foundation of empathy, an abolitionist teaching strategy would include systematic ways of thinking about others' emotional experiences. For example, students who may want to utilize others' stories to promote advocacy will understand that these voices have historically been commodified for individual gain in the pursuit of diversity for inclusion. My hope is that future research can elaborate on the power of an abolitionist teaching strategy, when trying to integrate empathy pedagogy into topics that house humanitarian ideals. If the two teaching strategies are successful in building one's prosocial behavior towards a socially just world, then empathy pedagogy is on the precipice of helping cultivate social justice advocacy. I believe that the first step of social justice is to understand the other.

Interestingly, when students aim to understand another outside of themselves, educators are utilizing self-reflections to measure the student's capacity to build these empathetic skills. However, this means of collection for subjective data does not give empathy pedagogy the validity it needs to stand in classrooms outside of the humanities. Future research should consider how educators can measure the building of capacity for empathy as students are in the process of empathy building. My hope is that once a measure for building one's capacity for empathy is established, students will start to understand their ability to emotionally understand

their experiences to formulate connections between others' experiences in emotion. One can analyze how the measure of empathy pedagogy will further bolster the theory of empathy pedagogy as a pro-social change agent in higher education.

As discussed in Chapter One, the integration of empathy and feminist pedagogy creates a hybrid teaching modality that cultivates pro-social helping behavior in students. Future research should consider what the integration of empathy pedagogy means for feminist solidarity. Specifically, theories of intersectionality carry strong roots that grounds the theory of mutuality when building interpersonal empathy within students. Future research could examine if feminist solidarity improves when mutuality is favored over diversity for inclusion. I believe that feminist solidarity is exponentially met when empathy pedagogy is integrated into feminist frameworks of thought. When individuals come together to discuss their differences in experiences through emotion, understanding is illuminated, and problems are solved collectively. Even so, individuals may feel obligated to stand in solidarity with like-minded women who express their concerns. Empathy pedagogy's integration into feminist concepts of solidarity illuminates problems outside the embodied knowledges of the self. To put simply, with empathy pedagogy, individuals will start to see others issues clearly. Individuals will start to work in tandem with others' concerns on social justice initiatives that one could not perceive on their own. Incidentally, empathy's transcendence into society through the higher educational system is achievable when individuals address their commonalities over differences.

As discussed in the Introduction, social empathy has the power to transcend into society over time with empathy pedagogy in practice. Students utilize the skills they learned in the classroom space to understand others in their private spaces. In other words, students are willing to share their tools of knowledge with others they know. This ideology, in theory, promotes the

skills of empathy to others outside academic spaces. Future research could consider how willing people are to accept empathy into their daily lives. Students may be eager to share their gifts of knowledge with others, but that does not mean others will accept the tools being given. I want to solidify the power of empathy pedagogy to transcend empathy into society, by assessing the willingness of society to acknowledge and understand others' emotion in experience. Most often, we diminish student thought as a menial start to deep knowledge. Future research could eliminate these assumptions about a student's power to transform the social environment around them. Students should be graded on their emotion work. As educators, we know the power they have to contribute to social justice causes. The wider world also needs to recognize a student's power to influence change.

As educators, we grade students on the accuracy of their work; however, emotion work is truthful. It requires an open mind to assess one's emotional feelings about a situation of concern, or in acknowledging one's trauma. Future research could examine how higher education professionals should grade emotion work. For example, students are often given tasks that require self-reflection exercises. Most often, these exercises are subjective. They carry meaningful words that illuminate the emotion of the class based on the material. However, they do not test on the objective traits of empathy that can be measured. Future research could consider: should educators grade emotion work for feeling, gradual progression of the traits of empathy, or class material inclusion for the week? In the beginning of empathy pedagogy in practice, I am aware that most students will not be willing to share their emotional feelings with others. I still hope to encourage students to participate in the process if uncomfortable. I find it is important to acknowledge our adverse responses to tasks we find unpleasant. Most often, there is a reason we feel the way we feel when it concerns sharing our emotional experiences. Empathy

pedagogy gives students the avenue to self-reflect on their life experiences if they have not been given that chance. My apprehension to grade emotion work comes from this place of concern. Students need a space to share the concerns in their daily lives. When empathy pedagogy is in practice, empathic communities are developed in the classroom space to give the security students need to share their experiences. I do not want to devalue the fostering of this crucial experience that in turn develops interpersonal empathy within students. By examining how educators can intend to grade emotion work, complexities surrounding student's needs in these empathic community classroom spaces will come to fruition. Interestingly, when discussing how emotion work should be graded, students partake in outside class materials that bolster their capacity for empathy.

