A Partnership in Pedagogy of Process:

Conversations about Co-Teaching Critical Analysis

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Abstract

Reflective, post-event conversations (Campbell, Gibson, & Gramlich, 2005) between two professors who co-taught a graduate level, online teacher education course in diversity depict a teaching partnership. Our goal was to reflect upon the process of co-teaching critical analysis within this partnership. Foucault's cautionary treatise (1980) is recognized in that analyses of power/knowledge metanarratives, such as pedagogies of diversity, liberal arts, and critical analysis, contain discourses of power, despite their emancipatory intentions. The conversations are considered reflexive discourse (Lather, 2007) in that truth can never be found outside of power relations (Foucault, 1980). Questioning the relations of power and influence within approaches to teaching and learning is discursive and therefore, contradictory. A pedagogy of process through the teaching partnership is highlighted as a way to acknowledge and value the negotiations of the spaces between contradictions as well as transform personal understandings and professional practice.

As professors who co-teach a graduate level teacher education course on diversity, we have the fortunate opportunity to regularly reflect upon our shared teaching experiences. Because of our exceptional level of respect and trust with one another, our partnership enables us to engage in conversations about our approaches to teaching and learning. Our conversations both sustain and challenge; we engage in an iterative cycle of constructing, affirming, deconstructing, and rejecting the work that we do. We constantly situate and reposition ourselves within the context of our work while recognizing we hold positions of power. We acknowledge that our approaches to teaching and learning represent our pedagogical desires (Britzman, 1991; 1992). These desires are manifested in our positions of power as professors.

We value social justice in our approaches to teaching and learning and the facilitation of our students' critical analysis of intersections of power, privilege, and the social constructions of knowledge. At the same time, we grapple with competing notions of what constitutes critical analysis and whether we should scaffold it with frameworks such as Socratic questioning embedded in Intellectual Standards (Elder & Paul, 2008). We recognize that these interventions may shape our students' identities within our own pedagogical desires and therefore are incomplete, despite their best intentions. Frameworks and interventions used to analyze systems of power and knowledge metanarratives are socially constructed and contain discourses of power, despite their emancipatory goals (Gore, 1993). We reflect often on the literature of those who have problematized postmodern theory within their own emancipatory practices, reflexively noting areas of professor hope and power while concurrently promoting visions of students' own constructions of identity (Ellsworth, 1989, 1992; Simon, 1992; Gore, 1993; Kelly, 1997; Paugh & Robinson, 2006; Guest, 2008; Frie, 2011; Blad, 2012; Kannen, 2012).

While engaging in our conversations, we repeatedly uphold the notion that a professional habit of taking stock of our practices and reflecting upon the contradictions and implications of them is important and necessary. We also discuss the value of being explicit about our paradoxes with our students as we co-teach as pedagogical partners. These conversations, habits, practices, and paradoxes lend themselves to a pedagogy that is systematic, yet uninhibited; planned, yet authentic; in short, a process of pedagogy that embraces contradictions as an inherent element of reflective practice.

The purpose of this article is to highlight a teaching partnership that supports conversation as a process for questioning issues of knowledge construction and to propose a pedagogy of process. For this purpose, we focused on some important questions to guide our reflective conversational interchanges. How do professors improve their students' ability to critically analyze diversity issues, especially in an online setting? Is it possible to 'walk the line' between too little and too much professor influence? How can we create reflexive spaces which are open to our own constitutions of teaching and learning while simultaneously allowing the validation of inquiries into competing discourses (e.g. Foucault, 1980)? How do we reconcile these contradictions or are the contradictions a necessary, though uncomfortable, component of this form of reflective pedagogy?

