Explorations of Educational Purpose 19

Tricia M. Kress

Critical Praxis Research

Breathing New Life into Research Methods for Teachers

Springer

Critical Praxis Research

EXPLORATIONS OF EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

Volume 19

Series Scope

In today's dominant modes of pedagogy, questions about issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, colonialism, religion, and other social dynamics are rarely asked. Questions about the social spaces where pedagogy takes place – in schools, media, and corporate think tanks – are not raised. And they need to be.

The *Explorations of Educational Purpose* book series can help establish a renewed interest in such questions and their centrality in the larger study of education and the preparation of teachers and other educational professionals. The editors of this series feel that education matters and that the world is in need of a rethinking of education and educational purpose.

Coming from a critical pedagogical orientation, *Explorations of Educational Purpose* aims to have the study of education transcend the trivialization that often degrades it. Rather than be content with the frivolous, scholarly lax forms of teacher education and weak teaching prevailing in the world today, we should work towards education that truly takes the unattained potential of human beings as its starting point. The series will present studies of all dimensions of education and offer alternatives. The ultimate aim of the series is to create new possibilities for people around the world who suffer under the current design of socio-political and educational institutions.

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Preface

For the past 2 years I have felt as if I am perpetually sitting still in front of my computer screen, trapped in existential musings. Much has happened to the world around me during that time. Education has shifted from No Child Left Behind to Race to the Top. The United States embraced its first Black president. Global capitalism began to spiral downward and was "rescued" by bailouts. The wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan continue to rage on. In my little corner of the world, I have come to the sometimes comforting, sometimes disconcerting realization that I am and will always be a critical theorist. I have seen the joy of births and new relationships, the heartaches of death and loss, and I have shared ideas with many wonderful critical allies. Through all this, existential questions weigh heavily on my brain and my heart as much as I try to ignore them.

Throughout my life I have been prone to asking existential questions. I distinctly remember when I was 9 years old, driving across Canada to Alaska with my family. I asked my father as we sat at the fold-out table in our mobile home, "How do you know what's real?" He didn't respond right away, so I rephrased my question, "I mean, sometimes, life feels like a dream and dreams feel like life. So, how do you know what's real?" I don't think he answered me, or if he did, I don't remember what his answer was, but I can only imagine how strange it must have seemed to hear that type of questioning coming from a 9-year old. That was 25 years ago, and I am still asking the same types of questions. What is the nature of reality? What is our purpose here? What is the purpose of research? What is the purpose of education? Who am I in this great big confusing world? I realize now that I was then and will continue to be a philosopher and critical pedagogue.

When I first came up with the idea for this text in early 2008, I had recently begun working with doctoral students at the University of Massachusetts Boston. In my individual conversations with my students, I was beginning to see a pattern in how they would approach their research. Conversations invariably would go something like this:

Tricia: Tell me about your research topic.
Student: I'm interested in studying {insert topic about urban education here}.
Tricia: How did you come to that topic?

Student: I've been reading about {topic X} and a lot of the research says {Y}, but I'm seeing that there may be something else going on based on what is happening in my {insert context; school, home life, other work setting}, and I really want to find a way to do something about this.

Of course, the students would change, their settings would change, and their topics would change, but what remained the same for most of them was how much their Selves, their work settings, and their desires to improve something were reflected in the research they gravitated toward. The pattern I saw was this interplay between identity, context, and purpose as the impetus for research.

To appease my existentially questioning brain's need to understand what was going on, I called up my mentor and friend Joe Kincheloe, and we had a jovial conversation about this interesting revelation I had. Joe's matter of fact assertion, "Tricia, that's wonderful! You're developing a methodology," was the catalyst for this textbook about what is, essentially, an existential philosophy of teacher research that I have named *Critical Praxis Research*. Tragically, Joe passed away about 8 months later, and I was never able to share with him the fruits of his mentorship and encouragement. I was just putting the finishing touches on Chapter 1 when I heard the news.

Since then, I have done much reading, writing, thinking, grieving, and growing, and I have come to the understanding that *Critical Praxis Research* was not so much me developing a methodology, but rather me naming, identifying, and theorizing a kind of methodology which many practitioners (myself included) already embraced. I won't be so bold as to assume that I have created something entirely new here. On the contrary, I believe this text surfaces what Critical Praxis Researchers already know, feel, and do. True to the ideas in this text, my purpose here is inextricable from my identity as a Critical Praxis Researcher who often feels outnumbered or alone in the "too cold" academy. By writing this text and identifying Critical Praxis Research as a methodology, I hope to provide existing and future Critical Praxis Researchers with a space to ponder their existential questions while feeling connected to, thinking with, grieving, and growing alongside others who do this type of work.

Boston, Massachusetts Tricia M. Kress

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Why Critical Praxis Research?

> *This is going to come as a very big surprise to you, but people of my generation went to schools without air conditioners. . . . The schools are being very careful to make sure that safety is maintained in the classroom. They can open the windows; there's a breeze (Mayor Michael Bloomberg, 10 June 2008).*

In early June of 2008, the northeast coast of the USA sweltered amidst an unseasonable heat wave. Public school students and teachers in New York City schools, many of which don't have air conditioning (at least that works), were trapped in oppressively hot school buildings with poor ventilation as the temperature climbed above 96° and the humidity made it feel like 105°. Resourceful teachers took their students outside to sit in the shade or to other parts of their buildings where air conditioners were working in order to find ways to escape the oppressive heat. Teachers complained that the air was so hot and thick that it was difficult to breathe.[1] Mayor Michael Bloomberg's above response illustrates the blatant disregard for human dignity that is so often experienced by students and educators in urban public schools. "Stop complaining," he implied, "just open a window."

As a product of the New York City public school system, I sympathize with the students and staff who are in the public schools day in and day out, sweating or freezing depending on the season, hesitant to drink water from the water fountains for fear of lead, unsure if the paint peeling off the walls or the fraying insulation around pipes contains lead or asbestos. I remember these hazards and more from when I was a child. I also remember sitting in an oppressively hot classroom with the few windows that could open opened. Some were unable to be opened at all, and some that were propped open with antiquated textbooks would randomly slam shut because the book buckled and they could not stay open on their own. I remember a small, rickety, metal oscillating fan that looked like it was from the 1950s sitting on a desk at the front of the room, creating the only bit of a breeze in that stuffy space. I remember students wilting onto their desks because it was too hot to lift their heads. I also remember feeling like I couldn't breathe. You would think, after 25 years, things would change.

Fast-forward to the present, and I am no longer a second grader in a hot and hazardous NYC classroom. Now I am a faculty member in an air-conditioned public university in Massachusetts. We have facility problems of our own, but

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air conditioning is not one of them. Most days, I bring a sweater because the air conditioning works so well that my nose gets cold. As I sit in my chilled office, I consider the irony of my situation. Educators who swelter and live with oppression every day leave their schools and come to my too cold university to learn how to conduct research. It serves as an interesting metaphor for what it means for passionate practitioners to do research in the academy. Fueled by the injustices they experience every day, these practitioners seek the guidance of academia to make sense of their lived realities in order to effect change for the better in the lives of their students. Yet, once they are within the frigid walls of the academy, they are told to cool down—passion has no place here.

When I was first interviewed for the position at my university, I was asked how I envisioned myself helping practitioners transition into scholars. My answer was that I didn't see these two roles as separate. To me, practitioners and scholars could be one and the same. With my limited formal experience in the academy, I didn't understand the contextual roots of the question. Looking back, I see that I had not been part of the prior conversation from which this question had emerged. Now, as a full-time faculty of education I am continuously reminded of how education faculty and students are perceived in the academy and, at times, how the latter are perceived within their own programs. Deficit perspectives abound. I have too often heard statements about education students prefaced by phrases such as "they can't," "they won't," "they don't want to," "they don't understand," "they're just," and "they're only." These are the very same deficit prefaces that too often are preambles to statements made about students in urban schools.

Implicit within the deficit disclaimers is a socially constructed hierarchical division, in the first instance between the academic and the practitioner. One's way of knowing is privileged over the other. Likewise in urban schools, white middle-class ways of knowing are privileged over the ways of knowing of students who do not fit that demographic, that is, students who are ethnic minorities, gender or sexual preference minorities, English language learners, come from lower income backgrounds, or have special needs. For students, this privileging of certain knowledge manifests itself in standardized curricula and high stakes testing; for teachers in schools, it manifests in top-down reforms, low wages, and poor working conditions; for practitioners attempting to do research in academia, it manifests when positivistic research methods (both quantitative and qualitative) are forced upon them so that they must attempt to either remove who they are from the research process or masquerade as the disinterested researchers they're not. Whether in their schools or in the academy, oppression is exacerbated when the very vehicle that practitioners seek out to conduct research for social justice forces them to dehumanize themselves and their research participants by joining the ranks of the oppressor.

Deconstructing the Practitioner/Scholar Divide

It should come as no surprise when I say that educators in our country get a bad rap. We have all heard the phrase, "those who can't, teach." Less familiar within this disparaging quip are the historical roots of education as a "lesser profession,"

and thus educational research as a "lesser science," in the United States. The story of how teaching and teacher research has earned second-class status in this country goes back several centuries and is a book in itself, but in order to fully grasp (and transcend) the practitioner/scholar divide, we must recognize that the present perception of teaching and teachers as researchers in the academy is derivative of the historical positioning of teaching (and educational research) as first, a temporary male profession; second, a women's profession; third, a lesser "science" within the academy; and finally, the savior and therefore scapegoat of social ills.

In the nineteenth century (and prior), the teaching profession was not how we have come to know it today. Hoffman (1981) explains that teaching was not necessarily a career. It was often a temporary job held by men until they could move on to more lucrative and/or prestigious positions. According to Perlmann and Margo (2001), even though women were employed as teachers for centuries, prior to the nineteenth century, men were generally better educated and therefore seen as better fit for being educators. Additionally, there seemed to be a belief that women would have a difficult time disciplining older boys; thus, a man was needed to maintain control. Female teachers usually taught either young children from out of their homes or, while the men worked other jobs, summer session to younger children and young women who did not work during the summer.[2]

With the onset of Civil War, there seemed to come a turning point in the teaching profession. As men went off to war, like it or not, school boards had to trust women with the responsibility of teaching. Once the war was over, men did return to the teaching profession but not in the same numbers as they had been previously, since around this same time, other social trends that had an impact on teaching were also occurring. First, industrialization created more jobs for men in the manufacturing sector; second, education beyond the primary grades was becoming more readily available to women; and third, particularly in urban areas, school systems were becoming more bureaucratized a nd children were being tiered into the graded system that we know today (Hoffman, 1981; Perlmann & Margo, 2001; Rury, 1991). While it is difficult to say which of these trends had the greatest impact on the feminization of teaching, the effect as a whole led to female teachers dominating the lower grades and slowly filtering into the upper grades, while men taught mainly in the upper grades or moved up the ranks into administrative positions.

Hiring female teachers was not only a by-product of other larger social movements, however. There were also some big incentives for school boards to hire women rather than men. First, women had fewer alternative employment opportunities compared to men, so teaching was a desirable profession when compared to say manufacturing. As was the norm for this time, women were paid lower salaries compared to men, so there were financial incentives to hire women. Since teaching was white-collar work and fairly prestigious for women, the salaries could be on par with manufacturing or clerical salaries, and the position would remain desirable. In addition, education reformers such as Catherine Beecher and Horace Mann argued that not only were women capable of teaching, but they were more favorable than men because of their natural dispositions for nurturing and child rearing. It was even expressed by some that a male teacher might be damaging to the healthy

development of the child (Hoffman, 1981; Rury, 1991). Thus, the ideal vision of teacher began to transform from the male disciplinarian schooled in Latin and literature to the female "good mother" who instinctively knew how to raise good moral citizens.

Around the same time that teaching began to receive the status of "women's work," schools were becoming more bureaucratized and school curricula were becoming more aligned with "real-world" professions. In the name of social efficiency and with the purpose of students being prepared for their future place in life (which often fell along gendered or classed lines), schools began offering classes in business and manufacturing for boys, and home economics, typing, and teaching for girls. For teaching, this was a first step in the move toward professionalization. Soon after, normal schools (teacher training institutions) began to flourish. Yet, while these were post-secondary institutions, they did not hold the same status as an actual college or university; rather, they were much more akin to community colleges, and in fact, most universities at the time resisted the teacher education movement. Two primary examples of this are Harvard and Columbia. In the case of Harvard, many of the faculty felt it inappropriate to offer education courses, and even more so felt it inappropriate to admit women to the university. In the case of Columbia, Teachers College (one of the first teacher training institutions to be developed by a university) was actually built outside the Columbia campus walls, faculty were not regarded as part of Columbia University faculty, and the degree students received was considered different from a traditional Columbia University degree (Lagemann, 2000).

This separation between departments of education and the more "scholarly," male-dominated disciplines in colleges and universities persisted for decades, and it was also reflected in the development and proliferation of educational research. As a field of study, education emerged out of the split between philosophy and psychology (which was originally a sub-discipline of philosophy). As psychology began to come into its own, the Child Study Movement emerged and schools became a great location to begin studying the human capacity for knowledge and learning. Yet many founding and well-known education researchers such as G. Stanley Hall, Charles Eliot, William James, and Edward L. Thorndike held a disdain for educational research, even though educational research was a lucrative field. As an example, Lagemann (2000) explains that, while at Harvard, James conducted and presented on educational research, as well as taught psychology to teachers, but he was highly disparaging about its worth. "[H]e did not think teachers 'need *much* psychology.' What is more, after a few years of teaching teachers in Cambridge, he concluded that 'teachers have less freedom of intellect than does any class of people... A teacher wrings his very soul to understand you, and if he does ever understand anything you say, he lies down on it with his whole weight like a cow on a doorstep so that you can neither get out or in with him'" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 37). Similarly, Lagemann explains that Thorndike believed that intellectual capacity was differentiated by one's inherited nature. In other words, some people are naturally superior in intellect than others. For him, this was the case with men and women. As such, he believed that it was from the ranks of men that "ideally,

school superintendents, education researchers, and other leaders would be drawn. . . Thorndike thought teachers should come to understand their subordinate place in the educational hierarchy. . . By defining teaching as a technical, subordinate task, Thorndike was implicitly elevating not only school administrators, but also educational psychologists like himself to a superordinate place relative to teachers" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 60).

Educational research because it was not considered a "pure" science has held a sub-standard place in academia, although it has been regarded as separate from and superior to teaching in general. A woman's teaching profession has historically been relegated to a lower rung on the professional hierarchy in American society, even in relation to conducting research about teaching, since researchers were historically male. These currents can still be felt in both academia and society at large as educational practitioners attempt to conduct research within the academy and as they go about their daily lives working in schools.

To compound this problem, educators, especially in urban areas, have also been historically charged with the impossible mission of improving society by fixing the immigrant or native "other," thereby fixing society. As Spring (2007) illustrates, schooling has not simply served the purpose of educating young minds. Historically, schools as institutions have served to "deculturalize" or strip non-white, non-English as a first language, non-Christian Protestant, and poor students of their cultural identities. Different groups experienced this process differently because of the degree to which they could or would assimilate into white-stream US society. The experience of being robbed of or denied one's culture, however, is common to native North Americans, African-Americans, Latino/as, and Asians, among various other immigrant groups. In effect, as agents of the state, and under the myth of the great American melting pot, teachers are asked to "blend" their subordinate culture students into white mainstream culture. It is important here to recognize the psychological and cultural violence urban teachers have historically been expected to inflict on their marginalized students as they endeavor toward a wholly unachievable goal of making all students become English-only, white, middle-class male, and Protestant. At the same time, since this social goal is unattainable, in the white-stream American psyche, to a degree, the teacher as the assimilator of "those" students will be identified with the mark of "failure."

Teacher Identity and the Purpose(s) of Research

Identity, who we are, is not just an individual state of being; it is an individual and collective process. In other words, people's identities are continuously being made and remade by themselves and others every day. While certainly personal, identity is not simply something one can endeavor toward alone. I am sure we have all noticed more than once that our home-life identities are slightly different from our work-life identities and may differ again from our social-life identities. And yet, while our identities shift depending upon where we are and whom we are with, we still maintain a core sense of self. Our core identity is a manifest of our autobiography,

a relatively stable sense of self that has evolved over time from childhood to adulthood, and encompasses all of who we are, have been, and envision ourselves to be in the future. The fluid aspect of identity, however, can be attributed to our participation in a collective society, said otherwise, ourselves in relation to others. Roth and Tobin (2007) refer to this as the individual|collective dialectic, whereby, our identities are just as impacted by others' perceptions of us as they are by our own perceptions of ourselves. So while it is true that we can seek to become whomever we choose, the ways in which others perceive us will have an impact on our agency (ability to act) as we aspire to become that person.

Identity, then, is not just who we think we are, it is also who others think we are, and it is also who we are in association with various groups. For example, in my life I identify and am identified as a white, middle-class woman, wife, sister, daughter, professor, colleague, friend, scholar, and writer, among others. These categories have as much to do with me as an individual as they do with me as a member of the collective group I belong to in regard to each of these descriptors. As a woman, for instance, who I am cannot be separated from the social construction and collective identity of women presently and historically in the USA as a whole. The myth of "woman" in the American social consciousness may subject me to lower wages compared to men (women's labor historically has been assigned less value compared to men's), expectations of demeanor (the "proper" woman historically has been passive, "well behaved," and nurturing), access to certain types of employment (teaching or nursing is more likely for women than being a professor or a doctor), and the list goes on. It is important to note that as a woman I am not immune to this social consciousness. I have been raised in the US society and have internalized many of these constructions, albeit unintentionally, which may move me toward making seemingly agentic choices that are actually socially sanctioned as appropriate for a woman; so, for example, while I am a professor and researcher, my chosen specialty is in education, a traditionally female field. My identity is always defined by who I am as an individual, as well as, who I am as part of a larger collective group.

For teachers, this collective aspect of identity is important to note, since who they are professionally cannot be extracted from how teachers in general are perceived in the US society as a whole. As the previous section illustrates, teaching has been relegated to a lesser profession, and being a teacher, however much the individual teacher is satisfied with his or her role, will always be tied to the American social construction of who or what a teacher is. On the one hand, while teaching will be touted as a noble profession by many, there is the simultaneous tendency to regard the teacher as "just" a teacher. Labaree (2004) surmises that this may be because everyone has experienced teaching peripherally since everyone has been a student. From the grown student's retrospective gaze, teaching is easy—anybody can do it. This may also be attributed to the fact that teachers work with children who, presently in the US society, are perceived as less sophisticated than adults (Labaree, 2004).[3] It is probably no accident that within the teaching profession itself, there is a grade level hierarchy where high school teachers are often seen as doing more sophisticated work than are elementary school teachers. It is also worth pointing

out that as you move from kindergarten to 12th grade, the prestige of the position increases, while the gap between the number of female and male teachers begins to narrow.

Any teacher will testify, however, that teaching, regardless of the grade level, is a tremendously complex and difficult job. Teachers need to be knowledgeable about not only their subject matter but also their students and how best to help them master that subject matter. They must be knowledgeable about designing lessons for students, but flexible enough to spontaneously change directions if a particular lesson isn't working or if some rich opportunity for learning comes along that shouldn't be missed. In an era of increased standardized testing and high stakes, teachers also need to be cognizant of the development of the child in relation to the demands of local, state, and federal government. Simply put, teaching is not easy—it is tremendously complex, and it is mentally, emotionally, and physically taxing.

For most of the teachers I work with, their collective identities are also fashioned by the populations of students that they work with. Since most are urban educators, generally they work with students who are ethnically and linguistically diverse, often impoverished, and commonly marked by underachievement as compared to their white, affluent peers in more suburban areas. As teachers of socially marginalized and stigmatized students, the urban teacher in the American imagination may be ascribed with a "savior" identity like Michelle Pfeiffer in *Dangerous Minds* (Smith 1995). On the other hand, as indicated above, as teachers of "failing" students, they may be ascribed as failing teachers—if it is the teacher's job to provide students with knowledge and the students can't display it when taking standardized tests, then the teacher must be inept. Both of these caricatures gloss over the complex and contradictory lived experiences of urban teachers and urban students. They also imbue the teacher, as an individual, with a tremendous amount of power and responsibility while downplaying the significance of the collective social inequality and marginalization that impacts the academic and non-academic lives of urban students.

With this in mind, research methods for teachers cannot be considered outside the context of what it means to identify as a teacher in a particular place and time in the web of reality. Given the local, national, and global political climates, and the particular needs and experiences of the teacher and the population of students he or she is working with, a teacher's purpose for conducting research will fluctuate dramatically. Many scholar–practitioners come to do research through a strong sense of activism. They want to learn more about a phenomenon in order to improve something, whether it is teaching and learning in the classroom, the inequitable distribution of resources in the school, or communication with parents (among infinite other phenomena). As a result, their purposes for conducting research, their identities as teachers, and the contexts in which they find themselves will be driving forces that propel teachers toward particular questions and particular modes of investigation. *Critical Praxis Research* urges the scholar–practitioner to bring these driving forces to the surface and explicitly examine how they shape the research that he or she will ultimately conduct.

Breathing New Life into Research Methods for Teachers

To a degree, CPR shares many commonalities with action research, in that the purpose of conducting research to incite action is essential. It is different, however, in that CPR requires scholar–practitioners to develop critical consciousness about who they are in relation to their students and the larger society in order to then determine the best methods for conducting sophisticated research that is fair, ethical, and empowering for all stakeholders. In this regard, CPR encourages scholar–practitioners to embrace and capitalize on their natural propensity toward complexity and improvisation, which is so important for becoming successful educators. Conversely, CPR rejects (a) simplistic positivist notions of classifying and categorizing, (b) the development of uni-dimensional caricatures of teachers and students, and (c) prescriptive, one-size-fits-all, teacher-research templates that dehumanize the researcher and his or her research participants.

In the context of the historical positioning of teachers, scholar–practitioners, and their students, this last point about prescription is important to emphasize. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire (2000) warns specifically about prescription as a tool of domination. As he explains, "One of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed is *prescription*. Every prescription represents the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to into the one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness. Thus, the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor" (pp. 46–47). With this in mind, CPR as a methodology does not ask scholar–practitioners to follow step-by-step guidelines; rather, it asks them to liberate themselves and others by developing a heightened awareness of what it could mean to be human and free in a world that is currently riddled with inequality and contradictions. By understanding more thoroughly themselves and others as complex social actors, and tailoring their research endeavors to address the contexts in which they work and their purposes for doing research, scholar–practitioners, with their unique positioning as simultaneously oppressor (scholar) and oppressed (practitioner), can begin to conceptualize educational research as a humanizing activity.

In the tradition of critical pedagogy which asserts that no educational act is politically neutral (Kincheloe, 2008), *Critical Praxis Research* asserts that no research, about education or otherwise, is politically neutral. Any research endeavor an individual embarks upon has been historically and contextually shaped by competing values and ideologies. Some researchers are more cognizant and/or forthcoming about the origins of their desire to conduct research, but every researcher comes to the research process with reasons for (a) wanting to conduct research, (b) wanting to conduct research about a particular phenomenon, on/with particular populations, (c) devising particular research questions, (d) selecting particular theoretical orientations, and (e) selecting particular data collection and analysis strategies. These reasons are not simply intrinsic wonderings or dispositions. They are shaped by our values, ideologies, and understandings of what/who should be researched, to what end, and in what manner. As social and cultural beings, who we are as researchers

cannot be separated from who we are in the larger context of what it means to be members of a raced, classed, and gendered capitalist society.

Oppressive hegemony and ideology in the US society are pervasive and can be seemingly impermeable, particularly for those who come from a dominant perspective. However, even those who experience the dual consciousness of the marginalized must still learn or continue to be critical of the social forces that shape how we conceive of and attempt to conduct research in the social world. As Freire (2000) explains, "oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness. Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 51). In this regard, CPR asks scholar–practitioners to continuously and critically reflect on self and world and not take for granted any knowledge as being commonsensical. By recognizing and accepting that our world, and the social inequality that mars it, is socially constructed by humans, we can begin to see how the world can be *reconstructed* anew and how our research can be part of this laudable goal. As we embark upon our CPR journeys by refusing to dehumanize ourselves and others by uncritically following prescriptions or selecting methods, we can begin toward conducting research in emancipatory ways and using our research findings to work toward changing ourselves and the world for the better.

With these understandings as a foundation, *Critical Praxis Research* aims not to bridge the gap between the practitioner and the scholar but to find another path where there is no gap at all. My goal is to clear the way to a temperate middle ground, some combination of the impassioned heat of the urban educator and the frigid indifference of the academic. It will be a place where practitioner–scholars can breathe again, easing the oppressive conditions of their schools without being frozen into a positivistic paralysis. I envision *Critical Praxis Research* as a theory of method that questions and challenges patriarchal and colonizing conceptualizations of research, while emphasizing the importance of considering in part and whole the epistemologies (ways of knowing) and ontologies (ways of being) of the researcher and the researched as both individuals and parts of larger collective groups within local, national, and global societies that are rife with power struggles, inequality, and contradictions. Key to becoming a Critical Praxis Researcher, regardless of whether the researcher identifies as positivist or postmodern, quantitative or qualitative, is the willingness to self-examine the many roles he or she plays in life in order to reveal his/her own motives for conducting research about education. In other words, rather than having the researcher attempt to control bias (which I would argue is wholly impossible), CPR requires the researcher to bring biases to the surface where they can be examined and deconstructed, thus rendering the researcher a research subject alongside the subjects s/he wishes to learn more about in his/her research study.

Kincheloe (2008), in the spirit of Freire, asks that students of critical pedagogy inject their practice with "radical love." In turn, I ask *Critical Praxis Researchers* to inject their *research* practice with radical love. "Such a love," he explains, "is compassionate, erotic, creative, sensual, and informed," and we should use it "to

increase our capacity to love, to bring the power of love to our everyday lives and social institutions, and to rethink reason in a humane and interconnected manner. Knowledge in this context takes on a form quite different from its more accepted and mainstream versions. A critical knowledge seeks to connect with the corporeal and the emotional in a way that understands at multiple levels and seeks to assuage human suffering" (p. 3). It is with these goals and values at the forefront that I present to you *Critical Praxis Research*.

Overview of the Book

This text is organized into three parts. The first part, *Breathing Life into Research Methods for Teachers*, explains why there is a need for a methodology such as this and how CPR came to be. I begin by chronicling the story of my own be(com)ing a Critical Praxis Researcher. In the following chapters, I illustrate how both quantitative and qualitative methods can be oppressive and dehumanizing for teacher researchers and their research participants. In the final chapter of Part I, I present a theoretical description of *Critical Praxis Research* as an alternative to more traditional methods that historically and currently are being used to conduct educational research in academia.

In the first chapter of Part II, by using the Seven Deadly Sins as a metaphor, I take possible critiques of *Critical Praxis Research* head on and show how CPR is in effect the exact opposite of what skeptics might assume. The remaining chapters of Part II illustrate how to draw from many different research paradigms to develop unique bricolage research methodologies, design and explain CPR methods to meet the demands of Institutional Review Board protocols, maintain a dignified and ethical approach to research, collect, and analyze data, and ensure the quality of the research.

Part III, *CPR in Action*, illuminates the importance of positioning one's self in the research process in order to see research as a fundamental part of who we are and in turn, a fundamental part of life. Because CPR is a transgressive research methodology, to maintain momentum and to stave off insecurity throughout the research journey, working with like-minded others who celebrate diversity and creativity in research is essential. Part III is thus comprised, primarily, of chapters written by CPR researchers who tell their stories about how they make sense of their research designs, research journeys, and researcher identities.

How to Read the Book

I have written this book in the same manner that I teach my doctoral courses—with the expectation that I will present ideas for my readers (students) to engage in, dialogue with, and even criticize. My words are not meant to be prescriptive, forcing

you to follow my way, but rather, they are meant to bring you to heightened understandings of yourselves as scholar–practitioners in a dynamic and unpredictable world in order for you to develop your own way. For this reason, each chapter concludes with probing questions and opportunities for my readers to reflect on and write about how they are engaging with the ideas in the text and who they are as researchers. I encourage my readers to read with an open mind and heart, envisioning yourselves as CPR researchers in your own settings with your own goals in mind, profoundly questioning how you know what you know and why you are who you are, and considering who and how you wish to be as a scholar–practitioner. As researchers, our easiest task is to gaze upon others and examine them critically. More difficult, however, is to gaze *critically* and *honestly* at ourselves, although this is easier when we don't go through it alone. I encourage you to embrace this text, and through it, me, my students, and other readers as a collective, as you begin on your journey toward self-discovery as a Critical Praxis Researcher. Feel free to laugh if you find me absurd, get angry if I tick you off, or be quietly introspective (which I would have you do often) as you consider who you are in relation to the ideas in this text. Breathe deeply with me as together we begin to breathe new life into research methods for teachers.

Questions for Discussion

1. Kress writes about the ways in which practitioners are told to "cool down" once in the university. What passions are motivating you as a practitioner and researcher? How might these passions guide you through your university experience? How have you experienced the "cool down" of academia, and what do you think you can do to "warm" the university?
2. Given the brief history of education provided in this chapter, what connections can you make between historical education, current education, and your experience as a student and an educator? How have you encountered education as a sub-standard profession and research science?
3. Kress writes, "It is important here to recognize the psychological and cultural violence urban teachers have historically been expected to inflict on their marginalized students as they endeavor toward a wholly unachievable goal of making all students become English-only, White, middle-class, male, and Protestant." What do you think Kress means by "psychological and cultural violence?" Do you agree or disagree with her assessment? Why or why not?
4. How have the collective aspects of identity—who you are perceived to be—influenced you? Consider how seemingly autonomous, free choices in your professional life have been determined by social expectation. What are the tensions of agency and collective in your professional identity?
5. Kress argues that the social construction of the world opens a potentiality for a reconstruction of the world through research. How are the worlds in which you work, as a practitioner and researcher, socially constructed? What oppressions,

powers, and inequalities do you find? How might these be reconstructed through research? What might such a reconstructive act require of you, personally and professionally?
6. How does Critical Praxis Research add to or trouble your own thinking about educational research? What are your concerns about Critical Praxis Research thus far? What intrigues you about CPR?

Writing for Insight

1. Kress writes that "research methods for teachers cannot be considered outside the context of what it means to identify as a teacher in a particular place and time in the web of reality." Draw this complex "web of reality." Use lines, shapes, and words to show the forces that identify you. Consider connections and conflicts between local, national, and global politics; your own schooling experiences; your experiences as a teacher; and the population with whom you work. What does this web ultimately express about your identity?
2. For 5 min, write freely about the multiple ways you might complete these sentences: An urban educator should _____, An urban student should _____, A researcher should _____. Then consider how "prescription" has colored your perceptions of urban teachers, urban students, and research. How have you, and your students, been de-humanized by prescription?

Notes

1. "NYC Teachers File Complaint Over Heat Wave" *Times Herald-Record*, retrieved from http://www.recordonline.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080611/NEWS/80611016, June 11, 2008.
2. These are generalizations and do not account for differentiation across regions of the United States. The teaching profession evolved differently in the northeast coastal region, the southeast, the mid-west, and on the west coast. This is described in detail in Perlmann and Margo, *Women's Work?*
3. This social construction of child that is presently the norm in US society has not always been so. Children in the past were viewed as "little adults."

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Chapter 2
Stages of Grief and Bringing Joy Back to Inquiry

As Critical Praxis Researchers prepare to embark upon our journeys of Self/Other discovery and transformation, it is essential that we examine the ways in which our socio-historical *situatedness* (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004) has shaped our ways of knowing (epistemology) and being (ontology). We all view the world from particular vantage points, particular places in the web of reality (Kincheloe, 2006). Furthermore, as social actors, the world is within us even as it is comprised of us. We cannot escape that although we are all individuals with our own senses of agency, together we also comprise a larger collective (Roth, 2005). This regulates what we see and how we experience and make sense of the world, which will inevitably shape the ways we approach our teaching and our research, whether we realize it or not, and whether we want it to or not. Often times, texts about research methods urge researchers to "eliminate" bias by removing their experiences and first person accounts and ensuring "validity." In this text, however, I ask my readers not to try to push aside or extract themselves and their own understandings of the world, but rather to unearth and challenge their perceptions by examining them just as they would examine those of a research participant.

Kincheloe (2005) emphasizes the importance of knowing ourselves and our own *historicity* in order to begin to see new ways of being in the world. In other words, we need to take a step back from those parts of us that feel the most "commonsensical," and think about why they feel that way to us in the first place. As we research, our task becomes not only making the strange familiar, but also making the familiar strange (Shklovsky, 1965). To do this, we must ask ourselves probing questions. For example, why do I see the world as I see it? Where does this vision come from? What/whose perspectives/ideologies inform, align with, and/or challenge this vision? How does my race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexuality, native language, geographic location, etc., inform the way I experience and make sense of the world? From my location in the web of reality, what am I able to see, and what is obscured? How might I expand my vision of the world? What/whose ways of knowing and being might help me to see the world in ways that are wider, deeper, and/or from different vantage points? How might these new perspectives help me to transform my practice to be more inclusive and human(e)?

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As we critically reflect, these general questions about Self will begin to give way to more pointed questions of how our Selves inform our pedagogical and research practice. For instance, we may begin to question how embedded ideologies shape the ways we define educational success and failure. We may start to question how our own experiences with education might be similar to or different from those of our students, thereby tacitly structuring our pedagogies to create advantage for some students and disadvantage for others. We may begin to question how our notions of "commonsense" lead us to relegate some students into the category of "gifted" while others are categorized as "at risk." We may begin to question why certain readings of the world are included in our curriculum while others are not. And we may begin to challenge our own prior judgments about which epistemologies or ontologies should be rewarded (or not) in schools. Here, within this zone of "defamiliarization" (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004), we begin to develop conscientization (Freire, 2000), that is, new awareness of Self, Other, and the world. By questioning our Self-constructions in this manner, we unravel our taken-for-granted assumptions and begin to remove the hegemonic swaddling that was previously so comfortable yet so confining. Through critical questioning, we kick free from these soft bonds, as we allow our Selves to stretch and flex. We grow epistemologically, ontologically, and spiritually as we seek out "multiple perspectives from divergent disciplines, theoretical constructs, cultural perspectives, historical moments, etc. in the effort to cultivate [our] intellect and transform the existing social order" (Kincheloe, 2006, p. 105). Beginning our research journeys in this way will necessarily be life-changing as we experience many moments of joy but also many moments of loss as we slough off our old Selves and begin to remake ourselves anew as Critical Praxis Researchers. Through critical reflection, we will catalyze a process of grieving, growing, and be(com)ing, emerging at a place where research and education are dynamic, unpredictable, humorous, ironic, painful, and ultimately joyful, just like life itself.

Grieving, Growing, and Be(com)ing a Critical Praxis Researcher

Learning to breathe life into education and educational research involves embracing and amplifying our own humanity so that we may be better able to dialogue with others. The ultimate goal, of course, is to develop new understandings of Self|Other and the world in order to bring about change—to our research practice, our pedagogy, and hopefully society. Therefore, the beginning of the Critical Praxis Researcher's journey is necessarily personal. We must know ourselves in order to begin to know others and the world around us. This process may be scary at first, particularly since our Self-revelations may pose threats to our identities. No one wants to see him/herself as having possibly treated others badly, even if we enacted these past practices unwittingly. As a scholar-practitioner who believes in the power of this process, however painful it might be, I would be remiss to ask my readers to

undergo this type of personal journey if I myself were unwilling to do so. Thus, in the remainder of this chapter, I will illustrate my own process of grieving, growing, and be(com)ing as a Critical Praxis Researcher. Using "Stages of Grief[1]" as a framework I bring my past experiences as a student to the surface where they may be critically examined, deconstructed, and reconstructed into something new. In the following sections, I draw from my own ways of knowing as a creative writer, as I present creative pieces for my readers to consider. My intent is to use these artistic forms to defamiliarize my past as a student by creating a distance between me in the present and me throughout my 30 years of experiences with what I refer to as "death education." I then analyze these experiences holistically by questioning what this reveals to me about my understandings of the world. I further challenge myself to think about what these pieces prevent me from seeing. I make connections between my experiences and US education and society more generally. And finally, I consider what this means for my professional practice.

Stage 1—Guilt: Death by Peanut

Mrs. Snow walked around the room checking students' homework. Sweet Pea looked down at her notebook and squirmed in her seat. In the top margin of the page, there was a faint hint of pink marker bleeding through from the other side. Sweet Pea was a dreamer and a doodler; during class she had doodled on her homework from the day before, and she knew Mrs. Snow would find it unacceptable.

"Maybe she won't notice," Sweet Pea hoped silently, hands folded, ankles crossed, waiting as Mrs. Snow crept ever closer.

"Please don't notice, please don't notice!" Sweet Pea begged in her mind as Mrs. Snow's red pen hovered above the page, poised to give her check mark of approval.

And just as the pen was about to touch the paper, it happened—

"What is that?!!" Mrs. Snow's shrill inquiry echoed off the plaster walls, turning all the children's heads in Sweet Pea's direction. Mrs. Snow's wrinkled hand flew to the page and flipped it over exposing. . .

"A peanut," Sweet Pea whispered softly in shame, eyes fixed on the pink cartoon peanut she had doodled in the margin.

Mrs. Snow chastised loudly in a sing-song voice, "Baby! Baby! Baby!" The rest of the class stared, and Sweet Pea sat tearless but humiliated enough.

Sweet Pea never drew another peanut or anything else in her notebook. Instead, she drew sad faces in art assignments and often suddenly became "ill" and missed days of school. She never told anyone that she was ashamed to go to school because she "acted like a baby."

Sweet Pea was 6 years old. This was the first grade.

Stage 2—Shock/Disbelief: "But, What's the Point?"

Stage 3—Bargaining: Death by Marginalization

Dear Mrs. G.,

I realize that my grades are not as high as many of my peers, and you think by allowing me to take AP English you will somehow put my academic standing in jeopardy.

However, colleges place high value on students taking Advanced Placement work, and I believe my college prospects will broaden if I am allowed this opportunity. Furthermore, I assure you that I am capable of doing the work, even if you think my previous grades indicate otherwise. Unlike many of my higher achieving peers who were placed into this course unwillingly and are now complaining that it is too difficult and the teacher is too demanding, I want to be challenged, and I very much would like to learn from Dr. A., the only Ph.D. in our school. If you allow me access to this course, I will do my best to maintain the required GPA. If at any point my grades falter, you may transfer me into the lower tracked class, and I will not protest your decision. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Dr. Kress's daughter

Stage 4—Anger: Evidence of Scholarship

My brain is brilliant—
an intelligent mash-up of audio/video,
hyper-reality bullshit come alive.

I'm a smart-mouthed, silver-tongued minx
running rampant across the page.
Now watch me flow like a river of mercury.

You can't touch me to take my temperature
'cause I'm too hot for this place,
too sour for your taste,
a straight-talking bitch struggling to escape domestication
in this patriarchal space.
And you dismiss me in a phrase:

"I see no evidence of scholarship here."

No, I won't play the passive minion,
or step-in-line, blindly following,
I flow around you, a silver minx with ferocity and grace.
So pardon me, while I seek a second opinion
before you diagnose me as a waste.

Stage 5—Acceptance/Hope: "Poetic License"

Scene 1
Setting: *The Graduate Center, City University of New York. Four weeks into the 2002 Fall semester. The course is Pedagogy in the Urban Classroom, and class has just ended. Students are gathering their belongings, casually chattering to each other*

and the professor (*Joe Kincheloe*) *who is also trying to make his way out of the tiny, windowless classroom. Trish, a first-year doctoral student who does not consider herself to be as scholarly and smart as her classmates, makes her way toward Joe after most of the others have left. Nervous but smiling, she places her hand on Joe's arm to stop him from exiting the room.*

Trish: (*quietly*) Hey, Joe.
Joe: Hey, Tricia.
Trish: So, um, exactly how much poetic license are we allowed in this mid-term assignment?
Joe: (*slyly and jovially, as if sharing an inside joke*) Why, as much as you need, of course.

Trish thanks Joe as they walk out the room where other students are waiting for Joe's attention. Trish ponders the inspiration for her work and Joe's "permission" to be creative and decides she will turn in her paper early "just in case."

Scene 2
Setting: *Joe's office, the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Two weeks before mid-semester. Approximately 3 pm, before class. Trish is sitting across from Joe who is behind his desk, upon which are various papers and other academic artifacts. The office is decorated with McDonald's and Simpsons memorabilia on the bookshelves and walls. Trying to take her mind off her nerves, Trish scans her surroundings and tries not to watch as Joe reads her two-weeks-early mid-term paper.*

Trish: *(sheepishly)* Sorry about the green paper. I ran out of white.
Joe: *(head down, reading)* That's quite alright.

Trish sits silently as Joe continues to read, becoming visibly more interested and excited as he turns the green pages.

Joe: *(shaking his head and smiling)* Wow. . .

Trish begins to smile but is still nervous. She wonders if it is actually her ideas or just her skill as a creative writer that Joe is responding to.

Joe: *(laughs out loud)* Sweetbreads! My God, that's good!

Trish's heart pounds as she shifts her body to the edge of her seat. She's quietly sharing in Joe's excitement as she realizes that he "gets" the joke. Joe finishes the last page and flops his arm, paper in hand, down on the desk, seemingly both exhausted and exhilarated from reading.

Tricia: So it's ok?
Joe: *(smiling and shaking his head as if in disbelief)* Tricia, this is brilliant, so yes, it's "ok."

Joe laughs again. Trish thanks him for his time and leaves the green paper behind to be graded.

Scene 3
Setting: *The Graduate Center, City University of New York. Structures of Social Knowledge course, Trish's 2nd semester as a doctoral student. Class is ending and Joe has handed back graded mid-term assignments. Trish flips to the back of the white paper to read the at-length feedback. The paper received an A, and Trish chuckles at the last line written on the page. "Fabulous paper! But I do miss the 'greenies!'" She makes a mental note, and at the end of the semester for the final paper she hands Joe a "greenie."*

Stage 6—Denial: Muses, Mojos, and "That-Guy"

Muses and mojos for me are the personification of creative energy. They are a dynamic duo: the muse is where inspiration begins and the mojo is the creative swagger that flows through written work. My muse's name is Desiree, and my mojo's name is Tony. Together, they represent the part of my identity where I feel secure in myself and uninhibited and intoxicated in my work. Desiree is a jet-setting party-girl who wears sequined outfits, is up on the latest fashion trends, and hosts hip soirees in exclusive clubs in places I've never actually been, like Ibiza or Bali. Tony is a cool cat in a rust-colored leisure suit who dances all night at the club and vacations in the South of France when he feels exhausted and run down after partying too hard with Desiree. Together, they throw one heck of a party. Lately, however, Desiree and Tony have been avoiding me. I find myself struggling to stay as sharp as Desiree (who always has quick and witty ideas) and as cool as Tony (whose moves are fluid and effortless), and sometimes that means I put up a front. When that happens they jet off to their next exotic locale without letting me know where they've gone or when they'll return.

When Desiree and Tony leave, I sit in front of my computer, tinkering with a paragraph here, moving a sentence there, but really not getting anything significant accomplished. Tinkering is my way of not dealing with writer's block, which afflicts me most often when I don't really "own" my work. This self-denial is what I struggle with most as both a scholar and a writer. When I slip into self-denial I can't find my voice. Then I backslide into old mimetic habits where I become the detached observer, which is a reflection of what I believed a scholar was (and what I clearly wasn't) when I first began my own scholar-practitioner journey. In those moments, I am no longer emotionally invested in my ideas, and I become "That-Guy" who is super smart, but isn't cool or fun and frowns upon Desiree's creative inspirations and Tony's fluid dancing. While That-Guy represents the part of my identity that I

associate with academic authority, he doesn't have a name because he feels foreign and unidentifiable to me, as if he is everywhere and nowhere all at once. On the surface he seems to be so much smarter than everyone else. When I am That-Guy, I take myself way too seriously, and I lose touch with other facets of my identity that feel very connected to "real" life. When That-Guy steps into the foreground of my mind, Desiree raises an eyebrow, and Tony shoots a sideward glance. They look at me as if to say, "who invited him?" And they saunter out as I begin to lecture.

Lessons (Un)Learned from Death Education

Presenting my past with education in this way has forced me to consider many probing questions. I have listed some of them below, and I attempt to make sense of them in the subsequent paragraphs.

(1) How is it possible that I could go to school for 20 years and not see myself as worthy of being a knowledge producer? How did a White middle-class girl whose grades were above average (but not excellent) wind up becoming a PhD and a university professor?
(2) In what ways do my experiences reveal contradictions within the achievement ideology and the rhetoric of meritocracy and equal opportunity via (public) education?
(3) How does my location in the web of reality (i.e., race, class, gender, socioeconomic status, etc.) influence what I am able (and unable) to see as I reflect on my experiences with education? What or who is absent from my past reflections?
(4) In what ways has my subsequent professional practice both disrupted and reproduced this *hegemony* that has shaped my own experiences with education?

First, notice how my questions travel across levels of analysis. I move from interrogating the surface of my experiences (meso level), to provoking socio-cultural analyses (macro level), to the implications for my practice (micro level). While a complete detailed analysis of the above questions is in itself worthy of several chapters, for the purpose of this exercise, I discuss briefly the understandings that I take away from these questions. I expect that my readers may have different interpretations, based upon their own historicities. However, I do my best to honestly capture how I make sense of my past at this moment and what it means for me as I move forward into the future.

What My Reflections Reveal

One of the most lasting lessons I learned (and still continuously struggle to unlearn) while attending public school in New York City in the 1980s and 1990s was that allowing whimsy, dreams, humor, philosophy, and creativity to spontaneously enter

into schoolwork was unacceptable because it took away from the "real" business of learning content. Even in "creative" spaces, my education was exemplary of the "banking" model (Freire, 2000). For example, I learned how to read music and play an instrument, but I did not learn how to be a musician; I learned how to write by summarizing others' ideas in five-paragraph essays, but I did not learn how to be a writer. As evidenced in Stages 1 and 2, as a "dreamer" and an analytical and creative thinker, I experienced epistemological and ontological violence when my ways of knowing and being did not align with the traditional school norms. "Death by peanut" (Stage 1) was the first real epistemological/ontological assault I can remember, and Stage 2 ("But What's the Point?") was the first time that I felt the sting of being academically punished for being "too" creative (i.e., not adhering to a prescribed format by failing to include a moral in a creative story). Up until I was in high school, I felt a tremendous amount of guilt and shame because I could never seem to behave "properly." I would impulsively do things (like draw in my notebook or not follow directions) that would result in backlash from my teachers. Because my ways of knowing were not often rewarded with the highest grades in the class, I often struggled to gain access to additional challenging learning environments. This was the case even when I applied for my doctoral program, and I landed on the "wait list," as I had many times before. Yet, as indicated in my signature as "Dr. Kress's Daughter" in Stage 3, I enjoyed a measure of privilege; my social capital (Bourdieu, 1998) ensured that I could rely on people I knew (like family or other trusted adults) to vouch for me and help me to gain access. I also had enough cultural capital from home to be able to "fake it" by mimicking the classroom norms and repressing dispositions that might have been considered unacceptable.

Throughout my school years, I internalized the above struggles as a problem with me, not as a disconnect between my ways of knowing and traditional school structures and philosophies of education. There is evidence of marginalization throughout stages 1–4, which span nearly 20 years of my life, ending with the very blatant assault from my academic advisor during my Masters degree. When he proclaimed, "I see no evidence of scholarship here," after reading the collection of works I submitted for my thesis, he unabashedly told me that I was not a scholar; meanwhile, these same works had successfully earned me a 3.98 GPA in the courses taught by faculty in his department. Contradictions such as these occurred throughout my education and prevented me from (a) knowing myself as a learner, and (b) regarding myself as someone who was able and/or entitled to be a scholar and producer of knowledge. In educational settings, I often felt like an interloper who "got in" (hooks, 1994) because she "knew someone." I simultaneously felt relegated to perform and compelled to rebel against the role of "stupid girl" in which my ideas were invalid until approved by authority holders. Furthermore, I identified myself first as an artist and second as an intellectual. This identity "ordering" allowed me to reconfigure my "eccentricity" as an asset rather than a deficit and use it to protect against identity threats. It was not until my doctoral studies that I was exposed to a language, which helped me to understand that (a) my ways of knowing did not exemplify the traditional, positivistic conception of education which had thus far been the norm in my life in schools, and (b) many times I was able to "succeed"

by leveraging my social and cultural capital in order to neutralize this disadvantage. The events detailed in Stage 5 ("Poetic License") mark the first time I felt my ways of knowing had been accepted as scholarly. As evidenced in Stage 6, I still struggle against these socio-historical identity resonances today when I slip into playing the role of That-Guy who is everything I am naturally not, which for a long time I felt was the personification of a serious scholar. This still resonates within my *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1998), and I don this façade as protection when I feel insecure.

What My Stories Obscure

Glaringly absent in my reflective pieces are four things: (1) any awareness of my own situatedness as a female, (2) a recognition of diversity, (3) collaborative learning with peers, and (4) a vision of a teacher who was not authoritarian. I list gender awareness first because I regard this as my most glaring omission. As a female, it seems contradictory that I did not understand the impact my gender had on my experiences with education. As a young woman, I did not know what feminism was or that being female was significant in school. Feminism was something that was in history books, and it was neutralized as a thing of the past in the same way that the Civil Rights Movement had been. I knew the terms "women's liberation" and "the feminist movement;" however, their political and social implications were muted because they were reduced to less than a page in a history book filled with mostly White male "heroes." In this context, feminism could be reduced to the following: in the 1920s women were given the right to vote, and in the 1960s and 1970s they were allowed equal opportunity in the workplace. This of course was punctuated by fairly cliché images of bra burning and "militant" protests. Such notions as "androcentric," "patriarchal," "mysogenistic," and alternately, "women's ways of knowing," "feminist epistemology," or "feminist standpoint" were absent from my life. I did not know that my ways of knowing (e.g., experiential, constructivist, subjective, empathic, corporeal, connected, etc.) are often associated with women's ways of knowing, and that these ways of knowing were not valued in school where body and mind, and experience and reason were bifurcated. I faced particular challenges in seeing myself as capable in math and science classes, particularly upper level classes like physics and precalculus because I could not make sense of the content through my lived experiences in the way I could with English and social studies.

I list diversity next because it is hard for me to believe that as a kid who grew up in New York City, I did not have much awareness of diversity. If I reflect again and look for diversity, I do not have to dig very deeply into my memory to find it. In fact, I could have easily replaced Stage 2 with a reflection about diversity. In grades 6–8, I attended a school that was populated primarily by minority students which was obvious in the mornings, during lunch, and in the afternoons when students were all together and not divided into their respective classes. However, in the 1980s in New York City Public Schools, academic tracking was commonplace. During instruction time there were few students of color in my classes. In contrast,

the lower tracks were almost entirely comprised of Black and Latino students with a small spattering of White students. The middle tracks were more racially and economically mixed, and the highest tracks were dominated by the Whitest and wealthiest students. Because I was in one of the highest tracks, I was removed from most students who were racially, culturally, and/or economically different from me. As a result, I was unable to recognize my Whiteness and corresponding privilege because of the insular structures of my classes. Because of the "blanching" effect that tracking had on my experiences with education, diversity is not always the first thing I see when I reflect on education, especially since I was not made aware of my own Whiteness and its associated privileges until I was in my twenties.

Omissions 3 and 4 are related to each other. I will address them together, because I believe these blind spots are a product of the type of schooling that I endured which was normalized through the hegemony of US society. I can only recall one instance when I was required to work with a group of my peers to complete an assignment for school. While I am sure there must have been other instances, this was such an uncommon occurrence that it feels now as if it did not exist at all. School learning was driven by an ideology of individualism. I remember often hearing phrases such as "eyes on your own papers," and "you are responsible for your own work." Exams were a competition, and grades were indicators of "winners" and "losers." Helping or being helped by my peers was not encouraged and could have serious consequences because it was considered "cheating." As a result, listening to the ideas and opinions of my peers was not a worthwhile activity, since knowing others' opinions and insights would not prepare me for an exam. Only textbook knowledge and teacher knowledge was "testable" knowledge. All class activities were teacher directed. Teachers like Mrs. Snow from Stage 1 were dictator-like and ruled with an iron fist; however, even teachers that I remember fondly like Dr. A. from Stage 3 were still authoritarian. In the end, achievement depended upon listening to the teacher by (a) doing what you were told, and (b) regurgitating information that he or she regarded as important (whether it was delivered through him/her or a textbook). I do not recall learning *with* my teachers until I was in college and graduate school, and even those moments were few.

Socio-cultural Analysis

By many accounts, *A Nation At Risk*, which was published in the early 1980s, marked the beginning of what we know today as the standardization of education via high-stakes testing. However, as is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the past 30 years of public education reform are simply the most recent manifestations of *positivist/behaviorist* ideology in US education. In fact, John Dewey was speaking out against this way of thinking about education around the turn of the twentieth century (Dewey, 1902). As a product of public education in the 1980s and 1990s, I cannot recall a time without standardized testing. As such, rote learning for the purpose of passing exams was normal for me, regardless of whether I excelled at this type of "learning." I did not know that education could mean something different until I was

a graduate student. I grew up being taught that we lived in a "color blind," "gender neutral," "classless" society where everyone was the same, the American dream was real, and anyone could realize it if only they worked hard enough. This *meritocratic* ideology was reinforced by the *achievement ideology* in schools. Supposedly, those who work hard in life will be rewarded for their efforts (meritocracy), and success in school will lead to success in life via social mobility (achievement ideology), regardless of who you are and where you come from (McLaren, 2007). Conversely, those who do not work hard (in life or in school) will not be rewarded. Through the use of standardized curricula and testing, education is ostensibly the same for everyone, and those who perform better are simply intrinsically smarter. In my education, race, class, ethnicity, gender, and other differences were not talked about in relation to power and inequality unless they were couched within historical tales. Inequality was a thing of the past. This hegemony that shaped my understanding of education and society reflects the dominant ideology of the US. According to this *Darwinian* logic, everyone has an equal chance at social mobility, and those who are strongest and smartest are the ones who will "make it." These ideologies normalize and justify social inequality by placing the onus for success or failure squarely in the hands of the individual (Giroux, 1988); meanwhile, they detract from larger structural forces that ensure that some people are destined to succeed while others are destined to fail. They also obscure the fact that the odds of success and failure vary from person to person and are largely dependent upon a person's race, ethnicity, class, gender, native language, etc.

Unearthing my own contradictory past with education illuminates to me the baldness of meritocracy and the achievement ideology. If in fact, people get where they are through hard work and achievement in school, I should not have become a PhD. Furthermore, I should have never gained access to the high school I entered, the AP course I took, or the doctoral program I graduated from. While I did work hard at school, if I did not have the privileges of the cultural, social, and symbolic capital I was imbued with from birth, I am sure I would not have made it to where I am now. There were too many moments where I was initially barred access, and I had to leverage my capital to get in. On the other hand, according to meritocracy and achievement ideology, since I did "make it," I landed in the appropriate place because I was able to be "successful" in the disciplines of English and Education, while I was unable to be "successful" in other fields. This would appear to be because of innate ability more than for socio-cultural reasons. The fact that the humanities and education fields have greater populations of women than other disciplines, would be of no consequence. Meanwhile, these ideologies prevented me from recognizing my own advantages as White and middle class and my simultaneous marginalization as a female. Inadvertently, the shame and insecurity I experienced when I was unable to fit into the norms of acceptable school behavior compelled me to repress my ways of knowing and by default collude in my own marginalization. It never occurred to me that there could be deeper, social reasons why the fields of English and Education were places where women could more easily flourish as compared to Engineering and Mathematics. Through critical and

feminist readings, the complexity of my experience is evident. I had a competitive advantage because of my race and my middle-class upbringing, but because of my gender, I was corralled (seemingly by choice) into a place where I "belonged."

Implications for Practice

The political dimensions of education were hidden from me for most of my life. This resulted, initially, in me reproducing society in my practice. Particularly troublesome, as I reflect back, was my inability to recognize my own Whiteness. In fact, I remember the first time I ever heard the term "invisible Whiteness" or had any clue that I might be privileged simply because of my skin color. This moment occurred when I was taking a course with Ira Shor while working on my Masters degree. I did not hear that term again until I was working on my doctorate 3 years later. By this time I had already been teaching for a few years. If I shift my retrospective gaze to my practice at the time, I can see instances where I may have perpetuated injustices without knowing it. For example, I remember in a freshman English course, my students and I decided on the novels to read together. After class one day, a female African-American student came to me and suggested that I consider using *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison (2004). She even gave me the book. Blinded by my own Whiteness, I did not suggest to the class that we read the book because we had already set the syllabus, and I did not want to deviate from it. I did not recognize at the time that deviating from the syllabus would have allowed me and my other students to learn from this student and Morrison's representation of the African-American experience. We missed out on what could have been a very rich learning opportunity because I could not see beyond myself to consider the implications of her gesture and my lack of response. I am saddened by this knowledge, because I do not know what pain I might have caused that student (or others) by not acting on opportunities to learn from my students who were racially and ethnically different from me. My Eurocentric upbringing masked by hegemony made me "color-blind," which meant by default I perpetuated the status quo and inequality because I was shaping my curriculum around a White middle-class vision of the world.

It is painful to have to face the things I may have done or not done in my practice, but I cannot change the past; I can only learn from it. I grieve and then I grow, as I move forward with my new knowledge, trying not to replicate what was done previously to me or by me. As a White middle-class woman who internalized these hegemonic norms for much of my life, I must be vigilant in questioning my own assumptions. Remedying my past mistakes is not as simple as using differentiated instruction or developing student-centered activities. In fact, I often used student-centered teaching approaches, but this did not guard against my own limited vision of what "normal" was, even though I myself could not embody the ideal of "normal." The fingerprints of my White, middle-class, patriarchal upbringing were on everything I did as I prepared for and conducted my class—from the readings I chose, to the assignments I created, to the ways I assessed student work—even

though they were invisible to me. As hooks (1994) explains, "racism, sexism, and class elitism shape the structure of classrooms, creating a lived reality of insider and outsider that is predetermined, often in place before any class discussion begins" (p. 83). Now, in order to better serve my students I purposefully seek out perspectives that are different from mine, that challenge me to unpack my assumptions and think differently about education. While I feel most comfortable in the world of critical pedagogy, I know that I need to push myself beyond my comfort zone in order to truly transform my practice. For instance, feminist, Black feminist, indigenous, subaltern, and postcolonial scholars (among countless others) have much to teach me about how my taken-for-granted ways of seeing the world shape my practice. They also provide me with clues about how my practices might be deconstructed and reconstructed to be more inclusive and humane.