In my lesson plans, I utilize podcasting as a conduit for students to actively listen to others' experiences in emotion. One can listen to a podcast, or collectively create their own podcast as a future venture into empathy pedagogy in practice. The ability for students to listen to others' voices builds their capacity for empathy by immersing themselves in the experience of others. I find that individuals are easily distracted when listening to others' experiences in emotion. Most often, they utilize their own experiences to coddle the person into comfort. This pseudo-empathy does not alleviate the emotional strain of the other; instead, it makes the other devalue their experience in emotion. When listening to podcasts, students are aware of their identity, but they cannot overtly share their experience with another. The ability to self-reflect alleviates students' need to align their belief in emotion with another. To put simply, students are better able to listen to another when the other is not in the room. As we know, the first step of empathy is to acknowledge yourself, step back, and then actively listen to another's emotional experience. By introducing podcasts into the curriculum, students are gradually building these

first skills of empathy on their own! Future research should consider the possibility of podcasting as the medium for empathy pedagogy. One can analyze how empathy is exponentially built when students are making and listening to podcasts inside and outside of classroom spaces.

Finally, future research can examine the relationship between empathy pedagogy, role-play behavior and one's life longevity. Optimal experience studies have discussed the power of flow states to enhance a fuller life with mindfulness in everyday interactions/activities. Sonia Krol and Jennifer Bartz explain their research on the self-concept clarity scale (SCC). Specifically, they found their scale shows the importance of distinguishing the self from the other for "optimal empathic responding"; "Without a clear, consistent, and coherent sense of self to draw upon, the task of defending the self against negative emotions should be particularly difficult and, in this way, make those with low SCC more prone to emotion regulation difficulties" (Krol & Bartz, 2021 p.14). To put simply, regulating one's emotion establishes a clarity in oneself that allows them to mindfully engage with others. This concept is established in higher education spaces that utilize an integrated empathy framework. One can lead a fuller life when empathy pedagogy is in practice, because mindfulness may carry a direct link to the emotion regulation needed to develop empathetic skills within oneself. Interestingly, calmer mindsets are also established when play is integrated into the teaching practices of empathy; "…self– other distinction in empathy comes from research examining differences between imagine other perspective-taking (IOPT), that is, imagining how the suffering other feels, versus imagine self-perspective-taking (ISPT), that is, imaging how oneself would feel in the suffering other's shoes" (Krol &Bartz, 2021). Essentially, the research supports that a state of flow influenced by play enhances one's ability to understand another outside oneself. Students, in higher education, would be able to regulate their emotions when interacting with one another's

experience in emotion through play behavior. Future research should consider what this may mean for empathy pedagogy longitudinally. If students develop calmer mindsets in these classroom spaces, then one can assume that students carry these skills outside of the classroom to influence the culture around them. I believe, with future research, the transcendence of empathy into society is possible. Essentially, these future research considerations illuminate empathy pedagogy's ability to build small-scale change within these empathic communities that grow understanding to all outside the self.

DESIGN THINKING SUPPORTS THE CHANGE EMPATHY PEDAGOGY CAN ENGENDER

The ideology of small-scale change initiatives is that over time these initiatives will develop radical changes. In order to understand a complex problem, individuals in design thinking utilize the perspective of the stakeholders to gain insight on where change needs to ensue. When integrating empathy pedagogy into higher education spaces, one can examine how the teaching practice of empathy pedagogy is a small-scale change initiative, since students are gaining insight on others' emotional experiences to gain understanding and spearhead advocacy for others outside themselves. Design thinking provides validity to empathy pedagogies' methods of intervention. Essentially, if students are building their capacity for empathy and gaining pro-social helping behaviors, then, over time radical change can ensue from the actions of students with developed empathetic skills. To put simply, if other areas of study adopted the teaching methodology of empathy, then society would develop the skills of empathy through osmosis.

If integrating empathy into class curriculum fulfills the factors of small-scale change, then the societal transcendence of empathy is achievable. Empathy pedagogy generates radical

pro-social activism within students, when developing the skills of empathy with class material.

Interestingly, students are gradually working collectively to fight issues of injustice. This process

uplifts the theory that integrating empathy pedagogy, into different departments of study, is a

small-scale change that will longitudinally transcend empathy into society.

CAN EMPATHY PEDADOGY WORK IN OTHER DISCIPLINES?