Rather than integrate conventional methodologies and empirical research to study critical analysis as we have in previous projects (Anderson & Piro, 2014a; Anderson & Piro, 2014b; Anderson & Piro, 2013; Piro & Anderson, In Press; Piro & Anderson, 2015), we aimed to purposefully apply a more collaborative and innovative approach for this piece. While this endeavor was never intended to be a self-study, autoethnographic study, or action research, some of our tactics could be regarded as complementary to these modes of inquiry. Rather, we

reflected on our ongoing conversations as we co-taught critical analysis in a diversity course in teacher education. Reflection and the emergence of new understandings of approaches to teaching and learning may emerge through organic, interactional, and non-structured processes of meaning-making. As in other academic works that consider the impact of conversation in teaching and learning (Campbell, Gibson, & Gramlich, 2005; Diamond, 1992; Pask, 1976; Scott, 2001), we posit that humans learn socially and intentionally. We learn by our collaborations, habits, practices, and conversations with others.

Perspectives of Pedagogy

Common definitions of pedagogy suggest that learning is not a one-on-one process but rather a social process between teachers and students (Alexander, 2003; Leach & Moon, 1999). Another definition is 'any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance the learning of another' (Watkins & Mortimer, 1999, p. 3). For the purposes of our endeavor, we refer to Lusted's (1986) definition of pedagogy that focuses on the process of knowledge production.

[Pedagogy] draws attention to the process through which knowledge is produced. Pedagogy addresses the 'how' questions involved not only in the transmission or reproduction of knowledge but also in its production. Indeed, it enables us to question the validity of separating these activities so easily by asking under what conditions and through what means we 'come to know'. How one teaches…becomes inseparable from what is being taught and, crucially, how one learns. (pp. 2-3)

Lusted's (1986) perspective best illuminates pedagogy as questioning for whom knowledge is constructed and for whose interests. This perspective informs a unique pedagogy that focuses on a process rather than an outcome and that has the potential to transform personal

understandings and professional practice, specifically when issues of power and contradiction in teaching and learning are explored through conversations.

Below we discuss the theoretical underpinnings of conversation as a form of knowledge construction that serves as the medium for a unique type of pedagogy. Then, we provide an account of our conversations that exemplify this type of pedagogical partnership.

Conversational Narrative and Discourses of Power

Conversation is considered a situated activity with the goal of making meaning out of our daily lives, 'to construct and reconstruct the narratives of our experience' (Goldsworthy, 2000, p. 101). As we reflect on our own practices as professors who co-teach, we engage in dialogue that is both situational and autobiographical. Our conversations are personal and non-confrontational; a contrast to traditional academic discourse (Lyotard, 1984).

Pask's Conversation Theory (1976) is a constructivist model of learning in a social context. As we reflect, conceptualize, and converse, we share 'consensual domains' that converge upon our understandings of teaching and learning (Scott, 2001, p. 347). Pask's model has also been applied to the learning that can occur between two peers in conversation who are 'exchanging, justifying, and demonstrating theories and their associated models and procedures' (Scott, 2001, p. 351). This theoretical model is helpful in understanding how our conversations both sustain and challenge us.

As we engage in our conversations, we organize our thoughts, beliefs, and practices in order to make sense of our experiences. The way we organize our words represent our ever-present, subjective realities. As Chanfrault-Duchet (1991) describes in his work on the structure of narrative, we view possibilities through continuing progress and personal challenge. We think

of our experiences as a journey as told through our conversational narrative. We acknowledge a starting and middle point in our journey, but there is no end; the conversations continue to inform our pedagogy as an integral process.

Our conversations intentionally focus on our work; not in quantifiable measures, but rather the autobiographical narration and reflection of it, inclusive of our subjective realities. We acknowledge Foucault's cautionary treatise (1980) that analyses of power/knowledge metanarratives, inclusive of diversity, liberal arts and critical analysis, contain discourses of power, despite their emancipatory intentions. As such, we consider our conversations as reflexive discourse (Lather, 2007) in that truth can never be found outside of power relations (Foucault, 1980). We revisit varying approaches to teaching and learning that inform and shape our own practice, and we acknowledge that contradictions exist as inter-relational components of the conversation of our pedagogy.