Thus far, I have only talked about practice as it relates to pedagogy; however, our research practices will be tacitly fashioned by our taken for granted assumptions in the same way if we do not examine why we think as we do about educational research. Our beliefs about the purpose of education and what is "normal," will also regulate where we choose to focus our attention, the questions we ask, the methods we employ, and how we interpret and share our findings. For example, without an understanding of how power and discourse (mine or other students') might silence some students in my classroom, I might make the erroneous assumption that quiet students are not interested in learning. As a result I may choose to investigate why these students are not engaged in their education. From this perspective, I am comparing students to an unspoken norm of what it means to be interested and engaged in learning. The resulting study then would be about why these students do not meet a particular preset norm and what needs to be done to have them conform to this norm. If I examine this phenomenon as a Critical Praxis Researcher, I would invert this dynamic and then look at it as a relationship in a specific context. Rather than assuming there was something wrong with the students, I would turn my attention to my practice and consider how it relates to my students, how my students relate to it, and how it is reflective (or not) of a particular political, social, and historical context. Instead, I might begin by asking, "Within this particular context, in what ways do I (via my practices and the classroom culture) not invite (or allow) certain students to speak?" The findings I yield in the second perspective will enable me to then consider how I might change my practices and the culture of the learning environment to afford *all* students an opportunity to come to voice, as opposed to the first perspective, which would more likely lead me to find ways to try to "fix" students whom I had already positioned as deficient. The distinction may seem slight, but it is important. As soon as we position another person as "less than" by measuring them against an unspoken norm, we have recreated an oppressive relationship and perpetuated the status quo by failing to question ourselves and the contextually related norms upon which we have based our assumptions. By looking at ourselves and our practices in relation to our students, we can begin to unravel our assumptions and challenge underlying norms that may exclude or marginalize. This approach goes beyond making learning more student-centered; it challenges the philosophical foundation of our practice; indeed, it challenges our very Selves.

Bringing Joy Back to Inquiry: Research as "Me-Search"

To be good at school for many people (myself included) sometimes means suppressing or in extreme cases killing off those parts of us that make us different in exchange for conforming to social norms that have been preset by someone else. The perverse logic of schooling touts individualism via the achievement ideology while simultaneously equating intellectual maturation with extinguishing the idiosyncrasies that make us uniquely human (Kincheloe, 2006). I have worked with students at various stages of their education, from middle school all the way up to the doctoral level, and I have seen the effects of this "death education." In fact, the further up the education ladder I go, the more severe it often becomes. I have worked with many students who were cautious, inhibited, fearful, self-conscious, skeptical, jaded, and sometimes really angry. I sympathize with them because I have often felt this way too. For this reason, I approach this text with a fierce desire to change the face of educational research so that we can reconnect our intellects to our affects, experiences, and desires (hooks, 1994). I am convinced that "human beings can do better, be smarter, grow less egocentric and violent, and develop new forms of connection to the cosmos and other people" (Kincheloe, 2006, p. 13). What better place to begin to do this than in our inquiries about education? Through critical inquiry we can begin to envision these new forms of connection to the cosmos, as we reconnect who we are with what and how we know and we open ourselves up to the infinite lessons the world has to teach us.

One of my students summed this up well when she shared with me that the type of work I do goes against everything she had been taught thus far. She recalled that a past professor had explicitly told her that she was supposed to do "*re*search, not *me*-search." The concept of "*me*-search," as that unnamed professor so aptly put it, may go against what a more traditional, positivistic notion of research requires, but in Critical Praxis Research, which is meant to be liberating for the researcher and his or her participants, *me*-search is essential. If we turn to the lessons of Freire (1981), "The important thing is to help man (and nations) help themselves, to place them in a consciously critical confrontation with their problems, to make them the agents of their own recuperation" (p. 16). Critical consciousness as Freire describes it *is me*-search, and conducting research for liberation and social change is impossible without it. As we come to appreciate ourselves and our place in this complex world, we also begin to appreciate others. In Critical Praxis Research, we learn to see the world critically, while at the same time charging our practice with a radical love powerful enough to catalyze transformation. We are humbled as we catch a glimpse of the vastness of the world, and we are propelled into "new domains [of thinking] concurrently injecting excitement and jouissance into processes once considered by many to be mundane and boring" (Kincheloe, 2006, p. 8). We revel in the world's complexity and our own incompleteness. As we come to realize that everything we do leads us deeper into our own be(com)ing, we accept that every step along our research path is an opportunity to experience a moment of joy as we discover ways of being in the world that were previously unimagined.

Questions for Discussion

1. Kress describes a process of self-growth that incorporates both joy and loss. What are the joys of a "new awareness of Self, Other, and the world" (2)? What might some of the losses be for you? How do you feel about such an emotional, spiritual, and intellectual journey?
2. A multi-genre approach guided you through Kress' educational historicity. What does each of the pieces reveal about Kress' realities as a student? With which piece do you most resonate? Why? What does your reaction to the various pieces (and the composite of the work) reveal to you about the hierarchies and constructs you assume to be most real?
3. A variety of statements in *Lessons (Un)learned from Death Education* help the reader to view her deconstruction of identity as a *process*, an unfolding, a journey. What language indicates this for you? What are your reactions to this circular, non-linear, never-ending view of identity construction and deconstruction? What are its implications for you as a practitioner-researcher?
4. Kress is able to recount a specific instance when her teacher practice perpetuated injustice; we read of her overlooking Morrison's *Song of Solomon* as a syllabus choice. Can you recall a specific instance in which you may have been ignorant of structural injustices, and in your ignorance, perpetuated them? What happened? How are the "fingerprints" of your upbringing evident, and to what effects?
5. How might your own research interests or research questions be re-conceptualized so that your research subjects are not viewed as deficient? How might your own practices be troubled by such a re-conceptualization? How might your research interest be contextualized so that the subject as individual(s) is/are not at fault? How can you move from re-search to me-search?

Writing for Insight

1. Using Kress' multi-genre approach as permission for writer's freedom, write a creative and honest practitioner self-history. You might write a poem, a lyric, a dialogue, an essay, a memo, a text message, or any form that appeals to your historicity. Consider addressing the questions Kress suggests on page 1:

    - Why do I see the world as I see it? Where does this vision come from?
    - What/whose perspectives/ideologies inform, align with, and/or challenge this vision?
    - How does my race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexuality, native language, geographic location, etc., inform the way I experience and make sense of the world?
    - From my location in the web of reality, what am I able to see, and what is obscured?
    - How might I expand my vision of the world? What/whose ways of knowing and being might help me to see the world in ways that are wider, deeper, and/or from different vantage points? How might these new perspectives help me to transform my practice to be more inclusive and human(e)?

2. Jot a quick note to a current or former professor, a note intended to give him/her a "piece of your mind." Then, step back from what you've just written. What does your opinion, your perspective, or even your anger reveal to you about your positionality? What is comfortable about this position? What might you do to trouble it, and to what possible effect?

Note

1. These are based on Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's 1969 influential text *On Death and Dying*, which detailed five stages of grief people experience when losing a loved one. They have since been expanded to include seven (sometimes eight) stages that are experienced in varying order and sometimes repeatedly.

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Chapter 3
Positivist Research, Death of the Self

People! When you do this kind of work, you believe these numbers mean something! They represent the phenomena you are trying to study![1]

During my doctoral studies, once a week during one particular semester, I and most of my classmates begrudgingly sat through a quantitative methods course, in which we were often scolded by the professor for our "resistance" to learning quantitative methods. Admittedly, we were at times not an easy bunch to teach, particularly when we were being lectured to about variables and hypotheses. For nearly the first half of the semester during every class, the professor was hit with a barrage of questions from students who wanted to know, "why." Why should we use quantitative methods? What will this show us? What will it not show us? Who are we including? Who are we excluding? What do we do with the results? For us, this line of questioning was appropriate, since in our other courses we had been encouraged to think in this way. But in this course, our incessant questioning of the professor's area of expertise must have grown tiresome and, in her defense, we may have even appeared disrespectful or antagonistic.

One evening, the professor had grown so frustrated that she actually yelled the above quote at us. The room was shocked into silence, and after a brief pause, she continued lecturing to us from her PowerPoint slides. Above all other lessons I learned in that course, that one stuck with me. Except, to me the professor's words sounded more like, "When you do this kind of work, you *believe* these numbers *mean* something! They *represent* the phenomenon you are trying to study." My ear had fixed on three words, "believe," "mean," and "represent." Regardless of what the professor had intended when she hollered at us, in my mind her anger and her words tore through the mystique surrounding positivistic research. The words and tone she used showed me something that had previously been hidden—the researcher in positivistic research is an active participant even when working under the guise of objectivity. She was telling us that to do this kind of work, *we* must believe the numbers mean and represent something that *we* wish to understand about the world. It all suddenly made a very simple kind of sense: positivism, its theory and methods, is a belief system. And like any belief system, it is not absolute. It is simply one invention among many designed by humans as a way of making sense of

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the world. As a class, we had repeatedly challenged our professor's belief system, and she reacted in a very human way—with anger.

What Is Positivism?

The term "positivism" was first coined by French philosopher Auguste Comte in the early nineteenth century. Comte, who is widely considered the first of modern sociologists, theorized that society goes through three stages, the theological (based on faith and religion), the metaphysical (based on experience), and the positive (based on science and universal laws), in its quest for truth. He claimed that these stages are hierarchical and occur in order as society "evolves." This notion is linked to the Western concept of "progress," where positivism and use of science is considered indicative of the pinnacle of "civilization." The theological and metaphysical (ways of knowing often associated with indigenous populations and women) were thus considered irrational and antiquated ways of making sense of the world. During Western colonization, this hierarchical ordering of "civilized" ways of knowing justified the domination of many peoples and nations by Western Europeans. The nineteenth century, Comte believed, was a positive or scientific stage of human thought, and in a scientific stage, only scientific findings could be deemed certain; a priori (emerging from prior experience) modes of thought should be rejected. For Comte, sociology and other human sciences should not be considered separate from physical sciences. He believed social behavior could be regarded as mechanistic and governed by underlying natural laws that were quantifiable and could be predicted and therefore manipulated.

Philosophically, however, the tenets of positivism existed long before Comte labeled it as such. Positivistic ways of thinking can be traced as far back as the philosophy of Plato and Socrates in the notions that societies should be democratic and decisions should be made based on the acceptance of reasoned arguments around what was, is, and can be (Kincheloe & Tobin, 2009). Age of Reason and Enlightenment thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (e.g., Descartes, Newton, and Bacon, among others) furthered these ideas through their emphasis on *realism*, *reductionism*, and *Cartesian dualism*. Taken together, Enlightenment thinking can be summarized in the following way:

- There is a singular, stable, "true" reality external to man that can be perceived by one's senses (realism).
- Complex phenomena occurring in this reality can best be explained and appreciated by reducing them to their constituent parts and then piecing them back together based on causal laws (reductionism).
- There is an internal subjective world of sensation and an external objective world of phenomena and these two things are separate (Cartesian dualism).

It was believed that true reality could only be "comprehended via science and scientific methodology. This form of science was universal in the sense that it

applied to all subjects of study and was based on mathematics" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 71), in which some axioms are accepted as true and can serve as the foundations upon which logical arguments are built.

Scientism and the Myth of the Scientific Method

Cartesian dualism (or the separation of the knower from the known) and the use of mathematics and reductionism to discover universal truths have been tremendously influential in Western philosophy and modern science. If we look at the scientific method as it is popularly conceived today, we can readily see the epistemological footprints of Cartesian philosophy and Enlightenment thinking. While Enlightenment thinkers were not the first in the world to conduct research on and systematic inquiry of natural phenomena (Smith, 1999), the "roots of [popularly conceived] modern science, it is widely agreed, largely lie somewhere and somehow in the seventeenth century in western Europe" (Bauer, 1992, p. 33). In a very abbreviated sense, the popular conception of the scientific method involves the following: (1) observing a phenomenon in the natural world, (2) formulating a hypothesis about the nature of that phenomenon, (3) using this hypothesis to theorize about or predict the outcome of the occurrence of the phenomenon, (4) performing an experiment to test the accuracy of this hypothesis, and (5) making conclusions based on observation of the results of the experiment.

Operationally, what has come to be known as the scientific method can largely be attributed to Francis Bacon (1561–1626) who explicitly advocated for its use in investigating natural phenomena. For Bacon and others like him theory was to be subordinate to observation. "One can trace over many centuries the intellectual struggle between, on the one hand, those who thought belief should follow authority, a priori reason, revelation, and the like, and, on the other hand, those who—like Bacon—thought that observation, experience, and evidence should be decisive" (Bauer, 1992, p. 34). Epitomizing the latter are well-known scientists such as Galileo (1564–1642) and Newton (1643–1727). By the nineteenth century, it seemed pretty clear "that science had made triumphant progress by subordinating theory to evidence, and that the same sort of progress could be made in *any* field or form of knowledge—psychology, say, or mediumistic spiritualism—just so long as the evidence was gathered objectively and the theory based faithfully on it. This was the grand age of science, when it seemed to the leading scholars of humanity that the sure road to understanding all things had finally been discovered in science and its Rosetta stone, the scientific method" (Bauer, 1992, p. 34).

When Auguste Comte popularized his notions of positivism and what he believed to be the next frontier of science—sociology—the ideological foundation for using the scientific method and quantitative methods for research about the natural world had long been established. Looking back, it seems almost a natural progression that the trend would be toward trying to make sense of society via scientific method also. In applying the scientific method vis-à-vis Comtean positivism, the natural world could be understood through reason and systematic observation; thus, social life

could also be understood mathematically through causal, invariable laws, and their interrelations if one would simply use the proper method of observing, experimenting, and predicting. Kincheloe and Tobin (2009) explain that this type of *empiricism* (the belief that true knowledge can only be obtained through evidence perceived by one's senses) is the backbone of Comtean positivism. In positivism, to conduct empirical research about people, one must

- pose salient research questions,
- identify important variables,
- obtain measures for all participants on all variables, and
- analyze data to show causal relationships between variables.

Comtean philosophy had a significant impact, and "at the turn of the twentieth century many leading philosophers and educators undertook research in the social sciences using a variety of empiricist epistemologies, including logical positivism, behaviorism, instrumentalism, and pragmatism" (Kincheloe & Tobin, 2009, p. 515).

However, the scientific method as promoted by Comte is a very unnatural way of making sense of the world, particularly as it pertains to making sense of people. Since people and their social contexts are complex and constantly in flux, it is impossible to identify and control for all the variables that might comprise or influence a particular phenomenon. For that matter, applying the scientific method as detailed above is flawed in another way: the scientific method is not actually what scientists do when they investigate natural phenomena (Kincheloe & Tobin, 2009). In *Scientific Literacy and the Myth of the Scientific Method*, Bauer (1992) illustrates how misconceptions about the capabilities of science and actual practices of scientists skew the ways in which non-scientists approach the reading and conduct of research in counter-productive ways. To do this, he draws an important distinction between textbook science and frontier science. The former is simply a compilation of beliefs about the natural world, which are widely agreed upon by scientists and for which there is substantial reliable evidence; however, they are not fact since the next test could prove them wrong. The latter is the stuff that we hear about daily in the media and is often based upon conjecture; it is also notably unreliable, and many notions that emerge from frontier science are later disproved. Those notions that do hold true over time then make their way into textbook science.

The reliability of what counts as textbook science is often attributed to scientists' use of the scientific method, a supposed disinterested, unbiased, systematic investigation leading to generalization about the natural world. However, most major breakthroughs in science have not historically come about this way—usually, they happen by accident, and when they are published, they are often initially met by much resistance from the scientific community. The reliability of textbook science is not attributable to the scientific method itself, but rather to the long-standing consensus among scientists about which knowledge is reliable and which isn't. Similarly, Bauer differentiates between the scientific method as an ideal and *scientism* as a way of approaching the study of phenomena. As an ideal, he asserts, the scientific method is a guide for investigating the world honestly and ethically, but in actuality,

people, scientists included, cannot be disinterested observers. If, for example, we take into consideration that many scientists receive funding for their projects from public and/or private sources, or that they may be employed by and/or own shares of corporations that stand to profit off their findings, or that historically what has counted as valuable or important knowledge is influenced by the political climate, disinterest in the scientific community is even more questionable. As an ideal, scientific investigation should also be undertaken in a systematic way, but people often make mistakes—there are many instances of false starts and backtracking that occur when one is conducting research. However, because these mistakes do not make it into the science textbooks, the scientific method often seems infallible (Bauer 1992).

Kincheloe and Tobin (2009) further emphasize, "even though many social scientists embrace scientism, today's scientists and philosophers of science do not endorse the dated and misconstrued methods of science that the social sciences have appropriated" (p. 514). *Scientism*, the belief that "methods of science can and should be applied in the social sciences to obtain social truths" (p. 515), has long been contested in social science and educational research, yet the history and impact of scientism in these fields is quite apparent. Notably, *logical positivism*, *behaviorism, instrumentalism*, and *pragmatism* have all been based upon the notion that science could explain, predict, and, therefore, be used to manipulate humanity; all of these orientations toward research, for better or worse, have been used at various times to justify various types of social reform, education reform among them.

The Rise of Positivism in Educational Research and Reform

The rise of positivism in the field of education in the United States has been anything but linear and clear-cut, but it is possible and important to identify key players and key events in order to contextualize the present state of educational research and reform. According to Lagemann (2000), education is greatly (and expectedly) influenced by the social climate of the times. "The biases, values and social agenda of the early educationists were driving forces in the early definitions of the field" (Lagemann 2000, p. 21). While not all research and reform initiatives have necessarily been positivistic in nature, most of the ones that have had the greatest impact have been, and they were often propelled by the values and agendas that fluctuated throughout history. As positivism has emerged as the dominant philosophy behind much educational research and reform, this theoretical approach has had profound effects on the ways in which conversations around education are presently being shaped. In particular, the preoccupation with standards and accountability bears a striking resemblance to many of the previous education reform movements that took place throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the United States.

A notable example of this is revealed in the rise of educational psychology in the nineteenth century. At that time, post-Darwinian ideas that science led to innovation and progress were linked to the popularity of experimentation and specialization; this trickled down into various types of research, including psychology.

As psychology simultaneously sought to gain acceptance as its own discipline in higher education, experimental studies about the cognition and mental functioning of children were obviously relevant. Many of these early studies were conducted in a "laboratory" style in which experiment and observation were conducted in isolation from the contexts in which children's cognition evolves. Still, for both education and psychology the pairing seemed to be mutually beneficial. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, despite their reluctance to be associated with education due to its lowly status and association with "women's work," psychologists such as G. Stanley Hall and William James, among others, made quite a name (and living) for themselves and for the field of psychology by furthering the Child Study Movement. According to Lagemann (2000), even Charles Eliot, who brought teacher education to Harvard, did so not because he believed that there should be a science of education, but because he saw an opportunity to boost enrollment in fairly uncertain times at the university. The application of psychology to education was very popular among teachers, reformers, and the public, making it a lucrative field, even if it was not fully supported by university faculty.

At the turn of the twentieth century, educational research began to move toward developing more practical applications of psychology to education. Researchers and reformers, such as Goddard, Gesell, Terman, and, most notably, Thorndike, rose to prominence. Thorndike, known as the "father of the measurement movement," believed "that whatever exists at all exists in some amount. To know it thoroughly involves knowing its quantity as well as its quality" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 57). He also believed that learning was a process of "making connections between stimuli and responses, and he called attention to the importance of individual differences based on inherited traits and characteristics" (p. 58). His influence was "critical in gaining acceptance for controlled experimentation and statistical measurement as essential methods of educational study" (p. 70). Through this method, he asserted, all characteristics of mental activity and stimuli could be identified and therefore easily manipulated. If Thorndike's behaviorist vision for educational psychology turned out to be true, teaching would become simply a technical act that anyone could perform, in effect, making the actual teacher irrelevant. This notion of deskilling teachers or "teacher-proofing" education still resonates in many reform efforts today.

Throughout the twentieth century, schools were seen as places to "fix" people and in turn "fix" society. The federal government began to pump a lot of money into schools in the hope of bringing about social reform. This made schools ripe places for conducting "applied" or experimental psychology (as Thorndike and others did), but it also created a need for determining accountability—both lawmakers and the public wanted to make sure that tax dollars were being spent wisely. This gave rise to the School Survey Movement in 1911. Surveys were used to quantitatively measure everything and anything in schools, from physical facilities, to types of people, to curricula taught. Data about many school facilities could be collected and compared, and information could then be disseminated to the public. Surveys became a means by which "policy elites could advance their ideas in an 'objective' and 'scientific' way" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 81). Data from surveys also served as

a means for "outside authorities to demonstrate the need for new, usually national standards of performance" (ibid).

Throughout the 1920s, as educational research was pushed toward the "canons of objectivity and rigor that were increasingly evident across the United States," it became "increasingly quantitative" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 70). "Markets for educational products, especially tests, were expanding," and "would actually continue to do so throughout the century" (p. 40). The Testing Movement, as it is called, was fueled by the development of IQ tests by Binet and Simon and the use of these tests by the US military during World War I. Similarly, educational psychologists began developing standardized tests that "were intended to measure differences in [students'] capacity to handle words, passages, and the like that had been ranked according to some measure of difficulty" (p. 88). The idea was that testing could help to make education more efficient by tracking students according to their academic capabilities. Standardized tests became tremendously popular; "between 1917 and 1928, some 1,300 achievement tests were developed in the United States, by 1940, there were 2,600" (ibid). When the Educational Testing Service (ETS) was chartered in 1947, its very existence helped to support the belief that testing was necessary for entrance into college and graduate school. That "belief, in turn, supported conceptions of educational purpose that gave priority to academic rather than social aims" (ibid).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Sputnik drama and Civil Rights Movement spurred the federal government to increase funding for education, particularly toward strengthening mathematics and science programs and providing equal educational opportunity for children of many different minority groups. In the 1950s, "thanks to the converging agendas of several groups, a new movement to infuse behavioral science theory into the study of educational administration made significant inroads at the nation's premier institutions of study" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 179). A notable example of the behaviorist tendencies of the time was B.F. Skinner's "teaching machines," which were purported to be more efficient for educating students than a human teacher, though it was discovered later that the machines were only effective for short-term achievement gains on tests and did not lead to actual gains in learning. The 1950s saw major government reform initiatives as well, in particular: the creation of the National Science Foundation, and the passing of the Cooperative Research Act in 1950 and the Defense Education Act of 1958, all of which were connected to the perceived threat of the United States' world standing in innovation being usurped by the Russians. In the 1960s, with the Civil Rights Movement and the push for equal opportunity, the federal government continued its focus on education reform. The federal government "became directly involved in policy goals and the amounts of funding it distributed increased manyfold" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 162). With new programs also came the need for new program evaluations, and the nation saw the growth of think tanks charged with the tasks of developing and evaluating the new reforms. Notable events included the development of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a "new assessment" that would "test general levels of knowledge" (p. 189). Assessment became the means by which the government hoped to improve education via standardization, and the

government's role in "research relevant to education policy was further enlarged" (p. 193).

From the 1970s through the 1990s, research in education began to move in new and interesting directions. On the one hand, President Nixon established the NIE (National Institute for Education), which had four major purposes: to alleviate problems and achieve objectives of American education; advance education as an "art, science, and profession"; "strengthen the scientific and technological foundation on which education rests"; and "build a vigorous and effective educational research and development system" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 206). On the other hand, cognitive science had emerged on the scene and was beginning to loosen the behaviorist stranglehold on education. This led education researchers to look more closely at the social contexts in which children were learning, which gave rise to qualitative, ethnographic, and practice-based teacher research. Yet, positivism still remained in favor for the study and reform of government policy around education. We see evidence of this in the increase in state-level inquiries following "the increase in state education policy-making that was stimulated by publication in 1983 of *A Nation at Risk*"[2] (Lagemann, 2000, p. 228). Then in the 1990s, Congress "undertook what would turn out to be their first attempt to strengthen the link between educational research and educational practice" (Walters, 2009, p. 33). The Reading Excellence Act of 1998 included a clause that declared only scientifically based reading programs would receive direct federal funding. This precedent "opened the way to an effort on the part of lawmakers to legislate 'scientific' research in education much more broadly in the next few years" (p. 34). The REA of 1998 became a "gateway" of sorts that enabled lawmakers to more closely regulate what was and was not considered acceptable (or valid) research about education, which also then resulted in only particular types of studies being eligible for government funding.

In the twenty-first century, positivism and scientism have become further entrenched in the present discourse about education to the extent that it is difficult to speak or hear about educational research and reform without references to empirical evidence, data-driven assessments, standards, and accountability. The epitomic No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, for example, stipulates which schools are eligible for federal funding based upon standardized achievement gains. Overtly punitive, NCLB mandates punishment in the form of funds being withheld from and/or corrective action taken against schools that consistently do not meet Annual Yearly Progress in all their target categories. The idea is that these schools will work harder to achieve their target gains in order to receive federal funds. Meanwhile, improving education for other purposes such as creating a democratic, informed citizenry has been pushed to the margins while education for achievement on standardized exams has been on the rise. Additionally, in 2002, for the first time we saw the federal government officially legislate what qualifies as "scientific" research in education. Congressman Michael Castle (R-DE) proposed and Congress passed the "Castle bill," H.R. 3801, which defined high-quality research in education in order to ensure that public funds were used to support only scientific, research-based reform initiatives (Walters, 2009).

By looking back at the past 100 plus years of educational research and reform in the United States, we can see how scientism coupled with fluctuating social events/movements has had a profound effect on the state of education; "recommendations appropriate to physics [have] not only [been] made but also accepted about defense, education, and no doubt other human activities as well" (Bauer, 1992, pp. 38–39). While the election of President Obama has brought hope for educators who are opposed to NCLB, the allure of positivistic input/output assessments has persevered under the new administration. As was illustrated in an August 2009 *New York Times* article,[3] which indicated that the Obama administration might be advocating for linking teacher evaluations to student performance, we still see the ghosts of positivism haunting US educational research and reform in the present.

Exposing the Ghosts of Positivism

One of the most obvious positivistic ghosts that haunt education is the measuring of inputs and outputs via standardized testing. This has been persistently popular for determining program reform, resource allocation, adoption of curricula, teacher hiring and promotion, student tracking, etc. Raw numerical data of input/output, standardized measurements can be used in various ways to justify various political agendas. It is also difficult to argue against because it has the allure of impartiality. For example, in the 1960s during the Nixon administration, policy-makers used the lack of input/output evaluations in schools to challenge the usefulness and effectiveness of allocating Title I money to schools serving disadvantaged children (New York State Archives, 2009). The argument was that schools were unable to provide empirical evidence that linked the federal aid to student achievement in schools. This gave rise to the National Institute of Education (NIE), which was designed to measure the effectiveness of all federal education programs and to link the distribution of federal aid to the academic achievement of inner-city students, as measured by standardized assessments. In some ways, this evaluation and regulation provides a needed measure of accountability, which ensures that federal funds are being distributed appropriately and fairly by local municipalities. However, evaluations of this type can be and have been used to challenge the very existence of these types of social support for disadvantaged populations. On the surface, this type of thinking, that one should be able to measure the effectiveness of what one puts into education by measuring the level of achievement gains of students, seems logical; however, drawing simplistic cause and effect relationships such as this can have disastrous consequences.

As Polanyi (1969) points out, data is just data until it is interpreted. One need only look at the Coleman Report[4] also written in the 1960s to see how seemingly unbiased inquiry can have damaging results depending upon who interprets the data, in what manner, and for what purposes. People who were already opposed to desegregation and equal opportunity for African-Americans used the Coleman Report as evidence that African-American children were inferior to their white

peers; they claimed the report showed that no matter what was done to provide equal opportunity for African-American school children, they would still lag behind white children. Interpreters such as these did not consider the complexity of the social contexts in which students learned and tests were administered, or that the assessments themselves may have been culturally biased, or that schools that taught African-American students in culturally irrelevant ways may have been damaging for African-American children. They didn't take these things into consideration because they didn't have to; decontextualized data assumes the appearance of authoritative truths. Thus, people were able to use the report to enforce their own preexisting racist notions and advocate for the preservation of social inequality.

While many people did argue against the findings of the Coleman Report being used in these insidious ways, the controversy surrounding it was evidence that assessments are not value-neutral. Quantitative data can mean many things to different people based upon their own lived experiences, values, and political aims. Thus, the very gathering of this kind of numerical, decontextualized data could have disastrous consequences for marginalized groups because of the ways in which data can be used for domination. Indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith makes the point that Western research in the name of imperialism and "progress" has historically been and is presently still used to dehumanize, oppress, exploit, and exterminate indigenous peoples around the globe (Smith, 1999). She explains, "we were not considered 'fully human'; some of us were not even considered partially human. . . Imperialism provided the means through which concepts of what counts as human could be applied systematically as forms of classification, for example through hierarchies of race and typologies of different societies. In conjunction with imperial power and with 'science', these classification systems came to shape relations between imperialist powers and indigenous societies" (p. 25).

Similarly, feminist scholar Sandra Harding (1998) argues that positivism has had dehumanizing consequences for women of all colors because of its *Eurocentric* and therefore *androcentric* focus. She explains that in positivistic, Eurocentric science, "what counts as rationality or objectivity is only what can be given a masculine meaning, and then the masculine is uniquely identified with the distinctly or ideally human. Men's preferred styles of reasoning or standards for maximizing objectivity thus have come to count as rationality and objectivity per se, leaving women's typical and valuable styles and standards marked as infantile, not fully human, or not ideal" (Harding, 1998, p. 82). The positioning of indigenous peoples and women as "not fully human" has been an historical trademark of Western positivistic research, which has served as justification for the extermination, enslavement, oppression, exploitation, domination, objectification, and marginalization of people of color and women.

The conversation regarding the potential dangers of positivistic research has persisted for centuries and been expressed by feminist, indigenous, and critical voices from around the world; yet, in the non-academic, US public sphere, it is practically nonexistent. Giroux (1988) illuminates the ways in which positivistic ideals have become more than just a means of investigating social phenomena; they have become deeply embedded in Western ways of thinking and being. Even

when not used toward explicitly discriminatory ends, the culture of positivism, at best, simply describes and thereby perpetuates the status quo. It presents a view of education, research, knowledge, and ethics that has no use for a world where humans decide their own meaning, order their own experiences, or fight against social forces that oppress them. Furthermore, as positivism has been absorbed into the dominant culture as "commonsense," it has also become nearly invisible as a socially constructed tool. Kincheloe and Tobin (2009) describe this phenomenon as the "zombification" of positivism. While positivism is supposedly "dead" it still walks among us and shapes the ways in which many people make sense of the world even without their knowing it. Amidst this crypto-positivistic (Kincheloe & Tobin, 2009) rhetoric fueled by scientism, it is easy to forget that education is about interactions among people, not just correlations between quantifiable variables. Thus, it is important to remind ourselves and others that while many people would like to think that positivism is a thing of the past, it still greatly influences the decisions we make about education and research, often in dangerous, unjust ways.

Preventing "Intellectual Suicide" with CPR

As was evident in the reaction of my professor at the beginning of the chapter, "As a cultural practice as well as a formal logic of inquiry, positivism and the debate surrounding it takes on emotional/affective dimensions that can lead to great anger" (Kincheloe & Tobin, 2009, p. 514). Combined with the personal and political dimensions of education, discussions around positivism in educational research and reform can become downright volatile. Meanwhile, scholar-practitioners get caught in the cross-fire. While my classmates and I felt the need to ask questions about the purpose and nature of this type of research style, our professor felt that these questions were an irritating distraction from the focus of the course content. Freire (2000) explains that the ability of positivism to silence secures its oppressive power. Positivism prevents naming, and it denies people the right to speak. Positivistic "truth" appears to come from an omniscient authority, and it shuts down dialogue that might lead to new ways of thinking about what it means to be more fully human. In effect, the designation of who speaks and who listens dehumanizes both parties and prevents social transformation.

In that classroom, my classmates and I were not encouraged to question, unless it was for clarification on performing proper research methods. We were not encouraged to "name" the sources of positivistic knowledge and the powerful implications of this knowledge in the larger social context. That silencing resulted in two outcomes. It preserved the power of our professor as knowledge holder and grade awarder (we had to buy in to what she said without question lest we fail the course), and it was intellectually damaging for students like myself who struggled to engage with the material while being explicitly told that our ideas didn't matter. To "succeed" in methods courses such as that one, students must censor all forms of prior knowledge and unquestioningly accept that positivistic science can lead

to some sort of stable, absolute truth about the world. While I do not intend to imply that conducting quantitative research is mindless (it is actually quite difficult), removing ourselves from our work is asking us to commit what I call "intellectual suicide." By extracting ourselves, our values, and our purposes for conducting research from larger social, historical, political contexts—in short, by pretending to be "objective"—we "kill off" all those things that make each of our lives uniquely and wonderfully human.

For Freire (2000), "The investigator who, in the name of scientific objectivity, transforms the organic into something inorganic, what is becoming to what is, life into death, is a person who fears change" (p. 108). In other words, the "objective observer" detaches himself/herself from the world as he/she decontextualizes people and phenomena via categorizing and quantification. In so doing, he/she objectifies that which is being investigated. In an effort to control the world, he/she strips away the organic, and is left with a husk of what was previously alive. Life is frozen in its tracks in an effort to preserve it. To the objective observer, change

> is not a sign of life, but a sign of death and decay... However, in seeing change as a sign of death and in making people the passive objects of investigation in order to arrive at rigid models, one betrays their own character as a killer of life (Freire, 2000, p. 108).

I would add that since we are all connected via the individual|collective dialectic, to be a "killer of life" is also to be a "killer of self." For some researchers, objectivism "provides a shelter in which to hide from the deeply personal dimensions that inhabit all human actions and interactions; personal issues, which, if they were freed from the Newtonian-Cartesian box, might well force an uncomfortable element of self-revelation" (Kincheloe, Steinberg, & Tippins, 1999, p. 80). Critical Praxis Researchers, however, seek to conduct research that is emancipatory and humanizing; therefore, we accept that we cannot hide from ourselves because we cannot hide from life, nor do we want to. For CPR scholar-practitioners, conducting research that denies the complexity of life "kills off" our intellectual curiosity, turning research into meaningless academic drudgery rather than a means of transformation. Like Kincheloe's (2003) critical constructivist teacher researchers, Critical Praxis Researchers are compelled to "see themselves as passionate scholars who connect themselves emotionally to that which they are seeking to know and understand" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 64).

Within the positivist tradition, the connection of knower and known is considered poor research. CPR recognizes that positivist science is just one epistemology among many, and although it is limited (as all methodologies are), it should not be disregarded altogether—many wonderful discoveries about the natural world as well as many medical breakthroughs have been made via modern positivist science. However, even though it can show us some things, it can obscure many others, and if we limit ourselves to only one way of thinking and being in the world, we severely limit the human potential of coming to new understandings about what it means to live. In contrast, as a research methodology, Critical Praxis Research encourages scholar-practitioners to amplify the idiosyncrasies that make us human and celebrate

the vicissitudes of humanity. In other words, it takes as an explicit goal the reconnection of the knower with the known and the individual with the collective. In this regard, CPR implores scholar-practitioners to approach their investigations from many schools of thought to engage in critical dialogue with others. As a Critical Praxis Researcher, one might not see positivism as the best means of investigating a complex phenomenon in education, but the end goal is not to impose one's own ideas of what is proper research methods on someone else, since this implies a simple inversion of the oppressor/oppressed relationship put in place by Comtean positivism. In the words of Freire (2000), "It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with people about their view and ours" (p. 96). It is within this dialogical space where transformational thinking and Critical Praxis Research can begin.

Questions for Discussion

1. How has scientism been a part of your training as an educator and educational researcher? What benefits of positivism have you experienced? What consequences of positivism have you experienced? How have you accepted or challenged the tenets of positivism?
2. What is/are your research interest(s)? How might your interest involve research participants who are marginalized by positivist approaches to research in the ways Kress describes? What ideas do you have for alternate ways of conducting research?
3. Kress mentions the connections between positivism and school reform. What are some specific ways that you have experienced school reform as positivistic? What were the outcomes of these reforms? Who was marginalized by such reforms?
4. What is "intellectual suicide," as Kress describes it? How do such acts undermine your experience, your knowledge, your research interests, and your humanity? Refer to the writing you did for the last chapter (Writing for Insight, question 1) to respond fully to this question.

Writing for Insight

1. Kress writes: "Positivism prevents naming, and it denies people the right to speak. Positivistic 'truth' appears to come from an omniscient authority, and it shuts down dialogue that might lead to new ways of thinking about what it means to be more fully human." Describe a moment in a college classroom when the "truth" of positivism silenced you or your classmates. What effect did this experience have on your perception of yourself as a practitioner and researcher? As an academic? As a person of worth?

2. Critical Praxis Researchers connect the "knower and the known." While your research interests may be intimately linked with who you are as a practitioner and human being, the danger is for the research to become a "task" on a to-do list, divorced from the Self. Make a list of some ways you've seen other researchers maintain an intrinsic sense of motivation about their research. How do they care for both themselves and their research, maintaining a dynamic and connective relationship between the two? Then, make a list for yourself—what are some ways that you could cultivate such a relationship?
3. Given the writing you completed for the last chapter (Writing for Insight, question 1), how might your connectivity to your research be furthered by your historicity? In other words, how did your history as seen through the individual collective dialectic carry you to this research interest? Write for a few moments about the ways in which your history has brought you to your work, and consider ways of writing that both honor that history and trouble it.

Notes

1. The name of this speaker has been withheld to preserve anonymity.
2. *A Nation At Risk* was a report that claimed that education in the United States had fallen far behind global competitors. The report called for a return to educational excellence via raising standards and increasing student assessments and teacher accountability.
3. "Dangling Money, Obama Pushes Education Shift," Retrieved from nytimes.com on August 26th, 2009.
4. The Coleman Report was a large-scale survey of schools around the nation after desegregation, which found that African-American students, regardless of the resources allocated to their schools or of whether they went to desegregated schools, were underperforming as compared to their white peers, and that this gap increased the longer they were in school.

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Chapter 4
Qualitative Research: The Researcher in a Comatose State

Christina's Story—October 1, 2009 (personal communication)

We read this article the other day; it was a qualitative study, written by this guy who observed all these police interrogations of suspects. I thought it was really interesting because he was the first person to conduct a study like this where he had such insider access into police interrogation techniques. I mean, sure, the study had its flaws, all studies do, but it was a really good effort. He had actually gotten in there behind closed doors, and it was the guy's dissertation research. But the rest of my class just ripped it to shreds because they were saying it wasn't scientific, that it should have been more experimental, or at least there should have been other researchers involved in the observations and coding in order to establish inter-rater reliability. They criticized that the researcher only used field notes and he didn't audio or videotape any of the interrogations, so he couldn't review the events in order to make sure he "got it right" when he was coding what he observed. One girl in my class actually said, "This is how anthropologists write. We don't do that here."

In that class, it's me and two other crime (criminal justice) majors, and the rest are forensic psych people, so is the professor. Because my take on the article was different, they would attack me and it felt very personal. After a while, I just learned to keep my mouth shut. One of the girls in my program, she never speaks at all. I think because she's scared. Another one of my friends said that our program just wasn't as good as theirs, that the students in forensic psych are a different caliber; they're smarter, more intense, trained to be more articulate, more serious. Their program is really selective, really prestigious, and they all have experience working in psych labs before they enter. We (students in the criminal justice program) recognized that we're just not as good as they are. So we try not to say anything because the minute we do, they attack us and make us feel like idiots.

In our program, we aren't trained to be that way. We have open discussions, it's more relaxed, more open-minded, and it's not all about critique. We don't fight with each other; we don't create hostile environments. But with the others, it's like, "this is the only way, and there is nothing better than the way we do

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research." Our professor actually told us, "no data is better than bad data." But, there is no such thing as perfect data. All data has flaws. I think it's a completely unrealistic view of the world; it's like they don't understand that this is real life. They were actually saying that the study was not empirical because it wasn't experimental, and I started to wonder, "Am I the one who's got it wrong?" I didn't think that empirical and experimental were synonyms, but now I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong.

Entering the Qualitative Versus Quantitative Debate

In her 2006 *Qualitative Studies in Education* article, Patti Lather cautions that quantitative versus qualitative research paradigm wars are very much still alive, and she urges her readers to think about the implications of this for young researchers who are often shielded from the conversation, but still impacted by it nonetheless. Like Lather, I recognize that scholar-practitioners who are beginning their research journeys are entering a world where this conversation around qualitative versus quantitative, positivist or *post-positivist* versus postmodern is still ongoing in many disciplines. Not being privy to that conversation can have unfortunate consequences for students like Christina who may find themselves in hostile environments where others attempt to colonize young minds into picking a side, rather than enabling students to develop their own ideas about what it means to do good research.

Just like in the above example, scholar-practitioners of education are also very likely to encounter resonances of this debate in courses they take, texts they read, and conversations they have with professors. And they will certainly encounter this in their lives as practitioners where language such as "data-driven decision making," "standards-based assessments," and "research-based practice" is pervasive. The quantitative/qualitative debate is still very much alive and has very real implications for scholar-practitioners. Thus, it is crucial for scholar-practitioners to be familiar with the socio-historical educational research landscape, so that they are prepared to make informed decisions about their own research. Without this understanding, students in a class such as the one above might be acculturated (or bullied) into a narrow way of thinking about research that limits the epistemological and ontological possibilities of their work. They might be oppressed to the point where they think they are just not as smart, that their ideas are wrong, and that they just aren't cut out for this sort of work. Or, they may go into qualitative research thinking that they are practicing research that is more fair for their participants, while unwittingly perpetuating the same colonizing tendencies that have historically marred the field. Kincheloe (2003) would classify this kind of colonizing and/or marginalizing of young minds and their potential research participants as "bad work." Bad work is something that CPR scholar-practitioners, in all that we do, strive to avoid. Thus, we must go into our research with a deep understanding about how our research methods, qualitative included, may lead us to perpetuate rather than alleviate injustice,

even when this is not our intention. Understanding the history of and debates around qualitative research in education will help prepare us to craft our methods carefully so that we can be more inclusive and humane as we investigate the world around us.

What Is Qualitative Research?

According to most definitions in popular methods texts, qualitative research involves the investigation of the meanings of phenomena. Kincheloe (2003) explains that qualitative researchers engage in a struggle to "address those aspects of the human condition that need not just counting but understanding" (p. 188). It can be distinguished from quantitative research in that quantitative methods tend to emphasize frequency and/or quantity, whereas qualitative methods are concerned with not only how often, to whom, or when a phenomenon happens, but also how it happens and why (i.e., the meaning behind it). Erickson (1998) points out that in qualitative research, "emphasis is on discovering *kinds* of things that make a difference in social life; hence the emphasis is placed on *qualitas* rather than *quantitas*" (p. 1155). Qualitative researchers are still concerned about the frequency of events, but they are also concerned about why and how these events occur within a given place and time; in other words, they are interested in "the 'qualities' of social action and meaning" (ibid).

For Bogdan and Biklen (2007) the practice of qualitative research is defined by five features:

1. It is *naturalistic*, meaning that the study has an actual setting, and that setting is important because the researcher is concerned about *context*.
2. Its data is *descriptive*. "Qualitative researchers do not reduce the pages upon pages of narration and other data to numerical symbols" (p. 5).
3. Conducting the research is about *process* not just outcomes or products.
4. The processes of data collection and analysis are *inductive*. Qualitative researchers are not seeking "data or evidence to prove or disprove hypotheses they hold before entering the study; rather, the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together" (p. 6).
5. Qualitative research is designed to solicit *meaning* in order to illuminate how people make sense of their lives.

In order to learn about people's lived experiences, qualitative researchers may align with many different research disciplines and draw from various data sources and analytic approaches. For example, qualitative research might be classified as *ethnography (auto, critical,* or *micro), ethnomethodology, phenomenology, participant observation*, *narrative*, *interview*, *survey, grounded theory, case study, action research,* or *historical/historiography* (among others) (Hatch, 2002). Qualitative researchers could also take a *bricolage* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Kincheloe, 2003) approach, meaning that the methodology they use is some combination of the above

methodological traditions. Data sources may include field notes, journal entries, video and audio recordings, narrative writing, photographs, documents, artwork, open-ended surveys, blogs, on-line discussions, and any other types of tools or artifacts that provide evidence of how people experience and make sense of the world. Qualitative researchers may also take innovative approaches to selecting data sources or designing data collection techniques. Tuck (2008) in conducting *participatory action research*, for example, used "slam books," or teenagers' shared, social journals to elicit anonymous feedback about students' experiences with drop-outs, push-outs, and the GED in New York City schools. Linville (2009) worked with gay, lesbian, bisexual, queer/questioning, and transgender (GLBQT) students who created maps of "safe" spaces for being GLBQT in their schools. Data analysis also can be approached in many different ways. Qualitative researchers may conduct *inductive analysis*, *deductive analysis*, *interpretive analysis*, *content analysis, discourse analysis*, *critical discourse analysis*, *micro-analysis*, *socio analysis*, some combination of these, and more. (Data collection and analysis are discussed further in Part II.) Throughout the qualitative research process, however, data collection and analysis are always directed toward the goal of understanding people's lived experiences.

Qualitative Research in Education: An Historical Overview

Over the past 40 years, qualitative research has become widely accepted as a valuable means of investigating educational phenomena; however, as a means of investigating the social world more generally, it has a much longer history that is worth being familiar with because many people view qualitative research differently based upon their philosophical orientations toward research. As such, their dispositions toward conducting research will vary depending upon their beliefs about what "good" qualitative research is. By looking at anthropology and sociology, we can see the deep historical roots of qualitative research and how these disciplines laid the foundations for using qualitative research in education. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), researchers in these disciplines have "always collected data in the field attempting to understand how particular peoples they studied made sense of their worlds" (p. 8). Qualitative research in anthropology can be traced back to the 1700s, and in sociology it can be traced back as far as the early 1800s in Britain, France, and other parts of Europe. Of particular influence were Malinowski, the first cultural anthropologist who laid the foundation for interpretive anthropology by spending extended periods of time living with indigenous communities in order to describe what he called the "'native's point of view'" (Malinowski in Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 8); W.E.B. DuBois, who conducted the first social survey in the United States and examined the lived conditions of more than 40,000 African-American residents in Philadelphia in the late 1800s; and the Chicago School, a group of sociologists from the University of Chicago who conducted in-depth qualitative studies of various types of people living in urban communities (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The trajectory of qualitative methods in the social

sciences since then has been marked by much uncertainty, debate, cycling and recycling through phases of development, and methodological, philosophical, and political orientations. Indeed, many of the debates and undercurrents that mark historical points in the development of qualitative research are still relevant and influential today.

Lincoln and Denzin (2005) chronicle this contested history of qualitative research in their delineation of eight "moments." Table 4.1 below delineates these moments, when they occurred, and the trends in qualitative research during those times. Lincoln and Denzin (2005) surmise that this conflict and debate will lead us into the future of qualitative research, which will involve four major issues: the reconnection of social science to social purpose, the rise of indigenous social science, the decolonization of the academy, and the homecoming of Western social science. In fact, they indicate that these trends have already been set in motion.

In education, the emergence of qualitative research began quite a bit later than in the social science disciplines, and it actually first grew out of the discipline of anthropology not out of education (Lagemann, 2000). Although John Dewey called for a more qualitative, teacher-centered approach to educational research as far back as the turn of the century and Margaret Meade called for anthropological studies of education in the 1920s, it was actually Edward Waller's work that arrived on the scene first in 1932. Waller viewed teachers and students as "whole human beings tied together in a complex maze of social interconnections" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 11). He took a cultural anthropology approach to research and relied on conducting interviews and observations, and examining diaries, letters, and other artifacts gathered from teachers and students. Similarly, in 1949, Margaret Mead, who was interested in schools as organizations and in the role of the teacher, applied anthropological approaches (e.g., participant observation and various other ethnographic methods) to education and "examined how particular contexts – the kinds of schools she categorized as the little red schoolhouse, the city school, and the academy – called for particular kinds of teachers and how these teachers interacted with students" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 9).

It was not until the 1950s, however, when George Spindler (an anthropologist, sociologist, and psychologist) was appointed to the School of Education at Stanford and Solon Kimball (also an anthropologist) was appointed to The Department of Philosophy and Social Sciences at Teachers College that "possibilities for systematically applying anthropological methods, especially ethnography, to education were formally discussed" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 220). Yet, ethnographic approaches to educational research remained within the domain of anthropologists under the name "applied anthropology" or "anthropology of education." At this time, researchers also began to use action research in education; however, "given the general hostility that educational researchers of the 1950s felt toward nonpositivistic research of any kind," action research was ridiculed, judged by positivistic standards, and consequently, fell out of favor fairly quickly (Anderson, Herr, & Nihlin, 1994, p. 13).

In the 1960s, nearly 40 years into Denzin and Lincoln's second moment, qualitative methods finally began to make inroads as a legitimate means of researching within the discipline of education. In the United States, "The 1960s brought national

Table 4.1 Lincoln and Denzin's Eight "Moments"

Era	Moment	Description
1900s–1940s	Traditional Period	Researchers were "objective" observers; reflected positivist scientist paradigm. Also linked to colonial investigation of the "other"
1940s–1970s	Modernist Phase	Marked a formalization of qualitative research by building upon earlier "canonical" works Mostly still positivist via the use of social realism, naturalism, and data analysis using quasi-positivistic analyses focusing on frequency, validity, and reliability
1970–1986	Blurred genres	Incorporation of many new theories (e.g., phenomenology, feminism, critical) Questioning researcher's authority as writer, representer, and interpreter of others' lives Turned to humanities for theories and methods and analysis to help deal with this uncertainty.
	Crisis of Representation	Erosion of classical research traditions Rise of reflexive research and writing that questioned issues of gender, class, and race
1980s–1990s	A Triple Crisis	Integration of feminist, critical, post-structural, and constructivist epistemologies Experience is created by the researcher by representing that experience Research quality is rethought—validity, reliability, and generalizability are insufficient Research texts were postmodern and experimental The emergence of previously silenced epistemologies and voices
1995–2000	Post-experimental inquiry	Acceptance and publication of new and experimental forms of qualitative research such as autobiographical, multi-vocal, critical, and performance research
2000–	Methodologically contested Present	Acceptance and publication of autobiographical, multi-vocal, critical, and performance research
2005–	Present	Conflict and methodological retrenchment Regulation of inquiry practices by government Growing qualitative research community New methodological, philosophical perspectives Conversations about research in a rapidly globalizing society

focus to educational problems, [which] revived interest in qualitative research and opened up educational research to this approach" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005, p. 17). As higher education was expanding, government funding for educational research through the NSF, the US Office of Education, and various other funding organizations increased. These funding agencies "provided increasing support for anthropological methods to educational problems" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 221), since anthropological methods like observation and interview were proving to be valuable tools for understanding the complexities of classroom life that could not be captured by using quantitative methods. Up until then, even while qualitative research in other disciplines was flourishing, research in education remained largely quantitative. Of particular popularity (and considered cutting-edge at the time) were behaviorist process–product research studies, in which researchers observed sets of "pre-determined teacher and student behaviors" and attempted to "correlate these behaviors with student performance" (ibid). However, when the outcomes of process–product studies were applied in other classrooms, they were marked with different results, and the limitations of this method were becoming increasingly apparent. Consequently, researchers turned to qualitative methods to help account for this variance. As Lagemann (2000) explains, "the shift toward qualitative methods was generally inspired by recognition that there were severe limitations in previous designs" which regarded those things that couldn't be measured as unimportant (p. 222).

In the mid-1970s, the National Institute of Education began to "support work on the 'social contexts of cognition'" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 222). Anthropologists and educators began examining discourse patterns in classrooms and documenting how different people experienced education differently, which resulted in a more nuanced and complex understanding of what successful classroom instruction looked like as well as the factors that mediated or inhibited this success. Still, "most educational research continued to focus on schooling with too little awareness of the multiple contexts in which education can and does occur" (ibid). Finally in the 1980s, the educational research landscape began to show significant shifts away from positivistic, quantitative, and/or experimental research as critical and postmodern research flourished and contributed to the new insights regarding the importance of social contexts of education. The increased "acceptance of qualitative research clearly opened the doors to many new debates about the social significance of education" (Lagemann, 2000, p. 223), and there was a growing relationship between research and practice, notably in the teacher-research movement.[1] Although the notion of teachers as researchers had been discussed for decades as far back as Dewey, teachers were not generally included in the research process. Even when they were, they were seen more as data collection instruments at the service of academics than as independent knowledge producers.

Over the past 30 years, qualitative research in education has become fairly commonplace. In accordance with Lincoln and Denzin's moments, educational research has also begun to see the proliferation of new methods, voices, epistemologies, and forms of representation. We have seen the rise of the teacher-research movement, an increase in the use of educational ethnography, the emergence of auto/ethnography,

and reemergence of action research and participatory research (among others) that use qualitative methods as their foundations. Yet, the debate about the scientific value of qualitative research continues. Denzin and Giardina (2007) postulate that the present era of government retrenchment, standardization, and scientism, amounts to "a 'methodological fundamentalism' that returns to a much-discredited model of empirical inquiry in which 'only randomized experiments produce truth' (House, 2006, pp. 100–101)" (p. 12). "Evidence-based" research, in the positivist sense of the term, has become popular once more, and many of the innovative, emergent, qualitative research genres are not necessarily valued in educational research. Cheek (2007) points out that we are working within "uncertain, fragmented, and precarious times for qualitative researchers. In many ways, we have made many gains, at the same time, the paradox is that more than any other time" we are finding ourselves "amidst a massive backlash in spaces that are potentially and actively hostile" (p. 103). This may have detrimental consequences for scholar-practitioners who seek to conduct research that is personally meaningful and empowering for themselves and their participants, particularly since some of this backlash is emerging *within* the qualitative community itself as a means of surviving these uncertain times.

As Lincoln and Denzin's ninth moment begins to reveal itself on this contested terrain, scholar-practitioners find themselves in a predicament: on the one hand, connected, holistic, and experimental means of investigating phenomena in education may enable them to expand their vision of what is possible and knowable, adding insight into the tremendously complex processes of teaching and learning; yet on the other hand, government mandates involving high-stakes testing and accountability via standards, standardization, and data-based decision making demand that teachers follow a particular prescribed way of measuring the outcomes of teaching and learning. As these opposing forces pull scholar-practitioners in opposite directions, it is critical that we are prepared to select our methods in an informed manner based upon what makes the most sense for us given who we are, who our students are, where we are located in the web of reality, and what we wish to accomplish through our research. Here, we craft methods that are appropriate for us personally and professionally; we do not blindly align with one side or another, since any approach (quantitative or qualitative) used in an uniformed manner can have disastrous consequences.

Qualitative Research in a Comatose State

History teaches us that "qualitative research, in many if not all of its forms (observation, participation, interviewing, ethnography), serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, and for truth. . . [It] provides the foundation for reports about and representations of 'the Other'" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 1). After all, with its roots in anthropology, this means of investigation also served as a tool for justifying the extermination and enslavement of native peoples inhabiting lands that Western Europeans were attempting to colonize. Try as we may to resist, we still live in a

Western, colonial, society where much of the above history about what qualifies as "good" research (i.e. conducted by the objective outside observer) has become "commonsensical," and the colonizing tendencies of positivism and scientism press down hard upon qualitative researchers as they seek to legitimate their practice in an unwelcoming social and academic forum. Cheek (2007) advises that it is "the *reasons* for those choices [we make] that need to be surfaced, made explicit, opened up to examination and critique" (p. 106).

Here, the work of indigenous scholars can be very helpful. Smith (1999), for example, explains that from the perspective of the colonized, "the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research,' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (p. 1) because research has often been used to justify the destruction of indigenous people around the globe. In this regard, qualitative research is not distinguishable as better or worse than quantitative research; both have been used in disastrous ways throughout history. With its roots in anthropology, qualitative research in education may even be more problematic than quantitative approaches, particularly as it is used to study marginalized urban and rural students. The "ethnographic 'gaze' of anthropology has collected, classified and represented other cultures to the extent that anthropologists are often the academics popularly perceived by the indigenous world as the epitome of all that is bad with academics" (p. 67). Much of the research that has been and is still being conducted by scholars in most academic disciplines is what Smith calls "research 'through imperial eyes'" (p. 56). It takes

> an approach which assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only ideas possible to hold, certainly the only rational ideas, and the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and of human beings... It is research which is imbued with an "attitude" and a "spirit" which assumes a certain ownership of the entire world, and which has established systems and forms of governance which embed that attitude in institutional practices. These practices determine what counts as legitimate research and who count as legitimate researchers (p. 56).

Contributing to this attitude of ownership are Western colonial notions of space: "the line," "the center," and "the outside." These three fundamental concepts are used in colonialism to mark territories and draw boundaries (the line), include some lands and/or peoples within the locus of power (the center), while excluding/marginalizing/eliminating others (the outside). In research, we see these same trends as researchers collect, sort, categorize, and classify information in such a way that draws boundaries of inclusion and exclusion while fragmenting the world. Furthermore, the notion of "distance," also a spatial concept, "is most important as it implies a neutrality on behalf of the researcher. Distance is measurable. What it has come to stand for is objectivity, which is not measurable to quite the same extent" (Smith, 1999, p. 56). This concept of distance or objectivity often stands as a major criterion for conducting "quality" research. Truth is come by via an objective stance and a glut of supporting evidence. We see this in the US federal guidelines that stipulate what qualifies as "scientific" research. However, Denzin and Giardina

(2007) point out the irony that, "the very act of labeling some research as 'evidence-based' implies that some research fails to mount evidence—a strongly political and decidedly non-objective stance" (p. 13). The very claim of distance or objectivity makes those researchers who are within the locus power, within the boundaries they set around those locations of "scientific" research, feel justified in relegating other ways of knowing to the margins.

In examining research methods from a black feminist standpoint, Patricia Hill Collins (2003) supports this notion. She explains that the positivistic/colonial researcher

(1) objectifies both the researcher and the subject,
(2) removes emotion from research,
(3) deems the consideration of one's ethics and values in research as inappropriate in the inquiry process, and
(4) engages in adversarial debates to ascertain truths, i.e., the strongest argument becomes the most valid truth.

While these criteria are most commonly associated with quantitative research, as Smith's critique illustrates, they are just as handily met in qualitative studies as well. In fact, these positivist/colonial dispositions toward conducting qualitative research are explicitly and not so explicitly advocated for in texts on research methods and in reports about the state of educational research, qualitative research included (National Research Council, 2002). Qualitative methods will continue to be just as ethically problematic, just as inhumane, as quantitative methods if the researcher remains "comatose" and does not enter into his/her research with a strong commitment to developing Self|Other awareness, which enables him/her to bring to the surface for examination both his/her own privileged position as a researcher and his/her philosophies about research. For young researchers like Christina, acquiring a new vision of research that allows them to reveal when and where these colonizing and/or marginalizing tendencies are occurring is important for (1) staving off the intellectual violence that comes along with being relegated to the positivist research margins; (2) critically examining their own understandings of what it means to do good work; and (3) designing research that seeks to disrupt rather than perpetuate these colonizing and marginalizing trends.

Waking from the Coma: Making Qualitative Educational Research More Human(e)

Conducting research that is humanizing and transformative requires more than just a change in data collection techniques. It first requires a heightened sensitivity toward what it means to engage with others in a complex world. Kincheloe (2003) refers to this as "critical consciousness." Even though qualitative research in education has historically been presented as "the answer" to the "problem" of the

limitations of quantitative, positivistic research, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) warn, a research design that uses qualitative rather than quantitative data collection techniques isn't necessarily less positivistic or colonizing or any more humane of a research method. As the offspring of zombie positivism (Kincheloe & Tobin, 2009), qualitative research conducted in a quasi-positivistic style can be thought of as that which is alive but only superficially so. It lives and breathes, but it lacks consciousness, and thereby falls short of being human. As researchers, when we remove our Selves and become physically present but ontologically absent, we lose the ability to dialogue with others about their positionality and ours. As disembodied researchers we deny our own physical, temporal, geographical, and historical situatedness. We position ourselves as coming from everywhere and nowhere simultaneously, while in turn losing the ability to see from multiple perspectives.

Feminist scholar Donna Haraway (2003) teaches us that in our attempts to be objective we falsely objectify the world. Taking an objective stance on research positions the researcher as an omniscient and powerful authority, as a colonizer who dehumanizes others and therefore dehumanizes himself/herself. To remedy this, we must situate ourselves, show where we are coming from, make our vantage points apparent, and critically examine why we make the choices we make. Christians (2007) asks researchers to take this a step further and reconsider the purpose of research entirely. No longer is it acceptable for the goal of research to be strictly the creation of new knowledge. On the contrary, research should be "pedagogical, political, moral, and ethical, involving the enhancement of moral agency, the production of moral discernment, a commitment to praxis, justice, and [sic] ethic of resistance, and a performative pedagogy that resists oppression" (Christians, 2007, p. 18). By bringing our ways of knowing to the forefront for examination, we are set on a path to deconstruct and reconstruct traditional ways of doing research. In recognizing that research is always a moral and political act, whether one chooses to use quantitative, qualitative positivist, or postmodern approaches, we can let go of those parts of us that are buried deep within and regulate our practice in ways that do not align with how we ultimately might envision a more humanizing research.

Critical Praxis Researchers recognize that the positivistic lines that are being drawn to preserve the power of those in the qualitative research "in" crowd are really just lines in the sand. They are easily washed away and redrawn based upon a researcher's perceptions of what is "good." This is how the powerful maintain their privileged position—they keep redrawing the lines, in effect changing the rules to their advantage. As young researchers wake from the positivistic coma and embrace the power of multiple ways of knowing and being, they refuse to collude in drawing new lines and making new rules to exclude others. Instead they use their critical consciousness to wash away the lines and eagerly head into Denzin and Lincoln's ninth moment where research can be inclusive, inextricable from social purpose, and indigenous and women's ways of knowing are essential for decolonizing and humanizing the research process. Critical Praxis Researchers breathe in the world deeply and learn to live as researchers without the aid of the positivist machine.

Questions for Discussion

1. Have you had any experiences similar to Christina's? What were they? How did their outcomes affect your thinking regarding qualitative research and its methodology?
2. Kress writes: "Bad work is something that CPR scholar-practitioners, in all that we do, strive to avoid. Thus, we must go into our research with a deep understanding about how our research methods, qualitative included, may lead us to perpetuate rather than alleviate injustice, even when this is not our intention." How did this chapter grow your understanding of "bad work" in qualitative research? What is the potential of your own research (or research interests) for perpetuating injustice?
3. What most surprised you about the history of qualitative research?
4. Kress writes about the hostility within the qualitative research community. What does she mean by this? What experiences in your school, your university, your teaching practice, and/or your research support this idea? What are the implications of such "contested terrain" for your future research?
5. Examine Patricia Hill Collins' four descriptions of the positivistic/colonial researcher. Which of these are most likely to describe you and/or your research? Why? How can CPR help you to embrace other ways of thinking about, and conducting, research?

Writing for Insight

1. "Try as we may to resist, we still live in a Western, colonial, society where much of the above history about what qualifies as 'good' research (i.e. conducted by the objective outside observer) has become 'commonsensical,' and the colonizing tendencies of positivism and scientism press down hard upon qualitative researchers as they seek to legitimate their practice in an unwelcoming social and academic forum." Write about how you have begun to question the "commonsensical," Westernized approaches to conducting research.
2. Kress discusses Smith (1999) in her discussion of Westernized ideas of space—the line, the center, and the outside. Draw a graphic representation of your research venture, or interest. Where are the "lines" in your research, and how might they be labeled or described? What is the center of your research, and by what influences or assumptions is this so? Finally, who or what is on the "outside" of your research? Highlight the tensions and conflicts inherent in your own research venture using color or symbols.

Note

1. The teacher-researcher movement in which teachers were themselves the investigators of their professional practices appeared first in Britain in the 1960s; it emerged much later as an actual practice in the United States.

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Chapter 5
CPR: Breathing New Life into Research Methods for Teachers

Defying the Dominance of Social Efficiency—Researching Education for Democracy

As indicated in the previous chapters, over the past 30 years, the purpose of education that has dominated education reform has most closely aligned with what Kliebard (2004) and Labaree (1999) identify as social efficiency, which was especially popular in the 1920s and again in the 1970s. At present, we see this in the emphasis toward standards, input/output measurements via standardized testing, "highly qualified" teacher mandates, tracking, and punitive measures being enforced for underachieving schools and students (Kincheloe, 2008). This social efficiency language that has so dominated education reform cannot be extracted from its roots in positivism, behaviorism, social Darwinism, and Taylorism. Under this model, education mimics the factory of the Industrial Revolution. The idea is to streamline education in order to make teaching and learning more efficient and to eliminate waste (Giroux, 1988). Teachers become assembly line workers, while students are raw materials that enter into the education machine at grade one and exit 12 years later certified as having become a particular predetermined product. Any extraneous characteristics students possess that do not fit into the prescribed notion of how and who a student should be and become, at best, get pushed to the educational margins; at worst, they are extracted and tossed aside as useless rubbish that is detrimental to school "learning" (Kincheloe, 2008). In turn, teachers' practices must always align with efficiently tempering students into "acceptable" and "marketable" products. Giroux (1988) explains that within this "instrumental rationality" model, teachers and students are not encouraged to think freely, they are only encouraged to "do" in a prescribed manner. The latest reforms of NCLB and Race to the Top may seem like new reform movements, but they are simply contemporary iterations of a long-standing history of social efficiency and human engineering in schools in which teachers are positioned as simultaneously oppressor and oppressed.

Although these ideologies have dominated education reform for the most part over the past century, they have been and continue to be met with dissent. Notable here is the work of John Dewey who at the turn of the twentieth century urged educators to envision education as a place for nurturing democratic citizens. Similarly,

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Giroux (1988) explains that educators need to develop a new discourse in which education is a site of resistance and struggle for democracy. "Instead of defining schools as extensions of the workplace or as front-line institutions in the battle of international markets and foreign competition, schools as democratic public spheres are constructed around forms of critical inquiry that dignify meaningful dialogue and human agency" (p. xxxii). Dewey and Giroux are only two voices among many[1] throughout history who have pointed out that education under social efficiency is only efficient for creating obedient workers, not for creating democratic citizens or facilitating social change.

Freire (1999) further explains that

> Progressive educators of the past have played their part in bringing us to this point, in unveiling practices of oppression and injustice. We still have crucial roles to play. We need to view our work with a sense of perspective and history. Our struggle today does not necessarily mean that we will achieve change, but without our struggle today, perhaps future generations would have to struggle much more. History does not finish with us, it goes beyond (p. 39).

By taking up Freire's charge, continuing on the path of those who have come before us, and recognizing that schooling does not have to be mechanical, that knowledge is not simply information approved by someone else, Critical Praxis Researchers, like their forbearers, can begin to (re)imagine schools using themselves and their own research as a starting point. As democratic institutions, schools can be seen as places where "knowledge and experience [become] *emancipatory* by enabling students [and teachers] to develop social imagination and civic courage capable of helping them to intervene in their own self-formation, in the formation of others, and in the socially reproductive cycle of life in general" (McLaren, 1988, p. xvii). To catalyze this process, schools need to be reconceptualized "as sites of struggle and possibility," in which teachers are "supported in their efforts both to understand and to transform schools as institutions of democratic struggle" (p. xvi). Teacher research is an essential part of this reconceptualization process.

In the present overwhelmingly positivist educational Zeitgeist, this may seem a near impossible task. However, Giroux (1988) points out that "the logic of domination represents a combination of historical and contemporary ideological and material practices that are never completely successful, always embody contradictions, and are constantly being fought over within asymmetrical relations of power" (p. 109). If we take Giroux's words as a starting point, then Critical Praxis Researchers can begin to look for what I call "fissures," spaces and times in history and contemporary society where the fingers of domination have failed to permeate and domination has been resisted, subverted, or challenged. These fissures, or contradictions in the ideological social fabric, reveal points of weakness that can be exploited by educators and researchers who envision a different future. Throughout the US history, educators like John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Maxine Greene, Jeff Duncan-Andrade, and Ernest Morrell (among many others) have done just this by challenging what is considered "normal" and leveraging multiple ways of knowing and being not only to expand the possibilities of learning but also to work for social

justice and social transformation through education. Similarly, in their desire to conduct research for educational and social change, Critical Praxis Researchers take advantage of these fissures in order to further chip away at the hegemonic bedrock, creating more room for diverse ways of knowing and being to permeate education and society.

Researching Education with a Sense of "Radical Purpose"

To begin this process we must first endeavor to reconnect the knower and the known, starting with ourselves. We must make sense of how socio-historical contexts and accompanying hegemonic forces are not only around us, but also within us; they are part of our identities as cultural actors. As Roth (2005) explains, "What an individual does is always a concrete realization of cultural-historical possibilities. . . actions are the heart of identifying and identification processes" (p. 4). Thus, we "must attempt to understand how issues of class, gender, and race have left an imprint on how [we] think and act" (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 9). The choices we make in daily life cannot be considered separately from who we are as individuals and part of a larger collective group; individual|collective identity and practice recursively influence each other (Olitsky, 2007). Our socio-cultural histories combined with hegemonic forces will shape the very ways we approach research if our Selves are not brought to the forefront where they can be critically examined and deconstructed. As I illustrated in Chapter 2, my own history with education directly contributes to how I now view the purpose of education, which impacts the ways I choose to conduct research about education. I accept that my vision of research is a derivative of my past as a "domesticated" and marginalized female student and present as a critical urban educator and researcher. As such, I take as my starting point my belief that any education or research practice that domesticates, excludes, or damages by prescribing or certifying only particular ways of knowing and being needs to be critically examined, deconstructed, and reconstructed. I also accept that critical examination, deconstruction, and reconstruction are not end results, but rather they mark the beginning of a lifelong endeavor toward Self and social change.

Our identities are continuously changing, and they are intimately tied to equally changing physical, temporal, geographical, socio-cultural, historical, and economic contexts. Thus, "Our research, no matter who we are, is never as independent of outside influence as we would like to think; we are all caught at a particular point in the web of reality" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 213). This means that critical examination of Self|Other and the world must be ongoing throughout the research process. As we critique the world and our own changing constructions of it, our research purpose, that is, our desire to conduct research in order to construct a different kind of future, will also continue to emerge and evolve. As a result any research about education that is designed to challenge the status quo needs to begin with an examination of who we are (identity), where we are (context), and what we believe is the purpose of education and educational research (purpose). These three constructs are nested

together, imply, and influence each other; as one changes, so do the others. This will naturally shape the entire research process, from the questions we ask, to the modes of investigation we choose, to the types of analyses we conduct, and the stories we tell when we share the results. Without critical examination, we are likely to reproduce the same hegemonic ideologies that have formed us. Thus, while continuing through the research process, we must consciously reflect on our changing identities, contexts, and purposes; as we do so, we will enable our identities, contexts, and senses of purpose to evolve. This will, in turn, impact the questions we ask and the methods we use to investigate those questions. As Kincheloe (2001) points out, "Our epistemological goal, of course, is to understand what our particular vantage point is and how it limits our vision. This process involves our awareness of our own historicity, or place in history. We become conscious of our own ideological inheritance and its relationship to our belief and value structures, our interests, our questions about our professional lives" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 213). Developing this new understanding of our particular vantage points enables us to make informed decisions and to consciously reshape our own worlds.

If, on the other hand, we unquestioningly accept the positivistic machine metaphors of education and research as "normal," if we follow prescribed forms of researching and/or reforming education, if we continue to reduce education to input/output, process/product relationships, then by default epistemological and ontological domestication and/or violence will continue to go unchallenged. Without developing what I am calling here a sense of "radical purpose" (i.e., critical consciousness for the purpose of transformation through research), any research we design and conduct will be insufficient for bringing about fundamental changes to teaching and learning in schools. Perhaps, we will find ways for students to perform better on exams, or perhaps we will find gentler ways of getting students to absorb content, but the notions that education is about retaining "facts," that learners should "perform" their intellects in a manner predetermined by someone else, and that knowledge is a series of objects that can be accumulated and tallied will remain the norm. This "death education" that claims, categorizes, and compartmentalizes the natural world, while in turn mechanizing and dehumanizing teachers and learners, will continue to regulate how teaching and learning happens in schools, leaving injustice in its wake.

Radical Purpose: The Driving Force Behind Critical Praxis Research

Scholar-practitioners who research with a sense of radical purpose take a stance that education and educational research should not be damaging; rather they should be processes that catalyze humanization and transformation of Self, Other, and the world. Yet, similar to a doctor who abides by the Hippocratic Oath, a Critical Praxis Researcher shall do no harm as s/he strives toward transformation of Self, Other, and the world. The difference, however, between doing no harm physiologically

and doing no harm epistemologically lies in the obviousness of such harm. For educational researchers, epistemological harm might not be immediately evident. We must be conscious that epistemological and ontological harm can occur during the educational research process even if it is unintentional. As Kincheloe (2001) explains,

> Much of the time, the ideological construction of consciousness emanating from sources of power does not take place at the level of conscious intention. For example, positivistic educational researchers, most of the time, do not typically seek to design research that results in the perpetuation of business and military values in school practices. School administrators do not typically seek to use educational research that represses ethical considerations and questions of justice in their efforts to run their schools. And teachers, most of the time, certainly do not consciously attempt to suppress their students' ability to think at a more critical level, nor do they try to punish the underprivileged. But all of these unfortunate things happen and most of the time, we have no clue why (p. 212).

Thus, for Critical Praxis Researchers, conducting research must involve critical self-reflection so that we come to recognize the ways our own values, judgments, and biases that are products of the cultural institutions that have formed us shape the research we design and conduct.

This goes against what many traditional research paradigms claim is the "proper" way of researching the social world. In more positivistic paradigms, researchers must attempt to extract themselves, their values, judgments, and biases in order to be "objective." Giroux (1988) refutes this notion by explaining that, "While the severance of knowledge and research from value claims may appear to be admirable to some, it hides more than it uncovers" (p. 14). Without self-reflection, we are vulnerable to reproducing oppressions and hierarchies even while under the guise of engaging in more liberatory practices. Kincheloe (2001) further cautions, "If researchers fail to keep the normative, political, or value dimension of educational research in mind, the research they produce and the ends to which it is applied will simply serve to reproduce hegemonic social relations" (p. 209). On the flip-side, self-reflection that is not self-critical and is merely self-indulgent can also be counterproductive; examination of the Self without recognition that the Self is both always constructed by and constructing the social world can lead to a fantasy in which the researcher takes his/her own social constructions for granted as the only "truths." "[B]ecause the preconstructed is everywhere, which we notice when we question our habitual ways of thinking about and doing things, we need to subject our preunderstandings themselves to radical questions" (Roth, 2005, p. 10). Researching with a sense of radical purpose, then, begins first with understanding one's Self, or identity, in relation to or with others within a given socio-historical context, yet always scrutinized with "radical doubt" (Roth, 2005).

Without such a move, the choices we make will necessarily be structured by our identities and the hegemonies that permeate them regardless of our intentions. Bringing our identities to the forefront allows us room to question how our socio-historical Selves influence the seemingly commonsensical choices we make. By troubling our own notions of "commonsense" we allow ourselves room to make

different choices that might have been invisible to us before. "[W]e come to formulate more penetrating questions about our professional practice, see new levels of activity and meaning in our classrooms, decipher connections between sociocultural meanings and the everyday life of school, and reconceptualize what we already 'know'" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 207). Then by sharing their work with others, Critical Praxis Researchers illuminate alternate possibilities for teaching, learning, and being in the world that were previously unimagined. Guba and Lincoln refer to this transformative potential as *transferability,* whereby others who engage with a researcher's work will take away from it what applies to their own contexts. When scholar-practitioners allow themselves to be human in their work, those of us who read their results can see our Selves and our students in relation to them. We learn through our commonalities and our differences; this allows us to come to new understandings about our Selves, our students, and our contexts as we are introduced to new ways of reading the world.

Hwang and Roth (2007) point out that much research about education has a tendency to appear simultaneously as super-human and less-than human as researchers attempt to extract themselves and achieve "objectivity," while they classify and categorize the lived experiences of others. As they explain, "In virtually all research articles, humans are bloodless creatures that are either *determined* by the stuff and structures in their bloodless minds or *determined* by the environment, as modeled in the correlations that use class, race, parental educational level, and so forth as predictors of what someone can do and achieve" (p. 185). Yet, Giroux (1988) emphasizes that humanity is much more nuanced and complex than this, and these "bloodless" categories and reports are simply a select few people's ways of making sense of the world. These "principles governing the organization, distribution, and evaluation of knowledge are not absolute and objective; instead, they are socio-historical constructs forged by active human beings creating rather than simply existing in the world" (Giroux, 1988, p. 25). Critical Praxis Researchers recognize that research design, process, categories, analysis, and the knowledge generated from the research act are all human social constructions, whether created by us or someone else:

> As bodies among bodies, we cannot achieve removed and disembodied knowledge; all knowledge is singular and embodied but also representative of the collective in that it constitutes a concrete realization of cultural historical and sociocultural possibilities. Rather than pretending to create objective observer-independent knowledge or retreating into an inner subjectivity, we can use critical methods together with inner subjectivity to bring about a maximum of intersubjectivity, that is, understanding the Self to understand the Other (Roth, 2005, p. 15).

As Critical Praxis Researchers we do not pretend that we are objective observers detached from the world we are investigating, because this approach "preclude[s] researchers from pointing out forms of domination to the researcher; such orientations obstruct attempts to encourage emancipatory social change for the betterment of the individuals, groups, and communities being studied" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 219). Instead of ignoring life and Self in our work, we engage in critical Self-examination to embrace and utilize who we are and our life experiences as the foundation for the research we conduct. In so doing, we seek out "the path to

Lebenswelt—the life world, the lived world of human consciousness" (p. 207). We construct our research worlds in an informed manner based upon who we are, where we are, and what we want to accomplish. And, we are forthcoming and Self-critical about how our identities, beliefs, values, goals, and socio-historical influences shape the research we design and conduct. In this way, we are humble as we allow ourselves to be vulnerable, whole, and human throughout the research process (Behar, 1996). In turn, we are better able to respect our research participants' vulnerability, wholeness, and humanity as well.

Radical Hope: Looking Beyond "What Is" Toward "What Could Be"

As the "what is" hegemony is revealed and de-normalized through the process of critical self-reflection, Critical Praxis Researchers understand that our work has only just begun. It is not enough simply to critique the world and our place in it and reveal oppressions and limitations. CPResearchers know that until we move beyond critique, we run the risk of falling into a nihilistic despair, and by default allowing the status quo to continue on. Helpful here is Freire's (1999) insistence on developing a pedagogy of desire, through which people can "go beyond a fatalistic understanding of the facts of history" which necessarily entails discovering "the role of consciousness, of subjectivity in history" (p. 38). Through a pedagogy of desire, CPResearchers "informed by a critical epistemology seek a new angle, a unique insight into different ways of knowing, different forms of social knowledge, different approaches to knowledge production, and new ways of discerning the role of power in knowledge and consciousness construction" (Kincheloe, 2001, pp. 214–215). This desire for new ways of knowing and being provides the foundation for transformative agency. Without a vision of what might be, we remain trapped in the quagmire of what is and what has been. Critical Praxis Researchers take seriously Freire's charge that "It is up to us to make history and to be made and remade by it" (p. 38). In so doing, we seek out new ways of researching education that facilitate a process of be(com)ing. We operate from within a vision of complexity in which identity, context, and purpose intermingle, allowing for the "was," "is," and "could be" to interact and inform each other. We "are comfortable on this difficult domain because ours is an epistemology that understands and seeks to deal with the complexity of the social world" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 223). Such a vision of complexity cannot be achieved within positivist machine metaphors of the world. A simultaneity of identity/context/purpose and past/present/future is impossible when we regard the world as consisting of a linear progression of inputs and outputs.

Positivist machine metaphors of progress demand that there be a particular was (past), is (present), and will be (future), which leaves little if any room for variance. Thus, Critical Praxis Researchers are naturally suspicious when we encounter positivist research and reports in which schools are factories and/or human minds are computers. With our recognition that humanity is much more complex than

machines could ever be, we reject the notion that human intellect could be fashioned into a "better product" by streamlining the educational assembly line or "fool-proofing" the education and research process. The notion that there is one distinctly correct way of knowing and being in the world that can be achieved by properly following a particular number of steps in a particular order runs counter to our sensibilities. We recognize that any form of education or educational research that is prescriptive is a form of oppression that "attempts to induce conformity to orders externally imposed" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 185). This suspicion is not just cynicism or paranoia; rather, it is indicative of a scholar-practitioner who is developing into what Giroux calls a "transformative intellectual." Scholar-practitioners as transformative intellectuals seek out new ways of knowing and being in order to recreate education so that it enables them and their students to create reality, rather than just accept someone else's notion of reality as truth. McLaren (1988) explains, a "transformative intellectual must be committed to the following: teaching as an emancipatory practice; the creation of schools as democratic public spheres; the restoration of a community of shared progressive values; and the fostering of a common public discourse linked to the democratic imperatives of equality and social justice" (McLaren, 1988, p. xviii). With our goals of researching in order to make education and society more humane, Critical Praxis Researchers work consciously to adopt the characteristics of transformative intellectuals.

As a result, being and becoming a Critical Praxis Researcher is not simply about doing a research project that has a clear beginning, middle, and end. It is about making a commitment to embodying the dispositions of a Critical Praxis Researcher. Research and reflection become part of practice, that is, they become intertwined with one's pedagogical praxis. The process of research and reflection is constant with no clear end, since everything one encounters in the social world is data that has the potential to be used to inform and transform both Self and world. The boundaries between living life and conducting research begin to blur, as one's transformation into a Critical Praxis Researcher is never complete. Rather, being a Critical Praxis Researcher means always being in the process of both being and becoming, just as scholar-practitioners are always being and becoming who they are both personally and professionally. In the input/output positivist machine world, this type of uncertainty is disturbing. There is no measurable outcome or final product that can receive an FDA (or DOE) seal of approval. However, fully embracing this uncertainty is in itself a liberating act for these same reasons; scholar-practitioners will no longer feel pressured to fit someone else's notion of who or what a researcher is or should be when there is no prescribed end to strive for. There is only what was, is, could be, and what we do now while working toward our vision of what we believe "could be" ought to look like—all while accepting that over time our vision of "could be" will also change. As McLaren (1988) explains, "A pedagogy of liberation has no final answers. It is always in the making" (p. xx). Critical Praxis Research is in itself a liberating pedagogy. We are all learners, constantly in the making, living our lives, and striving for a better world. Within this zone of complexity Critical Praxis Researchers are free to be creative, whimsical, philosophical, passionate, and visionary, all of those attributes that are so very much part of being a good educator

and living a good life, while researching (and reaching) toward our vision of a better educational and social future.

Breathing Without the Aid of the Positivist Educational Research Machine

Once we embrace the notion that "our lives are entangled with our projects" (Roth, 2005, p. 14), we can begin to breathe freely as we celebrate Self, Other, and life within the work that we do. Our research methods can no longer follow a prescribed path set by someone else because they are intimately tied to who we are. Instead, they "transcend the limitations imposed by an exclusive 'how-to-ism'" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 183). In *Getting Beyond the Facts: Teaching Social Studies/Social Sciences in the Twenty-first Century*, Kincheloe (2001) asserts that for teaching methods to be effective, they must be

> based around concrete experiences of particular teachers with their particular personalities and strengths teaching a particular subject matter to students with particular needs and interests. . . Teachers must develop their own methods based on their own intelligent observations of their particular circumstances. Only then, do methods relate to the lived world; only then can method and subject matter remain unified; only then, can methods avoid being reduced to mechanical routine (p. 186).

I assert that research methods should be regarded in the same manner. It is here where the imaginative and improvisational dispositions of educational practitioners are so helpful in research design. As *bricoleurs* (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004), Critical Praxis Researchers draw their methods of inquiry from many places in order to meet the particular research needs at hand.

Regardless of what kinds of methods we're talking about (i.e., teaching method, research method, scientific method, qualitative method, quantitative method), we are referring to some ways of approaching information. "In different situations, different methods of inquiry will be used" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 184). Depending upon who we are, where we stand, and what we hope to accomplish, the means by which we approach information gathering, analysis, and/or delivery will vary, sometimes rather drastically. Our methods reflect the choices we make, which are based upon how we understand best practices given our past and present experiences, combined with how we envision our future path in and around the knowledge we are working with/toward. In other words, our methods are maps that guide us as we endeavor toward new knowledge (Kincheloe, 2001). Yet, we cannot assume that these maps are permanent, nor should they be strictly adhered to. As we embark upon our research journeys, we are also guided by our intuitions, curiosities, and ethics, which necessarily serve as guides. When we travel down our research paths, inevitably, we will linger and drink in deeply the scenery and/or cultures of certain places, while we move quickly past others. Then we may double-back to revisit those places that we passed by too quickly on the first pass. Sometimes we will hold steadfast to our maps, while at other times our maps will need to be redrawn

entirely. Ultimately, we hope to take exhilarating detours into new terrain that we did not even know existed.

Contrarily, in a more positivistic paradigm, the route to knowledge is streamlined into a guided tour that creates distance between the researcher and the world. You get on the bus, follow the prescribed route, and visit the landmarks that have been previously regarded as worth seeing. Deviating from the path, lingering too long in one place, or doubling-back to visit something that has already been visited is undesirable because the point of the trip is to get to a specific destination as quickly and efficiently as possible. Desires to linger, revisit, or veer off course are detrimental when one is trying to reach a particular preset goal. In Critical Praxis Research, however, there is no predetermined final destination; life becomes a knowledge journey and our journeys become our lives. Someone or something we encounter today may change our trajectory, and before we have time to reflect, we find ourselves wandering into a wilderness of previously unexplored knowledge terrain. As Critical Praxis Researchers, we seek not to turn our backs on or tame that wilderness, but rather to confidently travel into it and ultimately develop a deeper understanding of our Selves and the world as we are immersed in an ecosystem of complexity. We seek out the lessons that a complex knowledge ecosystem can teach us but a guided tour of previously identified terrain cannot. In the knowledge wilderness, we are exposed to infinite new ways of knowing and being as we become "seekers of patterns, revealers of hidden agendas and ideologies, and agents of educational progress" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 196). Here, progress is not meant in a Western sense of claiming, dominating, and controlling, but rather in opening up the wilderness of knowledge in order to envision unforeseen ways of knowing and being in the world. In other words, educational progress in the zone of complexity is the inverse of the Western progress identified in Chapters 3 and 4. Instead of reducing the world to bits and pieces that are easy for humans to digest, we embrace the world's vastness and seek to expand our vision to see as much as we can in a more holistic and interconnected way.

As we explore the vast complexity of the world, Critical Praxis Researchers draw from multiple ways of knowing and being (cognitive, affective, corporeal, intuitive, etc.) to make sense of the world. Yet, we humbly accept that we can only ever know a tiny fraction of what the world has to teach us. The more we learn about the world (and ourselves) as we continue on our journeys, the more we realize just how far our journeys stretch out before us into the horizon. There is still so much more for us to see. Critical Praxis Researchers dream of what lay on that horizon, working our way toward a world that is more inclusive, even while knowing that this utopian vision will likely not be realized in our lifetimes. Freire explains that this "Dreaming is not only a necessary political act, it is an integral part of the historico-social manner of being a person. It is part of human nature, which, within history, is in permanent process of becoming... There is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope" (Freire, 2004, p. 77). Critical Praxis Researchers eagerly conduct our work within the affective, ontological, and epistemological zones of complexity, and we are fueled by a hope and a dream for a different future. As scholar-practitioners who work with youth and have the opportunity to work toward recreating the world

anew every day, Critical Praxis Researchers are well poised to begin creating that future in which education, and indeed humanity itself, is more humane.

Questions for Discussion

1. How would you define the purpose of American public schooling? Why?
2. How are the schools in which you have worked either "extensions of the work place" or "democratic public spheres," or both? Are these opposing purposes, or gradations on a continuum, or tensions, or something else? Why do you think so?
3. Kress discusses the historic "fissures" of education. What do you know about the educators she names as progressive? What other moments in history have challenged the status quo? What "fissures" have you experienced in your teaching career?
4. One goal of CPR discussed in this chapter is to "do no harm." How is this possible? What are your misgivings, feelings, or hopes about such a goal?
5. How are images of life and death important in this chapter, and in an understanding of CPR? If life and death are descriptors along a continuum, rather than polar opposites, what might their metaphorical uses offer in a discussion of education and research?
6. What is your professional dream?

Writing for Insight

1. Kress writes that "any education or research practice that domesticates, excludes or damages by prescribing or certifying only particular ways of knowing and being needs to be critically examined, deconstructed, and reconstructed." How have you begun examining, deconstructing, and/or reconstructing your own education or research practice, and to what effects? Write your thoughts.
2. Use a three-circle Venn diagram to record your understanding of (a) your identity, (b) your context, and (c) the purposes of education and educational research. Where are there "overlaps?" Where are there conflicts? Where are there "gaps" in your understanding?
3. Finish this sentence at least ten times, with education and research in mind: "It's just common sense that. . ." Afterwards, return to each statement you wrote. After each one, list some questions or thoughts that might trouble or challenge your assumptions. What do your assumptions tell you about your identity and the contexts in which you have been educated, and are educating?
4. Kress writes about the uses of reflection for a Critical Praxis Researcher, and about the need for such a researcher to evolve personally and professionally. How do you tend to these needs for constant growth in your personal life and in your professional life? Make a list of five "growth" practices you can engage

in regularly (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly) in each of these areas (personal and professional). Post these "top ten" growth practices somewhere where you can regularly review them.

Note

1. See, for example, Anyon (2005), Apple (1999), Fine (1991), Greene (1988), Duncan-Andrade and Morrell (2008), Labaree (1999), McLaren and Jaramillo (2007), and Portes (2005).

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Part II
Practicing Critical Praxis Research

Chapter 6
The Seven Deadly Sins: Vices and Virtues of CPR

By this time, my readers probably have recognized that from more traditional perspectives, Critical Praxis Research is likely to be considered research blasphemy. To some degree, we may even feel blasphemous in our own minds as we begin to self-examine and design our research in this very personal way. For those of us who have been steeped in Western beliefs of what "good" research practice is, we may feel criticism coming from a voice within as well as from voices outside of us. For this reason, this chapter is devoted exclusively to examining the likely critiques of CPR that are derivative of hegemonic Western epistemologies as they relate to science and research. Sandra Harding (1998) explains that part of Western science's ability to become as dominant as it has stems from its ability to "deculturalize" itself by asserting the detached objectivity of the researcher. However, this a-cultural feature of Western science is in fact a myth. As Chapters 3 and 4 illustrate, if we delve beneath the surface, Western science simultaneously produces and is itself a product of Western culture. Descartes' notion of mind as separate from matter is indicative of this, and Deloria (1997) points out that Descartes was not the first to make this distinction. In fact it "had already been an acceptable proposition in Europe theologically thanks to the Inquisition, which sought to save the soul by destroying the body" (p. 26). Furthermore, Western science did not simply appear during the Age of Enlightenment; rather, "science and philosophy simply copied the institutional paths already taken by Western religion" (p. 4). This link between Western theology and Western science indicates that there are particular facets of Western thinking that are unique to Western culture and are reflected in the worldviews, institutions, and cultural practices of Western people, scientists and researchers included.

In the following sections I utilize "The Seven Deadly Sins" of Christian, Judaic, and Ancient Greek religious beliefs to frame my discussion of likely critiques of CPR. I have chosen this unorthodox framework for several reasons. First, the seven sins and their opposites, the seven virtues, illustrate a form of binary thinking, as in something is either this or that, which is a common trait of Western epistemology; for instance, a person is either proud or humble but cannot be both proud and humble simultaneously. Second, the seven sins and seven virtues also illustrate the importance of time, procedure, progress, and individuality in Western thinking. For instance, much of the doctrine of the Christian religion advocates following certain guidelines in life in order to make it to eternity in heaven. As Deloria (2003)

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explains, to a great degree, life becomes a matter of engaging in a constant struggle for a predetermined "better" future that exists in another place; this results in a disconnection of man from the land upon which s/he stands and the body s/he inhabits, as salvation is associated with leaving this world and this corporeal shell. Given this promise of the individual's entrée into the ethereal land of eternity, the purpose of life is to follow a set of prescribed, decontextualized, abstract rules that lead to a particular individualistic end goal. Deloria further explains that this Western notion of time often "revolves around the problem of good and evil" (p. 70). Note, here, the similarity between this and the scientific method, in which the researcher is disconnected from the world s/he is investigating and, to a degree, the body s/he inhabits, as s/he follows the correct procedures in order to arrive at a singular universal truth. Finally, the seven sins and seven virtues, according to DeYoung (2009), have been around for more than 1800 years, and are fundamental in Western theological traditions, and therefore Western epistemology. They are pervasive in Western culture to the point that they are frequently topics of canonical literature (e.g. in Shakespeare's tragedies; in *MacBeth*, MacBeth's hubris, and in *Othello*, Iago's envy) (Shakespeare, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c), popular culture (e.g., the 1995 film *Se7en* by director David Fincher), and even texts about human psychology (e.g., Schimmel, 1997). Similarly, research (among other things) is often positioned as "good" or "bad" with methods being classified as "right" or "wrong;" recall Christina's story in Chapter 4 when the professor told the class "no data is better than bad data." Depending upon one's perspective, CPR might be construed as "bad" or "wrong," but looked at otherwise, it is also "good" and "right." Ultimately, in this chapter and subsequent chapters of Part II, my goal is to emphasize that methods that are situated and intimately tied to the researcher, her context and sense of radical purpose should not be evaluated on a basis of right or wrong. Rather, methods should be selected based on their appropriateness for the particular contexts from which they emerge as well as their ethical implications for the participants with whom the researcher is working.

Pride/Arrogance

Pride or arrogance is the manifestation of an individual's sense of superiority, which makes him/her callous to others. In Judaic, Christian, and Ancient Greek traditions, pride was also the gateway to all other human sin. For instance, one's sense of superiority might lead him/her to feel envious of another person, or might lead him/her to not work hard and exhibit laziness (sloth), or it might lead him/her to feel entitled to acquire more wealth at the expense of others' well-being (greed/gluttony). Throughout history we can see the effects of pride and arrogance in the cruelest and most brutal acts of violence committed by one people against another. The genocide of indigenous people of the Americas and the kidnapping and enslavement of African people are but two examples of how pride and arrogance, in this case of White Europeans, led one people to believe they were so superior that they felt justified to dominate and exterminate others. In research communities, pride has

also manifest itself in very unethical ways. Take, for instance, the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, which resulted in the deaths of 28 African-American men for whom the treatment for syphilis was withheld for the purposes of a medical experiment.[1] Extreme pride is dangerous.

To some who hold more traditional beliefs about what it means to do research, Critical Praxis Researchers may appear to be proud or arrogant. There is a bit of truth to this perspective because CPResearchers must be confident in ourselves and our intellectual capabilities in order to do what we do. We must possess a strong sense of Self in order to embark upon previously unexplored intellectual terrain. Perhaps, when we question research traditions, it will appear as if we think we "know better" than the scores of researchers and intellectuals who have come before us. CPResearchers' questioning, however, is not meant as an assertion of authority or a wholesale discounting of the ideas of those who have come before us. Rather, this is an indication of our belief that there is much more to learn about the world than what we have thus far been exposed to by Western research. Western science can teach us much, but other peoples' beliefs can teach us just as much if not more by helping us to expand our vision of the world.

In a sense, our quest for *multilogicality* and diverse perspectives is an expression of our humility. As Kincheloe explains, "the appreciation of the complexity of everyday life and the difficulty of understanding it demands humility on the part of researchers... [C]ertainty and interpretive finality are simply not possible given such complications" (in Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 31). Therefore, we purposefully seek out alternative views from not just researchers and academics, but also from research participants, community members, various ethnic traditions, and popular culture, among scores of other sources of knowledge. We take as a given that intelligence is not just a characteristic bestowed upon a select privileged few, but rather intelligence is a gift of all humanity (Malott, 2010). As much as CPResearchers think they know, this pales in comparison to what the world and all living things have to teach us because we know that our own ways of seeing and knowing are limited by Self and context. CPResearchers also know that in the academic world, where to a great degree pride is virtuous, we must be careful not to fall into the trap of positioning ourselves as all-knowing authorities. Here, CPR's insistence on critical self-reflection can be informed by Kincheloe's notion of *radical listening* (Tobin, 2009), in which we work hard to understand others from their own standpoints so that we may learn from difference. This requires an examination of Self while openly exploring the viability of the views of others, and it is essential in maintaining a sense of humility.

Envy

Envy is the pain we feel because others possess seemingly valuable qualities, status, or wealth that we don't. Envy can stem from a desire to achieve equality or a hunger for superiority. In an individualistic, capitalist society in which inequality

and stratification is normalized via the hegemony of meritocracy, people are taught at a young age to compete with and compare themselves to each other. Envy, as a natural byproduct of inequality and competition, is exceedingly difficult to avoid in this type of social structure. Further, envy can lead people to engage in all sorts of destructive acts against others (including theft, defamation, physical and psychological violence), as well as against themselves (including self-deprecation and risky financial or social behavior). In literature and popular culture, there are countless stories about the deleterious effects of envy in people's lives. Take for example, the dark comedy *Fun with Dick and Jane* (Kotcheff, 1977; Parisot, 2005), which depicts an upwardly mobile American couple who find themselves unemployed and in mountains of debt from spending beyond their means. In order to preserve their status and keep their possessions so that they can live a lifestyle similar to their neighbors, they wind up becoming bank robbers. While this is, of course, a fictitious example, as a cultural artifact the film illuminates the envy with which we all struggle. The world of research and academia is also similarly stratified and plagued with envy. Much of the work that researchers and academics do involves illustrating the superiority of their work over someone else's in order to achieve credibility and higher status; thus, envy can lead to dangerous acts in research and academic circles, as well. As an example, *Plagiary* is an academic journal devoted entirely to the study of plagiarism in various disciplines including science, medicine, history, and journalism. Academic theft, unfortunately, does occur, as do other harmful envy-related crimes such as slander and defamation.

Critical Praxis Researchers do regard others' knowledge and experiences as tremendously valuable; however, we do not seek to own or eclipse what other researchers have done. If CPResearchers truly practice what we believe, then envy should stand in contrast to our worldviews. Indeed, acting on envy will not truly lead us to equality; rather, this will simply invert and thereby perpetuate the oppressor/oppressed relationship. We recognize that there is much to be learned from various research traditions, and the goal of CPR is not to attempt to position ours as more virtuous than another's, or claim as our own that which belongs to someone else. Our interests lie in learning from and honoring the riches that others bring to the educational research world, while developing our own individual ways of knowing and being. Yet, as with pride, there is always potential for envy, because we are, after all, only human, and we too feel the pressure and compulsion to compete with others, as much as we might wish that wasn't so. Thus, to stave off envy, CPResearchers turn to Freire's concept of radical love, in which "love is always pointed in the direction of commitment and fidelity to a global project of emancipation" (McLaren, 2000, p. 54). Our work becomes more than just a means of improving our own social conditions, bolstering our own stature, or earning capital to exchange for material goods. As such, we appreciate the value of the intellectual contributions of many for improving social life as we know it, and while we may not always subscribe to others' ways of seeing the world, we do not seek to downgrade others' ways of knowing and being in order to garner advantage for ourselves. Furthermore, CPResearchers question our own positions of authority and degrees of power in society in order to live as we speak, affecting change by starting with ourselves (Ayvazian, 1995).

Gluttony, Greed, and Lust

In this section, I write about gluttony, greed, and lust together, because these vices are related to overindulgence, wantonness, and hedonism, all characteristics that are essentially derived from selfishness. Gluttony is a form of extreme overindulgence. Whether we are referring to eating, drinking, or even in the case of nations exploiting natural resources, gluttony is the consumption of more of a substance than is required for survival. Similarly, greed is the intense desire to possess more than what one needs or is entitled to. And finally, lust, which is traditionally associated with sexual desire, can also be construed as related to insatiable desire for sensory pleasure more generally. The overlap between these three concepts is significant, to the point where it is difficult to pinpoint where one ends and the next begins. For example, a person's insatiable desire for pleasures of the body, such as sex, food, or drink (lust), may lead one to overindulgence (gluttony) and the uncontrollable urge to acquire excess quantities of sustenance or possessions (greed) at the expense of others' and/or one's own well-being. In classical Christian and Ancient Greek literature, we find such stories as the tale of King Midas and the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah, which depict the disastrous effects of greed and lust. In contemporary American popular culture, scores of reality television shows exploit and sensationalize peoples' overindulgences and/or the tragic effects of overindulgence. News programs consistently report on famous or wealthy individuals' reckless, wanton, and wasteful behaviors. In recent fictional television, HBO's series *True Blood* illustrates the disastrous effects of Dionysian hedonism, which encompasses all three of these sins, as the townspeople (at the hands of a goddess) overindulge in food, drink, sex, and money until they nearly destroy themselves. In all cases, the consequences of these overindulgences are numerous and grotesque.

A major critique of Western research and the academic world is its tendency toward selfishness, the trait that lies at the heart of the above-described vices of overindulgence. Indigenous and feminist scholars, in particular, have pointed out that there are serious ethical problems with entering people's communities, gathering information, and then leaving those communities no better off (or even worse off) than they were, while the researcher gains acclaim and wealth at the peoples' expense (Smith, 1999). Historically, (social) scientists have been known to exploit the communities with which they work in numerous ways. Smith (1999) points out how research has often been used as a means of stealing the cultural, agricultural, and medicinal traditions of tribal people in order to sell these things on the capitalist marketplace; sometimes, they are even sold back to the communities from which they were taken. While this is not necessarily the case with all research or science, in most cases, the researcher or scientist has a marked advantage over the communities they research. Even while working under a mantra of social justice, especially if one works in an academic field, research can never be a purely selfless act. By way of the enhancement of one's own knowledge, acclaim through resulting presentations and publications, and rewards of tenure and promotion, research results in individual advantages for the researcher. In most instances, the advantages gained by the researcher far surpass those gained by the communities in/with which the

researchers conduct their research. Many scholars from various backgrounds have for decades been calling for more just relationships between researchers and their participants. Participatory researchers, in particular, teach us that research should be fair, inclusive of all stakeholders involved, and should make a positive difference in people's lives. In other words, the community should be direct beneficiaries of the dividends of research, whatever they may be.[2]

Admittedly, Critical Praxis Researchers derive great pleasure out of our work. We believe in the importance of utilizing all parts of us, mind, body, and soul in order to design and conduct research that is personally meaningful, empowering, and transformative. Kincheloe (in Thomas & Kincheloe, 2006) refers to the importance of injecting our practice with *jouissance* and tapping into the libidinal energy of people to eroticize learning, thereby making learning come alive. In this same way, CPR, which is intimately tied to the mind, body, and emotions, of the researcher, could be construed as a lustful way of researching. As theoretical and methodological bricoleurs, Critical Praxis Researchers hunger for new and numerous ways of knowing and being. Because we can never be satisfied with a singular, definitive answer from a monolithic perspective, we may appear greedy and gluttonous in our unending quest. And yes, we too will inevitably receive certain benefits just like any other traditional researchers, even if these benefits are simply new insights about ourselves and those around us. However, CPResearchers specifically seek to alleviate power imbalances in the work we do even as we revel in the pleasure we get from exploring the wonders of Self/Other and the world. Here, Guba and Lincoln's (1989) five authenticity criteria (*fairness, educative authenticity, ontological authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity*)[3] and Kincheloe's (2005) concept of *critical ontology* help CPResearchers ensure that they are not the sole beneficiaries of the fruits of their research. With these concepts in mind, research is designed and conducted in a critically conscious way, such that all stakeholders can participate in shaping the research, and all will learn from and experience the benefits of the research processes and products.

Sloth

Sloth is often associated with lack of motivation, laziness, or general sluggishness, whether physical or mental. It involves being undisciplined or unfocused, taking the easy road, procrastination, and/or avoiding responsibility because one doesn't want to make sacrifices or put forth effort. Sloth can be thought of as connected to feelings of hopelessness, apathy, nihilism, and sadness, resulting from the overwhelming sense that life is without purpose or the human condition and social life are unchangeable. Yet, while most people think of sloth as a kind of paralysis, it can also manifest as excessive activity of little consequence, in other words, busying oneself with trifles while avoiding important tasks. Famously, the Ancient Greek storyteller, Aesop, depicted the effects of laziness in his fable *The Grasshopper and the Ant* (Aesop, 2010). In Western culture, the negativity associated with sloth

is engrained in capitalism (i.e., the Protestant work ethic) and normalized through meritocratic and achievement ideologies. Indeed, there are many Western idioms that express the virtues of hard work, for example, "if you work hard, you will succeed;" "if you don't succeed at first, try, try again;" "time is money;" "idle hands are the devil's playthings;" "never put off until tomorrow what you can do today." Meanwhile, Western people are bombarded by contradictory media messages that encourage instant gratification through the expense of little effort.

In the worlds of research and academia, hard work and diligence, often referred to as "rigor," are also revered as virtuous. As was discussed in Chapter 3, the myth of the scientific method promotes a particular ideal in which researchers lay out a plan, and follow it faithfully step-by-step, never deviating (Bauer, 1992). The diligence of the researcher is often measured by his or her ability to adhere to this plan, remain objective, ground his or her work in empirical evidence, and replicate his or her findings to other settings. These dispositions are enacted (supposedly) in order to produce "rigorous" research that results in "scientific" research findings. Conversely, researchers who do not adhere to these rules are then regarded as not rigorous, not scientific or, in more disparaging terms, simply sloppy or lazy.[4] While many researchers of education have ceased touting these ideals as "law," the tenets of scientism and empiricism continue to undergird conversations about what constitutes rigorous research in education. For example, in the National Research Council's 2002 report, *Scientific Research in Education*, the authors recognize that educational research is value-laden and ambiguous and that neither quantitative nor qualitative methods are better for researching education. Yet, they also claim that "at its core, scientific inquiry in education is the same as in all other scientific disciplines" (p. 27), and "that it is possible to describe the physical and social world scientifically so that, for example, multiple observers can agree on what they see" (p. 25). They further assert the importance of replication and generalization to "strengthen and clarify the limits of scientific conjectures and theories" that are drawn from educational research (p. 70). In this perspective, Critical Praxis Research cannot be "rigorous" or "scientific" because it is not objective and it cannot be replicated or generalized. Rather, it is soft, subjective, even slothful or lazy, because it is not based on an adherence to the "rigor" of scientism and empiricism.

I would argue, however, that if we recast the word "rigor" to connote a commitment to endurance and challenging oneself, rather than only stiffness and disciplined adherence to rules, CPR is indeed rigorous, albeit in ways that are not immediately recognized by proponents of scientism and empiricism. This type of rigor means seeking out many sources of knowledge by various theories, methods, and perspectives and not ceasing our inquiry with the first answer we find. We can think of CPR as a winding, cross-country marathon, rather than a straightforward, 100-yard dash. It would certainly be viable to dash straight ahead to the finish line, limiting our inquiries to only that which we can see and can be replicated in another setting. Yet, doing so would severely truncate our efforts to expand our consciousness while unfurling the complexities of the world; these other types of investigations only allow us to scratch the surface of understanding for the simple fact that they are bound by phenomena that are observable. The rigor of CPR is embedded in the

researcher's drive to know more than what the eye allows us to see; to take the long, scenic route, and not stop at the first (or even second) explanation one sees.

Wrath

Wrath is the resulting backlash that comes from intense anger, usually stemming from feelings that one has been wronged by someone else. We have all at some point felt anger and rage, and perhaps even the desire for revenge. Anger that leads to wrath is often fueled by other sins such as pride, greed, or envy. Unfortunately, anger and wrath seem to be rampant in the world. It is difficult to turn on the television or open a newspaper without seeing evidence of anger and wrath on an individual level (as in crimes of passion and Columbine-type attacks) and a collective scale (as in terrorism and military strikes). There are countless novels and films that have been written about anger, rage, wrath, and revenge. Dostoevsky's (2008) *Crime and Punishment* or Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Shakespeare, 1994a) are just two pieces of such fiction. In American popular culture, the iconic comic book hero Batman emerged as a vigilante crime fighter as a result of his rage and resulting wrath stemming from a desire to avenge his parents' deaths. Alongside pride, wrath is the most violent and destructive of the sins as it often results in physical, psychological, and emotional harm toward others and self. Furthermore, when acted upon, wrath has a multiplying effect as violence tends to breed more violence, whether physical, psychological, or symbolic.

It is not uncommon for more traditional scholarly voices to accuse critical theorists of acting out of anger. This is not entirely unfounded, because there is much for critical theorists to be angry about in a world that is unjust. To date, volumes have been written about the injustices that various people have experienced at the hands of others throughout the course of history. Tuck (2009) refers to this positioning of people as victims as "damage-centered research," which has a history in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s; ostensibly, if researchers could reveal injustice to the perpetrators, the perpetrators would feel responsible for rectifying the situation and offering retribution. This is closely linked to the philosophical underpinnings of the US punitive legal system. Yet, Freire argues that liberation and equality will never be achieved in this manner, since the oppressor group would have to be willing to relinquish power to another. Notoriously, the powerful are unwilling to hand over such advantages.

I would be lying if I tried to claim that CPResearchers are not angry about the injustices of the world. However, it is not our anger that leads us to do what we do. We are not seeking revenge or a dominant position for previously marginalized groups, but rather we are seeking a way out of the oppressor/oppressed dynamic, which cannot be achieved via anger and wrath. We do not desire a Robin Hood-type of retribution in which we give advantage to subordinated groups by taking it at the expense dominant groups. Rather, we are seeking to disrupt inequality and the ideologies that normalize it by "break[ing] the lenses of present ways of viewing

the world. Such lenses need to be broken, bricoleurs contend, not because of some Oedipal impulse to kill the father, but because such frames have caused such heartbreak and suffering on the part of those who fall outside the favored race, class, gender, sexual, religious, and ability-related demographic" (Kincheloe & Berry, 2004, p. 19). Critical Praxis Researchers do not wish to see harm inflicted upon anyone, but as with the other vices, we are not immune to anger. To deal with the human compulsion toward anger, we turn to Freire's notion of radical love. We commit ourselves instead to compassion and understanding rather than simply condemning and punishing others. In turn, we free ourselves as we endeavor to free us all.

Clearing the Way to a Temperate Middle Ground

According to Deloria (2003), Western teachings that are based on time, binaries, and cardinal rules have particular limitations because they are decontextualized and "based on abstract propositions" that can never truly be applied to all circumstances (p. 67). He explains that, "A good many of our problems today are a result of the perpetuation of dreadfully outmoded beliefs derived from the Near Eastern/European past that do not correspond to what our science is discovering today or to the remembered experiences of non-Western peoples across the globe" (Deloria, 1997, p. 3). By blurring the boundaries of "vice" and "virtue" my goal was to illustrate that research and researchers cannot fit into simple binaries of good or bad. If science and research are situated, cultural activities, then as researchers, we cannot simply follow the "right" research path based upon abstract rules that have been created by someone else with different beliefs in a different place and time because there is simply not a right and wrong way to conduct research. The paths we choose do not exemplify virtue *or* vice, but rather virtue *and* vice; they are extensions of who we are as people, which means they are always imperfect, and they will always have both possibilities and limitations. As we come to embrace this complexity and our humble place in the world, we learn to find balance in virtue *and* vice. In our research, we can utilize our sensory perceptions *and* commit ourselves to not settling for easily observable answers. We can be angry about injustice *and* compassionate and understanding of others. We can hold a desire for social transformation *and* a profound love for humanity. These beliefs can and do work together because vices and virtues are two sides of the same coin; they imply and complete each other.

In the following chapters of Part II, I provide an overview of the many different types of data collection and analysis techniques (some that are common, others that are less so) that can be used in our research, as well as their advantages and disadvantages. I will devote attention to analysis, interpretation, and writing, and the importance of these acts when conducting Critical Praxis Research. I also provide discussions around issues of ethics, access, and navigating human subjects review boards. The information that follows is not meant to be exhaustive, nor prescriptive, but rather my aim is to offer insights that my readers may utilize as they begin to clear their own paths for transcending either/or notions of what constitutes "good work" in educational research.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is your familiarity with the Seven Deadly Sins? Discuss any knowledge or experiences of the Seven Sins you possessed prior to reading this chapter.
2. How has Western religion impacted you? How are its traditional dichotomies complementary, or at odds with, your research interests, ethics, or priorities?
3. Kress writes, "CPResearchers turn to Freire's concept of radical love, in which 'love is always pointed in the direction of commitment and fidelity to a global project of emancipation'" (quoting McLaren, 2000, p. 54). What do you think of this notion of "radical love?" How might love have implications for research? What does your comfort level with such a concept say to you about your views of academia and the dichotomies you might draw between the personal and professional?
4. Of the Seven Deadly Sins, which one seems most likely to prevent pitfalls for you, personally and professionally, as a practitioner researcher?

Writing for Insight

1. Complete the following chart as a way of summarizing and synthesizing what you've read about CPR.

	In what ways is this sin relevant to CPResearchers?	In what ways might CPResearchers turn sin into virtue?	How might this dichotomy be deconstructed within your teaching and research practices?
Pride/ Arrogance			
Envy			
Gluttony, Greed, Lust			
Sloth			
Wrath			

Notes

1. The Tuskegee experiment is discussed further in Chapter 9, which specifically attends to issues of ethics in research.
2. Research benefits can take many forms, but in the case of educational research, particularly if the researcher is working with marginalized populations, these benefits may take the form of self/other awareness and improved educational services. Many researchers now conduct their work *in collaboration with* students and teachers in schools. Students and teachers become co-researchers, rather than just objects being observed by the researcher. This change in roles enables participants to apply their agency to change their own lived realities. Just a few examples of researchers who do this type of work are Tuck (2009); Siry and Lang (2010); Duncan-Andrade and Morell (2008); Tobin, Elmesky, and Seiler (2005). There are many others who also conduct research in this way, but they are too numerous to list here.
3. Authenticity criteria will be tended to at length in Chapter 8 in my discussion of research quality.
4. While the words sloppy or lazy may or may not actually be used to describe "non-scientific" work as inferior, determinations of "quality" or "not quality" and "objective" or "subjective" carry with them connotations of "good" or "not good." Refer back to Christina's story in Chapter 4 where the concepts of "empirical" and "experimental" were conflated and anything falling outside those parameters was "bad data." Similarly, The National Research Council's report regarding what qualifies as scientific educational research does not make outright assertions about the types of research that are "not scientific," but they provide clear parameters about what types of research *are* considered "scientific" (i.e., quality and good). Anything falling outside these parameters is thereby classified as "not scientific" (i.e., not quality and not good).

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Chapter 7
The Art of CPR Research Design

Connecting the Practitioner and the Researcher

In Part I, I encouraged my readers to connect Self, Other, and the world by reconnecting the knower and the known and examining identity, context, and purpose. In this section of the book, by introducing various methodological approaches and data collection and analysis strategies, I encourage my readers to connect the practitioner to the researcher. This can be accomplished by utilizing the practitioner's natural propensity toward inquiry, improvisation, and action to design a study that is intimately connected to who and where the practitioner is and why she wants to conduct research in the first place. As I alluded to in previous chapters, the line between being a practitioner and a researcher is artificial and has emerged from centuries of social and ideological construction of the world of education, research, and society more broadly. If we think about what education practitioners do on a daily basis, it is easy to see the dispositions and practices of the researcher in the practitioner. For instance, we pay attention not just to the material we teach, but also to social interactions (teacher–student and student–student), discourse, environment, emotions, and student performance on assessments. We look for patterns, contradictions to patterns, and idiosyncrasies. We think about our students as learners and complex social actors. We think about ourselves as teachers, learners, and complex social actors. We raise questions about how we might better teach our classes, and we alter the classroom environment accordingly by adopting new strategies and texts or building better relationships with students and colleagues. Indeed, *we are already* researchers, and we utilize a bricolage of inquiry strategies.

Chism, Sanders, and Zitlow (1989) (in Anderson, Herr, & Nihlin 1994) assert, "[practitioners] naturally do use a form of inquiry to help deal with the problematic realities of teaching" (p. 46). Similarly, as teachers consider how to make the best learning environments for students, sometimes we systematically plan and adhere to that plan, but sometimes we work by having a "feel" for the learning environment, changing or reaffirming our course from day to day, and even improvising or changing course in the moment. Teachers gather and analyze artifacts such as student papers and various other materials that enter into or emerge from classroom activity. We keep track of students' progress and have conversations with students

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in order to learn how to best meet their needs. Many of us may even use journals to document our experiences, thoughts, and questions about teaching and learning, and based upon all of this, we draw implications for how to teach in the future. And, of course, each time a new school year begins, the inquiry process begins all over again; it is cyclical and never-ending. Be(com)ing a scholar-practitioner (and Critical Praxis Researcher), then, can be thought of as a matter of making this inquiry process more intentional. The actual doing of practitioner research "translates this type of informal questioning of practice to one of more systematic inquiry that lends itself to problem solving as well as possible dissemination to a larger audience" (Anderson et al., 1994, p. 47). The actual doing of Critical Praxis Research does not require shunting the dispositions of the practitioner, but rather *tapping into* the practitioner's strengths as a bricoleur in order to design and conduct research that is intimately tied to the scholar-practitioner's identity, context, and purpose.

Working in the Here and Now: Revisiting the Paradigms

As we begin to design our research, the self-examination that I emphasized in Part I is just the beginning of the Critical Praxis Research process. Being critically aware of identity, context, and purpose is important for pointing us in the right direction and guiding us through the decisions we make as we conduct our research; however, we also need to have an understanding of the range of research genres, data collection strategies, and analysis techniques from which we will choose as we design our studies. The world is comprised of many phenomena, and it is tremendously complex; the world of education is equally so. For this reason, it is often not enough to consider just one research paradigm or limit ourselves to particular types of data collection methods. There are benefits and drawbacks to all research approaches. Yet, we still must make judgments about which ones will serve us best for what we hope to accomplish. To do so, we must be aware of the range of techniques that are available to us.

It is likely that many of my readers will gravitate toward qualitative methods because they feel more holistic and connected to people's lives than quantitative methods often do. In addition, the self-examination portion of Critical Praxis Research may appear to be an additional, unnecessary step for someone interested in conducting quantitative research (although I would argue that self-examination is important for any researcher, regardless of the type of inquiry they prefer). This makes qualitative methods a natural fit for Critical Praxis Research. However, Roth (2007) cautions that when designing our research, we should not fall into the trap of selecting our methods based upon our personal preferences before fully considering what types of data will be gathered or generated and how those data will contribute to our understanding of the phenomena we would like to study. Ercikan and Roth (2006) further emphasize that the world is comprised of both quantitative and qualitative phenomena, and quantitative research has qualitative elements, while qualitative research also has quantitative elements. As they explain,

> in [qualitative] classroom observation, there are examples of student-student and student-teacher interactions that can be noted not just for the type of interaction but for the frequency as well. Similarly, in "quantitative research," judgments about qualities and categorizations are needed not just when we interpret findings but in the data creation and collection stages as well (p. 14).

Research of any type cannot be categorized as being strictly qualitative or strictly quantitative. Rather, if we think of the words quantitative and qualitative as two poles on either end of the research spectrum, one's design or comfort levels might lean more heavily toward one side or the other.

From this perspective, it remains important to keep in mind that depending upon the questions we ask and what we hope to accomplish in our research, we will need to select different methods because different data collection techniques will yield different information. Collecting certain types of data will enable us to see some things while obscuring others. For the beginning researcher, recognizing that methods simultaneously reveal and obscure different facets of the world might produce anxiety around choosing *the* method for revealing the "right" perspective of the world. Thus, the process of research design might feel high stakes and final. Yet, if we consider the research process as an extension of the existing practice of the practitioner, we are released from the burden of finding *the* method because this is just one more turn in the cycle of improving our practice. Clearly, practitioners utilize both qualitative and quantitative data in their practice every day, depending upon what they need to know about or accomplish. Similarly, Anderson et al. (1994) explain, "Research techniques and approaches must always be tempered by practice and seen through a filter of one's own environment and needs" (p. 107), which means methods necessarily must be flexible. As such, the key to designing a quality study lies not in selecting a particular method wholesale at the expense of all others, but rather in making informed and ethical decisions that make immediate sense, while remaining open to changing directions as the environment changes or new needs arise.

This is not much different from using multiple types of assessments in the classroom to get a more rounded perspective of how students are learning in a particular subject area. For example, a student's performance on a multiple choice test will illustrate how much content she has retained about a particular subject, while a written essay will allow the same student to illustrate depth of knowledge on a particular topic within the subject at hand. A multi-media presentation will allow the student to illustrate a complexity of understanding as she connects the topic to audio and visual media. Alternately, a one-on-one conference with the student may allow him/her to illustrate oral fluency while conversing about the topic, and careful observation of the student's body movements, facial expressions, and speech patterns may provide clues about how the student feels about and is making sense of the subject and their work. The types of approaches you will opt to use will depend largely upon your philosophies about teaching and learning, your prior understandings about the classroom and the child, and the questions you have about the learning environment and the child's experiences in it.

Similarly, the data collection techniques you employ in your research will emerge from your philosophies around education and research as well as your prior understandings and the lasting questions you have about your chosen topic. If we go back to the example of wanting to learn more about a student, looked at through the eyes of a researcher, we have various data sources that will allow us to see particular attributes of this student and her experience in the class. The multiple-choice exam is similar to a survey and will yield quantitative data with which the student can be compared to her peers. The written essay, multi-media presentation, one-on-one conversation, and observation will provide qualitative data quite like open-response questionnaires, interviews, artifacts, and observations. Depending upon what you want to know more about, you may choose to use one, some, or all of these techniques. Taken separately, the various data collection techniques provide snapshots of different attributes of that student; together, they provide a detailed mosaic of who this student is and how she performs in and experiences the classroom. Your philosophies (i.e., beliefs and values) about how best to come to know this student and what is important to know about her will steer you toward utilizing some methods over others and asking certain questions rather than others. This is quite similar to how you will design your research.

Methodologies and Methods

The philosophical approach you take toward your inquiry, commonly called methodology, will guide your general orientation toward conducting your study. Your methods, on the other hand, are the actual techniques you will use to gather data from various sources of information. Over the past 30 years, the number and types of methodologies and methods have multiplied, which makes the selection process rather daunting. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) document this proliferation of methodologies in their eight moments (see Chapter 4). To streamline the selection process, numerous authors (see for example, Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 2009) have attempted to delineate and categorize the many types of research into digestible forms. These categories, often referred to as paradigms or genres, are good starting points for thinking about research. Maxwell (2005) explains that within different paradigms, researchers share "very general philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology) and how we can understand it (epistemology) . . . Paradigms also typically include specific methodological strategies linked to these assumptions" (p. 36).

Yet, a complete categorization of all methodologies and methods into paradigms or genres is impossible because there exist so many types of research, and new methodologies are continually emerging. Consider, for instance, the impact that the Internet and digital media have had on society over the past 10 years; email, wikis, online communities, blogs, websites, message boards, chat rooms, and social networking sites have necessarily altered the research landscape[1]. To further complicate the matter, many inquiry approaches overlap in their data collection techniques, making it difficult to clearly distinguish one from another. For some researchers, it

may be challenging to categorize the approaches they choose because they resemble more than one approach, and depending upon one's philosophical or theoretical stance, an inquiry approach might again be labeled differently. For instance, you might identify your inquiry as feminist, indigenous, Marxist, or critical, but you also may be conducting ethnography, action research, or case study. As a result, there is no universally accepted list of research approaches, which can be frustrating. However, this also means that there are many options, and you can work with the combination that best suits you and your upcoming research. This ambiguity is what allows you to create a design that is tailored to you and your work. The following sections will provide a brief overview of qualitative and quantitative methods and how and when they might be used.

Qualitative Research

Despite the limitations of trying to categorize the many types of qualitative inquiry approaches, Marshall and Rossman's (2011)[2] descriptions of four major research genres (see below) are a useful starting point for narrowing down choices when designing Critical Praxis Research.[3] Rather than organize methodologies into procedural categories, Marshall and Rossman's categories reflect the general focus of the research, and then within those categories, the authors identify common methodologies and data collection techniques. Are you interested in studying "society and culture," "individual lived experience," "language and communication," or are you interested in "critical and emerging" studies? Once you decide which of these genres fits best with the type of work you wish to do, you can then further explore that genre and its methods that are best suited for investigation of that type in order to find the specific inquiry approaches that are right for you (Table 7.1).

In addition to the above-mentioned genres and their coordinating methodologies and methods, there are numerous types of research that do not easily fit into any of the above categories. History, life history, historiography, policy research, literary

Table 7.1 Marshall and Rossman's (2011) four major qualitative genres

Genre	Description
(1) Society & Culture (ethnographic approaches)	The researcher is interested in examining in-depth practices, interactions, and rituals which comprise the cultures or daily happenings of various groups of people (e.g., communities, workplaces, schools, and organizations) through prolonged engagement with those groups. *Methodologies include*: *case study, ethnography, auto/ethnography, critical ethnography, performance ethnography, public ethnography, and Internet ethnography* (some of these also fall under genre 4). *Common methods*: observations/participant observations, interviews, surveys, and artifact/document analysis.

Table 7.1 (continued)

Genre	Description
(2) Individual Lived Experience (phenomenological approaches)	The researcher seeks to illuminate the ways in which people make meaning of events and experiences in their lives. The goal of phenomenology is to find an essence of experience that is common to multiple participants who share similar life experiences; typically, the focus is on processes such as being, knowing, and feeling, etc. (see van Manen, 1990 for more). *Common method*s: in-depth interviews, observation, narrative, fiction and artistic renderings.
(3) Language & Communication (sociolinguistic approaches)	The researcher is interested in spoken and written discourse. Similar to ethnography and phenomenology, the focus is on participants' meaning-making. *Methodologies include: discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis,* and *microethnography*. *Common methods*: interview, observation, and artifact/document analysis.
(4) Critical & Emerging	The researcher critiques traditional methodological approaches, working under the premise that all research is political and social life is inscribed with power dynamics that create advantages for some groups at the expense of other groups. *Methodologies include*: *narrative research, action or participatory action research, cultural studies, bricolage*, *Internet ethnography*, *feminist approaches, critical race theory and analysis, queer theory and analysis, postcolonial approaches, indigenousmethodologies and more*. *Common methods*: all of the data sources identified in the above categories and more. Everything is a potential source of data.

analysis, and auto/biography (among others) are all qualitative research techniques that might be useful for educational research but may fall within several or none of the above categories. For instance, depending upon the approach the researcher takes, life history could fall under categories 1, 2, or 3 whereas, literary analysis might not fit into any of those categories. For this reason, it is important to listen to your instincts as a scholar-practitioner. If your self-examination and research design do not easily lead you into one of the above genres, you may need to search outside these categories and perhaps outside the discipline of education to find the methodology that is better suited for your needs.

Qualitative Data Sources

Within any of the identified methodologies above, there are countless sources of data for making sense of the world. However, certain data collection techniques are more commonly used by qualitative researchers than others. For example, interviews, observations, surveys/questionnaires, and artifacts/documents are usually found in a researcher's tool kit. As indicated above, different inquiry approaches rely more or less on different data sources, but many of the approaches overlap in the

sources they use. As a means of easily recognizing the function and purpose of different qualitative data sources, Creswell (2007) organizes data sources into four basic categories:

- *observation*: researcher gathers field notes through observation or participant observation. He/she may observe as an insider (directly involved in the activity) or as an outsider (removed from the activity), or he/she may move from the inside to the outside (or vice versa) to provide variation in perspective.
- *interview*: researcher conducts one-on-one or group interviews (or focus groups) that may be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured. Interviews may be recorded using audio or video recorders or by taking notes.
- *documents/artifacts*: researcher journal, participant journals, letters, memos, artwork, poetry, records, archival material, photographs or video (taken by the researcher or participants), charts, notes, etc.
- *audio/visual:* physical evidence, video/film, music or sounds, electronic messages (voicemail, email, text, instant messages, etc.), objects or possessions.

Cresswell's categorization is helpful for grasping basic types of data sources. However, it is important to also be open to existing and potential sources of information that cannot easily find their way onto this list, such as some of the more emergent and collaborative sources of information that are developed in Web 2.0 spaces like wikis or MOOs.[4] Also left out are non-traditional methods that straddle more than one category; a digital story, for instance, can simultaneously be regarded as audio/visual, document/artifact, and interview. Finally, I would argue that depending upon how they are used, data sources placed within one category above might fit into multiple categories. For example, email is categorized under audio/visual, but depending upon the content or how it is used in the research, it might also be considered an interview or document/artifact.

Quantitative Research

In critical communities, quantitative methods have gotten a bad reputation because of their connection to positivism. Admittedly, even in Chapter 3 of this text, quantitative methods were not presented in an inviting light especially because of the ways in which history illustrates the abuses of positivistic research, of which quantitative research is often an exemplar. This does not mean, however, that we should disregard quantitative methods altogether. In fact, numerous researchers who have crafted critical works have used both quantitative and qualitative data in their research (see for example, Gándara & Contreras 2009 and Valenzuela, 1999 among others). There is much we can learn by conducting quantitative research or mixed methods research (research that is a combination of both quantitative and qualitative). In my own work, I tend to gravitate toward qualitative and critical methods, but the reality is that there are many people (especially in influential positions) who subscribe to the National Research Council's (2002) definition of "scientific research in education,"

and if we wish to reach this particular audience, a quantitative or mixed methods design might be what speaks most loudly to them. While reaching this particular audience is not necessarily a priority for Critical Praxis Researchers who are interested in better understanding themselves and their students in order to improve teaching and learning, we still must consider what it is that we hope to accomplish with our work in order to decide on which methods are most appropriate for us. For example, is your goal right now to understand the culture of a classroom in order to make immediate change? If so, a quantitative study will likely not allow you to achieve this goal because it will only provide you with a numerical "snapshot" of relationships between variables in the classroom. Is your goal to send a message to administration or policy-makers about the efficacy of a particular program for a large group of students? If so, ethnography will likely not be the best methodology because this will provide narrative description, but it will not illustrate numerical patterns of relationships between variables across a large group of students. As we consider what we hope to accomplish, it may or may not turn out that quantitative or qualitative methods are best suited for our questions and/or our purpose in the moment. In the paragraphs that follow, I will provide a brief overview of quantitative methods. However, because CPR has emerged from traditions that lean more heavily toward qualitative research, this discussion of quantitative methods is by no means comprehensive. Those interested in quantitative methods should seek out a text specifically about quantitative research in education or social science to supplement this text.

To know whether quantitative methods are what we need, we have to know what it is that they can and can't do. As Hoy (2010)[5] explains, "Quantitative researchers are concerned with the development and testing of hypotheses, generating models and theories that explain behavior, and generalizing their results across many samples" (p. xi). In other words, quantitative research can't explain why phenomena occur, but rather, it can illustrate the presence and frequency of a phenomenon and provide patterns of relationships about which the researcher can then develop a theory. Ideally, that theory can then be generalized to a larger population than the one being studied. It is important here, especially as we think about quantitative research as it relates to Critical Praxis Research, that we remember "no theory (explanation) is ever taken as final because a better one may be devised at any time as new data become available" (Hoy, 2010, p. 5). The results we get from quantitative research *are not* undeniable truths, but *are* indications of broad trends that warrant further examination and explanation. For instance, a quantitative study may illustrate that there is a link between parents' education level and student achievement; however, this does not explain why that link exists or what this means to the parents or students in question. It also does not explain outliers that are not included in the data set, such as high-achieving students whose parents have not attained high levels of education. While a quantitative pattern cannot tell us the reasons for a revealed relationship, if there is a link between parents' education level and students' achievement for a large segment of the population, this is important information for educators and policy makers to know because it indicates an issue

in education. What that underlying issue is remains open for debate, but this information can serve as a catalyst for further research and for opening up conversations about how to improve education.

Types of Quantitative Research

While all quantitative research involves using numerical values and statistics to identify patterns and relationships between variables, there are several types of quantitative research. Most commonly, people think of *experimental* designs in which the researcher designs an experiment to test the efficacy of some type of intervention (e.g., a lesson, activity or teaching style). In quantitative research, experimental designs are considered ideal because if all variables can be controlled then the researcher can determine if the independent variable is indeed what caused a particular effect. The ideal experiment would involve randomly selecting a group of students that is representational of the population as a whole, randomly assigning those students to an experimental or control group, giving one group an intervention (e.g., activity) while withholding the intervention from the second group, measuring the effects on both groups, and then comparing the data to see if the intervention had some notable impact on the experimental group (e.g., achievement gains).

In educational research, however, experimental designs are not feasible for many reasons. First, there are ethical considerations to take into account—is it fair to give one group of children a particular learning experience that could be beneficial while withholding it from another group? Will parents allow researchers (regardless of their intentions) to experiment on their children? Second, experimental designs are based on the experimental model of natural sciences in which theories are tested in laboratories. Experiments are not meant to be conducted in the natural world or in an actual classroom setting because there are too many external variables that the researcher cannot control. Yet, since the classroom is the natural setting where teaching and learning occur, studying an intervention in a different setting (i.e., a lab) is not a true representation of what the intervention would actually look like in a real classroom. Furthermore, conducting an intervention experiment with people is quite different from mixing different quantities of chemicals or testing physical properties of various objects. While individuals may display common traits, each person is unique, and there is no way to guarantee that two people will experience an intervention in the same way.

As such, most quantitative research in education that seeks to identify effects of interventions cannot be considered experimental. Rather, it is *quasi-experimental*, meaning that the researcher might measure the impact of a particular intervention by comparing similar classrooms when matched for particular characteristics (e.g., type of school, student demographics, etc.), giving one class the intervention and withholding it from the other, and measuring (to the best one can) the impact of the intervention. One of the major critiques of this is that there could be many confounding variables that might skew the data so that we might never be sure that the intervention is indeed what created an impact on learning. However, if there are significant achievement gains (or losses), then as researchers, we are compelled to

consider that *something* is indeed happening, and it may be the result of this intervention or it may be the result of something else. Of course, this will warrant further investigation because the results indicate a relationship between variables that may or may not be causally related.

Another common type of quantitative research is *descriptive* research. We often see this in research that uses surveys or preexisting data sets such as national or regional achievement data. By conducting various types of statistical analyses, researchers can provide descriptions of groups and relationships between variables and group characteristics. The results of descriptive research are very commonly seen in conversations about policy (about education or otherwise). For example, in conversations about the achievement gap, the public is often presented with descriptive data that illustrate the disparity in achievement gains on standardized exams between White and minority students and economically privileged and lower-income students. Descriptive data provide a numerical picture of a situation without alluding to any cause. This type of data is often used as a backdrop that provides impetus for further investigation and action.

Mixed Methods and Bricolage

It is important to point out that while many researchers choose to adhere to one type of methodology (quantitative or qualitative) and one tradition within that methodology (i.e., ethnography, quasi-experimental, etc.), many researchers also choose to blend their quantitative and qualitative research approaches and conduct mixed methods research. This is distinguishable from bricolage in that, according to Kincheloe and Berry (2004), bricolage is improvisational and concerned with blurring boundaries between research genres and theoretical lenses, allowing the research process and the data and analysis that emerge to lead the researcher to the next methodological or theoretical approach. In addition, whereas the entire design of mixed methods research is usually planned from the start and is often oriented toward reducing complexity, the bricoleur seeks to reveal and explore complexity. Because both involve utilizing multiple methods (and methodologies), I present a brief discussion of each in this section. However, it should be noted that these approaches are vastly different from each other and both are rather complex. As with more traditional quantitative and qualitative approaches, if either of these approaches is of interest to you, I recommend that you seek out a more advanced text that details the approach you wish to use. Two good places to start are Creswell and Clark (2007) for mixed methods, and Kincheloe and Berry (2004) for bricolage.

Mixed Methods: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Mixed methods research is a term used to describe inquiry approaches that utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods. Advocates of mixed methods contend that by utilizing both approaches together, researchers can overcome the limitations of the other two approaches by drawing from both traditions' strengths. As Creswell

and Clark (2007)[6] explain, however, using mixed methods does not mean simply augmenting a quantitative survey with a few open-ended qualitative questions. Nor does it mean simply providing some descriptive quantitative data to support in-depth qualitative research. Rather, the two approaches must be woven together into the design so that the qualitative and quantitative data can be looked at together as the researcher crafts a detailed picture of what is going on in the phenomenon in question. The goal is to illustrate what these data taken together can reveal that would otherwise have remained hidden if the data were looked at separately. For example, as noted above, quantitative data and analyses can reveal relationships, but they cannot explain what causes the relationships or how people experience a phenomenon in question. Whereas qualitative research may enable the researcher to explore lived experience in-depth, it cannot necessarily account for the frequency of a phenomenon across a population, nor illustrate relationships between groups and phenomena in a manner that is generalizable. In these instances, a researcher might find that mixed methods is the best way to approach his or her topic. Qualitative research can provide rich descriptions of peoples' experiences; while quantitative research can reveal relationships between variables across a broad population.

Bricolage: Multiple Methods and Theories for Revealing Complexity

Bricolage is newly recognized as its own unique research genre. To a great degree, the philosophical underpinnings of Critical Praxis Research have been derived from the philosophical teachings of proponents of the bricolage (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Kincheloe & Berry 2004; Kincheloe 2001). However, while I have used the term loosely throughout this text to convey that a Critical Praxis Researcher is someone who is able to be flexible and improvisational, using the best methods available for the task at hand, bricolage as a methodology is actually much more developed than that. Kincheloe (2001) credits Yvonna Lincoln and Norman Denzin for having developed bricolage over the past 20 years as a unique methodological approach based on Claude Levi-Strauss's conceptualization of bricolage in 1966 in *The Savage Mind*. Bricolage is distinguishable from mixed methods because, generally speaking, mixed methods are simply a blending of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. In contrast, the bricoleur not only uses various research methods, but she also draws from various academic disciplines in order to continually shift her analytical lenses and deepen the sophistication of her understanding of the research object. Rather than seeking to remedy the limitations of a particular data collection strategy, bricolage is used in an interdisciplinary way to remedy the limitations of monolithic views of the world and their corresponding discursive structures, which necessarily constrain one's ability to make sense of the world.

Depending upon how your design unfolds, you may find yourself needing to take a bricolage approach (see Kincheloe & Berry 2004), where you spiral in and out of different methodologies and theoretical frameworks. For instance, you might begin by using a socio-cultural approach but find that you need to include psychoanalysis or Foucauldian genealogy. Berry (in Kincheloe & Berry 2004) explains that the

research object can be thought of as situated in the center of many different methods and theories. After the bricoleur has explored her topic within one method or discipline, she thinks about what she has learned, and especially the limitations of what she has learned. This leads to new questions that require the bricoleur to utilize the lenses of different disciplines and/or methods. As Berry explains, the bricoleur's journey begins in the center and makes looping paths into the surrounding methods and theories, then back to the center, and out again into another looping direction. She illustrates this by using the visual metaphor of a butterfly, wherein the object is the body and the theories and methods are its wings. With each pass outward and inward, the researcher's understanding of the central object deepens.

Choosing the Best Path: Framing a Question

While all methods will help us to develop new understandings about the world, none of these methods, quantitative, qualitative, mixed, or bricolage will allow a researcher to know final truths about a phenomenon. Take for example the actual learning experience of a child: because every method is a representation of the child's experience which has been translated through a particular medium and then translated again when interpreted by the researcher, the actual experience of that child can never truly be understood (Kincheloe & McLaren 2002). Each method provides the researcher with clues about how the student is learning and who s/he is as a learner, but every technique will yield only a partial view of the experience of that learner. Like a mosaic, even when the data are looked at together as a whole, there will still be fractures and inconsistencies in the picture the researcher creates from the data, and like a kaleidoscope, the image another researcher might see in the data could be different depending upon the viewer's changing lenses. Accordingly, it is impossible to find *the* method in research. It is easy for me to say that you must select the best methods you can for what you wish to accomplish or understand, but this is no easy task because the possibilities are seemingly endless. Herein lies the importance of the research question. From Roth's (2007) perspective, the first step in the right direction is the development of a well-framed question from which the right methods will emerge naturally. This means making a decision about where and how we want to focus our gaze.

Maxwell (2005) further explains that a researcher's early provisional questions help to frame the study because the research questions are "the one component [of the study] that links to all other components of the design" (p. 65). However, as we delve into the literature about qualitative methods, we will also find a conundrum—the researcher needs a question to get started, but there is an expectation that the research questions will change because the researcher cannot truly anticipate what s/he will find when s/he begins collecting and analyzing data. Most qualitative methods texts caution that once you are in the field conducting your research, you will likely discover that the preconceived notions you held about your research focus are not adequate for helping you to make sense of what you see. Consequently, your

questions may be inadequate as well. This happens because prior to entering the field, we can only assume from our prior experiences what we will find. Chances are, our prior frames of reference will not work in a new setting with a new experience because they did not emerge from that context and that experience. This is even likely to happen to a teacher or administrator who works in the field every day and now seeks to research her own work place.

As you begin to collect and analyze your data, you will be able to take a step back from your everyday experiences, which will enable you to see things that were hidden from you before. This dual inside/outside (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1993) perspective will allow you to ask questions that might not have seemed important in your day-to-day life as an insider or that might otherwise be obscured from the outsider perspective of a researcher. In other words, the more knowledge we gain about our topics, the more our questions will evolve, sometimes to the point where they no longer resemble where we started in the first place. And yet, we still need to start somewhere. To remedy this conundrum Marshall and Rossman (2011) advise that "research questions should be general enough to permit exploration but focused enough to delimit the study" (p. 73). Similarly, Creswell (2007) suggests devising a broad overarching question and then creating sub-questions that are more focused as your research unfolds. Research questions can be theoretical, population specific, or site specific (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), but in qualitative studies, they all should be "open-ended, evolving, and non-directional" (Creswell, 2007). Hatch (2002) explains that "qualitative research questions will look different depending on the paradigm" a researcher aligns with; however, none will be "based on assessing the effects of factors, variables, causes or determinants" (p. 42). Hatch (2002, pp. 41–42) provides the following as examples:

- What do members of this group know that allows them to operate within their culture?
- What are high school teachers' perspectives on zero tolerance policies?
- What is the nature of interactions between children with and without disabilities in this school?

As indicated in the above questions, research questions can be quite broad (as in the first example), or they can be fairly focused (as in the third example), but they are able to limit your gaze enough to get your started, while giving you enough leeway to explore and seek out the unanticipated.

In critical and emerging research genres, the questions will be open-ended as the ones above, but they might take a slightly different angle. For instance, Evans-Winters (2005) explains that most researchers ask "the basic 'Who, what, when, where and why?' questions in educational research studies" (p. 4). However, from a critical perspective, these types of questions can sometimes be "deficiency-oriented," which goes against the beliefs of critical researchers who seek to do research that does not position participants as somehow "lacking" or "broken." To avoid a deficit stance, Evans-Winters proposes moving beyond deficits by asking "process questions" in which the researcher inquires about the everyday processes of

peoples' lived experiences. For instance, in her ethnographic work *Teaching Black Girls*, s/he uses the following questions that are sensitive to and inclusive of the social experiences of African-American female students:

(a) What are the coping strategies of the most resilient students?
(b) What factors contribute to students staying in school?
(c) When are students at their most resilient?
(d) What are the historical, economic, and political conditions in which the students are experiencing schooling?
(e) How do African American female students cope, resist, or buffer adversity?
(f) How can educators apply these findings to the urban classroom (pp. 4–5)?

While I have explained some basic ideas about research questions here, it is important to note that framing a question is more relevant to those interested in doing qualitative, bricolage, or mixed methods research. Quantitative researchers don't commonly frame their work with questions, rather they develop hypotheses, which they aim to prove or disprove through statistical analyses. However, even if you choose to conduct a quantitative study, having a question to focus your thinking is not necessarily a bad thing, and furthermore, the quantitative work you may choose to do now is likely only the beginning of your investigations into the world of education. The questions you develop may lead you to additional investigations and questions later that are, perhaps, better suited for qualitative methods.

Being and Becoming in the Field

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed,* Freire (2000) explains that critical pedagogy in the classroom will be conscientizing for both the student and the teacher. A dialogical practice in which the teacher is receptive to new ideas and reflective of his/her own ways of knowing and being will necessarily be as transformative for the practitioner as it is for his/her students. This is the essence of praxis. By engaging with others and being open to the lessons of the world, the Critical Praxis Researcher will also be subject to change. This notion of be(com)ing is rarely mentioned in texts about research methods and is largely ignored in discussions about research design, but it is fundamental to what it means to design and conduct emancipatory research. There is nothing that can truly prepare us for our research, but a broad, deep, and evolving knowledge base coupled with Self|Other awareness will help us to make necessary choices in the moment—just as we are prone to do in the classroom.

As we devise our plans for entering into data collection, it is important to note that this is not a linear or clear-cut process. Rather like an artistic expression research design involves designing and redesigning until the design "feels" right. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) describe the research design process as similar to quilting, creating

mosaics, painting, and assembling collages. Some researchers may approach their craft like a quilt or mosaic by starting with a detailed pattern and following it to the end. For others, research may evolve in an impressionistic and ad hoc fashion similar to assembling a collage or "tinkering" with abstract art. Thus, I can lay these concepts out here for my readers to consider, but how we actually experience and engage in the research and design process will vary because Critical Praxis Research like art is very much a reflection and expression of Self in the world. Regardless of whether you prefer working with patterns, tinkering, or perhaps a combination of both, drawing from your strengths as a practitioner and supplementing these strengths with your emerging knowledge as a researcher will help you to develop strategies to remain true to yourself while be(com)ing a Critical Praxis Researcher who is committed to research that is conscientizing and reflects who you are and who you wish to be in connection to/with others in the world.

Questions for Discussion

1. Kress points out that qualitative and quantitative methods are not mutually exclusive. Describe any research you've read or experienced in which you found this to be (or not to be) the case.
2. Most beginning researchers lean toward a qualitative or quantitative approach. Toward which approach do you lean? Why do you think you have this preference? What do you hope this approach will offer you, your research, and your research subjects?
3. What types of assessments do you favor in your teaching practice? Why? What underlying assumptions do they reveal about your beliefs about learning, environment, and students? Similarly, what assumptions underlie your preference for particular research methods? Where do you see similarities between your assessment practice and your future research methods?
4. Given the chart of the four qualitative genres of research, describe which genre or genres appeal to you. Why? About which methods are you curious?
5. As Kress describes them, what are the limitations of qualitative research? Do you agree or disagree?
6. What is the difference between mixed methods research and bricolage? Does either of these approaches appeal to you? Why or why not?

Writing for Insight

1. Kress writes that our questions must be open-ended; specific enough to help us begin our research, but broad enough to welcome improvisation and new discovery. Brainstorm a list of education-related questions that are of interest to you. Or, if you have a research already in mind, brainstorm a list of questions that might apply to your interest. Which of these seems to fit Kress' criteria of openness?

2. Kress also suggests writing process-oriented questions. Read again an example of these from Evans-Winters's work. Choose one of your brainstorm questions (from above) and work to create a series of process questions related to that topic or interest.

Notes

1. For an extensive discussion about research involving the Internet see Markham and Baym (2009).
2. Building on Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), Marshall and Rossman (2011) provide a very helpful breakdown of qualitative research methodologies. While this is no means an exhaustive list of methodologies, it is a helpful resource for the beginning researcher.
3. For another example of how qualitative methodologies and methods have been categorized, see Creswell and Clark (2007) who break down methodologies by "worldviews" (postpositivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory, and pragmatic) and "worldview elements" (ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology and rhetoric).
4. Web 2.0 generally refers to online spaces in which content is co-created by users. A wiki is an online information source (see Wikipedia.com) to which multiple users can contribute content and make edits. A MOO is a text-based virtual online community that users to can co-create. Unlike traditional websites, which only allows visitors to access knowledge posted by others, wikis, MOOs and other Web 2.0 spaces allow users to contribute to the developing knowledge base of all who utilize these spaces.
5. For a good introduction to quantitative methods in education, see Hoy (2010). This text is designed to help its readers determine if quantitative methods are a good fit for their projects. If you choose quantitative research as your inquiry approach, more advanced texts will be useful for refining your work and devising specific data collection and analysis procedures.
6. Creswell and Clark's (2007) text *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* provides a comprehensive look at mixed methods as a particular type of research genre (not simply a blending of quantitative and qualitative) and can serve as a guide for the beginning researchers interested in using mixed methods.

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Chapter 8
From Knowledge Discovery to Understanding

September 25, 2010, Daily Horoscope

Leo: You are driven when it comes to fulfilling your ambitions and carving out a career. There is no lack of energy or drive here and nothing can stand in your way. Everything is poured into making the right moves and the correct decisions. That is why others will find you in the workplace today, instead of in your home. You are outgoing, enthusiastic and always diplomatic–everybody's favorite. You have a natural instinct for making the correct move at the right time. Politics or some public career seems inevitable. A career in psychology or areas of the mind and self are vulnerable and sensitive. You not only like change and transforming experiences, you pursue them for their own sake. Consider real flowers for the dinner table tonight.[1]

Horoscopes, runes, tea leaves, tarot cards, palm-reading, numerology—people of all cultural traditions throughout history have devised various systems of interpreting the world to make sense of where they are, where they have been, and where they are going. As I read my horoscope, immediately I begin to recognize a similarity to my life. Presently, I am an assistant professor, working my way toward tenure and toward building a scholarly reputation. I am writing this chapter on a Saturday morning when many people are probably doing non-work tasks or maybe even still sleeping. This morning is just one more in a long string of workdays, some lasting 12 h or more without any complete days off. Still, I love what I do and the people I work with, so most of the time I don't mind that I work on a daily basis. I also see myself as outgoing and enthusiastic. My work is clearly political and done in a public institution. I work with "areas of the mind," and I seek out and long for self and social transformation. As I read the passage above, indeed, I see myself reflected,

[1] There are numerous texts on quantitative research, but I suggest Salkind for beginning researchers because of its accessible style. If you are interested in using quantitative methods, Vogt's (2005) *Dictionary of statistics and methodology: A nontechnical guide for the social sciences,* and Huck's (2004) *Reading statistics and research* might also be helpful for you as you move forward.

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not precisely, but well enough to be recognizable, like a figure in an impressionist's painting.

However, I also know that this horoscope was not written as a description of my reality. I see myself in the above description because I am reading it with my lived experiences at this moment in time in mind. By interpreting through my own lenses, I have constructed the horoscope as a reflection of my reality, just as someone with experiences quite different from my own might also do the same. Conversely, another person might see nothing of herself in that description. In fact, 10 years from now, I might see nothing of myself reflected in that description either. In some ways, being a researcher in the midst of data analysis is much like gazing at horoscopes, runes, or tarot cards—interpreting the information gleaned from our data sources will enable us to construct a snapshot of present state and guidance for future directions. Just as the daily horoscope in the newspaper will mean something different to us tomorrow, such is also the case with our data. As Kincheloe (2003), explains, "Postmodern research is always tentative. It is nothing more than a temporary perspective on a particular segment of the educational world, concerned with the humble process of anticipation" (p. 152). In a Critical Praxis Research framework, data analysis and interpretation can be daunting because the only thing that is certain is that *nothing* is certain. The world is always changing. *We* are always changing. Therefore our interpretations of our data will also continue to change over time. We might collect and analyze our data today and have one interpretation, but a year from now that interpretation may change as we have gained new frames of reference.

Like the other processes described in this text, data analysis, interpretation, research quality, and representation need to be connected to all other aspects of the research and must also reflect the ways in which we are comfortable making sense of and telling about our data. As such, every researcher will take at least a slightly different approach to analysis, interpretation, and writing, which is contingent upon his/her research philosophy, questions, and methods. As in the previous chapter, here I will also point you to other resources that provide more detailed discussions of what data analysis, interpretation, and representation actually look like; although in general, I will steer clear of "how-to" references because I do not believe there is one proper way to organize, analyze, interpret, and share your data and findings. Rather, I seek to expose you to ways of thinking about analysis, interpretation/writing, and research quality so you will be better equipped to tailor these processes to suit your needs and dispositions as a researcher who is coming to understand the social world you are describing in your research. As a final disclaimer, I do not address quantitative data analysis in this chapter. Quantitative analyses must be built into the research design from the beginning because there are specific and precise techniques that must be used which will correspond with the overall design of the research. In contrast, in qualitative research, there is much more latitude for exploration, improvisation, and choice, which are all fundamental features of Critical Praxis Research. If your topic of interest seems suited for quantitative research, I suggest supplementing this text by purchasing a quantitative methods text such as Salkind's (2009) *Statistics for People (Who Think) They Hate*

Statistics[1] in order to provide you with the technical grounding you will need to get started with your research.

Understanding What You Know: Analysis and Interpretation

According to Bowker and Star (2000), "To classify is human. . . We all spend large parts of our days doing classification work, often tacitly, and we make up and use a range of ad hoc classifications to do so. We sort dirty dishes from clean, white laundry from colorfast, important email to be answered from e-junk" (pp. 1–2). In this regard, data analysis is essentially the process of working through the sources of information we have gathered in order to identify patterns and make sense of the world around us. As LeCompte and Schensul (1999) explain, "the goal of analysis is to create less data, not more" (p. 3), as researchers take masses of information culled from social life and break them down into manageable pieces that can then be described and interpreted. Like all parts of the research act, our data analysis is wrought by our own subjectivities. This is evident in the ways we select the pieces of information we find salient to our analyses as well as in our development of coding categories and our subsequent written interpretations.

As we manage our data, we are always both working within and expanding upon our prior knowledge; we are trying to make sense of the world from *within* the world (Kincheloe, 2003). Such is the case whether we have preset coding categories that are built into our research design from the start or if we employ an emergent style of coding where we develop an organic system based upon reading and rereading the data and looking for patterns. As Kincheloe (2003) explains, "[m]eaning derived from research data or frames of reference cannot help but reflect the ideology and social contexts which surround them" (p. 147). Consequently, all classification systems will reflect "our perception [which] is constructed through linguistic codes, cultural signs, and embedded ideologies" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 152). In a sense, what we see is what our minds expect to see based on our previous experiences. This is similar to interpreting a horoscope. Rather than data analysis being a process of discovering knowledge that exists somewhere beyond the self, it is more a process of organizing and coming to understand that which we already know (Roth, 2005).

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) explain the data analysis process as "systematically searching and arranging [your sources of information] to enable you to come up with findings" (p. 159). They distinguish analysis from interpretation, which they explain as "developing ideas about your findings and relating them to broader concerns and concepts" (ibid). Similarly, LeCompte and Schensul (1999) explain, "Interpreting, or giving meaning to, data involves figuring out what the crunched [organized and analyzed] data mean, or what they say about people, groups or programs" (p. 5). Yet, Roth (2005) and Marshall and Rossman (2011) also make the point that while the fundamental definitions of analysis and interpretation may differ, these things cannot truly be disentangled from each other. There is not actually a clear division

between these processes—researchers often begin analyzing even as they are still gathering information. In fact, Anderson, Herr, and Nihlin (1994) emphasize that the overlapping of these processes is necessary; "at various intervals you must stop gathering data and reflect on what you have thus far" (p. 155) because if you are gathering data over a long period of time, it is easy to lose sight of how the data relate (or not) to the focus of your research.

In thinking about research quality, this pre-analysis is actually advantageous because we can make sure that the data collection techniques we are using are yielding data that will help us toward answering our questions. Additionally, pre-analysis can also help us to ensure that our research questions are appropriate for what we are encountering in the field. Most researchers devise questions (at least very general ones) to help guide them through their fieldwork without having yet been in the field. This means that sometimes, initial research questions won't reflect what is actually happening and how our participants are experiencing the world.[2] In such cases, periodically reading observation notes or research journals can help us to see how we are "reading" the world around us and enable us to refine our questions to better focus our gaze. This will help us to make sure that we are documenting our changing constructions of the world, our evolving additional questions, as well as any subconscious assumptions we are making that might shape both our interactions with others and our subsequent interpretations of the data.

While we must be mindful of our ongoing analysis throughout the research process, it is also important to be clear about the more explicit analysis techniques we will employ once we have finished gathering our data.[3] For LeCompte and Schensul (1999) (writing about ethnographic research), data analysis falls under three types: (1) in-the-field analyses[4]; (2) analyses immediately following fieldwork (preferably while still in the field); (3) analyses far removed from the study. Marshall and Rossman (2011), however, describe qualitative data analysis techniques as falling along a continuum from prefigured, quasi-statistical analyses (the researcher has predetermined and chosen to adhere to strict quantitative analysis procedures), to emergent and organic techniques in which the researcher immerses herself and seeks to crystallize (Richardson, 1997) her understanding about the data holistically. Whichever analysis techniques you use, however, should be connected to the overarching philosophy around which your research has been designed. For instance, you will not be conducting quasi-statistical analyses if your study is an ethnography; nor will you attempt to create rich ethnographic descriptions from survey data because these two approaches to research are fundamentally different in philosophy and require different types of analyses.

While different researchers will identify different variations of how to go about this, most identify common activities that researchers engage in during the analysis and interpretation process. Marshall and Rossman (2011), for instance, identify seven phases of analysis which include: (1) organizing the data, (2) immersing yourself in the data, (3) generating categories and themes within the data, (4) coding the data according to themes, (5) creating analytic memos about the data (i.e., beginning your interpretation), (6) developing alternative interpretations (i.e., identifying other ways this phenomenon might be understood), and (7) writing your report or

action plan based on what you have learned. On the other hand, LeCompte and Schensul (1999) identify three analysis phases: (1) inscription (the act of making mental notes); (2) description (writing things down and describing them through notes or narratives); and (3) transcription (copying verbatim what people say and do), which is ultimately followed by writing the research findings. In all cases, the researcher's goal is to take the masses of information she has collected and condense them into a manageable collection that enables the researcher to interpret and then re-present to others the phenomenon s/he is studying.

Finally, some authors (e.g. Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) caution that for purposes of ease and manageability, the beginning researcher should try to postpone analysis and coding until after data collection has concluded, and then postpone interpretation until after analysis and coding has concluded. However, I don't believe that this is truly possible. As Kincheloe (2003) explains, "Even as data are being collected they are being subject to critical analysis" (p. 157). As people who are engaged in the world, we will automatically analyze, code, and interpret what we are seeing (whether intentionally or not) in order to simply cope with and respond to the world around us. This is inevitable. Rather than attempt to repress these tendencies, I encourage you to recognize that these processes will indeed begin as soon as you start your research; thus, you will need to be cognizant of them in order to open them up to examination alongside your data. This doesn't mean that as researchers we should begin jumping to conclusions as soon as we enter the field, but rather that we should be aware of our own human tendencies toward analysis, categorization, and interpretation in order to keep track of and develop our thinking. In fact, there is a hidden danger in trying to ignore and curb our developing understandings because they may insidiously guide and limit our ways of seeing and being in the field if we do not purposefully surface, examine, and even challenge them. As a Critical Praxis Researcher, this last piece is crucial because personal growth is a desirable research outcome. Curbing our natural tendencies may stunt this growth process by disallowing necessary critical reflection while we are engaging in the research process. Consequently, unlike some of the above researchers who separate analysis and interpretation into discrete phases, I prefer to think of these processes as an interrelated system of key practices that are fluidly enacted throughout the research process from beginning to end. These key practices, which I explain in turn below, involve *Organizing/Immersing*, *Coding/Categorizing*, and *Interpreting/Writing*, and will necessarily overlap as we go through the entire research process.

Organizing and Immersing Ourselves in the Data

Most research methods and data analysis texts emphasize the importance of organizing data and developing a system of classification that allows the researcher to easily locate data for the purposes of interpretation and writing. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) refer to this process as "tidying up" (p. 37), which they explain is tied to the researcher's questions, purposes and individual preferences. Roth (2005) explicitly talks about systems of organization, even providing a detailed explanation about

how he utilizes an electronic filing system for all of his data. Other researchers (e.g., Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007) also indicate the value of hard copies of transcripts, artifacts, and field notes that can be physically manipulated and stored in folders or card catalogues. In addition, there are numerous data analysis software programs that can help you organize, code, and analyze the information you collect (more on this below). How you decide to organize your data, however, is really a matter of what makes sense as it relates to your questions, analysis style, and personal preferences. For instance, some researchers may choose to organize data by date, others may choose to organize by type of data, still others may choose to organize based on what data fits what question or predesigned coding category. However you choose to organize your data is up to you, but this is an important first step in being able to make sense of what you have without getting lost in the masses of information you have gathered.

Once you have organized your data into a workable system, it is important to familiarize yourself with the data and its contents by reading and re-reading your materials. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) refer to this as developing intimacy with your data, which is accomplished as you "take long, undisturbed periods and carefully read your data at least twice" and "begin developing a preliminary list of possible coding categories" (p. 185). By allowing yourself to be alone and undisturbed with your data for long periods of time, you will have the time and room to begin to see patterns without interruptions and distractions. Similar to reading an academic text, frequent interruptions may prevent understanding. In a sense, you have already initiated this process through the development of your system of organization; the next step then is to immerse yourself more intentionally and completely with the purpose of seeking out patterns. Anderson et al. (1994) describe this process as "Wander[ing] through your data, making notes of items that strike you" (p. 157). At this point, you do not need to firmly categorize anything, but rather, just think about what the data are saying to you as you read through them, and make notes to yourself about what you are thinking during this process (more on the importance of note-taking and writing below).

It may take several passes through the data to begin to recognize patterns in the things that people say and do. But, the more you read and take notes, the more you will begin to recognize familiarity in participants' discourse and actions, as well as, your own meaning-making that is developing as you read. By this time, you probably will have already recognized some of the codes you will use. They may have occurred to you either when you were in the field or as you were organizing the data; however, you should still remain open to and on the lookout for additional codes that might work in tandem with or even contradict or replace the ones you may have already identified. As a final note about organization and immersion, LeCompte and Schensul (1999) and Bogdan and Biklen (2007) wisely advise researchers to keep a duplicate set of raw data in a separate and safe location in the event that one set of data is damaged or lost. You may even consider keeping multiples from different phases of your analysis; for instance, perhaps keep one set of data that is untouched, one that has preliminary notes and jottings, and one that is actually coded. This way, you can safeguard against your data being lost or damaged, but also, you will

be able to move back and forth through different stages of your thought processes during your analysis, which can help you to identify additional patterns and alternative interpretations that might not have been evident to you upon your first pass through the data.

Coding/Categorizing the Data[5]

As you begin gathering and organizing your data, you will want to remain on the lookout for possible codes that you will use to group and analyze your information. Codes can be thought of as "names or symbols used to stand for a group of similar items, ideas, or phenomena that the researcher has noticed in his or her data set" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 55). They are the researcher's shorthand way of indicating sections of data that illustrate, illuminate, or speak to the meanings people (researcher included) make about their social worlds. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) explain coding as, "organizing data in terms of a framework that [researchers] can use to support the results or conclusions they reach at the end of their study" (p. 45). Anderson, Herr and Nihlin (1994) explain that "[c]oding systems emerge from the data; consequently, the data become more manageable" (p. 157). However, codes don't just magically appear, nor do they simply exist somewhere like fossils awaiting excavation. Your codes come from *you*; they are drawn from your prior experiences and understandings, your theoretical and conceptual frames, and the literature you have read. In other words, your codes are *constructed* through your own lenses as you engage with and come to know others and the world around you.[6] For this reason, no text (regardless of its quality) can truly prepare you to code your data.

As Kincheloe (2003) explains, "Like reality itself, schools and classrooms are complex webs of interactions, codes and signifiers in which both teachers and students are interlaced. Just as postmodernism asserts that there is no single, privileged way to see the world, there is no one way of seeing the classroom, seeing intelligence, seeing teacher or pupil success" (p. 151). From this perspective, coding can be thought of less as a matter of finding codes and more as a process of *identifying* the terms that best describe your emerging understandings of the phenomenon you are investigating. To identify your codes, you will "search through your data [looking] for regularities and patterns as well as topics your data cover, and then you write down words or phrases to represent these topics or patterns" (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 173). Some authors (e.g., Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; LeCompte & Schensul, 1999; and especially Soldaña, 2009/2010) provide extensive guidance on types of codes and suggest techniques for coding your data. These are good starting points for helping you to orient your focus toward managing and sorting the information you have collected. However, only you can provide yourself with the actual codes you will need for analysis. No book will be able to provide you with premade codes. Rather, think back to your research questions, purpose, theoretical/contextual frames, and the literature you have read. Remind yourself of the ideas that you are

exploring, the major questions you have, who you are in relation to your participants, and how all of you are situated within the larger social world. Developing your codes could start with questions as simple as, "What do I think is going on here?" "Why might this be happening?" "What do my participants think about this?" "What do other researchers say about this?" "How might my theoretical frames lend insight into this?" and "What other explanations could there be for what is happening here?" Rather than answering these questions in phrases or long explanations use keywords. For example, depending upon the theoretical frames you use, you might have a code for "identity," or "social capital," or "agency." Other codes might be descriptors of types of activity or underlying meanings behind people's words or actions, for instance, "play," "conflict," "respect," "rules," "empathy," "desire." Your keywords should have some significant meaning in the context of what you are trying to understand about the phenomenon at hand.

Interpreting and Writing

As social actors navigating a complex and ever-changing world, people have a natural inclination toward interpretation. In fact, on a daily basis we are compelled to interpret various sources of information we encounter simply as we engage in the world around us; we must do so in order to adapt to our surroundings and survive. It is through the act of interpretation that we are able to appropriately interact with and respond to others and the world, whether that means improvising and changing our interactions in the moment, or retrospectively calculating a different means of action to apply to future situations. Consider for a moment the role of interpretation in your life as an educator—on a daily basis an educator must look at the information s/he has at his/her disposal, about his/her students, the curriculum, upcoming exams, etc., and make assessments about what topics can be accelerated through, what lessons must be revisited, which students might need extra help, and which might benefit from enrichment activities. This is just a quick and generic example of how information is analyzed, interpreted, and acted upon day-to-day in our lives, whether we realize it or not. Interpretation in the research process, then, can be seen as a manner of becoming more cognizant of how, when, and why we are forming our interpretations. In other words, as you have done throughout the Critical Praxis Research process, while forming your interpretations, continue to ask yourself, "What is going on here? Who and where am I? Who am I in dialogue with? Who am I in relation to those I am working with? Who are we as social actors and members of the larger society? What do I wish to tell others about this experience? Why is it important for others to know this? What will knowing this information help others to accomplish? How does what I am seeing in the field converge and diverge with my participants' perspectives, the literature, the theory, and my own prior knowledge? How does this add to my developing understandings of Self, Other, and the world?" Utilize your coded data to help you answer these types of questions.

As part of the process of interpretation, writing is important for documenting and refining our ideas. In nearly every research methods text I have encountered,

the authors have stressed the importance of writing for interpretation. Even in texts where writing is treated as a formal step (i.e., writing analytic memos, or writing up the research report) that is separate from the data collection and analysis process, the division between writing and the prior acts of analysis and interpretation are rather artificial. In fact, writing is an essential part of the entire research process, and it is not something that is done only after the data collection and analysis are completed. It is important that throughout the research process you keep a journal where you can jot down your thoughts, questions, wonderings, and the connections you are making. Sometimes, fleeting thoughts can lead us to important insights and interpretations later, but if we don't write them down, we may forget. As Marshall and Rossman (2011) state, "Writing notes, reflective memos, thoughts, and insights is invaluable for generating the unusual insights that move the analysis from the mundane and the obvious to the creative" (p. 213).

Writing also allows us to keep a running log of our changing ideas about the phenomenon we are studying. As we look back upon the thought processes we have documented during our research, we may see ideas that we can expand or elaborate on to develop our interpretations. Writing also allows us to keep an audit trail, which helps to ensure the quality of our research (more on research quality below). Finally, conducting our research can trigger intense emotions and lead to personal as well as intellectual growth if we let it. Documenting emotional responses and examining them later can help us to step back from who we are in the moment and see avenues for new ways of being. Writing our feelings, reactions, and triggered memories can provide us with ways of not only examining others, but also examining ourselves and our ways of knowing. If we do not document these experiences, however, we will lose the opportunity to see the "strangeness" in our own engagement with the world. If our goal as Critical Praxis Researchers is to spark a process of Self/Other/world transformation, keeping track of our own experiences and how we change and grow over time is essential. Thus, writing serves as both a vehicle for and evidence of this transformational process.[7]

While I do not regard the process of interpretation as separate from data collection and analysis, as with all parts of our research, it is wise to be clear about the influence of our standpoints and our intentions throughout our research. This is especially true during our interpretations because it is here in the outcomes of our work where our subjectivities will be most clearly imprinted upon our inquiries. Consequently, it is imperative that we go into the act of interpretation knowing that the ideas we "find" are not so much found as they are constructed. "What we designate as the facts is an act of interpretation" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 157), and it must be treated as such. By this I mean, we must be forthcoming about from where and how our interpretations emanate, intersect with, and even contradict our own experiences as socio-historical, gendered, cultured, raced, and classed persons. As we begin crafting our interpretations, we also must be vigilant about seeking out alternative ways of understanding and interpreting the phenomenon we are investigating, because surely our ways of understanding the world are not "truth;" rather, they are *our* truths which may be quite different from others' truths. As we work with our data, we must be explicit about when and how our interpretations are emerging,

and we must examine both the possibilities and limitations of our interpretations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Regarding Data Analysis Software

Many qualitative researchers find computer software to be extremely useful for organizing and sorting their data, while others choose to organize and analyze data in paper form because they find that computer software creates a distance between them and the data. Neither way is necessarily better than the other; they simply reflect differences in personal preference. Depending upon the size of your project (large or small) and your preferences (tactile or electronic data manipulation), you may opt for using software to help you. The options available are numerous, ranging from free to expensive. Generally, the more expensive the program, the more powerful are its capabilities. However, no software will analyze or interpret your data for you. I recommend that before purchasing software, you research what resources are available to you at your institution. Some universities and colleges, for instance, will have software available for free or at a minimal cost to students and faculty. If no software is available to you, perhaps consider experimenting with a free or inexpensive program or a trial version of a program before purchasing a costly software package. I suggest this because not all researchers like to use software. In fact, some researchers feel that software can be helpful, but it also can become an obstacle. In addition to possibly creating distance between the researcher and her data, some software programs are easier to use than others, so the amount of time you need to invest in learning the software might not make sense for you, especially if your project is small in scope. I do not mean to imply that you shouldn't use software, but rather that it is a good idea to figure out how well software will fit into your research style and your needs and what types of resources are available to you before entering into a costly software investment that may or may not be useful for your particular research project[8] and analysis preferences.

Research Quality

Regardless of the research genre you subscribe to, all genres incorporate methods for ensuring the quality of the research. Even though researchers from critical and emerging disciplines might hold very different views on what constitutes quality work than someone who aligns with more traditional research genres, quality is still important. As Lather (1991) explains in *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy with/in the Postmodern*, a failure to adhere to at least some kind of quality assurance criteria "will only decrease the legitimacy of the knowledge generated therein. . . if we do not develop such procedures, our theory-building will suffer from a failure to protect our work from our own passions and limitations" (pp. 68–69). However, "quality" will be assessed differently by different people because of their differing views of what "quality" means. For example, a critical ethnographer might ensure research quality by providing rich descriptions of the culture of a learning

environment and by utilizing Guba and Lincoln's (1989) authenticity criteria (more on this below); whereas, a quantitative study will utilize strict methodological procedures to measure the validity and reliability of the data collection techniques and statistical analysis of the data. Neither approach is better than the other, but each approach is better suited for determining the quality of a particular type of study. Just as with the methods we design, our quality control techniques will also be aligned with our philosophical beliefs about research.

Over the past 40 years, "goodness criteria" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) in social science and educational research have been debated at length by researchers of all types. In positivistic research (quantitative especially but also qualitative), quality is assured by instituting methodological safeguards that illustrate the degree to which a study's findings represent an accurate depiction of reality (Kincheloe, 2003). These criteria are commonly referred to by terms such as *validity (internal*, *external*, *face*, *construct)*, *reliability*, *replicability*, and *generalizability*, among others, and each of these techniques serves a particular function in ensuring the quality of a study. For instance, internal validity verifies the degree to which the researcher's "observations and measurements are true descriptions of a particular reality" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 168), while external validity is "the degree to which such descriptions can be accurately compared to other groups" (ibid). These measures of validity are ensured by attempting to limit the investigation to only relevant variables (independent and dependent) and the relationships between those variables, while eliminating confounding variables that might skew results. In quantitative and positivistic qualitative research, quality control is ensured through methodological precision, which ostensibly "reduces subjective influences and minimizes the ways in which information might be interpreted" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 161). Positivistic quality control or "verifiability is rational, [and] based on a mathematical set of assumptions" (ibid). This aligns with fundamental positivist beliefs; namely, that (1) there exists one true reality external to the person that is indeed discoverable, quantifiable, and measureable if proper methods are adhered to and bias is controlled, and (2) objectivity (i.e., bias control) is both possible and desirable.

Over the years, researchers from qualitative and postmodern genres have identified the limitations of utilizing positivistic verifiability for evaluating the goodness of research that does not align with the philosophical underpinnings of positivism. As Guba and Lincoln (1989) point out, as early as the 1970s there had been at least an initial attempt to develop alternative goodness criteria, but these criteria still remained parallel to traditional positivistic criteria. This meant that there remained positivist assumptions intrinsic to the criteria themselves. Consequently, the criteria were still prone to the same limitations inherent in the original positivistic criteria. Researchers who work within postmodern genres continue to question positivist and postpositivist quality criteria for several reasons. First, the internal logic of positivism provides at best an insufficient foundation for ensuring the quality of studies that are not designed with a positivist philosophy in mind. Second, judging non-positivist research with positivist criteria will surely deem any non-positivist research as having little or no value simply based on the fact that postmodern research can never be free of bias and cannot be considered generalizeable in a

positivistic sense. Postmodern research is context specific; it cannot be replicated precisely; and it cannot predict the same effect in another geo-temporal location. Third, postmodern research requires additional criteria to judge the quality of facets of the research that are deemed undesirable by positivists, but necessary by postmodernists. For instance, positivist criteria cannot capture the degree to which the research is transformative for the researcher and participants because in positivist research this is not a requirement; indeed this level of subjectivity is considered poor research in positivist logic.

Different criteria that are internally consistent with the logic and philosophies of postmodern traditions are required for evaluating the quality of research that has the expressed purpose(s) of revealing the complexity of reality, collaboratively sharing in the research process with participants, situating and making sense of a phenomenon in a specific context, and/or catalyzing action or transformation. Guba and Lincoln (1989) and Lather (1991, 2003) are just two examples of researchers who have discussed postmodern quality criteria at length and have offered alternatives to the traditional positivistic methods of quality assurance.[9] In *Fourth Generation Evaluation*,[10] Guba and Lincoln (1989) respond to the positivist/postmodern mismatch by offering instead five *authenticity criteria*, which include *fairness*, *ontological authenticity*, *educative authenticity*, *catalytic authenticity*, and *tactical authenticity*. These criteria were devised for the purpose of evaluating the *trustworthiness* of *constructivist* research; however, the five criteria are also useful for research that works closely with stakeholders and is intended to stimulate some kind of action. Taken together, these criteria can help the researcher to evaluate the worth of her research by addressing the extent to which research (a) is conducted with the input, concerns, and values of participants in mind; (b) participants' own understandings of their world have changed through their participation in the research; (c) participants' understandings of others has changed; (d) leads to some sort of decision-making or action; and (e) participants themselves feel empowered to act during the research process and beyond.

Similarly, Lather (2003) argues that in research that is openly ideological (Critical Praxis Research would fall into this classification), researchers can ensure the quality of their research by: extending the role of *triangulation* to include multiple methods, data sources, *and* theories; including *reflexive subjectivity* (i.e., evidence of how the researcher's prior assumptions have changed as a result of the research); adding new emphasis to *face validity* by soliciting participants' responses to analysis and conclusions via member-checking; and ensuring *catalytic validity* by providing evidence that the research has led to new insight and/or action on the part of participants. Both sets of criteria will have their advantages and disadvantages depending upon the particulars of your research design; although both are viable options for Critical Praxis Research. As a final point about research quality, Roth (2005) and Kincheloe (2005) respectively emphasize the importance of *radical doubt* and *critical ontology.* I mention these ideas because examining and critiquing one's own subjectivity is essential in CPR. Both of these concepts are meant to aid the researcher in scrutinizing his/her own interpretations, which are necessarily drawn from his/her own epistemology and ontology. In any criteria you devise,

you should also be sure to include these, because they address CPR's foundational notion of engaging Self in research.

Toward a Research of "Wholeness"

In closing this chapter, I would like to point out that the opening analogy of horoscope reading and similar types of mysticism are indeed similar to the processes of data analysis and interpretation, but only superficially so. While both emphasize subjectivity, Critical Praxis Research has much greater potential for leading toward conscientization, which in turn will help us see new avenues for knowing and being in the world. Unlike horoscopes or tarot cards, CPR allows the researcher to begin to understand Self/Other/world in depth and breadth by seeking new ways of knowing and being that extend well beyond as well as deep within the Self. In a horoscope reading, a person may be able to see certain descriptors that on the surface characterize his/her behavior. Yet, absent from this description is the *essence* of the person as someone who *feels* and *grows* as s/he *experiences* the world with and in relation to others.

Unfortunately, research can often feel devoid of the essence of what it means to be human, especially as we think about the actual "doing" of data collection and analysis. Many postmodern researchers will testify, however, that by engaging in our research we will begin to understand ourselves and those around us differently. When we allow ourselves to learn from difference we afford the gestation of new possibilities for who and how we wish to be. Indigenous scholar Manulani Aluli Meyer (2008) refers to this as a "wholeness" of body, mind, and spirit, which allows for a connection of Self and the world. As she explains, "using body, mind, and spirit as a template in which to organize meaningful research asks us to extend through our objective/empirical knowing (body) into wider spaces of reflection offered through conscious subjectivity (mind) and, finally, through recognition and engagement with deeper realities (spirit)" (p. 224). Endeavoring toward wholeness through research extends beyond the level of cerebral and is not commonly built into the methods and procedures described in research texts. As we engage in our data analysis processes, our goal as CPResearchers is to push past the boundaries of positivist research and into the potential of research for wholeness and humanity.

Questions for Discussion

1. Describe the ways in which you are thinking about objectivity and subjectivity in research. In this chapter, Kress likens data analysis to a horoscope reading. In what ways do you find this metaphor resonates with you? How does the metaphor trouble you? Why?
2. Kress cites Bowker and Star (2000), who write: "To classify is human… We all spend large parts of our days doing classification work, often tacitly, and we make up and use a range of ad hoc classifications to do so. We sort dirty dishes

from clean, white laundry from colorfast, important email to be answered from e-junk." How have you classified today? What do these classifications tell you about the kinds of assumptions you make about classification and the preferences with which you classify? How might these impact you as a researcher?

3. Why do you think that Kress argues that CPResearchers are unable to "wait" to analyze/classify their data until it is entirely collected? Do you agree or disagree with her premise? What are the pitfalls of both approaches—analyzing throughout the data collection process, and analyzing after the collection is completed?
4. Kress writes about "immersing" yourself in the data; certainly this practice should begin long before the research process starts. How is this kind of immersing, uninterrupted time a part of your academic practice already? How might you improve this kind of attention and intimacy as a practitioner-researcher?
5. Kress stresses the importance of writing throughout the research process. What experiences do you have with writing? Have these experiences been mostly positive, or mostly negative? How, or using what mediums, do you write in your personal and professional life? How can your research process encourage you in your identity as a writer and what role do you think you could play in this transformation?
6. Given Kress' discussion of postmodern quality criteria, how might your research interests be eventually evaluated by these standards? What connections can you make between these criteria and your research design? How might these criteria add intent to your research?

Writing for Insight

1. Kress writes that, "[a]s a Critical Praxis Researcher. . .personal growth is a desirable research outcome." Write a letter to your "post-research" self. How do you hope that the research process will have grown you? Who do you hope to be at the end of your work?
2. Read the poem, "On Turning Ten," by Billy Collins (2002) (available at http://www.poemhunter.com/poem/on-turning-ten/). Try to "code" the poem by developing a system of relevant analysis and using it to annotate the text. Use Kress' questions to help you: "'What do I think is going on here?' 'Why might this be happening?' 'What do my participants [here, the boy in the poem] think about this?' 'What do other researchers [here, what might other readers or literary critics] say about this?' 'How might my theoretical frames lend insight into this?' and 'What other explanations could there be for what is happening here?'"

Notes

1. (retrieved from http://www.dailyhoroscopes.com/index.php?option=com_events&task=view_detail&Itemid=4&agid=317&year=2010&month=09&day=25).
2. For a good example of how researchers' questions can significantly change during fieldwork, see Stacey Lee's (2009) *Unraveling the Model Minority Stereotype: Listening to Asian*

American Youth. Lee explains that when she designed her research, she was interested in how Asian-American youth developed pan-Asian identities. Once in the field, she saw that not all Asian-American youth did develop pan-Asian identities; however, the pervasive stereotyping of Asian-American youth as model minorities was significant in their identity development and their engagement in school and with their peers. Her research focus and questions then shifted to capture this experience.

3. See Anderson, Herr and Nihlin (1994, pp. 161–167) for a helpful list of various types of data analysis, including discourse analysis, dilemma analysis, constraints analysis, content analysis, document analysis, sociometric analysis, episode analysis, ethnographic analysis, domain analysis, taxonomy, componential analysis, analytic induction, and constant comparison.
4. For practical and detailed suggestions for data analysis in the field, see Bogdan and Biklen (2007), pp. 160–171.
5. For a comprehensive discussion about analytic memos, coding systems, and data interpretation see *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* by Saldaña (2009). Roth's and Hsu's (2010) text *Analyzing Communication: Praxis of Method* is another good resource that provides examples of analysis in the context of specific studies. For analyzing ethnographic data, LeCompte and Schensul (1999) provide a helpful starting point in their text *Analyzing & Interpreting Ethnographic Data*.
6. While codes are intrinsically linked to the researcher and her own research topic and theoretical/conceptual grounding and, thus, will be different for each researcher, Bogdan and Biklen (2007, pp. 177–180) provide a useful list of coding "families," or types of common codes that you will likely encounter or should consider looking for as you begin to code and analyze your data.
7. Laurel Richardson's article "Writing: A method of inquiry" in Lincoln and Denzin (2003) is a great resource for helping you to use writing to learn more about self/other/world. In this piece the author presents questions that lead the reader/writer to extend her thinking and devise new understandings about herself as a writer/inquirer. Additional texts that are helpful for thinking about and utilizing writing as a tool of inquiry are Goodall's (2000) *Writing the New Ethnography* and Richardson's (1997) *Fields of Play: Constructing an Academic Life.*
8. For a comprehensive list of software and pricing, The American Evaluation Association is a great resource (http://www.eval.org/resources/qda.htm).
9. While there are too many authors to name, a few notable others include Ercikan and Roth (2009); Reason and Rowan (1981); and Sharp and Green (1975).

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Chapter 9
Demystifying Research Ethics in CPR

> *An IRB standing before a practitioner researcher may resemble a troll. Trolls block the way—exacting tolls, asking questions, slowing things down, demanding to be appeased. IRB trolls exact their toll in the currency of time and effort needed to assemble IRB submissions, respond to IRB requests, and work through whatever modifications on which the IRB insists (Pritchard, 2002, p. 7).*

When I first began working with doctoral students, it quickly became clear to me that writing a proposal for an ethical review board can be scary for new researchers. Fear of the "IRB troll" had become so engrained in the program I work in that many students were choosing to curb their true research interests by designing research about education that did not include children and that did not focus on their own professional settings. Many students would opt to focus only on adults (teachers, administrators, and/or parents) in schools or districts other than their own because as they explained to me, "if you want to get through IRB, you can't do research with children and you can't research your own setting." In a doctoral program that promotes a transformative vision of urban school leadership, these IRB myths were counterproductive for helping students to design research for transformation. Moreover, these myths prevented many students from designing research projects that were a reflection of who they are and what they hope to accomplish with their research. Given CPR's goals of Self/Other/world transformation and research for "humanization," the ethical review process and CPR design should naturally fit together, but this did not seem to be the case at my institution. Instead, the fear of IRB had become an impediment to Critical Praxis Research, and I found myself in a predicament. My students needed to design studies that were true to who they were, but they also needed to be able to align those studies with the demands of the IRB. To help my students, I needed to be fluent in both CPR and IRB. Thus began my transformation into a research "troll."

For the past several years, in addition to being a Critical Praxis Researcher, I have also been a member of my university's IRB. I have slowed down and sometimes halted research projects. I have asked researchers countless clarifying questions about data collection, consent procedures, confidentiality, risks, and benefits. And

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I can say with confidence that I will continue to be a research troll, probably, for the rest of my career because as scary as trolls can be, when it comes to doing ethical research, trolls are also necessary. The very act of researching toward CPR's goal of Self/Other/world transformation implies that we feel compelled to respond to some social condition we have determined is unsatisfactory and/or unethical. We have made an ethical choice to pursue our work because we believe "we have a responsibility—an ethical and moral responsibility—to do whatever we can, individually and collectively to shape the future" (Denzin & Giardina, 2007, p. 35). The CPR philosophy is a virtuous one. Yet, the simple fact that we are researchers means that we are historically bound to the research act as a cultural, social, and ethical practice. While Critical Praxis Researchers intend to help and not harm people, history teaches us that good intentions and good outcomes are not necessarily the same. Depending upon how we look at different aspects of the research process or who is doing the looking, our actions can be interpreted in multiple ways. Ethics in research is often not clear-cut. Similar to the notion that being Critical Praxis Researchers is tied to our identities, contexts, and purposes, what it means to act ethically or unethically is also "intimately related to who you are, the deep values you subscribe to, and your understanding of your place in the spiritual order of reality" (Castellano, 2004, p. 103). Research trolls like me lend an additional perspective to research designs that can help to ensure that Critical Praxis Researchers live up to our ethical responsibilities. For these reasons, this chapter is devoted to familiarizing ourselves with the history of research ethics and unpacking the complex domain of research ethics as a socio-cultural-historical practice. We will learn about writing research proposals for IRB boards and how to engage in ethical and responsible research relationships with our participants who will share in the CPR process with us.

A Brief History of Research Ethics in the United States

As we consider the roots of ethics in research, it quickly becomes apparent that research in general has an unsavory history of exploiting and harming people under the auspice of generating knowledge for the greater good of society. Roth (2005) emphasizes, "Research ethics is not something coming to us from 'out there'... it is deeply bound up with issues of power, knowledge, agency (individual and collective) identity, and control, to name but a few" (p. 161). This ugly underbelly of research is revealed when we consider that the most egregious research acts have been performed on minorities, people with disabilities, prisoners, orphans, pregnant women, indigenous peoples, and the poor without their consent and/or knowledge (Jacobs & Zonnenberg, 2004). The most grotesque forms of harm are easily identified in biomedical research (e.g., Nazi experiments, Tuskegee syphilis experiments, Willowbrook hepatitis experiment); however, there have been psychological and sociological studies that have harmed people as well (e.g., Stanford prison experiment (Zimbardo, 1973), and Humphreys's "tearoom" study (Humphreys, 1975)).

In many books and articles, the Nuremburg Code, which was developed in response to Nazi Germany's experimentation on people during World War II, marked the beginning of the regulation of research ethics, but unethical research did not simply emerge along with the Nazi regime. There were many notable studies prior to World War II that were also ethically questionable. For example, Youngpeter (2008) notes that in 1920s in the United States, John Watson conducted ethically questionable behavioral research on an infant by the name of "Little Albert." In this study, the researchers conditioned an infant to fear a white rat while they observed and documented the child's reactions. As another example, from the early days of colonization well into the twentieth century, numerous ethnographic studies of indigenous communities around the world could also be regarded as unethical. As Carjuzaa and Fenimore-Smith (n.d.) explain, "Under the guise of research, [ethnographers have] exploited their subjects by stealing their artifacts, misinterpreting their traditions, and disrespecting their knowledge of the natural world" (not paginated).

The moments listed in Table 9.1 below have been documented as some of the most important in the history of research ethics, but these are simply the stories that have been documented in the literature. There are probably many more that have yet to be reported or accounted for, and these types of stories will continue to surface. As just one example, in 2010 Hillary Clinton apologized to Guatemala for US experiments which involved infecting mentally disabled Guatemalans with syphilis from 1946 to 1948 (CNN, 2010). This ugly unethical history extends into the present despite the fact that there have been numerous attempts at regulation and control. Unfortunately, as Roth (2005) points out, "whereas many researchers have keenly stayed with the times, other kinds of research continue to treat human beings in questionable ways" (p. 158). For Critical Praxis Researchers, these historic events serve as tales of caution as we strive not to repeat history in our work.

There are many disturbing unethical historical incidents from which we can learn how not to conduct research. Given how much research is conducted there have been relatively few truly harmful studies throughout history (Shamoo & Resnik, 2009). In Critical Praxis Research, however, any degree of harm is too much. Those so-called rare incidents that occurred in the past continue to occur and continue to have a serious impact on people's lives in the present. It is unlikely that educational researchers will encounter ethical situations that are as dire as those above, but what is important here is for my readers to walk away with a sensitivity toward the moral responsibilities we have as researchers who work with people and the necessity for understanding who we are and who we wish to be as we conduct our work.

The Belmont Report: Principles and Limitations

In the United States, regulations on medical research began in the early 1900s, but the most notable regulation attempts for research of all types did not occur until after the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki. In 1974 when the National Research Act was signed into law, the US federal government subsequently formed the

Table 9.1 A brief history of research ethics controversies and national/international policy responses to unethical research practice

1920	"Little Albert"	Behavioral experiment involved conditioning an infant to fear a rat. Infant was never de-conditioned at the conclusion of the study.
1932–1972	Tuskegee Syphilis Study	Rural black men were observed to study the progression of syphilis. They were not informed of their condition or that they were research subjects. Doctors withheld treatment from them even though the disease was curable.
1939–1945	Nazi experiments	German scientists performed egregious experiments, including hypothermia tests, deadly pathogen infection, and mutilation on concentration camp prisoners.
1944–1974	US radiation experiments	Without their consent or knowledge, the US government tested the effects of radiation on over 16,000 people, many of whom were pregnant women, prisoners, indigenous, disabled, or ill.
1947	The Nuremburg Code	During the Nuremburg trials, a code was developed for the fundamental principles of ethical conduct in research with human participants. This was the first international code of research ethics.
1951 to present	HeLa	Doctors harvested cervical cancer cells from Henrietta Lacks without her knowledge or consent. These cells have been cultivated and used in countless experiments and medical advances resulting in multi-million dollar profits for some companies. HeLa cells are still used widely today.
1953	NIH policy	The National Institute of Health developed the first federal policy for the protection of human subjects.
1961	Milgram's electric shock experiment	Study on obedience to authority. Participants believed they were administering increasingly stronger levels of electric shocks to people in another room.

Table 9.1 (continued)

1963–1966	Willowbrook experiments	Mentally disabled children were intentionally infected with hepatitis and observed for the purposes of documenting the progression of the disease.
1964	Declaration of Helsinki	The World Medical Association devised a set of codes for conducting ethical medical research with human subjects. Revised several times, most recently in 2001.
1970	Humphrey's "Tearoom Trade"	Ethnographic study of men who engaged in homosexual activity in a public restroom. The researcher served as a lookout. He then took down the subjects' license plate numbers, used them to acquire subjects' names and addresses, and conducted follow-up interviews in their homes while posing as a market researcher. The men did not know they were being researched.
1971	Stanford prison experiment	Students from the university were assigned in the roles of prisoners and guards in a mock jail order to study personality traits of people in these roles. The experiment was shut down because the "guards" were abusing the "prisoners."
1978	The Belmont Report	The foundational document for research ethics in the United States. Its primary principles are *respect*, *beneficence*, and *justice*. (See more below.)
1985–2005	NYC AIDS drug trials	New York City foster children were enrolled in clinical trials for experimental HIV/AIDS drug treatments. No children were reportedly harmed, but for 21% of the children, appropriate informed consent had not been documented. For 30% of the children some or all of their medical files had been lost or destroyed.
1991	The Common Rule	The Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects applies to research conducted by most federal agencies.

National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. In light of the past incidents of human subjects maltreatment, the Commission was charged with developing ethical guidelines to ensure the future protection of research subjects. According to the Office of Human Subjects Research, the committee's investigation focused on four things:

> (i) the boundaries between biomedical and behavioral research and the accepted and routine practice of medicine, (ii) the role of assessment of risk–benefit criteria in the determination of appropriateness of research involving human subjects, (iii) appropriate guidelines for the selection of human subjects for participation in such research, and (iv) the nature and definition of informed consent in various research settings (http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/belmont.html).

Four years later, the Commission published its report, *Ethical Principles and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects,* more commonly known as "The Belmont Report." By most accounts, The Belmont Report marks a watershed moment in the regulation of research ethics. The document has served as the foundational guidelines for federal regulation of research with human subjects, and it has shaped the design of Institutional Review Boards at universities, hospitals, and other organizations around the country. Within this document, the Commission distinguished between research and practice and identified three basic principles for conducting ethical research with human subjects (*respect for persons*, *beneficence*, and *justice)*. Each of the main principles of the Report is explained briefly below.

The Differences Between Research and Practice

The authors of The Belmont Report point out that research and practice are difficult to disentangle because oftentimes practitioners seek to evaluate the efficacy of particular treatments (e.g., a psychologist evaluating a particular type of therapy). However, the Commission made a distinction between the two acts by noting that practice is primarily for making diagnoses and administering treatment or therapy to individuals. Research, on the other hand, is meant for testing hypotheses, drawing conclusions, and adding to generalizable knowledge. They further assert that research usually has a protocol, a specific objective, and procedures or methods to reach the objective. Finally, they point out that practice can be "experimental" (e.g., a practitioner is trying out a new type of treatment), but this does not necessarily mean the practice is research. It is possible for research and practice to occur simultaneously (as in the previous example). However, if there is any element of research involved in a particular practice, then the research proposal should undergo an ethical review process.

Respect for Persons

This principle is comprised of two main assertions: (1) individuals are autonomous and, when provided with adequate information regarding risks and benefits, they are capable of making judgments about whether they wish to be involved in research, and (2) individuals who may have reduced autonomy (e.g., children, people with

disabilities, prisoners) are considered vulnerable and should be protected. In the first case, it is assumed that individuals are free to make their own decisions, and a researcher should not compromise that autonomy through coercion, deceit, or the withholding of information. In the second case, individuals who have reduced capacity to decide may require protection. Depending upon the degree of risk involved in the study, it may be necessary to exclude them from participating in a particular study entirely.

Beneficence

This principle holds that researchers should (a) not harm people, and (b) minimize potential harms while maximizing potential benefits. Here, the researcher must weigh the potential risks involved for participants in this study with the potential benefits of this study for participants and for society. They then must estimate whether the benefits will outweigh the risks. This principle requires that researchers redesign their research if the benefits do not justify the risks for research participants.

Justice

The concept of justice is concerned primarily with fairness and equal treatment. To ensure justice, the researcher must consider who will be participating in the research and whether certain populations are bearing an undue burden while others are benefitting from the research. Furthermore, participants should be recruited only for reasons related directly to the study, not for reasons of convenience.

Limitations of The Belmont Report

As necessary as The Belmont Report is and as beneficial as it has been, it is not without its limitations. Numerous researchers from qualitative, critical, feminist, and indigenous research genres have criticized the ability of The Belmont Report to appropriately address ethical concerns in all types of research. Denzin and Giardina (2007) explain that there are limitations in ensuring safeguards for all research participants because "The IRB framework assumes that one model of research fits all forms of inquiry, but this is not the case" (p. 20). Tolich and Fitzgerald (2006) and Borenstein (2008) have echoed similar concerns, citing the biomedical, behavioral, and positivistic orientations of The Belmont Report, as well as the report's narrow definitions of researcher and research as primary obstacles for appropriately reviewing social science and educational research. For Critical Praxis Researchers, these limitations may pose challenges during the ethical review process.

Tolich and Fitzgerald (2006) point out that, in research genres that take an exploratory or emergent approach (e.g., ethnography or action research), it is impossible to predict all human interactions that will take place and, therefore, what potential harm there might be for participants in the study. In some cases, it may even be impossible to know who the population in the study will be until the

researcher enters the field. Researchers who conduct participatory action research face multiple challenges; they will not necessarily know the precise topic under investigation, the types of methods that will be used, or the additional participants who will be involved prior to meeting with their co-researchers. Some researchers (see for example, Haggerty, 2004) have even questioned the role of IRBs and the meaning of The Belmont Report itself because at times it becomes prohibitively difficult to gain IRB approval for these types of research designs, but for biomedical research, which is arguably more invasive, approval can sometimes be obtained more easily. Finally, additional questions about ethics arise as we consider the differences between what it means to act ethically and what it means to act legally. For instance, in Jay MacLeod's (2009) famous ethnography *Ain't No Makin' It: Leveled Aspirations in a Low-Income Neighborhood,* the author was forced to choose between maintaining the trust of his participants and abiding by laws. Many of his participants were under 18 and were drinking alcohol illegally. Many of them were also using illegal drugs. Ethically, MacLeod was compelled to uphold his participants' confidence, rather than report the illegal activity.

The Belmont Report is a good starting point for guiding us in ethical decision-making, although clearly it does not offer enough guidance for all cases. Depending upon how we look at it, and the particular context, "An action might be legal and unethical or illegal and ethical" (Resnik, 2010). As Critical Praxis Researchers consider ethics in research design, we must take The Belmont Report to heart, but go beyond its limitations by anticipating the potential ethical conundrums that Critical Praxis Research will likely bring, but which are not adequately resolved in The Belmont Report itself. While scholar-practitioners might not have to contend with some of the issues that biomedical or behaviorist researchers contend with, we will undoubtedly be faced with ethical decisions during the course of our work, some of which are directly related to our dual roles as scholar-practitioners, others that may be related to our participants or the context of the research. This is especially true if we plan on using critical or emerging genres of research. Most pertinent to Critical Praxis Research, however, are the ways in which the principles in The Belmont Report relate to the work of the education scholar-practitioner.

Navigating the Murky Waters of (Educational) Research and the IRB

While educational research is not likely to inflict harm on people like other kinds of research noted above, it is still not exempt from ethical considerations or reviews, nor should it be. As Bahm (1994) explains, "No science is value-free. No science is ethics-free. All scientists are faced with choices at every step in their scientific investigations" (p. 4). In addition, educational researchers may face ethical challenges that other researchers will not. As Pritchard (2002) points out, practitioner research (like CPR) falls under the categories of both practice and research; "consequently the research ethicist must consider the moral responsibilities of those

involved as they are shaped by research, practice, and the two combined" (Pritchard, 2002, p. 4). While The Belmont Report does mention that the roles of researcher and practitioner may overlap, ultimately it regards the two roles as distinguishable based on two assumptions: (1) the research is biomedical or behavioral in nature and involves some type of intervention that usually takes place in a controlled setting, and (2) research has a testable hypothesis and will result in generalizable findings. These assumptions reflect a positivist philosophy of research that is not inclusive of more naturalistic research methods commonly used in educational settings, many toward which the Critical Praxis Researcher will likely gravitate. Bahm's (1994) description of ethics is perhaps more appropriate for the circumstances in which the scholar-practitioner will find him/herself. As he explains, ethics "consists in perpetual confrontation with a series of choices, each one of which must be decided on its own terms, that is, in terms of the way the alternatives appear" (Bahm, 1994, p. 32). Dealing with this ambivalence when devising an ethics review proposal may be daunting for new researchers.

Yet, even with this apparent misalignment, there are still analogies to be drawn and lessons to be learned. First, the scholar-practitioner might not be as different from the biomedical researcher as he or she seems at first glance. Emdin and Lehner (2006) make the point that even though their practices may be quite different, "teacher/researchers share a similar degree of symbolic authority as medical researchers and the potential harms of educational research, like medical studies, may have far reaching social and psychological consequences" (not paginated). Take for instance a teacher studying her own classroom. Because of the power relationship between the teacher and her students, one might question the degree to which students would actually feel free to not participate in the research. Second, because much educational research is conducted with children, a scholar-practitioner must also consider what special measures must be taken to help children understand their rights as research participants. A child's age, first language, ability, and ethnicity may all play a part in a researcher's ability to ensure students' "informed consent." When working with children, parent/guardian permission must also be sought. Given parents'/guardians' sensitivity to power dynamics between them and the teacher or even their perception that participation in research may garner some benefit for their children, there may even be a question of whether or not parents feel free to refuse to grant permission for their child to participate.

In these murky ethical waters, being a good researcher means much more than following rules or devising ethical data collection procedures. The ethical decisions of the scholar-practitioner must emerge from the wisdom of both the scholar and the practitioner because as Anthony (2005) asserts, "the teacher-researcher has rights, duties, and responsibilities as a teacher and as a researcher" (p. 1). Because of these embedded ethical issues and the challenges they pose for researchers, some authors (see for example, Bogden & Biklen, 2007) dissuade practitioners from researching their own practice. However, regardless of the type of research you conduct or the location in which it takes place, there will always be ethical gray areas that you cannot avoid. If we consciously employ The Belmont Report's fundamental principles of *respect*, *beneficence,* and *justice* in our research designs and our IRB proposals, I

believe it is both possible and desirable to align the goals of Critical Praxis Research with the demands of IRB boards. Striking this balance will enable us to ethically pursue research that matters to us and can make a difference in our lives and the lives of those around us.

Navigating The Ethical Review Process

The first step in handling the review process is to determine which institutions and/or persons will need to give approval for the study to commence. A researcher who is researching within a school will need to gain permission from the school district, the school itself, and the university in which s/he is doing his/her graduate work. A researcher conducting research at multiple schools will need to undergo a review for each location s/he will be researching, including private schools and community organizations. Any site in which a researcher wishes to conduct research must give permission. Universities generally have a standard procedure for submitting an IRB proposal, which often differs significantly from school districts and schools. Depending upon the size of the school district, however, there may or may not be formal procedures for gaining approval. Larger districts are likely to have an office devoted specifically to research; whereas, in smaller districts, the researcher may need to request approval through the Office of the Superintendent. It is the researcher's responsibility to find out what the proper procedures are for whatever sites s/he wishes to research.

University Approval

When writing an IRB proposal for a college or university, we need to first determine what type of review our studies will go through, *exempt, expedited*, or *full board. Exempt* studies are those that do not require extensive regulatory review because they pose less than minimum risk, participation is anonymous, and/or it is noninvasive (e.g., use of secondary or publicly available data). Quantitative educational research that uses de-identified secondary data and historical studies that use public archival material will usually fall under this category. *Expedited* studies pose no more than minimal risk and do not involve "vulnerable" subjects (prisoners, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and in some cases children); however, identifying data (e.g., names, ID numbers) are gathered and kept confidential. Survey and interview studies with adults who are not prisoners or people with disabilities will usually fall under this category.[1] *Full board* reviews are required for studies that pose greater than minimal risk and/or involve participants from vulnerable populations. Some IRBs may require any study involving children (or other vulnerable populations), even ones using only secondary de-identified data, to undergo full board review. Before we write our proposals, we also need to make sure to investigate the policies and procedures that are specific to our various institutions because the procedures will vary from place to place.

Understanding the IRB Proposal

What the IRB is looking for in your proposal will most likely differ from what a thesis advisor or professor will be looking for. It is important to write the proposal specifically for the IRB and resist cutting and pasting from longer and/or more theoretical works. The IRB is most concerned with protecting the participants who are involved in the study. For educational research, they will expect the researcher in plain language to explain the following in detail:

1. the rationale for the study and the prior research on this topic (Why is it important to study this? Who else has studied this? How will this study contribute to/differ from the prior research?)
2. the methods the researcher will be using (How will s/he study this? How/why are these methods appropriate for this study?)
3. the population the researcher will be working with (Is this a "vulnerable" population? Who is eligible and not eligible to participate? Why this population? How will participants be recruited?)
4. procedures for ensuring informed consent (What procedures will the researcher use to ensure that participants know their rights and have freely consented to participate? What types of consent documents will be used? Will translations of the documents be needed? What special measures will be taken for "vulnerable" populations?)
5. procedures for protecting participants' privacy (What measures will the researcher take to ensure the confidentiality of participants' identities? How/where will the data be stored? Who will have access to it? How/when will the data be disposed of after the research is done?)
6. the potential risks and benefits for research subjects (What potential risks are there for participants in this study? What procedures will be used to minimize these risks? What potential benefits are there for participants? To what degree do the benefits outweigh the risks? What special precautions will be taken for working with "vulnerable" populations?)

It is important to keep in mind, review board members will not necessarily be familiar with the discipline of education, so the proposal should be written directly and succinctly, with as much detail as possible, in accessible language that is free of discipline specific vocabulary. Make sure to include all supporting documentation that the IRB requires. The most common of these will be collaborating site permissions, recruitment materials, consent/assent/permission forms, surveys/questionnaires, and interview protocols. For researchers who plan on collecting video data or taking photographs in a school, it may be beneficial to include documentation that informs the IRB board on the school's or district's media policies (many schools use media release/opt out forms as part of normal practice). Finally, for those of us who wish to use web resources, like a discussion board, blog, or wiki to collect data, it is important to explain what types of cyber protections are available, how confidentiality will be maintained, and how "written" informed consent in a will be acquired in virtual medium.

Consent Forms and Procedures

Devising the consent procedures and documents is often one of the most challenging parts of writing the IRB proposal. The IRB will want to know exactly when, where, and how researchers will be handling the consent process. Researchers who are doing research with children or people with disabilities under legal guardianship will need to gain *permission* from participants' parents/guardians and *assent* from the participants themselves. It will also be necessary to have different forms for parent/guardians than for children. These should be written in plain language at a reading level appropriate for the participant, and they should be translated into other languages if necessary. Many universities will have samples on their websites or in their IRB procedure forms. Some institutions may even require researchers to use a standard form letter or specific wording; make sure to investigate this and find out which approach is right for your institution. It is best to get informed consent in writing; however, in some cases gaining written consent may be prohibitive for the study or risky for the participants. In such cases, the researcher may be able to request a "waiver of documented consent." (For more information about this, you should speak directly to the IRB officer at your institution.)

Confidentiality

Research participants have a right to privacy, and IRB boards will want to know what measures will be taken to assure that participants' identities and any data gathered from or about them will remain confidential. Make sure to explain where data will be stored and who will have access to it. If the data will be stored electronically, will the files be password protected or encrypted? How will the researcher ensure that private information remains private? In some cases it might not be possible to ensure participants' privacy. For instance, in an education program in which students create public websites or blogs, it may be near impossible to preserve confidentiality in research that features the program. In other cases, participants might find it undesirable for their confidentiality to be preserved because it would benefit them or others if the public knows of their participation in the research. These issues need to be made explicit in the IRB proposal and in the consent procedures for participants. The IRB will want to know that whatever the case may be, the researcher has put in place measures to make sure that participants understand their rights and what they are agreeing to when they agree to participate in research.

Address "Gray" Areas Head-on

In educational research, there are often ethical "gray" areas that create difficulties when the researcher is applying for IRB approval. For instance, there may be potential for conflicts of interest or coercion. There may be anticipated difficulties in obtaining written informed consent from certain participants, or the act of gaining written consent may potentially damage pre-established trusting relationships (Roth, 2005). The above concerns should not be taken lightly, and rather than trying to

avoid these troublesome issues, or worse, be deceitful in the IRB proposal, it is better to address these head on. Tilley, Powick-Kumar and Ratkovick (2009) explain, "teacher-researchers can often find ways to address issues related to ethical concerns in appropriate ways" (p. 22). I believe the best approach in writing the IRB proposal is to recognize that the problem exists and then explain how you will safeguard against it. For example, a researcher who is studying his/her own classroom might have someone else conduct the consent process with the students to avoid coercion. "Practitioner researchers can also point out the ethical advantages inherent in practitioner research" (Pritchard, 2002, p. 10). By utilizing The Belmont Report, we can explain the ways in which our studies are designed with the purpose of maximizing *respect*, *beneficence*, and *justice*. For instance, in feminist, indigenous and participatory designs, "participants have a coequal say in how research should be conducted, which methods should be used, which findings are 'valid' and acceptable, how the findings are to be implemented, and how the consequences of such actions are to be assessed" (Denzin & Giardina, 2007, p. 29). These elements of the research design may seem unusual in traditional research genres, but they can easily be pointed to as evidence that the study as a whole has been crafted to uphold the Belmont principles and ensure that participants are being treated fairly.

Working With Schools and Communities

As I mentioned earlier, school districts and individual schools may have their own ethical review processes that you will need to investigate and navigate. In some cases, you may find yourself in a predicament if a school district refuses to give approval until the university gives clearance, while the university refuses to give approval without approval from the district and school. In the event that this happens, I recommend speaking with either (or both) the university IRB officer or the district IRB officer to explain your situation. IRBs may be inclined to approve your study under the condition that you supply them with evidence of the district's approval as soon as you receive it. If the district or school has a standard application process, make sure to follow the guidelines as indicated. In cases where there is no formal process, you will want to write a letter of inquiry to the superintendent or assistant superintendent. Because administrators are very busy, this letter should be as brief as possible while directly explaining who you are, what your proposed research is about, what you wish to do in the school/district, the duration of the project, and what burdens and benefits there will be for the school/district and its students and staff.

Perhaps more importantly, though, schools and communities may have different ethical concerns than IRB boards. They will want to know that the researcher entering their community is trustworthy and respectful of their community, how much of a time commitment is required of participants, and what benefits individuals and the community may gain from being in the research. For meeting the needs of the community, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of *communication*, *transparency*, and *reciprocity*. In working with communities, it is essential that you (a) communicate about what the expectations, roles, and responsibilities are on both

sides (researcher and researched), and as a researcher, you live up to your responsibilities, (b) you are honest about your research and follow up with participants about what you are learning in the research, and (c) when possible you give back to the community by sharing your findings and/or giving back to the community in other ways. Researchers who espouse feminist and indigenous philosophies would even take this a step further and emphasize the need for research to be collaborative and responsive to the needs of the community from the beginning to the end of the project.

Beyond "Ethical Compliance" in Critical Praxis Research

Being an ethical Critical Praxis Researcher is not as simple as just following ethical guidelines. As is evident in the discussion above, laws and regulations are not enough to ensure ethical practice. CPResearchers are mindful of ethical laws and guidelines, but we are also cognizant of the multiple interpretations of what it means to be ethical as we bring to the forefront the socio-cultural-historical, moral, and axiological dimensions of our research. Critical Praxis Researchers go into their research with an acute awareness of how the seemingly benign can still be harmful, and we utilize "professionalism and the critical thinking skills of researchers. . . to help ensure that [our] work is informed in an ethical manner" (Borenstein, 2008, p. 9). As with teaching and designing research, Critical Praxis Researchers must be able to anticipate and intuit how to avoid potentially unethical practices because "it is the qualitative researchers' ability to deal with ambiguity between known and unknown risk that is the hallmark of good qualitative research" (Tolich & Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 76).

In Critical Praxis Research, "there is no substitute for the individual's development of the capacity to make ethical decisions about the design and conduct of his or her project" (Small, 2001, p. 405). CPResearchers make a "commitment to becoming morally responsible researchers" (McGinn & Bosacki, 2004, p. 24) because, as Small (2001) so aptly asserts, "In the end, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that educational research is ethical research, and the better prepared we are to address the task, the better our research will be" (Small, 2001 p. 405). This means that just as critical teaching and Critical Praxis Research cannot be prescribed, neither can there be a prescription of ethics. Furthermore, ethics is not an add-on simply for the sake of appeasing review boards, it is a fundamental part of being a Critical Praxis Researcher; because unethical research can never lead us toward our goal of Self/Other/world transformation. Ever mindful of the ethical dimensions of our work, Critical Praxis Researchers strive to be "wise researchers who use both their minds and their hearts when making research decisions" (McGinn & Bosacki, 2004, p. 24). We learn from the past, listen to our inner conscience, and listen to the people we work with to guide us in making responsible, ethical choices as we design and conduct research for humanization.

Questions for Discussion

1. Kress begins the chapter by reminding us of the ethical motivation of our work: "For Critical Praxis Researchers, the very act of researching toward CPR's goal of Self/Other/world transformation implies that we feel compelled to respond to some social condition we have determined is unsatisfactory and/or unethical." What is the social condition to which you feel compelled to respond? How do you perceive your research as contributing to the transformation of this condition?
2. How familiar were you with the various unethical studies Kress describes? Which ones do you find particularly disturbing? Rather than seeing these studies as extreme examples or "other" studies, how might the mistakes, motivations, and intentions of those studies be replicated in CPR studies? How do you propose to address these potential ethical pitfalls?
3. The authors of the Belmont Report draw a distinction between research and practice. What do you think about that? How might CPR trouble this dichotomy? How can CPResearchers address and learn from this distinction while at the same time furthering the notion of the teacher as scholar?
4. How do you understand the relationship between educational research and IRB? What obstacles do you perceive? What tensions? What possibilities? What opportunities?
5. Kress writes that "CPResearchers make a 'commitment to becoming morally responsible researchers' (McGinn & Bosacki, 2004, p. 24)." What does the phrase "morally responsible researcher" mean to you at this stage of your research development? How might you further a commitment to ethics in your work?

Writing for Insight

1. The Belmont Report discusses three fundamental principles for research: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. Choose one of these principles. Consider your ideas for a research study. Write for a few minutes about how this principle might apply, conflict with, or trouble your assumptions about your study.
2. Write a "practice" letter to your university's IRB about the research you hope one day to undertake. In it, explain:

    - Why you want to conduct your study
    - The methods you are considering
    - The population you want to study
    - The benefits and risks for the participants of your study

Then, re-read Understanding the IRB Proposal. As you progress in your research theory and design, what are the considerations you haven't yet addressed? How do you intend to address them prior to IRB approval?

Note

1. According to the federal government, classroom observations and minimal risk research with children can also fall under this category, but make sure to check with each institution's IRB because some colleges and universities require all research with children to go to full board review.

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Part III
CPR in Action

Chapter 10
Finding Solidarity with/in/through CPR

The dream I had last night was strange, interesting, illuminating. I was with Shirley and others, people I felt I knew somehow but didn't actually know. We were at a cabin, which I assume, in this dream world, was a place of residence that belonged to Joe and Shirley. It was (somehow) a bright place that was also hidden from the world, an underground oasis where sunlight penetrated through cracks and holes in the ceiling. It was a place I didn't want to leave. The décor was dated, modest, earthy, but warm and comfortable. There was a canopy of leaves outside the windows, and inside, oddly enough, there were gardens. There were hostas (or something like them), green and purple, leafy, similar to the potted plant growing in my living room. They filled the flowerbeds that wound around the perimeter of the rooms, and they seemed to somehow have taken root on the stone walls of the cabin. It was odd the way they were growing. Hostas usually multiply underground with tough roots like rhizomes. You can split them and transplant them. And as I thought this, Shirley dug out a few plants, wrapped soil around them in plastic bags, and set them by the flowerbed where they waited for me to take them home. The hostas that had taken root on the walls defied this logic—it appeared as if seeds had been scattered into the wind, and they took root between the stones. My mind shifted to the lamb's ear that carpeted my flowerbeds in New York: silver leaves, velvety to the touch, but prolific, stubborn, and robust. Their roots cling tightly to the earth as they spread underground, and their flower stalks burst upward like fists in the air, eventually, casting their seeds into the wind like confetti. And I realize now, this is how I understand the world of critical pedagogy (Journal Reflection, November 2010).

The Importance of Community in Critical Praxis Research

Be(com)ing a Critical Praxis Researcher is not for the faint of heart; there will be many times when our work will be gut-wrenching, frustrating, maddening, and lonely. In part, this is the nature of academic work. In part this is the nature of

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be(com)ing critical. There have been many times when I have blurted out critical observations in college meetings and social gatherings; if a record had been playing it would have screeched to a halt and been followed by a deafening silence. Through trial and error, I have become painfully aware that criticality when deployed in the wrong places, at inappropriate moments, or in the "wrong" language can kill conversations. Words like "oppression" and "liberation" are taboo in many circles. In part, I believe my super-silencing power is attributable to people's aversion to disequilibrium. The status quo can be quite comfortable for many, and critical theory makes people's heads spin. I also think my super-human ability to silence is partly attributable to my own newness as a critical pedagogue. Six years is really not long enough to know how to fluently "speak truth to power" in such a way that people will want to listen.

Freire (2005) explains this phenomenon thusly, "the somewhat abrupt emergence of the people from their previous stage of submersion leaves them more or less perplexed by the new experience of participation; and their activism takes the naïve and highly emotional form of rebellion" (p. 32). I'm sure that sometimes, I come across as highly emotional, rebellious, angst-y. There's some truth to this, and as a result, I can be a real downer at parties. The accompanying alienation, loneliness, and sadness that come along with the recognition of one's own marginal position and others' unwillingness to make room in the center can be disheartening, and it can cause moments of intense insecurity. For this reason, it is essential that Critical Praxis Researchers find allies with whom they can begin to develop community. Without the support of others who share our vision, we will have a very difficult time finding joy in our work. Staving off insecurity and sustaining motivation is unlikely if we don't feel good about our Selves and our research. Without the support of a like-minded collective we could quickly fall back into old habits, because as hard as we work to transcend the current social arrangement, hegemony tugs just as hard at our heels to pull us back down to the "what is" reality (Joyce 2008). Conceding to hegemony is *easy*; fighting against it is hard as hell. For these reasons, Part III of this text is designed to make Critical Praxis Researchers visible each other. By including the works of students who are Critical Praxis Researchers, I want my readers to see that they are not alone. There are many of us out there doing this kind of impassioned work. By introducing my readers to a like-minded collective, I hope to underscore the importance of seeking out and reaching out to others to whom and from whom we can give and receive support.

Establishing a Critical Collective: The "Birth" of the "Research Crew"

When I first began my job at my current university, I had no real collective to speak of. I had moved more than 300 miles away from New York City, where most of my doctoral classmates and professors remained, into Boston where the only people I knew were those with whom I had interviewed a few months prior.

While I found my department's and program's foci on urban education and social justice comforting, I was (and still am) the only self-identified critical pedagogue in my department. While I saw possibilities for a burgeoning critical collective, it took at least a semester (probably 6 months or more) to begin to truly connect with like-minded individuals. Meanwhile, I was witnessing many injustices unfolding around me, and my critical identity was growing stronger, if only in my own mind and heart. I began reading more critical literature, and I branched out into cultural studies, women's studies, and indigenous studies as well. I reconnected with Joe Kincheloe, and he invited me to become a blogger for The Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy (http://freireproject.org). The opportunity provided me with an outlet for my ideas and a place to dialogue with others. I found reassurance in the texts I was reading and the online conversations I was having, but my actual face-to-face contact with like-minded criticalists (that I was aware of, anyway) was still minimal. As I have already mentioned many times in this text, identity, who were are, is not just who we want to be or who we think we are, it is also who we are in relation to and with others. Without a known collective in my workplace, I essentially felt like a perpetual outsider. To say I was insecure in my ideas would be an understatement.

Slowly, I began to meet other critical colleagues at my university and around the world, and I finally felt I was gaining some footing. One by one, I began to connect with my doctoral advisees, and because our program was understaffed at the time, before I knew it, I had six students formally working with me and several others coming to me for informal guidance. When we started meeting on a regular basis, I finally began to see I was not alone in my views. To cope with my suddenly high doctoral advising load I decided to model my advising approach after Ken Tobin's (my dissertation advisor). I started a research squad where my students and I could share our research with each other on a regular basis, thereby developing as scholars together. Once I gathered my students as a group, they quickly (and jovially) informed me that the word "squad" was not cool, and they wished to be called a "Research Crew" instead. This marked the beginning of my first face-to-face critical collective. Aside from alleviating some pressure on me personally, there was something almost magical about the group meetings. They were charged with a positive energy that inspired us all to continue working even when times were difficult. We worked really hard, but we also laughed a lot—being together *felt* good. I quickly realized that I needed to document our work in some way because, at the risk of sounding cliché, there was something special about what we were doing. As far as any of us knew, this type of group had never been able to succeed before in our program, and yet here we were, and we all *wanted* to be there *with* each other and *for* each other.

During one of our sessions, I asked the Crew to brainstorm with me about what made this collective what it was. According to them, the power of the Research Crew lay in the following:

- There isn't a competitive edge; there are no hierarchies in the group; we look at each other's work through critical lenses; we critique and get critiqued,

and there's never the sense of being judged (at least not with any negative connotation); 1 cup radical doubt, 1 cup radical love.
- We share similar perspectives, but we also get new perspectives on things.
- It's not a class; we attend because we want to learn and grow, and it is about both process *and* content; whereas, classes are usually about process *or* content.
- We can discuss difficult issues; we talk about ideas that we can't talk about with other educators we work with; we're willing to put our identities at-risk, to expose ourselves, and be vulnerable because we've come to trust each other and the process.
- People ask questions and give advice based on "where is the author going?" *not* on where *they* think s/he *should* be going.
- We all focus on theories about process and transformation, and we see each other using these theories.
- We see this as who we are becoming; this is part of who we are. If this were detached from life, what would be the motivation to stay?
- We're all contributing and our job is to get everyone through. We expect to work hard and be overwhelmed.
- We have empathy for each other—this is life. Everything is difficult to a certain degree, but we know the others will be supportive of us here.
- Our individual differences strengthen our collective identity as a crew. In each other we see our own potential.

The Crew's observations of what this collective means to them, reveals the essence of a CPR collective in action. Specifically, they built solidarity through self-engagement, dialogue, and difference. They demand a lot from themselves and each other, and they push each other forward but not at the expense of or despite one another. They trust each other with their Selves and seek to come to conscientization *together* because in each other, they see potential for new and different ways of knowing and being.

Coming to Critical Praxis Research By Root and By Seed

In *Education for Critical Consciousness,* Freire (2005) explains that when previously alienated intellectual groups begin to see their own potentiality,

> hopelessness begins to be replaced by hope. Thus, nascent hope coincides with an increasingly critical perception of the concrete conditions of reality. Society now reveals itself as something unfinished, not as something inexorably given; it has become a challenge rather than a hopeless limitation. This new, critical optimism requires a strong sense of social responsibility and of engagement in the task of transforming society; it cannot mean simply letting things run on (p. 10).

In our work together, the Research Crew and I are able to maintain a sense of "critical optimism" that is so very crucial in sustaining momentum as we do our work. The world outside is an ugly and cruel place at times, and without hope we can

easily slip into nihilistic despair. The Crew meetings are a warm and nurturing place where we begin to dig in our roots deeply. Individually and collectively, we thrust our hands upward in a simultaneous display of rebellion and celebration, as we cast the seeds of our work widely into the world. In the remaining chapters of this text, I have chosen to share the seeds of student work as an invitation for my readers to find solidarity (and solace) here. Dig in deeply, rebel, breathe, and *be* with us as we celebrate Self|Other and life in Critical Praxis Research.

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Chapter 11
Shaken and Stirred: On Coming to Critical Praxis

Ask yourself how you came to know whatever things you feel are worth knowing (Postman & Weingartner 2010, p. 128).

Moments

Islamabad 1979: Carolyne age 15, secretly mourned the death of her (forbidden) friend, Steve, a US Marine, age 19.[1] He had made a habit of confiding in her. On deserted swings under the stars he had shared his story of leaving home to escape a cycle of poverty only to find himself again looked down on because of class in the Marine Corps. He had spoken often of feeling isolated and trapped. He was killed that year in riots against the US embassy. After his death, (bereft of school and community, as many of the foreigners were quickly evacuated, and her school was indefinitely shut) Carolyne had listened silently as remaining "ex-pat" adults discussed the angle of the bullet that killed him. And had wondered if the US government hailed him as a hero.

South Bronx 1992: Ms. Ali-Khan a high school teacher received a letter from Bosnia. The letter contained pictures of José, a former eleventh grade student, now in army uniform, "Look" he wrote, "I did what you encouraged, I traveled. I am in Europe!" Ms Ali-Khan walked into her classroom with a heavy heart. She had never thought that to encourage students to see other countries, when their resources were scant, might contribute to their becoming an active part of a much larger political machine. Bosnia was at war. José might not make it home.[2]

That's Just the Way It Is

Sometimes the world suddenly stops making sense. When life as we expect it falls apart (in Islamabad, the Bronx, or anywhere else), it is often revealed that there is something very wrong. At that moment, when the only question left to ask is

[1] Contributed by Carolyne Ali-Khan.

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"Why?!" the standard answer of "that's just the way it is" simply falls flat. Moved by pain in the world Bruce Hornsby (1986), Phil Collins (1990), and 2pac (1998) have all sung powerful protest songs centered around the refrain "That's just the way it is," highlighting that injustice demands a more satisfying response than this platitude.

One of the most substantive responses to injustice is Paulo Freire's notion of "conscientization" (1970). Conscientization involves developing a literacy—developing a consciousness—wherein one learns to "read" the ways in which power operates. By developing awareness about the structural organization of oppressive forces, individuals begin to understand the role we each play in the machinery and systemic patterns of oppression. In essence, conscientization is a fundamental rejection of "that's just the way it is." Critical praxis is the evolution of that rejection. A key part of critical praxis involves understanding how we have come to know the things we know. As a doctoral student, and in reflecting on how I came to my work I realize that a need for power literacy, critical pedagogy, and critical research praxis has been woven through my life, personally and professionally. In this chapter, I share some key moments and connections from my journey.

I was born and bred in a working class neighborhood of London, the child of a German mother and Pakistani father. Despite my cockney accent, in schools I was a "Paki," subjected to racial slurs and frequently told to "get out" and "go home!" Pakis were not welcome in south London. Then at the age of 11 my parents moved to Karachi, Pakistan. In a new land I was given a new identity and suddenly I was reframed as a "Britisher" in schools that taught of a bitter colonial history. Apparently I was to blame for sub-continental imperialism, and I was again told by my classmates to "get out" and "go home!" So, by the time I was 15 and reeling from the political events of 1979, I had already crossed the threshold of "that historical moment when one begins to think critically about the self and identity in relation to one's political circumstance" (hooks, 1994, p. 47). My response (with that absolute certainty that only youth or the truly arrogant can possess) was to come to some conclusions. In the words I had then as a 15-year old, I decided that: race/racism was widespread and confusing; that knowing something in one place didn't make it at all useful in another; that the media was evil as it made everything into just another story; that people were looked down on for not being good enough because of class; and that the political machines that pit us against each other were powerful, uncaring and deeply, truly, greatly, momentously, unjust! Race, class, and global politics had entered my consciousness. I was 15 and I was mad as hell.

Youth Responses

As a high school teacher now, I see my students struggle with oppressive circumstances and forces. I see them strive to make sense of an unjust world. Often they live in neighborhoods of violence and crumbling infrastructure, in which they are blamed for their misfortunes, and abandoned, ostracized, or silenced by the

institutions intended to serve them (Giroux, 2003). Attending impoverished schools they additionally suffer from the "structural violence" of blindly enforced educational policies (such as zero tolerance) and insufficient resources (Williams, 2005). As they look forward to what seems a bleak future in their communities they often seem to be on the verge of deciding that a high school diploma might be what Ken Tobin calls "counterfeit currency," a paper that has symbolic value and little else (2007, p. 177). Many of these youth are angry. They understand that impersonal structures impact their lives and communities but they have little room to maneuver through this insight. Inside schools, youth expressions of outrage are silenced or punished (Giroux, 2003). Outside of schools their energy is co-opted by predatory advertisers who are quick to repackage resistance as a hot new product (Kilbourne, 1999). bell hooks speaks of the frustration of being, "in resistance without having the political language to articulate that process" (1994, p. 46). As a society we claim to care about our children but I have spoken to countless youth who do not feel this care. Caught in the machine of race, class, gender, and other oppressions without the structures to be agentic, they seem doomed to a-political resistance, mad as hell, and lashing out against themselves and their peers.

Side by side with this reality lies a different story. One in which the energy and insights of youth provide them with a powerful vantage point from which to critique the world. Despite coming of age in a culture (and cult) of American/Western individualism and neoliberalism which discourages looking for structural causes of suffering, and despite coming of age at a time when "Individual Responsibility" is the name of the game (wherein all conduct is interpreted as nothing more than individual merit or pathology), many youth are refusing these dominant discourses and demanding different explanations. Their stories (individually and collectively) are complex and full of contradictions.[3] While many young people suffer deeply and do not recover to thrive in the world, others are able to use their understandings as a place from which to connect their experiences to those of their communities. They organize, mobilize, educate, and engage in positive and empowering strategies for resistance; they rap, write, march, photograph, boycott, broadcast, and form alliances (Porfilio & Carr, 2010). Often they are both fierce and vulnerable, engaged with zeal to challenge authoritarianism and hold accountable those who are in power. In the borrowed Quaker slogan of my youth they "speak truth to power.[4]"

Responsibilities

I would like to be able to say that my life has consistently been one of speaking truth to power. But it has not. I have lurched through the world. I left home at barely 17 and moved across the planet away from my family. I immediately joined Greenpeace, PETA, social justice, anti-war and anti-nuclear organizations. I marched in protests, and hotly debated politics. I rode on the tail end of the hippy spirit. But I couldn't hold on. Although the connections between systems of oppression and personal suffering revealed themselves to me when I was young, I learned

and forgot in equal measure as I unfurled into adulthood. Some years I was politically active, at other times all I could do was stay afloat, and on other occasions myopia was my middle name. I left behind my political consciousness when I struggled with many years of self-destructiveness both caused and compounded by a profound inability to stay out of harm's way. And it took time for me to connect the dots between what I do for a living (teach) and the political responsibility of being an educator.

As a new teacher I worked in a primarily boys vocational school in the impoverished neighborhood of the South Bronx. It was a classically "tough" school and I loved it. I thought I was doing a good work. I paid attention to my students' social and emotional needs. I respected and believed in their ability to do well. I trained and became certified in HIV Education, Conflict Resolution, and the like. Then I received the letter from José in Bosnia and it rattled me to my core. Reflecting on it I became aware that I needed a more complex understanding of my job. I began to see how epistemologically (with regard to the way I thought about knowledge) I had been naïve. I started to think about how the knowledge that is in (or not in) classrooms might influence life choices. I began to question the "why" in teaching. When I switched to teaching in Alternative Schools that served a population of "at risk" youth, I found myself increasingly radicalized. I was lucky. I had a dream job. I worked in a mini high school with brilliant, politically radical, driven, iconoclastic colleagues and passionate, fiery students. We met together frequently (as teachers and with students invited). In our meetings and in our practice we were constantly researching our experiences and pushing each other to engage more fully in embracing what education means in a lived world. I was perpetually humbled by the insights of my colleagues and the students. It was the most exhausting and fulfilling job in the world. By the time, (many years later) that I met my first dissertation advisor (Joe Kincheloe) and decided to enter a PhD program I knew that education was political and that I needed a theoretically solid framework for fully understanding it, (I wanted to live up to the people I had worked with) but I didn't know how to proceed.

Under Joe's guidance I began to understand the political dimensions of knowledge production. Prior to this, on the one hand, I had understood and respected that my students knew many things that I did not. I trusted that I had experiential knowledge about education from being a veteran teacher. I had fought fiercely with colleagues in some schools, and (unwisely) with professors in graduate school. But on the other hand, although I had a strong personal sense of what harm in education could mean, I lacked the language through which to critique the theories on which unjust policies and practices were predicated. In addition it simply did not occur to me that my own life might have shaped what I knew. Epistemologically I had been brought up to believe that knowledge was something given, an object handed down from the elders. It was the ideas of critical pedagogy and praxis, which encouraged me to connect the contradictions and connections in my personal and professional worlds to broader struggles.

I have learned to name axiological questions. Axiology is the study of values. Although (and with good reason) axiology is rarely separated from ontology (the

study of being) and epistemology (the study of knowing), I believe axiological concerns are at the core of critical pedagogy. As a budding critical pedagogue and critical praxis researcher, it is my concern with axiology that prompts me to question whose interests/stance/voices are prioritized/valued/erased and to further question for what/whose purpose. It reminds me that "that's just the way it is" should never be an acceptable answer. For me, axiology needs to be the starting point for all educational decisions (in classrooms and in research agendas). At its heart, on a macro level, critical pedagogy asks, "What are the educational structures and practices that perpetuate suffering?" Rephrased in personal and meso terms this can translate as, "Why me?!" (or Steve, or José). As I interpret it now, these are not cognitive or emotional questions alone, they do not simply ask for explanations of sequence and causation, or even blame. They are axiological questions that interrogate hierarchies of value in systems of privilege and oppression. It is this axiology that provides the language to name and fight injustice, and this fight that is at the core of critical pedagogical research/praxis. This paradigmatic focus stands in sharp contrast to the positivist, rationalist, efficiency-oriented, pedantic agendas of "accountability" as they are conceived of and set in motion through policy imperatives and test-based education. Ostensibly the claim that is made (in educational systems I have worked in) is that "accountability is about good teaching." But when good teaching is squeezed through simplistic measures of "accountability" it is stripped of an ability to address issues of axiological complexity. In the words of Myles Horton (co-founder of the Highlander Center where Dr. King and Rosa Parks trained): "It's not important to be good. It's important to be good for something" (1990, p. 35).

A Personal Introduction to Really Bad Theory

Some knowledge is "good for something" and some is quite the opposite. In 1989 Shahrazad Ali wrote *The Blackman's Guide to Understanding the Blackwoman*. It quickly made her famous. I do not know if my sweetheart at the time ever actually read the book of if he just watched her on The Sally Jesse Raphael Show, but when her theory met his life, my life changed dramatically. I had become involved with this boyfriend 5 years earlier in Cairo, Egypt, where I was studying to get my BA in Anthropology. We quickly moved in together. He was an African-American musician from a heavily segregated neighborhood in Chicago. When I met him I was barely 20 and still shaken from my second sexual assault. I had all of the symptoms of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and (I realized years later) it was probably because of this that despite all of the sizable evidence to the contrary, I felt safe with him. We lived together in Egypt, then in London (until he was deported for fighting an off-duty police officer) and finally in Chicago before coming to New York. Chicago was the most alien world I could have ever imagined: aside from being consumed by the newness and strangeness of the United States, I was involved in an inter-racial relationship without having any understanding of race in America. After a few months we moved to New York. I found a job as a cocktail waitress and

worked "off the books." He busked in the subways for change. We had a "music studio" in our tiny tenement apartment and lived the lives of those who are not "traditional" (in ways that it is commonly understood). "Off the grid," we were poor, uninsured, not quite legal, and happy, too young to worry. I was completely unprepared for domestic violence.

Shahrazad Ali (in her book and in her lectures) claimed that physical violence was an acceptable recourse for the Black man with a woman who questioned his authority over her. I was informed of this after feeling its consequences. My boyfriend assured me that he felt no remorse. And with Ali's theory supporting him, he explained that he needed me to *understand his logic* and behave accordingly. Freire explains that for oppression to succeed, the oppressed must buy into the oppressor's way of seeing the world (1970). It was an insight I would have appreciated at the time. I did not have any of the resources necessary to leave him, so although I left anyway, I was forced to come back. Gender, age, class, and new immigrant status had interacted to position me poorly; I had little power in my world. With logic typical of the working class (and not unlike many of my students) I simply accepted that life is tough. But I had received a fully grounded introduction to the ways that theory can directly shape experience.

Most theory doesn't make itself as visible (as a structure underlying behavior) as it did with me then. But its impact is no less real. In critical theories, it is widely accepted that theory and ideology operate beneath the radar, working to define and shape who we are (our ontologies) and what we can know (our epistemologies) in ways that masquerade as "common sense." To question common sense is (of course) to have none. Perhaps it is this logic that explains the unpopularity of theory, or anti-intellectualism that has given theory a bad name, or it might be that theory has been abused by being disconnected from life. But I often get the feeling that theory is considered beside the point in education. In addition to teaching high school, I have also taught graduate students studying to become teachers. These students sometimes came to educational foundations classes hesitant about studying theory, more concerned with the "how to" than the "why to." Their concern is understandable, new teachers need strategies. They believe (or perhaps hope) that these strategies lie in entirely concrete answers. But to learn strategies without theory is to have the proverbial tail wag the very sharp-toothed dog. Cultural ideological structures house our behaviors, they afford meaning making and define how we are able to view and therefore treat each other (Sensoy & DiAngelo, forthcoming). Theory is not just the lingua franca of "experts," it shapes all of us, and all of our experiences.

Experts?

"Phhhhhhhhhh!" my father would hiss at the TV, "another *so called bloody expert*!" Disgusted he would change the channel. Dad had little respect for the kinds of credentialing that position "experts" as authorities who dare to speak for *real* people in real jobs. Life, as he saw it, was in the trenches not the towers, and he knew that the only thing you can do from an ivory tower is look down. In epistemological terms, he

was contesting positivist paradigms. Kincheloe and Tobin define the epistemological dimensions of positivism using the acronym FIDUROD (2009, pp. 519–520). In this paradigm knowledge is Formal (acquired thorough a step-by-step process), Intractable (true forever), Decontextualized (removed from the context that gives it meaning), Universalistic (applicable to every instance), Reductionistic (simplified down to the easily measurable), and One Dimensional (unable to accept other realities). As a member of the working class my father understood knowledge as just the opposite. It was embodied rather than formal (knowledge was acquired by doing and being-in the work that you did); contingent rather than intractable (knowledge was dependent upon circumstance and happenstance); context based rather than decontextualized (knowledge was useful and possible because it was in the world or in the work; based in action not removed and isolated from it); complex (it was not easy to measure, not easy to label with some new fancy word); and multidimensional (it was enacted differently in Pakistan, where he came from, than it was in the United Kingdom). Most importantly knowledge was accessible and for those who needed it, not a thing to be owned by those who talked about it. "Bloody experts" as he saw them, violated his sense of what it meant to know the world.

To make matters worse my father sensed that experts did not want to acknowledge the likes of him. I feel his pain. As a teacher in public schools my voice joins the unanimous groans of my colleagues when yet another expert-decided teaching method is mandated as the new order of the day. When my principal begins a sentence with, "The research shows. . ." all of me cringes. This type of "research" in schools is often a weapon for control, denying teachers the validity of their experiential contextual knowledge and disempowering them (Kincheloe, 2003a). Although teachers often feel victimized by factory style control supervisory control of their work (Kincheloe, 2000), the possibility that *social class* (managerial v. worker) hierarchies might influence the dynamic of these interactions is rarely discussed. We are not that déclassé.

Class

Externally I carry few signifiers of my class background. Internally I am filled with ambivalence, I am both at home and completely ill at ease in academe. (Perhaps everyone is?) Aside from my family history, and my preference for being around "fringe" cultures and individuals, I was born in the mid 60 s and came of age in a time of strong class-consciousness. *I think about social class a lot*. On a professional level it factors into the way I read the world and the research I am interesting in. My academic work centers around trying to understand the ways that "those on the edges" of society (in recent work teens, skaters, and Muslims) are un/represented and socially constructed as well as exploring ways to speak back (such as co-authorship and visual methods). On a personal level I am plagued by the possibility that to work in academe as *I* am able to do it might be to simply become "another bloody expert.[5]" I fear that I won't live up to brilliant colleagues and mentors who can and do write and teach in ways that are beautiful, powerful, and change

the world. "Don't worry" a teacher friend of mine reassured me recently, "after all these years in schools you've paid your dues. Anyway it's not really bad, there are much worse ways to sell out." From a working-class perspective to become a PhD *is* to risk selling out. I know a hundred instances where that is not true, but still it haunts me.

On an entirely different level, (although I feel connected to those who value ideas), I always feel like an imposter, one who will be found out and banished at any moment, the peasant who has snuck into the banquet. Walking past the Sorbonne this summer my boyfriend half joked, "Apply for a job here. We should live in Paris." I looked at the rows of marble busts we were passing, all seemingly Caucasian, all male, with reserved countenances and starched collars. I saw myself cartoonized in their eyes: just a little scruffy brown girl (doctorate be damned). I simply could not fathom *ever* being accepted among them. Valerie Walkerdine (1990) connects this type of internalizing and insecurity to class and gender:

> She received more or less straight A's for all her work, but she cannot believe that the distinction belongs to her; it is as though the person with her name exists somewhere else, outside of her body: this powerful person whom she cannot recognize as herself. Instead she feels that she is hopeless, constantly panics about her performance (p. 133).

Richard Kahlenberg notes that the working class is both under represented and silenced in "the vast majority of colleges and universities" (The Chronicle of Higher Education, October 6, 2010). Perhaps this is not surprising. Shirley Steinberg observes that in academia we refuse to acknowledge class while expecting people to follow middle-class rules (2007). Still it seems gauche to speak of these things. Self-indulgent. And whiney. To make matters "worse," although I know that class means more than economic status (Hooks, 2000) because I am not suffering economically, and live in many ways a privileged life, I worry that I have no right to my perceptions.

Nonetheless, like Cinderella I feel grateful to have a pass to the ball. So for the most part I pull my socks up and get on with it. But I am always crossing my fingers behind my back. Hoping not to forget my family/personal history. Hoping to somehow be able to do good work without getting caught in my own expert myth. And hoping not to be found out and have my guest pass revoked.

Art and Cultural Studies

One of the things I love most about the arts is their epistemological egalitarianism. We are all welcome. When my students speak of learning things that matter to them they often reference ideas that are transmitted through affect and the arts (in particular TV and music). Perhaps one of the reasons popular culture is popular is its democratic accessibility. Much popular culture is based in the artistic mediums of music, film, video, fiction, poetry, visual art, dance, and performance. As most education happens outside of schools, popular culture is an important site of knowledge for youth (Aronowitz, 2004, p. 17). When I need to learn things to sustain me

I too turn to the arts. I skate, stare at pictures, play CDs, and read poems. Art gives me hope on demand. (Sartre's darkness made me find God in no God, Caravaggio and Kiki Smith gave me beauty in blood and tragedy, T. S. Elliot gave me comfort from the Wasteland). The knowledge that I access by looking, touching, hearing, and moving, is knowledge that I cherish. It informs what I know/can know (my epistemology) and who I am (my ontology). A well-written sentence, beautiful painting, fine poem, good skate, or sing-along make me feel alive. My affect-based, aesthetically prone ontology seeps into academe: the educational theorists I admire move me in ways that I can only define as spiritual, and I desire their way of understanding the world.

My interest in the plastic, kinesthetic and literary arts (including cultural studies) stems both from my visceral reaction to, and from my fascination with, the kinds of complex connections to the world that art can afford. On a political level, media educates and positions us (Kellner & Share, 2007) and the pedagogy of popular culture is sophisticated and infused with powerful ontological, epistemological, and axiological messages. On personal levels, art is a pathway to access affect and meaning. Arts education theorist Maxine Greene quoting John Steinbeck argues, "ain't got a soul of (my) own, but only a piece of a big one" (1995, p. 33). Art can reconnect us to that big soul, it can make us feel like we are not alone in history and not isolated in the world. These are not simply emotional declarations. They have ontological, political, and methodological implications for teaching and for research. As an educator I have capitalized on students' willingness to engage with the arts. In my work I strive to utilize ways of understanding and representing the world that are based in aesthetic approaches (using photographs, pictures, poems, and fiction) in the hope that I can create research that is widely accessible and that legitimizes the insights of affect-driven interpretations and social realities.

Once Upon a Time

Using arts-based inquiry (Finley, 2008) and "fictionalized fact" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 16), I return to questions of axiology in education, to examine (for a moment) the idea of "always becoming," and to also ask "how do we know what we value?" I offer a fictional tale based in the tropes of popular culture. As a teacher I have heard this story many times. (It is a companion to the newer tale, "Ways teachers ruin the world.")

The Allegory of Mike

Once upon a time there was a child who did not do well in school. (Perhaps you know this child?) Let's call him Mike; let's say he's 15 years old. Mike was "not in a good place," (as one of his more sympathetic teachers put it). He got in trouble for breaking school rules, he failed most of his classes, he felt that his teachers didn't

really deserve much respect, and he couldn't find it in him to care about the things they wanted him to. Mike appeared to be perpetually distracted, unfocused about his future, and particularly disinterested in his education. He seemed destined to be "the kid who fell through the cracks," another dropout among thousands. But then something amazing happened. Mike's school hired a different teacher, a teacher unlike the others. And through the course of the semester with this teacher, Mike changed. He learned to pass his classes; he was able to compete in school. Mike was healed, actualized, and transformed. He was suddenly able to flourish in the world. Mike became "a winner." (The crowds cheered.)

Mike's story is one that pop culture celebrates. It is the stuff of violins, it is the advertisement in the bus that invites bored commuters in less than meaningful jobs to change careers and embrace the glory of "doing something that matters." To be a part of Mike's story is to be able to sleep at night, warmed by the comfort of believing.

This type of popular narrative unnerves me for multiple reasons, not least among them is that tales like Mike's are usually soaked in neoliberal ideology. In this discourse teachers are to blame for the failures of the educational system (structural inequity be damned, all that is really needed is a visionary/one good teacher to shake things up). Kids are dolts waiting to be saved. And the rest of the working class is in need of saving too, as they have no cultural heritage, no sources of pride, no inner strength. The poor don't really care about their kids, or if they do, they don't know how to, and it takes a brave hero from the middle class to show them how to love, learn, and parent. And of course they are poor because they didn't try hard enough. In neoliberal savior narratives ("Dangerous Minds" is the film that most encapsulates these stereotypes) the hero is always middle class and more often than not white, but tough enough to venture into the "jungle" of the child's neighborhood, bringing his/her saving light to one lucky home. Portrayals of non-white communities are usually demeaning and simplistic. Ultimately knowledge is never about collective power, it is never about the search for justice, or a critique of the status quo. The purpose of education in these tales is to provide a path to equity by allowing kids like Mike to climb up the food chain, eyes firmly closed.

Yet, critiques aside, these stories tell us about the way that we (as a nation) are caught in a schizophrenic place. They point to the disconnect between what is apparently a collective desire for some type of meaningful education and the endless media headlines on education that focus on "accountability." In the language of accountability, "better education" means "increases on standardized test scores." But cultural tropes tell us that it is worth believing that education is about our collective desire for something more. They remind us that we need to know the difference between a child and a scope and sequence chart (Ohanian, 1999). Tobin offers us the vision of an alternative to neoliberalism in education. In this world schools refuse knowledge oligarchies, are clear on what social justice means, and reflect an ethic in which, "At all levels of social organization there is a civic responsibility, an ethic of care, whereby individuals act in ways that afford others' agency—acting not just for oneself but also for others" (2010, p. 87). However unsavory the specifics may be, in the world of tales like Mike's, adults and students make connections as human

beings who care about one another. They are not brains on stems. They are full human beings, complex and nuanced, each bringing their history and their lifeworlds with them into the school, always interacting and always in the process of becoming.

Reflexivity and Connections

Freire says that we are always in the process of becoming (1970). As we learn, we engage in this process of becoming with others (Siry, 2011). I have focused largely on the autobiographical to provide a discursive hermeneutic (interpretive) analysis of some the connections that I have made journeying through my early steps in critical research. Echoing Tricia Kress it is my hope that, "through illustrating and analyzing my own experiences, other educators can make connections and come to heightened awarenesses of their own experiences as well" (n.d., p. 6). Heeding Freire's call to reinvent him, Kincheloe argues that it is our critically aware connections that make us able to act as ethical and agentic beings. From the perspective of critical ontology he states, "A critical ontology involves the process of reconnecting human beings on a variety of levels and in numerous ways to a living social and physical web of reality" (2003b, p. 21) from the perspective of post-formal psychology this also means that we need to be pedagogically concerned with connecting with each other as well as reintegrating emotion and reason within ourselves (1999). As Kress reinvents Kincheloe (in this book) she offers us a paradigm in which self, art, and affect matter. Kress's critical praxis research acknowledges Sandra Harding's point that objectivity needs to be unmasked and instead encourages us to examine our standpoints (1998). Positionality or the intersection between race, class, gender, age, location (and other social categories), as well as the ability to belong to dominant groups and the fluidity with which we can pass between categories, defines what we are able to see and care about both in research and in life. On one level my story is about the archeology of positionality in a struggle toward conscientization. It is about the way that ideology infuses the day-to-day, about the way that structures collide with agency, and about how identity perpetually comes into being. On another level my tale is just that, a story that might resonate with yours, one woman's attempt to connect the dots in the struggle toward meaningful and justice-based academic work.

When All is Said and Done. . .

I have a few words of advice to doctoral students finding their way. (1) Find a committee chair that inspires you and makes sense to you from the place where making sense is the deepest and most meaningful. (Through a tragic event I have had two, and I am very fortunate as both have been amazing). (2) Find friends in your program whom you respect and trust, then share papers, thoughts, giggles, wine, tea, gossip, your heart, aspirations, fears and brain with them. (3) Heed Paulo:

> We grow old if we believe, as we realize the importance we have gained in our environment, that it is of our own merit. We grow old if we believe this importance lies in ourselves rather than in the relations between ourselves, others and the world (Paulo Freire, 1998, p. 73).

About the Author

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Notes

1. For further details see BBC news (in the references).
2. As José had a common last name and gave me no identifying information on his exact whereabouts, I had no way of ever knowing what happened to him.
3. I bring this up to avoid essentializing youth into these two tales. The reality of youth life and youth responses is a complex continuum.
4. The idea of "speaking truth to power" originated in Quaker pacifism (Quaker.org, n.d.) But by the time I came of age it had come to be a phrase connected with what is in effect critical social justice and resistance to a variety of oppression.
5. Freire (1970) notes the difference between authority and authoritarianism, one libratory the other oppressive. In part it is this that I wrestle with.

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Chapter 12
Making Space for Praxis: Reflection on Research with ESL Teachers

It is in "distancing ourselves" from the object that we "come closer" (Freire, 1998, p. 93).

With these words, the Brazilian educator and "radical humanist" Paulo Freire describes the conscious process of knowing: reflection. As we move through the world we most often rely on our spontaneous knowledge, which comes from our experiences and our practices. To deepen our understanding of the world and the ways in which we do and can participate in our world, we must engage our epistemological knowledge and reflect on our practices. This type of reflexivity requires the creation of a space in which we can distance ourselves and make time to analyze. When as teacher researchers we reflect on our practices, we come closer to understanding the significance of our actions, and gaining more complex and nuanced understandings of how we are engaged in our world.

As a doctoral student, teacher educator, and researcher (and these are just the professional identities I ascribe to myself), it is notoriously difficult to find space and time. This chapter is a welcome opportunity to distance myself from the object that is currently central to my practice: my dissertation. I attempt to demonstrate my commitment to Critical Praxis Research by attending to Kress' (Chapter 5, this volume) call for paying specific attention to my purposes, identities, and contexts as I analyze my research process. With these "driving forces" in mind I explain what went into the process of deciding on my research topic, formulating my research questions, choosing my research methods, and conducting my study. I am currently in the data analysis phase of my study so I briefly touch on what I have learned so far.

Beginning the Process

Research questions are often born of frustration (Hubbard & Power, 1999). Little did I realize when my research journey actually began. As an ESL teacher in an urban school I was frustrated. I was teaching English to primarily Cape Verdean

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middle-school students, and I felt I didn't have the necessary knowledge to help my students not only to learn English but also to pass the state exams that are a requirement for graduation. I had just completed a Master's in Applied Linguistics, and I had 5 years of teaching experience, although in very different contexts teaching ESL overseas. However, I felt unprepared for the pedagogical challenges I faced. I was expected to teach academic literacy in English to students coming from an oral culture. I was unhappy following curricula that were not meeting the needs of students, but yet were required. I wanted and needed more tools and more knowledge. My students and I both needed more support. I left teaching in public schools because I believed I was failing my students.

I entered a doctoral program with the goal of deepening my understandings of the issues facing English learners in US public schools and their teachers. My hope was to find answers to the frustrations and problems I had faced in the classroom. However, I was dismayed to find myself learning about how to read and conduct research in my doctoral programs rather than techniques or methods to help teach struggling students. Had I made a mistake? I began to ask how "research" could possibly help ESL teachers in their daily practices. It started to occur to me that perhaps I would not find the answer to relieve my frustration.

Making Space to Step Back

It is at this point that I appreciate and can take advantage of the distanced perspective provided by this opportunity to reflect on my research process. Looking back it is clear that my identity is not an essentialized state of being but rather is relational to the context: the people, circumstances, discourses, and structures with which and whom I engage. My identity in relationship to my context determines my understandings of my world and the purposes of my work.

At the beginning of my research journey my understandings were drawn from my own teaching experiences and the urban schools in which survival came before learning. This context had taught me to be skeptical of researchers and what research held for my teaching practice. I had a vague conception of research being conducted by academics for other academics. What I considered research seemed very removed from the realities and the struggles of everyday teaching. Did the researchers who had numbers and data to support their findings ever try to teach English to children from oral cultures or war torn countries? Was the language they used in their reports designed to make teachers feel inadequate? These feelings are not uncommon even in academic research literature: "Teachers tend to resent researchers for positioning themselves as having answers to questions that are not the concern of practitioners" (Gitlin et al. 1999).

My purpose at this point was to put in my time at the university. I was going "off to school" one last time to get the answers to my troubling questions from the academic experts. Once I had obtained the knowledge of how to "effectively"

work with the students I loved yet seemed incapable of reaching, I would bring this information back to my own classroom.

In my first year of doctoral work, as my identity began to shift in relation to my new context, I felt almost as if I were abandoning my goals and my identity as a teacher. After all, how was conducting research ever going to affect positive change in the lives of teachers?

Finding the Answer?

In my second semester of doctoral work I got a job as a teaching assistant for a master's course: *Practitioner Research*. I was excited by this opportunity to learn about how teachers could implement research in their classrooms. The students in the course were in-service teachers in a large urban school district. The Practitioner Research course was the first class offered to this cohort of teachers as they began their Master's in Education Program. The master's program was unique in design and purpose. Through a federally grant-funded professional development initiative, my university's School of Education formed partnerships with several school districts to form the ACCELA (Access to Critical Content and English Language Acquisition) Alliance. The ACCELA Alliance was created in response to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation and the state's eradication of bilingual education and adoption of an English-Only law. One of the purposes of ACCELA was to support the academic literacies of linguistically and culturally diverse learners through an inquiry-based, on-site master's program for cohorts of district teachers seeking reading and ESL licensure. Another purpose was to provide fellowships to doctoral students to allow them to explore topics related to supporting the education of linguistically and culturally diverse students in times of rapid social, economic, and political change.

Given my questions about how research could help struggling students and teachers, the ACCELA Alliance provided me with a home for my own research. I was still writing and thinking about the gap between research and practice in education, but in the work of ACCELA I saw great possibility for research to make an impact in classrooms. Not only was I excited by teachers conducting their own research in *Practitioner Research*, but I also saw how the work of university researchers could be meaningful when conducted locally and collaboratively. I explain further the theoretical perspectives underpinning research in the ACCELA Alliance as it has come to be central to my own thinking and work.

Research in ACCELA

For participants in the ACCELA Alliance the predominant discourse of research informing the work done throughout the context—time, location, and participants—came from the mission of ACCELA:

> Research is central to the ACCELA mission of social change through and for education. The form of research we engage in is called Praxis. Praxis differs from traditional conceptions of research in that theory, practice, research, and action are not separated but engaged in by all participants simultaneously and directly. Traditionally, theory, research, action, and practice are conceptualized as separate activities, each informing the other indirectly: Theory informs research, which informs action (policy), which informs practice (teaching), which research examines to inform theory. Following a praxis model, ACCELA participants, however, engage in all phases of the research-practice continuum by systematically and critically examining their own practice, as defined by their role in their institution, but also by examining how their practice relates to the full institutional and cultural system in which it is embedded (ACCELA Website, retrieved on 10/11/10 from http://www.umass.edu/accela/research.htm).

All participants in the program—professors, doctoral students, and teachers—are asked to engage with research, specifically praxis, which entails conducting cycles of research on their own practices, roles, and institutional and cultural systems or contexts. As a participant in the ACCELA community my skepticism toward research began to shift and I started to become excited by the work that was being done.

At this point it seemed to me for a brief moment that I had found my answer. Practitioner Research was the answer. The notion of teachers conducting research on their own classrooms and being generators of knowledge for the field (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993) connected research to practice.

"Mining the Tensions"

I worked with the course instructor, Pat Paugh, to collect a variety of course texts during the semester. These included: videotapes of class discussions, written assignments, emails, course documents, field notes, and memos. We were in the beginning stages of conducting cycles of research on our own practices. We wanted to know within the current "high stakes" political climate how teachers made meaning of their teaching as a theoretical and practical enterprise within the ACCELA master's program.

My assumptions about practitioner research empowering teachers and providing them with tools to do critical work in their classrooms were quickly challenged. We had asked the class to read a book chapter written by a teacher researcher on the importance of teachers engaging with research. The class' response to the chapter was less than enthusiastic. They felt they were being asked to take on one more responsibility and that academics were just not in touch with the realities of the classroom. When we pointed out that the chapter had been written by a teacher like themselves, their opinions didn't waiver and one teacher wondered why the language of research had to be so "highfalutin"? This incident prompted Pat and I to investigate our own assumptions as well as other tensions running throughout the *Practitioner Research* class.

Three major tensions emerged from our analysis; we considered these important to our ongoing development of ACCELA courses with our faculty colleagues. These tensions included:

- tensions between teachers' desire to affirm positive professional identities and the course focus that required them to critique their teaching as practitioner researchers;
- tensions between teachers' embedded privileging of technical learning (emphasizing methods and procedures), and sociocultural theories that require analysis of social and cultural learning (the ACCELA framework); and,
- tensions arising when multiple perspectives on research, theory, and practice came into contact as teachers struggled to fit a "research" orientation into their daily classroom lives (Paugh & Robinson, 2005, p. 3).

These tensions provided interconnected opportunities for struggle and for new learning. I was reminded of the words used by Hubbard & Power (1999) to explain how topics and questions evolve in teacher research from "mining tensions" (p. 25).

I believe that like reflection, tensions create important spaces. However, these spaces are neither comfortable nor safe. Generally, if given a choice I try to avoid tensions. In taking the time and the space to step away and reflect on the work I was doing in ACCELA, I realized that not only would my topic for my own research most likely grow from the tensions I was exploring between research and teaching, but that ACCELA in its design was meant as a space to engage with tensions.

The faculty who constructed the ACCELA Alliance "conceptualized ACCELA's programs as 'third spaces'" (Willett & Rosenberger, 2005, p. 206). Third spaces are often conceived of as hybrid spaces that go beyond oppositional binaries: "In third space, then, what seem to be oppositional categories can actually work together to generate new knowledges, new Discourses, and new forms of literacy," (Moje et al. 2004). Another feature incorporated in the design of the ACCELA Alliance was that "instructional spaces would be located outside of normal spaces so as to achieve at least a partially carnivalesque quality" (Willett & Rosenberger, 2005, p. 206). The term "carnivalesque" from the work of Bakhtin refers to the carnivalizing of normal life. This involves the "temporary suspension of all hierarchic distinctions and barriers among men . . . and of the prohibitions of usual life" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 15). The intention in the design of ACCELA, as I understand it, was to do away with hierarchical power relationships that are generally present in school–university partnerships: "All were considered equal during carnival. Here, in the town square, a special form of free and familiar contact reigned among people who were usually divided by the barriers of caste, property, profession, and age" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 10).

I was originally upset by the realization that I was involved in a program where avoiding tensions was impossible. As my awareness of the program and my understanding of the new ACCELA context grew, I began to formulate the topic for my research study by mining these tensions.

The tension I still felt between research and practice continued to drive the questions I asked. However, I was no longer conceiving of research and practice as essentialized, oppositional constructs. I was beginning to ask different questions about research in the field of teacher education. What are the purposes for asking teachers to engage with research, and, "[w]hat kind of research best serves teacher education?" (Fenstermacher, 2002, p. 242). To what extent and in what ways can the technical knowledge derived from research influence actual teaching? What is the definition or paradigm of research for the different organizations overseeing the preparation of teachers? How can teachers' engagement with research affect student learning?

Purpose of the Study

Moving from my initial conceptions about research as being distant from the work of teachers, my experiences and relations with others in new contexts expanded my understandings of research. Gaining distance from my work in a classroom enabled me to look more broadly and deeply at the local and federal contexts with which ESL teachers engage. I began to understand that many different discourses of research were contributing to the school context.

Scientifically based research (SBR) is the dominant discourse of research in US public schools as a result of the NCLB educational policy. Missing in this dominant discourse of research that seeks to generalize effectiveness in teaching programs is attention to students' different social and cultural knowledge and learning processes. An understanding of power relations in institutional and school contexts is also absent in the discourse of SBR.

As I worked with the teachers throughout their ACCELA master's courses, the tensions continued to capture my attention as I listened to them complain that what we (ACCELA) were asking them to do would be wonderful in an ideal world. The charge consistently leveled at the ACCELA professors and project assistants was that we were not fully aware of the constraints and mandates the teachers dealt with in their daily practices. The discourses of teacher research and praxis that ACCELA was working hard to promote were not always in line with district, state, or federal research-based mandates and the discourse of Scientifically Based Research. However, the stakes being high for teachers to finish their master's degrees as well as keep their jobs, it was remarkable to watch how teachers began to navigate and make meaning of all the discourses of research affecting them.

I was coming to a place in my own studies where I really appreciated the theoretical base my doctoral work provided me to pursue what I was experiencing in my work with teachers. Conducting literature reviews, as all educational researchers must, is a practice that Lisa Patel-Stevens (2010) argues recreates the hegemony of knowledge production in the field of education. Only the work that gets published is allowed to count as knowledge in the academy. However, doing critical work, as I was learning through my doctoral studies, means maintaining awareness of power

and how it operates and where and how to accept or challenge the status quo. As a doctoral student, I am aware that I do not have the option of challenging the process. At the same time I am also humbled by how much I have to learn from the process and realize to what degree I must trust in the process and my mentors whom I have chosen for their critical and meaningful work.

The cycles my literature review went through mirror my own shifting and expanding understandings of research and the ways it is enacted in schools. Having conducted a literature review on *ESL Teachers' Engagement with Research*, I came to an understanding of the importance of helping teachers to navigate and engage with research. This engagement not only affects teaching practices, but is central to helping teachers work in these new times and in this scientifically research driven school context. It is specifically important for teachers who work with students who are viewed as struggling to understand how research affects what happens in their classrooms. I also found a gap in the literature about preparing ESL teachers regarding the ways in which ESL teachers make meaning of research, what types of research they draw on in their daily practices, and how research affects their teaching. DiPardo et al. (2006) recognize that more is needed in the knowledge of how research can and does affect teachers' practices: "We need many more vignettes, case-studies, and narratives of teachers' uses of research, the factors that shape such uses, and the sorts of preparation and ongoing support that can help" (p. 306).

Informed by my literature review and by experiences working with teachers, the overarching goal of my study is to attend to the calls for teachers, specifically ESL teachers, to be engaged with research by examining what "research as praxis" (Lather, 1986), that is, research explicitly committed to critiquing the status quo and building a more just society (p. 258), means for the ways in which ESL teachers construct research meanings and purposes.

Research Questions

From almost the very first day of my doctoral program there has been a focus on the "research question." "What is your question?" was asked in every course and also among my cohort members as we tried to wrap our heads around our purposes for our studies. I feel some comfort in the fact that my questions have always focused on the roles of research in the lives of teachers. My work in the ACCELA Alliance throughout my doctoral studies enabled me to refine my questions as I worked as a "mediator" between the discourses of the university and those of the schools in which teachers worked. My relationships with teachers developed as they began to see me and the other project assistants as allies and resources in navigating the tensions they were finding within their contexts. Because of my own interests I focused primarily on two ESL teachers throughout their ACCELA master's program. Later I supervised them in their practicum leading to ESL licensure. The depth and length of time of my work with these two teachers provided the framework for my study.

The study I have conducted draws on texts created by two ESL teachers, Sarah and Irina,[1] both working in an urban school district. I aimed to examine the meanings they made of "research" over a period of 5 years. The following questions guide the research:

- Within the context of NCLB and a praxis-based master's program what meanings of "research" are made by two urban ESL teachers during their master's work, their practicum, and 2 years after completing their degrees?
- What meanings do Sarah and Irina make of research in their ACCELA master's program?
- What meanings do Sarah and Irina make of research in the process of completing their practicum for ESL licensure?
- What meanings do Sarah and Irina make of research 2 years after having left the ACCELA program and working in a Cornerstone school?
- How do different discourses of research inform the teachers' meanings of research?
- How are the meanings teachers make of research enacted in their teaching practices?

Theoretical Frameworks Informing My Methods

Struggling with a Paradigm

I began my doctoral program, as I assume most students do, as a member of a cohort. To prepare us for conducting research we read a lot about the different paradigms of research and debated their pros and cons. It was as if our cohort of doctoral students was preparing for rushing a sorority or fraternity. We all wanted to know which paradigm fit us best and where we would end up. By the end of my first year I had gravitated toward feminist writings and was fascinated by the love/hate relationship between feminists and poststructuralists. When I came across the work of Patti Lather I felt like I had found my fit:

> I would have stayed forever if I had found enabling conditions to foster good teaching. Instead, I found small reward for hard work and a bureaucracy seemingly intent on thwarting my every attempt to teach creatively. . .Deciding to pursue a doctorate in education so that I could help make schools places where people like me could have lifetime careers as teachers. . .I knew I would have to do "research" (Lather, 1992, p. 87).

This quote seemed to mirror my experience. It drew me in and I have been struggling to find the language and understanding to write from a feminist poststructural perspective ever since.

At one point I compared and contrasted the discourse of Scientifically Based Research with Teacher Research. Theoretically this was problematic. In my attempt to explain the differences in discourses of research I was essentializing characteristics and features of two specific discourses. I created a binary and was

trying to enforce order on the discourses and their production of power. It is difficult to escape the humanist desire to define the essence of things or produce order in representations. In a reasoned and ordered world made up of binaries and hierarchies someone or something is always on the wrong side or on the bottom (Adams St. Pierre, 2000). The political and social contexts in which I have spent most of my life rely on binaries to differentiate and organize people in relation to issues. And so the "chaos by design" of the third spaces created in ACCELA for the hybridization of knowledge and discourse serves as a reminder of how our epistemological views drive our work. My goal is to do justice to the complexity of research rather than simplify the issues I am analyzing. Although I had found *where* I wanted to fit in, it continues to be a challenge to not get trapped into a humanist perspective and language when writing about theoretical concepts.

Making Peace with Theory

From grappling with feminist poststructuralism I have come to rely on some theoretical understandings or constructs that lie at the heart of my work. I acknowledge that it is only through my studies that I have learned to use theory as a tool not only for understanding my experiences, but also for writing about them. I now understand that the position I take in researching and representing others' acts is "situated, partial, and perspectival" (Lather, 1999, p. 4). I have asked Sarah and Irina for feedback and input on my accounts of events. Nevertheless, my research can never capture a "truth" about the meanings Sarah and Irina make of research. "Meaning is 'radically plural, always open, and . . .there is politics in every account'" (Bruner 1993 in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 615).

My understanding of meaning being constructed within context is also central to my work. This understanding is greatly informed by my doctoral program which is grounded in sociocultural theories of language. Teachers' ways of relating to the world are directly connected to the complex contexts or situations teachers are dealing with (Freeman, 2002; Korthagen, 2007). Teachers generate meaning of and within their contexts in order to understand and relate to the world. Drawing on the work of sociocultural theorists such as Bakhtin (1981), Fairclough (2003), Foucault (1980), Gee (1996), Halliday and Hasan (1989), and Vygotsky (1978). I consider knowledge to be socially generated in relationships through language for certain purposes within certain contexts. Therefore, to examine the meanings of research teachers are constructing, I look at the language teachers use with the understanding that language shapes and is shaped by the context (Rogers, 2004).

The Context of My Work

My theoretical frameworks require an in-depth understanding of the teachers with whom I am working, our relationship and the context surrounding their teaching and my research. I first met Sarah and Irina in January of 2005, as they began their

Master's in Education through the ACCELA program. Sarah had been a long-term sub for 6 months and Irina had been an elementary teacher for 4 years. Although both teachers moved several times from one school to another they stayed in the district and are both currently teaching at the Jefferson School.

Before entering the teaching profession Sarah had worked for several years in marketing for an advertising agency in Boston. As a native English speaker Sarah often questions the best methods for teaching her primarily Latino students:

> Some native Spanish speaking teachers believe that students should try to only speak English while in the classroom. I'm not sure if this is the best way for me to instruct, as sometimes there are lapses in communication. I usually try my best to explain things in Spanish (like math concepts) and have students help me translate. Although I encourage students to speak in English I do not require them to do so (Sarah's memo 04/13/05).

Irina enrolled in the ACCELA master's program the first year she began to teach ESL. Due to cuts in funding Irina has had to move several times. Irina moved to Jefferson School in September of 2007 and is now the ESL support teacher for the fourth grade. Irina was born in Puerto Rico but completed most of her schooling in the United States. Her Latina heritage and bilingualism enable Irina to relate well to her students and develop close relationships with them. She is familiar with the ways in which "ELL students can use their native language to interpret a text or a situation" (Irina reading response 2/9/05).

My relationship with Sarah and Irina began as their project assistant and continued throughout their ACCELA master's program. Each project assistant was assigned to four teachers. Our official role was to help the teachers collect research in the form of classroom videos, student work, and field notes for their teacher-research projects. As I alluded to earlier, project assistants also act as intermediaries between the teachers, fielding their frustrations and complaints and representing their voices to the faculty in the program. My role allowed me to get to know the teachers in a less formal manner than I may have if I had been their instructor. As a former ESL teacher, I admire and look up to the skill, intellect, and dedication both Sarah and Irina bring to their students. I have learned an incredible amount about teaching from them. I knew from the first course they took that I wanted to follow Sarah and Irina for my research. I tried to make our relationship mutually beneficial and throughout their courses they often asked for my feedback before submitting assignments.

The district Sarah and Irina work in is the third largest school district in Massachusetts. The statistics are unfortunately characteristic of large urban districts. The dropout rate in the district is 9.3%, which is higher than the state average of 3.4%, while the graduation rate in the district is 54.4%. There is a high rate of student transience. Demographically the schools serve a student population that is 24% African American, 2.1% Asian, 52.9% Hispanic, 0.1% Native American, 16.8 % White, and 4.1% multiracial. 13% of the students are identified as bilingual and there are 50 different languages spoken by students throughout the district (District Website. Retrieved on 10/20/09).

The various schools in which Sarah and Irina worked during the first 3 years of this study were labeled "underperforming" by the state due to the lack of improvement in the state standardized tests and also received Reading First grants. These grants put great pressure on school districts, especially the ones deemed "underperforming," to meet Adequate Yearly Progress benchmarks. This must be done through implementation of Scientifically Research Based Curriculum. It was not rare for me to visit one of the teachers and find them reading from "the script" in the teachers' manual as required by the principal.

In different years, both Sarah and Irina, moved to the Jefferson School. The Principal of Jefferson Elementary developed a great interest in the work of the ACCELA Alliance and recruited teachers who had graduated from the ACCELA program. The Jefferson School puts strong emphasis on literacy across the curriculum and has made great progress in raising their students' test scores but also in preparing their students to go on to middle school. The school does not use curriculum scripts and the teachers are given more freedom in choosing and planning their curriculum.

Conducting the Study

Praxis requires me to engage the theories I draw on in my research by conducting cycles of research and reflection always keeping in mind my own practices, roles, and the institutional and cultural systems within which I am operating. The approaches I chose for my longitudinal study borrow from both case study and ethnographic methods. I have chosen case studies drawing on the work of Yin (2009) because I want to represent both Sarah and Irina as individual cases, not in a comparative study. Though I have completed the data collection, my analysis is ongoing. I am conducting two case studies of two different teachers bounded by time (January of 2005 to January of 2010), place (Urban School District), program (master's program within the university/school partnership), and position (ESL teachers).

The data sets I have collected in this study are grouped into three different phases. My rationale for the three phases was that each phase is representative of an important stage in teacher growth and education. Also, my responsibilities in relationship to the teachers differed in each phase.

- Phase 1 occurred during the teachers' praxis-based master's program. The data consist mainly of the work the teachers produced for their courses as well as classroom observations and e-mail correspondence. There were also data collected from the teachers' dissemination of their data at conferences and interviews with the teachers. In this phase I was a project assistant and the teachers were master's students.
- Phase 2 occurred during the teachers' practicum leading to TESOL licensure. In this phase I was the practicum supervisor and I collected the teachers' coursework, observations from their classrooms and notes and video of the meetings with the teachers and their supervising practitioners.

- Phase 3 was completed in January of 2010, 2 years after the teachers had completed their master's program. I spent 2 weeks observing, videotaping, and collecting lesson plans from both teachers as they prepared for a district wide lesson study conducted in their classrooms. There were also follow-up interviews with each teacher.

Analysis and Preliminary Findings

I have begun my first stage of reflection and analysis with a text from each of the three phases that constitutes a critical incident (Angelides, 2001). For my purposes in this process I have defined a critical incident as a reflective text in which the teachers re-visit written texts, discursive practices, events, or meanings that were previously made. I chose this approach to begin my analysis because I have collected a daunting amount of data over 5 years. I see critical incident analysis as a good way to begin looking at the themes and general meanings made by the teachers in each of the three data collection stages. I do this by coding the language used. The critical incident I have chosen to analyze is what I believe to be the culminating reflective text in the time period being covered. In other words, the critical incident chosen for analysis in each stage occurs toward or at the end of the stage and re-visits events, meanings, and texts that have occurred throughout the master's program, practicum, and follow-up visit. I have also chosen texts in which I have interacted with the teachers either through conversation or feedback on assignments. My goal was to maintain reflexivity throughout the analysis, by focusing on the meanings the teachers and I were co-constructing.

I am finding that discourses of research in this study are always mediated. One of the main mediating factors is curriculum. At times discourses of research are mediated though the curriculum of the teachers' master's program and other times it is the curriculum that the teachers are responsible for implementing in their own classrooms. It is the teachers' negotiation of these curricula and the decisions they make about what discourses of research to draw on depending on the purpose and audience for their texts that is remarkable. The teachers both demonstrate heightened and hybrid understandings of educational research and its uses and purposes.

Having Made Space and Time

Writing this chapter has allowed me the space and time to interrogate critical praxis in my research process. It is one thing to claim critical praxis yet far more difficult to live critical praxis. I often find myself writing about my responsibility to reflect on my own practices, roles, and the institutional and cultural systems within which I am operating, and then returning to the distanced voice of an educational researcher gazing through a lens at my subjects. This chapter has made imperative my responsibility to put the reflection in action and to maintain my voice as I struggle to represent myself and my decisions humbly yet honestly.

This exercise of reflection has made salient the importance of purpose in working toward productive social change. The paths I have taken toward achieving my purpose have varied and often meandered, but I have committed to Critical Praxis Research as my method. I have realized that purpose is generally not an achievable end point. In order to ensure that my purpose is aligned with bringing about social change through critiquing the status quo to build a more just society, I am responsible for continually theorizing and acting. The ways in which I take on this responsibility will always be shaped by my understandings. My understandings are based on my awareness of who I am and how I shape the process. Who I am, or my identity, is always shaped by the contexts I engage with while working toward achieving my purpose just as in return I shape those contexts. It is within this mutually informing relationship that all the work involved in Critical Praxis Research will hopefully bring us closer to our purpose.

Finding the answer for how to make research meaningful in the lives of ESL teachers is not a purpose I am able to achieve. What I have achieved is a greater understanding of the complexities of who I am and how this informs the work I do with teachers and future teachers in schools. I am a teacher researcher. My heart will always be in schools with students struggling to learn and teachers struggling to teach. However, I now see my role as existing in the *third space* connecting research and classroom practices. My purpose is to collaboratively generate new knowledge, new discourses, and new ways of turning struggles into challenges that can be met.

About the Author

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Note

1. Pseudonyms have been given to the schools and the teachers in this research.

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Chapter 13
Developing My Own Ways of Knowing as a Teacher Researcher

Changing Perceptions

About 4 years ago when I started my doctorate program, I had preconceived notions about what academic research looked like. I assumed that it was profoundly objective and sought to surface certainties about people and the world. Grounded in this idea of research, I also had expectations of my doctoral program. I believed that the classes would train me to become a disconnected observer capable of discerning rationality and objectivity to problems that needed solving. I was excited. I desperately wanted the tools to fix the problems I was seeing in my classroom and the world, and I had faith that once I learned to be a researcher, I would be capable of studying, analyzing, and solving. At this point in the program, I had no idea how my ways of thinking about research and myself would quickly unravel and mold into something new.

As the classes progressed, I found myself in seminars where I began to talk and think about what I wanted to study for my dissertation. I kept trying to think of ideas that seemed "right." By this I mean that I purposely tried to force my mind to hook onto something and be interested in something that I could imagine putting under a microscope and picking apart. Most essential to the scientist/microscope image I had in my mind was that it had to be something outside of my life and relationships. So, in class, I began generating ideas about studies I could do in other people's classrooms, and I fantasized about interviews I could hold to learn about other people's thoughts. Although this genre of research may have made for a quality study, it wasn't truly where my head and heart were residing; it wasn't me.

Through my discernments about how to frame my doctoral research, I came to better define this "me;" the image I held of a distant researcher was completely fractured from how I viewed myself. As a teacher, wife, mother, friend—all of the labels I would have given myself—my view of the world was intimate, relational, and connected. My passions about teaching that were fueling my interests as a doctoral candidate were inextricably linked to my own classroom, students, and life. I saw so much occurring within my own setting, and to push it all aside to adhere to

Contributed by Maura Morse.

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a vision of academia, I began to see would be doing a disservice to my research, my students, and myself. I asked myself, "If I am disingenuine, how then can my research make a meaningful and genuine impact in my life, the lives of others and the educational community at large?" So, I began to pay attention to my own setting coupled with my own wants and perceptions.

Teacher Research

Having identified myself as a woman, wife, mother, and importantly, a teacher, who wanted to do research that was intimate to my own life and classroom setting, I sought out guidance concerning how I could situate my evolving perception of researcher within rigorous academic research. Around this time, I stumbled across Joe L. Kincheloe's (2003) work, *Teachers as Researchers*, and Kincheloe's notions gave me a needed vocabulary which supported my intuitive feelings about who I am and, thus, how that should inform how I frame my research. In other words, his work put words to my gut feelings, which I did not yet have the vocabulary to articulate. Through his writing, I learned that my previous ideas about academic research were situated in positivism's championship of the scientific method, and through this the popular belief that studies could and should be objectively carried out by distant, disconnected observers. I became empowered to learn that there was a cadre of researchers out there who rigorously argued that ways of researching and knowing must be subjective and connected to oneself (Giroux, 1988; Kincheloe, 2003).

In fact, I began to perceive that an underlying current of their arguments had to do with the types of questions and problems facing contemporary schools. Kincheloe (2003) states, "Methodology should not be criticized as ambiguous and vague, if the problems to which it is applied are ambiguous and vague, and this is the condition of educational research" (p. 163). I interpreted statements like this one to be cognizant of what I intuitively knew as a teacher – that classrooms are messy places – making studying them "hopelessly complex" (Carver, 2006, p. 219).

I came to believe that researching this complex milieu as a distant observer was probably not the way to deeply research the questions that were arising inside of me like questions about my pedagogy and student learning. Therefore, I started to pay close attention to my inner passions and the driving questions and concerns I had about education in my own setting, a 5th grade classroom located in an affluent city in the greater Boston area. Important to this process of attending to my own ideas was the allowance of self to view my position of teacher as being synonymous with being in the position of expert. I had come to see that I did not need to rely on outside and distant experts to drive the direction and shape of my study, but that through my day-to-day work in the classroom, I held an essential—an intimate—a relational—a connected—a knowing—position that could uniquely add to the literature in a way that no one else could about my own classroom.

Grounding My Study in My Personal Experience

At the same time I was becoming empowered as a teacher researcher, I had become deeply interested in a theme I was noticing in my own classroom, twenty-first century skills. My interest in this topic was born out of my personal experience with it. In the spring of 2006, my principal called my classroom to congratulate me. Another principal had just called her to congratulate her. The Boston Globe's school rankings based on the Massachusetts' Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) results were in and my students had scored in the top five in the state for the number of students who achieved advanced math score rankings. I was ecstatic. She was thrilled. The attention and recognition from my colleagues boosted my confidence in myself as a teacher. I felt motivated to help my students to do even better the next year. At the time, I did not realize that this achievement would mark a turning point in my career that would disaffirm rather than affirm my teaching.

Around the same time period of this experience, I tuned into what I interpreted to be a popular buzz about the changing global landscape. Thinking globally was encouraged by events both outside and within my classroom. Outside of the classroom, it seemed to me that the pulse of the media and many social conversations I engaged in centered on the interconnectedness of the world. Talk of people and events like the 2006 winter Olympics in Italy and the war between Israel and Lebanon that existed far beyond my classroom was more and more woven throughout my private life. There seemed to be this "other world" that I left behind when I walked through my classroom door.

Simultaneously, my former superintendent launched a strategic plan for my school district that focused on preparing the district for the class of 2020, which was an initiative focused on globalization. This spurred professional conversations with my colleagues in my classroom and during faculty meetings about educating the class of 2020 for a global age. Ironically, as these private and professional conversations were flooding my life, I was planning extra MCAS test prep lessons. Quite frankly, the additional test prep lessons were boring and did not reflect the learning or experiences that I hoped my students would gain during the year. As I further delved into an internal voice of change, I gained an urgency to teach differently. This urgency fueled my desire to want to learn more about teaching for a global age confluent with my own teaching practices and within my own context. I started to see that my work as a doctoral student could be situated somewhere within this sense of change I was feeling and could possibly help support it. Realizations such as this began to further suggest that I wanted myself to be an integral part of my study.

Having the sense that I wanted my teaching to be different and musing with the idea of possibly framing my research around this, I looked for guidance outside of my classroom and noticed a great deal of talk about this topic in the media. For example, I became aware that Paul Reville, the Secretary of Education in Massachusetts, appointed the Global Education Advisory Council to develop recommendations on how to infuse skills for the twenty-first century into Massachusetts' curriculum. This group published a set of goals that include,

"To update and distribute a packet of resources … to superintendents and principals …" and "To carry out a survey of existing practices in global education in Massachusetts' schools" (p. 36). In addition to their goals, this council stated, "Professional development is essential to help teachers … help students gain global competence…" (p. 36).

Instead of helping me, dialogue such as this frustrated me. I couldn't fathom what packet of resources this group could give me that would help me change my teaching. Nothing in their language seemed to be about teaching and learning; it seemed to be empty rhetoric. Nor, did I think that more of the same professional development seminars would really make a deep impact. I envisioned the same script I had been a part of so often—I sit and listen politely as someone show's off a new teaching tool or asks me to reflect on a specific practice. I watch and engage in the seminar and often the discussions do make me think about my practice. But, inevitably, I return to my classroom and teach the same way I always taught before the one-day seminar. I began to interpret words such as "surveys," "packets of resources," and "professional development" as buzzwords that suggest something is happening. When really, in my experience, these items do not provide teachers meaningful support to make much happen. Moreover, I noticed that the words behind the discussions are never really fully unpacked, by the leaders and more importantly by the teachers themselves. I saw that my frustration and more essentially my need to interpret the rhetoric further was at the crux of my desire to teach differently.

Studying My Own Classroom Practice

My hopes for my classroom, my students, and my own practice as a teacher were the seeds that grounded my ideas for my study. Further rooting the study in rigorous research, I saw that my own experience mirrored a deep cavity in the literature in relation to teacher interpretation of the rhetoric of school reform. Therefore, it became apparent that to further construct my own understanding of teaching for a global age, a framework was needed that would push me beyond an imposed definition of these terms. Also, a framework was needed that would allow me to further critically interpret the rhetoric around change so that I could own it, and shape it, and then implement in my own classroom. Based on my review of the literature, I concluded that a framework for teacher interpretation that pushes new ways of seeing and critical analysis is missing from the dialogue, and so I sought out to create one for my study. As such, my study explored the meaning of twenty-first century skills and global education and what these terms mean for my teaching.

To investigate this both necessary and personal topic, I needed to create a framework that would allow me to rigorously explore my perceptions of the educational discourse and changes I could or could not make in my classroom. So, I designed a case study of my 5th grade classroom located in District X (pseudonym). Baxter and Jack (2008) define a case to be an in-depth study of a single group or incident. Specifically, my study had three phases that I interpreted to be closely connected

to my work as a teacher. Phase I of the study focused on interpreting media texts (newspaper articles, magazine articles, YouTube videos, etc.) and then constructing our (I explain the "our" below) own definition of twenty-first century skills/global education; in Phase II of the study, we changed a unit of study (geometry) so that it better aligned with our own co-constructed definition; lastly, in Phase III of the study, we implemented our changed unit with our students.

Co-teaching Methodology

To really investigate teacher interpretation of education for a global age and pedagogical change in my case study of my classroom, I employed a co-teaching methodology. In particular, my study used Tobin's and Roth's (2006) definition of co-teaching; "co-teaching occurs when two or more persons teach a group of students with a dual purpose: providing more opportunities for students to learn and providing opportunities to the persons to grow as teachers" (p. 17). Throughout my study, I co-taught with Mrs. X (pseudonym) who was a 5th grade teacher with whom I had previously shared a classroom.

Importance of the Shared Experience and Cogenerative Dialogue

Using the co-teaching model while engaged in the three phases of the study, provided a shared experience between my co-teacher and I. Importantly, while living the shared experience of interpreting twenty-first century skills and global education, changing a unit of study, and implementing the unit, my co-teacher and I were constantly engaged in dialogue. This dialogue was shaped by the fact that through the methodology of co-teaching, we both shared the experience of being stakeholders, engaged in and responsible for all three phases of the study. In this way, co-teaching encouraged a dialogue that was only possible amongst two people fully invested in and responsible for the classroom.

Roth and Tobin (2002) further explain, "We found that co-teaching provided us with many shared experiences that subsequently led to professional conversations during which we came to better understand teaching in our respective settings" (p. 43). This quote implies that through the "shared experience" and the conversations that can result because of it, growth in understanding occurs for teachers (Roth & Tobin, 2002, p. 43). Co-teaching was used in all three phases of the study to support growth in interpretation of dialogue, growth in curriculum changes, and growth in implementation.

Specifically, Roth and Tobin (2002) use the term cogenerative dialogue to denote the conversation that can occur between co-teachers. Cogenerative dialogue replaced the term, "praxeology," for the researchers, which was a way to name talk about praxis or the habitual ways of acting as teacher. Tobin and Roth (2006) describe cogenerative dialogue as being praxis of method in a triple sense: (1) It is a means for stakeholders in a context to deal with contradiction and conflict

themselves instead of relying on research and policy changes; (2) It is an alternative to interviewing teachers about their experiences; and (3) It is a concrete context in which to generate theory as part of research. Co-teaching and cogenerative dialogue have a dialectical relationship; since the theory is a dialectical one, the two are always in reciprocation. This suggests that when applied, cogenerative dialogue supports reliance on our own interpretations, was a way to talk about all three phases of our study in a different way than is evidenced in interviews of teachers, and provided a space to create our own theories as a part of our own research.

Importance of Co-participating

To afford the opportunity of the shared experience and cogenerative dialogue, the co-teaching methodology insists on co-participants in all three phases of the study. Instead of taking an objective/outsider role, the researcher must co-participate by actively co-teaching. In this way, the researcher gains a first person perspective that allows her to recognize salient meanings that practitioners use to ground their actions, impossible to gain through a peripheral stance. My research embraced the notion that practices can be "understood only from the perspective of the participating subject, thereby requiring researchers to coparticipate in teaching in order to understand it" (Roth & Tobin, 2002, p. 246). By co-participating I was better situated to be able to critically interpret terms, change a unit of study, and then implement it because I was doing so through a lived experience instead of considering it as one would a Petri dish to be put under a microscope.

Roth & Tobin (2002) ground the importance of the participatory nature of co-teaching in activity theory. Activity theory assumes that one cannot understand human activity independent of contexts and that human actions can best be understood through the lens of practice (Engeström, 1999). This theory considers the relationship between an individual to the object of his/her activity, but also, the means through which tools, rules, community, and individuals' roles mediate this relationship. For example, the relationship between student and teacher is mediated by pedagogy and rules for the interactions between teachers and students. Activity theory maintains that human activity is not simply determined by internal and external factors, but that subjects actively shape contexts and the ways in which they contribute to their activity.

Roth and Tobin (2002) stress the importance of contradictions to their co-teaching approach. The core contradiction Roth and Tobin (2002) note is that while teachers are in their classrooms and instructing, we are subjects. As subjects, we have a role in shaping intimate and influential decisions about the course of the day and gleaning understandings about the school day that can only be learned from someone in this teacher (subject) position. Differently, these two researchers contend that too often research about schools relegates teachers to the role of object; outside researchers observe, study, pick apart, make recommendations, and draw conclusions about the object of study, the teacher. Since this is done without the outside researcher ever stepping into the role (the activity system) of the teacher,

Roth and Tobin (2002) maintain that this type of research lacks understandings that can only be gained by joining the teacher as a stakeholder within the classroom so that both researcher and teacher are subjects. Since traditional theory building research remains outside of the activity of teaching and stays within the activity of observing, Roth and Tobin (2002) state, "we believe that it is a major obstacle to significant and lasting change" (p. 250). By situating myself as a co-teacher, I was able to be within the activity system of the teacher as the subject. The subject position was attained through the shared experience of and responsibility for the actions taken in the three stages of the study.

For instance, while co-teaching, I engaged in all lesson planning with my co-teacher, photocopied and organized materials, answered parent emails, stood in front of the class and equally explained lesson goals, etc. To further elaborate our collaboration, I provide one example in more detail. While working together, we found that our face-to-face time was not always long enough for us to process what we were thinking and seeing. Therefore, instead of keeping separate journals, we created a shared Google document that we both could access anytime. This provided a virtual forum from which we could see and respond to each other's thoughts. An excerpt from our Google document is below. In this example, we are beginning to think and write about how we will change the geometry unit so that it better matched our emerging co-created definition of twenty-first century skills/global education.

> Maura: What problems do we want our students to be able to solve with the math they are learning—geometry could help students build more sustainable houses someday or help people understand concentration of poverty in the world through mapping and analysis.
>
> Mrs. X: At a former school, I participated in a pilot that examined and compared a constructivist text and a back-to-basics text. My participation reaffirmed my belief that no single commercial program will be best for all students—and that's where good teachers come in.

In these excerpts, we both are beginning to write for ourselves and share with each other some of our ideas about how to shape our lessons. I noted real-life applications of geometry to alleviate poverty, and Mrs. X alluded to the idea that she does not believe one prepackaged program would fit our needs. The Google document allowed us to continue to engage as co-teachers outside of the classroom hours.

Importantly, the co-teaching methodology aligned with my own perceptions of myself as described above, as a person who experiences the world in relation as a teacher, woman, wife, mother, friend, etc. This methodology demanded that I be in a connected and relational position in relation to Mrs. X, the students, and the material to be studied. Secondly, as noted, this methodology also was akin to my perceptions that the teacher becomes knowledgeable about her classroom through her everyday activities with the students. I had given myself permission to see myself as expert and attend to my own musings. Roth's and Tobin's (2002) co-teaching methodology provided a framework from which my sentiments could be extended into academic research.

(co) Auto/Ethnography

I framed my use of the co-teaching method in the wider ethnographic tradition; specifically, I coined my study a (co) auto/ethnography. Clearly, I wanted to explore what transpired with Mrs. X and me as we progressed through the three phases of the study; however, my background experience as a teacher dissuaded me from seeking definite answers or certainties. I knew classrooms are dynamic places and perceived that interpreting our experience would reveal more than chasing truths. As such, I decided to produce a (co) auto/ethnography, described below.

- *Ethnography:* I use the term here to represent the study of shared experiences, but more specifically, the study of everyday activities. My view of ethnography in my study aimed to be "holistic" and to show how "education is linked to the economy, the political system, the local social structure, and the belief system of the people served by the school" (Ogbu, 1981, p. 6). Thus, in the study of how co-teachers engage in the everyday activity of interpreting and implementing, we strove to see our beliefs and actions as embedded within their wider ideological place within the complex web of reality. In doing this, I recognized that I would never attain a complete view of the situatedness of our activities, and readily admitted that the story of the co-teachers I told was not the truth, but one person's struggle to better see her world. In fact, in writing my ethnography, I did not focus on certainties, but on our ever-evolving struggle to more clearly interpret our world and ourselves as we journeyed throughout the research.
- *Auto/:* I used this part of the term as recognition of the fact that I, as one of the co-teachers, was a significant focus of the story in my dissertation. I placed myself in the study so as to explore the situatedness of myself with others in social contexts as I worked to better understand 21st century skills/global education (Spry, 2001, p. 710). Relying on Kincheloe's (2007) notion of auto/ethnography, I included the '/' between the term. He does this, as did I, to denote the belief that the self is always dialectically in relation to others. In this way, the study of the self is always also the study of others and the study of others is always also the study of self.
- *(co):* I based my coining of this part of the term on co-auto/ethnography (which differs from my use of (co) auto/ethnography). In recognizing that the study of oneself is inextricably intertwined with the study of others, this tradition structures research by multiple researchers in ways that value the individuals' ways of knowing separately and together. Taylor and Coia (2006), two researchers who engage in co-auto/ethnographic research, explain, " . . . our collaborative model provides spaces for us to examine ourselves first and then look outward and then back inward for clarification . . . we pushed one another to keep reflecting, and thinking about the ways in which we were teaching" (Taylor & Coia, 2006, p. 275). This quote suggests that the co-auto/ethnographic approach allows one to gain a greater understanding of self through collaboration with another. These researchers describe a process of co-reflecting that leads to deeper understandings of both self and others by engaging with auto/ethnographic work in

> relationship with others as the "co." (Roth & Tobin, 2002; Taylor & Coia, 2006). Roth and Tobin (2002) and Taylor and Coia (2006) describe that the collaborative approach has become such a central component of their research and how they come to understand the subject of focus that to then reduce their story/findings to one voice is disingenuous to the research. Therefore, these researchers co-author texts in such a way that the reader can see each individual voice and the progression of ideas that flows from the respective voices. Certainly, since the discourse flowed from two distinct voices something is lost when one person synthesizes and reports. Although my dissertation was akin to the spirit of the co-auto/ethnographic tradition, I could not rightfully say that it fully embodied it. Therefore, I coined the term (co) auto/ethnographic as a way to denote that there were two voices informing the study. I have put the (co) in parenthesis to separate it from the auto/ethnography; since it was my dissertation, my work was not co-authored. However, because I worked so closely with my co-teacher, I believed that my co-teacher intangibly and inextricably influenced my voice. The (co) before the auto/ethnography was in recognition and tribute of this influence.

I was thrilled to be able to develop my own term for my study. Again, the guiding lights shaping my study were reliance on my own knowledge of what I wanted to accomplish and not prescriptive methods.

Judging the Quality of My Teacher Research

Certainly, important to any study is the quality of the research that was produced. Having produced a study where I went against the grain of more traditional/positivist research by co-participating in the shared experience as the researcher, I needed to seek out more appropriate ways to judge the quality of my research than offered by positivism's typical qualifiers of reliability, validity, and generalizability. This was of particular importance to my study, as teacher research often has to fight to be seen as being as academically sound as the harder sciences. I relied on Kincheloe's (2003) rejection of positivist notions and instead used his re-conceptualization of standards of rigorous research for teacher researchers that include accommodation and pragmatic validity.

Anticipatory Accommodation

My study was grounded in the idea that teachers are intimately connected to their classrooms and the structures and ideologies that shape their contexts. Therefore, my study drew on the contention that it would be impossible to attain any sort of objectivity, or separation, between teachers and their classrooms, as positivist researchers would demand. Instead, Kincheloe (2003) replaces the notion of objectivity with a focus on the credibility of the researcher's portrayal of constructed realities (Kincheloe, 2003). In this way, the teacher researcher's construction of and

understanding of her classroom study is valued as a means through which to rigorously further explore classroom practice. In terms of my study, I did not seek to obtain objectivity through a separation of my research and myself. In fact, my methodological framework demanded the opposite. Instead, I considered the credibility of the reality I was portraying. To support me in this aim, Mrs. X and the students participated with me during data analysis.

To help further consider the credibility of what the teacher researcher presents, Kincheloe (2003) explains anticipatory accommodation. Instead of using the positivist idea of generalizability, Kincheloe (2003) postulates the notion of accommodation as being a more appropriate standard for teacher research. Classrooms are dynamic places that are constantly changing. Student and teacher needs do not just change on a yearly basis, but can change on a daily basis. "Teachers intuitively know that classrooms with their many significant and peripheral variables, their complexity and chaos, are not good places to replicate (validate) research" (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 171).

Specifically, to account for the lived realities of classrooms in relation to generalizability, Kincheloe (2003) advocates a Piagetian standard of accommodation. Piaget posited a notion of cognitive constructivism; humans reshape cognitive structures to accommodate what is happening in new contexts. In this way, humans compare and contrast different interpretations of contexts as we move towards new understandings/cognitive structures. As such, as teachers understand their own and other's research, they will accommodate their findings to their own classrooms. In relation to my research, I did not seek to prove the generalizabiity of my study, but instead considered how other teachers may accommodate my findings to their own realities. To make their accommodation easier, I tried to make my own settings, biases, and details of my study explicit so that teachers could have as much useful information as possible as they accommodated for their own classroom.

Pragmatic Validity

As a teacher researcher, I sought to use a standard of rigorous research that would not just matter to academia, but to the community of teachers, as well. Kincheloe (2003) puts forth the idea of pragmatic validity to reach both of these aims. My role as a teacher demands that my educational research is judged by its usefulness in educational contexts. Kincheloe (2003) explains, "Those with a more pragmatic orientation maintain in this context that knowledge produced by research may be best validated via its role in practice – thus the notion of pragmatic validity" (p. 184). This quote suggests that knowledge produced by research encounters a rigorous test when put into action in the lived experience of a classroom. Thus, when applying pragmatic validity to my study, I considered the usefulness of the knowledge produced to my classroom and possibly others. I speculated that as teachers accommodate my story to their own context, they would glean useful guidance from this research. In addition to this gauge of teacher research, other researchers such as Guba and Lincoln (1989) also offer criterion from which to ensure that teacher

research maintains the rigor of academia. Importantly, these measures mean that my study which was grounded in my own ways of knowing and which took place in my own classroom can and should be included in the academic literature as the peer of more traditional studies.

Conclusion

My experience with my study strongly suggests that research can be framed by one's view of self and the questions one has about the world she is seeing. My study was personal from its conception being tied to my own driving questions and situated in my own classroom with me as a participating co-teacher. This aligns with my view of myself and my place in the world as someone who learns and seeks to surface connections relationally with others. In fact, the changes we made and tried to make in the classroom through the three phases of the study, I interpret could not be mandated nor easily measured by traditional/positivist standards. Instead, they were the result of deep considerations about both our professional and personal lives. Our project was not mandated by administrators and policymakers, but driven by the internal processes of two teachers striving for significant change. Importantly, in this way, our study suggests the value in supporting teacher-directed inquiry and championing methods that support this inquiry.

At the conclusion of the study, I felt like I had some answers, but infinitely more questions. I still have questions like: (1) How can I better see and interpret my experience as a classroom teacher? (2) How do I sustain my work as both a classroom teacher and a teacher researcher within an educational system that does not always align with my ways of seeing and knowing? (3) How can I best communicate my ideas to the wider academic and educational community as a teacher researcher? It is my hope that questions like these will help me continue on the path of becoming closer to who I want to be as a teacher, a mother, a wife, a friend, and a person living in a particular position in the grand web of reality. I speculate that methods I develop for any future studies will be framed by my personal hopes and the discerning questionings of a teacher researcher. Excitingly, I now know and can say with confidence that rigorous academic consideration of my questioning and imagining can illuminate pertinent understandings for the educational community in a way that can only be spotlighted by a researcher in my expert position of teacher.

About the Author

Maura Morse graduated from Boston College with a BA in Elementary Education and History, and with a MA in Educational Psychology. Her doctorate is from UMASS Boston where her dissertation focused on teacher research and twenty-first century skills/global education. She has taught 5th grade for 7 years.

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Chapter 14
The Interplay of Identity, Context, and Purpose in a Study of Mathematics Teaching and Learning

Locating the Gap Between Theory and Practice in Mathematics Education

According to policy makers and researchers, the role of mathematics in a post-industrial society goes beyond that of career preparation in the science and technology fields. Mathematical reasoning is an indispensible tool for informed participation in a democracy (Thurston, 1990). Our world is increasingly understood through the examination of patterns and trends; consequently, wise decision- and policy-making require that individuals sift information, determine relevance, solve problems, and analyze facts from multiple perspectives. Mathematics education today, however significant the role of mathematics in society, continues to be plagued with problems and challenges, including: low student enrollment in undergraduate and graduate mathematics programs; indicators of poor learning outcomes in mathematics for American students in comparison with students from other industrialized nations (Beaton et al., 1998); a prevalent lack of mathematical competence in the workforce; and the persistence of an achievement gap among students. African American, Latino, and Native American students continue to score lowest on standardized assessments. Few of these students study mathematics beyond lower level courses in high school (Martin, 2004; Oakes, 1990; Secada, 1992). Accordingly, several efforts have been made to reform mathematics education, including the development of curriculum standards by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and more recently, the Common Core Standards, and the design and implementation of new mathematics curricula (such as programs funded by the National Science Foundation, NSF), accompanied by strict regulation of implementation and greater emphasis on standardized assessment (Remillard, Stein, & Smith, 2007).

Once we get to the classroom setting, however, there appears to be a disconnect between what researchers and policy makers say needs to happen with mathematics education and what actually happens. In every setting in which I have taught, students have wondered about the need for learning mathematics and its relevance

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or connection to their own lives. Mathematics continues to be very difficult for students to learn. A gulf persists between theories of individual mathematics learning and the teaching and learning practices in the classroom. Explorations around what happens in the "black box" of the mind have contributed much to mathematics educational research, and have come close to explaining mental processes that students develop as they build understanding of specific mathematical concepts (Dubinsky, 1991; Gray & Tall, 2001); nevertheless, these developments have not fully resolved the problem that students and teachers face daily—not only is mathematics difficult to learn, but its importance eludes students, particularly at the secondary school level, where concepts and ideas feel disconnected from students' own developing identities. Thus, it is essential that our understanding of how students think increase significantly. Goos, Galbraith, and Renshaw (2002) assert that, given our incomplete understanding of mathematical thinking, we need further research on mathematics learning in authentic environments before continuing to make changes in classrooms. Specifically, we need more research that can contribute to the practice of teaching mathematics by focusing on the social dimensions of learning (which complements theories that explain individual cognitive processes), in order to develop better curriculum materials, refine pedagogy, and improve the structuring of classroom environments.

Mathematics as Culture: Situating Myself in the Research

My experiences with mathematics and my students' experiences with mathematics are vastly different. I am the daughter of a mathematician. Mathematics was not simply something I learned in a classroom; it was part of my life world. For this reason, in developing my dissertation research, I understood the importance of tracing back and analyzing the lenses through which I view mathematics and its instruction. I wanted to develop research questions that revolved around understanding how my students learned to think mathematically, but first I needed to make explicit what I meant by mathematical thinking and how this perspective might be supported by research and by my own experiences with mathematics and teaching. My developing perspectives on mathematics have determined and have been determined by my upbringing and my career path, influencing the school choices I made and the opportunities I sought. And with each experience, my beliefs were re-examined as new questions surfaced. Consequently, my identity as a mathematics educator informed the theories I searched for and appropriated in my doctoral study, as well as the research methodology that complements my conceptual framework.

I have taught mathematics in public schools for many years, including pilot and charter schools, and have formed ideas about the nature of the discipline. These ideas were built upon a foundation established when I was younger, working with and observing my father, a professional mathematician (research probabilitist and professor). The image that I first created of a practitioner of mathematics was of someone who worked all hours of the night, recording symbols as a way to communicate with other mathematicians, many of whom would visit and stay with my

family during collaborative stages of my father's practice. Growing up, I took the prescribed college preparatory math courses at each level of schooling and had the advantage of learning mathematics at school while receiving my father's support at home. Working with him not only influenced my interest in mathematics, but also my orientation toward teaching within the discipline. My father helped me justify ideas I was exposed to at school, and introduced me to various ways of proving results and building convincing mathematical arguments. He showed me how mathematicians had arrived at certain conclusions, why particular concepts were important, and how they could be communicated in order to provide a foundation for new ideas. In this way, I was initiated into a community of practice with the help and support of an expert. This is not to say that my own transition into mathematical thinking was easy, nor even linear, but it happened in the company of others, a dedicated high school math teacher and my father, whose life's work was mathematical thinking. My father's conceptualization of the field continues to reflect my own understanding of mathematics, after having engaged in years of school learning, teaching mathematics at the college and high school levels, designing mathematics curriculum, coaching teachers, and conducting educational research.

My father's practice of mathematics reflects an interpretive rather than objectivist characterization of the nature and practice of mathematics (Giné, 2008). Rather than seeing mathematics as a fixed, stable, and unique body of knowledge from an objectivist viewpoint, where mathematics teaching is characterized by the transmission of an accepted and structured domain, his study proceeded from the assumption that mathematics is an evolving empirical discipline. My first-hand view of a mathematician's practice emphasized for me that the discipline continues to evolve, as new discoveries contribute to the dynamic process of studying, conjecturing, and proving ideas. Klein (2003) further expounds on this view, "If history is any guide, there will be new additions to mathematics that will call for new foundations. In this respect, mathematics is like any one of the physical sciences. Theories must be modified as new observations or new experimental results conflict with previous established theories and compel formulations of new ones. No timeless account of mathematical truth is possible" (p. 320).

Mathematics is the science of solving problems. Problems may emerge directly from observation of real phenomena or may arise within the development of a particular branch of the discipline, arrived at through deductive reasoning, with indirect connections to real contexts. The nature of these problems is inherently complex, taking weeks, months, and sometimes years to resolve, and even longer to become part of the agreed-upon body of knowledge. But it continues to emerge and evolve, with the intention of reducing uncertainty in our understanding of the world. Such a conceptualization of the nature of mathematics begs the questions of how students begin to think mathematically, what it means to do so, and how school mathematics might be structured to encourage an exploratory approach to the subject that reflects, at some level, the work of mathematicians.

Through my role as a teacher and as the mathematics department head of two schools, I attempted to change mathematics education within local settings to reflect this view of mathematics. The timing of these experiences collided with

the extensive work that the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the National Research Council have done in order to communicate a vision of mathematics teaching and learning that embodies the nature of the discipline. Throughout my career, I had the opportunity to informally pilot and implement different elements of several of the standards-based, NSF-funded curricula of the 1990s, including Interactive Mathematics Program (IMP), Systemic Initiative for Montana Mathematics and Science curriculum (SIMMS), Contemporary Mathematics in Context (developed by the Core-Plus Mathematics Project), and Mathematics: Modeling Our World (created by COMAP). In addition, I was able to write and implement my own curriculum that borrowed the best ideas (in my opinion) from the projects mentioned above. Furthermore, I worked in member schools of the Coalition of Essential Schools, a national network of schools that embraces 10 principles that stress both depth over breadth of curriculum and teacher autonomy in design, among other innovative principles. This provided me with the opportunity to begin developing mathematics curriculum to reflect what mathematicians do, and it prepared me for the next step on my career path. After years of teaching mathematics to high school students, I decided to leave and begin designing mathematics curriculum at Education Development Center (EDC). The mathematics programs mentioned above, along with the NCTM standards (NCTM, 2000), formed part of a reform initiative intended to communicate mathematics as a discipline centered on problem-solving through inquiry-based and project-based teaching and learning practices. My work at EDC enabled me to be part of this reform.

My interest and ideas on how students learn to think mathematically evolved from these experiences and led to my dissertation study. The great intention of standards for mathematics instruction, and the interesting and challenging approaches to mathematics thinking and learning embodied by the new curricula in the 1990s, have yet to provide a teaching and learning model in the context of the classroom that really explains how kids think. Nor do they successfully suggest how a classroom environment might be structured in order for students to experience what it means to do mathematics and to think mathematically. Moreover, neither can account for the different ways that students receive instruction in the classroom. Even in my own experiences, there were stark differences in depth of mathematical understanding that students attained in different schools. High school students from the inner city school in which I had worked had the widest gaps in the background knowledge of mathematics, and their learning outcomes were characterized by low scores on standardized tests. On the other hand, students from the suburban charter school in which I also taught seemed to learn from innovative approaches and scored well on both the state test for graduation as well as college entrance exams. The range of student engagement with innovative math curriculum in the schools in which I taught prompted me to further explore how students think and learn in the context of an urban classroom, one in which a standards-based curriculum was being implemented.

As a mathematics educator and the daughter of a mathematician, I did not experience the same disconnect between math theory and math practice that my students did, and I wanted to in some way try to bridge this gap and make mathematics come

alive for students. To do so, I needed to examine and understand how students make sense of mathematics in the context of the classroom and in the interaction of students, teacher, and curriculum materials. I believed that situating my research in the classroom could ensure that, unlike more traditional approaches to cognition, the learner is not detached from the context in which most of his/her mathematical exposure takes place (Barab & Duffy, 1998). My experiences growing up in a culture of mathematics taught me that learning does not happen only within one's mind; it is not in isolation from the cultural, social, and historical influences of the setting in which learning takes place. My experiences as a teacher and curriculum designer, further taught me that mathematics curriculum cannot be thought of separately from a specific classroom and the students within that classroom. For this reason, I attempted to capture learning situated in the classroom, where students interact with peers, teachers, and mediating artifacts, including the curriculum in use. I hoped that further research on how students think and learn about mathematics, mediated by teacher and student interactions and classroom and curriculum artifacts, could provide insight into the difficulties encountered in teaching and learning mathematics at the secondary school level.

At this juncture, I emerged with an iteration of my study's research questions, in a generalized form. These included,

1. How do students learn to think mathematically in the context of a high school math classroom?
2. What are the implications of this study for supporting the classroom work of teachers, advancing mathematics educational research, and for developing curriculum materials?

Mathematics Teaching and Learning as Socio-cultural Practice

Given the perspective of mathematics I embrace, I searched the literature for constructivist and socio-cultural theories of learning, rather than absorptive or transmission theories. This was the logical approach for me because, first, constructivism acknowledges that students play an active role in making meaning while creating mental constructions of abstract mathematical objects (Dubinsky, 1991). This is valuable in that it provides language for talking about the mental constructions needed to understand and then apply a particular math concept. Research that details the processes students engage in when creating such constructions could be very powerful in suggesting places along a student's path for understanding where teachers might provide support. Pedagogical strategies can emerge from such descriptions, or genetic decompositions of mathematical concepts (Dubinsky, 1991).

However, while the research I conducted would be in consonance with such theoretical approaches, I deferred to socio-cultural theory for its overt attempt to integrate the cognitive and social dimensions of learning, directly acknowledging

that learning occurs within a cultural and historical context in which previous human activity is inseparable from our everyday learning experiences. The socio-cultural theories that guided the research include Russian- and German-rooted Activity Theory (Engeström, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978) and Structure Theory (Sewell, 1992). Under the umbrella of socio-cultural theory, I also considered socio-semiotic approaches that could help me make sense of mathematical discourse in the classroom. This seemed a natural extension given the characterization of mathematical thinking provided here, with its emphasis on discourse (use of language, symbols, notation, and diagrams).

Activity[1] Theory evolved from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries German and Soviet traditions of cultural-historical research. In contrast to the British theories of empiricism that formed the foundation for Anglo-American scientific thought, in which observation and experimentation were central, Activity Theory emphasized the active role of humans in developing and constructing ideas (Kuutti, 1995). Rather than viewing events in isolated and controlled settings, this approach placed human activity in the context in which it occurs. The Soviet roots of Activity Theory, traced back to the work of Vygotsky, Leont'ev, and Luria, emerged from the belief that children do not simply mature in isolation through a series of inevitable developmental processes; instead, Vygotsky (1978) argued that children play an active role in their own development of practical intelligence, or their use of tools in their environment. Not only did Vygotsky situate child development in a social context inseparable from cultural and historical influences, but he also stressed the *mediating* role of speech and sign use in children's development of practical intelligence. Although in his early work, Vygotsky (1978) explained that tool use in children might be considered separately from sign use and speech, he contended that, "the dialectical unity of these systems in the human adult is the very essence of complex human behavior" (p. 24).

The essential ideas underlying the model that I incorporated in my own explanation of students learning mathematics in the classroom are reflected in the Finnish interpretation of Activity Theory. These ideas can be summarized as follows: (1) human activity cannot be studied in isolation from the context in which it evolves; (2) mediating factors, such as the use of symbols and the development of speech, orient human behavior, linking individual and social levels of learning. This model served as a tool with which "to explicate components and internal relations of an activity system" (Engeström, 2001). Broken down into component parts, this model would prove helpful in analyzing the transitions between the actions of a collective, to the actions of individuals, and back again. In my research, I believed that Activity Theory combined with Structure Theory could shed light on the purpose of my work, which was to make sense of how mathematics thinking and learning happens in the classroom. Having found theories that embodied my epistemological perspective, I then designed my research methods in a way that would require my own participation in the classroom, the context I hoped would be conducive to making meaning of students' path toward mathematical ways of thinking and knowing.

Student Learning in Context: A Qualitative Case Study

Given the perspectives with which I entered this process, along with the matching theoretical lenses that hold explanatory power for understanding what and how students learn mathematics, I designed a qualitative, single-site case study of a 3-week mathematics summer course during which I would teach students from a Boston pilot school. Yin (2003) defines case study as an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (pp. 13–14). The cultural forces (in-school and out-of-school), in which the classroom is embedded form part of all classroom activity, influencing the types of interactions that take place, as well as the mathematical knowledge deemed important. In turn, these affect the kinds of artifacts present in the classroom and their use. Exploring student learning in context thus necessitated the reliability on multiple sources that would allow me to create thick descriptions and to analyze the data for emerging themes.

This case-study strategy directly placed the learning in the classroom—comprised of students' actions and perspectives as well as my own—as a central focus of the research. Because my interest lay in the individual and collective interactions during the construction of mathematical knowledge, an additional research strategy I appropriated was the microanalysis of the participants' communicative interactions captured on videotape. The primary data collection methods included my own participation in the setting (through the role of teacher-researcher), direct observation supplemented with detailed memos, two semi-structured group interviews of students, and the use of video. Classroom artifacts produced by students were also collected; these artifacts consisted of student products created during the summer session as well as students' own reflections on their learning process. I also used topic-predicate constructions (Van Oers, 2000) in my analysis of classroom discourse.

In addition to needing methods that could capture mathematical thinking and learning in action, my research relied on the creation of a classroom environment that elicited students' meaningful participation in the construction of mathematical ideas. Because my interest centered on capturing student mathematical thinking and analyzing it using a socio-cultural lens, I tried to ensure that students were provided various opportunities to engage with the curriculum materials and with myself, in the role of teacher-researcher. To this end, I decided to use a curriculum unit I developed through my role as a research associate at Education Development Center.

I wrote the unit, *Transforming Figures: The Mathematics of Animation* (Giné, 2009), with the intent that students would learn how math is used in animation by applying geometric transformations to two-dimensional figures. The unit begins by asking students to explore motion in animation through the viewing and discussion of short animated films. In particular, students pick geometric shapes they recognize and trace their movement through various viewings of the same film. Next,

the unit guides students to create simple optical toys so that they begin to understand how the illusion of motion can be created. The intent of the unit is that: as students work toward the creation of a flipbook, the unit project, they learn to mathematically represent slides, flips, and enlargements, while applying these transformations to the shapes they create. Students use matrices to represent objects and find systematic ways to move them, creating a short animated sequence. The unit suggests that each student design a flipbook animation with an accompanying guide explaining the mathematics used to move an object from one frame to the next in the animation.

There are several reasons why I used this unit as part of the context in this research study. First, both the content and the suggested pedagogy included in the unit and teacher's guide match the ideas behind the NCTM standards. More importantly, they are consistent with the conceptualization of mathematics and its practice, as explained above. The following are elements that I tried to incorporate in its design, in an attempt to learn for myself and later help guide teachers in the creation of an educational setting in which students learn to think mathematically:

1. My father described mathematical activity as constituted by attempts to understand aspects of phenomena, including change, structure, and relationships. In this unit, students explore invariants: they apply transformations to figures and determine the qualities of the figure that change and those that stay the same.
2. Schoenfeld (1992) and Gray and Tall (2001) describe flexible thinking as the ability to use symbols to represent processes, and then to treat the process as an object in itself. Through the enactment of this unit, students learn to use matrices to represent objects on a coordinate system. Matrices are also used to transform objects through various operations.
3. The unit is taught through an exploratory approach. Students experiment with geometric objects and transform them in order to create the illusion of motion with their flipbooks.
4. Students take on an active role in the creation of their own animated sequences. This unit is intended to provide students with an application through which they can experience the power of mathematics.
5. There is a particular focus in the unit on the use of symbols to communicate mathematical ideas. Students can make connections between the notation often used to represent functions in algebra and the notation used to represent transformations in geometry. Notation becomes purposeful in symbolizing ideas across mathematical fields.
6. Students are encouraged to communicate with one another while they explore mathematical ideas. While working together through various activities in the unit, students begin to develop common language as they check their own mental representations with one another.
7. Students communicate mathematics in writing when they create a mathematical guide that explains changes in their geometric objects from one frame of the animation sequence to the next.

Revisiting the Research Questions

While working on the research design for this study, I found the need to refine the research questions that would guide the work in the field and my subsequent analysis. I found first that my initial questions had been very general, which was good for getting me started, but they would be difficult to address through my research. Additionally, conducting the literature review provided me with language that embodied concepts I did not know how to write about at the time when I created my first iteration of the research questions. In particular, I began to understand that I needed to specify what I meant by learning mathematics. The first question then changed to a focus on student engagement with artifacts in the classroom and emphasized the mediating capacity of communication acts in the learning of mathematics. This question became more researchable, providing me with a clearer sense of what I might capture through the research methods I had designed. This iterative and constructive approach to the research questions would re-emerge in both the process of analysis following data collection and my appropriation of theory to explain observed phenomena in the classroom.

My new research questions were the following:

1. How do urban school students learn essential geometric ways of thinking in the context of a high school summer enrichment classroom?
   (a) How do students engage with curriculum artifacts?
2. How do communicative interactions in the classroom mediate student learning?
   (a) What are the implications of this study for: supporting the classroom work of teachers, advancing mathematics educational research, developing curriculum materials, and for urban mathematics education?

Analyzing the Data

One of the most challenging phases of the research process was data analysis. My intent had been to view videos daily, after teaching each class, in an effort to identify excerpts that might be interesting to watch and discuss with students. This proved difficult for me, both on a logistic level, as well as an emotional level. During the first week, I reviewed the data at home by watching the videos of our class sessions. However, finding time for this process was challenging given the various tasks with which I was engaged. I had also underestimated the time it would take me to establish rapport with my students and to co-create the kind of learning environment I had envisioned. I realized that in my past teaching experiences, a positive rapport with students resulting in trusting and caring relationships had been essential in mediating the learning process. Watching the initial videos and witnessing the lack of connection between the students and myself rendered me unable to suspend value

judgments regarding my role in the classroom. A feeling of inadequacy in my own teaching started to develop within me. I knew myself to be a better teacher; consequently, I felt too vulnerable to share the video clips with the students I did not yet know well. This struggle was quite significant: it would point to a need for revision of the theoretical lenses with which I entered the research process as well as a shift in the instructional practices I had appropriated during the first week of the course (I return to these ideas in the section below, where I describe how this recognition of a needed shift in teaching changed initial classroom dynamics). At this time I made a conscious decision to limit my concurrent analysis and to focus more intently on teaching, working to develop positive relationships with my students.

Once the course came to an end, I sought support while viewing the video data I collected. My fear was that I was too close to the data and that, as a consequence, I would be unable to separate observation from interpretation. In response, I organized a staff meeting at EDC for the purpose of receiving input on our classroom activity; I had hoped that new eyes on the video data would impart a more objective stance, and in turn, might temporarily free me from my own critical perspective to reveal the class dynamics that contribute to student learning. Showing the same videos to my research group, I was able to gather input that felt necessarily more detached than my own viewpoint. Making our classroom public resulted in engaging conversations with my colleagues and with my advisor that relieved some of the discomfort and disappointment I felt in myself. This does not mean that I separated myself from the data; rather, I needed to step back in order to view myself as subject in the research.

Next steps included entering the video data into Transana, a tool for transcribing audio and video. This software is particularly useful in that it provides a way to link video to corresponding transcripts so that clips can be captured and moved into collections. Collections then classify series of clips identified by a chosen code, allowing researchers to work with collections of clips that share common threads. Entering data into Transana meant transcribing all of the video I had collected; the transcription process was valuable for me, providing another way to note events without simultaneously interpreting them. In fact, when I was ready to make interpretations, I saved these as memos that accompanied specific transcripts linked to corresponding video. In this way, I began organizing my data.

After one detailed pass through the video data, I moved between an inductive and a deductive analysis approach. Given that my beliefs around teaching and learning closely match Vygotsky's ideas and their representation in Engeström's Activity model, I first used constructs from this model to code the data (such as *tools, object, community, division of labor*). This process, however, was complemented by an inductive analysis through which codes were created from emerging themes. In this way, a series of coded collections emerged. Examples of codes that emerged from the data include: ownership, authority, flexible thinking, use of questions, and use of mathematical language (by students, by teacher), among others. While searching for these themes, I followed suggestions noted by Saka, Southerland, and Brooks (2009), who write about data analysis processes that are consistent with Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT, term used to refer to modern/evolved versions

of Russian-rooted activity theory). This author suggests that researchers focus on "aspects of activity that are coherent and on those aspects that presented contradictions" (p. 1004). In particular, contradictions might point to "sources of difficulty as well as catalysts for change" (Saka et al., 2009, p. 1004). For me, identifying contradictions in the visual data, while revisiting the range of emotions I experienced in teaching the course, led me to my initial findings: the subjects of our activity system projected different outcomes for learning. This observation, in turn, illuminated the events of the second and third weeks, as we negotiated outcomes in order to arrive at a more unified activity system.

The idea of ownership over one's learning process also emerged from analyzing the data inductively; I was able to make connections between the emotional discomfort I had endured and the imbalance in authority present in my class. In the section that follows, I describe in more detail the source of this discomfort, itself arising from my use of expert authority to guide the classroom processes, rather than structuring a student-centered environment. Identifying an imbalance present during the first week led to an expanded literature search on authority relations in mathematics classrooms, and to my understanding of the explanatory power of Structure Theory. My process of analysis, then, can be described as cyclical, oscillating between inductive (searching for emerging themes) and deductive (starting with a hypothesis and creating corresponding codes) approaches.

An Initial Description of Classroom Activity

As I mentioned above, while the course was in session, I suspended concurrent analysis. This does not mean, however, that I was unaware of problems as they surfaced. My previous teaching experiences coupled with the critical lens through which I view my behavior in general, and teaching in particular, helped me recognize that I was not the best version of myself as a teacher during the first intense week of teaching this course. Below, I describe my analysis of the first week, as I understood it *after* the completion of the class; however, during its course, I followed my own intuitions and reached out for help in order to change the evolving dynamics.

1. Mathematical tasks as enacted presented low cognitive demand for students. On several instances, instead of asking eliciting or extending questions, the questions I asked were leading—breaking down the problem so much that very little thinking was needed to resolve it.
2. Students were not wholly re-inventing themselves as mathematics learners; rather, they were reproducing roles they had always played. Evidence pointed to students acting in the ways that they believed I would want them to act (or any teacher might want them to act) in the classroom.
3. I took on the role of expert authority, which in turn served to block student ownership of the learning processes. My response to not being known by this new community of students, or even within the larger school community, was to

exercise my authority around mathematics content knowledge. I felt insecure in the multiple roles I needed to embrace.
4. The curriculum unit as a tool limited my ability to be *present* with my students, in the context of this enrichment course. My need to pilot the unit interfered with my ability to adapt it as needed, in response to the students in my classroom.

These partial outcomes were significant because they presented a challenge for me, given the inherent contradictions to my epistemological beliefs that determine the pedagogy I value. In large part I am thankful to the lack of integration within me among the roles I was trying to carry out—the reflective teacher role, however, allowed me to adapt and adjust in a significant way toward relieving the discomfort and disappointment I felt early on. And even more significantly, the threats to my identity as a teacher rendered me vulnerable enough to accept the need to adjust in order to work toward the outcomes I had hoped for. At this juncture, I met with Dr. Kress, my dissertation advisor, and Dr. Dick, one of my readers. I presented to them my fear that, if the class environment did not change, I would not have a dissertation to present! Nothing seemed to be going the way I had hoped: student learning was not yet at the center of our activity. Dr. Dick suggested "letting go" of the classroom processes and of those aspects of the curriculum unit that seemed so limiting, and placing more choice and responsibility in the hands of the students. One way of doing this could be to reframe the course by placing the flipbook project at the center of our work, rather than following the trajectory outlined in the unit of presenting various transformations and applying them to the flipbook, as we became more knowledgeable about each. This change in sequencing would mean that students would learn about the various transformations on a "need-to-know" basis.

The next day, after my conversation with my advisors, I structured a conversation with students around the 2 weeks of the course that remained. They agreed to begin their work on the project and suggested that we omit the section in the unit around dilations. This suggestion resulted from their worry that there would not be enough time to learn the concept and apply it to their flipbooks. I agreed. Interestingly, the young woman that made this suggestion later asked to learn about dilations; she applied these to her skateboarder, the main character of her flipbook.

During analysis, I recognized that my own expectations around the kind of teacher I knew I could be, along with the students' need to be active participants in their worlds provided fertile ground for change. Complemented by a sense of community that was evolving (for instance, as students became my allies during moments of frustration), a genuine interest by all subjects to learn together, and in particular, to adjust our roles for this purpose, the potential for change emerged. This is not to say that a complete transformation occurred; rather, negotiation around outcomes and the sharing of authority simply moved us a little closer to a unified activity system. To further understand and characterize the changes that occurred, I turned to Sewell's (1992) re-conceptualization of Structure Theory. Understanding the classroom context through this lens helped me uncover the rationale behind the

subjects' moves in the classroom that contributed to negotiation of outcomes and, subsequently, to student learning of essential geometric ideas and ways of thinking.

I found that authority relations in the classroom structured the ways in which the subjects of the activity interacted with one another and in turn, through communication acts, started to negotiate outcomes toward making meaning of the mathematics at hand. Benne (1970) describes authority as operating "in situations in which a person or group, fulfilling some purpose, project, or need, requires guidance or direction from a source outside himself or itself . . . the individual or group grants obedience to another person or group which claims effectiveness in mediating the field of conduct or belief, as a condition of receiving assistance" (pp. 392–393). Thus, in the case of our classroom, students enrolled in the class in order to learn something, to achieve part or all of their proposed outcomes, and, at least in the beginning, would need to follow my lead in class.

Exploration of the relationship between structure and agency in our summer class uncovered various reasons why our community could shift. Elements responsible for change included:

1. In sharing authority with respect to process, subjects could make decisions jointly;
2. Resources, such as the curriculum unit in use, could be re-interpreted;
3. My mathematics knowledge and prior teaching experiences gave me freedom to be agentive in re-directing the course;
4. A move toward a more open pedagogical approach would be more consistent with students' identity formation.
5. Resources I called upon included my knowledge of the discipline and my pedagogical content knowledge. These are not new resources for me; nevertheless, they were only activated when the tone of the class shifted. Sharing authority enhanced my knowledge resources to render students agentive. Student learning reclaimed its position in my mind as the central and most significant outcome of our activity.

In sum, sharing the object of our classroom activity and negotiating outcomes through a joint decision-making process was more consistent with both, my beliefs about mathematics teaching and learning, and the identities that students are developing in their everyday lives.

Embracing the Humanity of Mathematics

I envisage my integration of Activity Theory and Structure Theory through an analogy to the theory of plate tectonics; changes in various aspects of our teaching and learning activity, or disturbances that occur at one level, were catalyzed by transformations of structures occurring at another, more deeply embedded layer. In the

theory of plate tectonics, land masses buckle and fold to create mountain ranges, plates are pushed together causing volcanoes, and the Earth's magma rises as the sea floor spreads. The Earth's plates are continuously in motion, sometimes causing extreme changes above ground, and sometimes only building up tension for future spurts of movement. Similarly, my students and I negotiated structures in the classroom, which affected the exercise of agency by different members of the learning community, and in turn, caused significant changes in the interactions among elements that constitute classroom activity. At times, they only built toward future shifts, but understanding the underlying relationship between structure and agency helped me illuminate the teaching and learning activity that was occurring in my classroom.

I designed a study in which my identity was necessarily intertwined with the research process. This offered a valuable opportunity for me—I could make my way to the mathematics classroom, *inside* the context of schooling, even if for a short time period, and return with new understandings to the *outside*, EDC, the educational setting I inhabited at the time of this work. In fact, this study helped me to bridge theory and practice, shedding light on real classroom work, informing not only my research, but also the process of writing and developing curriculum. In my dual role as teacher-researcher, I learned that students from the summer class wanted to feel the humanity of learning. They wanted to participate, feel confident, and play an active role in every aspect of their lives, including the mathematics classroom. This was in many ways similar to my own upbringing in the culture of mathematics. Shifting our classroom structures, then, became a way through which students could participate as members of this mathematical community. The schemas, to which I had subscribed throughout my teaching career (in particular, "*learning to use one's mind well*," and "*student-as-worker*, *teacher-as-coach*"), could be transposed to our learning space in order to provide students the possibility of thinking flexibly and applying their new knowledge in creative ways. As I learned to "let go" in my teaching and my research, my students and I achieved a learning process more consistent with their forming identities and my epistemological beliefs about mathematics.

About the Author

Roser Giné graduated from Dartmouth College with a BA in mathematics, completed coursework for her master's in mathematics from Tufts University, and graduated from Harvard University with a master's degree in teaching mathematics. She earned her doctorate from the University of Massachusetts Boston in 2010. Her dissertation work involved the study of teaching and learning mathematics in the context of urban high schools, using socio-cultural theories to help bridge the divide between collective and individual learning processes. She has taught mathematics for 15 years and currently is a clinical assistant professor in the graduate college of education at UMass Lowell.

Note

1. Kuutti (1995) explains that this tradition is poorly named, as the term "activity" in English does not reflect the more nuanced connotation in corresponding German and Russian terms of "doing in order to transform something" (p. 22).

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Chapter 15
Swimming UpStream: Reconsidering Alternative Education and Resiliency vis-à-vis Identity and Context

"Soy Latina" Doesn't Mean "I'm Hood"

My family and I went to one of two Chinese restaurants every Sunday night for as long as I can remember; they knew us there and they knew our order. This culinary ritual brought my mom, my dad, my two big brothers, and I together regularly after a week of long school hours, extracurricular activities, and nights on call for my dad. Routine ruled my life during the week, and the public weekend display of family unity created the appearance of a Latino family that was making it in an upper-class white-dominant community outside of Chicago.

The luxuries afforded to me by my parents offered me a public education that was top ten in the state of Illinois and access to all aspects of the dominant culture. At times, I secretly harbored a Latina identity. While taking AP Spanish my junior year I feigned my accent to my teacher and classmates, although they knew I spoke fluently, just to sound "like everybody else"; I was a "gringo" just like them. It was an interesting dilemma in which I found myself every time the teacher called on me to read aloud or to respond.

I share this piece of my identity because, as a child, while I was a part of the dominant culture in regards to the middle-class socio-cultural capital that was passed down to me by my family, I also maintained one foot in the Latino culture. If I identified too much as a Latina, I would have had no one else to identify with while in elementary school and high school, because all of my classmates and teachers were White. Throughout my years in school I managed to be as "American" as the next kid until I realized that being Latina could be a tremendous asset to me as a college applicant, a potential employee, a teacher, and a student advocate. So after I graduated high school, I went to Boston College (BC) where I quickly learned that all the other kids "like me" received weekly newsletters about all the minority achievements taking place across the campus. Such was the result of filling out the Latina bubble when applying to colleges: a small detail with a fortuitous payoff. I was after all, a Latina with excellent grades and a glowing resume: a perfect "representative" for my people.

Contributed by Siouxsie Espinosa.

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I cannot say that I cared about "repping my peeps" at BC as much as I did when I stepped foot into a high school as a first year teacher. I was teaching English to a general education population of 11th and 12th graders. The few students that had Individual Education Plans (IEPs)—of whom I took note—were mainly of color and Latino, as were most of the students in my lower level English 11 course. It wasn't a familiar setting to find students that were "kinda" like me; I was an honors student from the White Chicago suburbs and all the other Latinos I knew were like me: kids of doctors. However, as an adult and educator, my identification as a Latina was growing stronger, and I noticed that, in contrast, the self-contained special education classes I taught were almost exclusively students of color; that was bothersome to me. I found myself wondering: Are these students truly having a difficult time learning because they have learning disabilities? Or are they in the self-contained classes because they are very disconnected from the curriculum, the content, and the language used?

After 1 year of being a general education teacher, I returned to the same school as a self-contained special education teacher. I wanted to connect with those students who did not have a staff member who shared a similar cultural background. I wanted to be able to call their parents and speak with them in their native language. I was the only teacher in the department that could speak Spanish. Shortly thereafter, I noticed that I was the only staff member in the school (including administration) that could make that phone call home. I found myself supporting those students that were struggling the most and building great relationships with them. Aside from the qualifications appearing on my resume, my proclaimed identification as a Latina increased my capital among many students that struggled academically in schools, and were Latinos. I realized that I could choose to be a successful and accomplished Latina representative while also being a member of the dominant culture; I could be supportive of students from my cultural background as they navigated the dominant culture and system. Here, my bi-cultural identity was an asset.

Eventually, I became more involved with special programs that worked with "at-risk" students within Westham High School, specifically one known as *Resiliency for Life (RFL)*. It was a program within the larger high school that created a small community of support by creating cohorts of students that would be carefully monitored and supported by the staff working with the program. Field trips, overnight stays, out of state adventures, college visits, and other team-building experiences and incentives were characteristic of this program to re-engage students with school and assist them in being academically successful. My involvement with this alternative program and my increasing identification as a Latina, influenced my next career decision, which took me to another town. As the contexts of my work experiences changed, I saw how much place (context and environment) matters. Dreier et al. (2004) explain that "a person with the same education, experience, and skills will earn a very different income depending on where he or she lives" (p. 42). This was immediately apparent when I went from teaching in the affluent town of Westham to the economically depressed town of UpStream.

Even though I felt as though I could truly affect change and influence Latino students throughout their high school years regardless of where I was working, I came to realize that my work with the kids at an alternative high school in UpStream

would by virtue of context, be different than my work in Westham. I wanted to connect with them and be an advocate for them, while helping them become better advocates for themselves. So I began working with the same founding member and co-director of the RFL program in Westham, at an alternative high school in UpStream.[1] I worked as an administrator with an administrative team that was committed to redesigning a failing alternative high school to appropriately service the students placed there and engage them in their learning. My participation in this process and in the community further sparked my interest in the success of marginalized populations of students. I found myself asking questions that were similar to the ones I asked about my self-contained special education classes. Again, I wondered: Are these students truly having a difficult time learning because they are "alternative" students who need a different setting? Or are they in the alternative school because they are very disconnected from the curriculum, the content, or the language used in school?

This time, however, I had additional questions. In particular, I wondered about what it was like to grow up in the town of UpStream where almost 40% of working-eligible people are unemployed, and only 60% of adults have a high school diploma. What does education mean in this town and how valuable is a high school diploma? I wondered about the word "resiliency" in our school's name and if resiliency might mean something different in my hometown or in Westham as compared to UpStream. And I wondered about the word "alternative," and what that meant when fewer than 60% of students in this town graduate from high school. As Dreier et al. (2004) said, "place matters." And so it began that my research interests emerged.

Swimming UpStream: Building a Viable Alternative to a "Dropout Factory"

When the RFL team and I arrived in UpStream, we began our redesign of the alternative school with the Westham RFL structure in mind. The design in Westham allowed for a cohort of students to work together and with their team leaders throughout the school day, during homeroom, classes, and group sessions, to build relationships, camaraderie, and trust. The team leaders were in constant communication with students' teachers and parents and worked effortlessly to let the kids know that they mattered and that RFL staff members cared. This formula resulted in considerable success in Westham. The design was so successful, in fact, that the RFL students outperformed the students in the larger high school in regards to tardiness, attendance, grade point average (GPA), Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores, and college acceptance rates. Confident in the soundness of our alternative school design in Westham, my colleagues and I attempted to recreate RFL in UpStream, a town which has a much larger population of students at risk of academic failure than Westham.

Contextually speaking, however, Westham and UpStream are quite different. Unlike the high school in Westham where "alternative" students were the minority, nearly 50 percent of the students at Duffy High School (UpStream's traditional high

school) do not graduate. They do not earn a diploma or a certificate of completion—they simply drop out of high school. For approximately half the students in the town, our newly created alternative high school, UpStream Alternative High School (USAHS), was the last stop before dropping out. During the 2007–2008 school year, the year I began working at USAHS, only two percent of the students graduated. With such dismal graduation statistics at the "last stop," there was little reason for students to believe that they would be anomalies who "make it." Furthermore, more than a third of the city as a whole does not have a high school diploma. Further compounding the problem, according to the 2010 US Census, nearly 40% of working-eligible adults in UpStream are not working. Whether students have a diploma or not, there may be no employment opportunities waiting for them once they finish high school.

The needs of the UpStream community are quite different from that of Westham, which in comparison to UpStream is quite affluent. In Westham only 20% of working-eligible residents are not working. The median household income in Westham in 2010 was $81,923; per capita income was $33,327, with a poverty rate of 8%. Whereas, in UpStream, the median family income in 2010 was $45,709; per capita income was $20,591, with a poverty rate of 19%. Despite the apparent need for alternative type programs in UpStream, USAHS had not attained the same degree of success as was attained in Westham in that first year (although noteworthy successes have been made since then). This led me to believe that replication of RFL was desirable but not logical because of the unique context. The town's diploma rate, the unemployment rate, and the intense poverty were not taken into consideration when we created USAHS. In order to design my research, it was important that I understand the challenges USAHS faculty and students were facing simply by virtue of their geographical and socioeconomic location. The city itself plays an important role in shaping these students' lives, and as such, research about alternative education in this place could not be considered separately from what it means to be a kid growing up in UpStream.

In some ways, this is not much different from the ways my own identity and high school experiences were shaped by the context in which I grew up. I went to school in a predominantly White, upper-middle class system, which garnered me the privileges of the affluent community around me. The only other Latinos remotely near me were in a neighboring "undesirable" town and school setting. Had I grown up there rather than in the wealthier White suburb, my identification as Latina would likely have been different. The high achieving, competitive high school that I attended influenced my competitive edge as did the color and class of my town. Similarly, the "at-risk," economically disadvantaged town of UpStream influences the identities and educational experiences of students who attend USAHS; however, the USAHS staff (myself included) had not taken this into account when first designing the alternative high school. In fact, the Westham model that was used probably would have been much more appropriate for the affluent town in which I grew up rather than for the town of UpStream where poverty is the norm, rather than the exception.

Reconsidering "Resiliency"

My role as an administrator at the alternative school in UpStream made me very aware of the disconnect of the perceived role of education between me, the administrative team, most of the teachers, and the community (including the students and parents). It was this disconnect, and the mere existence of an alternative school which worked with the quintessential "troubled" kid that made me curious. All "alternative" students seemed to have a similar profile as described in literature and through my experiences. All of these students seemed to have had some major life disruption that steered them off course from a consistently successful academic career. My career of working with students that have had academic difficulty has led me to question what goes on in their minds (how do they perceive themselves as students) as well as what is actually going on in the classrooms that don't seem to be meeting their needs. For USAHS staff, alternative education is meant to be an educational setting in which students can find academic success with the support of caring adults and by building nurturing relationships with teachers and staff. One of the major concepts upon which we based our design is resiliency theory—which is the idea that individuals can recover or "bounce back" from adverse and difficult situations through the addition of a number of "factors" in their lives. Resiliency theory would imply that the students are "missing" something, some character trait or family support, and this prevents them from succeeding in school. But I questioned, is it really something that *they* are missing? Or is it something that schools are missing?

Inherent in resiliency theory is the notion that resiliency can be fostered in the presence of certain environmental elements, and with the existence or adoption of certain personality traits. In order for students to display resilience, they have to overcome the things they do *not* have (a deficit way of thinking which will be addressed later), which are most often possessed by the dominant culture, and by taking advantage of what they *do* have. So by adding what is missing, students should have fewer obstacles preventing them from being resilient. But for the community of UpStream it seems as though there are not enough resources to add to the schools, to provide the students with the supports necessary to help them "bounce back." (Benard, 2004).

Working in UpStream revealed to me that resiliency theory is guided by deficiency thinking that assumes that certain individuals do not have certain necessary factors in their lives, constituting them "at-risk" and in need of these factors (two parents, steady income, English speaking, White, no court involvement). The "norm" therefore, is the *existence* of all of these factors in individuals' lives; the norm does not describe those who are, for example, low-income, people of color, living in single family homes, and are from non-English speaking homes. Resiliency is conceived of as an individual's ability to compensate for these deficiencies in order to achieve in education. However, the "norm" in UpStream is much more like the latter description. Clearly, resiliency theory was not enough to build an alternative education model in UpStream because "norm" is redefined and the realities of students in the context of UpStream are different than those of students in

Westham. And yet clearly we needed to provide an alternative because this large urban de-industrialized community in Massachusetts is facing an educational and community crisis—the high school was recently identified as one of the nation's "dropout factories."[2]

Redesigning an Alternative in UpStream: The Importance of Context

Recognizing the powerful influence that my context had on my development, and the great differences between this alternative program in Westham and in UpStream, I looked more closely at the composition of UpStream. According to 2010 US Census, the population of UpStream is 88,968, approximately half of the population is over 16 and considered a part of the labor force. From that number of working-eligible people, 38% of them are not working. A large reason for this unemployment percentage has to do with the steadily disappearing textile and manufacturing industry of UpStream. As just one example of this, a major employer in the city since 1949 was a textile factory; in 2007 it was shut down.[3] It was the nation's fifth largest supplier of upholstery fabric in 1994. While many other textile manufactures closed or left the state in the 1990s, this company prospered. On June 29th, 2007, however, 930 employees left work for the annual 2-week company vacation and never returned. The company had filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Many of those who worked there were married couples. In such cases, entire family incomes were lost. Since its closing, there has not been another industry which can employ these 930 previously employed individuals in the city. This is just one example of a history of disappearing employment in UpStream.

With jobs being shipped overseas and factories steadily closing year after year, many families in UpStream find themselves living in a cycle of poverty. I quickly learned that financial stability is a pressing concern for many students' families, and for some students, staying in high school seemed to be postponing their opportunity to make money. I had students that would leave the school day early, or not attend at all so that they could maintain employment. The median income in 2000 was $29,014 ($33,124 by 2009) with 57.3% of those households earning less than $34,999, and an approximately 46% are receiving additional government aid (social security, public assistance). Finding employment outside of UpStream is equally difficult because of the limited transportation system in the city (there is no train system, and the buses stop running after 5:30) as well as the financial burdens of owning a reliable car.

This exodus from high school to find employment has resulted in the devastatingly low high school graduation rate mentioned above. The results of a 2007 nationwide study conducted by Johns Hopkins University identified high schools in the state of Massachusetts, which had a graduation rate of less than 60%. Eight percent of Massachusetts high schools fall into that category; among that eight percent is UpStream Public Schools.[4] Many of USAHS students' parents grew up in this

community, when jobs in the labor force and other employment might have been available without the need for a high school diploma, but employment opportunities for the city's large working class population have been steadily decreasing as manufacturing jobs are outsourced and factories are closed. According to Dreier et al. (2004), "Underclass areas are usually characterized by a wide range of negative conditions, including high rates of unemployment, drug use, crime, teen pregnancies, out-of-wedlock births, single-parent families, and school dropouts" (p. 28). Using this definition, the city of UpStream could be labeled "underclass." Unemployment, drug-use, and crime will be far more likely to occur as the population of undereducated individuals find themselves on the streets not contributing positively to the community (Dreier et al. 2004). The high unemployment rate in the city, coupled with the poorly educated and low-skilled residents, for many people results in a limited social network that provides few opportunities for those who have access to it.

As an additional strain on the already sparse labor market, in UpStream there are 22 housing projects for 4,900 families, the largest per capita in the state.[5] Consequently, the influx of people needing housing from neighboring towns and distant states has increased while the job availability has decreased. Until recently the community has not appeared to recognize the severity of this problem and its cyclical relationship: an educational failure of the school system becomes a problem of the community; conversely, the problems in the community impact education. The need for revenue is great and having a job is tremendously important; even though jobs are difficult to find. In this town where so many do not graduate and for those who do, their graduation does not guarantee employment, alternative education *cannot* mean the same thing as it does in Westham, where most students graduate, and far fewer need more intensive supports and alternatives for their success.

Researching *with* Students to Improve Alternative Education

Given all that I was learning about the influence of context on education, I realized that I needed to investigate alternative education differently than it had been investigated in literature that I had read. I believed the limited scope of resiliency theory as it informed alternative education needed to be challenged and redefined. The plight of USAHS students illustrated that simply aiming to provide students with the "missing" elements in their lives in a school setting is not enough when disadvantage is the norm for so much of the population in a given location. I believed that alternative schools in cities like UpStream needed to recognize and take into consideration students' lived realities, which are inextricable from the needs of their communities. To respond to this new awareness, I designed my research with two purposes: first, to offer students of USAHS the opportunity to empower themselves to make a difference in their lives and their educational careers; and second, to begin to develop a new concept of alternative education that can be a true alternative by taking into account the lived reality of students and their communities and tailoring education to their needs. Essentially, I wished to re-conceptualize the current

understanding of alternative education which is built upon resiliency theory, so that alternative schools can become more than just a means of "removing disruptive students from instruction and warehousing them in separate facilities" (Beckett & Brown, 2007, p. 1). I ultimately hoped that my work could then inform alternative education policy in the larger national context. I wanted to work *with* alternative students toward this endeavor because I felt it would be unethical for me to simply harvest information from them and then leave their lives unchanged. I hoped that my research could add to the scholarly conversation and afford a few UpStream students an opportunity to perhaps change their lived realities.

Methodology

Taking into consideration that who I am, my identity, is largely shaped by my historical and present context (Roth, 2005), I recognized that as a researcher I alone cannot truly understand or affect liberating change in the lived reality of UpStream students. Thus, this research took a Participatory Action approach that sought to empower students to question and thereby affect change in their lives and their community. PAR gives students equal stake in the research process, and it affords them the opportunity to critically look at education and unpack the systems of privilege and power that oppress them. Through conscientization, students can learn to navigate through the oppressive system and find their own power (Freire, 1993). As co-researchers, my students began to re-conceptualize the purpose of alternative education so that it took into consideration their lived realities. Their identities are tied to the fate of the community which recent history has shown to be limiting. This research aimed to provide students with an opportunity to fashion new identities that reflected but were not determined by the history of their community.

The methodological choices that I made are the result of my need to address what I believed research *should* do and whom it should serve in UpStream. Had I chosen to do an ethnographic study, for example, I would have felt like I was using my access to the elite academic culture to exploit these kids and earn yet another degree. This didn't seem to be a fair considering the statistical likelihood that many UpStream kids would end up with no degree at all (not even a HS diploma) once my work was done. Using PAR was a way for me to ease the researcher-researched hierarchy and lessen the chances of exploiting students simply for my own gain.

Preliminary Results

When I began my research, I had the lofty goal of recruiting five to eight students from USAHS who would be willing to be co-researchers. While there was initial interest expressed by six students, in the end, only one student stuck with me throughout the entire data collection and analysis process. Three co-researchers and I began collecting data in early April 2009, but only Caree continued until April

2010. By the end of that first school year, two of the students had graduated and did not express interest in continuing with the research. As a research team, however, the students and I collaboratively decided on the data sources, including student slambooks (Tuck, 2007), student led interviews of administrators and teachers, school artifacts, and researcher journals. Data analysis took place as material was collected and transcribed throughout the process. Most of the data were analyzed by just me and my one remaining co-researcher Caree.

Our analysis revealed that students at USAHS are very aware that the community has a negative perception of alternative students, which has had an impact on their identities. It appears that many of them have internalized the negative beliefs that teachers, students (traditional and alternative), and other community members have of "alternative" students, and the students have expressed conflicting views about themselves. They seemed to be so accustomed to being in conflict with rules and adults that they were initially distrustful of adults at USAHS. And while they understand while certain rules exist at the school (e.g., rules about dress codes and safety) that differed from those at Duffy (the traditional high school), they often act in opposition to those rules. The slambooks also revealed more contradictions regarding their academic successes; students suggested that it was much easier at the alternative school than it was at Duffy, but also felt as though they were successful because the teachers were better and were more understanding at USAHS. In their responses they do not attribute any high grades to their own ability, but rather to an easy curriculum and to better teaching.

I did not expect that all but one of the co-researchers would have discontinued the data collection and analysis process and this made the process take longer than anticipated. We initially all thought of presenting the findings to the school administration, but as the research team shrunk to include just Caree and myself, it took on a much more personal twist as Caree began to focus on her transition to college and began to write a portion of her autobiography. The data that we analyzed began to include her story, her identity, and her interest in being part of the research. Through the fall of 2010, I continue to tie all of the pieces together as Caree completed her first semester at a 4-year university 2 hours north of UpStream. The method and the one-on-one collaboration with me in the research seemed to have given Caree an opportunity to affect change in her life. And we both hope that our work will eventually help to change the lives of other students like her.

Conclusion

Students continue to take advantage of new programs at USAHS (including online courses), graduate, and apply to colleges, while also combating the stigma of being alternative education students. Caree has now completed her first semester as a college student. When living in UpStream, she dreamed of leaving, but was not sure that she would be able to be away from her little siblings or be academically prepared enough to be successful in a college environment. No longer fighting with girls in

the streets, she studies hard, visits her family, and is confidently moving toward her degree. I am now officially Dr. Espinosa, the Dean of students in a different town at another urban high school that is struggling with its alternative programming.

The challenges in this town are quite different from UpStream's. Although the stigma surrounding alternative education also persists, the alternative school in this place is surrounded by academia and privilege, mixed with homeless students, low-income students, and immigrant students. Resources are overflowing in this district ($25,000 per pupil expenditure as compared to UpStream's $6,000), yet there are still students who are not academically successful. Despite the abundant resources in the environment (near a major national city, abundant public transportation, close to an elite university), students are still dropping out of school. Introducing Bridgetown to an alternative program similar to the one in UpStream will require different implementation and services; it is a different context, and the needs of the community are also different. Dreier's (2004) words "place matters" echo here too, and my questions still persist: What does alternative mean in *this* place?

About the Author

Siouxsie Espinosa received her doctorate from the University of Massachusetts, Boston. She has been a high school educator for 10 years in the role of English teacher, special educator, and currently an administrator. These experiences have influenced her research in alternative programs and working with marginalized populations of students.

Notes

1. All names of locations and individuals have been changed to preserve confidentiality.
2. Citation withheld to preserve confidentiality.
3. Name of the factory and citation withheld to preserve confidentiality.
4. Citation withheld to preserve confidentiality.
5. Citation withheld to preserve confidentiality.

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Chapter 16
From Research to Me-Search

Everyday I Write the Book

The last thing I wanted to do that frigid evening in February of 2008 after teaching all day was go to my class at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. The novelty of being a doctoral student had long since worn off, and the coursework was feeling mundane. I was sick of the winter and I was sick of my doctoral studies. My good friend and colleague, Jonathan Hoffman, and I were sitting in his classroom after school, strumming on a couple of beat up acoustic guitars (as we typically did), and talking about the book we were planning on writing together.

"Jonathan, check it out," I said, as I swung one arm across his shoulder, directing his gaze up toward the ceiling, "we could call the book, 'From Harvard to the Hood: The Culture Shock of an Upper Middle Class White Suburban Teacher in an Urban School for the First Time who had no Clue how to Relate to the Students and who just Expected the Students to Relate to him Because he was the Teacher and Whose Harvard Education was Useless Because he Couldn't Teach the Students Because They Wouldn't let him Teach Them Because They Didn't Respect him or Trust him and Who was Drowning Until a Heroic Veteran Urban Teacher who Happened also to be very Good-looking Showed him the Ropes and Saved him from Himself!' " Turning nose to nose with Jonathan and dramatically gasping to regain my breath, I asked with exaggerated pride, "So, whatdaya think?"

Jonathan shook my arm off his shoulder, gave me a shove, and responded, "I think it's a little long."

"Hmm. Yeah, maybe you're right. . ." I picked up my guitar and played a classic closing blues lick, "I'll keep working on it."

Although I was clearly joking, I felt strongly that the book title needed to capture the essence of the daily jam sessions Jonathan and I had. We'd play the guitar together, but essentially we used that time to compare and contrast Jonathan's experiences with suburban and urban schooling. Those conversations were at the heart of how I mentored Jonathan his first year at our school, and they eventually led to

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Contributed by Christopher Avilés.

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us writing a story about the challenges Jonathan faced as he adapted to teaching in an urban school.

I offered a new, more serious, title suggestion, "Well then, how about we just call it, 'From Harvard to the Hood: The Culture Shock of a White Suburban Teacher in an Urban School for the First Time.' Any better?"

Jonathan strummed an angelic chord on the guitar and shot me a satisfied look, "that is an awesome title, dude! Definitely!" Then he paused and thought for a second, "That perfectly captures what we've written about so far. This is gonna be cool man. I'm so excited about writing this book; we have so many crazy stories to tell about what we deal with in our classrooms everyday." Jonathan looked at me with a slight concern in his eyes, "But do you think anyone who has never experienced teaching in a hardcore urban high school like ours is going to think that we're totally making these stories up?"

"Yeah, but fuck 'em. Jonathan, trust me, anyone who has taught in a similar school environment will totally relate to these stories. That's the whole point to writing this; there are so many teachers out there who are just like you dude. Along with these stories being wicked funny, they're also about the same things that other teachers go through. I'm telling you man, this book is going to resonate with people."

Jonathan perked up; he placed his guitar face up on the table he was sitting on, and took a seat at his computer on the desk. He clicked twice on the mouse and opened the Word doc we started the day before. "Okay then Chris, so here are our possible chapter ideas so far:

- Lack of Leadership: The Opportunities Missed
- The Empowerment Project: Power Struggle
- Class and Race: The Elephants in the Room
- No Good Deed Goes Unpunished
- Don't Ask. Tell. (Deepen Your Tone of Voice; You're not in the Valley Anymore Bitch)
- A Parody of a School
- I Can Only Teach You Sometimes Because I'm Not Black
- A Harvard Education: Did I Get My Money's Worth?
- Disenfranchised: The Next Generation"

As I listened to Jonathan read the titles, it was like I could see the whole book rapidly unfolding, chapter by chapter, from cover to cover. Then, from out of the corner of my eye, I was abruptly yanked from my vision by the clock on the wall. Shit! I was going to be late for class. I turned to Jonathan, "Sorry dude, I gotta go." I put my guitar away and grabbed my coat. Sliding my arm in the sleeve, I swung around to Jonathan and said, "I'm telling you man, lately all I want to do is work on the book and play guitar. I'm at the point where sometimes I wonder if I'm actually gonna get through this doctoral program." Reaching behind me for my other sleeve, I continued, "Seriously dude, I just finished my qualifying paper, and instead of feeling excited about it, I feel like all I'm doing is going through the motions. It's

like I'm jumping through all these academic hoops just for the sake of completing the program." Clumsily grabbing at my sleeve and missing again, I paused and pathetically looking at Jonathan I said, "It's such bullshit." Reaching again behind me for my dangling sleeve, I continued my rant, "And then, when you and I are talking and working on the book, I'm excited. I mean, look at me; I've been here all day and I'm still not ready to leave. I'd rather just stay here and continue working on this." Then, like a dog chasing its tail, I was spinning in a circle, awkwardly trying to get my other arm in the friggin' sleeve of my coat; until, in final frustration I stopped, threw my arms down by my side, and declared, "Screw it! I'm not going to class tonight."

Jonathan stood up and stepped out from behind his desk. He calmly walked over to me, helped me with my other sleeve, and said, "Chris, believe me, I'd love nothing better than to hang out, brainstorm some more on the book, and play a few songs; but we both know that you gotta go to class. Back to reality dude; not going to class tonight ain't even an option."

I zipped up my coat and sighed, "Yeah, yeah, I know; you're right. It's just as well; with my luck, tonight would be the one class I couldn't afford to miss. All right brother, I'm out of here. See you tomorrow."

Jonathan waved me on my way and bid me, "Later dude."

I reluctantly gathered myself and headed to the University; the book Jonathan and I were writing would have to wait on the back burner of my life until I finished school—if I finished. Whatever. At least I was making progress in my program and clearing important hurdles. The university had just accepted my qualifying paper after I revised and resubmitted it. Now I had to put together my dissertation proposal. I just needed to figure out how to turn my qualifying paper topic into a research design. Of course, the potential down side to finally reaching the dissertation proposal stage was that the moment of truth loomed large on the horizon—I was going to have to transform into some sort of researcher, exactly what kind of researcher was still beyond me.

Man in the Box

As I sat in the early evening traffic on Galivan Blvd., on my way to the university, my mind was racing faster than my car was, sitting at this red light. I wondered . . . How was I going to be a researcher? A researcher was a pure academic—the ivory tower type. Right? Who was I to claim such a role? Who was I to even think that I could play such a role? I was still getting used to the idea that I was a doctoral student. I could easily identify as a practitioner, and I was beginning to accept myself as a scholar, but a researcher? I never imagined myself a "researcher." I guess I always imagined a researcher to be the stereotypical scientific type—a white lab coat, glasses, clipboard, etc.—in other words, a nerdy bookworm all grown up, pouring over mounds of data, checking off boxes on paper forms, living among boxes of paperback books, eating out of boxes of microwaveable meals, with no social life to speak of, always working, always thinking perfectly inside "the box." In fact, I was

pretty sure that a researcher had designed "the box." Could I be such an academic standard-bearer?

As a practitioner/scholar I straddled the divide between theory and application (Kress, this text). The dialectical nature of my experience underscores simultaneously the paradox of the problem and the solution. I am torn between the opposing and often contradictory perspectives of those *who think* idealistically of how best to do, and those *who do* realistically the best they can. I am also torn between the modern-positivist perspective that is generally accepted and favored by the mainstream society (Askeland & Payne, 2006), and the postmodernist perspective of society's philosophical fringes where I have spent the majority of my thinking throughout my life from the street corner to the classroom. I joke with friends and colleagues that I have spent my entire life so far trying to think *inside* "the box." Upon reflection, a big part of me has always felt intellectually marginalized; as if my *out of the box* way of thinking (and theorizing) was incorrect; as if my interpretations of the reality of my experiences of life and the world that gives it context were less valid than—and I am stereotyping here—those who are: right-handed (I am a lefty); type A personalities (I am most definitely not type A) with all their ducks in a row (my ducks are out of luck little wanderers); read the directions carefully before assembling (I just grab at it and see what happens); tuck in the bed sheets tightly (why bother when I am just going to mess the bed up when I go to sleep?); compartmentalized (I am a towering, disheveled stack of papers cluttering up the desk); organized (I am generally very disorganized); color-coated stick-it-notes-highlighted list of things to do (I never use stick-it-notes, and I keep my lists in my head); in and out boxes functionally positioned on the desk (I clearly have issues with boxes); clean off your desk (HELP!); one right way to do things, members of the dominant positivist cookie cutter majority. I have always felt as if, because of the type of person I am, and because of my socioeconomic and sociocultural background, I was never meant to be, invited to be, or encouraged to be an intellectual or a scholar—never mind a researcher—and therefore my mind did not have access to the kinds of thinking that took place *inside* "the box."

This feeling of alienation created demons for me to overcome. I had internalized that "people like me" were not meant to go to college, have meaningful careers, hold respectable positions in society, own property, etc. "People like me" were taught to do as we were told. We were tracked by the public school system to take our place amongst the workers of society, to ask for permission, to await our instructions, and to follow blindly without questioning authority. I remember clearly, for example, in seventh grade I received the pink schedule card that indicated I was not going to take college prep courses. I was being tracked to ultimately attend Southeastern Regional Vocational High School. Apparently "people like me" were meant to learn trades—as if my mind had anything at all to do with hammers, wrenches, or pipes (well okay, maybe pipes; but that's it). Criticality was not an attribute that was emphasized to "people like me." After allowing my *Self* to become angry enough to refuse to be defined by others, and over the course of time and schooling despite my social status, and despite my *Self*, I was able to ultimately own my thoughts, I was empowered to dare to think for myself and find my place amongst intellectuals and scholars. . .BEEP! BEEP! "Move it asshole!"

Help!

I arrived to the University a few minutes late for class that evening. It was still the beginning of the new semester and I had not yet gotten to know the new professor, Dr. Kress. I wasn't sure whether or not she would frown on my tardiness. Either way, the fact that I managed to drag myself to class at all relieved most of the guilt I felt for being late. When I entered the room, Dr. Kress was in the process of breaking the students into small groups so that we could share our ideas for our research. This exercise was surely going to suck, since I wasn't really feeling at all passionate about my qualifying paper topic. I quickly scanned the room and decided to sit with Siouxsie and Kelly. Siouxsie was in my cohort. I really liked her; she was very cool, and she had a great sense of humor. The activity might suck; but at least Siouxsie and I could share a few jokes. I didn't really know Kelly, but I liked the fact that she also liked to laugh a lot. Kelly was taking the dissertation seminar with us; however, she was technically in the cohort ahead of ours.

As the groups around us started to buzz with participatory chatter, I looked to Siouxsie and asked, "You wanna go first?"

Siouxsie replied, "Since you're the only guy in our group, why don't you go first? Right Kelly?"

Kelly smiled and nodded her approval. "Why not? We're liberated women."

"All righty then; let's see, where should I start?" I propped myself up in my seat and began to unpack my thoughts, "Okay, well honestly, I've kind of struggled with coming up with my research topic. My qualifying paper explored the effects of violence on teaching and learning in an urban context. So, I guess I'm leaning towards designing my research around that topic."

Siouxsie leaned toward me and asked probingly, "So, what made you decide to do your qualifying paper on that topic?"

"Well, if you visit the school I teach at, Urban High School (UHS), you'll see that the students' bookbags and hats are covered with memorial buttons of their friends and family members. Most of them are murder victims. Year after year I watch so many of my students suffer violence directly or indirectly. But this is the reality of where they live. . ."

I continued to tell Siouxsie and Kelly about the challenges of working in my school, which is situated within an impoverished Boston neighborhood that is repeatedly traumatized by increasing rates of violence. According to the Boston Police Department's 2005 Annual Report, there was a 20% increase of homicides from 2004 to 2005; this was right around the time when I began my doctoral work. In 2005 alone, 74 people were murdered in Boston. In 2006, 75 people were murdered. These figures reflected 10-year highs in homicides. Half of all homicides that happened in Boston in 2007 took place in Dorchester, where my school is located. My students, of course, are greatly affected. The most disturbing fact is that the CDC has reported that the leading cause of death among African American males ages 10–24 in the United States is homicide. Considering that almost 70% of the students at my school are African American, I'm deeply bothered by this. It makes me want to know why. The more I've searched for the "why" to this particular problem,

the more it's dawned on me that it's just one part of a much larger sociocultural and socioeconomic problem.

When I finished up my monologue about violence and the community around my school, I looked to my group-mates for help, "So, now, I've been trying to figure out a way to broaden the scope of my lens, but in a way that's manageable. That's where I'm having the most difficulty."

Kelly observed, "You say that you're not passionate about the topic, but listen to yourself; you sound passionate to me."

"Yeah, I'm passionate about it; but my passion is coming from my belief that violence is only a symptom of much larger social problems around class and race in our society. I'll give you an example. My colleague Jonathan Hoffman and I have been working on a book about his experiences as a new teacher at our school. Now, Mr. Hoffman was a great teacher at his old school but he sucked when he first came to UHS because none of our students respected him. His problem was that, coming from teaching in an affluent suburban high school in California, he didn't understand the culture of our poor urban high school, and to our students Mr. Hoffman quickly devolved into that 'white guy' and 'the bitch'. . ."

As I began to tell Kelly Jonathan's story, I was getting increasingly animated. I explained to her that Jonathan was this upper middle-class white guy who was now teaching in a school that was essentially all minority students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. He just couldn't relate to where our students were coming from. He arrived to our school with a lot of assumptions about the students. That used to upset me because I'd grown up similarly to the way my students were growing up, and there were times when I felt like Mr. Hoffman was looking down on them. Jonathan used to project his own cultural schema and his own values and beliefs onto our students and get angry with them if they did not conform. I could see why the students would dismiss him and call him a "bitch." For the past 2 years as his mentor, I essentially engaged with him in ethnography of the school in order to help him become a more culturally competent teacher. He needed to know our students and where they were coming from. The results of our mentoring relationship were stunning. Not only had Jonathan changed, but we had actually been affecting change to the very culture of the school, from one of failure to one of pride and success. It was an amazing experience, and our students were right there with us. In fact, we had co-created a new 9th Grade Academy with our students. It was so powerful; the more I talked, the more excited I got, until Kelly finally interrupted me.

"Hello!!!" Kelly nearly shouted, "Chris, are you listening to yourself? There you go; that's your research topic."

I looked at Kelly curiously, "What do you mean?"

"That's a great topic, Chris." Kelly insisted, "Think about it. How many teachers find themselves in Mr. Hoffman's position exactly? White, middle-class teachers who have absolutely no idea what urban minority students experience, and who have this 'let them eat cake' attitude because they don't know any better. New teachers who come to the city from the suburbs to teach in an urban school, often to be able to say they did so, like some great white hope wannabe, and what are the consequences for our urban minority students?"

Kelly assured me that this topic would allow me to delve deeply into all of the issues of class and race that I raised, where focusing specifically on violence wouldn't allow me to do that. She pointed out that I already had all the data from the work Mr. Hoffman and I did at the school and the book we had already started to write.

I couldn't believe it. To research what Jonathan and I had experienced at UHS would be incredible. In essence, our book would actually become my dissertation! Kelly's words resonated with me so intensely that I, in turn, suggested the change of topic to Dr. Kress, who, to my surprise, also thought it was a great idea. Dr. Kress added that I would have to include myself in the study. So, in my case, the kind of research I did that would earn me my doctorate was ultimately a "me-search." But there was still the problem of needing to apply a research methodology that would fit my design. And there was still the problem of my own understandings of what "legitimate" research was. If I conducted a kind of qualitative "me-search," would this discredit my study before I even started it? I shared my concerns with Dr. Kress and she introduced me to Critical Praxis Research (CPR) as a methodology. Dr. Kress advised me that, not only would I have to include myself in the research, but that I would have to put myself under the microscope just as much as I did Jonathan. As the researcher, with CPR as my methodology, rather than attempt to be separate from the research, I would instead be a co-subject of the me-search.

Where We Converge and Diverge

Critical Praxis Research, as a methodology, suited the issues of identity, context, and purpose that were underlying in the stories that Jonathan and I wanted to tell. Along with examining Mr. Hoffman's transformation into a successful urban teacher, my study also examined the ways in which I too was transformed by the mentoring process. In order to better understand how I affected and was affected by my study of the problem, I employed identity theory (Roth & Tobin, 2007) to explore how my own sense of self had transformed, how Mr. Hoffman was transformed, and how people in general as both individuals and members of a collective group, be it the school community or society as whole are in a constant state of transformation. At the forefront of my thinking in conjunction with identity theory was critical theory (McLaren, 2003) and critical pedagogy (McLaren, 2003), which included the concepts of equity and social justice. Social reproduction theory (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) was also incorporated throughout my study since it took place within the context of an urban school and community that suffers from perpetual poverty, crime, and low-academic achievement of students who come from a community that is overwhelmingly comprised of minority groups.

As I thought more about the mentoring relationship/process, it occurred to me that it was less about the transference of knowledge and more about the sharing of lived experiences. Everything kept coming down to issues of identity. I realized then that understanding what happened between Mr. Hoffman and me as mentor/mentee required understanding who we were as individuals within the context of the meso

and macro structures of the school and society. To do this, identity was the first of three critical lenses applied to this study.

As we moved forward with this critical work, Mr. Hoffman and I explored and researched, as practitioners, our own sociocultural constructs. We employed identity theory to tease out the ways in which we defined and redefined ourselves as a result of our individual and collective sociocultural and socioeconomic experiences, and the meanings we apply to our experiences as we exist simultaneously as individuals and members of the collective society. Through autobiographies and auto-ethnographies, we examined where our individual experiences converged and diverged as if to create a Venn diagram of who we were together collectively and as individuals navigating through the parody and paradoxes of our own lives, and of our experience of urban schooling as it falls within the larger context of society.

Critical Praxis Research is "radical," because the researcher's personal lived experience in the culture is taken as the first organizing principle of the study (adapted from Goodall, 2000). I used a bricolage of qualitative methods and critical theories for the purpose of unpacking the richness that one finds in the nuances of the details of the human experience, and more specifically, the human experience as lived out in the microcosm of an urban school community. The fieldwork methods that are key to this new research methodology as it applies to this case study are auto/ethnography, and practitioner ethnography. Therefore, the primary methods I used are auto/biographical and biographical narratives based on the journal entries, reflections, and vignettes of Mr. Hoffman, as a culturally white middle-class teacher new to urban teaching, and myself as his mentor.

It is interesting to me to note, for example, that the employment of identity theory revealed that Mr. Hoffman and I entered into teaching for very different reasons. I became a teacher to be an agent of change in the lives of students who found themselves locked out of "the American dream" in much the same way I was as a student. As a teacher, I have always been driven by a mission of emancipation and empowerment—my own and that of my students. Mr. Hoffman, on the other hand, became a teacher as a stepping-stone to further his career ambitions, which had more to do with having summers off than with helping marginalized school children. Where our experiences converged at UHS is where this study was born. Where our experiences diverged was where this study took off!

The Book Is the Dissertation!

On my way home from class that night I couldn't wait to call Jonathan. As soon as I got to my car, I pulled out my cell phone and speed dialed him. The phone kept ringing until the call finally went to his voicemail. So I left a message, "Dude! You are not going to believe what just happened! The book is the dissertation Dude! The book is the dissertation!"

The next day after work, Jonathan and I again met in his room with the guitars. We were jamming a Led Zeppelin song called "Over the Hills and Far Away," and talking about how best to approach studying what we had done together at

the school. I was trying to explain Critical Praxis Research to him, in particular, I was conveying the concepts of identity, purpose, and context. The song we were playing made me think of my favorite drummer's symbol—the three overlapping circles.

"Dude, think of it like Zeppelin."

"Think of it like Zeppelin? Chris what have you been smoking?"

"No, no. Think of the symbol on John Bonham's drum set. You know, this one." I picked up a whiteboard marker and drew the three overlapping circles that Led Zeppelin's drummer, John Bonham, had on his bass drum. Jonathan stayed with me patiently, "uh-huh."

"Now, check it out dude. Each circle represents a different dimension of how we live the same experience. In other words, here I am; there you are. Each of us is an individual and we experience reality individually. Right?"

Again, Jonathan nodded patiently and politely. "Keep going Chris; I'm with ya."

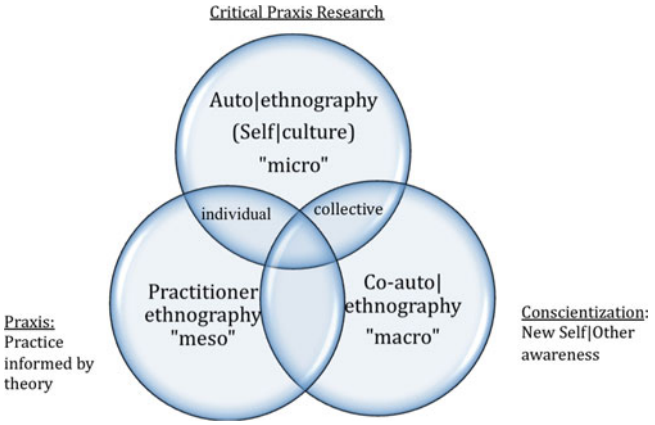
"Meanwhile, each of us simultaneously experiences reality as members of groups. Right? As teachers, as middle class, as African American, Latino, White, etc. As individuals and members of groups, we are motivated and experience purpose similarly and differently, and our lived experience is always contextual. Therefore, to research what we experienced, both within and out of our particular field of practice, requires a that we use multiple methods. So I propose to incorporate a methodological bricolage. I'll examine the problems and challenges you faced adapting to an urban school environment, and the problems and challenges I faced as your mentor first from the micro lens of identity. To examine the problem on this level we'll both reflect on our own individual identities and keep autobiographical narratives of how we've experienced and continue to experience urban schooling as individuals."

Then, pointing to the second circle in the symbol, I continued. "Next, we'll examine the meso level of our experience. This is where we look specifically at what we did, and continue to do as practitioners in the field. This speaks most specifically to our purpose for doing this research—to inform our practice and to improve in our roles as educators in the field of education. Right? And more specifically, right here at the school. And then finally, we'll combine our experiences and the lessons we glean from them to engage a sociocultural analysis in order to consider our work on the macro level of society itself."

Jonathan, listened intently, and then attempted to paraphrase in order to check for understanding, "Okay, so again Chris, if I understand you correctly . . . on the micro level of identity we are each individuals, each with our own unique life experiences and methodologically we will write autobiographical narratives of our experiences to analyze, but then we'll consider our specific identities as teachers, and we'll examine precisely what we did in our mentoring relationship/process that helped to transform the school experience on the meso level, and then finally, we'll consider how we identify collectively and on the macro level, as members of society. If we do the study this way, we'll be able to examine how we converge and diverge as individuals and as members of groups in society, and this speaks to identity, purpose, and context."

"You've got it brother. And what I'm going to do is create a visual that captures the research design." Jonathan agreed that a visual would help him to understand the research design conceptually. We further agreed that we would pick up on it the following day. In the meantime, I went home that evening and drew a concept map to better show Jonathan what I was talking about.

Methodological Framework



The above graphic illustrates my conceptualization of CPR as a research methodology that adapts a bricolage of research methods in order to accommodate the researcher as a whole person beyond the boundaries of the particular role of researcher. Specific to my study, Mr. Hoffman and I used CPR to frame our work together, in which we each engaged in an auto|ethnography to examine our own individual and collective cultural identities. We then examined how our individual and collective cultural schemas interacted with the urban school culture thereby affecting and being affected by all cultural schemas. At the meso level of the school, where the mentoring relationship/process took place, Mr. Hoffman and I conducted an informal practitioner ethnography of our professional selves guided by critical theories of education in the context of the school culture in order to inform our practice. Finally, Mr. Hoffman and I mutually engaged in a co-auto/ethnography for the purpose of gaining new awareness and embarked upon a macro level analysis of society that resulted in a critique of American culture, in particular, as it determines and defines our public schools.

The First Critical Lens—Auto|Ethnography

As Mr. Hoffman's mentor I guided us through a process of auto|ethnography. Through the process of engaging in our own individual auto|ethnographies based on our auto/biographical narratives, Mr. Hoffman and I both examined our individual

Self identities and cultural schemas in dialectical relation to that of the collective cultural *Other*. As a result, we each gained greater insight, understanding, and awareness of how the ways in which we identify internally carry with them personal biases that interact with the external world. Due to the dialectical nature of human existence as both an individual and collective experience, "auto|biography and auto|ethnography are but two ways educators can expose their pre-judgments (prejudices) that they bring to the understanding of issues in teaching and learning" (Roth, 2005, p. 9), while at the same time drawing understanding of the collective generalized experience of what it is to be a teacher.

Mr. Hoffman and I both entered the teaching field with a general understanding of how we each defined the role of a teacher. Auto|ethnography had us each examine our own sociocultural and socioeconomic backgrounds in order to narrow our definitions down to what it means to us, individually and collectively, to be urban teachers—one from a culturally white, upper-middle-class background in Mr. Hoffman's case, and one from a culturally stripped, low-working class Latino background in my case. Through the auto|ethnographical process of understanding ourselves culturally, thereby better understanding the dialectical nature of our identities, we were well positioned to then narrow the focus of our *Self* examinations for the purpose of more specifically defining our understanding of the roles we play as urban teachers. We were then better able to examine how our individual cultural identities informed our teacher identities and how these identities interacted with the individual cultural identities of our students and the collective urban school culture in ways that both augmented and truncated our agency as practitioners.

The Second Critical Lens—Practitioner Ethnography

When Mr. Hoffman started at the school he experienced utter culture shock. Mr. Hoffman states in one of his autobiographical narratives "The cultural difference between my students and I is so huge that I often end up feeling inept (actually, I am inept) because there are occasions when I just don't know how to talk to the kids." As part of the mentoring relationship/process, Mr. Hoffman and I spent a great deal of time and energy examining and discussing the urban school culture. Essentially we conducted an informal ethnography of the school in order that Mr. Hoffman could better understand how to bridge the cultural divide between him and his students, in order to develop cooperative and healthy relationships. As teachers, who are practitioners in the field, we delved deeper into our study of the school culture by situating ourselves as participants in our study. Although we weren't fully aware of it at the time, we were applying CPR to research our roles as practitioners in dialectical relation to the urban school. In doing so, we founded our study on the same principles as auto|ethnography, but focusing specifically on how our unique individual identities as teacher-practitioners interacted with the school culture. In retrospect I considered what we did as a process to be a practitioner ethnography.

Practitioner ethnography is the term I use to describe the ways in which Mr. Hoffman and I examined the collective sociocultural and socioeconomic environment of the school community with particular interest in the dialectical relationships

we experienced as individuals who are teachers with middle-class status (having arrived at that middle-class status differently) against the socioeconomic lower-class and overwhelmingly sociocultural minority backdrop of the school and community where we worked. Together Mr. Hoffman and I explored and researched, as practitioners, our own sociocultural constructs and we employed identity theory to tease out the ways in which we define and redefine ourselves as a result of our individual and collective sociocultural and socioeconomic experiences, and the meanings we apply to our experiences as we exist simultaneously as individuals and members of the collective society.

The Third Critical Lens—Co-Auto|Ethnography

As colleagues and co-participants in this study, the story of the mentoring relationship/process is one of a shared experience. Mr. Hoffman learned and benefited from my experiences through our mentoring relationship. I too benefited equally from his life's experiences. As a result of having shared our stories together through the reflective process of mentoring, and co-researching, Mr. Hoffman and I co-created new structures and agency for ourselves based on our shared auto|biographical and auto|ethnographical insights thus transforming our identities as a result. Our shared stories, and the give-and-take dialogues they produced contributed to the process and creation of a co-auto/biography and co-auto|ethnography (Taylor & Coia, 2005). The full and true benefits of this study emerged from this co-authorship. Therefore, what began with me studying Mr. Hoffman, evolved into a study of my *Self* as well. I am both the researcher and a co-participant in the study.

Co-auto|ethnography is the method Mr. Hoffman and I used to collectively examine our personal and shared cultural experiences and the ways in which they informed our understanding of the mentoring relationship/process, urban school culture and students, and the *Individual*/*Collective*, *Dominant*/*Subordinate* cultural dialectic. As we addressed the *Other* in one another, we dialogued at length about the extension of our *Other*-ness at the macro level of society. Along with reflective *Self*-analysis through auto/ethnography and practitioner ethnography, Mr. Hoffman and I also collectively engaged in a sociocultural analysis in order to more deeply explore the complexities of the *Self* |*Other* dialectic.

Challenge the Status Quo with Criticality

The organic nature of the mentoring relationship between me and Mr. Hoffman and the process of reporting it is the very thing that ultimately allowed my "me-search" to produce practical methods for other urban teachers to use in adapting to and integrating into the urban school culture. My study became an evolving work in that the very process of writing it and conducting it changed it, just as the mentoring relationship changed the individuals involved. In a sense, it mirrored the mentoring relationship itself because it was grounded in our lived experiences. Postformal, postmodern, critical theory, and praxis contributed to the ability of Jonathan's and my new perceptions of urban schools, urban students, and urban teachers to be

teased out, unpacked, and understood by those who seek to mentor new teachers. In the end, it introduced a new school of thought to teacher training and mentoring, which encourages mentors to help new teachers cultivate the flexibility to adapt and grow within an urban school context.

Every individual is unique; and the dynamics created by two or more individuals coming together are unique to that particular pair or group. Therefore the application of the theories presented in this dissertation and the results they yield can never be duplicated in such a way as to yield the exact same results every time regardless of the participants. Mr. Hoffman and I enjoyed the success we did because of who we are together. Although others would generate their own unique mentoring relationship with its own dynamics. By utilizing Critical Praxis Research as my methodology I was able, through this rigorous process, to challenge the status quo with criticality. I was able to challenge the dominant modern-positivist frame that marginalizes people like myself, and my urban school students, those of us who do not fit "the mold," and who do not think *inside* "the box." Engaging in Critical Praxis Research allowed me to invoke and embody the true spirit of a researcher that was wholly *me* and not some scientist in a white coat, until finally, my research evolved into my me-search.

About the Author

Christopher Avilés is a husband and father of four children. Professionally, he is currently a high school administrator in the Boston Public Schools system. In May, 2009, Christopher completed the Leadership in Urban Schools doctoral program at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. He has a teacher's license and is licensed as a high school principal.

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Chapter 17
The Whole Story

The Whole Story: Integration of Critical Praxis Research and Lived Experience

I love a good story. As a girl, I used to gather with my three younger sisters on my grandmother's bed. There, we would sit as close to her as we could while she told us stories she had learned from her own mother. A story about a messy boy who learned the advantages of self-care after he was sent to the barn to find his brother among the pigs. A story about a boy whose name I would have no idea how to spell, but was pronounced A-pim-uh-not-is. This lad was constantly misunderstanding his mother's instructions, thereby destroying every gift he ever received. And of course, *Little Red Riding Hood*, which my Grammy used to tell with a sock doll that was Little Red on one end, and, when we lifted her skirts and turned her upside down, the white-capped wolf on the other. My sisters and I would laugh with delight at the sudden appearance of the wolf. I grew up, it turns out, in a great story-telling tradition, surrounded by grandmothers who told stories, a grandfather who preached stories from church lecterns, thousands of books on our home shelves, and a father who wrote and taught literature for a living.

It's no surprise, then, that I continue to see my life as narrative, all these years later. I'm constantly searching for threads in my life—themes, or recurring characters, or archetypes, or symbols. I guess it's my never-ending search for meaning, for understanding, and for self-criticality that turns me, through journaling and regular "retreat days," to story.

This chapter is the story of how my life conspired to bring me to a doctoral program. Like many of the readers of this book, I am a doctoral candidate. My post-graduate work is not yet finished, the research story of my life just barely begun. Here I aim to demonstrate how my life story engaged me with the methodology of research my dear professor, Tricia Kress, has called Critical Praxis Research. I have read every word of her book. My reading and the beginning of my doctoral training are illuminating for me the ways in which the threads of my narrative are woven with the ideas and ideals of CPR. Sometimes, these threads seem tightly and almost seamlessly woven. But as a newcomer to CPR, many of the narrative threads are complicated knots. This is the story of how my interest in research—and in CPR—came to be, and how CPR has both furthered, troubled, and changed my unfolding

Contributed by Melissa Winchell.

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story as a person and a researcher. At the conclusion of my story, I propose some ways that CPR integrates research into our life and explain how CPR might offer us a holistic academic journey. In other words, CPR might offer us a research storyline that does not compete with, or demand separation from, our life narratives. This potential for wholeness can inspire teacher-researchers like us to finish our doctoral studies; more importantly, the "whole story" of CPR offers us a unique opportunity to be transformed.

Narrative One: Faith *and* Scholarship

Many of my fondest memories of childhood include my father. My father in his college office, looking up at me from a stack of essays. My father at home in his library, typing on an old typewriter. My father teaching a class of college students while I sit in the back of the classroom and draw a picture of him—suit and tie, bearded, smiling.

My father was raised in a single-parent evangelical home, back when single-parent was not yet a word in the American lexicon and when evangelical described people's personal faith and not a political force. Something about the Kansan farming milieu shaped him into a man a part of, and apart from, his faith and small town traditions. He went to church on Sundays, but (contrary to his church's teachings) listened to the Beatles and frequented the movie theater on Main Street, too. He joined the town's high school marching band and left town after graduation, the first in his family to seek higher education, and to obtain it.

Drawing on Bourdieu's ideas about social reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990), I can see how my life journey is in many ways an extension of my father's, a reproduction of the structures that held sway in the evangelical environment of my life. My dad eventually made his way through seminary, a pastorate, and a professorship in literature at a small evangelical college. Like my father, I attended a faith-based college. Like him, I chose to teach English. And after a decade-long career teaching English and ESL in an urban high school, I, too, am seeking now to make a career for myself in academia.

Like my dad, I also struggle with the tensions between faith and scholarship. Because the tradition in which my father was raised (and, throughout most of my life, I was raised) is a low church, charismatic, evangelical tradition, academia is often portrayed as the antithesis to spiritual wisdom or growth. For others raised in a myriad of other Christian and even Christian evangelical traditions, this is not necessarily the case. But as it was for my father and now for me, there is a sense that I am straddling two cultures. My father has resolved this tension by leaving the faith tradition in which he was raised; I live instead in the tension, feeling uncomfortable most Sundays with the politics and rhetoric of church, and unsure how best to make sense of my spirituality in the postmodern and critical scholarship of the university.

You've read already in this book Kress' criticisms of Christianity. These are criticisms I share. And yet though I am new to critical theory, it seems that there is a

home even for me, a follower of a (gulp) colonizing faith tradition. And it's actually critical theory that most excites me as a spiritual person; I believe the unfolding of faith in my life has been a thread of a narrative that has brought me to study critical theory, even as critical theory criticizes and troubles faith.

In fact, both critical theorists and Christian academics are issuing a wide call for justice and for attention to the colonized and marginalized. As with critical theory, many Christians in academia are concerned with postcolonialism and expressions of faith and scholarship that are not Western-centric.[1] Many Christians with whom I work are lecturing, writing, and attending conferences about the "Southern Church" (Jenkins, 2006, 2007). In other words, there is an emerging understanding that the heart of the organized faith is not in the North any longer—not in Europe, or North America—but rather in vibrant and growing communities of faith in South America, in Southeast Asia, and in Africa. These communities differ considerably from the communities of faith in the North, and may both conflict and alter the face of Christianity throughout the next century. How these diverse and divergent communities of faith will re-define Christianity remains to be seen, but the call within Christendom, as within critical theory, is to turn our ear to these altern voices and to position ourselves as learners within a framework of justice.[2] For me, this call can be answered with both scholarship and faith, and this possibility for wholeness—a response of my whole self to the entirety of the wrongs of the world—inspires me.

The indigenous research tradition has strengthened my sense that spirituality is an asset as a researcher (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Perhaps some in Western academia struggle to read indigenous accounts of spiritual practices; perhaps these scholars read them as fairy tales or "suspect" phenomena. The narrative of my life has given me a whole array of strange, spiritual events; from the miraculous to the mysterious, my life story has opened me to the possibility for other-worldness. This I find a great asset when reading with the indigenous, postcolonial, and critical traditions. Unlike traditional Western post-Enlightenment minds, my own can accept and value mystical experiences, which are important within many indigenous narratives.

Finally, the theme of spirituality throughout my life story has developed over the years, expanding from a narrow definition of personal salvation to include a *shalom* perspective, a perspective reflected in critical scholarship. Growing up, I thought the point of faith was to save myself from eternal damnation. Other Christians—from a vibrant spectrum of traditions—have helped me to re-read our spiritual texts as a story whose theme is the restoration of *shalom*—whole peace, whole justice—to the world.[3] These themes I find echoed in the critical scholarship, for example, in Freire's idea of "radical love:"

> Radicalization involves an increased commitment to the position one has chosen. It is predominantly critical, humbling, loving, and communicative. . .The man who has made a radical option does not deny another man's right to choose. . .The radical does, however, have the duty, imposed by love itself, to react against the violence of those who try to silence him. (Freire, 1973, p. 10)

In the apostolic writings, Christians are similarly compelled by the love of Christ to radical acts of justice—forgiveness, humility, protest, and peace. Freire's call to

a radical work and life that is both loving and radical bears a striking resemblance to the teachings of faith texts. A commitment to an ethic of justice and a morality of work (described by Kress in her final chapter as fundamental to Critical Praxis Research) is in harmony with the spirituality of Christian faith—a spirituality that is itself the whole of life, and can embrace and transform the academic, the daily, the personal, and the mystic.

And yet, as a scholar researching in a postmodern tradition, I feel the tensions of ascribing to a faith metanarrative among colleagues who abhor metanarratives of any sort. But justice, it seems to me, is a metanarrative, a driving force of our work, however, we fill in the chapters that brought us to that concluding page. For me, those chapters were largely faith-filled; for others, they will not be. My doctoral studies have particularly challenged either/or binaries; it seems to me that one of the final considerations for postmodern scholarship will be the troubling of the *either faith or academia* binary. A doing away of the *sacred or secular.* My faith calls me to find connectedness, to seek wholeness, to further integrity. This is *shalom*. A peace that brings all to its fullness, its potential, even as it addresses each one, hears each one, loves each one. Faith *and* critical scholarship, a *whole* story for the *whole* of humanity.

Narrative Two: Girl Power

I haven't mentioned my mother yet, and I did have one, and have one still. In fact, the influence of females on my life probably cannot be overstated. To understand me is to understand the gender dominance of my household. We were six—my father, my mother, me, and my three younger sisters. That's right. Sisters. Four girls.

We were, of course, subject to a lot of generalized teasing from my father and from others who pretended to "pity" his position as the lone man in the house. But there wasn't much doubt in our minds, growing up, about the distribution of power. It was usually, decidedly, titled in the direction of my mother, a strong-willed, outspoken, driven mother of four. She was, when we were young, the proverbial leader of our estrogen pack. And because my father belied many of the stereotypical masculine traits—he preferred shopping to flag football, reading a book to installing a light switch—I had a unique opportunity to grow up in an environment that I only much later recognized as unusually empowering for a female.

This is not to say that my mother was a feminist. She was not. She herself had grown up in a male-dominated household, and in a more conservative evangelical tradition than my father; she wanted us, in addition to any other accomplishments, to marry. I remember as a high school student arguing with my mother about why I didn't *want* to date any of the boys at church; it took a few weeks for me to help her to understand that my insistence on editing the school newspaper, working, and traveling abroad were *not* going to make a spinster of me at just 16 years of age. On the other hand, my mother's faith tradition, conservative as it was, welcomed female leadership. My mother had seen women ordained as ministers, heard them preach,

seen them lead churches, and heard their adventurous missionary tales. It was my mother who raised my sisters and me to be independent young women.

Further, the influence of my sisters on my life is probably one of the strongest threads—a cord, really—of my life story. My parent's marriage had its difficulties, and the greatest effect of this turmoil was the growth in relationships between their four daughters. It was as if we huddled together in storm-time. We are all adults now, all married with children, and still we email or call nearly every day. Once a year we schedule a weekend "sister retreat," and when we can, we snatch time to be together—as many of us who are able. Those who know the four of us feel that when we are together, we are a particular (and sometimes intimidating) force. We feel this power, and capitalize on it frequently; we each draw strength from the other three, and push ourselves to survive and to succeed in honor of our sisterhood. Watching my sisters live their own life stories has given me a wider perspective of what is possible for women, and taught me about the particular issues which affect, marginalize, and silence us.

I am sure that this sisterhood has influenced my decision to choose CPR as a research methodology. There, feminist voices are not only welcomed—they are leading, co-creating, and forming their own "force" with which academia must reckon (Haraway, 2003; Hill Collins, 2003; Visweswaran, 2003). Also, the way in which CPR was first presented to me—as a lived experience, I mean—was highly feminized. After asking Kress within my first year to serve as my eventual dissertation advisor, she invited me to work with a group of her students—all farther along in their research processes than me—to write, revise, and work out our research. I spent the latter half of my first year of doctoral candidacy with this group of people. Most of them were women. Women in leadership positions in schools, women in mothering roles, women engrossed in theory and methodology, women who wrote, women with a biting wit, women who had overcome obstacles, women who worked together. It was this mix of feminized synergy that first attracted me—and then kept me coming back to bimonthly meetings. Only later did I realize that I was reproducing a sort of sisterhood in my life again; only later did I understand that I had all but left behind the women in my own doctoral cohort (who were unable to work together) for the powerful mix of feminine energy and creativity that was an entire chapter, a familiar theme, of my own life story.

Narrative Three: The Urban Mission

I'm going to risk full disclosure here, and hope that you'll continue reading beyond the next sentence. Here it is: when I went off to college as an undergraduate, I had one decided goal—to become a missionary. I wanted to do some good in the world, and since the highest notion of good (a hierarchy created by the religious establishment in which I was raised) was a missionary, I was, of course, determined to be the best at *good* that I could be. Much conspired in those early years of college to change my notions of the do-good job hierarchy, and when I finally graduated 4

years later, I had altered my plan. I had figured out I didn't need to be a missionary to do good—getting on a plane for a far-off country was not necessary, I had allowed—but I also thought I should do *something* to help *someone*. So I went off to teach English at an urban public high school, figuring mostly that cities were pretty much full of lots of *someones* needing lots of help.

There is so much to deconstruct here, I know—social reproduction and habitus and religious training and colonial mindsets and us–them mentalities and volunteerism and crazy notions of "urban" and anthropological pride and scarily empire-like motives and white power and … Only now can I read those things into the professional narrative of my life.[4] My evangelical college training (a much more liberal scholarship and faith than I had experienced previously) had begun to unpack some of that for me, as much as I would allow at the time. I knew enough to know I shouldn't *say* aloud what I was thinking—that I was going to *help* the school, and *better* its staff and students in some way. For me, the urban school was an outpost mission of some foreign sort.

I taught at the same high school for a decade, and suffice to say, encountered there so much that troubled, challenged, and changed my notions of urban schooling. I made a lot of mistakes, said insensitive things, misunderstood veteran teachers, underestimated some students, devalued students' funds of knowledge, misread racial tensions and alliances, ineffectively challenged school leadership, and sometimes, made mountains out of proverbial molehills.

Along the way, I also got to listen. And finally, after many years, I began to hear what my students were saying to me. That life was not fair, and that the system seemed stacked against them. That they were far more than the sum of their test scores and data folders and racial profiles and free lunches. I watched students rise to Ivy League success, and saw others locked in juvey, and wondered at it all. And in the end, I wondered a lot. I think this—the questions I could not answer, the tensions I could not solve, the complexities I could not explain or even articulate—began the deconstruction of my identity as urban school do-gooder. And these questions, tensions, and complexities prompted me, finally, to admit how little I really knew and to look for practitioners with incomplete professional stories like mine. I came to the university and applied for a doctoral program out of this intention that I might discover a community of those interested in justice, and mentors there who might give me a language and a context from which to speak, research, and act.

I was also prompted to seek a doctoral program by my experiences as a teacher of high school refugee students from Somalia, Liberia, Sudan, and Burundi. Throughout the 5 years in which I worked as an ESL teacher with these students, I began to learn about the ways in which these students had been marginalized—in their home countries, in the process of applying for refugee status, in refugee camps, and in their resettlement experiences in the United States. I also developed a growing awareness of the ways in which our school (often ignorantly, and sometimes intentionally) misunderstood, ignored, or devalued them. I thought about my own training as an English and ESL teacher and realized how woefully ignorant I was of how best to instruct these students, and I questioned whether "best practices" were

really best, and for whom they were effective, and who had the power to say so. I applied for a doctoral program knowing that I had an interest in learning more about refugee students in US public schools.

As a second year candidate, I am beginning my literature review in the fields of refugee studies and education. And of course, Critical Praxis Research has prompted a lot of considerations for me. Though I'm required by my university to define research questions in order to begin my literature review, I am approaching the research process with an openness to redefinition and revision along the way. As Kress has written, often our questions derive from our research, and I expect this will happen, particularly as CPR has introduced me to the notion of researching *with* refugee students. During my literature review, I plan on investigating participatory action research (James, Milenkiewicz, & Bucknam, 2008; McIntyre, 2008; Tuck et al., 2008) and considering the ways in which a PAR study could occur in a refugee student context. I will need to address language barriers, translation issues, and cross-cultural concerns; I haven't yet determined how to do this, and how to preserve the integrity of my co-researchers' work within a linguistically and culturally diverse (and often contested) context. Also, because I want to discover more about the lived experiences of refugee students with limited to no formal education, I will need to think seriously about how best to collect, record, and share data with co-researchers who may be developing or emergent in literacy.

The most difficult—and beneficial—aspect of CPR for me thus far, however, has been its insistence on self-criticality. Because the narrative of my life reads "missionary," and because I was raised in a binary context (even understanding urban and suburban schools as bad and good, and drawing unnecessary distinctions between them), I have had—and still have—a lot of work to do to uncover my assumptions and to engage with a multiplicity of perspectives. I find that this work is ongoing and will necessarily continue throughout my doctoral candidacy and, I hope, my academic life. Though CPR may "untie" some of the knots of my narrative threads (and believe me, this has been painful and disconcerting at times), I have experienced CPR as patient, welcoming, and process-oriented. A few months ago Kress told me that she had been unaware of her whiteness until her 20s; this brought me strange comfort, to know that we are, professors and students, on a journey toward understanding one another. And that I, too, am welcome at the CPR table, even if I don't have all of my own colonizing or oppressive mindsets ferreted out yet. This, I think, is the university version of grace.

Narrative Four: Personal *and* Professional

There must be some doctoral candidates out there who prefer to compartmentalize their studies from the rest of their life. I don't. I mean, I do leave the house sometimes to read or write in a local café or library. With three children, that sort of separation is necessary for sanity and progress. But that's not what I mean. What

I mean is, I intended from the start to be the sort of doctoral candidate that saw my studies *as* my life, not all of it, certainly, but still "it"—vibrant, energizing, and motivating. The hours I spend in class, in other words, are not a disruption to life; life is going on as I sit and listen, or take notes, or research, and I want to savor those moments, and accept them as my life as much as snuggling with my daughter is my life, too.

I was helped along in this assumption from the first of my doctoral classes by a member of my cohort. At his insistence, one day after class we left our backpacks and headed for the university pier for a sailing lesson. In his words, if we were going to *do* this "doctorate thing," we should "do it right." I resonated with his *carpe diem* doctoral philosophy, and I have tried to live it since, however, imperfectly. I've swum laps in the university pool and attended lectures. I've come on campus for a quiet day of reflection, have taken walks on its shore-side boardwalk, and sat on its lawn with my personal journal. And most especially, I've tried to keep myself from complaining about the work, learning finally to take on only those classes I can handle (even if it means falling behind my cohort). The more joy I can experience in and through my studies, I figure, the less likely I am to leave my work unfinished.

This is no easy task for those of us with full professional and personal lives outside of our doctoral studies. Many of us parent full-time, work full-time, attend our classes, and begin our literature reviews. We become extraordinary multi-taskers even as the details of life seem to get lost in the shuffle (or our to-do lists get lost in our purses). We leave a course assignment undone, time ourselves in the library ("you have four hours to finish this paper, and that's it"), let the dishes pile up in the sink, and neglect our vacuuming. We are juggling, always.

Here's what I'm learning about this juggling act: it's not so bad as long as we don't begin to perceive that life is going to happen *after* the juggling is over. As long as we see life *as* the juggling, we can find joy even while our pins and balls and fiery torches cartwheel through the air. CPR has taught me that when my research is connected to who I am, when I am bringing my whole self to my doctoral studies, I can see my studies as an extension of myself and who I am destined to be in this world. I'm not counting down the years until I "finish this thing." In fact, my studies were interrupted last year by an unexpected diagnosis after the birth of our third child. Returning to my research and my classes a year later has only furthered my belief that the work is only worth doing if the work is *connected* to me. And because I am energized in and through the work, I am motivated to continue despite the altered landscape of my family life.

In Critical Praxis Research, my personal experiences and my professional experiences have opportunity to integrate. CPR offers us opportunity to write the narrative of our doctoral programs as an extension of the narrative of our lives, rather than as a confusing and competing sub-plot. This valuing of the whole, and the serene and joy-filled work-life it produces, is no doubt a central reason why I have chosen Critical Praxis Research as my methodology.

Conclusion: How Newbies Like Us Can Write a Whole Story

The fundamental tenet of Critical Praxis Research is the valuing of the practitioner as an academic. It is a (w)holistic view of the educator as teacher-researcher-person. Somehow, we—the newcomers to doctoral studies—have found ourselves fortunate enough to be valued in such a way, to be regarded, listened to, and understood.

We have a responsibility, it seems to me, in the context of such esteem. We must decide if we are in a doctoral program to write a dissertation, or if we are in a doctoral program to listen to, learn from, and trouble the narrative of our life. There is a vast difference. One will earn us a degree. The other will earn us a degree *and* a contextualized, multiplicitous perspective we're going to need in all our lived experiences. How, then, do we choose to write such a whole story?

First, to choose to connect our life narrative with our doctoral work means we must be willing to bring our whole selves to our work, even when we are not sure if or how some of our assumptions or beliefs "fit" with our theories and the lived experiences of the people with whom we research or study. Second, a whole—unified, holistic—story will mean seeking out a community of people in the context of our doctoral programs who will create a brother- and sisterhood of creativity, criticality, and context. Third, a whole story will mean a commitment to self-criticism and to an ongoing sense of humility, teachability, and a scholarly identity of the not-yet. And finally, a whole story will mean the deconstruction of the personal and professional dichotomy in favor of a perspective of life that reaches from our classrooms into our apartments.

In addition, a whole story means the resistance of the Westernized notion of narrative as linear. As a young girl, all of my grandmother's stories about messy boys and little girls began, reached a climax, and concluded. Instead, I believe that the narrative of our life is a layering of circular narratives, a mess of connections and dissonances, a cutting and rebinding of threads. If so, then we cannot view our doctoral experience as a professional apex; it is not a foreshadowing of the yet-to-come. Here, Critical Praxis Research would say to us, *is* the story. Here, as we do our work, *is* our life.

Perhaps my undergraduate studies in literature are getting the best of me here, but those who study story know that the outcome of every story is the transformation of a character. The salesman who was once delusional commits suicide in despair, or more hopefully, the man sentenced to death row is saved and softened. If our life is a narrative, then it makes sense to ask this question: how will our doctoral stories change us? Maybe, it turns out, this doctoral story isn't so much about attaining something as it is about living through something that will transform us. I wonder, after these doctoral chapters of my life have been written and I have the space to read them, what change of character I will find there. Whatever it is, I only hope I will look back with the satisfaction of having lived my studies *as* my life, of having created my life as a whole, complex, emerging, and love-filled story.

About the Author

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Notes

1. A body of postcolonial theologians is meeting regularly and has launched two Internet sites of interest. One is an online network called Postcolonial Networks at www.postcolonialnetworks.com. The other is a related online journal, titled *Journal of Postcolonial Theory and Theology*, at www.postcolonialjournal.com. I am indebted to my Alma matter, Gordon College, for hosting a symposium regarding postcolonial theology in the fall of 2010 and thereby bringing these resources to my attention.
2. Some of these calls for justice are in keeping with liberation theology, historically associated with South American movements for freedom but with implications for the developing and developed world. Justice- and community-based networks of Christians may be of interest to my reader, and include Christian Community Development Association (www.ccda.org), Sojourners (www.sojo.net) and the World Forum on Theology and Liberation (www.wftl.org).
3. In particular, the Emergent Church, a recent movement among Christians in North America, is reissuing a historic call to a spirituality that is both personal and communal. In this I perceive an individual/collective dialectic that is focused on justice and transformation. For more information about the Emergent Church, you might sample a few books I've enjoyed, including Brian McLaren's *A Generous Orthodoxy: Why I am a missional, evangelical, post/protestant, liberal/conservative, mystical/poetic, biblical, charismatic/contemplative, fundamentalist/calvinist, anabaptist/anglican, methodist, catholic, green, incarnational, depressed-yet-hopeful, emergent, unfinished Christian* (2004) and Shane Claiborne's *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical* (2006). There are many voices within the Emergent Church movement, but McLaren and Claiborne are worthy introductions.
4. Many evangelicals, of course, are themselves troubling colonial notions of "missionary" (see Newbigin, L. (1989). *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*; Walls, A. (1996). *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*; Escobar, S. (2003). *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone*). For many, the mysteries of faith and the mysteries of the increasingly global contexts in which we live combine to create an emerging sense in Christendom that leveraging our resources for justice is about more than a do-good, turn-or-burn positionality, and that such a positionality is actually the antithesis of justice in the first place.

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Glossary

Achievement ideology Related to *meritocratic ideology*, achievement ideology applies meritocracy to education and supposes that those who succeed in school will be rewarded with upward mobility in society

Action research Research whose purpose is to create social change and to empower participant action

Agency Refers to one's capacity to make choices for himself/herself

Androcentric Marked by the domination by males or masculinity

Behaviorism Originally a school of psychology, the assumption that reality can be objectively observed and that a direct, stimulus-based explanation for behavior exists

Bricolage An approach to research in which the methodology is a combination of methodological traditions

Bricoleurs Researchers who practice *bricolage*

Bureaucratization The regulation and structuring of education

Cartesian dualism The Enlightenment tendency to distinguish between objective and subjective realities and to understand them as separate and unequal

Case study A qualitative research study of a particular person or small group of people in comparison or contrast to their larger group, culture, or contexts

Catalytic validity A determination of research quality by providing evidence that the research has led to new insight and/or action on the part of participants

Critical theory Critical theory is an avenue of social inquiry that helps one to explain what is wrong with the current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation

Critical ontology The critical examination of the transformation of the self as teacher-researcher, with the express purpose of conducting research that can result in social change

Critical pedagogy A teaching approach that attempts to help students to question and challenge domination, and the beliefs and practices that dominate

Critical Praxis Research Research conducted by educators who wish to address the lived realities of their students and schools. The practitioner-researcher develops a critical consciousness and then conducts research in ways that promote

T.M. Kress, *Critical Praxis Research*, Explorations of Educational Purpose 19,
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justice, where justice is understood to benefit (or be driven by) the research participants

Critical race theory A research movement that troubles historical notions of race and power for the purposes of social change

Cultural studies Research that examines culture vis-à-vis critical theory or Marxism and including a variety of related critical schools (feminist, indigenous, and so on)

Darwinian logic The belief that the fittest survive; in education, the notion that the smartest or most hard working will succeed

Deficit thinking A perspective which is typically held by the dominant group that views the member in question as being wrong or "less than" simply because that member does operate under the same norms of the dominant group. Results when people perceive that a member of group xx has specific life experiences because of his/her group association; and, because of these experiences, will exhibit behaviors that result in negative life outcomes

Dialectic Refers to the notion that two opposing arguments can occur and influence situations and actions at the same time

Empiricism The belief that knowledge is attained and understood via the five senses

Epistemology Theory of knowledge that addresses the nature and limitations of the construction of knowledge

Ethnography A social science field of research with roots in anthropology; the purpose of ethnography is to study people and their culture(s)

Autoethnography: An ethnographic study in which the researcher and his/her contexts are the subject of the research

Critical ethnography: An research approach that applies critical theory to ethnographic studies

Internet ethnography An ethnographic approach to Internet research

Microethnography The use of video to document moments of time for ethnographic research

Performance ethnography An ethnographic study in which the research is represented in performance

Public ethnography An ethnographic study meant not for the small academic community, but for the general public; as such, its data are represented in public ways, for example, through performance

Ethnomethodology The ethnographic study of the rules and rituals of a group of people

Eurocentric Domination of Western European values, assumptions, and perceptions of reality

Feminist research/approaches Research that troubles Western male-dominated notions of culture, self, and education

Feminization A perceived shift of gender roles in a society toward the characteristically "female"

Grounded theory A qualitative research methodology whereby the researcher gleans theory from data rather than (or in addition to) applying a previously chosen theoretical framework to data

Habitus The attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of those in a person's social world

Hegemony The predominance of one way of seeing the world over another; in CPR, hegemony refers to the dominant white, male, and middle class way of researching and teaching

Historical/historiography A research methodology based on critical examination of historic event; using primary and secondary sources, historiography attempts to revise the narrative of history

Historicity A researcher's historical contexts; CPR researchers seek to critically examine their historicity in order to trouble their assumptive worldviews

Identity The way one sees or defines himself; it is network of values and beliefs that structure one's life. Individual identity is something that may be dynamic and constantly changing as one moves through life experiences, e.g., sister to aunt and sister, wife to wife and mother.

Indigenous research/methodologies A research movement founded by indigenous researchers seeking to give voice to their people and cultures; these researchers are particularly concerned with the ways in which indigenous people have been oppressed by colonization and globalization

Individual/collective dialectic The notion that individuals have agency as their unique selves and at the same time reproduce and contribute to a collective or groups' sense of agency

Instrumentalism A pragmatic philosophy that asserts that theories are instruments for social change; theory is valued by its success at impacting society

Interview A research methodology in which the researcher questions and listens to a participant for the purposes of data collection

Jouissance From the French, to enjoy

Lebenswelt The lived world of human consciousness; for CPResearchers, a motivation for research that includes the Self

Logical positivism A philosophy that rejects any suppositions that cannot be logically proven and empirically verified; as such, it can reject theology, metaphysics, and ethics

Meritocratic ideology The notion, particular to the "American dream," that hard work alone can account for—and bring—reward

Me-search A part of CPR; the notion that research can and should embrace the researcher and that an ongoing criticality of self will foster justice for others

Mixed methods research A research approach that combines quantitative and qualitative research methodologies

Multilogicality Multiple perspectives or ways of knowing

Narrative A means of representation in which the research assumes a story-telling style

Ontology The study of the nature of being and existence

Participatory action research A research methodology in which the researcher co-researches with his/her participants; together, the researcher and participants conduct research meant to create social change

Participant observation An ethnographic methodology in which the researcher is both a participant in the culture and an observer of it

Patriarchy The structuring of society on the basis of family units, where fathers have primary responsibility for the welfare of, and authority over, their families.

Phenomenology An ethnographic approach in which the phenomena (symbolic gestures, rites, or traditions, for example) of a culture are studied

Positivism A theoretical philosophy which holds that the only authentic knowledge is that based on actual sense experience. A positivist approach to education looks to the past to help explain current problems and issues.

Postcolonial research/approaches A research movement focusing on the history of imperialism and its affects on marginalized, colonized cultures and people

Postmodernism A theoretical movement that emerged from modernism, which attempts to describe a condition, or a state of being by questioning assumptions based on set traditions and clear cut moral positions

Post-positivist A theoretical stance that amends *positivism*; while truth is still objective, post-positivism claims that human knowledge is based not on absolutes, but on human conjecture

Pragmatism A philosophy which holds that theories are valuable or meaningful on the basis of their practical outcomes

Prescription Explains a process of research that might force practitioner-researchers to follow a template or recipe for their work; such a prescriptive methodology oppresses practitioner-researchers and their participants and furthers the dominant hegemony

Professionalization Describes the legitimization process of education as teachers' roles in the classroom were now viewed as viable career options

Quasi-experimental A research methodology, often used in educational research, in which experimental methods are employed but with the understanding that all variables cannot be controlled

Queer theory A research movement founded in feminism and LGBT movements; queer theory applies critical notions of gender and sexuality to research

Radical doubt Wolff-Michael Roth's term for subjecting one's own interpretation to intense scrutiny during the research process

Radical listening The notion that social change can be furthered by a critical examination of self while listening to, and with, others

Realism The Enlightenment tenet that truth, or reality, exists and is verifiable via the five senses

Reciprocity The notion that research should "give back" to its participants or to society in some way

Reductionism The Enlightenment tenet that claims that reality, even complex realities, can be intellectually analyzed

Reflexive subjectivity Evidence of how the researcher's prior assumptions have changed as a result of the research

Reliability The degree to which a body of research is determined to be reliable

Replicability The degree to which a body of research is determined to be reproducible

Scientism The belief that scientific methodology is the best methodology for social science research

Situatedness A researcher's positionality within connected and even conflicting contexts, including socio-economic, political, historical, racial, and so on

Social efficacy the idea that society as a whole should be productive and all members within that society shall lead efficacious lives

Survey A research methodology in which the researcher polls a representative sample of participants to collect data meant to represent the entire group

Transferability The ability of research to engage a reader in a manner unique to the reader; the "transfer" of the ideas of the research to a particular person's context

Triangulation A technique for establishing the validity of research via multiple validity criteria

Validity The assessment of a research's quality, or "truthfulness"

- **Construct validity**: The degree to which the measurement of the research corresponds to the theoretical construct of the research
- **External validity**: The degree to which the researcher's observations can be compared to other research
- **Face validity**: The validity of research via member-checking (the solicitation of participants' responses to analysis and conclusions)
- **Internal validity**: Internal validity verifies the degree to which the researcher's observations accurately depict reality

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