Empathy pedagogy is versatile. I believe it has the power to work with other disciplines;

specifically, future research could examine how the integration of empathy pedagogy could work

within other departments in higher education, such business, health sciences, and engineering. I

believe empathy pedagogy has the capacity to be integrated into unit material outside of the

humanities. Other disciplines utilize real-life interactions with others outside themselves. It is

only fitting that they adopt empathy pedagogy into their curriculum to allow students to build the

crucial skills of empathy, not only for the transcendence of empathy in society, but for the

exponentially met requirements of the program goals when empathy pedagogy is in use.

Essentially, we all need the skill to empathize with those around us; we need to be able to set

aside our assumptions, so we can better relate to the people we interact with. Modern day

conglomerates are a perfect example of how empathy skills can be utilized in a business setting.

A subjective experience from my sister's career, AFOX corporations, examines how life

insurance sales can incorporate empathy. Her company utilizes stoic philosophy and mindfulness

not only in the workplace, but as an approach to clients for raised understanding. For example,

her company empathized with my sister's mental health situation, her current health issues, and

the recent death of my grandfather. They understood her situation and treated her how they

would like to be treated. They repetitively told her, "don't take a mental health day, take a mental

health week", "come back when you feel your best, because you will work your best". AFOX

corporations uses a "don't say something unless you have been through it" approach when interacting with their clientele. They believe if you cannot fully relate to an emotional topic, then how do you know how the other is feeling. Life insurance can be an emotional topic. It is prudent to be emotionally in tune with another when trying to sell life insurance. Individuals appreciate honesty and compassion when discussing their after-life plans. Empathy works by understanding another's experience in emotion, rather than sympathizing with a person's experiences. Overall, one needs to fully understand what someone has gone through and act accordingly, or one will never build the trust and respect that is necessary for workplace flow.

My sister's experience in her career justifies how empathy can be integrated into business settings. When integrating empathy into other departments of study, educators need to be aware that students need to develop humane understanding no matter what they do. At the end of the day, our webs of identity intersect with one another—it is inevitable that one will interact with others—why not be mindful with our interactions? I believe we need to build these empathetic skills within students, so they do not enhance the rotten individualism that characterizes our present circumstances in neoliberal culture. When empathy pedagogy is utilized in higher education spaces outside of humanitarian study, social empathy is achievable over time.

CONCLUSION

When we react, we are showing up. By integrating the learning tools of empathy into class materials, we hold the power to shift how the future reacts to social issues of injustice. Students want to show up as radical activist ready for change, but they need to pay attention and understand their bodies in emotion to address and accept accountability. I argued that when we integrate empathy pedagogy with feminist thought and social justice, we are building the capacity for students to understand others' lives in oppression. An integrated modality of

teaching empathy will allow students to foster the traits of empathy within themselves; students are then better able to empathize by utilizing the traits of empathy to actively listen, self-reflect, and mindfully engage with other lived experiences of oppression.

We now know the benefits of empathy pedagogy when in practice in higher education spaces. The importance of empathy pedagogy as a small-scale change initiative instills that social empathy is an attainable goal over time. As educators, we have a responsibility to give students tools to be the best they can be. I ask: why would we neglect them the tools of understanding others outside themselves? We need empathy now more than ever. The possibility to build one's capacity for empathy, while learning class material, changes higher education completely. Instead of spaces of learning, educators can build empathic communities that establish trust through the building of interpersonal empathy within students. Students can advocate for other voices outside themselves when listening to stories that carry their similar emotion responses. The possibility of generating a world with more individuals utilizing empathetic skills is possible, we just need to be willing to do the work required to integrate empathy into our passions of study in the classroom.

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APPENDIX A

LESSON PLAN ONE

Lesson Plan 1: WMST 201-- Lecture integrated with empathy pedagogy

Unit Name: Intergenerational Waves of Feminism

Unit Essential Question: Why is it important to look at the waves of feminism from an intergenerational lens?