The following reflective, post-event conversations (Campbell, Gibson, & Gramlich, 2005) between two professors who co-taught a graduate level, online teacher education course in diversity who used conversation to illuminate ideas, struggles, and reflexivity of a teaching partnership while teaching critical analysis within power, situated-ness and context. They are considered post-event conversations because they took place as a form of reflection after our co-taught class sessions, not because they are considered finite. In fact, our conversations are ongoing and iterative, resembling a collaborative form of metacognition. In order to provide a semblance of structure, our post-event conversations are thematically and chronologically summarized below and both direct and indirect dialogue between each other and ourselves.

Naming our Challenges and Goals

Our teaching partnership began as co-professors of a teacher education diversity course. As we collaborated, we struggled with ways to require our graduate students to not only become more aware of the complexities and ambiguities surrounding diversity issues but to also question and critique school practices that may help or hinder the progress of diverse student populations. We shared the goal of enhancing the critical analysis skills of our students. This goal was reaffirmed by research that states improved critical thinking of teachers is needed in order to be prepared for increasingly diverse classrooms (Gorski, 2009). Despite our progress on clarifying our practical intentions, proceeding toward appropriate next steps seemed quite daunting and abstract. How do professors improve their students' ability to critically think and analyze, especially in an online setting? Where should we begin such an endeavor?

We continued grappling with these questions as well as the notion that online settings have the potential for encouraging critical analysis (Thomas, 2002). Furthermore, we learned about Christopher Phillips' (2001) Socrates Café and were inspired to create opportunities for critical analysis by simulating a café style discussion. We attempted replication of this form of civil discourse about complex topics by way of critical analysis and Socratic questioning, as was the similar protocol used in Phillips' discussions held in coffee shops, schools, and libraries. His groups discussed questions like 'Is there such a thing as human nature? What, if anything, is the nature of individuality? When is life not worth living? What is the nature of transcendence? Does human nature vary across time or cultures' (Phillips, 2001, p. 25)? The questions we posed in our diversity course Socrates Café were similar in complexity. We discussed questions such as 'Is the mismatch between the culture of the students and that of the school and/or teachers

problematic? 'Regardless of your race or ethnicity, in what ways might you or others around you experience privilege?' and 'Should schools be repositories of morality?'

We believed the Socrates Café discussions demonstrated a symbiotic relationship between critical analysis and our values as teacher educators in that they have the potential to facilitate civil discourse and democratic engagement for both individuals and for the larger community. Our diversity course Socrates Café discussions began as optional, extra credit activities to be completed in an online discussion board. We soon realized we desired a higher level of participation and accountability, though we were unsure how to scaffold or assess such a discussion. What should be our next step?

Questioning Our Methods

We examined the merits of a Socrates Café in an online, graduate, diversity course in teacher education and considered whether the marriage was doomed. After all, this was an instructional activity steeped in the liberal arts tradition that we hoped would inform a course in diversity for teacher education graduate students. We wondered whether we might expand our Socrates Café with the intention of increasing civil discourse via student critical analysis in an online forum. Or would the very nature of a classic liberal arts forum belie the purposes of our focus on the disruption of metanarratives and unreasoned discourse? Could we help students use sound logic rather than fallacious assumptions and unexamined truths? Even more formidable in scope, how were these guiding questions reflective of our own hidden desires and unexamined power in our pedagogy? These were the questions we asked of ourselves as professors.

The Socrates Café as a means of civil discourse was an exciting prospect. After all, as our society becomes more and more polarized, that polarization erupts into our online discussion

forums in teacher education and curriculum studies. Yet, the ability to question one's own assumptions and those of one's peers is an integral component of a true dialogue. We found unexamined notions of 'truth' and un-reflexive positioning of issues as students attempted to convince others of their realities, often as monologues or diatribes, within traditional discussion boards. We posited that the Socrates Café might, by its very structure, scaffold a more reasoned and thoughtful discourse. Critical analysis aimed at increased civil discourse was at the root of our instructional goals as professors in teacher education. Concurrently, we sought to acknowledge the pedagogical desires of that goal and locate our own desires within our own expectations in our Socrates Café.

Promoting critical analysis in education is not a new endeavor. Educators have employed Bloom's taxonomy (1956) to scaffold higher order thinking and questioning for decades. The taxonomy is hierarchical with lower level thinking at the bottom and evaluation and synthesis at the top. There are additional perspectives for increasing critical thinking and analysis beyond the educational sphere (Lai, 2011). The philosophical perspective of critical analysis focuses on the student's ability to logically analyze arguments rather than on the teacher's expertise (Plato, Hamilton & Huntington, 1961). The cognitive-psychological approach suggests that behaviors or skills that imply critical thought may be determined (Lewis & Smith, 1993) and that the use of 'skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome' (Halpern, 1998, p. 450) may be measured by frameworks intent on increasing critical analysis. Both of these structures suggested that by purposefully supporting critical analysis, more reasoned dialogue may result. Could we find standards or a framework to help support civil discourse by way of critical analysis for our online Socrates Café?

Framing the Possibilities

Once we settled on our intentions, further inquiries arose. How should we define critical analysis? How will we know when it has occurred? On the one hand, we were genuinely interested in addressing these questions. Many find it helpful to have benchmarks and frameworks to guide complex endeavors. On the other hand, we knew that this rationale could restrict or limit the possibilities of other forms of critical analysis. It certainly would elevate our own positions of power. We decided to begin with general notions of what it means to critically think or analyze. We found many definitions in the literature, but one characteristic seemed to stand out: critical analysis through the use of questions within dialogue to examine one's own as well as others' beliefs, assumptions, and reasoning (Lai, 2011; Paul, Martin, & Adamson, 1989). These kinds of questions are typically considered Socratic. Oftentimes, this line of reasoning leaves one with more questions than answers.

Socratic questioning has historically been recognized as a method of critical analysis (Golding, 2011; Knezic, Wubbels, Elbers, & Hajer, 2010; Paul & Elder, 2007). Could we utilize this method started by an ancient, Greek male, who contributed greatly to traditionalist notions of what counts as knowledge, for a progressive, pragmatic purpose? What would Socrates, John Dewey, and Paulo Freire have to say about this triad affiliation between philosophy, democracy, and social justice? Were some core components of knowledge production complimentary, or were they diametrically opposed? We were intrigued about the possibilities. We decided to proceed on this unchartered, post-structural path toward an unknown outcome while simultaneously recognizing the path, itself, as a tool for our own reflexivity concerning the obscure elements of power and desire within our own pedagogical hopes and dreams for our students (Britzman, 1991; Gore, 1993; Simon, 1992).

Socratic questions typically do not have a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Therefore, we were concerned that our students might think that questions such as 'What do you think about this?' Or 'How will you address this in your own classroom?' might be considered Socratic. We recognized an innate absurdity in attempting to evaluate such a subjective enterprise, but we also wanted to stay true to our intentions. Therefore, we wanted to help our students develop better questions. We discovered the Universal Intellectual Standards which offer a framework for identifying question types that are Socratic in nature and that occur during critical discussions (Paul & Elder, 2007; Elder & Paul, 2007; 2007b). According to Elder & Paul (2007), we humans naturally distort the truth. Our socially-constructed worldviews are difficult to challenge. Elder & Paul (2007b) claim that the Universal Intellectual Standards helps check the quality of reasoning when investigating a problem or issue and include clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness of expression. Probing questions accompany each standard such as 'Could you elaborate further? (clarity)'; 'How does that relate to the problem? (relevance)'; and 'Is this the central idea to focus on? (significance)'. We were troubled by the term 'intellectual' and its possible elitist connotations. In the interest of promoting widespread civil discourse in varied educational settings, would a student participant feel such a term was off-putting and therefore be reluctant to join such a discussion? We continued to simultaneously acknowledge, resist, and eventually accept the disequilibrium that was becoming the norm in our practice. As we introduced the Intellectual Standards within our Socrates Café, a subsequent question emerged. Should we intervene in discussions if the framework we provided was unsuccessful and our students lacked critical analysis?

Scaffolding or Stifling? Acknowledging Contradictions

We wondered if instructional interventions would help or hinder our students' progress and whether they would increase resistance or support our student' attempts at critical analysis. The notion of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980) emerged in our conversation as we 'unpacked' our instruction after meeting with our students. Each instructional act was contextual and held the potential for swirling power relations among students and professor. Our intention to inspire and motivate students through authentic, reasoned discourse could have the opposite effect.

The research is mixed on the subject of professor intervention during critical analysis discussions. Some researchers suggest that instructional assistance is an a priori requirement of professors who wish to increase critical analysis (Abrami et al., 2008; Bailin, et al, 2005; Facione, 1990; Halpern, 1998; Hew & Cheung, 2003; Landsman & Gorski, 2007; Paul, 1992). These studies suggest that scaffolding critical thinking will increase the probability of a desirable outcome (Halpern, 1998). In contrast, other researchers have found the opposite result in online learning forums, suggesting that professor intentions to clarify, scaffold, and guide student analysis had a negative effect on learning. Fauske & Wade (2003-2004) found that the perception of teacher power in online forums limited student participation. Zhao & McDougall (2005) suggested that when professors posted in online forums, those postings were viewed by students as the final, authoritative commentary, and served to prohibit further dialogue. In these cases, interventions proved too systematized and limited critical analysis or participation, in general.

Silence, rather than student voice, could be the unintended outcome of our required dialogue. Weedon's work on post-structural theory (1987) suggested that speakers assumed a dependent position within a discourse in that they are subjected to the power of the discourse in

which they engage. Certainly, a requirement to critically analyze complex issues in our class could be construed as subjectivity on the part of the student. The notion that silence, or lack of participation in discussions was a political act (Lewis, 1993) took hold as a part of our reflexivity. We wondered if students purposely held back or refrained from authentic discourse because the framework discouraged certain voices or ways of knowing.

As well, we pondered the increase of critical analysis that we found in our discussions. In fact, in one of our empirical studies, we found the nine Universal Intellectual Standards provided an exceptional deductive framework for understanding the types and frequencies of Socratic questioning that were occurring in the Socrates Café (Piro & Anderson, 2015). It is possible that our desires became our students' desires in a peculiar manifestation of counter-transference and that critical expression of thought was exhibited because it was 'our house with our rules.' The intersection of writer and text becomes apparent in any reading of our required assignments in Socrates Café, especially one that stipulated the use of critical analysis. We speculated whether we were creating 'ventriloquic' (Kelly, 1997) student expressions with the framework of the Universal Intellectual Standards and the Socrates Café and if students simply complied with our instructional goals. Was the increased critical analysis that we perceived in our students' dialogue by way of the Socrates Café a result of the Socratic questioning framework itself, or simply a result of our professor power, or a result of other factors? Also, were these other factors mutually exclusive outcomes?

Dancing between the Polarities: Negotiating the Space between Contradictions

The essence of our instructional desires is fraught with contradictions. Each of us is a desiring subject (Kelly, 1997), and professors cannot escape their own instructional desires. The

challenge results not in taking the teacher/self out of approaches to teaching and learning but in claiming the ways in which teachers project their own desires, power, and autobiographies into their classrooms. We have found that self-reflection as educational practitioners on the intersection of knowledge and power as a contextual practice is an ongoing process of understanding the ways that power within pedagogy is discursive. Therefore, our attempts to create critical analysis will continue to be subjected to our ongoing conversations. These conversations necessarily include challenging questions with which we continue to grapple. We often have to live with the disequilibrium that ensues as a result. The difficult conversations themselves are integral to the pedagogy of process. Our attempt to produce critical analysis within discussion has produced areas of contradiction and conflict. We have found a guiding paradox in our pedagogy to be '…between what teachers feel students should know and what students might (come to) know…' (Gore, 1993, p. 63). Located as such, contradictory desires continue to inform our work: the desire to create a space where reasoned voices are validated and the desire to have students self-interrogate that voice and locate themselves within ideological structures; the desire for critical civil discourse inside of our classrooms and the desire for students to self-locate and self-identify within their own identifies as scholars; and the desire for student engagement and civil discourse while simultaneously recognizing the political act of silence. As we negotiate the spaces between these contradictions we 'play with paradox' (Doll, 1993) in an ongoing process and praxis.

These contradictions orient us to reflect on who we are as we interrogate our continuously emerging notions of professor influence in knowledge production. As well, they highlight the intersection among our students, approaches to teaching and learning, our instructional goals, and our own autobiographical constructions as professors. Reflecting upon

these contradictions and intersections is often cathartic; at other times, it is disruptive and challenging. Our task is to negotiate the spaces between the contradictions of teaching and learning in ongoing conversations with colleagues and selves.

Implications of a Pedagogy of Process

As we noted previously, conversations are integral to our teaching partnership aimed at a pedagogy of process. There is a beginning and middle point, but no end. We continue our critical conversations in order to negotiate the contradictions and paradoxes of our teaching and learning practice—attempting, at each turn—to manage seemingly contradictory social selves (Fine, 1994) that both sculpt and disrupt simultaneously our sense of who we are as professors and how we encourage our students to negotiate critical analysis for civil discourse. Each semester is an opportunity to work with new students who will provide the genesis of collaboration to start our process yet again. It is widely purported that Socrates said, 'Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.' Each semester we begin the act of kindling that flame that will ignite self-examination and civil discourse, while simultaneously recognizing that we maybe singed as a result of the endeavor.

In that we evoke Foucault's dismissal of a creation of formal structures that hold universal value in all pedagogical contexts, our conversations sustain us in our partnership toward a pedagogy of process as we construct, deconstruct, revisit, refine, discard, create and refashion in an ongoing and iterative instructional cycle. We hope that making our pedagogical desires more visible will enhance critical analysis and civil discourse in our complex, and increasingly polarized world. This instructional partnership of process requires patience and humility but also tenacity and integrity; that is, an ability to hold oppositions in a manner that

embraces a generative stance. This is challenging work with the potential for high risks but also high rewards.

The value of process as well as outcome in pedagogy helped us identify the shared, vested interests we have in our practice, which appear to embrace Freirean, Deweyan, and post-structural approaches to teaching and learning. We value opportunities for transformational yet pragmatic learning experiences for our students and ourselves. Like Socrates, Paulo Freire believed in avoiding banking models of teaching and learning, as these perpetuated systems of power and privilege. Furthermore, John Dewey and Paulo Freire both stressed the importance of communication and civil discourse. Our post-structural preferences in our pedagogy acknowledge that we share these pedagogical desires, even though they are fraught with unavoidable contradictions and power structures. We continue to remain focused on the process through conversations, dance between the binaries of critical analysis, knowledge, and power, between structured and unstructured learning spaces, and between ours and our students' pedagogical desires. We posit that regardless of professors' disciplines and course content, a partnership within this pedagogy of process has the potential to transform understandings and professional practice, especially when conversing with a trusted colleague who can respectfully question and challenge our taken-for-granted influence of our students and our teaching and learning processes.

Conclusion

In summary, the important questions that motivated (and continue to motivate) our pedagogical conversations have led us to believe that 'walking the line' between too little and too much professor influence is an ongoing investigation. Knowing exactly if and when our

influence is insufficient or excessive is unattainable; yet, we are certain that the ongoing attempt to maintain the space between both binaries is a ubiquitous tension, a process of negotiating that opposition as an ever-present component of our pedagogy of process. We learned that creating reflexive spaces open to our own constitutions while simultaneously allowing inquiries into competing discourses is challenging but also a necessary component of this unique pedagogy. We affirm there are contradictions and paradoxes within our practice. We acknowledge that within a pedagogy of process, these contradictions, while often uncomfortable, are inherent and necessary to our transformation and professional practice.

Personal understandings and professional practice may be transformed when colleagues partner and engage in authentic conversations characteristic of a journey (King, 2002). We invite you to consider a pedagogy of process, start or continue your own journey, and begin your own partnership with trusted colleagues. Perhaps the following questions might get you started. *What are your vested interests in teaching and learning? Whose viewpoints do they represent? What practices sustain and challenge you?*

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