Learning Objectives:
- Students will understand/ know the intergenerational waves of feminism.
- Students will be able to explain how each wave shares perspectives.
- Students will reflect on their own embodied knowledges, after hearing from others, in the hopes of understanding the importance of intergenerational feminism.
- Students will analyze the class materials to find commonalities between their viewpoints and the viewpoints of feminists from differing waves of thought.
-

Outside Class Materials:
1. "The waves of feminism, and why people keep fighting over them, explained" By Constance Grady-- The waves of feminism, and why people keep fighting over them, explained - Vox
2. "Different Waves, Same Wavelength: Intergenerational Reflections on Feminism" By Melanie Floyd, OBOS volunteer-- Different Waves, Same Wavelength: Intergenerational Reflections on Feminism - Our Bodies Ourselves
3. "Why we're feminists: An intergenerational conversation on women's rights" By Molly Greenwold-- https://www.girlslife.com/life/get-inspired/36693/why-were-feminists-an-intergeneration-conversation-on-womens-rights-
4. "Mariel on Collective Existence" https://www.iheart.com/podcast/298-hey-girl-28052673/episode/mariel-on-collective-existence-63118596/

Facilitation Questions #SharingThoughts:
- What are the waves of feminism and why do people keep fighting over them?
- Do you know someone who identifies as a feminist, and if so, what wave may they identify with?
- Why do you believe we often ignore the views of others in the movement that came before us? Do you believe not talking to the mothers of a movement is a problem?
- Why do we need to share our stories of experience with others?
- Why is collective existence an important concept when understanding the intergenerational waves of feminism? Think about healing and self-care from the podcast entitled, "Mariel on Collective Existence".

Theme: Continuity

"The wave metaphor can be reductive. It can suggest that each wave of feminism is a monolith with a single unified agenda, when in fact the history of feminism is a history of different ideas in wild conflict. It can reduce each wave to a stereotype and suggest that there is a sharp division between generations of feminism, when in fact there's a fairly strong continuity between each wave — and since no wave is a monolith, the theories that are fashionable in one wave are often grounded in the work that someone was doing on the sidelines of a previous wave. And the wave metaphor can suggest that mainstream feminism is the only kind of feminism there is, when feminism is full of splinter movements."

– Constance Grady.

In other words, they are not separate tiers with different agendas.

In class activity #BuildingMutuality:
Self-reflect on what we have discussed in class. Write a letter to a person you admire. In this letter address how this person has shaped you into the person you are today. Include their viewpoints or quotes that resonate with you in this moment. After you have finished writing the letter, answer the question, "are they a feminist?" with a yes or no answer. Explain why you believe they are a feminist. We will share the yes or no answers at the end of the write up.

APPENDIX B

LESSON PLAN TWO

Lesson Plan 2: (Online) WMST 201—Lecture integrated with empathy pedagogy

Unit Name: Narrative Identity and Poetics

Unit Essential Question: How can we take ownership of our identities through the narratives we tell?

Learning Objectives:
- Students will examine the concept of narrative identities through poetics.
- Students will understand the social construction of identity to understand identity categorizations in others outside themselves; overall, they will examine how the boxes we subscribe to formulate our personalities.
- Students will apply the information learned by assessing their own identities with an in-class activity.
- Students will kinesthetically examine the concept of expressing their narrative identity through art forms (e.g., poetry, and sculpture).

Outside Class Materials:
1. "Real Talk: Mapping our Identities Through Personal Narrative | Diana Moreno | TEDxUF" -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Uqy_pZxtIY
2. "The Importance of Queer Art" By Elena Hubbell -- https://www.michigandaily.com/viewpoints/op-ed-art-and-sexuality/
3. "Ep. 103: Narrative Identity and Why It Matters in Your Fiction" By The Legal Stuff-- https://writership.com/podcast-episodes/ep-103-narrative-identity
4. Augusta Savage—Nude Torso Sculpture—Google

Facilitation Questions #SharingThoughts:
- Do you think it is important to talk about identities, and if so why? Why does knowing or understanding our identities matter?
- A binary is situated in relation to two concepts of ideology. In other words, two opposing things that socially construct how we live in our identities. How do binaries promote stereotypes about others?
- Why do you think we often define our identities--making sure everyone has a place within our norm; why might we favor binaries over letting people be themselves outside the dominant norm?
- When advocating for others, how might we promote, in solidarity, the identities of others?
- What happens when we share our experiences with others? How do you think sharing our personal narratives redefines who we are in our identities?

Theme:
Our experiences shape us, but they do not have to define us.

In class activity #PerspectiveTaking, #Self-Reflect:
Drawing yourself.
Does not need to be an amazing drawing; just make sure you show aspects of yourself that bring out your personality! Having these questions in mind will help you get through your drawing: "What annoys you?" "What motivates you?" "What are your favorite things to do?" "How might others see you?"
Narrative Identity—redefining our personal experiences by retelling our stories.
Self-reflection exercise: Recreate a short personal story or share a formative incident that helped shape who you are. Try to think about how you felt in the experience, or how you wanted to feel. Afterwards, write your emotional feeling in one word. If you are comfortable, share that word after the time is up.

- The goal is to look for commonalities in the words that define one's feeling. Experimentally, the students will realize their classmates share their similar feelings in emotion; the only difference is the experience that fostered those emotions.

APPENDIX C

LESSON PLAN THREE

Lesson Plan 3 WMST 201—Lecture integrated with empathy pedagogy

Unit Name: Refugee Resettlement

Unit Essential Question: How does it feel to be othered by xenophobic rhetoric?

Learning Objectives:
- Students will understand the refugee resettlement vetting process.
- Students will be aware of xenophobic rhetoric and its affect on the experiences of resettling into America.
- Students will examine the game "WAY" to experience the constraints resettled refugees feel.
- Students will analyze the "us versus them" rhetoric in their daily lives.

Outside class materials:
1. Play the game "WAY" -- https://makeourway.com/
2. Read Chapter 1 of "Strangers in their Own Land' by Arlie Russell Hochschild
3. "What defines 'us vs. them' in U.S. political discourse?" By Yang, an SFI Omidyar Fellow and Peters Hurst Scholar -- https://santafe.edu/news-center/news/what-defines-us-vs-them-us-political-discourse
4. "Watch Donald Trump Talk About 'Us' and 'Them'" By Ryan Teague Beckwith-- https://time.com/4914655/donald-trump-us-them-rhetoric/
5. "WHAT DOES THE US REFUGEE VETTING PROCESS LOOK LIKE?" By Shannon Elder-- https://borgenproject.org/us-refugee-vetting-process/#:~:text=The%20vetting%20process%20refers%20to%20the%20steps%20a,law%2C%20this%20particular%20person%20qualifies%20for%20refugee%20status.

Facilitation Questions #SharingThoughts:
- In "Way", two strangers learn how to speak. How do language and tone influence conversation? Reflect on the video game experience of playing "WAY." Was it difficult to communicate? What was easy or hard?
- How can replacement centers for resettled refugees effectively communicate with the language barrier? Reflect on the importance of empathizing with others.
- In "Strangers in their Own Land," Arlie Russell Hochschild converses with people who do not see her side of the argument. How does she do this successfully? Reflect on the actions she participates in that allow her to talk to others about political issues.
- Have you heard "us versus them" rhetoric before the article explained it? If so, share an experience as an example.

Theme:
We never know what brought someone to the space we take up together.

In class activity #RolePlay:
- Try to imagine yourself in another's shoes. It could be anyone: from your past, to the present, and reflect on your experience as that person.
- How would you positively communicate with someone you did not identify with? What are the challenges involved? Reflect on a situation where you were at odds with someone in an argument. Try to write about their side as they might understand it.

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EDUCATION

M.A Humanities, Old Dominion University, 2021. Thesis: "Integrating empathy pedagogy with feminist thought and social justice praxis."

Graduate Certificate, Women's and Gender Studies, Old Dominion University, 2021.

B.A Women's and Gender Studies, Old Dominion University, 2019.

B.Psy. Psychology, Old Dominion University, 2019.

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Graduate Research Assistant, Department of Women's and Gender Studies, Old Dominion University, August 2019- Present. Responsibilities include: assisting professors with gathering and analyzing research interests by transcribing interviews, finding literature, and organizing research information.

GUEST LECTURES

Presented a lecture for Dr. Jennifer Fish on "Transnational Empathy: Refugee Resettlement" for her class that teaches Refugee Studies, Department of Women's and Gender Studies, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, 2 June 2020.

Presented a lecture for Dr. Amy Milligan on "Sexual Education Needs Various Sexual Representation" for her class that teaches Sex and the Body, Department of Women's and Gender Studies, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, 14 December 2020.

Presented a lecture for Prof. Remica Bingham-Risher on "Narrative Identity" for her class lecture on Queer/Identity. Black Feminist Poetics, Department of Women's and Gender Studies, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, 15 April 2021.

PRESENTATIONS AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

"Analysis of social justice movements: A move toward a more radical and empathetic movement." Beyond the Culture: Black Popular Culture and Social Justice, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia, 6 February 2020.

"Queer History Project: The Late Show; LGBTQA: A Queer Walk Through History: Researching Norfolk's LGBTQ Past." Undergraduate Research Symposium, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, 2 February 2019.

ACADEMIC AWARDS

Awarded Dean's List for the academic year of Fall 2018 to Spring 2019 at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia.