

FROM “I AM” TO “WE COULD BE”: TEACHING, LEARNING, AND DOING RESEARCH
DIALOGICALLY IN ESOL TEACHER EDUCATION

by

ERIKA FRANÇA DE SOUZA VASCONCELOS

(Under the Direction of Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor)

ABSTRACT

This critical classroom ethnographic study comes in response to calls for empirical studies that illustrate and model dialogic practices associated with preparing ESOL pre-service teachers to teach in our ever-increasingly diverse K-12 education context. I explore the theory, practice, and implications of teaching, learning, and doing research dialogically in an undergraduate ESOL teacher education class at a research university in the southeastern United States. Drawing from Freirean critical pedagogy, dialogue is conceptualized as a democratic pedagogical communicative relation (Burbules, 1993) that acts directly on the social world as it mediates learning and knowing among people bound by habits of heart, but also free to differ and diverge from one another. Two main layers comprise the study: dialogue as pedagogy and dialogue as research method. The first layer examines the complex dynamics of events, experiences, discourses, and relationships in this classroom setting. I offer a “thick description in motion” (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 53) of the language-mediated actions and reactions that the participants practiced over time, as the course instructor, a “critical innovator in the Discourse of teaching and learning” (Willett & Miller, 2004, p. 53), positioned the students as important knowledge-producers. The class was encouraged to revisit and expand their notions of culture,

diversity, and school achievement, towards developing a critical multicultural perspective on teaching and learning. The second layer in this study offers a “thick description in motion” of the fluid, dynamic, sustained, and recursive processes of actions and reactions that the participants and I as the researcher engaged in over time, in and out of the classroom. On one level, the study found that the dialogic pedagogy practiced by the instructor facilitated humanizing relations, community building, deep learning, critical awareness raising, and critical self-reflection among the students, contributing to their development as prospective ESOL teachers. On another level, the study illustrates dialogic research as a process tailored to each participant, with the potential to produce rich research data and promote personal and collective learning and positive change. The findings of the study demonstrate the potential of dialogic work in teaching and research in ESOL teacher education programs.

INDEX WORDS: ESOL Teacher Education, Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, Dialogue, Dialogic Pedagogy, Humanizing Pedagogy, Collaborative Research, Dialogue as Research Method, Critical Classroom Ethnography, Critical Discourse Analysis.

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ERIKA FRANÇA DE SOUZA VASCONCELOS

B.A., Universidade de Brasília, Brazil, 1993

M.A., Universidade de Brasília, Brazil, 1999

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ERIKA FRANÇA DE SOUZA VASCONCELOS

Major Professor: Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor

Committee: JoBeth Allen
Linda Harklau
Robert Moser

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2011

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved children

Thales Felipe – the gentle spirit, o cidadão do mundo

João Vítor – the logical mind, o construtor de pontes

Gabriela – the loving heart, a estrela nata

who in their uniqueness never cease to teach me on the elaborate art of dialogic education.

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This amazing teacher of course leads me to his equally amazing students in the Language and Culture in the Classroom class. Thank you all for opening up not just your classroom but

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Not long ago, teacher educator and scholar Sonia Nieto (2006) posed a few essential questions for teacher preparation in our current sociopolitical context:

- How can schools of education prepare teachers and future teachers for classrooms that are diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, nationality, social class, language and other differences?
- What kinds of dispositions and abilities do teachers need to teach in today's diverse schools, and how can they develop these?
- What does it mean to teach with solidarity, courage and heart, and what can we do to change current practices in teacher education programs to reflect these ideals?

Nieto's poignant questions are very timely in light of the state of public education in the United States of America, where the so-called "minority achievement gap" between White students and their peers of other ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds persists (Nieto & Bode, 2008). The task of preparing a predominantly (87 percent) White teacher workforce (National Education Association, 2010) to effectively teach an ever-increasingly diverse student body presents a pressing challenge. Nearly 45 percent of students in U.S. public schools today represent backgrounds other than White. Students of Latino origin, many of whom are English language learners—ELLs, account for nearly half of those 45 percent (Sable & Plotts, 2010). Between 1997 and 2008, the enrollment of ELLs in public schools increased by 53 percent, compared with just over 8 percent for the total student population during the same period (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition—NCELA, 2010). Within this context, differences in race, ethnicity, language, and social class, among others, have defined inequality in public education. Deficit perspectives towards ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity dominate social institutions such as public schools (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

Traditionally, many teacher education programs have followed a solution-oriented approach in which the teacher educator and/or the textbook are considered to be the ultimate sources of and authorities for knowledge (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010; Cahnmann, Rymes, & Souto-Manning, 2005). This model of teacher education is solution-oriented in that it seeks to provide top-down, often decontextualized solutions to issues being explored. This is done in a monologic manner and with an emphasis on “best” one-size-fits-all teaching methods. Issues of diversity and difference, if addressed, are considered from a liberal perspective that merely promotes developing awareness of cultural “others” (Banks, 2006; Kubota, 2004, 2006). Such a perspective alone lacks the political and ideological clarity (Bartolomé, 1996; Bartolomé & Balderrama, 2001) necessary for preparing teachers to deal with the complexities of working in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms, and for providing them with tools to recognize and confront prejudice and inequity.

Alternatively, teacher education programs with specializations in multicultural and bilingual education, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and those that combine these strands are considered better equipped to prepare teachers to successfully work with students from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Nieto, 2000, p. 182). This preparation should involve critical frameworks that facilitate examination and critique of the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which schools and classrooms are embedded. Moreover, teacher educators have recommended that schools and colleges of education provide prospective teachers of all ethnic backgrounds with opportunities to reflect on their own cultural identities and privilege, before they can teach children from diverse backgrounds (Sleeter, 2008, p. 114).

Critical teacher educators also have highlighted the potential of teacher educators and student teachers entering into dialogue (Freire, 1993) in order to promote critical awareness, political action and social change (Allen, 2007; Nieto, 2006). Drawing from Freire, I view *dialogic education* as that “which seeks to create spaces where the teachers’ *and* students’ voices are equally valued; where the knowledge and lived experiences of teachers and students alike serve as a springboard for the joint construction of transformed and transformative knowledge” (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011, p. 105). In this scenario,

teachers and students collectively contribute to the teaching and learning process as they develop caring and humanizing (Bartolomé, 1996) relationships with one another and engage in dialogue oriented towards acting on the world in order to improve it.

This dissertation is situated against the backdrop of Nieto's crucial questions above, as well as the emerging and promising field of critical/dialogic ESOL teacher education. Publications on dialogue in ESOL teacher education are still rather scarce—especially dialogue that engages future ESOL instructors in difficult questions about diversity, inequality, privilege, transformative action, and social change. Calls have been issued for more empirical studies providing examples that illustrate and model dialogic practices associated with preparing ESOL pre-service teachers (Hawkins, 2004; Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Johnston, 2000). This qualitative study comes in response to such calls. This study explores the theory, practice, and implications of teaching and learning dialogically in one ESOL teacher education class at a research university in the southeastern United States. What did it mean to approach teaching and learning dialogically in this class? What challenges were there to engaging a dialogic pedagogy in this context? Did the dialogic approach contribute to the pre-service teachers' critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and development as prospective ESOL instructors? If so, how? Answers to these questions comprise the bulk of this critical classroom ethnographic study.

I was drawn to this study after meeting and working with an expert ESOL teacher educator who is a “critical innovator in the Discourse of teaching and learning” (Willett & Miller, 2004, p. 53). Greg McClure (real name)¹ teaches with “solidarity, courage and heart” (Nieto, 2006). In his teaching and interactions with his students, Greg seeks to fashion democratic discourses and a cultural context that would lead to student empowerment and personal and collective transformation. In Greg's classes, student teachers are encouraged to explore their cultural identities and lived experiences vis-à-vis broader social relations and realities. They are invited to consider ways in which they can structure their own

¹ As I detail in Chapter 3, this dissertation resulted from a follow-up study (Study B) to a first study (Study A) that Greg McClure and I did together (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011). Given the publication of Study A, and the close ties between both studies, it would have been pointless to designate Greg by a pseudonym in this dissertation. Using his real name was not just a possibility—it was the logical choice.

classrooms as sites of democracy, community and collectivity. In the few years that I have known Greg, I have increasingly come to admire and value his unique, excellent teaching practice. This study documents how that excellence was lived out in an undergraduate class titled Language and Culture in the Classroom. The class was comprised of 10 members, including Greg, the students, and myself.

But, after all, why research the practice of dialogic teaching and learning in ESOL teacher education in the first place? Before I go on to provide further details of the study itself, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at some of the reasons that make a study such as this one relevant for this field. I do so in the next sections, by focusing on published research as well as my own personal experience as the mother of Latino children in American schools.

Why is a Study on Dialogic Pedagogy Important for ESOL Teacher Education?

In order to answer this question, I will take several necessary steps. First, I consider and discuss the nature of language, and language learning and teaching, with a view to describing characteristics of the critical ESOL teacher education program that I advocate. I argue that, among other things, critical ESOL teacher education should prepare prospective teachers to negotiate linguistic and racial tensions, and to practice anti-discriminatory education in their multicultural schools. Next, I will hone in on three examples from research that illustrate discrimination and racism facing immigrant minority ESOL students in U.S. public schools. In the sequence, I offer the example of my daughter's experience with prejudice and racism in public schools. I present these examples to argue the need for a critical approach to ESOL teacher preparation. Finally, in light of these examples, I focus on dialogic pedagogy per se and discuss its relevance and place in ESOL teacher education.

Language, language learning, and ESOL teacher education

Traditionally, learning English as a second or foreign language has been equated to learning and mastering an objective linguistic system comprised of grammar, structures, pronunciations, and communicative acts and skills. This view of language learning is tied to an understanding of learning from a "cognitivist position predicated on telementational notions of communication and individualistic, monolingualistic, and formalistic perceptions of language" (Firth & Wagner, 2007, p. 802); that is, learning

is conceived as a cognitive, autonomous/individual process that is in essence context-neutral. The traditional ESOL classroom is viewed as something of a “closed box” (Pennycook, 2000, p. 89), an educational context separated from society. These perceptions have underpinned research in mainstream cognitivist Second Language Acquisition (SLA), in its theorizing on language, learning, and discourse, in its terminologies and fundamental concepts (such as *input*, *output*, *interference*, *fossilization*, *interlanguage*), and in its methodological practices (Firth & Wagner, 1997, 2007; Norton & Toohey, 2001, p. 310). As the TESOL field was formalized, linguistic description, psycholinguistics, and cognitive acquisition became privileged areas for research, at the expense of social, humanistic, and historical considerations (Stewart, 2006, p. 422).

The mainstream formalistic view of language and learning is quite limited. Language is much more than a skill or a system of rules comprised of vocabulary, phonology, syntax, and pragmatics; language is also a semiotic tool for meaning making, expression, and communication. Furthermore, language is a complex social practice that constructs, and is constructed by the ways people understand themselves, their social surroundings, their histories, relationships, and beliefs. Language is intimately tied to one’s identity and culture, and is intimately affected by questions of ideology and power.

Recognizing this, a growing number of SLA scholars and language teachers have gradually moved beyond the traditional decontextualized, rule-governed, and “scientized” understanding of language and learning, towards sociocultural approaches that recognize the importance of theorizing learner experience, “experience that is lived, made sense of, negotiated, contested, and claimed by learners in their physical, interpersonal, social, cultural, and historical context” (Ortega, 2006, p. 244). Sociocultural theories of language study integrate the language learner and the learning context by locating language use within the context of social practice (Byrnes, 2005, p. 290). The language learner is regarded as a social and cultural being, and is viewed in interaction with other people, contexts, and materials. Explanatory constructs that cut across these approaches are agency, identity, and power (Norton Peirce, 1995; Ortega, 2006). From this perspective, second language learning is seen as an

activity involving dynamic social, cultural, and historical processes, as well as complex kinds of ways of thinking and being in the world.

In the past 20 years, the field of ESOL education has witnessed what has been called a “critical turn” (Clark, 1992, 1995; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Kubota & Austin, 2007; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 1990, 2000, 2001). This “critical turn” is about extending the educational space to the social, cultural, and political dynamics of language use, not just limiting it to the phonological, syntactic, and pragmatic domains of language usage; “it is about realizing that language learning and teaching is more than learning and teaching language” (Kumaravadivelu, 2006, p. 70). Advocates of critical approaches to ESOL education, informed by philosophies such as (neo) Marxism, post-structuralism, and postcolonialism, explore the relationships between language learning, identity, ideology, and social change; they envision the creation of a more just society by transforming unequal power relations in the classroom and beyond. This involves investigation of whose knowledge has historically been privileged, whose has been disregarded, and why. It also recognizes that the heterogeneity of society must be understood with reference to an inequitably structured world in which the gender, race, class and ethnicity of second language learners may serve to marginalize them (Norton, 2000, p. 7).

In recent years, the “critical turn” has also reached the field of ESOL teacher education (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Toohey, 1995). Traditionally, ESOL teacher education programs have amounted to methodological courses that examine such topics as the teaching of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills; content-based language teaching; curriculum planning; classroom management; and evaluation strategies (Goldstein, 2004). However, increasingly such programming is no longer viewed as sufficient to prepare ESOL teachers to deal with the cultural complexities implicit in classroom learning (Walker, Ranney, & Fortune, 2005, p. 326). Recognizing that language, culture and identity are intrinsically related, teacher educators have argued that the content of teacher preparation needs to include not only the linguistic features of English and how these may be taught and learned, but also the complexity of social and cultural issues ranging from considerations of the political position of the

English language in the world, to the impact of language learning on the lives and identities of the learners themselves. The emerging field of critical ESOL teacher education upholds practices that promote the student teachers' critical awareness and critical self-reflection involving these and related issues, as well as the development of critical/democratic pedagogical relations between teacher educators and student teachers (Hawkins & Norton, 2009).

For example, in order to promote critical awareness and self-reflection, opportunities should be made for student teachers to investigate the concept of culture as a dynamic, multifaceted, ideological, and political construct (Franson & Holliday, 2009, p. 44; Kumaravadivelu, 2008). Inherent in this discussion is a need to make explicit how language, culture, identity, relations, ideology, and power are relevant to all language teaching and learning situations. As Kubota (2004, 2006) has argued, the study of culture should resist a color-blind, superficial liberal view of cultural difference that essentializes cultures and creates a dichotomy between "us"(Self) and "them"(Other). Rather, within a critical multiculturalism framework, student teachers should examine in greater depth how cultural differences are constructed by discourses and how power is exercised in perpetuating these differences to the advantage of some and disadvantage of others. Additionally, student teachers should be made aware of the discourses of racism and linguistic prejudice, or linguicism (Talmy, 2005, 2009), and how they are embedded in social and educational structures. If student teachers are encouraged to examine the complexities of working across linguistic, cultural, and racial differences in multicultural and multilingual schools, including such issues as language use/choice, linguistic discrimination, stereotyping and racism, they will be better prepared to negotiate linguistic and racial tensions and to practice anti-discriminatory education in their own multicultural school communities (Goldstein, 2004).

Three examples from research

A number of research studies have documented discrimination and racism facing immigrant minority ESOL students in U.S. public schools. One way that ESOL pre-service teachers can become aware of the discourse of racism and how it is embedded in U.S. schools is by coming into contact with and examining these studies, such as the three examples reviewed in this section.

The first example is Valenzuela's (1999) oft-cited critical ethnographic study of Seguin High School, situated in an inner-city community of Houston, Texas. Valenzuela exposed the complex and distressing dynamics that comprised relations between students and school personnel in that context. At the time the study was conducted, Seguin High School had very high student failure and drop-out rates. Teachers were predominantly non-Latino (81 percent), while the student body was virtually all Latino (45 percent immigrant Mexicans and 55 percent U.S. born of Mexican background). Valenzuela found considerable evidence for Seguin's practice of subtractive schooling, a process of de-Mexicanization that promotes a de-identification from the Spanish language, Mexico, and Mexican cultural practices. Demonstrating bias and cultural chauvinism, the teachers in the school, with few exceptions, believed that Seguin students "aren't going anywhere anyway" because they don't, can't or won't "try." The teachers often made this view explicit to the students themselves, practicing verbal abuse towards them. Mexican students were viewed and portrayed as immature, unambitious and defiant of authority—It was the students' fault, so the teachers felt that they had no power to change the situation.

The second example stems from Bohon, Macpherson, and Atilas' (2005) study. Using multimethod qualitative techniques including in-depth interviews and focus groups, the authors researched the educational experiences of new Latino migrants in Georgia, an emerging immigrant gateway state in the South. Many focus group participants in the study commented on what they saw as unfair treatment of their children (or, in the case of the younger focus group participants, treatment that they personally received in Georgia schools). This real or perceived discrimination fostered and exacerbated Latino feelings of alienation from Georgia's educational system. The common feeling noted by many focus group members was that if children do not understand English, or if they have brown rather than white skin, they are ignored by teachers. The feeling of being a nonperson was pervasive; even very young children relayed stories of inattentive teachers to their parents. According to Bohon et al., this problem is aggravated by a shortage of certified ESOL, bilingual and bicultural teachers and staff in the Georgia school system, making it ill prepared to accommodate the language and cultural needs of Latinos.

The last example I reference is Palmer's (2007) compelling case study. From fall 2001 to fall 2002, Palmer conducted an ethnographic study with 11 Latina immigrant ESL students enrolled in an affluent high school in North Carolina. The students (all females) were interviewed by Palmer, and they reported incidents of prejudice and discrimination that they experienced in the school, ranging from subtle offenses to overt harassment and threats from both Whites (Anglos) and African Americans. For example, some of the students reported insults such as, "If you're going to live in America, you have to talk English" or "Go home, dirty Mexican." While most overt discrimination came from other students, some incidents involved teachers and staff. Also, the Latina students reported hearing teachers' comments that revealed their antagonism and low opinion of Hispanic achievement in general. The Latina students realized that the school community was developing a dominant stereotype of the Hispanic student as a poor and low-achieving Mexican, and that it was the students' burden to prove that they did not fit that stereotype. The cultural differences, negative perceptions and stereotypes, and unaddressed conflicts between Latinas and African Americans challenged the immigrant students' social adjustment and negatively affected their academic performance, interfering with their feelings of safety and acceptance and their willingness to participate in classroom and extracurricular activities. From the Latina students' point of view, the White teachers and administrators were either not aware of or had chosen to ignore their struggles, and African American staff resented their presence. Within this context, in most cases the Latina students lacked *confianza* – confidence or boldness – to approach their teachers to request assistance with their questions and school work. Only occasionally did counselors and teachers take the initiative to develop close relationships of *confianza* with these students, by joining them for breakfast or lunch, writing notes, speaking to them in the hallway, or explicitly offering help and specifying times when they would be available. Palmer concluded that Latina immigrant students were disempowered at that high school. Their language and culture were not made part of the school program, and the teaching, with few exceptions, did not promote active use of language to generate students' own knowledge. Rather, instruction for ELLs focused on mastery of basic skills to graduate on a limited "ESL track" that did not prepare the students either for college or for a technical profession.

One example from personal experience

The research findings above come as no surprise to me. I can match them to a face and a name: Gabriela. Gabriela is the youngest of my three children and my only (long-awaited) daughter. She has just turned 13 years old. Like her older brothers, Gabby—as they call her in school—was born in Brazil, but has attended public schools in Georgia and North Carolina since 2005, the year our family moved from Brazil to the United States. Gabe \ˈgä-bē\—as her dad, her brothers and I call her—is in seventh grade this year. She has maintained a B average in her overall school work. When Gabe first started school in first grade in the U.S. (North Carolina), she received special assistance through the ESOL program, but by the end of third grade she had learned English well enough to leave the program. In truth, although she remained enrolled in the ESOL program in third grade, she didn’t really need any special language support that year. I would say that today her ability to speak, read, and write in English is native-like. She is more fluent in English than in our mother tongue Portuguese.

The following prose poem² portrays Gabriela’s experience in fourth grade in Georgia. All the words in the poem are her own:

Fourth grade. That was the worst time.

Well, I really liked the teachers there.
They were very good teachers.
I actually learned something from them.

I definitely think
that the thing that I didn’t like
was that a lot of people discriminated against me.

² The process I followed in writing this data poem (Poindexter, 2002; Richardson, 2003) was quite simple. First, I conducted and recorded a 15-minute unstructured interview with Gabriela, in which I asked her to talk about her experiences in elementary school. After transcribing the interview, I selected everything Gabriela had said in reference to fourth grade. Next I arranged her phrases and sentences in short stanzas in an order that best seemed to represent her experience. I engaged in the “diamond-cutting” activity of carving away all the phrases and stanzas that seemed most evocative in emotion and clarity” (Poindexter, 2002, p. 709). The result was a poem in Gabe’s actual words, those that I found the most compelling. I only made changes to the sequencing, looking to best represent the narrative flow, the “story-like” feel. I wanted to remain faithful to Gabriela’s voice, and honor her speech style, words, rhythms, and syntax. Finally, I showed Gabe the poem, for her inspection. She approved of it, but not without first adding a few commas to cut off the word *like* a couple of times.

It's just the way that my so-called friends,
how they treated me.
They were always making rude jokes about me.
They weren't really friends at all.
They were just classmates really.
The girls that were constantly harassing me.

Because I was the only Latino chick and all the others were Black.

I don't exactly remember,
but I mean, there was harsh jokes.
They were always, like, calling me the usual arguments
like white cracker.
And you know how everybody else
called everybody else oreo cookie.
It's really stupid.

They called Miss Filar white cracker too.
But you know the mixed kids were called cookie dough
or something like that.
They definitely considered me mixed
but they never really called me mixed at all.

They said I didn't belong in the U.S.
That I had just to go back to Brazil,
my little country where I came from.
They didn't know Brazil was the biggest country in Latin America obviously.
They said I needed to go back to my own little country.

I was just always, I don't know, sitting in a bench and reading, you know.

I know that sometimes I came home
either I was, like, really upset,
or on the verge of crying really.

That was the worst year. Definitely.

While all this was going on with Gabriela in 2007-2008, I missed it. (Shame on me!) I, her mother, the full-time Ph.D. student and teaching assistant constantly immersed in my own work, was usually not home when Gabe arrived from school. At the time, I did feel that I was able to keep up fairly well with Gabe's progress in her school work; I also had a sense that she didn't have that many friends in school. However, I was clueless that she was facing these tremendous challenges relating to her classmates. Apparently, so was her young and still inexperienced teacher, whom I could tell was working hard and doing her best to teach her first group of students. Gabriela communicated fluently in English

and was making good grades, so all was well, or so her teacher and I thought. Gabe ended up dealing with the discrimination, the pain, and the hurt on her own, all alone.

It was rather by chance that I discovered the extent of the problem, when in the summer of 2008 Gabe one day burst into tears after learning that she would be going back to the same elementary school to attend fifth grade in the fall (rather than going back to live in Brazil, as she might have talked herself into believing would happen). A year later (2009), as a pre-adolescent starting middle school, Gabriela recollected her experiences in elementary school, and I came to know a bit more of what she had been through. By then she was a happy student in sixth grade. She was no longer bullied or harassed by her classmates on account of her ethnicity or national origin. She was accepted by her peers; she fit in. By the end of sixth grade, Gabriela was feeling that she belonged to her middle school's multicultural community of students. At last.

Gabriela's non-academic-related challenges did not end there, though. Neither did my challenges as the parent of Latino children. Over the years I have had to advocate for my children in school on a number of occasions. This dissertation is not the place to go into details about these experiences;³ nonetheless, I would have a lot to write about the time I met with the assistant principal at my son João Vítor's middle school to complain about something that João Vítor's African American math teacher had said to him: "It doesn't surprise me that you can't work out a math problem." I could also write about another one of João Vítor's African American teachers who was committed to a "zero tolerance" policy, but was not able to explain to us parents why João Vítor, always a very well-rounded student, had fallen short of making an A in his eighth-grade science class. As for Gabriela herself, I could talk about how her White teacher in her sixth-grade advanced language arts class didn't seem to think much of an Asian American male student repeatedly calling Gabriela "retarded," since after all "boys will be boys." These stories would have to be told on their own, another time. Despite their particularities, these examples have

³ Neither is this dissertation the place to describe the occasions when I met with my children's teachers who were caring, humanizing educators. These teachers showed that they cared for my children and believed in their potential, regardless of their ethnic background or national origin. To be fair, those were more than just a few occasions, and I cherish them dearly.

one thing in common: every single one of these incidents was satisfactorily resolved. I always had to intervene, though. I always had to take the initiative to speak up, and to find a proper and careful way to do so. Each time I respectfully approached teachers and administrators to talk to them at their own level, these people listened to me—the educated Latina⁴ parent—and acted on the situation to help and do what was fair for my children.

However, something quite striking involving Gabriela happened just recently, in a public middle school in North Carolina. For the first time that I can recall, a school incident pertaining to one of my children did not have a satisfactory ending, despite my efforts. This took place as I was beginning to write this dissertation, perhaps as a sign that it was meant to be told and recorded in this introduction.⁵

We moved from Georgia back to North Carolina in the summer of 2010, so 12-year-old Gabriela started seventh grade in a new middle school. In her second week in school, she was enjoying it and had already made a couple of friends. One afternoon that week, to my surprise, Gabriela arrived home visibly upset. She immediately came up to me to recount what had happened in math class that morning. I listened to her and asked a few questions. Later I sat down to write an e-mail to her White math teacher. It was the first of an increasingly disappointing e-mail exchange:

2010/9/3 12:38 AM

Dear Mrs. Jones,⁶

This is Erika França Vasconcelos, Gabriela França's mother. We have recently moved here from Athens, Georgia. I am writing to you in regards to an unpleasant experience Gabriela had in your class yesterday. Gabriela shared with me what happened as soon as she came home from school. The minute she finished talking, I knew I would be contacting you about the incident. I have decided to do so sooner than later in hopes that everything may be properly sorted out.

As I understand it, Gabriela chose to write out a few assigned homework questions in ink in her math notebook, when you had ordered that students were not to write their homework in ink. Because she, in your view, disobeyed you and was “stubborn,” you deducted 5 points from her homework grade for yesterday. Gabriela assured me that she had no intention of being stubborn and that she believes she should have the right to use a blue or black pen to write out the questions (but not the answers) in her own notebook. She does not see any problem in doing so,

⁴ For years now, I have struggled with the label *Latina* to describe myself. I am comfortable with defining myself as multiracial or simply Brazilian. I use *Latina* here because I realize that, whether I like it or not, it is how U.S.-born Americans for the most part see and define me.

⁵ I have made a conscious effort to narrate this incident as factually as possible. Except for replacing the names of the people involved with pseudonyms, I have made no changes whatsoever to the texts of the e-mail messages exchanged between “Ms. Jones” and me.

⁶ Real name has been changed.

but she does recognize and accept your rule that assignments that are to be turned in should be totally written in pencil. This is actually how she had interpreted your order. Gabriela further argued that if the 7th grade supplies list had black and blue pens on it, then she should be allowed to use them.

Not just as a parent but also as an educator, I will say that I totally back up Gabriela in her view. I have never covered up for any of my children's wrongdoings, and I definitely do not mean to challenge your pedagogy, but I do feel that you misinterpreted Gabriela's action. She is very frustrated with what happened. She has always been a respectful child, and I do not think she deserved either the "stubborn" qualifier or the deduction in her grade. Also, she is very creative and artistic, and I do believe she learns better when she can highlight her writing in different colors.

Your rule of "absolutely no ink" is beyond my comprehension. Coming from Brazil, I actually grew up writing out questions in ink and answers in pencil in my notebooks in school. I was praised because my notebooks and papers not only had excellent content but looked nice and pretty as well. It demonstrated I took care in completing them. But I would not like this incident to be seen as a cross-cultural misunderstanding. In all my years as a student and a teacher both in Brazil and the US, it is the first time I hear of such a rule. I really don't know what to make of it, and I am sad that it has negatively affected Gabriela. Please let me know if I missed something about what happened or misinterpreted you in any way.

I am currently completing my Ph.D. program in the College of Education at the University of Georgia. The focus of my research is Dialogic Pedagogy in Teacher Education. In a nutshell, my study explores the benefits of teaching and learning dialogically to prepare future teachers of English language learners, so that these teachers may learn how to better communicate with, understand and teach such students. It is a very complex and challenging study, and I am in the middle of analyzing my rich data and writing up my dissertation. When Gabriela came home from school yesterday, I set everything aside to focus on my daughter, who will always be a priority for me. But I truly wish that I didn't have to contact you to make her case; I wish such misunderstandings did not happen, especially during such a hectic and challenging time in my life. Nonetheless, as a teacher myself, one that has not hesitated in the past to revisit her own assumptions and decisions in regards to her own students, I believe that there is always hope. And by all means, having read the math syllabus you sent home for parents to sign, I do believe in your good intentions, competence, and effort to make this an excellent academic year not just for Gabriela but all your students. I did note, though, that the syllabus made no reference to the instrument (pen or pencil) required for writing homework and assignments. I would very much hope that you reconsider the "absolutely no ink" rule as it pertains to Gabriela.

Thank you very much for your attention. I look forward to meeting you whenever the opportunity arises.

Best wishes,

Erika Vasconcelos

Lo and behold, Ms. Jones' response came sooner than I expected, later that same morning:

2010/9/3 9:45 AM

Hello Ms. Vasconcelos,

Thank you for your e-mail. I'm afraid that Gabriela did not inform you of the multiple other days since the 1st day of school that I have asked her to not use pen in math class. Yesterday was at least the 3rd time that I've had to correct her about using a pen in math class, and that's why it came across as disobedience to me. On the math letter that students and parents signed, it states, "Students agree to follow the rules and procedures set forth here, as well as those taught in class,"

and this was taught in class. It's not just my rule, and it's not just something we've instituted this year; it has always been a 7th grade math class policy.

After reminding students daily for one week about only using pencil in math class, I have started deducting 5 points for work done in pen, and this will continue all year. I firmly believe in fairness and consistency, and so I enforce the rules with all students and make the deductions for all students. Pens were on the 7th grade supply list because many teachers allow them in their classes, but we don't in math. It's only one out of Gabriela's 5 classes, and I hope she can sacrifice and use pencil in math. We have this rule as mistakes are part of learning math, and students need to be able to quickly erase well and rework problems on the spot. My fellow math teachers support the "no pen in math class" rule and enforce it themselves. I would sincerely appreciate your support in this too.

I will be happy to talk with Gabriela about this today, as I would hate for this to sour her taste for math this year. She is a bright student and I expect her to succeed this year in math. Please let me know of any other concerns or questions.

Thank you,

Ann Jones, M.A.Ed.

7th Grade Math Teacher

I promptly replied to Ms. Jones' e-mail:

2010/9/3 10:51 AM

Hello Ms. Jones,

Thank you for your response. I'm afraid you missed several of the points I made in my message. I am still very puzzled and now somewhat frustrated myself. Frankly, I don't think a student should have to hear from a teacher that hardly knows her that she is "stubborn." Also, you say that Gabriela was aware of your rule that she was not to do work in pen, since "mistakes are part of learning math, and students need to be able to quickly erase well and rework problems on the spot." While this obviously applies and makes sense concerning the answers to questions and problems, should it encompass the headings and questions themselves?? From my understanding, Gabriela just wrote out the questions in ink, as I explained in my previous message.

I believe in school rules as means to promote organization and order for the purpose of enhancing student learning. It is very hard to obey a rule that does not seem fair or logical. I cannot support this (absolutely/under no circumstances) "no pen in math class" rule. And of course I do not blame Gabriela for not understanding such an absolute rule. (I believe that if rules, policies, and laws were to be set in stone and not revisited or rewritten, there would be no need for a Legislative branch of power.)

That said, and provided that you have informed me that "this will continue all year," I'm afraid that Gabriela has no other choice than to comply with your rule and wish. She will have to sacrifice and use just pencil in math, since it does not seem to matter that she actually learns better if she can contrast/highlight the elements and items in her notebook by separating/contrasting with pen and pencil the headings and questions from the answers and problems. I will tell her that she should obey you because, as it is, she has no other choice. But I truly wished your math class made room for students' individual abilities and needs.

Such a simple matter, and such an unsatisfactory outcome.

Thank you.

Erika Vasconcelos

Ms. Jones' short (let's-get-this-over-with-and-out-of-the-way) response came that same afternoon:

2010/9/3 4:31 PM

Ms. Vasconcelos,

I truly regret we didn't see eye-to-eye this time, but I appreciate you being willing to teach Gabriela to follow classroom rules, even though she may not always agree with them.

Thank you,

Ann Jones, M.A.Ed.

7th Grade Math Teacher

The next day, I sent Ms. Jones one last brief message, but I didn't hear back from her:

2010/9/4 12:15 AM

Ms. Jones,

As I said I would do, I have instructed Gabriela on the matter. Given your unfulfilling responses, I don't think it would have made any difference if we had met in person. At this point, all I can hope for is that Gabriela can have a happy and successful year in math class, despite this unfortunate beginning.

Erika França Vasconcelos

And that was it. While this exchange was going on, Gabriela was aware that I was in contact with Ms. Jones, but I did not find it appropriate to share these messages with her. I told Gabe that I had tried my best to talk with Ms. Jones, but Gabe still had to follow the "absolutely no pen in math class" rule and be in her very best behavior with Ms. Jones. It seems that Ms. Jones unmistakably but politely reinforced the rule in a one-on-one conversation (her first and last) with Gabe. Disappointed as I was, I made an effort not to think too much of the whole incident and waited to see how things would evolve. A few days later, I realized that Gabe's homeroom teacher was none other than Ms. Jones. Because Gabe has struggled with math in the past, my main concern was to make sure that she wouldn't fall behind in seventh grade math.

For a while, nothing else happened. Then, three weeks later, Gabriela came home from school and proudly announced that she had scored the highest grade—98—on their first math quiz. However, Gabe was swift to point out that when Ms. Jones talked about the quiz results in class, she showed surprise with Gabe's performance. Ms. Jones' reaction stayed in the back of my head as I proceeded with my dissertation work. Later that day, I couldn't resist sending Ms. Jones another e-mail:

2010/9/28 11:51 PM

Hello Ms. Jones,

Are you familiar with the Critical Pedagogy tradition? Do you have fifteen minutes available? If so, I encourage you to check out the video "Why Critical Pedagogy?" at the following link:

<http://freireproject.org/content/critical-pedagogy-tv>

at The Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy website.

I have just watched it again, as I continue working on my research. I first watched it in the ESOL teacher education class at the University of Georgia where I conducted my study. The video made me think of you. I hope you have the time to watch it, and that you enjoy it.

Thank you,

Erika

The next morning, the complete unexpected happened—I got a call from the school principal, Mr. Ishmael Jackson.⁷ I had met him briefly before, an African American male in his mid thirties. Mr. Jackson introduced himself again over the phone, and without further ado asked me why I had sent the Critical Pedagogy video link to Ms. Jones. I explained that I found the video very inspiring, and as an educator myself, I hoped to inform another educator of the Critical Pedagogy tradition, which I sensed Ms. Jones was not familiar with. I added that there was a bigger picture of course; a context for my being motivated to send her the video in the first place. I told Mr. Jackson about my e-mail exchange with Ms. Jones earlier that month. (Because Mr. Jackson did not comment on this, I had the sense that he wasn't aware of the exchange.) Mr. Jackson, in turn, said that Ms. Jones had not received the video well because she did not like being singled out, and she thought I meant to call her a racist. But Mr. Jackson added that he had enjoyed the video. A doctoral student himself, he said that he was going to share the video in one of the graduate classes he is taking this year. I went into the details of Ms. Jones' and my e-mail exchange, and its frustrating (lack of) resolution, the way I viewed it. I explained how I believed in dialogue—which was why I hadn't gone to him with this problem yet, in spite of considering doing so, because I was hoping for a way to deal with it through dialogue with Ms. Jones first. I thought that sharing the video with her might be a way to open up this dialogue. I said that I was sorry Ms. Jones was upset, but as a parent I needed to act in my daughter's best interest. I let Mr. Jackson know that Gabriela was feeling that

⁷ Real name has been changed. I took down notes of what "Mr. Jackson" and I talked about in our phone conversation immediately after hanging up the phone. I tried to write down the actual words that "Mr. Jackson" spoke to me, and I believe that I was able to do so.

Ms. Jones doubted her capacity to do great work in math, because of Ms. Jones' surprise with Gabe's performance on the math quiz. I noted that I didn't mean to say that Ms. Jones really did doubt Gabe's capacity, but for Gabe to feel that way, it had to have happened for some reason. Mr. Jackson listened to me for the most part, but again he stressed that he liked the video because it spoke to his own views on education and the kind of work he wants to do. In closing, I told Mr. Jackson that I remembered that he had called Gabby by name on their first day of school, when he saw her in the hallway. I said that I appreciated his personal approach in relating to the students.

Evidently I was taken aback by Mr. Jackson's phone call (though also very pleased with his response to the Critical Pedagogy video), but once the conversation ended my focus turned to Ms. Jones. What should I do now? My first reaction was to just forget about it, but I remembered Freire's (1993) conditions for dialogue (see Chapter 2): love, faith, hope, and humility. I chose to try to walk the extra mile, so I e-mailed Ms. Jones one more time:

2010/9/29 8:15 PM

Dear Ms. Jones,

I thought I should write you to clarify that I had the best of intentions when I sent you the link to the Critical Pedagogy video. I'm really sorry if you thought otherwise. I didn't mean to offend you or anything. I'm really enthusiastic about the Critical Pedagogy tradition, and how it is so tied to praxis (reflection and action) and multiculturalism in education. I was deeply inspired when I first saw the video, and I just felt like sharing with you an alternate perspective on education than the mainstream perspective; just an educator passing on something she believes wholeheartedly in to another educator. Please do forgive me if I offended you.

Best,

Erika

I never heard back from Ms. Jones.

Just a few weeks later, somewhat out of the blue, Gabe matter-of-factly told me that she had quit caring about what Ms. Jones thought of her. I was at once sad and relieved to hear Gabe's words—in them I read that she had carved out a safe place for herself, one where she would not allow her identity to be weakened, if it could not be affirmed and empowered. Gabe had no trouble in math throughout the school year; she kept a B in the class. She had no enthusiasm for the class, either. More importantly, she

had a happy year among her classmates and a few other teachers who engaged with her—specially her French language teacher, who found creative ways to value Gabe’s home culture and bilingualism.

So this was it. As I noted above, in narrating this incident I made a conscious effort to approach it as factually as possible. I am aware, though, that our subjectivity inevitably frames the narrator or storyteller in each of us. Thus, while my deliberate purpose here is not to analyze the specific details of what happened, it might be helpful to verbalize a few questions concerning Ms. Jones’ participation in this experience. These questions linger on my mind: Why wasn’t there any attempt from Ms. Jones to show some level of consideration of the points I made in my first e-mail to her? That is, to let me know that it was okay or acceptable for me to make them? Why wasn’t there any implicit or explicit, “Ms. Vasconcelos, I can see your point or where you’re coming from, but ... (there’s not much I can or should do, I’m sorry)” in her first response? Why wasn’t there room for any search for a compromise? Why did Ms. Jones choose to reinforce Gabriela’s fault? Why did she reprimand Gabriela in front of the other students, in the first place? Why didn’t Ms. Jones invite me to come to the school and meet with her face to face, when I made it obvious that I was not pleased with the outcome? What other choice did she give me, other than express my displeasure with the outcome, but still have Gabriela comply with her rule? Later, why didn’t Ms. Jones celebrate Gabriela’s success on the math quiz? In my second attempt to communicate with Ms. Jones, why was she so offended when I sent her the link to the Critical Pedagogy video? What was so offensive about this educational video, or my sending it to her? Why did Ms. Jones contact the principal about this? Why didn’t she contact me? Why in the world did she think I meant to call her a racist? Why did she cut me off and no longer replied to my messages, even my apologetic one? Why didn’t she make any room for dialogue, but why was there just failed dialogue between the two of us?

I do not have answers for these questions. All I have is the experience of the fact. This experience leads me to a couple of thoughts: Ms. Jones, I guess, did not take a course in multicultural education and/or cross-cultural communication in her undergraduate or graduate teacher preparation program. She was trained, it seems, in the prevailing transmission-based, banking model of instruction (Freire, 1993).

Apparently, she was taught to believe in the fairness of all students being treated equally across the board, regardless of individual differences, cultures, and needs. These are my guesses.

Amid the unanswered questions and guesses, of one thing I am pretty certain: Ms. Jones did not have a dialogic teacher like Greg McClure.

Back to the question: Why is a study on dialogic pedagogy relevant for ESOL teacher education?

So far I have drawn on research and personal experience to argue the need for a critical approach to ESOL teacher education—an approach that should include not only methodological courses covering the linguistic features of English and how these may be taught and learned, but also courses that examine the complexities of social, cultural, and political issues related to working with diverse students in multicultural and multilingual schools. If it is not clear already, the point that I have attempted to make in bringing up examples of research studies that document discrimination and racism facing immigrant ESOL students, as well as in sharing Gabriela's story, is that all ELLs, most of whom come from minority ethnic backgrounds, from their first day of class face a myriad of linguistic, social, and cultural challenges in U.S. public schools. I believe that many if not most of these minority students, long after they have overcome the language barrier, are still grappling with cross-cultural challenges and other issues, such as inequity, prejudice, and downright racism. Their chances of achieving success in school are contingent upon their success, and the help they get, in dealing with all these challenges. Critical ESOL teacher education can help prepare pre-service teachers to serve and help these minority students. By promoting practices aimed at raising critical awareness and critical self-reflection, and enhancing humanizing pedagogical relations, critical ESOL teacher education encourages pre-service teachers to examine and reflect on the complexities of working across linguistic, cultural, and racial differences in multicultural schools, while taking a stand on diversity and social justice (Nieto, 2000, 2006).

But why employ a dialogic pedagogy framework? Quite plainly, because it makes sense to explore the potential of dialogic pedagogy in this context. I am not the first one to perceive that dialogic pedagogy and critical teacher education go well together (Allen, 2007, 2010; Nieto, 2006). In Chapter 2, I will detail the characteristics of dialogic education, but for now it suffices to point out a few things: At

the heart of Freire's (1993) dialogic pedagogy is the purpose to engage learners' voices, background knowledge, and lived experiences with the object of collective inquiry (the content), while interrogating the relationship between knowledge, authority, and power. Conceptually, dialogic pedagogy seeks to create spaces where teachers and students collectively contribute to the teaching and learning process. Dialogue is a pedagogical communicative relation (Burbules, 1993) that involves shared inquiry and meaning making, in an atmosphere marked by mutual respect, trust, and care. Dialogue also makes room for divergent points of view, and invites candid and respectful engagement with difficult, even controversial topics. For all this and more, dialogic pedagogy can create opportunities for inquiry and discussion that raise student teachers' critical awareness about sensitive but crucial issues, encourage them to engage in critical self-inquiry, and promote democratic relations between teacher educators and student teachers—both to model dialogic practices and to encourage student teachers to consider ways in which their own teaching can enhance opportunities for ESOL learners in their future classrooms. Therefore, given the growing linguistic and cultural diversity of today's classrooms, and the conceptual potential of dialogic pedagogy, it is worth researching what it looks like when ESOL teacher educators and pre-service teachers enter into dialogue. It is important to better understand dialogic pedagogy in order to better enact, document, and showcase it—for the sake of all the “Gabrielas” in our schools.

The Structure of the Study

The next chapters will show that indeed it was worth investigating the theory, practice, and implications of teaching and learning dialogically in Greg McClure's class. In this study, I examine the complex dynamics of events, experiences, discourses, and relationships that took place in this classroom setting. The class—Language and Culture in the Classroom—is one of three required courses for students pursuing the ESOL teaching endorsement in the state of Georgia. Greg structured the course as an inquiry experience for examining concepts of language and culture, and their relationships to teaching and learning in U.S. public schools. The students taking the course—all females between 20-28 years of age—were encouraged to examine various perspectives concerning school achievement of diverse minority students, and to expand their notions of what it means to develop a multicultural perspective on

teaching and learning. I used ethnographic methods to conduct field work for the study during fall 2009. Data were collected through participant observation in all class sessions (75 minutes each, twice a week); extensive fieldnotes; dialogic interactions with the participants; one questionnaire; audio-recordings of most classes; video-recordings of two classes; e-mail exchanges; semi-structured interviews with all participants; students' final course evaluations; and a variety of teacher and student written materials.

The presentation of the study is structured as follows:

In Chapter 2, I situate a discussion of the theory of dialogue and dialogic pedagogy within the critical pedagogy tradition initiated with Paulo Freire's (1993) groundbreaking work. I address three core concepts in Freire's critical pedagogy: *conscientização* (critical consciousness or consciousness-raising), dialogue, and humanization. I argue that these three concepts are intimately connected. Drawing on the work of a number of critical scholars that have influenced my thinking, I suggest and discuss a list of essential characteristics of dialogue in a classroom setting. In the sequence, I review several empirical studies that have examined the application of dialogic pedagogy in classroom settings in the context of multicultural teacher education in the United States. Finally, I examine six studies that sought to promote critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and/or critical pedagogical relations in ESOL teacher education classrooms in North America. These studies are solid contributions to the field of critical dialogic ESOL teacher education, and served as valuable references as I conceptualized, designed, and conducted my own study.

In Chapter 3, I position myself and my study in relation to current discussions within which my research methodology is located. After considering my subjectivities vis-à-vis my study, I describe the unique methodological framework of the study. I explain how this investigation became more than a critical classroom ethnography of a collaborative nature, as originally designed. From a collaborative study on teaching and learning dialogically, it became a rather unique dialogic study on teaching, learning, and doing research dialogically. Throughout the implementation stages of the study, I capitalized on my role of researcher as instrument by exploring dialogue as a research method, ultimately impacting not just the research design but its outcomes as well. In Chapter 3, I also describe the context of

the study and introduce the participants. Finally, I “show the workings” (Holliday, 2007) of how I carried out data collection, analysis, and representation of the study.

In Chapter 4, I begin to tell the story of the Language and Culture class: one teacher (who is also a researcher), eight students and one researcher (who is also a teacher) who came together to teach and learn together for nearly four months. I paint a picture of what it meant to approach teaching and learning dialogically in this context, in the classroom. In order to do so, I identify four stages through which the class developed as a learning community: 1) Laying down the foundation: Setting the community mood; 2) Learning how to dialogue; 3) Engaging in critical reflection and self-inquiry; and 4) Preparing for practice. I describe these stages in detail, with a focus on the evolving characteristics of the class, the roles teacher and students played, the ways in which course content was approached and handled, and the dialogic interactions and caring, humanizing relationships that were formed among the class members.

In Chapter 5, I hone in on one dialogic speech event that took place during Stage 3 (Engaging in critical reflection and self-inquiry) in the development of the Language and Culture class. Drawing on theoretical-methodological tools from the field of critical discourse analysis, I examine this speech event as a “moment of crisis” (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 230) that developed into a powerful, transformative experience for the participants. This speech event has distinguishable beginning, middle and end parts that indicate disclosure and problematization of naturalized concepts regarding what it means to “be American.” The event represented an instance of struggle over ascribed, commonsense meanings that include some U.S. Americans and exclude others. I describe the characteristics of this instance of dialogic discourse in education, and discuss its results in terms of the construction of knowledge, social relations and social identities through language.

In Chapter 6, I continue to tell the story of the Language and Culture class. The focus in this chapter is on what happened behind the scenes. I describe actions and circumstances that took place out of the classroom (out of scheduled class time) but clearly impacted the development of the story that took place in the classroom. An understanding of what went on in and out of the classroom provides a fuller and more accurate picture of what it meant to teach, learn, *and* do research dialogically in this context.

Throughout the semester, a complex, multilayered and multidirectional network of e-mail communications and personal interactions developed behind the scenes, between Greg, the students, and me. Dialogue was at the center of this complex network: between Greg and me, the students and me, Greg and the students, and possibly among the students themselves. Chapter 6 describes and examines the dialogical interactions between Greg and me, the students and me, and Greg and the students. I discuss some of the ways in which my actions influenced and did not influence the participants of the study, and not less significantly, how their actions impacted me and the development of the study.

In Chapter 7, I examine the students' voices for their perceptions on the Language and Culture class. While the students indicated that their experience in the course was overwhelmingly positive, even transformative for some, their views were continuously compared to and mediated by normative educational expectations. The students held divergent views on Greg's role and pedagogy, and convergent views on their own role in the class. For most students, Greg was an active teacher presence in the class, but for a couple of students, he was a passive facilitator. However, all the students saw themselves and one another as active knowledge-producers. I examine the force of the dominant technocratic educational discourse on the students, the effects of Greg's action of not spelling out his dialogic pedagogy to the class, as well as the impact of Greg authentically living the dialogue in his actions and interactions with the students. Chapter 7 also describes the students' experiences learning with and from one another, and the ways in which their critical awareness and critical self-reflection developed in the class. Finally, I examine the effects of the course on the students' preparation as prospective ESOL teachers.

In Chapter 8, I consider the substantive and procedural issues (Holliday, 2007) that comprised this study: dialogue as pedagogy and dialogue as research method. In regards to dialogue as pedagogy, I sum up the experiences of the Language and Culture class and examine the challenges and constraints facing the participants in this setting. I also discuss the potential of critical questions and moments of crisis for dialogic teacher education. The second half of Chapter 8 is devoted to examining dialogue as a research method. I discuss how I approached collaboration in this study and examine the characteristics of

dialogue as a research method in my interactions with the participants. Finally, I suggest implications and offer recommendations for dialogic work in ESOL teacher education.

A “Language Disclaimer”

I cannot end this introductory chapter without sharing a very special challenge that I have faced writing this dissertation. Given my oral and written proficiency in English, some would tend to dismiss its importance; but I know well enough how challenging this process has been for me—writing a whole dissertation, and an ethnographic account at that, in a language that I know well but, nonetheless, I wrestle with *all the time*, in my perennial search for *that* word or expression, just *the right one*.

As a child in the 1970’s, I was fortunate to live for three years in the United States, and that has made a difference in my life. However, for 25 years I remained away from this country, and that has forever affected my relationship with the English language. When I came back to the U.S. six years ago, at first I thought that it would take me but a few months, no longer than a year perhaps, to pick up all the language and culture that I missed while I was away. How naïve! Soon I sadly realized how unrealistic that thought had been. Since then, I have engaged tirelessly in filling up my English knapsack, only to discover, day after day, that it is still missing a myriad of words, readily available to all the native English-speaking experts that surround me. Here I absolutely don’t mean to sound whiny or defeated—rather, I’m pretty content with the progress I have made—I just feel the need to share that writing this dissertation has been a truly overwhelming, time-consuming process. One way or another, I have been able to tell my stories—compose my texts—in the previous and following pages, but very often not exactly in the manner that I had initially intended because my knapsack lacked the tools that I needed, and Merriam-Webster online dictionary (www.merriam-webster.com), my constant, faithful companion, did not always supply them to me, even after precious minutes of search. I am a language lover. English is my language of the heart, but it doesn’t love me the way I love it. And Portuguese, my other language of the heart—which loves me unconditionally—can’t be there for me now. Wow! So that ends my “language disclaimer” and also this introduction.

CHAPTER 2

DIALOGUE IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Critical Pedagogy

Studies in critical pedagogy originated with the publication of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970/1993), authored by Paulo Freire, considered by many to be the most important educator in the world during the second half of the 20th century (Kohl, 1997; Macedo & Freire, 2005). Critical pedagogy popularized the political, evaluative, transformative, and emancipatory objectives of critical social theory in the field of education (Leonardo, 2004, p. 12; Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010). Through his views on emancipatory education, Freire inserted questions of power, culture and oppression within the context of schooling. By foregrounding pedagogical questions related to social agency, voice, and democratic participation, Freire labored consistently to develop the politics of education within the existing framework of the larger society (Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2009, p. 5). Freire's critical pedagogy⁸ stresses historical self-determination of individuals and communities through dialogue and problem posing that engage learners' lived experiences while seeking to interrogate the relationship between knowledge, authority, and power. In the broadest sense, critical pedagogy aims to recognize, critique, and transform any existing undemocratic social practices and institutional structures that produce and sustain inequalities and oppressive social identities and relations (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996).

For Freire (1993), a critical, liberatory pedagogy emphasizes the development of *conscientização*, often translated from Portuguese as *critical consciousness* or *consciousness-raising*. Developing *conscientização* entails assessing the system of social institutions, social traditions, and social relations

⁸ Over the years Freire's work has been critiqued from a number of perspectives. Like Ellsworth earlier (1989), Bowers (2005), Rasmussen (2005), and Robinson (2005) all asserted that Freire's pedagogy stems from Enlightenment thinking and promotes individualism. Others have critiqued Freire's work for not valuing indigenous knowledge (Siddhartha, 2005) and being anthropocentric and inattentive to environmental concerns (Bowers & Apffel-Marglin, 2005). While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to address these concerns, I feel it is important to acknowledge these critiques. For further discussion, see Au (2009), Au and Apple (2007), and Freire and Macedo (1996).

that create and maintain conditions of oppression, while acknowledging one's place and role in that system. Students should learn to "read the word and the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987)—an understanding of language and literacy should mediate an understanding of social reality. As learners engage in reading the word and the world, they can situate themselves in their own historicity, for example, by grasping the class, race, and gender aspects of education and social formation and realizing the complexity of the power relations that have produced this situation (Aronowitz, 1998, p. 14). Critical consciousness is also the beginning point of liberatory praxis, configured as an ongoing, reflective approach to taking action to create a more egalitarian society. As critically conscious learners "unveil the world of oppression" (Freire, 1993, p. 36), they simultaneously come to see themselves as active subjects able to act on social reality, rather than passive objects that are acted upon. The principle of critical consciousness is transformed cognition, the process in which "knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality through action upon it" (Freire, 1998c, p. 519).

Power is central to Freire's ideas on education. He recurrently underscored the statement, "still rejected by many people in spite of its obviousness," (Freire, 2005, p. 112) that education is a political act, that a neutral stance is never an option. A common understanding of Freire's political education stems from his grassroots work to promote adult literacy among Brazilian peasant communities. An ardent supporter of leftist Catholic Christian discourses as well as Marxist ideas, Freire was deeply committed to the plight of the poor and illiterate peasants in the northeast of Brazil. He argued that the educational system is a key component used by power elites, or oppressors, to retain power and status and to dominate and control the thinking of the masses, or oppressed, through the instruction of sterile curricula. Freire developed an overtly political literacy program, aimed not only at enabling the impoverished communities to read, but at empowering them to fight for their own rights and dignity, disrupting layers of hierarchy from the ground up. Over the years, this progressive view of political education, which considers the ways in which power operates so as to take action to redress inequities through education, has grounded the practices in many institutional and community contexts where critical pedagogy is

applied throughout the world. In those contexts, the vast agenda of critical pedagogy “advocates a multiracial and anti-imperialist social movement dedicated to opposing racism, capitalism (both in private property and state property forms), sexism, heterosexism, hierarchies based on social class, as well as other forms of oppression” (McLaren as cited in Willis et al., 2008, p. 43).

Inherent in the context-specific forms and manifestations of Freire’s critical pedagogy should be a fundamental, though at times overlooked, characteristic at the level of human relationships. For education to be political, it must be relational, interpersonal from the outset as well. It is not by chance that Freire (1993) started out his critique of education drawing attention to the teacher–student relationship. If Freire argued for transcending the classroom, he did not underestimate the roles of teachers and students *in* the classroom, and he delved into examining the power relations between them. Freire believed that broader social relations should be modeled after the dialogic teacher–student relationship that he proposed. While I acknowledge the sociopolitical and historical manifestations and repercussions of Freire’s educational philosophy, in this chapter I place the teacher–student relationship at the center of my investigation. I turn my gaze to the classroom as the site by default where political education begins; where democratic, humanizing relationships can be cultivated through dialogue.

Essential Characteristics of Dialogic Pedagogy

A number of progressive educators and scholars from the critical pedagogy tradition have coined various terms in their theoretical publications in the field, such as: “engaged pedagogy” (hooks, 1994), “humanizing pedagogy” (Bartolomé, 1996), “empowering education” (Shor, 1992), “pedagogy of conflict” (Gadotti, 1996, p. xvi), “participatory pedagogy” (Auerbach, 2000), to name a few. Freire (1993, 1998a, 1998b, 2005) himself often used “problem-posing,” “libertarian,” and “progressive” as descriptors for the educational practice he advocated. To a greater or lesser extent, all the critical scholars above, and a number of others, have helped shape my understanding of critical pedagogy. Above and beyond all, Freire has left his mark on my thinking and practice in education. Because *dialogue* is a quintessential, comprehensive concept in Freire’s educational theory, my preferred choice in this research study has

become the descriptor *dialogic* pedagogy. Drawing from Freire, I view dialogic education as that “which seeks to create spaces where the teachers’ *and* students’ voices are equally valued; where the knowledge and lived experiences of teachers and students alike serve as a springboard for the joint construction of transformed and transformative knowledge” (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011). Teachers and students collectively contribute to the teaching and learning process through candid dialogue with one another. These dialogic spaces become pedagogical sites of engagement; “culture circles” where the participants attempt through group debate to clarify situations or to seek actions arising from that clarification (Freire, 1973, p. 42). It is critical to acknowledge that such learning communities are political spaces, as participants are ideologically oriented towards acting on their world in order to improve it.

Dialogue is the cornerstone of Freire’s pedagogy. However, dialogue is not easily defined, comprehended or achieved. In Freire’s (1970/1993) first published work in English, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, he defined dialogue as “the encounter between men [human beings], mediated by the world, in order to name the world” (p. 69). Freire’s endeavor to define dialogue did not end there. Over three decades, in an effort to thoroughly describe, explain, and clarify the meaning and significance of dialogue, Freire recurrently addressed the topic in his remarkable legacy of written work, including posthumous publications. A number of other critical scholars, including Burbules (1993), Allen (2007, 2010), Willett & Rosenberger (2005), and Hermann-Wilmarth (2005, 2008), also have endeavored to examine this challenging topic. Drawing on their work, I suggest and discuss a list of characteristics of dialogue in the context of a classroom setting. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it pinpoints the characteristics or principles that I have identified as indispensable in an ideal dialogic classroom:

- Dialogue is a means to resolve the teacher–student contradiction.
- Dialogue is an essential component of the process of learning and knowing.
- Dialogue is infused with love, humility, faith, hope, and critical thinking/acting.
- Dialogue makes room for dissonance and divergence.
- Dialogue acts directly on the social world.
- Dialogue is a pedagogical communicative relation.

Dialogue is a means to resolve the teacher–student contradiction.

Freire (1993) introduced the term “banking education” to designate the predominant model of authoritarian, transmission-based education, which he equated with the use of education as an instrument of oppression and silencing. Banking education occurs when teachers as certified possessors of legitimized knowledge perceive learners as empty containers that need to be filled with preestablished bodies of knowledge. Students’ actions are limited to receiving, filing, storing, and regurgitating deposits of information, which are often disconnected from their lived experiences and social realities. The conventional, naturalized dichotomy between teacher as knowledgeable expert and learner as ignorant empty vessel characterizes the “teacher–student contradiction” (Freire, 1993, p. 53).

In lieu of monologic banking education that maintains rigid boundaries between teachers and students, Freire (1993) proposed a democratic approach, a drive towards reconciliation: “Education must begin with the solution of the teacher–student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students” (p. 53). Resolving the teacher–student contradiction is a complex but fundamental process that requires that the teacher “exchange the role of depositor, prescriber, domesticator, for the role of student among students” (Freire, 1993, p. 56). The goal in dialogic education is the joint production of transformed and transformative knowledge, starting from the participants’ ideas and experiences, both the teacher’s *and* the students’. As teacher and student roles are blurred, the teacher is not merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is herself taught in dialogue with the students, who are no longer silenced, but come to voice. As the teacher becomes aware of her own unfinishedness, she shows openness toward her students and is not ashamed that she might not know some things. The democratic educator is challenged to “live the difficult but possible and pleasurable experience of speaking to and with learners” (Freire, 2005, p. 114).

Dialogic education thus involves shared inquiry and meaning making, and “marks the democratic position between teachers and students” (Freire, 1998a, p. 117). This is not to imply that dialogue places teachers and students on the same footing, or that there are equal power relations between them. What it

does imply is a sincere, fundamental climate of respect on the part of teachers and students, “one that is born of just, serious, humble, and generous relationships, in which both the authority of the teacher and the freedom of the students are ethically grounded” (Freire, 1998b, p. 86). While the teacher needs to be authoritative—that is, “knowledgeable, clear, and direct” (Nieto, 1999, p. 143)—in sharing her understanding of the content with the students, she must be humble enough to be disposed to relearn that which she thinks she already knows, through interaction with the students. The authority which the educator enjoys must not be allowed to degenerate into authoritarianism. In this process of teaching and learning together, it is essential that teachers and students know that open, curious, respectful questioning, whether in speaking or listening, is what grounds them mutually.

Dialogue is an essential component of the process of learning and knowing.

Freire’s view of dialogue has been widely misinterpreted and misappropriated by educators and used as an uncritical method (Leistyna, Woodrum & Sherblom, 1996, p. 200). Many educators, blindly advocating the dialogical model, have transformed Freire’s understanding of dialogue into a method, and have ended up “promoting a laissez-faire, feel-good pedagogy,” (Freire & Macedo, 1996, p. 203) that “exoticizes discussing lived experiences as a process of coming to voice” (p. 205). This misconceived notion of dialogue is tied to another fallacy, that by which Freire would have meant for the teacher to relinquish her authority and become a so-called facilitator, in order to foster a democratization of power in the classroom. The facilitator would merely orchestrate the participation of students in turn-taking conversation, or “pure verbalism,” (Freire & Macedo, 1996, p. 207) in a type of group therapy space focusing on the psychology of the individual.

However, for all its transformative potential, dialogue must not be misunderstood as a mere method or technique for promoting conversation and discussion among learners. When this is the case, isolated individual experiences dominate, and dialogue devolves into conversation or “idle chatter” that has lost its connection to co-constructing knowledge. This fails to understand that dialogue constitutes both a process of learning and a way of knowing, what Freire and Macedo (1996) referred to as an “epistemological relationship” (p. 202). Reducing dialogue to a noncommittal conversation or a

discussion about individuals' lived experiences would strip it, on the one hand, from the necessary sociopolitical and ideological reflection on those lived experiences, and on the other, from a clear focus on the object of knowledge and the indispensable methodological rigor to engage with it. And true dialogue, for Freire (1998a), could dispense with neither: "There is no educational practice without content," he insisted (p. 112).

Freire recognized the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of learning and knowing. Dialogue between teachers and students is guided by a spirit of discovery, so that the typical tone of dialogue is exploratory and interrogative (Burbules, 1993, p. 8); dialogue stimulates the learners' "epistemological curiosity" (Freire & Macedo, 1996). The teacher is a central driving force in this process (Auerbach, 2000). As teacher and students meet around the object of study for mutual inquiry, the teacher's task lies not just in offering her knowledge, but in drawing out the students' knowledge and extending it with them. Dialogue becomes "the sealing together of the teacher and students in the joint act of knowing and re-knowing the object of study" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 14). The teacher values the students' background knowledge, culture, and life experiences. By practicing problem-posing education (Freire, 1993), the dialogic educator promotes practices that encourage students to see the world as a reality in process, rather than a static reality, and to perceive critically the way they exist in the world. These practices can translate into a myriad of communicative, interactive, experience-based, and decision-sharing activities. The point of departure must be the "here and now"—the situation within which students are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they can intervene. The students search their communities for themes and issues of immediate relevance to their lives, which are collectively investigated and problematized as participants seek to identify larger issues shaping oppressive situations, as well as possibilities for intervention and transformation. The students are enabled to transform their lived experiences into knowledge and to use the already acquired knowledge as a process to unveil new transformative knowledge (Freire & Macedo, 1996, p. 209).

Dialogue is infused with love, humility, faith, hope, and critical thinking/acting.

Freire's (1993) conditions for true dialogue are love for the world and for people, humility, faith in humankind, hope, and critical thinking/acting. Allen (2010) noted that these dialogic conditions, or "habits of heart," are better expressed in verb form—to love humanity, to relate with humility, to have faith in others, to have hope for a better world, and to think and act critically.

To love humanity is to be committed to others, and to the cause of liberation (Freire, 1993, p. 70). This is an "armed love"—the political, fighting love of those convinced of the right and the duty to denounce and to announce (Freire, 2005, p. 74). *To relate with humility* requires courage, self-respect, and respect for others. Freire (2005) explained, "Humility helps us understand this obvious truth: No one knows it all; no one is ignorant of everything. We all know something; we are all ignorant of something" (p. 72). It is impossible to enter into dialogue if we always project ignorance onto others and never perceive our own. When we *have faith in others*, we believe in people's power "to make and remake, to create and recreate" (Freire, 1993, p. 71); we believe in everyone's participatory role in constructing knowledge and in "change[ing] actual worlds into possible worlds" (Allen, 2007, p. 88). We have faith in the intentions as well as the intelligence of those with whom we seek dialogue (Allen, 2010, p. 179). When we *have hope*, we nourish the expectation that through dialogue the world will become a better place. Hope is "a natural, possible, and necessary impetus in the context of our unfinishedness ... without it, instead of history we would have pure determinism" (Freire, 1998b, p. 69). If dialogue is a horizontal relationship founded upon love, humility, and faith, the natural consequence is mutual trust (Freire, 1993, p. 72). Finally, Freire (1993) called for "thinking which perceives reality as process, as transformation, rather than as a static entity; thinking which does not separate itself from action" (p. 73). When we are able to *think and act critically*, we engage in praxis—a dialectical process that goes from action to reflection and from reflection upon action to a new action, as we seek to create new and transformative realities.

"How can I be an educator if I do not develop in myself a caring and loving attitude toward the student, which is indispensable on the part of one who is committed to teaching and to the education

process itself?” Freire posed (1998b, p. 65). In the same vein, hooks (1994) noted: “To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (p. 13). Dialogic teachers have before them the challenging task of bringing all the conditions for dialogue—the “habits of heart”—together in every act of teaching and learning (Allen, 2010). They must be willing to love their students, relate to them with humility, and have faith in them and in their potential. Dialogic teachers must also encourage their students to think and act critically, nourishing the hope that not only will their students learn and grow, but that they will contribute to making the world a better place. Both Freire and hooks called for the need to overcome the false separation between serious, objective teaching and the expression of feeling, arguing that rigorous intellectual discipline is totally compatible with the expression of feeling and care, in the context of a “specifically human mode of action” (Freire, 1998b, p. 125). hooks (2003) defined love as a combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect, and trust, which should form the basis of teacher–student interaction, creating the conditions for optimal learning (p. 131). As hooks described, “Love in the classroom prepares teachers and students to open our minds and hearts. It is the foundation on which every learning community can be created” (p. 137).

Dialogue makes room for dissonance and divergence.

While engaging in dialogue requires developing horizontal relationships infused with love, humility, faith, and hope, it also welcomes dissonance and disagreement. Participants in dialogic interactions are not expected to hold unanimous views of the object of study. That is, if dialogue should present itself as an essential component of learning and knowing, instances of dissonance and divergence should be indicators of a rigorous search for knowledge. Freire (2005) encouraged our interactions to be “open, democratic, free,” where we “could exercise the right to our curiosity, the right to ask, to disagree, to criticize” (p. 106). That is how Freire lived his progressive pedagogy—as he offered his own reading of the world, he consistently sought to encourage other readings of the world, different from the one he offered and at times antagonistic to it (Freire, 1998a, p. 112). As Freire (1998a) explained:

To defend a thesis, a position, a preference, with earnestness, defend it rigorously, but passionately, as well, and at the same time to stimulate the contrary discourse, and respect the right to utter that discourse, is the best way to teach, first, the right to have our own ideas, even our duty to “quarrel” for them ... and second, mutual respect. (p. 78)

It is critical to acknowledge that mutual respect and tolerance, “the virtue that teaches us to live with the different, to learn from and respect the different,” (Freire, 2005, p. 76) are indispensable qualities in dialogic encounters. As Hermann-Wilmarth (2008) noted, participants in dialogue must relate and listen to one another in a respectful and attentive way:

Dialogic space is where participants in a conversation feel free to express their divergent stances on a topic while they also listen to the other’s stance ... In their listening, participants evaluate their own stance and evaluate that stance based on the knowledge gained during the conversation. Although the stance isn’t necessarily changed by this dialogue, a new approach to the issue is formed. (p. 24)

For a dialogic space to be present in classrooms, teachers and students must be willing to engage in conversation that pushes the boundaries of participant comfort zones and takes participant identities and histories into account. Dialogic spaces should offer multiple opportunities to address challenging topics (Hermann-Wilmarth, 2008, p. 20). In this way, amidst a democracy of multiple voices bearing different perspectives, participants can grow their understanding of viewpoints that are seemingly opposite of their own, and they may even change their own perspective. A dissonant dialogue is thus a means to engage in a rigorous search for knowledge—or multiple knowledges—and to exercise mutual respect and tolerance, as participants learn to listen to one another and work across their differences.

Dialogue acts directly on the social world.

Willett and Rosenberger (2005) proposed an understanding of dialogue that I find particularly relevant for the classroom context:

For many, dialogue is collaborative talk about an issue or problem in preparation for taking action. Indeed, critics sometimes see it as a substitute for action. We see dialogue as acting directly on the social world. As with all language practices, people who interact with one another actively construct relations, identities, and ideologies. Whether they construct, reproduce, or transform existing relationships is an empirical question, but as long as participants are willing to remain in dialogic relationships, the possibility of transformation exists. Unlike other language practices, dialogue is a declared act of inquiry, not an act of persuasion with a view to achieving particular outcomes. This is not to say there can be no concrete outcomes, but just that

participants do not assume the outcomes from the start. Moreover, critical dialogue implies that we reflect on the nature and consequences of the relations, ideologies, and identities that we construct in dialogue. (p. 193)

Dialogue is a social practice that acts directly on the social world. The dialogic classroom is part of the world; it is the site by default where transformative teaching and learning begins, where teachers and students can learn to engage with one another and with the object of inquiry. In the dialogic classroom the students can begin developing *conscientização*, which is the first step toward liberatory praxis. Dialogic interactions formed and enacted within this classroom are part of the social world, and must be recognized as such. Each interaction is an instance of dialogue in the world, and in and of itself needs to be conceptualized as enough, regardless of actions that may ensue. Students and teachers who engage in dialogue with each other in the classroom are acting on the world, right there and then.

This view recognizes that classrooms, both in themselves and in their relationship to the world beyond their walls, are complex social and cultural spaces imbued with relations of power (Pennycook, 2000). As a microcosm of the larger social and cultural world, the classroom is a site where different codes, different visions of the world, and different pedagogies are in competition and conflict. There is a complex interplay between classrooms and the outside world—the relationship of classrooms to the outside world is a reciprocal one: the classroom is not so much a reflection of the outside world, but rather part of the world, both affected by what happens outside its walls and affecting what happens there. The challenge, as Pennycook (2000) argued, is to find ways of always focusing on the local—how we teach, what we teach, and how we respond to students in the classroom—while at the same time keeping an eye on the broader horizons—how realities outside the classroom both affect and can be affected by what happens in the classroom.

Dialogue is a pedagogical communicative relation.

Three pillars of Freire's pedagogical theory—the relational character of dialogue, a constructivist view of knowledge, and a nonauthoritarian conception of teaching—have strongly influenced Burbules' (1993) thinking on dialogue (p. 6). Burbules described dialogue as a *pedagogical communicative relation*

that requires active participation of the people involved, attempts to pursue intersubjective understanding, and seeks to sustain the conditions that make the communicative interaction possible. Dialogue is *pedagogical* because it is directed toward discovery and new understanding, which stands to improve the knowledge, insight or sensitivity of its participants. Dialogue is *communicative* because it is aimed at the pursuit of intersubjective understanding, which may or may not result in agreement. Dialogue is a *relation* because it depends on the establishment and maintenance of bonds of mutual respect, trust, and concern among its participants. The relational aspect is the most characteristic thing about dialogue and the element that sustains it over time.

Corresponding to these three components of dialogue are three flexible rules that, like signposts, indicate a general direction for interaction (Burbules, 1993):

1) rule of participation — “Engagement in this type of communicative relation must be voluntary and open to active involvement by any of its participants” (p. 80). In practice, this means that any participant should be able to raise topics, pose questions, and challenge other points of view in the process of co-constructing knowledge;

2) rule of commitment — “Engagement ... must allow the flow of conversation to be persistent and extensive across a range of shared concerns, even difficult or divisive ones” (p. 81). This commits participants to a certain degree of openness about their positions and a willingness to see the process through to some meaningful conclusion—not necessarily to agreement or consensus, but at least to an understanding and respect for differences;

3) rule of reciprocity — “Engagement ... must be undertaken in a spirit of mutual respect and concern, and must not take for granted roles of privilege or expertise” (p. 82). Any dynamic within a dialogical relation must be reversible and reflexive—in practice, what we ask of others we must be prepared for them to ask of us; and what we expect of others we must expect of ourselves.

Burbules’ conceptualization of dialogue as a pedagogical communicative relation brings together and sums up the essence of the other five characteristics of dialogue that I discussed above. By being pedagogical, dialogue is an act of inquiry and discovery that mediates learning and knowing. By being

communicative, dialogue admits dissonance and divergence as the participants seek to pursue intersubjective understanding. And because dialogue is first and foremost a relation, it entails the development of habits of heart (love, humility, faith, hope, trust, respect) among the participants in the process of resolving the teacher–student contradiction. As a relation that takes place and develops in space and time, dialogue acts directly on the social world, of which the classroom is a part.

Dialogue and Humanization

So far in this chapter I have discussed two core concepts in Freire’s pedagogy: *conscientização* and dialogue. A third concept—humanization—is also crucial in Freire’s view of liberatory education. Humanization is closely tied to dialogue and *conscientização*. Freire postulated that humanization is people’s ontological and historical vocation. To be “more fully human” (Freire, 1993, p. 47) means that men and women should be subjects of decision, able to reflect and act upon the world in order to transform it, rather than dehumanized objects acted upon by oppressive forces. Humanization is the ultimate goal of liberatory education. It is an ongoing, unending process on account of “an essential characteristic of our humanness, namely, our radical (and assumed) unfinishedness” (Freire, 1998b, p. 59). Freire (1998b) explained: “It is in our incompleteness that education as a permanent process is grounded. Women and men are capable of being educated only to the extent that they are capable of recognizing themselves as unfinished” (p. 58). To live fully is thus to engage in a lifelong process of searching, learning, and relating to others.

Kristjánsson (2007) noted the influences of both Marxist humanism and Christian humanism on Freire’s notion of humanization. While the influence of Marxist philosophy on Freire’s pedagogy is widely recognized, the Christian dimension of Freire’s thought is often overlooked. To become more fully human in Marxist humanism involves historical, discursive struggle over meaning. Humanization in the Christian dimension presupposes an understanding of human beings in a relationship of love and liberation with God, whom Freire understood as an active presence in history. The relationship of human beings with their Creator should serve as a model of radical love for transcendent relationships between

individuals and within society.⁹ Dialogic education is thus humanizing education¹⁰ — “The path through which men and women can become conscious about their presence in the world. The way they act and think when they develop all of their capacities, taking into consideration their needs, but also the needs and aspirations of others” (Macedo & Freire, 2005, p. xv). Dialogue allows people to participate in humanizing one another, in fulfilling the mission that “I am not, I do not be, unless you are, unless you be. Above all, I am not if I forbid you to be” (Freire, 1998a, p. 99).

As humanizing education seeks to radically transform the traditional pattern of teacher–student roles and interactions, it lays out a conceptual model or stance (but not a method, as Freire emphatically noted; cf. Freire & Macedo, 1996) to be followed in the classroom and beyond. This practice is aimed at creating democratic, dialogic and caring relations in the “culture circle” (Freire, 1973, p. 42), among the participants. Again, the classroom is the site by default where transformation in the education arena begins, where a sound foundation can be laid for people to embark on the quest to become fully human. New roles inside the classroom, between teachers and students, and among students, lay the groundwork for challenging inequities outside the classroom—through sharing and comparing experiences, reflecting critically on them, co-constructing new knowledge, and developing collective strategies for change,

⁹ This Christian dimension of humanization is expressed in a passage omitted in the English translation of the first chapter of Freire’s (1973) first book, *Education for Critical Consciousness*. Elias (as cited in Kristjánsson, 2007, p. 138) provided the following translation for the omitted passage: “For we are incomplete beings, and the completion of our incompleteness is encountered in our relationships with our Creator, a relationship which, by its very nature, can never be a relationship of domination or domestication, but is always a relationship of liberation. Thus religion (from *religare*—to bind) which incarnates this transcendent relationship among humans should never be an instrument of alienation. Precisely because humans are finite and indigent beings, in this transcendence through love, humans have their return to their source, who liberates them.”

¹⁰ Whereas the terms “(de)humanization” and “becoming fully human” have acquired broader meaning through frequent association with Freire’s work, the term “humanizing pedagogy” owes to Lilia Bartolomé’s (1996) oft-cited article, *Beyond the Methods Fetish: Toward a Humanizing Pedagogy*. Bartolomé (1996) argued for “a humanizing pedagogy that values the students’ background knowledge, culture, and life experiences, and creates learning contexts where power is shared by students and teachers” (p. 248). Her view is that minority students’ humanity is denied when they are robbed of their culture, language, history, and values by the current ethnocentric American educational system, where schools “often reduce these students to the status of subhumans who need to be rescued from their “savage” selves” (p. 233). Rejecting the uncritical use of teaching methods, Bartolomé argued for ways to foster a culturally responsive pedagogy focused on the teacher–student relationship, by valuing the students’ prior knowledge and experiences and treating them with respect and dignity. Bartolomé and Balderrama (2001) further developed this notion, adding that a humanizing pedagogy is also “driven by a political and ideological quest for greater social justice” (p. 52).

learners move toward challenging the conditions that have left them and/or others voiceless, powerless, and dehumanized. The classroom becomes the learning space “where students become apprentices in the rigors of exploration” (Freire & Macedo, 1996, p. 208) and where teachers’ and students’ humanizing vocation begins, so that they can apply what they have learned together in other community and social contexts, contributing to the larger project of education as the practice of freedom (Freire, 1993; hooks, 1994). Attired in “armed love,” Freire urged critical educators to build communities anchored in relationships of solidarity as a form of networking within schools and organizations committed to the fight against economic and social inequality and to the democratic enhancement of individual and collective life. The rebuilding of solidarity among educators and students was for Freire a vital and necessary radical objective because solidarity moved against the grain of “capitalism’s intrinsic perversity, its antisolidarity nature” (Freire as cited in Darder, 2002, p. 42). In this process of moving towards social praxis and becoming more fully human, a healthy balance of concern and imagination, critique and hope combine to engage all learners in an active process of education, social inquiry, and humanization.

Dialogue in Teacher Education

Despite the efforts of critical pedagogy to promote democratic relations and equity in schools and other social and institutional contexts, the field has been criticized on various grounds. A recurrent objection raised against critical pedagogy is its failure to make explicit connections between its visionary but abstract philosophical position and its practical realization (Burbules, 1993, p. xi; Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996; Usher & Edwards as cited in Johnston, 1999, p. 559). Another critique pertains to the theoretical language of critical pedagogy, which has been said to reinscribe power and privilege, creating a new form of oppression, since it would be inaccessible to those most affected by social inequalities (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009; Johnston, 2002). Students in teacher education programs have expressed that they struggled to understand the “obscure” terminology of critical pedagogy (Huerta-Charles, 2007; Lin, 2004). However, when teacher-educators have found ways to connect the language and content of critical pedagogy to the learners’ lives and experiences, also drawing on “testimonies from

the field” (Huerta-Charles, 2007, p. 257) —stories or narrative situations that establish a significant connection between theory and practice—the students were able to learn better and, in Huerta-Charles’ (2007) experience, they “engaged in an open and honest conversation” (p. 257) with him, their teacher. This is not surprising, since at the heart of Freire’s dialogic, humanizing pedagogy is the pragmatic purpose to engage learners’ voices and lived experiences with the object of collective inquiry, while interrogating the relationship between knowledge, authority, and power.

In response to the criticisms raised against critical pedagogy, progressive educators have sought to engage forthrightly with tangible questions of literacy, class, race, gender, culture, and power, following Freire’s own invitation to recreate and reinvent his ideas within specific contexts (Macedo & Freire, 2005, p. x). In the context of teacher education in the United States, a number of empirical studies have examined the application of dialogic pedagogy in classroom settings. Next I review a few of these studies conducted in the fields of language and literacy and multicultural teacher education.

Allen and Hermann-Wilmarth (2004) examined their experiences seeking to “place diversity front and center” (Nieto, 2000, p. 180) when teaching different sections of an undergraduate language arts methods course. The authors wished to help their students “see culture,” their own as well as their students’, as a prerequisite for culturally responsive teaching. The students, most of whom were White women from middle- or upper-income families (like the authors), participated in activities that included writing and sharing cultural memoirs, field experiences in diverse settings, and written reflection on the relation between their cultural constructions and those of the students they were teaching. Allen and Hermann-Wilmarth asked themselves the same question that they posed to their students: What are we learning about our students as cultural beings that is helping us prepare them more effectively to be culturally responsive teachers? With Freire and hooks as mentors, the authors sought to enact a transformative and engaged pedagogy. Engaged educators not only value their students’ expressions but listen to and learn from them. As Allen and Hermann-Wilmarth sought to listen to their students with understanding and to respectfully engage in dialogue with them, they learned important lessons: they

reconstructed their understanding of students as complex cultural beings, recognized themselves as privileged teachers of the privileged (rather than bearers of the multicultural education standard), and learned about the nature and relationship of resistance and risk in face of issues of cultural privilege and other sensitive issues such as racism, classism, sexism, and homophobia.

Allen (2010) examined her attempts to create dialogue in two classes she taught: a split undergraduate/graduate class that explored difficulties in literacy teaching and learning, and a language and literacy seminar for incoming doctoral students. Allen described how in the split-level literacy class, despite her good intentions, she initially failed to enact Freire's conditions for dialogue (the "habits of heart"). In their first class, Allen shared her letter of introduction—an "invitation to dialogue" (p. 183)—and in turn asked the students to write and read aloud a letter introducing themselves, in which they should "step out on that scary limb" (p. 184) and address their learning difficulties. "What seemed to me as faith in my students and in our courage to reveal ourselves was for many of the students a demand made from my position of power," Allen realized (p. 184). Privately, in e-mail and notes, the students let her know that she had asked too much, implying that they could not risk sharing their intimate, painful learning struggles with total strangers. Allen understood that she had failed at love and humility in relating to the class, but her next step was to reach out to the students and validate their feelings. For their second class, Allen wrote and shared a poem that started out, "I don't know you well enough to share—to say, to write—My hidden self." In the poem, Allen tried to capture the students' perspectives, what they might have felt and were trying to tell her. She showed that she had truly listened to them.

As for Allen's (2010) experience teaching the doctoral seminar, the trigger was one student's midterm negative assessment of the class. The student felt that she was being silenced every meeting because she never got the chance to contribute, since "the discussion is dominated by people who seem to think and talk simultaneously" (p. 187). Allen's response to the student's valid complaint was to invite the whole class to practice a "radical pedagogy" that "insists that everyone's presence is acknowledged" (hooks, 1994, p. 8). Allen challenged the group to find and develop dialogical practices that would make spaces for everyone; such strategies included using cards to indicate that "I have something to say,"

seeking to “read” nonverbal cues that expressed someone’s wish to speak, and talking in small groups for part of the time. The class discussed and affirmed these and other options, which were incorporated for the rest of the semester as the participants developed a more democratic and inclusive pedagogical practice. “Because one person had the courage to name the oppression of the group and because she had faith in our ability to change, we moved our discussions toward dialogue ... We continued to learn from each other how to be in dialogue,” Allen concluded (p. 189).

Hermann-Wilmarth (2005, 2008) investigated the creation of dialogic spaces in two undergraduate teacher education classes (a children’s literature course and a language arts methods course) that she taught at a large southeastern university. By creating structures and practices that prompted dialogue, including e-mail exchanges, small group discussions, response journals and a voluntary action research group that met outside of class, Hermann-Wilmarth showed her students not only how to talk with each other about taboo topics such as religion and homosexuality, but how to consider such dialogue in inclusive elementary classrooms. A self-identified lesbian and Christian, Hermann-Wilmarth was concerned with the question of what dialogic spaces might look like in teacher education classrooms around perceived controversial or risky topics. In her investigation, she looked for classroom interactions where the participants appeared to be listening to one another, reflecting on their own positions, gaining new understanding about their own ideas and the ideas of others, and strengthening their ideas about an issue, even if they didn’t change to a new way of thinking. This, Hermann-Wilmarth labeled dialogue, but not small-group discussions in which the students merely agreed with each other. Out of the classroom, Hermann-Wilmarth continued individual conversations with several students, most notably Jianna, a conservative Christian who opposed homosexuality and refused to consider dealing with the topic in her own future classroom. As Hermann-Wilmarth and Jianna engaged in e-mail exchanges and a couple of face-to-face conversations, they opened up a dialogic space to respectfully explain their contrasting understandings of religion and homosexuality while attentively considering each other’s perspectives. As a result, both of them were able to gain another perspective without compromising their own beliefs. Jianna shifted from saying “I don’t want to deal with it

[homosexuality] in my classroom” to a position of growth: “Well, if we hadn’t read this and talked about it, I wouldn’t know how to address it in my classroom. Seeing how other people might approach it helps me see how I might.” As for Hermann-Wilmarth, she revisited the stereotypical views she held on her conservative Christian students. She realized that she too needed to be open and learn from those students whom she perceived as most resistant to her ideas. Hermann-Wilmarth identified three characteristics necessary for the creation of dialogic space: the desire for dialogue among all participants, common texts and common language, and the co-exploration of personal perspectives.

Finally, Moss (2008) investigated how diversity study circles (DSC) contributed to preparing pre-service teachers to engage in critical self-reflection and address the complex issues of a multicultural society as a form of critical pedagogy. DSC is a critical multicultural community program designed to engage pre-service teachers in dialogues about race as a social construction. These race dialogues offered the students an opportunity to gain experiential multicultural knowledge and deepen their understanding of critical dialogue and the complexity of addressing issues of racism through education. For the DSC meetings, White middle-class students taking Moss’s (2008) Critical Reading in the Content Areas course met for five two-hour sessions with volunteer students of color enrolled in university classes and from the broader community. The participants discussed issues of race as it relates to housing and economic development, education, and the impact of race on the daily lives of each participant. In DSC meetings, student teachers learned valuable intellectual and moral lessons from the lived experiences of those with whom they engaged in this experiential teaching and learning project. By analyzing her students’ critical narratives on their reading of Freire’s (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and their experiences with DSC, Moss (2008) found that the race dialogues helped the pre-service teachers acknowledge the influence of racism on curriculum and instruction, and reconceptualize critical reading as embedded in the political, social, and economic structure of education. The students also felt challenged to become change agents in their schools. The study reinforced Moss’s stance that teacher education practices must find a place for engaging pre-service teachers in race dialogues, in a way to develop “multicultural teaching capital” (Moss, 2008, p. 223).

Dialogic Pedagogy in ESOL Teacher Education

There is a growing body of literature within the fields of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), Applied Linguistics, and Second Language Acquisition that addresses critical theoretical stances around language use, language teaching, and language planning (e.g. Auerbach, 2000; Firth & Wagner, 1997, 2007; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Pennycook, 2001; Phillipson, 1992; Reagan, 2005; Tollefson, 2002; Wallace, 2003). In the field of language teaching, dialogic approaches have been addressed in TESOL scholarship; however, the discussion has primarily focused on dialogic pedagogy as it relates to working directly with second language learners in various contexts (Auerbach, 2000; Benesch, 1999; Wong, 2006). In recent years, the field has broadened to include a number of theoretical, conceptual, and reflective texts on critical pedagogical approaches in ESOL teacher education (Johnston, 2002; Kumaravadivelu, 2006; Morgan, 2009; Pennycook, 2004; Ramanathan, 2002; Wallerstein & Auerbach, 2004). However, empirical studies providing examples that illustrate and model critical and dialogic practices in ESOL teacher education classrooms are more difficult to find (Hawkins, 2004, p. 6; Hawkins & Norton, 2009, p. 33; Johnston, 2000, p. 159).

Hawkins and Norton (2009) stated that *critical awareness*, *critical self-reflection*, and *critical pedagogical relations* are central heuristics in critical language teacher education (noting, however, that there are no neat boundaries between these conceptual frames). Critical ESOL teacher educators seek to promote critical awareness in their student teachers by raising consciousness about the ways in which power relations are constructed and function in society, and the extent to which historical, social, and political practices structure educational inequity and affect the language learners they teach. Critical ESOL teacher educators also encourage student teachers to critically reflect on their own identities and positioning in society. Self-reflection provides a window on the relationship between the individual and the social world, highlighting both constraints on and possibilities for social change. A third goal of critical teacher educators should be to attempt to structure power relations between themselves and their student teachers on equitable terms, both to model critical pedagogical practices and to encourage student

teachers to consider ways in which their own teaching can enhance opportunities for ESOL learners in their classrooms.

Among the empirical studies that have been conducted in ESOL teacher education classrooms, I note six studies aimed at promoting critical awareness, critical self-reflection, critical pedagogical relations, or a combination of the three. I examine these studies as examples of dialogic pedagogy in ESOL teacher education classrooms in North America.

In an effort to disrupt the banking model of education (Freire, 1993), Crookes and Lehner (1998) followed a “double-loop approach”—the idea that teacher educators should use the techniques and principles they hope their student teachers will use—in co-teaching a graduate ESL/EFL critical pedagogy teacher preparation course in Hawaii. Crookes and Lehner aimed for a learning community that encouraged dialogue and problem-posing. Beginning with negotiation of the syllabus, the instructors shared decision making with the students, from selecting and presenting course materials to leading discussions. Some of the challenges the authors faced were the pessimism of a few East Asian student teachers who doubted they would be able to enact a critical pedagogy in classrooms in their home countries; resistance of a couple of students to some critical pedagogy ideas and language; and, above all, the authors’ own tensions as instructors in position of authority who nonetheless resisted advocating their own views on the content. These challenges notwithstanding, Crookes and Lehner maintained that “within the context of teacher–student negotiation of both content and process, letting go of traditional expectations of neatly organized, teacher-centered lessons is an achievable and worthwhile goal” (p. 326).

While in Crookes and Lehner’s (1998) study the bulk of the data seems to have consisted of student evaluation comments, Johnston (2000) drew on data from various sources, including transcripts of classroom interaction, teacher journal, student journals, and drafts of written student assignments, in a self-study project that aimed to examine the dialogical features of his own teaching in an MATESL program in a U.S. university. The study was conducted with an MA-level methods class comprised of nine students: four Americans and five internationals. The course syllabus encompassed the history of

language teaching methods, current teaching practices, the “big picture” of ESL/EFL, including syllabus and program design, and also the sociopolitical context and political nature of English teaching. Johnston sought to make the class as interactive as possible and to connect the course readings to the teacher learners’ own experiences as language learners and teachers. He also constantly negotiated the course content and structure with the class. Johnston’s analysis focused on distinguishing features of dialogue: classroom discussions, dialogue through writing, and other dialogical moments, such as brief casual encounters out of regular class time, which he considered important for building and maintaining dialogical relations. The students’ evaluations of the enacted dialogic approach were “overwhelmingly positive;” “it was the first time in graduate school I’ve been treated as an adult,” one student wrote (Johnston, 2000, p. 170). However, three of the non-native student teachers felt that they had been silenced, because of their difficulty to speak up in real-time classroom discussions. These students’ comments indicated that Burbules’ (1993) rule of participation did not fully operate in the class. For Johnston, among the vital messages that emerged from this project was the importance of extending possibilities of dialogue, such as small group discussions and alternative forms like dialogue journals, to non-native students or otherwise quiet students that might not feel comfortable speaking up in class.

The third study I reference is a collaborative text by Willett and Miller (2004), respectively teacher and student in a graduate language teacher education class in the eastern United States. In a dialogic exchange, the authors reflected on their experiences implementing a course that explored the possibility of transformational curriculum deliberation and design in this standards-based era of accountability. The course supported teacher-learners to “challenge the status quo” by becoming “critical innovators in the Discourse of teaching and learning” (p. 53) and exploring new ways to design and adapt a curriculum for actual bilingual learners in local schools and agencies. Willett worked to reconceptualize and redistribute power relations among participants in the class. In describing the course (based on data such as transcripts of students’ meetings and deliberations, and students’ reflection papers) and writing up their collaborative reflections, the authors represented the teacher-learners’ struggles, as well as their own. In their view, “contradictions, tensions, misalignments, and unpredictable results provide productive

possibilities for transformative practice” (p. 53), and it was through dialogic engagement across differences that learning for all participants occurred.

Goldstein (2004) discussed her implementation of ethnographic playwriting and performed ethnography with pre-service teachers in Canada, based on a play she wrote titled *Hong Kong, Canada*, which represented linguistic and racial tensions experienced in multilingual and multicultural high school settings. Material for the play was drawn from a four-year critical ethnographic case study of an English-speaking Canadian high school that had recently enrolled a large number of immigrant students from Hong Kong. Goldstein described how her student teachers performed the play, and how she then facilitated dialogue on their affective responses. She asked them to identify issues and dilemmas represented, focusing in particular on identity politics, the power of linguistic privilege, discrimination, and racism. Goldstein concluded that ethnographic playwriting and performed ethnography help student teachers engage in conflict resolution and anti-discriminatory education, which will, in turn, help create safe and equitable learning environments for language learners in multilingual schools.

Cahnmann-Taylor and Souto-Manning (2010) carried out a longitudinal study between 2003 and 2009 concerning the experiences of pre- and in-service bilingual, mostly Spanish-English, teachers in the southeastern United States. Inspired by the work of Paulo Freire (1993) and Augusto Boal (1979, 1992), and the merger between Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed, the authors utilized dramatic play and games as methods of research and for innovative professional development. The participants became “spect-actors” (Boal, 1979) that “acted up” as themselves and each other, as they rehearsed embodied dialogue that explored their real-life experiences of struggles with students, colleagues, administrators, parents, and other players in the education arena. In one example, “Marisol,” a pull-out ESOL teacher, performed a recurring problem that she had with a colleague who often shopped online during instructional time, and appeared not to care about the ESOL students in her mainstream second-grade class. In another case, “Yolanda” performed her frustration working with an administrator who claimed, in the presence of Yolanda’s students, to “not understand” her Spanish-accented pronunciation of English. Yolanda felt unfairly discriminated against and devalued in her work environment. By acting out these

and other oppressive situations, the participants engaged in collective dialogue about power and agency, as they debated alternatives and cultivated possibilities for change. The theater games and dramatic play exercises prompted the pre- and in-service teachers to think of themselves as the protagonists of their own lives and to collectively rehearse dialogue and strategies for working with and through antagonists and antagonisms. Findings from the study indicated that the participants derived benefits from problem-posing and problem solving performatively for their lives and teaching practice. They came to recognize the complex, dynamic nature of oppressor (antagonist) and oppressed (protagonist) roles, the power that acting can yield, and the direct links between performance, reflection, and practice/action. The authors found evidence of the dynamic potential of embodied teaching and learning for blurring boundaries between teacher and learner, between protagonist and antagonist, and between the art and science of teacher education.

Finally, McClure and Vasconcelos (2011) investigated an undergraduate ESOL teacher education class in the southeastern United States by combining a collaborative research partnership with ethnographic methods. Our study found that the critical and humanizing pedagogical approach practiced by the course instructor challenged the traditional teacher–student hierarchical structure and positioned the students as important knowledge-producers. The students acknowledged that making room for individual experiences within the academic setting and connecting those experiences to course content contributed to the development of caring personal relationships and ultimately an engaged learning community unlike that typically experienced in their undergraduate coursework. However, a more complex learning community was also revealed, one that struggled to name and examine some of its underlying tensions on occasions when structural and procedural elements of community-building and course work were left unaddressed. In other words, on one level the course made room for competing and dissonant voices during discussions of course concepts. The participants dialogued vigorously and respectfully about difficult issues including bilingualism, immigration, racism, and privilege and how those issues intersected and collided with their personal, religious, and political selves at times. However, on another level, the instructor failed to engage the class as a whole in a discussion of underlying

structural tensions experienced by some students, such as their understanding that some members of the class were not doing the work and course readings, and were taking the learning community for granted. As a result, disparate perceptions of how the class community was developing were left unaddressed and the group's collective potential was limited. Implications of our study suggested that teachers cannot be selective in their dialogic efforts; they must recognize dialogue as a process of knowing and learning as it relates to both the content *and* the process of their work.

The studies above are solid contributions to the field of critical dialogic ESOL teacher education. The first three studies (Crookes & Leher, 1998; Johnston, 2000; Willett & Miller, 2004) took place in graduate-level settings, and many of the participants were already practicing teachers. These studies had a clear focus on the investigation of the characteristics and manifestations of dialogue as critical pedagogical relations. Goldstein's (2004) reflective piece foregrounded dialogue for critical awareness and self-reflection among undergraduate students preparing to become teachers. Cahnmann-Taylor and Souto-Manning's (2010) longitudinal study with pre- and in-service teachers explored embodied dialogue for raising critical awareness and self-reflection, and for the participants to rehearse their voices as agents for social change. McClure and Vasconcelos (2011) examined the potential of dialogue to promote critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and critical pedagogical relations in an undergraduate teacher education class. It is obviously no coincidence that the latter is the study that most directly connects to the study that resulted in this dissertation. Nonetheless, this dissertation, to a greater or lesser extent, intersects not just with McClure and Vasconcelos' (2011) study, but with the other studies above, in aspects that range from focus and design to implementation and findings.

In spite of such intersections, the study laid out in this dissertation is, as the following chapters will show, one of a kind in the field of undergraduate ESOL teacher education. It is unique in a couple of ways, most notably in its dialogic methodological framework and implementation (see Chapters 3, 6, and 8) and in its goal to examine, in the breadth and depth that a critical classroom ethnography allows, the potential of dialogue to mediate and promote critical awareness, critical self-reflection, and critical pedagogical relations among the participants in a class (Chapters 4, 5, and 7). In other words, this study

foregrounds all the indispensable characteristics of dialogue that I discussed above—that dialogue is a democratic pedagogical communicative relation that acts directly on the social world as it mediates learning and knowing among teacher-students and student-teachers bound by habits of heart, but also free to differ and diverge from one another. In the next chapter, I present the unique methodological framework that grounded this study.

CHAPTER 3

CRITICAL CLASSROOM ETHNOGRAPHY MEETS DIALOGUE

In Chapter 2, I addressed the literature in order to position my study in relation to current discussions within which my topic of investigation—dialogic pedagogy in ESOL teacher education—is located. In this chapter, I will position myself in relation to current discussions within which my research methodology is located. To begin, I consider Jones' (2002) recommendation: "Researchers must make known who they are in the context of the study under investigation and make explicit the "subjective I" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992)" (p. 463). On the same note, Maxwell (2005) contended that the qualitative researcher should consider how her personal goals, rooted in her own values and identity, might shape and influence the study.

My "subjective I" begins with the professional role I identify with the most—my teacher role. Of all the occupations that I've had in the past 20 years in Brazil and the United States (teacher, supervisor, translator, editor, information analyst, and researcher), teaching has accompanied me from the start and brings me the highest pleasure. I am a teacher not just by profession but also at heart. My most memorable, cherished experiences have taken place in the classroom context from grade school through graduate school. They have led me to believe that relationships are paramount in successful teaching and learning (cf. Vasconcelos, 2011). First, as a student, I treasured the times and moments when my teachers acknowledged my presence and heard my voice. While I was not consciously aware years back, it meant the world to me to be seen as an individual with ideas worthy of consideration. Then, as a teacher, I have witnessed history repeat itself as my students have responded positively whenever I have genuinely wished to know who they were and hear what they had to say. Whereas the trigger may have been a problem or a complaint, the outcome inevitably has been favorable; the dialogic encounters have rendered good fruit. So my most treasured memories are relational, dialogic in essence.

It was not until four years ago, while taking a memorable graduate course on critical pedagogies in the Department of Language and Literacy Education (LLED) at the University of Georgia, that I encountered the theoretical perspective that matches my long-standing pedagogical experiences and aspirations. I have sought to be a Freirean humanizing educator for so long, and just wasn't aware of it. I loathe authoritarianism, by which I mean abuse of power in any form or shape. I view classrooms as political spaces that can either be democratic or authoritarian. Classrooms where conceited, scornful teacher-rulers dictate orders, and humble, voiceless, oppressed students obey at all times outrage me. Nearly five years ago, I was shocked to witness an oppressive incident in a classroom at UGA. I felt very sorry for the constrained undergraduate students who were not free to speak up, and possibly were not even aware that they were disempowered.¹¹ For its dehumanizing intensity, that episode was quite unique; truly one of a kind in all my years of teaching and learning. I would like to believe that seldom is a class *that* oppressive and dehumanizing. In any event, from my experiences at UGA, I understand that the banking (Freire, 1993) or technocratic¹² (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996) paradigm underpins the prevailing college culture (i.e. the socially structured practices, behaviors, relationships, and expectations) in this context. At UGA, the teacher-centered, book-determined, grade-oriented instruction that most undergraduate students apparently have received from grade school through college is reflected in their attitude as patient, passive objects, most willing to receive “deposits” of knowledge from their professors, the certified possessors of legitimate knowledge.¹³

These recent teaching-learning experiences at UGA, as well as my cherished teaching-learning memories, have drawn me to this study or, technically, to a previous project that may be seen as a pilot study for this study. Early in January 2008, I learned that I would need to carry out a participant

¹¹ This incident is narrated in my autoethnographic investigation of my teacher–student self (see Vasconcelos, 2011).

¹² Emanating from the positivistic tradition, technocratic models of instruction embrace depersonalized methods that often translate into the regulation and standardization of teacher practices and curricula, and rote memorization of selected teacher-transmitted “facts” that can be measured through testing.

¹³ Research on postsecondary classrooms in the United States has found that the dominant and official discourse of teaching and learning has been characterized by teacher-centered, transmission-oriented, skill-based instruction throughout the past century (Kubota, 2001, pp. 18-20): a “knowledge-out-of-context approach” (Applebee as cited in Kubota, 2001, p. 21) focusing on memorization and rote learning. My experiences at UGA are exemplary of this.

observation study as an assignment in a graduate qualitative methods course that I was enrolled in. As I considered possibilities of research topic and setting, I remembered that Greg McClure was teaching an undergraduate ESOL teacher education class that semester. I had met Greg, a fellow doctoral student and teaching assistant in the LLED Department, in the same critical pedagogies graduate class that I mentioned above.

When we first met, Greg was 34 years old; I was 37. At first sight, the age range might look like the only thing we had in common. Worlds of differences would seem to separate the two of us—Greg is a White male from the U.S.; I am a multiracial (“Latina”) female from Brazil. However, in our lively and thought-provoking discussions in the critical pedagogies class, our apparent differences (gender, ethnicity, native language, and nationality) were bridged through our common rejection of the banking concept of instruction and our shared interest in exploring the terrain of humanizing pedagogy. I knew that Greg sought to teach dialogically, and I was not surprised that he agreed to have me conduct my participant observation study in his ESOL teacher education class. Observing and participating in Greg’s class was a wonderful experience; a refreshing change from the inertia that I had observed in other undergraduate classes at UGA. Eventually, that first study (henceforth Study A) developed into a collaborative project that resulted in a jointly written and published article (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011).

While observing Greg’s class during Study A, I became familiar with discussions that, up to then, I had known little about—discussions on the complexities of the sociocultural and political context of public education in the U.S. vis-à-vis deficit perspectives towards ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity. My eyes were opened to inequality in U.S. public schools on the grounds of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, and social class, documented in publications that Greg had the class read. Gradually, as I developed *conscientização*, this experience took on a more personal tone as I began to critically examine my own children’s experiences and challenges in U.S. public schools (see Chapter 1) in light of the class readings and discussions. At the same time, I was thrilled to observe the fruitful teaching and learning that were taking place in the weekly meetings in Greg’s class; how the student teachers, positioned as knowledge-producers, were engaging in vigorous dialogue about difficult, controversial

issues (such as bilingualism, immigration, structural inequality, racism, and privilege), and how they too were developing *conscientização* in the process. I realized that I wanted and needed to learn more—more than Study A would provide me. I wanted to deepen my investigation on the theory, practice, and potential of dialogic pedagogy. I was also compelled to explore not just the potential of dialogic pedagogy for empowering and humanizing objectified undergraduate students, but also its place and role in preparing ESOL pre-service teachers to deal with diversity, prejudice, and inequality in public schools. Study A had convinced me of Greg’s excellent pedagogy; now I wished to understand his teaching better, so that I could document it to the best of my ability in a full-fledged ethnographic account. I decided I would conduct a new study (Study B) in another class that Greg would be teaching. I knew then that this investigation would become my dissertation focus and goal.

So, like Glesne & Peshkin (1992), I recognize that, “My subjectivity is *the* basis for the story that I am able to tell. It is a strength on which I build. It makes me who I am as a person *and* as a researcher, equipping me with the perspectives and insights that shape all that I do as a researcher, from the selection of topic clear through to the emphases I make in my writing” (p. 104) [*italics in original*]. I note that my personal, practical, and intellectual goals¹⁴ (Maxwell, 2005) for this study have overlapped and intermingled, like compatible faces of the same mosaic whole. Personally, I wanted to be in a college classroom, where I have always felt the happiest and the most meaningful. It seemed like a pleasurable way to work toward my Ph.D. degree and to advance my career. In practical terms, I wished to work on something that hopefully can contribute to changing what I see as a failing paradigm in education as a whole, and post-secondary education in particular. The classroom is a space where I can act upon the world and make a difference for the better. Intellectually, I have attempted to gain insight into what has taken place, why it has taken place, and what forces and influences have operated, in order to reach a new

¹⁴ Maxwell (2005, pp. 16-21) described three kinds of goals for doing a study: personal, practical, and intellectual (or scholarly) goals. Personal goals are things that motivate someone to do a study, but are not necessarily important for others. Practical goals are focused on accomplishing something—meeting some need, changing some situation, or achieving some objective. Intellectual goals are focused on understanding something—gaining insight into what is going on and why this is happening, or answering some question that previous research has not adequately answered.

understanding of dialogic pedagogy in ESOL teacher education. Also, I have been motivated to act upon the world by producing in a field that has not been sufficiently explored yet.

My research goals translated into the following research questions:

1. What does it mean to approach teaching and learning dialogically in this ESOL teacher education class? What are the evolving configurations and characteristics of the class? What roles do the teacher and students play, and how do they relate to one another?
2. What are the constraints to seeking to teach and learn dialogically in this specific case within this university context?
3. Does this teaching approach facilitate raising the participating students' critical awareness and critical self-reflection, and their understanding of dialogic pedagogy? If so, how does that in turn affect their development as prospective ESOL teachers?

Conceptual Framework

From the get-go, I chose to address these questions from a qualitative approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) offered an initial, generic definition for this approach: "Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos of the self" (p. 4). The following qualities are characteristic of qualitative research: understanding comes from an emic, or insider's, perspective; the researcher is the instrument; research is field based or occurring in natural settings; research is inductive in nature; and research findings depend upon rich description and writing to tell the central story of a phenomenon under investigation (Jones, 2002).

The epistemology¹⁵ that grounds my study is constructionism. Constructionism claims that meanings are constructed by human beings “in and out of interaction,” as they engage with the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Knowledge is thus constructed intersubjectively, through discursive processes in human practices in social contexts. Research in the constructionist vein “invites us to approach the object in a radical spirit of openness to its potential for new or richer meaning” (Crotty, 1998, p. 51). It is research about advancing understanding by engaging in the social world and recreating it anew (Schwandt, 1994).

In the bifurcation that occurs within constructionist social science between interpretivism (“overwhelmingly oriented towards an uncritical exploration of cultural meaning,” Crotty, 1998, p. 60) and critical theory, as a researcher interested in ideology, power relations, and social justice I have taken the critical stance that the latter theoretical path offers. Critical social theory and critical/dialogic pedagogy are the theoretical perspectives that inform this study.

Critical social theory holds power, ideology, and oppression at the center of inquiry. It is an evaluative as well as a political activity that involves assessing how things are in order to transform them into what they ought to be. Critical social theorists view society as a human construction in need of reconstruction. They maintain that critical theory is an integral part of building and sustaining a more just society, one in which all members of that society feel empowered to carry out their practices in ways that foster democratic and empowering processes and outcomes, while continuously monitoring those processes and outcomes for evidence of social injustices (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010).

Central to a critical theory argument is that systems like capitalism produce knowledge in such a way as to obscure their oppressive consequences. Unjust practices and arrangements, therefore, do not

¹⁵ In designing this study, I considered four elements that comprise the structure of a research design. These elements are generally defined as *method*, which refers to the actual techniques used to gather data and analyze results; *methodology*, which describes the theory and design undergirding the research process; *theoretical perspective*, which suggests a philosophical position that informs the methodology; and *epistemology*, also philosophical in nature, which conveys the way of understanding the world or theory of knowledge rooted in the theoretical perspective. Although conceptually distinct, each element ties to the others in important ways that inform the complete research process (Jones, 2002).

manifest themselves in straightforward ways but become distorted and hidden over time in the form of pervasive inequalities and injustices, within contextually and culturally embedded practices and relationships (Dant, 2003). The primary function of critical theory is the establishment of a sustained critique of all social formations (social structures, discourses, ideologies, epistemologies, etc.), with an eye to preventing any one form from taking control of the world in a way that is antidemocratic, unjust, exploitative, or oppressive (Dant, 2003; Sherman, 2003). Embedded in the notion of critique is an anti-oppressive pedagogy oriented to social change (Freire, 1993).

Critical pedagogy popularized the political, evaluative, transformative, and emancipatory objectives of critical social theory in the field of education. As Luke (2004) stated, “Freire’s work has become a canonical example of what we might term *point of decolonization* educational theorizing about emancipation, consciousness-raising, and education” (p. 21). Freire gave education a language that neglected neither the effect of oppression on concrete people nor their ability to intervene on their own behalf, nor the unjust structured consequences of capitalism and other systems (Leonardo, 2004, p. 12). Freire’s critical/dialogic pedagogy stresses historical self-determination of individuals and communities through dialogue (see Chapter 2) and problem posing that engage learners’ lived experiences, with a focus on naming and questioning of the world as well as resisting physical and symbolic violence, material oppression, and psychological repression, such as strategies of silence and marginalization (Luke, 2004).

Research Methodology

The methodological framework for this study is bricked together from three traditions: critical ethnography, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and microethnographic approaches to discourse analysis. I will briefly describe these traditions separately, before explaining how I combined perspectives and elements of each in my own research design.

Critical classroom ethnography

Ethnography refers to the social science tradition of cultural description and analysis characterized by long-term, first-hand, naturalistic, sustained observation and participation in a particular social setting. The term ethnography encompasses both research method and text genre (Conquergood, 2006, p. 351).

As a research method, ethnography relies substantively on participant observation (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Harklau, 2005), which involves that the researcher enter a social setting and participate in the routines of this setting, while developing relations with the people in it and observing all the while what is going on. As a text genre, ethnography means that the researcher will systematically produce written accounts of her observations and experiences in the field. In their textual undertakings, ethnographers aim to achieve thick descriptions (Geertz, 1993) by seeking to discover the important and recurring variables in a setting from the point of view of the participants, as those variables relate to one another, and as they affect or produce certain results and outcomes within it. Doing fieldwork and writing fieldnotes (and ultimately the completed ethnography) are dialectically related and interdependent activities that together comprise the core of ethnographic research (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 15; Heath & Street, 2008).

Critical ethnography shares many of the characteristics of conventional ethnography, such as core methods (participant observation, key informant work, extensive interviews, and document collection) and emic interpretation of data (Foley, 2002; May, 1997; Villenas & Foley, 2002). Critical ethnography departs from conventional ethnography in highlighting the role of ideology in sustaining and perpetuating inequality within society, thus offering a more reflective style of thinking about the relationship between knowledge, society, and freedom from unnecessary social domination (Thomas, 2003, p. 45). Critical ethnography recognizes that commonsense (taken-for-granted) reality is a social and cultural construction, linked to power relations, which privileges some participants and disadvantages others. Modernist epistemologies center on the idea that there are universal truths, absolute logic, and thus common sense in the world. However, for critical theorists a common sense is a selective view of social reality that imposes a homogenizing, hegemonic social paradigm that considers difference as deviant or as a deficit (Leistyna & Woodrum, 1996, p. 3).

A significant distinction between conventional and critical ethnography pertains to the goal of research. While conventional ethnography seeks to describe particular settings as they appear to be, critical ethnography aims to *change* them for the better: “Conventional ethnography describes what is; critical ethnography asks what could be . . . Conventional ethnographers study culture for the purpose of

describing it; critical ethnographers do so to change it” (Thomas, 1993, p. 4). Critical ethnography is “openly ideological research” (Lather, 1986, p. 258) that hopes to be simultaneously hermeneutic and emancipatory (Lather, 1986; May, 1997)—and this not just for overtly oppressed or socially marginal groups, but for all people who experience unnecessary repression to some extent (Thomas, 1993). Ideally, critical ethnography proceeds simultaneously from three components: epistemological and ontological reflecting, empirical inquiry, and action—By thinking about and then acting upon the world, we are able to change our subjective interpretations and objective conditions (Thomas, 2003, p. 47). In other words, the intellectual activity of research should be intimately connected to the praxis of the daily life of researchers (Trueba, 1999, p. 593).

Critical classroom ethnography involves the intensive, detailed observation of a classroom over the period of its duration (e.g., semester or year). Data are collected through a combination of participant observation, fieldnotes, audio-and/or visual recordings, interviews with teacher and students, among other methods. In contrast to quantitative approaches to classroom research, classroom ethnography emphasizes the sociocultural nature of teaching and learning processes, incorporates teachers and students perspectives on their own cultural practices, and offers a holistic analysis sensitive to levels of context in which interactions and classrooms are situated (Adams, Fujii, & Mackey, 2005, p. 75; Watson-Gegeo, 1997). Classrooms are viewed as sociopolitical spaces that exist in a complex relationship to the world—as “domains imbued with relations of power” (Pennycook, 2000, p. 91); “a kind of microcosm of the broader social order” (Auerbach, 1995, p. 9). The researcher focuses her gaze on the relations of power in language use; how social differentiation in the larger society is reproduced and contested in the classroom through language and discourse; and the dialectical relationship between social structural constraints and human agency. The goal of critical classroom ethnography is empowerment for students and teachers, and studies in this approach ideally involve collaborative relationships among researcher and participants (Watson-Gegeo, 1997).

Throughout the processes of doing and writing critical ethnography, democratic strategies emphasizing researcher–participant collaboration and participant empowerment are encouraged. These

strategies include developing personal, trusting relations with participants; interviewing them in an open-ended, conversational style; writing in ordinary language and in an accessible, engaging narrative style; and having community members review the ethnographic manuscript before publication (Angrosino, 2005; Foley & Valenzuela, 2005; May, 1997). A helpful description of empowering research is found in Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, and Richardson (1992). Cameron et al. (1992) contended that empowering research is research *on, for, and with* the researched, where the *with* implies the use of interactive and dialogic methods in relating to the participants. Three tenets should be observed: (a) Persons are not objects and should not be treated as objects (the central point here is that research methods should be open, interactive and dialogic); (b) Subjects have their own agendas and research should try to address them (in working *with* the participants, it is important to consider their needs and interests); and (c) If knowledge is worth having, it is worth sharing (it is important to consider the question of providing feedback to the participants on the findings of the research).

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a contemporary theoretical-methodological approach to the study of language in social institutions. The fundamental principles of CDA are that language is a social practice; language is shaped by and shapes identities, values, beliefs, and power relations in sociocultural contexts; and language use can contribute to discursive and sociocultural change (Fairclough, 1992a, 1992b, 1995, 2003). Within a CDA tradition, discourse “moves back and forth between reflecting and constructing the social world” (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & O’Garro Joseph, 2005, p. 369). From this perspective, language cannot be considered neutral because it is caught up in political, social, and cultural formations.

One of the most elaborate attempts toward theorizing CDA was Fairclough’s *Discourse and Social Change* (1992a). Fairclough (1992a) constructed a social theory of discourse and sketched a three-dimensional methodological framework for conceiving of and analyzing discourse. Every discursive instance has three dimensions: it is a spoken or written text; it is an interaction between people, involving processes of producing and interpreting the text; and it is part of a piece of social action. Thus the first

dimension is discourse-as-text, i.e. the linguistic features and organization of concrete instances of discourse. Choices and patterns in vocabulary (e.g. wording, metaphor), grammar (e.g. transitivity, modality), cohesion (e.g. conjunction, schemata), and text structure (e.g. episoding, turn-taking system) should be systematically analyzed. The second dimension is discourse-as-discursive-practice, i.e. discourse as concrete linguistic objects (oral or written texts) that are produced, circulated, distributed, and consumed in society. Approaching discourse as discursive practice means that in analyzing vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure, attention should be given to speech acts, coherence, and intertextuality—three aspects that link a text to its context. The third dimension is discourse-as-social-practice, i.e. the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is a feature. Hegemony concerns power that is achieved through constructing alliances and integrating classes and groups through consent. It is from this third dimension that Fairclough constructs his approach to social change: hegemonies change, and this can be witnessed in discursive change, when the latter is viewed from the angle of intertextuality. The way in which discourse is being represented, respokey or rewritten sheds light on the emergence of new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, attempts at control, and resistance against regimes of power.

CDA advocates interventionism in the social practices it investigates. It openly professes strong commitments to change, empowerment, and practice-orientedness (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Education is viewed as a major area for the reproduction of beliefs, values and social relations, including representation and identity formation, but also for possibilities for change. CDA recognizes that educational discourses can be drawn upon in standard, normative ways, but also in creative, innovative, transformational ways, in constituting or reconstituting the different dimensions of the social.

A microethnographic approach to discourse analysis

A social linguistic/interactional approach that brings together elements of critical classroom ethnography and principles of CDA is Bloome, Carter, Christian, Otto and Shuart-Faris' (2005) microethnographic approach to the discourse analysis of classroom language and literacy events. This approach foregrounds the daily life of classrooms; it draws attention to how people use language (verbal,

nonverbal, and related semiotic systems) in constructing events in classrooms, with attention to social, cultural, and political processes. Classrooms are viewed as complex spaces where teachers and students actively act and react, create and re-create, adopt and adapt, and engage in a full range of interactions.

For Bloome et al. (2005), an event is “a bounded series of actions and reactions that people make in response to each other at the level of face-to-face interactions” (p. 6). Pivotal to their microethnographic approach is the understanding that people are always acting and reacting to each other through language, creating and re-creating the worlds in which they live. People react to actions immediately previous, to actions that occurred sometime earlier, and also to future actions. Even a “nonaction” can be a reaction. These actions and reactions are not necessarily linear, and may occur simultaneously. This perspective takes as given that people, through their interactions, construct relationships between and among texts (intertextuality) and between and among social events and contexts (intercontextuality). The analysis of intertextual and intercontextual relationships provides insight into the relationship of micro level contexts and macro level contexts (broader cultural and social processes), and provides a theoretical and methodological tool for describing such relationships.

Particularly significant in this approach is the concept of “thick description in motion” (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 53) to describe classroom language and literacy practices as fluid and dynamic, rather than fixed and static. This notion presupposes a dialectics of continuity and change. That is, within the multidirectional action-reaction patterns among teachers and students, language practices as well as social identities must be understood as part of a process of continuity and change over time and place, within and across events, settings, and social institutions.

Bloome et al. (2005) located their microethnographic approach within the “linguistic turn” in the social sciences. The “linguistic turn” tradition looks at how people and institutions use language in everyday life, on the one hand, to exert power and control—sometimes manifest along racial, gender, and class lines, sometimes along more subtle lines—and, on the other hand, to engage in agency, resistance, creativity, and caring relations—“loving and mutually respectful and caring relationships among individuals and among groups” (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 47). The “linguistic turn” also called attention to

the language used in the conduct of and writing of research: “We ask who is doing what, to whom, where, and how through the use of language in classrooms, and we ask that of ourselves [researchers] as well as of teachers and students” (p. 49).

Research Design: My Dialogic Study on Dialogic Pedagogy and Research

This study was conceptualized as a critical classroom ethnography of a collaborative nature. I pieced together elements from the methodological traditions above to compose the initial research framework. Throughout the stages of field work and data collection and analysis, the initial framework developed in ways I did not foresee, which expanded and redefined the collaborative, participatory nature of the study.¹⁶ This expansion and redefinition of researcher-participant collaboration, in turn, impacted and expanded the very focus and scope of the study. The process affected the content, and the outcome. What started out as a critical classroom ethnography of dialogic pedagogy became more than that; it became a study of dialogic research as well—dialogue as a research method. From a study on teaching and learning dialogically, it developed into a study on teaching, learning, and doing research dialogically. In this development lies the uniqueness of this study.

Before focusing on what the study became, I will describe its original design. Drawing on the traditions of critical ethnography, CDA, and Bloome et al.’s (2005) microethnographic approach to discourse analysis of classroom language and literacy events, I devised this study as a critical ethnography foregrounding the daily (or, more properly, biweekly) life of one classroom, with a focus on language use in the interactions among the participants (teacher and students). This study would offer a “thick description in motion” (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 53) of the participants’ language practices, that is, the fluid and dynamic processes of actions and reactions that they engaged in over time, for the duration of the

¹⁶ According to Alasuutari (1996), “The main task of the researcher is to dig out and reconstruct the framework implied in the questions asked and in the research design in question. Such a more or less explicit theoretical framework consists of ontological and epistemological premises, that is, of notions about the nature of the reality being studied and the ways by which one can study that reality. The main function of data collection and analysis is to make one’s own underlying premises as visible as possible and to challenge and develop the initial framework” (p. 373). Only after undertaking my own study was I able to fully grasp this notion of challenging, developing, and reconstructing the initial framework of the research design during data collection and analysis.

course. From the start, I regarded this chronological perspective as an important lens (Peshkin, 2001)¹⁷ in examining the complex dynamic of events, discourses, experiences, and relationships that developed in the class. This study would tell the story of a class; the week-to-week, evolving story of a teacher's actions—his unorthodox, innovative dialogic teaching practice—and the students' reactions—their responses to the dialogic pedagogy that the teacher enacted. I viewed this teacher as a “critical innovator in the Discourse of teaching and learning” (Willett & Miller, 2004, p. 53) who rejects commonsense power asymmetries between teacher and students and seeks to fashion more liberating educational discourses and a cultural context that would lead to student empowerment and educational and social transformation. Therefore, concepts such as discourse, agency, ideology, culture, power relations, and transformation underpinned this investigation of the classroom as “a microcosm of the broader social order” (Auerbach, 1995, p. 9).

In terms of the collaborative nature of the study, from the outset I aimed to develop personal, trusting relations with the participants and to carry out empowering research (Cameron et al., 1992). I definitely did not view Greg and the students as research *objects*; I wanted to consider their agendas, and I wished that the study and its findings could benefit them somehow. However, in practical terms, my thought-out actions in my study design were limited to observing and participating in class discussions as I perceived a regular student might, and in the process, seek to establish rapport with the students. As for Greg, I envisioned that the two of us would engage in a kind of collaborative relationship in which we would share our perceptions of the class with one another. We were fellow graduate students and had done research together, so it made sense to talk about the study. I could demonstrate openness and transparency, while counting on his member checking. That was essentially how I conceived of researcher-participant collaboration in the original research design.

Underlying my somewhat limited actions towards fostering researcher-participant collaboration was my intent to behave as inconspicuously as possible in the classroom, so as to minimize my

¹⁷ According to Peshkin (2001), “It is self-evidently reasonable to think that by following our phenomenon, problem, or issue over time, we can take account of the nonstatic nature of events and people . . . To do justice to the variability of teachers or classes or students, we must perceive them over time” (p. 243).

interference in the development of the class. If my goal was to tell the evolving story of that learning community by faithfully documenting Greg's excellent dialogic pedagogy (his actions) and the students' reactions and new actions, then I needed to stay out of the picture, or so I thought. Somehow, in some mysterious way, I expected to collaborate with the class without affecting them, without "tampering with the results." Intellectually, in theory, I firmly believed in the purpose of critical ethnography to ask "what could be" and to study culture in order to change it (Thomas, 1993, p. 4). As a qualitative researcher, I also aspired to composing a text that would stand as a "testament to the facts of our [my] existence, to our [my] having 'been there' and to the many voices of the individuals with whom we [I] have interacted" (Lincoln as cited in Jones, 2002, p. 468). In practice, though, I was taking on a descriptive stance towards the study that was silencing my own voice as a researcher and also a teacher.

However, early on in the field work phase, cued by Greg himself, I came to realize that I was part of the story, after all (see Chapter 6). It was not just *their* story; it was *our* story. So I pondered my participation in the class and made the conscious decision to go all the way in living out my roles as a researcher, a student, and a co-teacher there—and to document it in my fieldnotes and memos. That decision prompted the most notable change in the research design: my actions and reactions became part of the story too. Following Thomas (1993), I dived right into asking "what could be" in order to leave my print on the evolving culture of the class. I engaged in dialogic interactions with Greg and the students not just in the classroom, but most notably "behind the scenes," out of scheduled class time. This dialogue affected the participants and the development of the class and the study. With Greg, the dialogue was real-time, continuous, sustained, and recursive, maintained through e-mail, brief conversations before and after class, and longer "debriefing dialogues" (scheduled recorded sessions in which the two of us sought to make sense of the development of the class by sharing our perceptions and critiquing each other's assertions). This dialogue began to impact Greg's teaching practice. It also affected my subsequent actions in and out of the classroom.

These dialogical interactions are described and examined in all their complexity in Chapter 6, where I offer a thick description in motion of the language-mediated actions and reactions that the

participants and I engaged in over time, out of the classroom, but clearly impacted what took place in the classroom. As it happened, capitalizing on my role of researcher as instrument, by exploring dialogue as a research method, is what made this study unique, best characterizing it as a critical classroom ethnography. From just a collaborative study on dialogic pedagogy, this study became a dialogic study on dialogic pedagogy and research.

A Closer Look at Collaborative Research

Over the years there have been some notable critical ethnographic studies in the field of education. A few accounts have showcased stories of success that model democratic, empowering social realities and practices, such as May's (1994) description of an unusually successful multicultural, multiethnic, and multilingual elementary school in New Zealand, and Trueba's (1999) portrait of a teacher's humanizing approach that promoted both cultural maintenance and academic achievement among his fourth grade students, most of whom were of Mexican origin. Other studies have focused on complexities associated with the ways in which social and political differentiation in the larger society is reproduced and sometimes contested in the classroom through language and discourse. Examples of such studies are Canagarajah's (1993) and Talmy's (2005, 2009) critical classroom ethnographies. Canagarajah (1993) investigated student accommodation and resistance to learning English in a Sri Lankan university. Canagarajah's analysis considered how the attitudes formed by the students in daily classroom life were impinged upon by more abstract sociopolitical forces outside the walls of the classroom. Talmy (2005, 2009) conducted his study in high school ESL classes in Hawaii. Talmy investigated the production of ESL as a negatively marked, stigmatized identity at the high school, drawing attention to how this category diverged from the "mainstream student" or "native speaker," valorized as the preferred ideals.

The studies above are theoretically and methodologically sound examples of critical ethnographies that served as references as I conducted my own study. Particularly May (1994) and Trueba (1999) helped me perceive the goal of "documenting the process of empowerment" (Trueba, 1999, p. 593) as a legitimate critical slant in doing critical ethnography. However, in regards to the specific topic of researcher-participant relations, these studies did not explicitly discuss whether democratic research

strategies emphasizing researcher–participant collaboration and/or participant empowerment (Cameron et al., 1993) were considered or pursued. As discussed earlier in this chapter, it is recommended that critical ethnographies seek to foster researcher–participant collaboration and participant empowerment. This notwithstanding, studies that document in some depth ways in which this recommendation has been addressed seem difficult to find.

The topic of collaboration in research has also made its way into the field of TESOL (Norton, 2004). In this context, the focus has generally been on the collaboration between university-based researchers and ESOL teachers conducting research together. Over the past decade, the split between teaching practice and research on teaching has been much discussed, with the TESOL organization at the forefront of efforts to bridge this gap by promoting the concept of the teacher-as-researcher. Stewart (2006) drew attention to the power imbalance at play between university-based researchers and ESOL teachers in traditional teacher–researcher collaboration, where the researcher’s slant is often the privileged one. Since all researchers in education are teachers as well, Stewart (2006) offered the egalitarian label *teachers’ research* as a more accurate description of the current broadening of shared teacher knowledge in TESOL. Teachers’ research is “oriented toward reform rather than simply toward description or meaning” (Thesen & Kuzel as cited in Stewart, 2006, p. 427); it is knowledge that other teachers can draw from to understand and promote social change in their own schools and communities.

Recent studies in TESOL have employed configurations of university–school partnerships to examine opportunities for language learning in school contexts. In Hawkins and Legler (2004), Hawkins, a teacher educator, and Legler, a kindergarten teacher, considered their collaborative study on ELLs as “a positive force for change” (p. 342). Their study yielded data-based theoretical perspectives and applications on the topic of classroom ecology. In O’Connor and Sharkey (2004), Sharkey, a teacher educator, and O’Connor, a third grade ESOL teacher, related a few obstacles they experienced in conducting collaborative research, such as the often heavy demands on teachers’ time and unforeseen school events that disrupted their meetings. Nonetheless, O’Connor and Sharkey valued the different perspectives, knowledge, and resources that each of them brought to the collaboration, recognizing that

they had “much to learn from and to teach each other” (p. 336). In both these studies the research partnership was clearly welcomed and valued; however, the individual roles that the authors played and the characteristics of their intersubjective collaboration were not fleshed out. For example, in Hawkins and Legler’s (2004) account, it is not clear how the authors’ “equal (though differential) participation” (p. 340) occurred, or how they “negotiated our [their] way through the collaborative relationship, building trust and opening communication” (p. 340).

The same can be noted about another study, this time in the context of teacher education. Assaf and Dooley (2006), both university-based researchers, conducted a collaborative study similar to mine, in terms of content. The authors investigated how instructional practices in a masters-level multicultural education course encouraged students to “explore their own cultures, appreciate differences, and transform their previously held views and assumptions about multiculturalism” (p. 42). However, aside from mentioning Assaf’s role as course designer and instructor, and Dooley’s role as participant observer, data collector, and student interviewer, the nature of the collaboration and the role it played in contributing to the authors’ understandings were left unspecified.

Another example of collaboration, this time in the field of heritage language education, was a study conducted by Brito, Lima, and Auerbach (2004). The authors’ collaborative inquiry project aimed to demonstrate the benefits of teaching in Cape Verdean language (CVL) for Cape Verdean high school students. The nature of the collaboration was succinctly described: Brito taught the CVL class; Lima, a Cape Verdean teacher at the same Boston high school, and Auerbach, a university-based researcher, observed the CVL class for one period a week (about seventy minutes) over the course of a semester, took notes, and conferenced with Brito afterwards. Lima and Auerbach acted as “sounding boards” for Brito, mainly listening as Brito talked about what she was doing, the students’ reactions, her thoughts on how things were going, and her plans. There was no specific intervention in the class from Lima and Auerbach; no further description of the collaboration was provided, other than “the feeling of trust” that Brito derived from it (Bruto et al., 2004, p. 183).

Finally, Gill and Illesca, in Doecke, Gill, Illesca, & Van de Ven (2009), carried out a collaborative study in a literature class in an Australian secondary school. The study constructed an account of the pedagogy of Gill, a teacher of literature who shared her lesson plans and engaged in conversations with a “critical friend,” Illesca, who observed Gill giving lessons over a period of two weeks. Prior to Illesca’s visits to her classroom, Gill explained what she was trying to achieve in her lessons, and both Illesca and Gill wrote a series of reflections from their respective viewpoints, trying to identify the matches and mismatches between the planned curriculum and the curriculum that was actually implemented, as Gill interacted with her students in the course of the lessons. Therefore, in addition to recording classroom observations, the critical friend wrote extended reflections about what she had observed, sometimes in response to the teacher’s ensuing reflections about the success of the lessons. The study thus arose out of a professional dialogue between the teacher and her critical friend, and it attempted to convey a sense of their continuing conversation, as they reflected on what they had learned from their collaboration. For the purpose of writing their article, Illesca and Gill engaged in further reflections and interpretive discussions several months after the classroom observations occurred, in response to the data that was originally collected. While the dialogue between Illesca and Gill was a learning experience for both of them, its effects on Gill’s actual teaching practice during the two weeks that Illesca observed her class, if experienced, were not accounted for.

In sum, save Doecke et al.’s (2009) study, the studies reviewed in this section, although undoubtedly contributions to their respective fields, either did not consider or allude to, or did not specify, detail or discuss the nature, process, and implications of collaboration between researchers, and between researcher and participants, in their respective settings. In Doecke et al. (2009), the collaboration between a teacher and a researcher was documented and described. More studies that address the challenging task of fostering, documenting, and discussing collaboration in research are called for.

Validity

The literature is replete with discussions of standards for assessing the quality and rigor of qualitative research. Cho and Trent (2006) proposed a holistic view of validity that aligns with my own

take on the topic. Cho and Trent (2006) conceived of validity as a process that can be equated with a reflective journal that makes transparent the subjective process now made explicit for research consumers. By “thinking out loud,” the researcher continually considers her concerns, safeguards, and contradictions. This holistic view of validity values a recursive, open, eclectic process, and provides an analytic tool by which to identify a methodological relationship among the research goals, questions, and processes. It is open to a bricolage of varied validity approaches that best serves that purpose.

I draw on Cho and Trent’s (2006) work to incorporate the following bricolage of validity approaches into my study:

- Validity in the thick description purpose – The emphasis here is on constructing texts in which rich descriptions are salient and in harmony with analytic interpretations. Major validity criteria that should be implemented are: (1) the extent to which data are descriptively presented, in order to let readers “see” for themselves; (2) the researcher’s competence in making sense of the daily life of the participants. Thick description researchers rely on holistic processes, prolonged engagement, triangulation, and member checking. The fundamental question this approach addresses is: How do the people under study interpret the phenomena?

- Validity in the personal essay purpose – The researcher’s subjectivity is intentionally front and center in research reports/accounts. Questions asked in the personal essay purpose fall under reflexive and aesthetic validity processes. The researcher’s foregrounded subjectivity involves self-assessment of experience and/or public appeal of personal opinion. In essence, the experiential understanding of self surrounding educative issues should be represented in such a way that makes it possible to help the reader come to a new way of understanding a phenomenon or event under investigation. The fundamental question to be addressed is: What is the researcher’s personal interpretation?

- Validity in the praxis/social change purpose – A key aspect of this validity approach lies in the relationship between researcher and researched. Change efforts become integral parts of the research design. In order for authentic change to occur, collaborative relationships between researcher and researched should be manifested during (and after) the research process. While the scope and depth of the

praxis/social change purpose varies, major validity criteria in this approach are: (1) member checks as reflexive; (2) critical reflexivity of self; and (3) redefinition of the status quo. The first criterion refers to the constant backward and forward confirmation between the researcher and the participants in regard to re/constructions of constructions of the participants. Critical reflexivity of self should lead the researcher to openly express how her own subjectivity has progressively been challenged and thus transformed as she collaboratively interacts with the participants. Lastly, in regard to the third criterion, participants should be able to differently perceive and impact the world in which they live. The fundamental question to be addressed is: How can we learn and change educators, organizations or both?

In the following sections I will “show the workings” (Holliday, 2007) of how I approached data collection and data analysis in this study. By doing so, I seek to make evident the methodological relationship among goals, questions, and processes in this research study. In addition, I have formatted the analytical chapters in this dissertation in ways to give consideration to validity issues. Chapters 4 and 5 seek to meet the criteria for validity in the thick description purpose, to let the readers “see” the reality constructed for themselves. Chapter 6, where I intentionally place my subjectivity front and center in my account of the relationships developed between the participants and myself, speaks to validity in the personal essay and in the praxis/social change purposes. My hope is that the structure of this dissertation as a whole bears witness to the attention that I have given to questions of validity in this work.

For its importance, at this point I draw attention to the notion of reflexivity. Because critical ethnography is not just inherently value-laden but openly ideological research (Lather, 1986), the term reflexivity has become a key concept to denote the self-reflection of the researcher, from the initial stages of the study through the write-up of the ethnography (Conquergood, 2006). The researcher is prompted to examine how she may be influencing and shaping the research, through a constant mirroring of the self, by turning or bending back upon oneself in a critical manner, thus becoming an object to oneself (Babcock as cited in Foley, 2002, p. 473). Reflexivity thus refers to the ethnographer rigorously examining how her presence in the setting and her involvement with the participants affect data gathering, analysis, and subsequent display to an audience (Maxwell, 2005; Thomas, 1993). Because critical

ethnographic studies aim to impact reality, the researcher “minimizing” her effect in the research setting is not a meaningful goal (Maxwell, 2005, p. 109); rather, she should consider *how* this effect occurs.

In terms of the writing stages of the ethnography, reflexivity specifically entails the recognition that texts do not simply and transparently mirror reality, but rather stem from writing choices made by the ethnographer that are implicated in the work of reality-construction (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 213). Contemporary ethnography is extremely interested in and self-conscious about its own text-making practices and ways of presenting research results; it is being rethought in fundamentally rhetorical terms, in line with the “linguistic turn.” The realization that critical ethnographers—“mere culture-bound mortals speaking from very particular race, class, gender, and sexual identity locations” (Foley & Valenzuela, 2005, p. 218)—represent particular standpoints in a hierarchical society, and always convey partial truths, has encouraged experimental, intuitive or subjective ways of knowing and writing (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2008; Foley, 2002).

In my study, from data collection through analysis and write-up, I took reflexivity into consideration. While I am aware that my own standpoint framed the finished product, I have also strived to make it into a “testament to the many voices of the individuals with whom we [I] have interacted” (Lincoln as cited in Jones, 2002) so that “the story told is recognizable to those who told it; that emerges directly from their words, behaviors, and the contexts influencing the study; and that holds together as coherent, believable, and cogent to all who read it” (p. 468). In practice, as I sought to foster personal, trusting relations with the participants, I systematically recorded in my fieldnotes and memos not just my impressions of how I might be affecting the class, but also specific instances when I realized that had happened (see Chapter 6). Also, I had six “debriefing dialogues” with Greg throughout the four months of the course, in which I gauged if we were seeing and hearing the same things in the class, and if not, why not. Had I read too much or too little into some student’s behavior or a classroom event? Additionally, I submitted the transcripts of the interviews that I had with the students to them for member checking (their feedback and clarification on some further questions I raised). That is, each student was sent the transcript of the interview I had with her, with my questions and comments embedded. The students had the

opportunity to review the content of the interviews, make corrections, and respond to the questions. Six students returned revised transcripts to me. Throughout the field work and write-up of this study, on three occasions I sent the class as a whole drafts of analyses for their appreciation and revision. I also e-mailed individual students additional excerpts of drafts. Finally, I e-mailed the class the completed dissertation. I invited them to propose edits to the text as needed. A couple of students responded to say that they had read the material and appreciated it; one student said that she had read through the complete dissertation, and “loved it.” She suggested a modification to correct a factual mistake identified in her biographic information. “Other than that, everything looked good,” she added. The correction that she suggested was made. No further modifications to the text were proposed.

Context of the Study

Growing immigration has irreversibly transformed the demographic and sociocultural landscape of the southeastern United States. In what has been called the “new Latino diaspora,” increasing numbers of immigrants of Latino origin have been settling both temporarily and permanently in the region, which traditionally has not been home to Latinos (Wortham, Murillo & Hamann, 2002; Hamann & Harklau, 2010). Mirroring this immigration wave, schools in states of the southeastern U.S. experienced tremendous growth in their ELL population in the last decade. In Georgia, for example, the number of ELLs enrolled in public schools increased over 200% between 1998 and 2008 (NCELA, 2010). Academic success, however, has not paralleled school enrollment for immigrant ELL students. Latino students, who represent the majority of ELLs, have not fared as well in school as their non-Latino peers. Latino students have high dropout rates, and the gaps between their test scores and those of White students have widened in the states of the new Latino diaspora (Hamann & Harklau, 2010).

Clearly, teacher education programs in the southeastern U.S. are faced with the pressing challenge of preparing their predominantly White student teacher body to effectively teach the increasingly diverse K-12 student population in the region. Ranked highly among the nation’s research extensive universities, the University of Georgia through its College of Education aims to prepare exemplary, reflective professionals to serve a diverse global community. The College of Education is

committed to multicultural education as a foundation for working towards a more just and equitable society, as stated in their mission statement: “As critical multicultural educators we work simultaneously to increase our own awareness of power, privilege, and positionality, as well as collaboratively with stakeholders to enact social change. As educational professionals we identify and challenge oppression and work for social justice, generally, and in local educational settings, specifically.”¹⁸

One of the multiple ways in which the UGA College of Education has addressed this goal is through its ESOL endorsement program. Nested in the Department of Language and Literacy Education, the ESOL endorsement program seeks to prepare teachers to work with diverse populations and to become professionals who are leaders in the field of TESOL at their schools. The endorsement program provides “add-on” certification to teach ESOL in grades P-12 in Georgia public schools. It is only valid for educators who have or will hold a teaching credential in another subject area (e.g., elementary education, mathematics, Spanish), a speech and language pathology professional certificate, or a school counseling credential. The program consists of three courses offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Two courses in the program cover ESOL teaching methods, curricular and materials design, and first and second language acquisition and development. The third course is called Language and Culture in the Classroom.

During fall 2009, Greg McClure taught an undergraduate section of the Language and Culture in the Classroom course. He structured the course as an inquiry experience for examining concepts of language and culture and their relationships to teaching and learning in U.S. public schools. Objectives of the course included developing an understanding of sociocultural factors that promote and impede school achievement for diverse learners; gaining critical perspectives on curriculum, pedagogy, and learning; and identifying tools and approaches that enable teachers to link theory with practice in order to create culturally responsive learning environments. The course readings introduced critical views on culture, learning, immigration, privilege, equity, and other topics related to teaching culturally and linguistically

¹⁸ The full text of the Mission Statement on Multicultural Education and Social Justice of the College of Education can be found online at <http://www.coe.uga.edu/diversity/about/mission/>.

diverse students. The core readings were Bigelow, Harvey, Karp, and Miller's (Eds.) (2001) *Rethinking our Classrooms* and Nieto's (1999) *The Light in Their Eyes*. Additional articles complemented the core readings. Course assignments¹⁹ such as "I Am" poems²⁰ and cultural autobiographies were designed to facilitate students developing a relational perspective across the course readings, personal experiences, and social norms and practices. The class met in a spacious classroom, twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays), for 75-minute sessions (11:00 am to 12:15 pm). Classes ran August 18th through December 3rd, 2009.

The Participants

In fall 2009, students of White ethnicity comprised 77% of the total enrollment at UGA. For some unknown reason, the Language and Culture class that Greg taught that semester was much smaller than usual; only 7 students (all females) enrolled, rather than the customary 15 to 20 individuals who take the course each term. Still, their ethnicities mirrored the university student body: 5 students were White, and 2 were African-American. An eighth Latina student, also female, audited the class informally for half of the semester. Of the eight students, only one had prior teaching experience in K-12 contexts.

During the first class session, Greg and I informed details of the study to the students and assured them that participation was expressly voluntary and would in no way impact their grades in the course. All students returned signed consent forms to participate in the study. Some of the students are herein designated by pseudonyms; others have kept their real names.²¹ The following biographical blurbs portray the participants where they stood in fall 2009:

Rosanna was a 28-year-old African-American graduate student. A native of Alabama, Rosanna was raised in Dalton, Georgia. She was the daughter of an African man and an American woman who met and got married in the United States. Her father owned a floor covering business. Rosanna earned her undergraduate degree in Kinesiology and Health at Georgia State University. She came back to school

¹⁹ A description of the course assignments is provided in the course syllabus in Appendix A.

²⁰ "I Am" poems are personal poems with each line often starting with the phrase "I am" or "I am from." The goal is for the author to describe in their own words who they are and what's salient to their cultural identity.

²¹ Institutional Review Board approval granted permission for use of the students' real names in the study. While some students opted for using pseudonyms, others specifically requested to use their real names.

after doing some “soul searching” and realizing that she really wanted to be a teacher. Rosanna was in her first year in the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program in Early Childhood Education. Prior to joining the program, she worked for a few years as a teacher assistant at the Atlanta International School. Rosanna’s name meant “Test me” in a language spoken in Zambia, her father’s home country.

Like Rosanna, **Kristi** was in her first year in the MAT program in Early Childhood Education. Kristi was 23 years old and came from a Southern White Baptist family in Duluth, Georgia. While Kristi was growing up, her father worked at small bank chains; her mother was a paraprofessional at an elementary school. In fall 2009, Kristi had been married for a year, and her husband was a Law student at UGA. Kristi had plans to become a school counselor in the future.

Isabella was a 20-year-old undergraduate student double-majoring in English and English Education. She was born and raised in the small, historical town of Washington, Georgia. She came from a close-knit White Southern family. She described herself as a Baptist who liked to practice the Episcopal faith occasionally. Isabella was valedictorian of her high school, just as her older brother and her mother had been when they graduated. Both her parents held master’s degrees.

Jenna was a White undergraduate student majoring in Early Childhood Education. She was 21 years old. She was born in New Jersey, but was raised in the South. Jenna’s mother was a school nurse, and her father owned an irrigation business.

Rachel was a White undergraduate student majoring in Spanish and Foreign Language Education. She came from Atlanta, Georgia. She was 20 years old. Rachel identified herself not just as a Christian, but as a follower of Christ, as having a relationship with him. Both her parents were Christians, or “believers,” as Rachel said. Her mother was a dental hygienist, and her father owned his own accounting business. Rachel had plans to pursue a master’s degree in Second Language Acquisition at UGA.

Renae was a 20-year-old undergraduate student double-majoring in Linguistics and German. She was born in Stone Mountain, Georgia. She came from a large close-knit African-American Baptist family that valued tradition and education. Renae’s father worked with computer analysis and networking; her

mother was a secretary at a local high school. Renae wanted to pursue a master's degree in Speech and Language Pathology.

Lauren was a White undergraduate student who had recently transferred from Dalton State College to UGA. Lauren was 21 years old. She was born and raised in Chickamauga, Georgia. Her father was a UGA graduate who worked at a distributing company, and her mother was a registered nurse. Lauren was majoring in Early Childhood Education, and was considering pursuing a master's degree after graduation.

Evelinne was my (Erika's) niece. Evelinne was 22 years old and was born in Bahia, Brazil. She had taken six months off from school to come to the United States to learn English and experience the American culture. In Brazil, Evelinne was an undergraduate student majoring in Journalism at a public university located in the northeastern state of Paraíba. Evelinne audited the Language and Culture class until she left back for Brazil, halfway through the course.

Finally, **Greg McClure**. Born in Florida and raised in North Carolina, Greg was 36 years old. He described himself as "WHITE, male, middle-class, and privileged all the way around." Greg first began to develop this critical self-awareness while in undergraduate school in the 1990's, when he came face to face with the adverse effects of U.S. hegemony around the world and particularly in Latin America. During his undergraduate studies, Greg had the opportunity to work as a human rights observer in the multilingual highlands of Guatemala, in the last year of the country's civil war. While in Guatemala, Greg taught Spanish in a recently returned Mayan refugee community and supported the indigenous groups in their struggles and pursuit of human rights and social justice. What began for Greg as a commitment to justice, dignity, and human rights evolved into a professional and academic career focused on understanding the ways language, culture, and power intersect and play out in educational practices.

Prior to joining the doctoral program at UGA, Greg worked for eight years as an ESL teacher and program director in North Carolina public schools. He endeavored to reform the district's program, emphasizing the need to foster strong partnerships involving schools, parents, and community agencies. Greg taught courses that prepared teachers to work with linguistically and culturally diverse learners.

Over the years, grounded on his experiences as an activist, human rights observer, and educator, Greg developed a stance toward teaching that placed political action at the center of education. For him, “education cannot be thought of as strictly the accumulation of information; education is about preparing students to be engaged critical actors in the world.” Greg believed in developing deeply personal and caring relationships with one another, relationships that grow out of love, towards freedom, and are sustained by a commitment to social justice. Building community—constructing meaningful relationships among teachers and students in the classroom—was a core part of his teaching philosophy; “the idea that we have to do the very personal and intense work of coming to know one another if we have any hopes of learning from one another.”

From 2006 to 2010, Greg worked with the ESOL endorsement program at UGA. In fall 2009, Greg was teaching the Language and Culture class for the third time. In the previous sections of the course that he taught, he consistently received superior assessments from the students in the end-of-course evaluations.

Fall 2009 was a specially challenging time for Greg, as he was juggling a number of crucial tasks. Besides teaching the Language and Culture class and participating as a key informant in this study, he was striving to meet deadlines to complete his own doctoral dissertation while applying for academic positions. Greg graduated with his Ph.D. in Language and Literacy Education in May 2010, and took a position as an Assistant Professor at Appalachian State University, North Carolina, in August 2010.

Methods of Data Collection

Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p. 5) validated the role of the qualitative researcher as a *bricoleur*—a “Jack of all trades, a kind of professional do-it-yourself” (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17)—or as a maker of quilts, who uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, and empirical materials are at hand. If the researcher needs to invent, or piece together, new tools or techniques, he or she will do so. Putting on my *bricoleur* hat and aiming for triangulation of multiple sources, I collected data through the following methods and instruments:

- ***Participant observation*** – I attended all 75-minute class sessions (a total of 30) during the fall 2009 term. I produced extensive fieldnotes with my observations for every class (an average of 5 to 7 single-spaced typed pages of notes per class).
- ***Dialogue*** – I use dialogue here in the same sense introduced in Chapter 2: as a democratic pedagogical communicative relation that acts directly on the social world as it mediates learning and knowing between people (here, researcher and participants) bound by habits of heart, but also free to differ and diverge from one another. Dialogue between the participants and me took the form of e-mail exchanges; face-to-face conversations before, during, and after class; and, in regard to Greg, also our “debriefing dialogues” (which I view as unique contributing factors of this study.) With Greg, the dialogue was real-time, continuous, sustained, and recursive, throughout the stages of data collection, data analysis, and writing of preliminary drafts through the completed dissertation. During the data collection phase (fall 2009), Greg and I had six debriefing dialogues, on the following dates: Aug 21st (15 min.), Sep 3rd (30 min.), Sep 18th (35 min.), Oct 15th (1h15min.), Nov 17th (1h30min.), and Dec 17th (1h20min.). All the debriefing dialogues were digitally audio-recorded, transcribed, and the transcriptions shared with Greg.
- ***Audio- and video-recordings*** – All but four of the total class sessions were digitally audio-recorded. Two class sessions were video-recorded as well. The recordings were of invaluable aid in the writing of fieldnotes. Portions of the recordings were selected, transcribed, and incorporated into data analysis and representation.
- ***Questionnaire*** – On the first day of class, the students were asked to respond to a brief questionnaire (Appendix B) about their previous experiences with university classes that followed a dialogic format. (This questionnaire proved to be a problematic instrument for data collection and analysis; see my discussion in Chapter 6).
- ***Course materials*** – Greg provided me with copies of all the materials he produced for the course.

- ***Collected student work*** – All the students supplied me with hard copies of samples of their written work in the course, including their “I Am” poems, cultural autobiographies, final course reflection papers, and a few other assignments.
- ***Interviews*** – I met with each student for a semi-structured, conversational interview, during the last week of classes. All the students agreed to be interviewed. The interviews took place before the students’ final grades in the course were released. Five students were interviewed individually and two students (Jenna and Isabella) were interviewed together. Each interview lasted 75 minutes in average. The interviews followed a basic protocol of questions (Appendix C) to elicit participants’ impressions on and experiences in/with the course. The protocol was designed to be purposely redundant (several questions overlap or intersect), as a way to double-check the students’ answers. Also, the interviews were tailored to each student; a few questions were added to the basic protocol based on specificities of their written work and/or participation in class. All interviews were digitally audio-recorded, transcribed, and the transcripts e-mailed to the respective students. I embedded additional comments and questions in the transcripts, and asked the students to send them back to me with their clarifying comments and answers. Six students complied with my request.
- ***Students’ final course evaluations*** – All seven students provided anonymous feedback in the final course evaluations, submitted online to the College of Education. These final course evaluations were added to the data pool.

Data Analysis and Representation

In this section, I describe the constant comparative method (Charmaz, 2006; Freeman, 2005) and inform how I applied this inductive approach to my data analysis, in an effort to bring “order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data” (Marshall & Rossman as cited in Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002, p. 31). For Holliday (2007, p. 113), thick description is comprised of the network of interconnected data plus the argument and discussion which demonstrates the way in which the data interconnects. I concur with Holliday’s (2007) view that thick description cannot be fully achieved until

the interconnections are fully articulated in the written study. In my case, pursuing these interconnections has entailed approaching writing as inquiry: “a way of “knowing”—a method of discovery and analysis” (Richardson, 2000, p. 923).

The constant comparative method is an inductive data coding process used for categorizing and comparing qualitative data for analysis purposes. Often associated with the methodology of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1965), it is widely used with other research frameworks as well (Boeije, 2002, p. 391; Freeman, 2005). Goetz and LeCompte (1981) described the constant comparative method as a combination of inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all social incidents observed. Hypothesis generation, or the discovery of relationships between categories of social phenomena, begins with the analysis of initial observations and undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data collection and analysis process, while continuously feeding back into the process of category coding. “As events are constantly compared with previous events, new typological dimensions, as well as new relationships, may be discovered” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981, p. 58).

Comparisons thus constitute each stage of analytic development: “Making comparisons between data, codes, and categories advances your conceptual understanding because you define analytic properties of your categories and then begin to treat these properties to rigorous scrutiny” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 179). A code is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña, 2009, p. 3). Each unit of data is analyzed and broken into codes signaling emerging themes and concepts, which are then organized into categories that reflect analytic understanding of the coded entities. As new data are analyzed, they are systematically compared with previously collected and analyzed data (Freeman, 2005). This process allows for in-depth, recursive data examination and rigorous scrutiny of preliminary hypotheses and conclusions.

Coding, categorizing, and interpreting my data

Boeije (2002) called for increased “traceability” when describing how constant comparative analysis is used and implemented in a study; that is, Boeije argued that researchers should offer an

account and explication of issues such as the subject of comparison, the phase of the research in which it took place, the reason for the comparison, and the results of the comparison. In an effort to achieve this “traceability,” thus making the research process more public (Anfara et al., 2002), in this section I show the workings (Holliday, 2007) of how I organized my data corpus and applied the constant comparative method to the analysis.

Of the three research questions that guided my study, question # 1 (What does it mean to approach teaching (and learning) dialogically in this ESOL teacher education class?) provided the cornerstone, the guiding star, with its focus on the participants, characteristics and configurations of the class. Given my intent to tell the week-to-week unfolding story of this class, from the outset, **time** became the overarching lens (Peshkin, 2001) for data collection, organization, categorization, and analysis. By examining the interactions among the participants over time, I was able to gain insight into their evolving culture and shifting roles in the learning community. Throughout the semester my fieldnotes were the main core where I systematically recorded how Greg was carrying out his teaching practice, how the students were participating in class, and how they were all interacting with one another. Thus research question #1 guided the bulk of data collection from the first through the last day of classes. As the semester progressed, other data (such as e-mail exchanges and students’ written work) that more clearly informed research questions #2 and #3 began to appear, culminating with student interviews during the final week of classes. Gradually, I began to give more attention to questions #2 and #3 as well.

By December 2009 I had a voluminous data corpus; for each class session alone, I had typed an average of 5-7 single-spaced pages of fieldnotes and memos. This was usually done later in the day after class, when I would check my jottings taken during class time while listening all the way through to the audio-recording for the class. Because participant observation is both a data collection and an analytic tool (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002), I was able to engage in some level of analysis contemporaneously with data collection, throughout the semester. I pursued not just descriptive writing of my class observations,

but also interpretive and analytic writing through asides, commentaries and in-process memos.²² I wrote down anything and everything that came to mind, while zeroing in on all which pertained to the unfolding interactions (actions and reactions) and relationships in the class.

Having completed the field work, I next turned to sorting and organizing my reams of data in a manner that would make them manageable for further analysis. Once again, the time element was a helpful lens, since any looking back upon time is affected by the present and to some extent helps fill gaps of understanding that weren't previously grasped. This recursive loop allowed for a more complete or comprehensive investigation throughout the analysis and representation stages of the study. In sorting and analyzing my data, I took a series of iterative steps:

First, I broke down the fall 2009 semester into 15 weeks and created one electronic folder and one paper folder for each week. Next I combed through all my data and grouped all the items pertaining to Week 1. I placed these items in the Week 1 virtual and paper folders, accordingly, and listed them in a table of contents. The Week 1 folders contained mostly the same items, except for materials available only in hardcopy (e.g., course handouts and student questionnaires), placed only in the paper folder.

Secondly, I turned to my fieldnotes in the Week 1 folder. While reading through them, I listened a second time to the audio-recordings of the two classes for that week, double-checking for accuracy and editing (usually adding details) as needed. I next used Process Coding²³ (Saldaña, 2009) to begin line-by-line and/or paragraph-by-paragraph coding of the fieldnotes with the use of gerunds ("-ing" words). This coding lens made sense to me because it clearly denoted the actions of the participants. Some examples of codes generated were: "arranging desks in a circle," "learning students' names," and "following teacher's instructions." After coding the fieldnotes, I also coded the other materials in the Week 1 folder (course

²² According to Emerson et al. (1995, pp. 100-105), *asides* are "brief, reflective bits of analytic writing that succinctly clarify, explain, interpret, or raise questions about some specific happening or process described in a fieldnote;" a *commentary* is "a more elaborate reflection on some specific event or issue; it is contained in a separate paragraph and set off with parentheses;" and *in-process memos* are "products of more sustained analytic writing ... such memos address incidents across several sets of fieldnotes."

²³ By using gerunds ("-ing" words) to invoke a language of action, Process Coding "fosters theoretical sensitivity because these words nudge us out of static topics and into enacted processes. Gerunds prompt thinking about actions—large and small" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 136).

handouts, students' completed questionnaires, and one debriefing dialogue transcript), aiming for short, simple codes (gerunds or otherwise).

Following this Initial Coding (Charmaz, 2006), I examined the manageable chunks (the codes) and compared them across all the data in Week 1, looking for similarities and patterns among the participants' words and actions. By trying my hand at Axial Coding (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2009), I assembled the codes according to emerging categories they seemed to fit into. These emerging categories were Structure, Content, and Relations—there were two sets of each category, one for codes pertaining to the instructor's actions, the other to the students'. The Structure category contained all the codes associated with physical setting/arrangement (such as “arranging desks in a circle”) or instructional structure/initiatives (such as “handing out tentative syllabus”). The Content category encompassed the codes that elicited content or subject matter (whether explicitly laid out as a topic in the syllabus or not; one example is “elaborating on students' answers about stereotypes”). The Relations category contained codes that expressed some type of interpersonal action not explicitly covered by Structure or Content (such as “learning students' names by the second class” or “noticing student's absence”). After assigning codes to categories, I reread and reexamined the contents in the Week 1 folders, and continued comparing incidents to incidents (Charmaz, 2006, p. 53). I then wrote a conceptual memo²⁴ (Heath & Street, 2008) that served as a tentative conclusion for the insights and meanings—the preliminary findings—I derived from the participants' actions in Week 1. Additionally, I selected and transcribed specific moments in the class audio-recordings, and also picked illustrative excerpts from other materials (such as the students' completed questionnaires). I then copied these excerpts and examples under the conceptual memo for Week 1, which served as a tentative conclusion file for future reference and illustration of my themes.

Having dealt with Week 1, I went back to my original data corpus and selected and grouped all the items pertaining to Week 2. I placed the items in the Week 2 electronic and paper folders, and listed

²⁴ Heath and Street (2008, pp. 79-82) recommended that conceptual memos be written weekly or at other regular intervals, in connection with logs of recorded data in fieldnotes. Conceptual memos should contain generic ideas that come from particular events, along with queries raised in reflections made in the fieldnotes. The ethnographer hones in on patterns detected, insights, or trends, and “aha!” realizations. Conceptual memos also map the locations of data—themes, trends, and insights recorded in them often become chapters and subheadings in the final work.

them in the table of contents for that week. Then I went through the same steps that I had taken for the Week 1 data analysis: Initial Coding (including Process Coding), Axial Coding, categorization, and conceptual memo-writing. This led me to compare the Week 2 generated codes and categories back to the Week 1 preliminary codes and categories, as I looked for patterns of similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence, and causation (Saldaña, 2009, p. 6) among them. I perceived that some of the codes in my Structure, Content, and Relations categories intersected and overlapped (both in Week 1 and Week 2 data). For example, I noticed that the codes “[teacher] inviting students to participate in decision making on handling discussions” and “[teacher] joining students in small group work,” which I had originally placed in the Structure category, also conveyed the idea of Relations. I then revisited the classification of my codes in Weeks 1 and 2 so as to indicate this overlapping. In the sequence, I charted those codes and categories following Anfara et al.’s (2002) Code Mapping pattern (Appendix D). Both the processes of code mapping and memo-writing gave rise to tentative themes in the form of statements that I then included in the code mapping. I also began to notice underlying relational threads in the instructor’s actions. I called these threads “student among students” and “teacher among teachers.” At this point, I went back to the literature on dialogic pedagogy to investigate the concept of student-as-teacher and teacher-as-student (Freire, 1993).

I carried out the same basic steps above for Weeks 3 through 15, with a few modifications. I continued reading recursively across all the materials that I placed in the folders. I also continued to code the data, but gradually I felt less the need to do line-by-line or paragraph-by-paragraph coding, and I turned more and more to writing conceptual memos. I compared and contrasted codes, categories, and chunks of text within and across the weeks, always with an eye on spotting significant threads without missing the bigger picture. As the patterns of the participants’ actions and reactions were revealed, phases or stages in the development of the class also began to emerge. In the end, it was evident to me that the 15 chronological weeks amounted to 4 subsequent stages, each stage having its own distinctive configuration and characteristics. The 4 stages unfolded as I compared the content of each week to the previous week, in search of similarities and differences between their patterns. If I found similarities, I took note of them

and moved on to the next week. If I found differences, that marked the beginning of a new stage, so I would stop and go back to the previous week(s) to revisit their characteristics, so as to better spell them out, in preparation for producing an outline for the write-up of that stage. I also identified examples and illustrations from the fieldnotes and transcripts that best exemplified the characteristics of the stage. Those examples would be included in the draft of the stage. I also double-checked to make sure that I had really uncovered a new stage. For instance, initially I thought that one of the most significant dialogic speech events that I had identified in my data—which I examine in Chapter 5—marked the beginning of a new stage. Upon closer examination, though, it became clear to me that a broader topic (which became Stage 3—Engaging in critical reflection and self-inquiry) encompassed that dialogic speech event.

The most revealing discovery that came out of this constant comparative process of data analysis was not, in truth, recognizing the 4 stages themselves (as illuminating as that was). The biggest discovery was realizing something else that the data were telling me. Much of the data contained in fieldnotes, e-mails, and debriefing dialogues pointed to actions and reactions that had taken place among the participants (mostly but not exclusively with my involvement), but out of the classroom (out of scheduled class time). This made me realize that the story of the Language and Culture class was comprised of two distinct yet complementary layers or realms: what had happened **in** the classroom and what had happened **out of** the classroom. Both layers, combined, painted a fuller, more accurate picture of what it meant to teach, learn, and also do research dialogically in this class. Once I began to perceive this, I combed through all the data in the folders once again, week by week, in order to pinpoint and examine the data which pertained to my actions that influenced Greg and his teaching; Greg's actions that affected me and this study; and my interactions with the students out of the classroom that somehow related to what had taken place in the classroom. As I reread and reexamined the data from this perspective, through a different lens, I carried out different readings and levels of analyses within the same pieces of data (which consisted mainly, but not exclusively, of fieldnotes and memos, e-mails, and debriefing dialogue transcripts). All the while, I went back and forth between examining my data and writing new conceptual memos and notes to myself, often-times in several simultaneous tabs (pages).

Representing my analysis and my study

Having reached that point, I began to visualize the format that the finished product would take. I could see that what had taken place in the classroom would need to be addressed in one chapter (Chapter 4); what had happened behind the scenes, or out of the classroom, would become the theme of another chapter (Chapter 6). To me, that seemed like the most effective way to set up and tell the story of this Language and Culture class. Chapter 5 would be the place to hone in on one specific speech event in my data that illustrated a dialogic interaction, through a detailed critical discourse analysis of that powerful instance. And in Chapter 7, I would focus on the students themselves and listen to their voices; their observations, impressions, and critique of the course. Despite their distinctions and particularities, the four chapters would interconnect and complement each other, forming a broader whole.

In this process of inquiry and representation, I found inspiration in Foley's (2002) conceptualization of a "reflexive realist critical ethnography" that foregrounds the constructed, intersubjective, and polyvocal nature of writing critical ethnography. Contemporary critical ethnographers such as Foley have placed value on experimental, innovative, introspective, and intuitive ways of knowing and writing by experimenting with multiple epistemologies and genres in exploring the Self-Other interaction. Foley (2002) described his eclectic approach to critical ethnography:

Unlike Phil Carspecken (1996), I have little interest in developing a foundational scientific method for critical ethnography. I am much more interested in expanding the notion of cultural critique by tapping into the genres of autobiography, new journalism, travel writing, and fiction. Appropriating epistemologies and textual practices from these genres will help us create more public, useful ethnographic storytelling forms. Such a "science" would still subscribe to extensive, systematic fieldwork, and it would speak from a historically situated standpoint . . . [it] would be highly reflexive . . . Among other things, reflexivity involves holding dichotomies like science-humanities/art in a useful tension . . . I am also trying to tap into introspection, intuition, and emotion the way autoethnographers (Ellis & Bochner, 1996, 2001) and ethnic (Collins, 1990) and indigenous scholars (Tuhiwami Smith, 1999) are. Such experimentation . . . makes me an ethnographer who is trying to use common sense, autobiographical experiences, ordinary language, irony, satire, metaphor, and parody to understand everyday life. (pp. 486-487)

In Foley's reflexive realist narrative writing practice, there is room for member checking—one of several standard procedures (along with triangulation of data sources and methods, and collaborative researcher-participant relations) for assessing the validity of a qualitative research study (May, 1994, p.

52). While writing *The Heartland Chronicles* (1995), Foley carried out a community review process in which forty of the key characters were asked to read and critique a draft of the book. The highlights of their favorable and unfavorable commentary were published in the book's epilogue (Foley, 2002, p. 485). Foley's initiative exemplified how writing critical ethnography can become a co-constructed, intersubjective, and polyvocal process.

In order to compose an accessible and useful "reflexive realist critical ethnography," and again putting on my *bricoleur* hat (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 5), I draw on a combination of narrative techniques in Chapters 4, 6, and 7. In this endeavor, I explore experimental, storytelling and introspective genres as well as intersubjective contributions. Where transcribed data from class recordings and interviews appear in Chapters 4, 6, and 7, they do not conform to special transcription strategies or conventions; I basically transcribed word for word what the participants said. These simple transcriptions are fit for my purpose of telling the story (capturing the substance) of the Language and Culture class. However, my approach changes dramatically in Chapter 5, where I draw on theoretical-methodological tools from the field of critical discourse analysis to carry out a detailed analysis of a dialogic speech event. In Chapter 5, the transcribed data conform to technical conventions that represent linguistic, paralinguistic/prosodic, and kinesics aspects. These transcription conventions are needed because my purpose in this chapter is to examine in depth excerpts of classroom discourse in order to characterize a dialogic speech event according to its specific linguistic elements.

Hence chapters 4 to 7 should speak for themselves. From visualizing the chapters to writing them up was a whole new game, one that took my engaging with the data and analysis all over again; a recursive process of inquiry in the best Laurel Richardson (2000) style. Writing this dissertation certainly has become a way of knowing—a method of discovery and analysis—all the way through the last page. Again, the following chapters should speak for themselves.

CHAPTER 4

TEACHING AND LEARNING DIALOGICALLY

This chapter begins to tell the story of the Language and Culture class; one teacher (who is also a researcher), eight students, and one researcher (who is also a teacher) who came together to teach and learn together for nearly four months. It paints a picture of what it meant to approach teaching and learning dialogically in this context, in the classroom. It describes the stages through which the class developed as a learning community, with a focus on the roles teacher and students played, the evolving characteristics and configurations of the class, as well as the relationships that were formed among its members.

The class developed in four subsequent stages, over a period of fifteen weeks:

- Stage 1 (Weeks 1 and 2-- Aug 18-30) – **Laying down the foundation: Setting the community mood**
- Stage 2 (Weeks 3 to 6 -- Aug 31-Sep 28) – **Learning how to dialogue**
- Stage 3 (Weeks 7 to 11-- Sep 29-Oct 29) – **Engaging in critical reflection and self-inquiry**
- Stage 4 (Weeks 10 to 15 -- Oct 19-Dec 3)²⁵ – **Preparing for practice**

This chronological representation is not only helpful but also indispensable in telling the story of this class. However, the boundaries between the stages should not be seen as definite, seamless; rather, in many instances they blurred or overlapped, such as evidenced in the transition between Stages 3 and 4. Also, except for Stage 1, each stage should be viewed not as replacing the previous one, but building upon it while turning the focus to the newly introduced stage. Stage 4, for instance, was a combination of Stages 2, 3 and 4—Learning how to dialogue + Engaging in critical reflection and self-inquiry + Preparing for practice—with a clear emphasis on the latter.

²⁵ There were no classes during Thanksgiving week (Nov 23-27), so this week is not counted into Stage 4.

The story in this chapter is narrated in the third person. Since I was a participant in the story, the character Erika in the following pages is none other than me. I have chosen to write this chapter in the third person rather than the first person because I feel it enhances the story's clarity, consistency and readability.

Stage 1 – Laying Down the Foundation: Setting the Community Mood

An unorthodox beginning

“Let's see... What do you suppose would work here? Any ideas?” Greg asks the class. The students don't offer any suggestions, so Greg continues, “How about a circle format? Can we do that?” Quietly, the students agree. Everyone stands up and starts moving desks around, disrupting the traditional format of desks facing the front of the classroom. Soon a rectangle-shaped arrangement is formed, and the students have a seat again, their eyes fixed on Greg. Laid-back, a twinkle in his blue eyes, Greg is seated facing the students, framed by 8 x 10 portraits of two smiling girls and a younger boy. Greg introduces the class to Addie, Alden, and Lemuel. He tells the class the children's ages and grades in school, and what they like to do and are good at. The students listen quietly. Before anything else, they have learned that their teacher is a proud, loving father of three.

In the first five minutes of the first meeting of this Language and Culture class, Greg has introduced the students to two of his trademarks, which they will witness on numberless occasions throughout the semester. First, his preference for open-ended questions (such as “What do you suppose would work here?”), be it to invite the students' participation in decision making, to elicit and teach content, or to ask the students about their personal interests and tastes. Secondly, his focus on being personal as a springboard for establishing ground with the students in the sphere of cultural backgrounds, values, and lived experiences, while also constantly seeking to tie his personal self to his professional and academic self in a harmonious combination.

Introductions took up most of that first class. Greg went on to talk about his background in undergraduate school, his experiences working as a human rights observer in Guatemala in the 1990's, and his path in the field of education. Greg also had the students share in pairs something “that you would

normally not share, or had never shared in public before;” next he asked them to introduce one another to the rest of the class. Finally, after briefly addressing the concepts of language and culture, Greg handed out what he called a tentative syllabus, but went over just bits and pieces of it with the students, asking them to read it at home.

For homework, the students were also asked to think about ways to conduct the course and put together a working agenda. They received a handout describing three “Discussion Facilitation Roles;”²⁶ the handout contained an invitation: “Let’s design these to be the most useful to us. Here are some *possibilities*,” followed by another open-ended question: “How do we want to operate as a learning community?” Homework included doing a few readings listed in the syllabus as well, but Greg encouraged the class to think about the working agenda first, “at the expense of two of the three readings if necessary.”

The students left class that first day knowing a little about each other and a bit more about their instructor, but barely anything about the syllabus and virtually nothing about course assignments and assessment. As they would learn later, there would be time to take care of those.

“Running the show” with Greg

Greg started out the second class greeting the students warmly and addressing all of them by name. The first class activity that day was writing a “million dollar sentence” about something in the syllabus or the readings that had struck them the most. After a few minutes on this task, Greg asked for volunteers to share what they had written. A few students responded, including Rosanna:

²⁶ The three Discussion Facilitation Roles were described as: 1. Discussion Director – Each student will be expected to prepare and lead class discussions based on the assigned readings for that day. Depending on class size, this assignment may be completed with a partner. On the day a particular reading set is assigned, the Discussion Leader(s) will be the “expert” and will have 30 minutes to present her/his materials/activities to the class. I encourage you to make the presentation as interactive as possible. 2. Counter Voice – This is a chance to critique and/or challenge what is presented in the readings. Take this opportunity to point out what is NOT being addressed by the authors; who’s perspective is missing, silenced, or misinterpreted? Your counter voice must be supported by other readings and/or your own experiences. 3. Context Enricher – contribute background information related to the readings. You may want to extend our understanding through adding information on the cultural, political, or intellectual times in which authors wrote; providing biological information; taking us to websites; and/or sharing other readings from the authors, or related readings by other authors.

- Rosanna: I wrote the quote that she [Sonia Nieto] said from—Is it Paulo Freire?—about “Liberation is a social act. Liberating education is a social process of illumination,” page 19.
- Greg: Okay.
- Rosanna: It just stuck out while I was reading it last night. It sounded like revolution, and I was like, “Yeah! (*Students laugh.*) What about that?”
- Greg: Hmm...I think when I read this introduction, that kind of stands out to me as well, it’s that she’s clearly taking a position that education is a very political thing, not political in the sense of liberal or conservative, but political in terms of the way we choose to carry out ourselves in the classroom has real, significant implications on what kinds of people come out of public schools. People are the vehicles of policy in our democracy, they inform what decisions get made and what policies get written, all of those things, so an emphasis on schooling as political and the choices that we make as teachers have really long-lasting implications, far beyond student performance on tests.²⁷

In his response to Rosanna, Greg introduced the class to another one of his pedagogical trademarks—his practice of building upon students’ answers to teach content. In this case, Greg connected the notion of liberating education introduced by Rosanna to the concept of education as a political act, a theme that he would frequently come back to and expand on throughout the semester.

The million dollar sentence activity was followed by a group activity where students were asked to broadly address the topics of multicultural education, labeling and stereotypes. Greg assigned a prompt to each group of three; he joined one of the groups as a regular participant. A whole class discussion followed the small group work. A spokesperson for each group talked about the use, meanings, and effects of “window dressing” (Nieto, 1999) and labels such as minority, majority, bicultural, people of color, LEP (Limited English Proficiency), Hispanic, and “at risk.” Elaborating upon each spokesperson’s contributions, Greg called attention to the assumptions and ideologies embedded in labels and stereotypes. “How do you wrestle with that stuff? Is that something you need to be aware of as teachers?” Greg asked. Again, personalized, open-ended questions were means to invite students into reflection on the topics, some of which were of a quite sensitive nature.

²⁷ Where transcribed data from class recordings are presented in this chapter, they do not conform to special transcription conventions; they amount to basic word for word transcription of the participants’ speech. Underlying indicates emphasized speech; (...) represents omitted excerpts from the actual classroom interaction.

In the last ten minutes of class, Greg picked up from where he had left in the previous class, turning to the handout on "Discussion Facilitation Roles":

- Greg: Let's talk a minute about how we'll handle discussions. I gave you a handout on that and asked you to think hard about that; for what you'd like to do for the rest of the semester. And it's very easy for me to just say, "Okay, one person's gonna be discussion leader each week," and pass out a sheet and say, "Sign up," right? Or to say, "You're responsible to write a one-page summary for at least 10 of our readings." You know, and that's typically how it's done, right? hmm, and we can choose one of those options, but I would prefer hearing what sounds good to you. And I guess the other thing, the little questionnaire you filled out at the very beginning of last class, revealed as most do, that some folks love group discussion, they love contributing in class, some folks can't stand group discussion and struggle contributing in class, right? So, you know, we can do what most classes do, and ignore that, and just say, "Well, you know, here we are, I'm the teacher, and this is what we're gonna do," or we can say, "What's a decent medium, how do we work that out? How far am I willing to kind of push my own boundaries? Try things, do things I'm not so comfortable with... you know?" Do you have any thoughts?
- Lauren: *(after about 10 seconds)* I don't know about everybody else, but for me, personally, I like doing stuff like this where maybe you kind of get in smaller groups, and kind of talk and that way you can see everybody else's opinion about what was read, or what we're discussing. That way you can maybe broaden on what you had originally in mind, and maybe come back together, and kind of see what everybody in class had to say about it in their own groups.
- Greg: Uh-huh.
- Jenna: And that will help when people don't like to participate in whole class discussion; they can just talk in their small group, and they can have a speaker or something.
- Greg: Uh-huh. I agree. Thanks, Lauren.
- Kristi: Do we necessarily have to have, like, discussion director?
- Greg: No.
- Kristi: No? So we could have classes where you, like, put up questions, and then we get in small groups and discuss.
- Greg: Oh yeah.
- Jenna: I like that.
- Kristi: 'Cause I really enjoy that.
- Greg: One suggestion that I have is to have pairs. So it would be one, two, three, four, maybe. So that would be four weeks out of our schedule, you and a partner would be responsible for deciding that. Okay, we're gonna have four discussion questions, and you're gonna get together and talk about them or
- Kristi: So we would decide the discussion questions?
- Greg: Yeah or
- Student: Oh yeah.
- Rachel: Yeah.
- Greg: Or the activity, it doesn't have to be discussion. What that does... Hopefully, in years past, what it translates into is, "I don't like doing group work, so when I'm leading we're not doing any group work." You know, or when Erika, when it's her week, and she and her partner they do nothing but, you know, drama skits and bringing music or whatever, because that's what they like to do. Hopefully, that provides a solution to what you said, you know, that we can kind of tailor to our own interests when we're

running the show, as opposed to the teacher always running the show and tailoring it to their own interests, which is what we tend to do, because we can, right?

(Students smile.)

Greg: hmm... But that leaves different perspectives untouched, you know, and I think you're exactly right, we end up probably with a good experience, but not as rich, I can't remember what you said, but you know, we don't get as much out of it. Okay, hm... Can we go with that, for a start?

(Students nod.)

Greg: Okay.

In this interaction, Greg invited the students to “run the show” with him, that is, to express their views on how they wanted the course to operate. Greg first evoked the typical, traditional technocratic pattern that ascribes the teacher the role of sole decision maker; then, in order to dismiss it—and thus construct a new approach—he said he preferred hearing the students’ suggestions, wrapping up with an open-ended question: “Do you have any thoughts?” After a few seconds of hesitation, Lauren took him up on his offer, and Jenna and Kristi joined her in sharing their opinions. As Greg accepted and expanded on their suggestions, teacher and students were successful in collectively deciding on a discussion pattern based on pair and small group work. The end result differed quite a bit from the “Discussion Facilitation Roles”—Discussion Director, Counter Voice, and Context Enricher—and other specifics as laid out in the handout which Greg had initially provided the class. However, nothing was lost, quite the contrary. The students’ voices were considered and affirmed, Greg achieved his purpose of producing an initial working agenda, and all looked content.

Building community

In the second week of classes, Greg started out with what he calls housekeeping— going over the plan for the day. He accessed eLearningCommons (eLC, the online segment of the course) to pull up and project his bulleted notes for the day, headed by the topic *Building Community*. Greg read a quote from the screen to the class: “The primary goal at the beginning of a new year or term is to lead students to come together, form a group, and be there for one another (Peterson, 1992, p. 13).” He explained that the quote spoke very directly to his approach to teaching and learning, his own goal of building a community; “a place where students and folks can get together and build relationships where they can trust one

another and grow.” In order to begin accomplishing that, Greg suggested starting out each class with a show-and-tell time during which volunteer students could share something meaningful to them, such as a poem, a song or art work, serving as a window to showcase some of their interests to the others.

The bulleted class notes also had a “5 minute free-write on culture” activity, which Greg asked the students to do next. No sooner had they started jotting down their personal thoughts on the topic than Greg broke the silence, sidetracking to talk about his “hectic beginning of week.” He went on to relate the “horrible, horrendous event” of his ten-month-old dog getting hit by a car the previous night. Following Greg’s brief narrative, during which the class stopped writing to listen closely, Erika asked him how his dog was doing, and Kristi wanted to know what kind of dog it was. The class learned that “Alabama,” the female mutt, was doing “unbelievably well,” having suffered just minor cuts and bruises.

Housekeeping that day also covered an element that had been carried over from the previous week: talking about the course assignments. These assignments included a violation of cultural norm activity, a cultural autobiography, a boundary-crossing field experience, a book review, and a final paper.²⁸ Greg went over the assignments in some detail, describing examples of work done by students in previous classes and handing out the rubrics that would be used for grading, while the students listened quietly.

After forty minutes of housekeeping, Greg switched to commenting broadly on Nieto’s (1999) chapter on the seven characteristics of culture.²⁹ He pointed out that according to research in bilingualism, the academic success of second language learners is closely related to their literacy level in their native language; that the greater the students’ literacy level in their first language, the better they will do academically in their second language. He also commented on the importance of getting to know your students as individuals, at a personal level. In the sequence, Rachel volunteered a personal experience:

²⁸ These assignments are described in the course syllabus (See Appendix A) .

²⁹ The seven characteristics of culture that Nieto (1999) describes are: [culture is] dynamic; multifaceted; embedded in social context; influenced by social, economic, and political factors; created and socially constructed; learned; and dialectical.

Rachel: A girl I worked with this summer – hmm I worked for the camp – she the group that she had one week was really uh like culturally diverse, like a bunch of her girls spoke different languages, like in addition to English. And hm she had them every day, they had a language of the day, and she had the girls, like one of the girls would teach everybody how to count to 8 in that language. And uh so they would count off every day in a different language and kind of learn things about that language. I just thought it was the coolest idea

Greg: Why is that a good idea?

Rachel: It (*hesitates*)

Greg: I agree 100%

Rachel: Yeah I love it

Greg: What are some of the reasons that that's a good idea?

Rachel: I kind of saw some of the girls that were more introverted, like I'm pretty sure that was the way that – there were two uh Japanese girls who came who didn't really speak much English at all, and so they were pretty quiet, but it gave kids like them and other kids who maybe were more introverted because they might be more uncomfortable with American culture because they have another culture that it was more of their home culture, but it gives them a chance to have a leadership role of some sort in the group because they get to say, "well this is part of who I am – part of it at least", and they get to teach about themselves to other people.

Greg: It demonstrates, it demonstrates to the class that you value these things. You value difference, you value some very specific things about different people. It shows, it gives, like you said, students a chance to be an expert and it says a lot to students that you give time for their language and culture to be valued, brought into the spotlight. Definitely.

This interaction illustrates Greg's ability to build on students' contributions and tie them back to the topics being discussed. After Rachel described an instructional strategy used by one of her peers—having English language learners (ELLs) teach native English-speaking students (as well as ELLs from other countries) how to count in their mother languages—Greg posed an open-ended question to her: "Why is that a good idea?" Rachel's hesitation suggests that she wasn't expecting the question, leading Greg to explicitly state that he approved of the idea. Greg's approval in turn encouraged Rachel to provide an elaborate answer which explained that the instructional strategy had served as a means for ELLs to participate actively and teach the other students about themselves and their home cultures. By rephrasing Rachel's answer ("it gives, like you said, students a chance to be an expert"), Greg validated her example and explanation while emphasizing the importance of teachers valuing cultural differences and making time and opportunities to address them in their classes, with their ELLs and native English-speaking students alike.

Towards the end of the class, Greg asked the students to respond to the course readings in the future by bringing either a question they had on the material, a comment to enrich or add to it, or a comment posing a challenge, such as a contrasting point based on research or personal experience. This instructional strategy (question–challenge–context enricher) was taken up throughout the semester, serving as a kickoff for many class discussions.

The Multicultural Me

During housekeeping in the following class, Greg explained his plan to start off with an activity, followed by a deeper look into Nieto’s seven characteristics of culture. For the activity, he passed out copies of a handout titled The Multicultural Me, which displayed several bubbles attached to a bigger bubble in the middle. The students were asked to fill in the bubbles with characteristics or descriptors they identified with.³⁰ As they were finishing completing the handout, Greg asked them to share their responses with the class, if they felt comfortable doing so. Greg himself shared, combining two of his descriptors (musician/guitar player and doctoral student) in a manner that elicited grins and giggles from the students: “My life as a musician has really come alive this past year as a way of avoiding doing my work as a doctoral student.” One by one, all volunteered to speak, except Rosanna and Renae. As each student talked about her cultural descriptors, Greg offered comments on specifics of what they shared, while the others chipped in every now and then, such as in the interaction below:

Lauren: I’ll go.
Greg: Lauren? Sure.
Lauren: I’m a student. Female. I’m from a small country town. I’m a teacher. I have a family. Athletic. I’m Southern. I’m artistic. I’m a Christian and I put European American instead of White.
Greg: Yeah. One of my advisors always puts that. In all my writings I think I identify myself as White. She always changes it to European American. It’s interesting.

³⁰ The following instructions accompanied this handout: “This activity highlights the multiple dimensions of our identities. It addresses the importance of individuals self-defining their identities and challenging stereotypes. Place your name in the center circle of the structure below. Write an important aspect of your identity in each of the satellite circles -- an identifier or descriptor that you feel is important in defining you. This can include anything: Asian American, female, mother, athlete, educator, Taoist, scientist, or any descriptor with which you identify. 1. Share a story about a time you were especially proud to identify yourself with one of the descriptors you used above. 2. Share a story about a time it was especially painful to be identified with one of your identifiers or descriptors. 3. Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence: I am (a/an) _____ but I am NOT/ALSO (a/an) _____”.

Erika: (to Lauren) Is there any specific reason why you prefer European American? I'm just wondering. Because you can, how do you say it, trace back where family comes from?

Lauren: Yeah. It's kind of a pastime in my family, find out where our previous generations have come from. And they found so far back as we were from England, this little place called Nottinghamshire.

Greg: Cool.

Kristi: Robin Hood. (*Students laugh.*)

Erika: Yeah, that makes sense.

Lauren: (to Greg) Yeah. That's why I identify with your teacher.

Greg: Cool.

Among the common characteristics that came up in most of the students' self-descriptions were Southern culture and Christian or church background. When all but Rosanna and Renae had voluntarily shared, there was a brief pause followed by Kristi's friendly yet determined refusal to let them off the hook:

Greg: Ok. Uh... Is that it?

Kristi: (in a pleading tone, while looking at Rosanna and Renae, sitting across from her in the square) You guys didn't go. Go! I'm sorry, I'm making you. (*General laughs.*)

Greg: (smiling) There's a request! (*More laughs.*)

Rosanna: Alright. I'll go. I put down that I was Black American and the other bubble African American.

Greg: Hmm.

Rosanna: Christian, student, an aunt, a daughter. Hmm I guess a story, when it was especially painful to be identified as a daughter, would be the other day when my dad requested me to be a friend on Facebook.

(*General laughs.*)

Student: Nooo!

Kristi: Ahh, man!

Greg: Wow.

Isabella: I'm friends with my mom on Facebook. She didn't ask though.

Kristi: I'm friends with my mother-in-law.

Kristi's push ("You guys didn't go. Go! I'm sorry, I'm making you.") showed that she refused to leave anyone out of the classroom community. Her initiative made a difference in drawing forth responses from Rosanna and Renae, the two African-American students in the class. After Rosanna shared about her multicultural self, Renae also participated animatedly and ended up talking more than anyone else had, describing aspects of her extended family ties, her softball culture, and her sign language culture. Greg wrapped up this interactive time drawing everyone's attention to the point of the activity: "We get to

know a little bit more about who we are, but also I hope it helps illustrate how dynamic and multifaceted culture is. We could all make some gross generalizations about White culture; many of us in here belong to a White culture, and have very, very few similarities in our bubbles, right? So to begin thinking about things like that.” The relaxed and participatory atmosphere felt during The Multicultural Me activity extended into the following task, when students worked in pairs to discuss Nieto’s seven characteristics of culture and produce posters about them. Smiles, giggles, and informal yet content-focused chatting bubbled all around, as the class engaged in serious, quality work.

What foundation was laid in Stage 1?

As a self-identified Freirean educator, Greg sought to resolve the “teacher–student contradiction” (Freire, 1993, p. 56) by creating in the class an environment conducive to the emergence of teacher-students and student-teachers, where all class members could contribute multidirectionally to the teaching and learning process. Greg translated this goal into the rather intuitive practice of approaching instruction on a minute to minute basis. “I have a plan and I have a foundation of where that plan’s coming from. But what happens in the classroom, the way folks respond, what is contributed and shared, and the way folks engage with that really determines the next move for me,” he shared about his teaching practice (in a debriefing dialogue with Erika). Clearly Greg kept his eyes and ears open to the students’ responses as he set the foundation for implementing his plan for the class. His actions during the first two weeks of classes foregrounded three overall characteristics or qualities: relations, structure, and content. These actions constantly intermingled and overlapped, forming a complex, inseparable whole.

In terms of relations, from the outset Greg sought to establish and foster personal connections within the class, both implicitly and explicitly. He did so implicitly, for instance, in sharing details of his personal background and life (and even his dog), calling the students by name, welcoming their introductions and opinions, and staying back after class to give them individual attention and answer their questions. In addition, Greg explicitly set the expectation for fostering caring personal relations among all, by presenting his approach to teaching and learning as building a community where members were encouraged to share a favorite poem, song, or art work—a little about themselves—with the group.

Embedded in the building community metaphor is not just a relational expectation, but also a clear sense of structure. Many of Greg's actions emphasized setting up structure conducive to community teaching and learning, both in regards to the physical setting—the proposed circle arrangement—and the instructional and pedagogical structure. Examples of the latter are Greg's actions of doing housekeeping along with the students, seeking out their opinions on the tentative syllabus and course assignments, and instructing the class to come up with a question, a challenge or a context-enricher—something that each student found meaningful—in response to the readings. A significant instance when Greg's relational actions and structure-oriented actions conflated happened in the conversation he had with the students on how the course should be conducted. Greg related to the students by reaching out to them for their views and input on classroom management. Prompted by Greg's democratic, open-ended questions, the class accepted his offer to share in the decision making process, exemplifying how dialogue can mark the democratic position between teacher and students (Freire, 1998a, p. 117).

In regards to Greg's actions that were explicitly aimed at content, again his practice of posing open-ended questions (such as, "What happens when research and educational policies clash with state law or legal policies?"), as well as offering comments tailored to students' responses, served to elicit and explain content, offering a preview of the delicate themes coming up in following weeks. While Greg's focus in Stage 1 did not seem to be on content per se, a number of important topics were addressed in pair work and whole class activities and discussions, as Greg posed questions and built on students' contributions with his expert knowledge. These topics included labeling and stereotyping; the importance of teachers showing respect and appreciation for the home culture and native language of English language learners; and various characteristics of culture. The Multicultural Me activity illustrates these themes coming together in the same instructional moment; more significantly, it shows Greg's relational, structure-oriented, and content-eliciting actions combining into one interconnected, inseparable whole. The structure he provided (the activity itself) prompted the students to seek to define their cultural selves in order to share them (thus establishing relations) with the class. The outcome of the activity, other than

the teacher and students having fun learning more about one another, was a content-based lesson on the dynamic, multifaceted and context-embedded characteristics of culture.

Therefore, ultimately Greg's goal of building community among teacher and students, as demonstrated in the Multicultural Me activity, was not an end in itself; rather, it served a broader purpose within the context of teaching and learning. Greg firmly believed that when teacher and students engage with each other and with each other's experiences, when they, in his words, "shoot for dialogue," they can engage with the material by filtering it through their experiences, thus learning the content better. So, for Greg, the ultimate goal of content learning and co-construction of knowledge through community building cannot be dismissed. Committed to the course content and to his view of education as a political act, from the start Greg foregrounded "building community that leads towards some sort of critical approach to learning and thinking together."

Another related aspect of the foundation that Greg sought to lay down in this beginning stage pertained to his double-role as a *teacher among teachers* and a *student among students*. This double-role served as a means to mitigate the traditional hierarchical relation between teacher and students. Greg positioned himself as a *teacher among teachers* whenever he posed open-ended questions to the students on the course content in a genuine search for their opinions and contributions on the topics, and when he validated their responses by further elaborating on them. Explicit questions such as "Is that something you need to be aware of as teachers?" reinforced the message he was sending the class. Greg was also a *teacher among teachers* when he invited the class to participate in making decisions on the discussion routine and course management. As for being a *student among students*, this happened when Greg joined in pair or small group work as a regular participant; it also surfaced when he shared his "weakness" of playing music in order to avoid doing his own doctoral student work. Greg's double role as a teacher-student framed and grounded his relational, structure-oriented, and content-eliciting actions throughout the semester.

Stage 2 – Learning How to Dialogue

While sociable, friendly Kristi soon began to take the initiative to speak up, ask questions, and interact with Greg and the class, in the beginning she was the odd one out. Most students only spoke up spontaneously to ask Greg specific questions about assignments due. The students for the most part took on a passive role, participating briefly with a couple of sentences or so when cued by the instructor. In the first few weeks, class discussions would often be reduced to an initial open-ended question posed by Greg, a brief answer by a volunteer student or a spokesperson for a pair or group, and a successive instructive explanation or comment by the instructor. Seldom would the discussion evolve to include follow-up participation from other students on that initial topic.

As the weeks progressed, Greg kept up the practice of the relational, structure-oriented, and content-eliciting actions that he had carried out in the first couple of weeks. His classes fell into a pattern made up of several phases, broadly accounted for as: (a) Introduction, (b) Housekeeping, (c) Instruction, and (d) Coda. These phases amounted to:

- Introduction – During five to ten minutes, Greg and the students would share personal information about self, family, friends or what they had been doing lately. It was also during the introduction phase that the class had the opportunity to bring something for show-and-tell time.
- Housekeeping – In the sequence, Greg would usually devote another five to ten minutes to going over his plan for the day and touching base with students about upcoming readings and assignments.
- Instruction – After housekeeping came the bulk of the class, usually comprised of one to three activities planned out for the lesson. These activities were mostly discussion-based and often accompanied by handouts with bulleted points and questions as prompts.

- Coda – Lastly, depending on time available, Greg would ask the students to write a “ticket out”³¹ during the last five to ten minutes in response to a content-related prompt. Frequently, however, the coda would amount to Greg seeking to wrap up the topic with some final thoughts on what the class had accomplished (that is, the scope of their discussion), and also issuing quick reminders about readings or homework for the following class, as the instruction phase would often stretch all the way to the end of regular class time.

Greg’s teaching approach has been described by a student in one of his previous classes as “informally formal” (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011) to express at once organization and flexibility—while his lessons followed organized, planned out phases, nothing was ever set in stone. “There is rarely a “you’re supposed to” in this class,” Greg said to the students. On a few occasions, Greg rescheduled the due dates for assignments, when he felt the class would prefer that. Also, despite his admitted struggle with time management in conducting a 75-minute class, Greg never seemed in a hurry to complete a phase in the lesson and transition to the next one (except perhaps when attempting to wrap up and finish the class on time). Thus, as he would seek to listen to the students and recognize their needs, he wouldn’t hesitate to switch back to housekeeping halfway through instruction to clarify or further explain something, and he would gladly allow the class extra time for pair or group work if necessary.

Little by little in the first month of classes several students voluntarily began to share personal information with each other and Greg during the introduction phase and whenever the opportunity arose during the lesson. Isabella showed a picture of her kitten from her laptop screen. She also shared a favorite picture book with the class. Rachel said that she had been babysitting during the weekend. Lauren read one of her favorite poems to the class. Kristi, Isabella and Lauren shared their fond thoughts on the Twilight book and movie series. Rachel was delighted that her sister was chosen homecoming queen. Erika shared a poem she had written. When Kristi announced it was her birthday and admitted she hadn’t completed the reading for the day, Greg pointed out his personal policy of being free to do whatever he

³¹ A “ticket out” is a summarizing strategy usually used at the end of class. Students are asked to respond in writing to a particular question or to pose a question or comment related to the class discussion or readings for the day. The text they produce is literally their ticket to leave the classroom.

wished on his birthday. Greg also announced that he had bought his wife “a glamorous, exciting popcorn popper” because that was what she wanted for her birthday. The students seemed to enjoy these laid-back moments. Still, while most students (or at least the most talkative ones) would easily and actively engage in small talk at the beginning of class, their participation was initially more passive during whole class discussions of the readings and other material. As noted above, they would often just respond briefly to Greg’s open-ended questions. If Greg wished for “all participants to engage in selecting, evaluating, challenging, and critiquing course material as well as the process and presentation of that material,” as laid out in the course syllabus, and if he hoped to build a community that would lead to some sort of critical approach to learning and thinking together, it seemed that he would need to figure out a way to teach the class how to engage in dialogue about the course content. “Piggybacking” proved to be useful here.

“Piggybacking”

It was in the sixth class that Greg introduced the students to the “piggyback” strategy. Instruction that day covered the five principles of learning suggested by Nieto (1999).³² Greg proposed two instructional tasks to explore the topic. For the first task, the students paired up to discuss Nieto’s principles of learning using a 4A’s protocol: 1) What assumptions does Nieto make? 2) What do you want to argue with? 3) What do you agree with in the text? 4) What parts of the text do you want to aspire to? The second task—the “piggyback” activity—would sum up and expand on the outcomes of the first task as the group came back together for a whole class discussion. For the second task, Greg passed around scraps of paper and demonstrated how he wanted the students to crunch the paper into little balls that they would toss to the floor in the center of the square of tables. Each student would toss a paper ball each time she was ready to contribute her response. The goal, Greg explained, was for everyone “to go more than just one deep” into the discussion, on their dialogue, by reacting at least once to something that someone else shared, something that sparked their interest. He pointed out that they wanted to start building

³² Such principles are: learning is actively constructed; learning emerges from and builds on experience; learning is influenced by cultural differences; learning is influenced by the context in which it occurs; and learning is socially mediated and develops within a culture and community.

connections, and that each piggyback could be not just a point of agreement, but also a different opinion, a challenge.

As requested, the students paired up for the first instructional activity. Rosanna and Lauren worked together to discuss Nieto's fourth principle: Learning is influenced by the context in which it occurs. When the whole group reunited after some 20 minutes of engaged conversation, Rosanna spoke up for her pair:

- Rosanna: We chose the what we argue with. It's from page 12 and 13. She [Sonia Nieto] had a lot of uh studies and quotes and stuff, so it's hard kind of picking through. But the study that she put in about hmm from Claude Steele, the stereotype stigma³³ hm I don't know, I think we argue with it because I don't know if it was his actual research or the way that she summarized it, it seemed like it left out a lot of stuff. Hm like he used the term "dropped out" but what does that actually entail? Does it entail like people transferring to another school or, you know, having to withdraw for a little bit because of family issues and then coming back, or what? And it doesn't tell like, you know, if the kids ended up going to another school, then it could have been the exact same demographic as the first school, and you know, they did much better in that school or, you know, it's just not going into enough detail you know
- Greg: Well, I think that's the privilege and the challenge of being the author, you get to use the stuff however you see fit and if his study was terrible, clearly you're not going to illuminate that, you're going to use it, you know, so you're right. We don't know those details, and so as critical readers and thinkers, you know, with lots of extra time on our hands, we go to Claude Steel's 1992 publication and think it through. And then come to perhaps the realization that you made that he doesn't define what he means by drop-out, we don't know how many, yeah. That's an excellent point.
- Lauren: I think, and this just popped out at me while she was reading it. I think that another key word in that paragraph would be "still claims". To me a claim is more of an assumption, and it says that he claims that their inability to identify with school, which leads to their not being treated as valuable members of the social community. To me that's just a huge jump to make. He doesn't know why. I mean, that sentence reads to me that he doesn't know why they left but he just assumes that it's because they're not treated as valuable members.
- Greg: Yep.
- Kristi: I didn't write this down but (*crunching her scrap of paper and throwing in into the center of the circle*) whatever.
- Greg: Oh, you don't have to write.

³³ Claude Steele (1992) defines stereotype stigma as "the endemic devaluation many blacks face in our society and schools. This status is its own condition of life, different from class, money, culture" (p. 68). According to Nieto, Steele insists that stereotype stigma is tied intimately to school achievement among African Americans, and that this connection has been vastly underappreciated in explicating academic success or failure. Rosanna's and Lauren's comments were directly tied to the following excerpt from Nieto's text: "he [Steele] found that disadvantage in background preparation is also not a full explanation for poor achievement; for instance, Black students at one prestigious university dropped out even when they had the *highest levels* of preparation. Steele's conclusion was that something else depresses the academic achievement of Blacks at *every level* of preparation. The "something else," Steele claims, is their inability to identify with school, which leads to their not being treated as valuable members of the school community" (p. 13).

- Kristi: *(laughs)* My question is like, how do some students just kind of fall through the cracks? Like my best friend, a friend of hers is on a first-grade reading level, and he didn't finish high school because he couldn't take the graduation test. My question is, how do people like that just completely fall through the cracks in our educational system? I mean, obviously he was cheating his way through, but like, how does the teacher not catch that and not take the time to teach this kid how to read? He's twenty-two years old and he's still sounding out letters. I mean, his parents too, obviously, because his parents didn't encourage him how to read. But like, how did he get through, how did he make it to eleventh grade or whatever grade it is, I don't really know. You know, I need to know, it's bothering me.
- Rosanna: *(picking up a book)* Hmm in my book that I'm reading, *Savage Inequalities*, they talk about how at this one high school, you know, of the like 20% that did actually graduate, only 3.2% are able to read at the level that they're supposed to. Everyone else is at eighth grade and below. So, I don't know, I guess a big part of it is the school you actually go to, and if you're going to a school that doesn't really have the resources and funds and stuff to be able to buy everyone in the classroom books, then you get left behind. And I know the guy that I went to prom with, he played football, and I guess, you know, they helped him along and helped him along, but when it came to the graduation test, he didn't pass it and as far as I know he still hasn't passed it so...
- Kristi: And like, how is he going to pass the GED if he can't pass the high school graduation test?
- Isabella: How big is the school that he went to?
- Kristi: I don't know. It's from Cleveland, Georgia. And he is a White male like *(pause)* I don't think there's any excuse *(smiling)*
- Renae: I think part of it is this: after a certain point a lot of teachers are like, "that's not my problem; the next class can take it," you know? There's only so much that you can do for a child if it's not caught in the beginning, to where he's not still like behind schedule for all the rest of the reasons. If they don't have the resources to take him out of the class and give him help that he needs, then he's just going to be stuck in the class.
- Kristi: It's just sad.
- Rachel: That just made me think, like I wonder, this would be really different, but I wonder how education would change if teachers stayed with students throughout their school experience? If the teacher taught first grade one year, then second grade, then third grade, then fourth grade, I feel like problems like that would be solved if the teacher were to know her students well.
- Kristi: What's that called, grouping or something like that?
- Greg: Looping, looping *(Greg continued explaining and providing examples of looping. This interaction went on for another couple of minutes with further participation from Renae, Kristi, and Rachel.)*

In the interaction above, the participants responded in piggyback to Rosanna, Kristi, and Renae. Rosanna started out criticizing the lack of details in the reading, specifically questioning the obscure sense of the term *dropped out* in the text. Greg, Lauren, and Kristi piggybacked off of Rosanna's input—Greg validated her "excellent point," Lauren pointed out her dissatisfaction with the use of another term in the

text (*still claims*), and Kristi brought up an example of a friend of a friend of hers who dropped out of high school. Kristi also asked a few questions about why such cases occurred. In the sequence, Rosanna, Isabella, and Renae piggybacked in response to Kristi's questions—Rosanna suggested that sometimes students get left behind as a result of schools' lack of resources and funds, Isabella asked a question for clarification, and Renae pointed out difficulties faced by teachers when the problem is not identified early enough. Rachel, in turn, tagged onto Renae's response to suggest the possible benefits of teachers staying with the same group of students for several years. So one way of summing up this piggyback interaction could be: 1) Rosanna brought up the topic of dropping out of school; 2) Kristi offered a real example of a drop-out student to prompt consideration of the reasons for dropping out; 3) Rosanna and Renae suggested reasons for dropping out; and 4) Rachel offered a possible way of addressing the problem.

It should be noted that, truly speaking, this interaction did not lead to deeper consideration of specifics of the initial point made by Rosanna, namely the possible lack of clarity and appropriateness in the use of the term *dropped out* either in Steele's study or Nieto's account of it. Essentially the students' piggybacking took the discussion into another direction, one they could directly relate to, engage with and learn from. What stands out is that having been asked to specifically react and respond to each other in the group, the students were really led to listen carefully to one another. By piggybacking they were having the chance to consider what everyone was contributing and build upon it. Interestingly enough, both Lauren and Rachel noted that something that had just been read or said made them think of something that they in turn shared. In addition, while several students crunched their little paper balls, a few apparently forgot to do so; however, everyone spoke up to respond at least once to what the others said during the piggyback activity, and most if not all the students responded more than once. The class was understanding what piggybacking was all about: not crunching paper, but learning to truly listen to and speak with one another—that is, engaging in dialogue to learn together.

Practicing dialogue

As the weeks went by, the students had more chances to practice dialogue. They proceeded to take turns as discussion/instruction leaders, following the working agenda whose terms had been agreed upon in the beginning of the semester. Some students, like Renae and Isabella, chose to lead discussion on their own, while others paired up for this assignment. None of the discussion leaders ever emulated Greg's action of handing out scraps of paper to have the class respond to one another in piggyback format. However, they planned out instruction that included open-ended questions, experience-based examples, and space for inquiry and discussion in piggyback format. Those were opportunities that the students themselves began to make for building upon each other's contributions and practicing dialogue about the course content.

An example of such an instance happened when Rosanna and Lauren led instruction on the topic of racism and privilege. On the occasion, first Rosanna and Lauren had the students work in small groups to discuss some questions about Peggy McIntosh's (1990) article *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack* and a few readings from the *Rethinking our Classrooms* (2001) book. Rosanna and Lauren passed out handouts with questions: What angers you? What do you want to argue with? What do you agree with in the text? What parts of the text do you want to aspire to? Rosanna encouraged the class to share their thoughts on anything that stood out to them but that might not be covered in the questions. After twenty minutes of small group discussion, the whole class was brought back together and invited to share anything that had raised a flag for them. Rachel, Isabella and Kristi were the last group to speak:

- Rachel: This is the article on White privilege, and she [Peggy McIntosh] has the list of fifty privileges that White people enjoy. And this one stood out to me, it's number 46, that "I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin." I've never really thought about, like, that's not the color of everyone's flesh. It's interesting to read this to me; it takes the world for me and, like, turns it and makes me look at other people's perspectives. I haven't realized that these are privileges before.
- Isabella: I always got the cartoon band-aids so (*Kristi and Rachel laugh*) I didn't notice.
- Kristi: Something that I felt from reading all these little points was that assumption that was made is that, like, I just felt like all White families are the same, as I was reading this, like nobody deals with this. And something that we all have to realize is that no families are the same, and no kids are going to be the same, like, whether they're White or Black, a seven-year-old child can be molested, you know? You just never

- know. And it's something that we really have to think about hmm... A teacher that I'm volunteering with, she's going on house visits to get to know her kids. And I'm just like, every night I go home from volunteering I'm like, "Oh, I'm so gonna do this like her, so gonna do this like her!" Because she really gets an understanding of her children and she develops a relationship with her children's parents. And that just leaves no room for assumptions. And "oh, well, this kid doesn't speak any English, he speaks Korean, we're not gonna do anything about it." No, she's still gonna go visit his family and try to communicate with them. I don't know. I'm excited for her.
- Greg: I'm excited for you. (*Students giggle.*) There have been some interesting discussions over the years about this article and this list of privileges, and both of you make important comments. It's important to think, to recognize that there is incredible diversity within White people, White families, among English speakers, you know, there's a privilege of being a native speaker of English in the United States. Something that she [Peggy McIntosh] doesn't touch on is the fact that there is privilege to speaking standard English in the United States, as opposed to having a thick Southern accent, or being from the rural mountains of Appalachia, or having a harsh accent from New Jersey or the Bronx, and you suffer extreme discrimination in different contexts because of that. At the same time, I think it's important to remember that her point here is that at some level, at some level, there is a commonality that because the color of your skin is white in this society that values whiteness largely over others, there is an inherent easier access to many things. Even if you're poor and speak, you know, Southern White American English, her point is that, her assertion is that there is privilege based just on that. And you know, that's a hard thing to deal with, and it's a hard thing to figure out what to do with.
- Kristi: Yeah, I mean, I completely understand that, what she's trying to say, especially like with when she said the flesh colored band-aids. My flesh color is completely different than Rosanna's and Evelinne's, so like... But there are other things that I'm just kind of like, "What? I don't even understand what she's saying!" Maybe because I need to read the whole article.
- Isabella: There are some things that I agree with and that I know that I've been privileged about that you don't really think about because just, you're like, "that's the way it is," is what White people say hmm... but it's a privilege that you haven't noticed, or taken the time to notice because you're White. And then there are some of these in here that I think have already changed, like there's the one about the cop, like if you get pulled over it's because of your race or something like that, and that's assuming that all cops are White and that they're targeting Black people. And all the times I've ever been pulled over were by people of color. So I mean, like, a lot of these things are different, a lot of them come from stereotypes or believing stereotypes. I don't know, there's some truth to some, and then there's not any in others. We talked about one for the longest time, we couldn't understand about like protecting your children from people that wouldn't like them. We were like, "That doesn't make any sense".
- (*The students search the list of privileges for the number Isabella referred to.*)
- Rachel: I was looking for it, but... I thought it was near the top.
- Isabella: Oh, it's the first one: "I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them." We were like... You said (*looking at Kristi*): "Who wouldn't like children?" (*Isabella laughs*). We took a while to figure out
- Kristi: Yeah, we said that. Well, because I was thinking like as... like a big bad wolf or something like that. Y'all were thinking small, like as in the classroom (*Isabella: uh-huh*), and I was thinking like... you know, why people have a fear to protect their children from, you know, the big bad wolf. And I was like, "What? Who doesn't like kids?"

Greg: Read it again out loud.

Rachel: "I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them."

Isabella: Think about a parent's choice, like about where they send their kids to school or, like, what activities they participate in or which day care facility is the best; by believing in the stereotype that somebody of another race wouldn't like their children, or of different beliefs or whatever. But I couldn't really think of a specific one other than those. If anybody has any idea, more specific...

Greg: Erika, you look like you were going to say something there.

Erika: I'm trying to...I was thinking back to hmm...Remember Soria Colomer, she shared this experience with us in class. Hearing this, it just came to mind, but I'm not sure if I'll be able to phrase it here...hmm the sense I get is that when you're the standard, when you're the norm...Well, first of all, I think I want to say that for her, for Peggy McIntosh, I think if she took the trouble of writing every single one of those 50 phrases it's because they were, I mean, they were not stereotypes for her (*Greg: Right.*), the way I read it. They may be stereotypes for other people who didn't go through that, but what I read in her is that, for her, each and every one of them was something real, something tangible, that she could relate to (*Rachel: Yeah.*), meaningful to her reality. And then, again, I know that, I can totally understand that, you know, White families are different; like worlds of differences. And I think that became sort of clear to me in the multicultural activity, the bubbles, how different we all are (*Greg: Sure.*). But I'm looking here for the similarities. That specific idea, not having to worry about protecting your children from something, because White kids, I mean, because it's taken for granted that they will be well treated wherever they go, anywhere in the world probably. In Brazil, we just love White babies, blue-eyed babies, everyone wants to have a White child, a blue-eyed baby; it's always valued. I have a nephew who was born with blue eyes, now his eyes turned green, Lucas. People, they're drawn to White babies, all around the world, I guess, wherever you are because that's the standard of beauty for many, many cultures, I think. At least it is the standard of beauty in Brazil. So you can count on wherever you are your child will be well treated. That's definitely not the case, at least not from what I've seen around, and probably not just here in the US, with an African American child, or a Latino child, or maybe even an Asian child, who knows. Because that's not the standard, the supreme, let me put it that way, standard of beauty. But back to Soria's example: Soria is a Latino student here in the department, a Ph.D. student, and this was when she was teaching a class. She had an African American student, and they went to a store to buy something, get paints for a project; I think it was cheerleading, I'm not quite sure. The child didn't want to go into the store, and Soria was like, "How come? Why not?" And the minute they stepped into the store, Soria got it. Because no one would talk to them, the White staff, they totally ignored their presence. And when they stepped out of the store, the kid, "You see what I mean? I told you I didn't want to go there." So that's not something, a situation that a White parent would have to worry about. That's what I mean, that's the message I get. It just doesn't cross their mind.

Greg: Since we're out of time...

Erika: Yeah, sorry.

Kristi: We're always out of time. I love it.

As often happened throughout the semester, it was already ten minutes past regular class time when the group got to that point in the discussion, so the dialogue was cut short that day. Nonetheless, the students had the opportunity to begin exploring the sensitive topic of White privilege. Rachel introduced the topic admitting that Peggy McIntosh's text had opened up her eyes to realize that she enjoyed privileges that non-White people did not. Isabella and Kristi, however, showed resistance to the text and argued with its content. For Kristi, the article made the assumption that all White families were the same. As for Isabella, while she started out indicating that she agreed with some of the privileges in the list, she offered no specific examples of those; rather, her focus immediately turned to the "stereotypes" embedded in the text, namely, a point she disagreed with and another point her group had trouble understanding ("I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them."). Interestingly enough, Isabella herself was able to offer a reasonable interpretation for the statement (privilege): "Think about a parent's choice, like about where they send their kids to school or like what activities they participate in or which day care facility is the best." However, Isabella dismissed her own interpretation by referring to it as a stereotype; a "stereotype that somebody of another race wouldn't like their children."

What stands out in this interaction is that the participatory and dialogic approach opened up a space for the participants to name what they argued or struggled with, and to hear from others on the matter. Isabella and Kristi admitted that they couldn't make out the meaning of one of the listed privileges. They didn't do just that, though; Isabella also asked the class for help: "If anybody has any idea, more specific..." Prompted by Isabella's question and encouraged by Greg, Erika shared a few ideas and offered an example that helped clarify and explain the meaning of the privilege. Given the atmosphere of collective respect and the spirit of inquiry that the class demonstrated in addressing the matter, it is likely that the students would have continued stretching their discussion had time allowed. The topic of White privilege was a sensitive one, but the students seemed willing to engage it. Moments such as the one above were leading the class to investigate and reflect on crucial issues.

Developing community: “We want you in the picture”

As learning how to dialogue is inherently a never-ending process, Stage 2 continued throughout the semester, all the way to the last day of classes. Encouraged by Greg to contribute their thoughts, and bonded by the U- or square-shaped desk arrangement that allowed making constant eye contact, the students gradually and consistently began to take on a more active role in their overall participation in class, as they would piggyback or respond to what each other said during discussions. Still true to their individual personalities, some students seemed to prefer to speak more while others chose to listen more; Kristi and Rachel were clearly “active speakers;” Rosanna, Jenna and Evelinne were more the “active listeners,” the quiet type; and Isabella, Lauren and Renae remained somewhere in between, choosing to speak up some days more than others; so did Erika.

As for the seating arrangement, everyone was free to choose to sit wherever they pleased. While a few students seemed to show a preference for one side of the square of desks—such as Rosanna and Lauren, who often sat next to one another—most participants, including Greg and Erika, varied their seats within the square each class. The single exception was Renae, who throughout the semester always chose to sit at one of the far-off corners of the square, closest to the chalkboard. Figure 4.1 shows the seating layout in one of the Week 6 classes. (No two seating layouts were identical during the entire semester.)

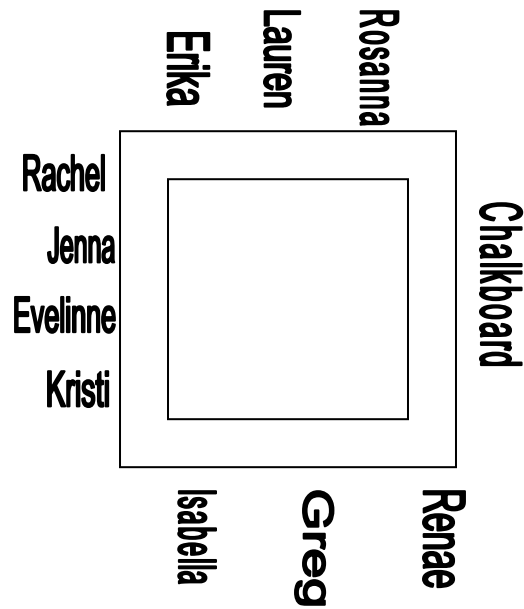


Figure 4.1 Example of a Seating Layout

A closer look at how the students presented themselves and interacted with one another revealed diverse personalities. There was calm and friendly Rachel, who from the start reached out to Evelinne with a kind smile on her face and an interest in learning more about Evelinne's Brazilian background and her experiences in the US. Sometimes when Evelinne sat close to Rachel, Rachel asked Evelinne questions about her life in Brazil and her impressions on the US. Evelinne was unsure of how to properly express her thoughts in English and how to behave in an unfamiliar context, so she did not talk much during class, and she kept to herself. However, she appreciated Rachel's interest and enjoyed answering her questions one-on-one. Rosanna did not usually take the initiative to start a conversation with those seated nearby, but she would always make an effort to answer back in Portuguese when Erika greeted her in the foreign language. Isabella and Lauren would often engage in conversation with whoever was seated next to them. Jenna often wore a shy smile, and was probably the quietest of all; however, her friendly eyes communicated interest and attention to what was going on in class. Willing to interact and engage with all the others was bubbly Kristi, a social butterfly who constantly took the initiative to approach whoever was around. Her presence filled the classroom. And there was Renae. Renae and her look—her

deep penetrating look. Renae would usually enter the classroom some five to ten minutes after the class had started and walk straight to her chosen seat at one of the far-off corners of the square. Renae had a loud laugh, which she sometimes let out in the middle of class discussions. Renae did not smile easily, though.

Kristi noticed Renae. Sometimes Kristi would sit over by Renae, or sit closer to Renae's side of the square of desks. One day Kristi made sure that Renae joined the class for a picture. The photo was Rachel's idea. "Since we're all here, can we get a picture of the class?" Rachel suggested one day right after class. Everyone agreed, but Renae jumped in and announced that she would take the picture. Rachel replied that she had thought of just setting the camera on one of the tables; "We want you in it," Rachel said to Renae. Renae hesitated, but Kristi immediately stepped in and insisted, "Renae, you need to be in it!" So Renae gave in and joined the group for the picture. On other occasions, Kristi would come over to Renae to say that she liked the clothes Renae was wearing or to ask her where she had bought those "cute shoes" she had on. This would often happen right after class, as the students were chatting with each other and getting ready to go. Kristi once said, "I like how everyone's not in such a hurry to leave, you know. We all have, like, a little bit of love, a little love for each other." Although the class ended officially at 12:15, more often than not the students would linger in the classroom until the teacher and students for the 12:30 class would start coming in.

As for Greg, he would sometimes call on individual participants whenever he read in their body language and facial expressions (a gesture, a look, a furrowed brow, etc.) that they might wish to participate with a question or comment. "Jenna?" "Lauren?" "Erika?" Greg would call on individuals in an interrogative tone, adding, "Do you want to say something?" Greg always addressed students by name, greeted them warmly and naturally (even those who walked in late), noticed their absence, and informed the class of the reason for the absence when he knew it. Greg showed his willingness to give each student the individual attention they might need mostly in the ten minutes right after class, when they would come up to him to ask questions and exchange ideas about something that had been discussed or about

forthcoming assignments. Renae was the most faithful presence in these individual sessions; there was hardly a day she wouldn't stay back to talk to Greg about some homework project or activity.

In terms of course content, Stage 2 also coincided with the introduction of a number of readings on complex, sensitive topics, such as White privilege, structural inequality³⁴ and its connections to poor academic achievement, meritocracy, tracking, racism, and the effects of segregation and desegregation in schools. In one lesson, Greg presented a series of slides that showed racial statistical breakdowns of economic gains/income, educational achievement, and prison rates, to name a few. The statistics pointed to the overwhelming disadvantage of the African American and Latino populations. On more than one occasion, Greg admitted that engaging with such topics was not easy:

Greg (*to class*): It's hard to read Nieto at times as a White educator. She says very directly that often White educators struggle with understanding what it means to have been othered or on the receiving end of structural discrimination or racism or whatever. It's hard to read her with an open mind and try to figure out what I can learn from what she's saying and think through it. That requires letting my defensive filter down a little bit so that I can think a little more clearly. But it's hard, it's hard...

Still, Greg kept on inviting the students to "stretch their thinking" on those complex topics because he viewed them as a necessary means to his end of teaching the class that education should be viewed as a political act:

Greg (*to class*): I think a part of her [Nieto's] message is that issues of racism, issues of homosexuality, issues that are taboo and very difficult and issues that marginalize certain types of people based on social categories are not discussed and are not dealt with. And so as a result, that perpetuates a particular politics. Politics not in the government sense of liberal, conservative, republican, democrat. Politics in the sense of the way we approach the world, right? Choosing not to address things that exist and marginalize people furthers a position. There's a famous rock line from the band Rush: "If you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice," right? Same thing; by ignoring a particular presence of something, you're taking a position on that.

³⁴ Drawing on Nieto, the students offered the following definition for structural inequality: "Structural inequality is a problem in the U.S. because there is institutionally sanctioned discrimination in access to educational resources in the U.S. Sometimes this is active, sometimes it's passive, and they just allow discrimination to go on. The discriminatory and racist ideas are subtly embedded in the minds of policy makers and law makers. That's how structural inequality manifests itself in the U.S."

As a result, as the students were learning how to interact and dialogue with each other, they were also encouraged to engage in critical dialogue with the course material and with their own selves. As they entered Week 7, the group was at the threshold of the next stage in their development as a class: Engaging in critical reflection and self-inquiry.

Stage 3 – Engaging in Critical Reflection and Self-Inquiry

While the students had already shown obvious signs that they were, as Greg would say, “going more than just one deep” into the course material and class discussions, some students gradually began to make comments and ask questions that indicated a still deeper level of inquiry and self-reflection—critical “why” and “how” questions. Rachel was one of the first to raise such questions in class. “Why did Nieto even write this book? What is her purpose in writing this?” Rachel asked Greg, quite out of the blue, while transitioning between classroom activities one day. She continued, “I feel like she [Nieto] gives us a lot of general stuff about studies, but it doesn’t convince me that the study is valid. You’d have to do so much more reading to be able to agree or disagree with her, like reading the sources and studies she cites.” Rather than offer Rachel a clear-cut answer, Greg suggested that it would be a good thing for her to flesh out her thinking about Nieto’s purpose in writing the book, to continue thinking about that. And Rachel did. In a ticket out following Greg’s presentation of statistics on structural inequality, she wrote: “These data are staggering. Reading Nieto’s book, I didn’t take it seriously because I didn’t know where she got her data, and her tone or something about her writing made it seem like she’d just take data from anywhere to prove her point—ie, she seems over-zealous to me. BUT. The data Greg showed us today was crazy—was overwhelming. Structural inequality based on race should not exist. It’s bad. And I’m stuck with no solution.” In the same vein, Lauren wrote in a response letter that Greg read in class: “How do we save each other from being another statistic? How do we create equality for all in a capitalist society without anyone being treated unequally? How do we fight the reality of structural inequality?”

Thus, in the midst of all the sharing, camaraderie and fun that were taking place during moments of informal chatting, show-and-tell time, and class discussions and instructional activities, there was also a growing sense of restlessness, an evolving spirit of inquiry, and an intensified engagement with crucial

questions. In Stage 3, two activities made room for and encouraged the class to delve into critical reflection and self inquiry. One of these activities was an oral midterm evaluation conducted by Greg, where the class was invited to engage in reflection and dialogue about the management and development of the class and Greg's own dialogic pedagogy. The second activity was the cultural autobiography assignment, which prompted the students to continue investigating their own selves while also deepening reflection on the course content.

Assessing the course: “What’s working/not working so far for you in this class?”

At the end of Week 7, Greg sent the students an e-mail that somewhat evoked an invitation he had made earlier in the semester, for the class to “run the show” with him: “It is mid-semester after all, and what better time to talk through how we’re all experiencing the class. Please come prepared to dialogue about what’s working, what’s not. What does it mean to dialogue? Have we engaged in dialogue in this class? What examples can you identify? What are you learning and how do you know? What are some underlying tensions in our class that need to be discussed and aired out? When do we teeter off into “never-never land” in our discussions?” To help the class prepare for the task, Greg asked the students to read a paper authored by him and Erika (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011) that contextualized some of those questions within the specific case study considered in the paper. More specifically, the manuscript described how “Amy,” a student of Greg’s in the former study, had talked about her experience in that previous class: “I think some people in the class know they can get away with not doing work because we are just going to have a discussion that teeters off into never-never land.”

All the students attended class on the day of the midterm discussion. Greg passed around a handout containing the same questions he had e-mailed the students and a description of a recurrent struggle he faces in his teaching: “how to maintain a balance between making space for students to bring their individual experiences into the class AND keeping a focus on the content of our learning—a delicate balance between the two, as one constantly informs the other.” He addressed a few words to the class and again invited them to share their views on the matter. Kristi, Renae, Lauren, and Isabella spoke up. For both Kristi and Renae, “Amy’s” experience of classroom discussions teetering off into never-never land

did not apply to their context. Kristi said that she tried harder in this class to do the readings because she wanted to be able to contribute and understand everyone else's points of view. Hearing the other students' experiences and responses to the readings was helping Kristi rethink her own perspective and learn more. For Kristi and Renae, everyone's personal experiences were tying to the class discussions and course content. Renae said that Greg, Erika and Rachel were "lovely people who had a lot to pass on," and she felt it was important to learn through sharing personal experiences in a class dealing with language and culture and how it shapes and affects our classrooms. In the sequence, Lauren noted that Greg's approach was making her love and respect multicultural education because Greg valued his students and created a positive classroom environment where everyone's opinions were valued and encouraged.

In an attempt to make room for different opinions, Erika highlighted that dialogue also entails dissonance, divergent opinions, and that students should feel free to speak up any thoughts they might have. Isabella, in turn, pointed out that she enjoyed the class and agreed that sharing experiences is relevant to learning, but she felt a little like "Amy" in the earlier study. Isabella explained that she never felt that their discussions went off into never-never land, but at times she missed not sitting in a regular class setup (with desks facing the front of the room) and she preferred learning in an environment that incorporated more approaches to presenting content than group work and discussions. Isabella ended saying, "I'm probably the only one here that thinks this, but..." Kristi restated that in this class everyone's points of view and experiences were relevant and ended up tying back to the content. Greg said that he appreciated Isabella's comment, as it reminded him that teachers tend to teach the way they like to learn, but people experience learning differently. Erika observed that for her the circle arrangement could be constraining at times, adding that since there is no formula for teaching, teachers need to figure out what works for them along the way by listening to their students and adjusting their teaching to what makes sense in specific contexts. Greg wrapped up the discussion asking the class to remember to think about and write down what they were learning from this class, as this process might lead to other questions and notes to be shared. Later that day he also e-mailed the class: "Thanks for the good discussion this afternoon! I really enjoyed it and hope we can continue to assess ourselves along these lines."

Cultural autobiography: “I am what makes me, me”

The cultural autobiography assignment took The Multicultural Me activity to a whole new level. For the cultural autobiography, each student was expected to examine her own attitudes, beliefs, cultural values and behaviors in order to describe how she came to be who she was at that point in her life, and what influenced her value systems and how she viewed her culture. This project was designed to facilitate students developing a relational perspective across personal experiences, social norms, and course readings that introduced critical views on culture, learning, privilege, equity, and related topics.

Earlier in the semester, in Week 3, Greg had already highlighted the relevance of this assignment within the context of the course:

Greg (*to class*): It’s really the heart behind why we do, in this course, we begin these I Am poems³⁵ and we work towards the cultural autobiography. If your goal is to teach (...) whether we choose to be ESL teachers or not, this nation is changing toward a more diverse place. Period. Culturally, linguistically, ethnically, racially. No longer is it Black, White, Hispanic. You know, it’s incredibly complicated in terms of biracial, in terms of all of these things (...) To be a successful educator whose charge is to prepare young people to go out and be successful in this nation, you have to have given some deep, sustained consideration of who you are culturally, and how you understand your place in teaching as a result of that (...) thinking of and reflecting on who you are culturally and how that has changed. That’s an incredibly important step in becoming competent and skilled and at least open to working with culturally and linguistically diverse kids and families. Yeah. Some of us may have had extremely diverse experiences growing up in our schools, in our communities, but most of us really haven’t. And then to think about going into public schools that more and more will look like that, it’s certainly a challenge.

Deliverance of the projects spanned four weeks, with each presentation lasting 20 to 30 minutes, often followed by a questions and answers session with the class. Most students formatted their work as Power Point slides that contained text interspersed with photos of family members, friends, and memorable places; some students added an artsy piece—a short video, a collage, a CD with favorite songs. Several students included their I Am poems in their presentations. Regardless of their individual (introvert or extrovert) personalities, all students took the opportunity to speak up and share aspects of

³⁵ “I Am” poems are personal poems with each line often starting with the phrase “I am” or “I am from.” The goal is for the author to describe in their own words who they are and what’s salient to their cultural identity. See <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/poetry.html> for information and lesson plans.

who they were personally and culturally, and the influences and challenges in their lives. They were willing to be vulnerable and share both happy and difficult elements of their life experiences, demonstrating their trust in the class as a supportive community that could laugh and cry together. They also used the opportunity to discover, face, and question some of their own biases, misconceptions and preconceived notions. The participants were impacted, one way or another. Furthermore, the ties among them were strengthened.

Through this project, all came to hear from a teary-eyed Kristi that as a young child she had been prematurely diagnosed with a learning disability (ADD), and her parents were forewarned of a grim future for her, devoid of access to college. Currently a master's student on the Dean's List, Kristi wants to help children who have to face what she did. "As a future teacher, IEP specialist, school counselor, or family counselor, I want to put a stop to people who make assumptions about children and their learning disabilities before really getting to know the child," Kristi affirmed. Also fighting back her tears, Jenna for the first time in her life spoke in public about her difficulties dealing with the effects of her parents' divorce and her father's absence in her life. Recognizing that these challenges have helped mold her character, Jenna declared her passion for teaching as well as her commitment to seek to meet her future students where they are, valuing their inherent potential regardless of personal circumstances and backgrounds.

Renae's detailed presentation foregrounded the axes of family, education, religion, sports, and arts in her life. Renae started out saying, "I really didn't want to do this project...hmm...but I did." Pretty soon, though, she was speaking enthusiastically about the several elements of her culture, with a thorough description of her large, close-knit African-American Baptist family. She also spoke highly of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program that she attended in high school along with students from diverse backgrounds. In regards to the education system in the U.S., Renae posed a critical question: "Why is it necessary to categorize the curriculum as multicultural when it discusses minority groups?" She further pointed out: "I feel like education as a whole should just be education, and all of these things

should be embedded into education. It doesn't have to be necessarily an emphasis on "Oh, this is going to be the multicultural section." I don't know, I just kind of feel like that secludes the students, you know?"

When Rosanna's turn to present her work came around, she hesitantly started out informing that her presentation would only last five minutes, adding that she hated talking in front of people and hated talking about herself. This feeling did not prevent Rosanna from treating the class to her powerful I Am poem, which she read in a calm voice:

I Am Me

I am from the land of "Muli Shani" and "Bwino"
By way of rockets and outer spaces
I am from carrying the weight of the world on our shoulders
Without showing any traces
I am from keeping from crying,
By hiding behind the smile on our faces
I am from Nancy and Reuben to Louise and James
I am them, because I carry their name
I am from frozen kool-aid and bicycle shorts
Running in sewers and chasing icee trucks
"I better be home before the street lights come on."
I am from belts and shoes, fly swatters and switches too,
It hurts not to follow the rules
I am from Glenda and Stetson,
Friday night fish fries and pizza and arguing in the streets
I am from bumps and bruises, hoses and jail cells
I am from burnings and lynchings
And not to mention songs that lift the spirit
By 'Telling it on the mountain' and 'We shall overcome' all obstacles set forth
I am the product of many strong branches that make up my family tree
I am from hurt, pain, and tragedy
But above all else, I am from triumph
I am what makes me, me

In the sequence, Rosanna projected some Power Point slides with pictures of members of her family. Still cautious, she advised: "There is a slide before this one, but I haven't decided if I'm going to show it or not. I'm still trying to work my way up to it. Maybe I will, maybe I won't, I don't know." No sooner had Rosanna gone over all the slides and wrapped up her presentation than Rachel gently asked:

Rachel: Did you decide not to show us the first slide?
Rosanna: Yeah.
Rachel: (*softly*) I wish we could see it.
Rosanna: I'll show it.
Greg: (*to Rachel*) Thanks for asking.

Rosanna pulled up the first slide: “Okay. This is the slide that I was going to show. That’s me, and that’s my mom and my brother. They both passed away.” As if invigorated by Rachel’s interest, Rosanna went on to describe the format of her project in more detail, a CD booklet that combined text with some of her favorite songs. She explained that she picked one of the songs, a sad one, to go along with the part where she wrote about her mother’s passing. She continued explaining her rationale for including each song in her cultural autobiography. Rosanna ended up speaking 15 minutes.

From Evelinne, who was not required to complete this assignment, came a creative surprise—a video merging photos, images, soundtrack and text that described her fears as a foreigner in the United States: “Going to McDonald’s, answering the phone, riding the bus, talking to someone... Things that terrified me for a long time. Some people told me that you America wouldn’t like me, just because I’m not North American. I’m a South American. But it seemed like being from the south I fell short of your expectations. *That* America wasn’t quite as good for you.” Evelinne further explained how things had changed when she built up the courage to get out of her shell: “When I did get out, I decided to analyze you carefully. For the first time I looked at you in your eyes as I had wanted to. I’ve seen poor people begging for food. I’ve seen the social differences between races. I’ve seen your beautiful flag waving everywhere. I’ve seen things that make you proud and I’ve seen things that embarrass you.” As a result of this newfound awareness, Evelinne could now declare: “America, my fears are gone. I know that in 6 months it is impossible to get to know a country, a society, years and years of history. But I’ve been comparing you with my country all these months, and today I can make my own concepts about you. I myself can paint a picture of you. Believe me, your troubles have made me like you even better. I don’t have a perfect image of you. I don’t have a bad one either. I just believe you now.” The class enjoyed Evelinne’s presentation and praised her work. “That was so good!” exclaimed Rachel and Kristi. “Can we have a copy of your video?”

For Lauren, doing the cultural autobiography project was a difficult, challenging task that entailed addressing an important question: “where do I hope to be in the future, and how does my past and present shape me as a future educator, and who am I as a cultural being.” Her presentation took the form of a

colorful poster board collage (Figure 4.2) that incorporated themes from volumes 1 and 2 of the *Rethinking our Classroom* series, such as unsung heroes, the power of words and the power of the past in molding and shaping education in the future. Lauren described her work to the class: “This is where I hope to be in the future. It’s six different collages, but you kind of can’t tell where one ends and one begins, which is I think symbolic in a way. And they all talk about our lives as educators, or mine, and the struggles that I’ve had to face as a person, as a cultural being. And I’ve struggled with some of this because I didn’t know what to put on here, and a lot of it goes against my beliefs. There’s things on here such as, you know, homosexuality and implementing multicultural education, which is what all of this is, implementing it into the classroom. Some of these I have already overcome; some of them I haven’t. It’s tolerance; to me this collage is tolerance; it’s how to overcome it and how to find the link between your culture and the cultures that you come in contact with as a teacher.” As Lauren admitted her struggles and confronted her biases, she also affirmed her wish to implement multicultural education in her teaching practice, “to where that my classroom is the safe haven, so there can be equality for all.” For Lauren, the crucial question was: “How do we implement all of this? How to do that [in the context of] the state-mandated curriculum that we have today?”

In sum, the cultural autobiography project opened up dialogic spaces where cultural influences were acknowledged, personal stories and struggles were shared, biases were faced and confronted, and critical questions were raised. Often times, certain aspects of the students’ experiences and questions would generate further discussion in the follow-up questions and answers session; at other times, there seemed to be no time or opportunity to do more than barely touch the surface of questions to which there



Figure 4.2 Lauren's Collage

were no easy, straightforward answers anyway. Nonetheless, by being raised and considered, those questions were named, so their importance was recognized, and it was not unusual for those ideas to be picked up again and dealt with in future classes.

One specific question, however, was not dropped and left to another class; it was dealt with on the spot and to the fullest. A question that Renae asked Rachel following Rachel's cultural autobiography presentation—"Can you explain the dog situation again? Like, the guard dog?"—it could have been easily dismissed. That is not what happened, though. Renae's question led the class to deal with an apparent misunderstanding and breakdown in communication; it triggered a "moment of crisis" (Fairclough, 1992a) that developed into a powerful, transformative dialogic experience for the participants. The discursive event that took place on that occasion is analyzed in depth in Chapter 5.³⁶

Stage 4 – Preparing for Practice

During the last month of the semester, the learning community in the Language and Culture class reached its greatest development. In this final stage, the class had the opportunity to continue learning and growing together while deepening their dialogue with Nieto's text and considering applications for their future teaching practice.

Learning and growing in community

"Are you sure?" Rosanna replied when Greg reminded the class that the book reviews were due the following week. The students giggled and exchanged telling glances. "What are you telling me? What's on your mind?" Greg asked. "Lauren?" he prodded. "I'm working on it [the book review]," Lauren answered in the blink of an eye. The others burst out laughing. Then, one by one, they began to speak up. They wanted more time to work on their book review assignment. For 15 minutes, the group democratically negotiated changes in the schedule for the following two weeks. The negotiation resulted in pushing back the book review presentations while still meeting the original content goals for that period. Renae promptly volunteered to write and send the class an e-mail with the revised schedule.

³⁶ So as not to break with the chronological sequence of this narrative, at this point I suggest that the reader skip to Chapter 5 and read it before continuing Chapter 4. After reading Chapter 5, the reader can resume this chapter from Stage 4: Preparing for Practice, on this page.

During Stage 4 in the class development, it was not unusual for moments of spontaneous participation in a safe environment to happen, yielding effective and satisfying results for all, such as in the moment described above. By then, the classroom community had grown stronger, having been through laughing and crying together, having faced a crucial critical moment (see Chapter 5), and having learned to respect each other's personalities and boundaries. In previous weeks, Kristi, Rachel, Isabella, Lauren, and Erika had volunteered to share something about themselves and their interests during show-and-tell time; all (including those who didn't share during show-and-tell) had gone into detail about their personal lives and histories during their cultural autobiography presentations. It was now time for the class to continue developing their potential as a learning community, and to do so recursively, in the ongoing process of getting to know each other even better as members of the same community, showing they cared for one another, feeling free to speak up or not—all the while engaging their lived experiences and knowledge with the course content.

The students were having fun too. They would break into laughter over any number of reasons: Lauren's "suspicious" "I'm working on it" response to Greg; Kristi's comment that she (Kristi) looked like a frog because she didn't have a neck; Greg's confession that "When I first read bell hooks as an undergrad, there was no hope for she and I..."; Erika's admission that she "wanted to die" whenever she had to mispronounce one of her surnames (França) in Portuguese so that Americans could make sense of it in English. While the laughs didn't last long, the cheerful, spontaneous atmosphere did, reaching beyond the end of the class. One day, no sooner had the lesson ended than Renae approached a couple of students obviously eager to share some exciting news:

Renae:	I got into an accident.
Jenna:	Like a car accident?
Kristi:	What?
Renae:	No. A bike accident.
Jenna:	Oh.
Kristi:	You were riding your bike?
Renae:	<i>(nodding)</i> And I didn't have a helmet on. And my sister almost ran into a tree, and she didn't have a helmet on (<i>Renae laughs</i>). She was trying to stop 'cause I was in the middle of the road.
Jenna:	You, like, wrecked in the middle of the road?

Renae: Yeah, it was not the road, it was like a hill that had trees on it, and I was talking on the phone. (*Renae laughs*) (*Jenna laughs too*)
Kristi: How are you talking on the phone while you're riding your bike?
Renae: (*indecipherable answer*)
Kristi: Oh, OK.
Jenna: OK.
(*indecipherable chatter*)
Kristi: Renae, careful. (*Renae laughs*) See you on Thursday.
Renae: Bye.

Whereas earlier in the semester it was Kristi who would take the initiative to approach Renae, now Renae would also come up to Kristi to strike up a conversation. And, during class, Renae began to smile more. Sometimes. From her usual seat at one of the far-off corners of the square of desks, along with her usual intense, penetrating trademark look, Renae began to open up a beautiful smile with perfectly lined up sparkling white teeth. Renae's smile made her face glow. Renae's loud laugh now had a gorgeous smile to go along with it every now and then.

How do you implement a multicultural, critical pedagogy?

Throughout the semester, Greg had provided the class with plenty of time and opportunities to build community, and it paid off. The students interacted with one another, engaged in practicing dialogue, investigated their own cultural selves, and deepened reflection on the course content. Now that the learning community was solid, Greg could prioritize breadth and depth in the delivery of instruction. On the one hand, Greg made more opportunities to offer the class instruction on the complex topics and issues pertaining to multicultural education. During housekeeping, not only would he go over his plan for the day, but he also began to suggest titles of relevant books and magazines and to access websites that could serve as rich resources for the students in their prospective teaching practice. Also, since he was left with the discussion leader role for most lessons in Stage 4, he planned out instruction that made room and time for the students' contributions and his own detailed feedback and some content delivery. On the other hand, echoing a question first raised by Lauren on the implementation of multicultural education, Greg posed a recurrent question to the group: "How can a teacher carry out a critical pedagogy in the classroom? How DO you implement a multicultural pedagogy?" The class engaged in searching for

effective answers to this question over a number of lessons and through several activities, which included revisiting the course readings for practical ideas, watching a video on Critical Pedagogy (<http://freireproject.org/content/critical-pedagogy-tv>), and researching the Teaching Tolerance website (www.teachingtolerance.com). As an outcome, class discussions became longer and deeper—by stretching their thinking, teacher and students were extending their active participation and dialogue.

For example, in order to cover the topic of critical pedagogy, Greg planned instructional activities that spanned three classes. First, he briefly introduced the topic:

Greg (*to class*): We talked a lot Tuesday about teaching from a critical perspective. Being a critical pedagogue involves making a specific decision about the goal of teaching, right? You're not teaching for academic success as the end goal, you're teaching towards helping folks make better decisions towards social justice, towards identifying, understanding and acting on inequitable power relations. And so there's a clear stance identified in the way you choose to teach, and that stands in stark contrast to a non-critical approach to teaching (...) What do you think? What is an appropriate role for a teacher to play? How will you approach that when you have your own classroom?

That same day, he asked the students to write down definitions for critical pedagogy, based on what they had taken away from the weekly readings. In the next class, he played a fifteen-minute video titled "Why Critical Pedagogy?" available from The Paulo and Nita Freire International Project for Critical Pedagogy website (<http://freireproject.org/content/critical-pedagogy-tv>). The video and the weekly readings served as food for thought for the students to write a ticket out in response to the questions: "How can a teacher carry out a critical pedagogy in the classroom? What examples can you think of from the texts we've read for this class? Come up with at least one concrete example and list a possible challenge you would expect for trying to do this."

The next class Greg started out housekeeping providing feedback on the students' ticket outs:

Greg (*to class, checking his notes*): The first thing I want to do is share some of the comments from what I got to read from you guys last week, your thoughts on critical pedagogy. I tried to compile some of that stuff to share it with you. I guess there was a combination; some folks talked about general things that we can do, and also some very specific, concrete suggestions. So things that were shared were the role and the importance of creating community, creating a safe space in the classroom that enables things like frank and candid discussions, dialogue. Almost everybody mentioned questioning—encouraging students to question information, curriculum, texts, assignments, teachers. And so I think in order for that to happen you've got to have a particular environment within your classroom, otherwise, number one, it either doesn't happen or

it's not very productive—it's questioning that in many times is aggressive and resistant and doesn't lead to any positive outcomes, perhaps. Let's see, direct question, challenge... The role and the potential of the arts. One of you, actually Renae wrote about the potential of the arts. A couple of others referenced the poetry and the poems as potential for social change, things like that. So the arts can be wonderful outlets, not only to make class engaging, interesting, but it provides another way for students to show their knowledge, their strengths, their culture, their language. Some of those things that you may never get at in discussion or reading or whatever may all of a sudden emerge if you allow different modalities—song, art, whatever. So that was cool, I appreciated that. And then several of you noted very specific things: the mix between teaching curriculum, content, the standards that have to be taught, but doing it in creative ways; you mentioned the maps, you mentioned thinking about internment camps from multiple perspectives, those kinds of things. Renae's writing really reminded me of Maxine Greene's work. Do you guys know about Maxine Greene? She has been cited as the most influential American educator and philosopher since John Dewey. That's a pretty significant statement. She's got to be in her eighties, maybe her nineties now. And she is all about imagination, the arts and creative inquiry—the combination there.

As a follow-up, the class received a lesson on Maxine Greene's biography and influential work, as Greg pulled up her website (www.maxinegreene.org) and spent a few minutes browsing it and drawing attention to aspects of her life and work. Greg's multimodal approach to covering the critical pedagogy topic was effective for a number of reasons: 1) It provided a balanced lesson-to-lesson sequence to content instruction and development; 2) It allowed the students time and space to learn about a complex topic they were not familiar with; 3) It invited the students' written suggestions of applications for practice, which were publicly valued and validated; 4) It created an opportunity for all to learn from each other's suggestions and ideas; and 5) It made room for the introduction of new but related content embedded in Maxine Greene's website.

Alongside planned instructional activities that yielded spelled out applications for practice (such as the activities in the critical pedagogy lessons), the students' own experiences also helped address the question of how they could go about carrying out a critical pedagogy in the classroom. Learning the course content continued to be mediated through the students' own personal and at times intimate and painful lived experiences. These spontaneous moments led to profound lessons and reflections as well. That was the case when Rosanna shared a striking school experience of one of her family members:

Rosanna: Essentially a classroom should be like a community. So I was telling Isabella about my little cousin who got in trouble a few weeks back, because this little boy in her class touched her arm and the other little boy told the little boy not to touch her

because he was going to turn black; and that he hated Black people and wished that Black people would die. So my little cousin stabbed him in the arm with a pencil. hmm yeah... So I just felt like the teacher

Rachel: What, she got in trouble?

Rosanna: Yeah.

Rachel: Did they?

Rosanna: Hmm, I don't know if the other little boy did or not. But I was telling Isabella that I felt like it was, you know, a learning opportunity for the entire class, and the teacher never, you know, took the time out to turn it into a learning opportunity, so... yeah.

Greg: How old?

Rosanna: They're in second grade.

Greg: I have a son in first grade and the next oldest is in fifth grade. I think you're exactly right. The issue here is that this is a glaring, glaring opportunity in your face to deal with how the way we perceive race and prejudice, you know, has very real consequences in the classroom, in all kinds of situations, and I don't know any of the details of the event, but I can relate it to other things that I've seen in classrooms. And just even as a parent or adult in society, it's so much easier for us to jump on the fact that we now have a violent and medical situation to deal with, that requires consequences and, you know, it's much easier to say, "Oh, my gosh! We've got to deal with this. You can't stab people, you can't hurt people" than spend time talking as a class about what got us to that point and how do we avoid it in the future, you know, why do we feel like all Black people should die, and what should we do about those feelings.

Erika: Did the teacher ever learn the real story?

Rosanna: I know my little cousin's mother went up to the school and talked to her at that conference and stuff, but I don't think it was like a classroom conference or a conference between her and the little boy's parents, or anything like that. I think it was just, you know, "she stabbed him in the arm with a pencil."

Greg: It's one thing for us, for me to sit here and say, "Boy, that's a teachable moment. We missed an opportunity to make a difference in social transformation there," right? You know, I can't imagine how to begin to, how I would respond as a teacher in that situation. I don't know that any of us know exactly. I do know that I would feel that I would have to deal with it as a class. I would imagine probably most schools would deal with it as an individual student-student, parent-student situation in the principal's office, with the counselor, something like that, but without ever bringing it in front of the rest of the kids in the class. That sends a message, like you said, without having a classroom conference, it sends a message to kids.

Kristi: In my class last night we had a health and safety discussion (it was very boring). But basically, the lesson was that no matter what happens to your students you have to report it to the school nurse. In that situation, you know, the kid could have gotten lead poisoning, "yadiyadiyada", could you send them to the nurse, make sure everything's fine, and then say, "When you get back, we're going to have a class discussion about this." Could you set it up like that?

Greg: Sure. Yeah.

Kristi: Okay. Just curious.

Greg: Yeah, I think

Erika: Like

Greg: Go ahead, Erika.

Erika: Yeah, I think finding the right moment, the right time, right? And perhaps not even the same day.

Greg: Oh, yeah, of course.

- Erika: After everybody calmed down, not then; but bring it up—she is the teacher, she'll have plenty of room, opportunities to bring it up as a class.
- Greg: Those were very real, raw, powerful emotions, you know. Feeling as a seven, eight-year-old, you know, you've had many social experiences that have led you to this understanding that you want all Black people dead. And maybe you don't really feel that, but that's what gets verbalized. And then being assaulted in your classroom, there's all kinds of things there that would need to be dealt with in order for that to be a safe classroom space again.

Rosanna's cousin's real life experience served as a case study that the class engaged with as they sought answers to what should and should not be done when teachers have to deal with racism in the classroom. While Greg did not attempt to offer clear-cut, straightforward answers, he took the opportunity to offer instruction as he analyzed aspects of the case in light of his own educational practice, honing in on expected versus desirable reactions of the people who might be involved in a situation like this (students, parents, teacher, counselor, principal). Erika also drew on her own experience as an educator to emphasize that teachers need to find the right time and opportunity to act. Kristi came up with a practical scenario for dealing with the problem. The conversation brought about awareness of problems and tensions that the students might face in their future teaching practice; it also resulted in a lesson on the need for teachers to have the courage to address what is obviously there, rather than turn a blind eye to situations of prejudice and racism that hinder the implementation of multicultural education.

Dialogue with Nieto

Another practice-oriented activity addressed a question that Greg posed to the class two weeks to the end of the semester: "Where do we stand in terms of our learning and Nieto's book?" Greg called it a "3-2-1 Summarizing Activity." The students were asked to write down three things they had learned from Nieto, two ideas they would try out as a teacher, and one question or comment for Nieto. Greg collected the answers and brought back a handout with their compiled work. In the next couple of classes, the students, first in small groups, then as a whole class, focused on the questions/comments component of the handout in order to reach a decision on what should be kept, changed or deleted. Greg's plan was to send Nieto a letter with the students' questions and comments that would hopefully engage her in dialogue with them. (Table 4.1 shows the first draft of the class's compiled work in this activity.)

Table 4.1 3-2-1 Summarizing Activity

<p>3 Things You Learned from Nieto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ EDUCATION IS ALWAYS POLITICAL ❖ Learning and teaching are primarily about relationships ❖ White and middle-class brings significant privilege and social status ❖ Difference between additive and subtractive approaches to teaching (building on all students' background knowledge and experiences) ❖ True learning only happens when students see themselves as competent and capable ❖ Multicultural education is only effective if it helps students learn ❖ Culture shapes how you view the world, and thus learning ❖ Transformation must be both personal AND collective ❖ It is OK to voice, question, and critique aspects of education and society that we perceive as unjust ❖ It is important to be self-reflective ❖ Learning is an ACTIVE process, based on experience and culture ❖ Teachers should be LEARNERS too! ❖ Real learning requires room for dialogue and disagreement
<p>2 ideas you will try as a teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Home visits ❖ Additive approach to knowledge, language, and culture ❖ Checking assumptions about students at the door ❖ Build community as a class ❖ Learn as I teach, teach as I learn ❖ Address inequality in class (sexism, racism, classism, etc.) ❖ Teach, AND teach against the grain ❖ Collaborative & group work
<p>1 Question/Comment for Nieto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ COMMENTS ❖ State opinions but try not to put others down/ Write with a style that shows less cultural bias, while still keeping your passion for your view on educational reform <p>❖ QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think White people are not diverse? It seems that you play into the stereotype that is perceived of White people. 2. What measures are you taking to actively confront the issues you write about? 3. Have your views changed over time—do you question some of your ideology because of experiences in later life? 4. How do you engage in productive dialogue with those that come from cultural positions that are ideologically opposed to democratic structures? 5. What is success for you? 6. What would social justice look like? 7. How has your culture influenced who you are today? 8. Why do you only once acknowledge the existence of disadvantaged European Americans and always associate European Americans with the oppressors? Doesn't this jeopardize the opportunity for dialogue and relationship building you promote in your writing?

For nearly two hours spread out over two classes, the class collectively reviewed the Comments and Questions section of the handout. Most of the discussion centered on the comment and questions numbers 1 and 8 from the first draft, which reflected aspects of Nieto's text that a few students had criticized on a number of occasions. Particularly Rachel, Lauren, and Kristi had a hard time reading Nieto. It was the students' reactions to Nieto's text that prompted Greg to come up with working on the questions for Nieto in the first place. Earlier that month, Lauren had said that she disagreed with a statement on page 132: "Teachers in the United States, who are primarily White, middle-class, and monolingual, have had limited experiences with diverse populations, and they frequently perceive of diversity in a negative way." Lauren continued, "I feel like she's kind of making an assumption about all White, middle-class, monolingual [people]; that none of us from the dominant racial group have experienced with diverse populations. And I don't really agree with that because there are plenty of White people I know that are not monolinguals, that have had some sort of diversity, or been experienced with diverse populations." Rachel was critical of Nieto's pointed perspective, "as if this is the only way to think, and everybody goes along with that line of thinking."

"What does it take for us to really think through what offends us? Figure out why it offends us, produce the counter argument and then move through the defensiveness to a more productive site? So try to pinpoint why it offends you," Greg had suggested. The 3-2-1 Summarizing Activity opened up a space for the class to do just that. As the students collectively engaged in examining their questions for Nieto, they began to reach awareness of some of the reasons behind their resistance to Nieto's text. They shared these perceptions in the midst of the discussion:

Lauren: I feel like my struggle with Nieto and her writing is that some of it is reality, and I have a hard problem, I have a hard time digesting that. I know it is, but I don't want to admit it.

Rachel: I think that kind of our reaction to Nieto probably is that we may not identify with, I mean, if we're White, middle-class, privileged people, we may not identify with what she's talking about, whereas someone who does come from where she's talking about would be like, "Yes, I love hearing this, reading this!" But it may be harder if you're not in that situation, to hear that.

Kristi: I feel like my beef with her is that, like, she makes all of these accusations or whatever, but she doesn't give us her background so that we can understand her accusations better. If I had known her struggles and all that jazz, then I feel like, you know, I could have taken it a little bit better, like not fall asleep [while reading her], you know.

As the discussion progressed, new points were raised and tentative explanations were offered.

This in turn led to counter arguments and new questions being posed and considered, with new understandings arising from that, in typical piggyback style:

Greg: I think one thing we can agree on is that her message delivery hurts her cause. The way she goes about it. For Kristi it's particularly this; for me it may be this. But for most of us her message delivery perhaps is hurting her cause.

Renaë: *(to Greg)* I don't know, I just felt like you're saying that she's saying things that are real and we can't take it, and I don't know, why is it wrong because she's saying something that's real but you don't want to hear it? Why should we question something that's right?

Greg: You're asking a great question.

Rachel: Oh, like the problem is our reaction, not what she's saying.

Renaë: Yeah, the problem's the reaction, not what she says.

Kristi: What you're saying is right, but it would be easier to read and to understand better if, in my perspective, if I understood her better, if I understood her experiences better.

Renaë: I just feel like maybe because she is a minority, we feel like she should have this experience behind it, and we want to know what it is. But we don't all have these experiences, and we can still write about it, it's something that we see and hear about every day.

Greg: I think Renaë poses a really good question. What if somebody like me writes this book, and puts the information out there, and says the same things, exactly, in the same harsh terms that she does. If the information is still grounded on empirical studies of real people in the real world, what difference does it make?

Isabella: I think she probably—I mean this is just a guess—but maybe Nieto wants to be viewed as a researcher, as an educator, and not somebody who overcame all this or had to endure this, like she doesn't feel like she should validate her point because she was disadvantaged and prejudiced and society didn't meet her needs. She wants to be on the same level with these European White people that she's trying to talk to, not "you should pity me or take my standpoint because this is what I've experienced."

Kristi: Well, that's a good point.

Students: That's a good point.

It would be inaccurate to say that the discussion led the students to reach a common ground on their understanding and acceptance of Nieto's text. It was a complex topic that in essence could be argued from various perspectives. However, the students' concentration and effort to listen to one another and revisit and expand their thinking was evident. The comments made by Lauren, Rachel and Isabella

(above) indicated that they were trying to look at the matter from the perspective of the Other (the minority group to which they do not belong). Had they chosen to keep to themselves and deal with Nieto monologically, they would have been limited in their understanding and learning. However, because they were willing to listen to and learn from one another—all of them teacher-students and student-teachers—they were able to reach the more productive site that Greg had suggested.

In the class before last, once again the group resumed their work on the questions for Nieto. Once again Greg pushed them to stretch their thinking:

- Greg: What do we do with this [questions #1 and #8]? Why is it that we're put on edge with what Nieto is saying? Are we on edge because of the information that we're hearing from her? Are we defensive by what she's saying? Are we uncomfortable just because of the way she's presenting it? Do we feel like she's too limited?
- Erika: I do think she does tend to overgeneralize. This is really my honest opinion, though even statistically she's probably right when she says that European Americans are not diverse, the way she phrases it. But she does overgeneralize, and by overgeneralizing I see a flaw there, see? And I'm trying to be as detached as I can. When you get to the end of the book, you get the sense that all European Americans are wealthy, well-off, have made it in life. And you look around and you don't see that.
- Rachel: Maybe she gets confused about who her enemy is, like if it's all White people, or if it's people who oppress other people.
- Greg: That's a great point. Are we misinterpreting, are we missing the fact that she's pointing to class as often as she is race? I don't know.
- Erika: But you don't read much about class in here. You see an overwhelming presence of race and ethnicity, and not class as much. We know it's in there, but...
- Greg: I will work with that; try to work that into a comment.
- Erika: Even labels like "White ally." You know? It just doesn't sound right, and I can't pinpoint, I can't say exactly why.
- Rachel: As if one from the enemy has come over to her team.
- Erika: Right! Yeah.
- Kristi: Yeah.
- Greg: So do we have a problem with...yeah! Is she conflating White with dominant class? Yes. Is it OK to conflate White with dominant class? Are there wealthy African Americans who oppress lower class folks? Sure! Are they the dominant? I don't know, I don't think so. This is a tough...yeah. Conflating erroneously, putting together two categories, do you see? The struggle here is White as dominant. Is White dominant?
- Erika: Yes.
- Greg: From my perspective, yes. Are all Whites dominant? No. There are poor, illiterate, oppressed, underclass Whites. So...
- Kristi: But being dominant, a part of the dominant whatever, that doesn't make me an oppressor, that doesn't make me a hateful person, or anyone else in here.
- Greg: That may be the problem. If that's the feeling we get from reading, the interpretation we get from Nieto, then that's the problem.

- Isabella: I really think the main mistake that she makes is just with the language that she uses, the labels. She didn't even have to say, "The person is a White ally." She could just say, "This is my ally". And race does make a difference sometimes, but she overgeneralizes it to a point where it invalidates her point.
- Greg: That is a great question. I like this question: Why the need for the label "White" when you're talking about "White ally"? Does it make a difference that the ally is White? Couldn't it be an Asian ally or any ally, a White ally that is not referred to as White? I think a response to that would be very revealing.
- Students: Yeah.

The group's hard work reviewing the questions for Nieto resulted in deleting or modifying most questions, and replacing a couple with new ones that better captured the students' intentions in posing them. The revised draft came down to just four questions; it was the product of true dialogic group work.

Table 4.2 – Revised Questions for Nieto

Questions for Nieto

1. Have your views changed over time—do you question some of your ideology because of experiences in later life?
2. How do you engage in productive dialogue with those that come from cultural positions that are ideologically opposed to democratic structures?
3. What do you believe people's purpose on earth is, and in light of that why should people work towards social justice?
4. Why is there a need for the label "White" when you're talking about "ally"? Does it make a difference that the ally is White?

Epilogue: The Last Class

La Fiesta restaurant; time to celebrate the course and the deep learning that had taken place. Gathered around a long rectangular table while savoring Mexican food, Greg and the students have their eyes on Erika as she reads a letter she has written to them:

Dear girls,

You are not my students, so technically I am not your teacher. But once a teacher, always a teacher, I guess. And because I see myself as a teacher-learner, I suppose that developing a relationship of both co-teacher and classmate with you all this semester was meant to be. *So much* has been said and discussed in our classes this semester, and I hope you all have come away with something to draw on in your own teaching practice and also your life. I hope that somehow you have been inspired to search for possible and desirable educational worlds--perhaps unusual and unfamiliar ones--and to engage in self-inquiry and exploratory dialogue in your own teaching-learning practice.

Truly I come away from this class with much more than I anticipated. I cannot think of another class in my whole educational life where I learned so much, at so many levels. As I write this, I am flabbergasted by the oddness of this realization. But it is the truth. I learned a lot as I attentively listened to Greg and each of you throughout this semester.

Kristi, with you I learned that “no problem” means “you’re welcome,” and that entering into dialogue requires truly listening to the other. Your never-ending ability to authentically *care* for others in such an inconspicuous way is, as you say, “so cute”!

Rachel, you taught me that even I can learn Geography (my worst subject ever) if the teacher is able to filter the content through her experiences. You also reminded me that faith, science, and knowledge are totally compatible and interconnected. You made me want to search for those connections this semester.

Isabella, you taught me that the “structural inequality X meritocracy” discussion is not simple at all! You also reminded me of the importance of always looking at both (or more) sides of an argument. You reminded me of the importance of discipline and structure too. You have challenged me to look for more grounding for the dialogic pedagogy I believe in.

Rosanna, with you I learned to always try to strike a balance between taking the initiative to speak and encouraging others to speak. You reminded me that being a good listener is at least as important as--or possibly more important than--being a good speaker. Whenever you “are tested,” the depth of your thinking, of your experiences and your generosity surface, teach and inspire me.

Jenna, you reminded me that “students will always be students,” or better “people will always be people,” and that we all need to be pushed to perform our best. You taught me that trust and teaching go hand in hand. With you I also learned that we as teachers must be willing to meet each student where they are.

Renae, you gave me an insider’s perspective and understanding of international education. You showed me the importance of being authentic and standing up *in your way* for what you believe in. You taught me that *fabulous mysteries* are all around us, and that it is so worth undertaking the challenge of figuring out those mysteries. You reminded me that relationships are *always* worth the effort.

Lauren, you taught me that asking ourselves good questions is probably better than coming up with good, clear-cut answers. You reminded me that keeping to the basics yields some of the most profound lessons. You have given me hope and renewed my confidence in the potential of dialogic education.

Each of you is one of a kind. Each of you is a student you could have one of these days... What will Isabella do if she has a student just like Kristi? How will Renae relate to a student just like Jenna? What if Lauren comes across a student just like Evelinne? I bet you will all do just fine!

I cannot thank you enough for letting me hear your voices and for teaching me so much this semester, more than any class or teacher, and few books, have ever taught me.

Affectionately,

Erika

CHAPTER 5

“I JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE THAT EVERYONE KNEW I WAS AMERICAN”:

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF A DIALOGIC SPEECH EVENT

This chapter examines a dialogic speech event³⁷ that took place during Stage 3 (Engaging in critical reflection and self-inquiry) in the development of the Language and Culture class. The object of analysis is the transcript of a speech event extracted from a 30-minute presentation of Rachel’s cultural autobiography and the ensuing 20-minute class discussion. This presentation took place halfway through the course, nearly two months after the first day of class. Rachel read from her notes and shared a few comments while projecting Power Point slides with photos of family and places that she had visited. It was an interesting, detailed presentation that highlighted her Christian faith, her experiences traveling abroad, and her contact with cultural and linguistic diversity.

The analysis of this speech event is framed by theoretical concepts and methodological tools from the fields of discourse analysis and dialogic studies: Fairclough’s (1992a, 2003) Critical Discourse Analysis, Bloome et al.’s (2005) microethnographic approach to discourse analysis, and Burbules’ (1993) rules of dialogue. The transcribed data in this chapter conform to technical transcription conventions that represent linguistic, paralinguistic/prosodic, and kinesics aspects (see Table 5.2, p. 143). The following elements comprise the lenses of analysis:

- *interactional control features* (distribution of turns, selection and change of topics, opening and closing of interactions) – The investigation of interactional control conventions is a means to explain the concrete enactment and negotiation of social relations in social practice, since such conventions embody specific claims about social and power relations between participants (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 152);

³⁷ A speech event is “a bounded series of actions and reactions that people make in response to each other at the level of face-to-face interaction” (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 6).

- *modality* – This involves “the many ways in which attitudes can be expressed towards the ‘pure’ reference-and-predication content of an utterance, signaling factuality, degrees of certainty or doubt, vagueness, possibility, necessity, and even permission and obligation” (Verschueren as cited in Fairclough, 2003, p. 165);
- *intertextuality* – This refers to the presence within a text of elements of other texts (and therefore potentially other voices than the author’s own), which may be related to (dialogued with, assumed, rejected, etc.) in various ways (Fairclough, 2003, p. 218);
- *contextualization cues* – These include verbal, nonverbal, and prosodic features of linguistic form that contribute to the signaling of contextual presuppositions (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 9);
- *intercontextuality* – This refers to the social construction of relationships among contexts, past and future, as well as to the social construction of relationships among social events (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 144).

This speech event will be examined as a “moment of crisis” (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 230). Three sections of the speech event comprise the foci of analysis. First, these sections will be described and examined in depth for their distinguishing components and characteristics. In the sequence, reasons that made this interaction a dialogic speech event will be discussed, as well as its results in terms of the construction of knowledge, social relations and social identities through language.

The Potential of a “Moment of Crisis”

When selecting discourse samples from a whole corpus for analysis, the researcher, according to Fairclough (1992a), should look for “crucies” or “moments of crisis,” that is, moments in the discourse

where there is evidence that things are going wrong: a misunderstanding which requires participants to “repair” a communicative problem, for example through asking for or offering repetitions, or through one participant correcting another; exceptional disfluencies (hesitations, repetitions) in the production of a text; silences; sudden shifts of style . . . Such moments of crisis make visible aspects of practices which might normally be naturalized, and therefore difficult to notice; but they also show change in process, the actual ways in which people deal with the problematization of practices. (p. 230)

The speech event in this chapter illustrates one such “moment of crisis.” For the apparent purpose of sorting out a misunderstanding, one student (Renae) asked another student (Rachel) a question requesting repetition of information given by the latter. The speech event has distinguishable beginning, middle and end parts that indicate disclosure and problematization of naturalized concepts regarding what it means to “be American.” It represents an instance of struggle over ascribed, commonsense meanings that include some U.S. Americans and exclude others. Four class members participated in this speech event: the two main interlocutors Rachel and Renae, and Greg and Kristi.

A series of sequential components comprise this moment of crisis; such components can be identified by their linguistic (verbal and nonverbal) features as well as their place and function in the speech event. A definition for each component is offered in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Structure of the Moment of Crisis

Moment of Crisis
Trigger – Any linguistic action that precipitates a linguistic reaction
Onset – The linguistic response to the trigger; the onset characterizes the moment of crisis because it suggests misunderstanding in the speech event
Development – The linguistic chain following the onset and building up to the pre-climax
Pre-climax – A linguistic unit that leads up to the climax
Climax – A linguistic unit that indicates a decisive moment of maximum intensity because it exposes the reason for the misunderstanding
Resolution – A linguistic unit that indicates that the misunderstanding has been clarified and worked out (the resolution characterizes a moment of crisis as a dialogic speech event)
Coda – A linguistic unit that serves to round out or conclude the speech event

In the following speech event, the **trigger** happened in the first part or section; 35 minutes later, in the second section came the **onset**, **development**, **pre-climax**, **climax** and **resolution**; finally, about five minutes after the end of the second section, the **coda** took place in the third and last section.

Table 5.2 Section 1 of the Moment of Crisis

Section 1									
Rachel: (<i>reading from her notes in “reading mode”</i>) When I just turned twelve I spent eight days in Guatemala where I saw intense poverty and crime for the first time in my life (.) I went with my mom and a team and other Americans for the purpose of aiding a doctor in going to small towns and villages to offer medical care to the residents there. Usually these visits to the villages were only day trips but we spent the night in the church of one village (.) Most nights we stayed in a compound built on the back of the doctor’s house in Guatemala city (.) The doctor’s small house was surrounded by a ten-foot wall with barbed wire on the top; there was also a guard dog that was trained to fend off thieves. (<i>Rachel stops reading and immediately addresses the class.</i>)									
Rachel:	It was funny she actually	hm	the guard dog (.)	had this preference for Americans					1
	like she associated Americans just (.)	people with lighter skin	↑	> as (.) that they					2
	weren’t (.)	a threat	<	but when she met new Guatemalans	she was threatened and				3
	would (.)	I mean not hurt them but just be defensive if her family was around	↑	(.)					4
	which I thought was really interesting								5
<i>Rachel immediately resumes reading from the notes in her hand. Much of what she reads has to do with interactions she had with people from other countries during her trips abroad (to Guatemala, Thailand, Russia, Costa Rica, Spain) and how she consciously avoided stereotyping them, rather developing cultural sensitivity/responsiveness and attempting to successfully navigate different cultures.</i>									
Transcription conventions:									
↑ = raised pitch									
↓ = lowered pitch									
= = latching									
<> = speeding up speech									
>< = slowing speech down									
[] = overlapping speech									
Underlined words = emphasized speech									
inaudible or undecipherable= ()									
(.) = minor pause									
longer pauses:									
No	One	thou	Sand	One	One	One	Thou	Sand	Two
0.2	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.10	1.2	1.4	1.6	1.8	2.0

Trigger – “Like she associated Americans just people with lighter skin”

It all began quite inconspicuously—with a short, discreet identifying relative clause: “just people with lighter skin” (line 2), to refer to U.S. Americans. Halfway through her cultural autobiography presentation, Rachel was reading to the class about her experience as a young girl traveling with a group of White Americans to Guatemala to aid a doctor in offering medical care to poor residents. Rachel’s class notes included a sentence informing that the doctor’s guard dog was trained to fend off thieves. When Rachel reached that line in her notes, a memory crossed her mind, one that she found “funny” (line 1). On the spur of the moment, she decided to share her recollection with the class: that the dog felt threatened by (darker-skinned) Guatemalans when meeting them for the first time, but not around the lighter-skinned Americans staying at the doctor’s house. However, as Rachel sidetracked to relate that, she unconsciously phrased it in such a way that revealed a deeper, taken-for-granted presupposition—that Americans have light skin. As a form of intertextuality, presuppositions are ways of incorporating the texts of others; in this case, the assumption was “a more nebulous ‘text’ corresponding to general opinion (what people tend to say, accumulated textual experience)” (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 121). In other words, Rachel’s utterance echoed a naturalized perception of the predominant stratum of U.S. society, of White Americans who have grown used to seeing their country and people through their own racial eyes. Linguistically, the inconspicuous relative clause “just people with lighter skin” served as a **trigger** that would set off a somewhat delayed response from Renae, 35 minutes after this first section of the speech event, as well as the series of actions and reactions that followed.

Rachel’s obliviousness to the stereotyped presupposition embedded in her words further stands out when contrasted with the remainder of her presentation. Rachel went on to talk about the interactions she had had with people from other countries during her several trips abroad (to Guatemala, Thailand, Russia, Costa Rica, and Spain). She highlighted how she took care to avoid stereotyping them, rather developing cultural sensitivity and awareness while attempting to successfully navigate different cultures.

Table 5.3 Section 2 of the Moment of Crisis

Section 2 (35 minutes after Section 1)		
<i>Later, during the class discussion following Rachel's presentation, Greg and a few students engage in a conversation about the differences, similarities, and intersections between beliefs and culture, and also the need to nurture feelings of compassion and love to be able to understand and accept diverse others in classrooms and communities that teachers work in. Following this section, the subject switches back to something Rachel said earlier in her presentation:</i>		
Greg:	So those are things that we'll encounter in our classrooms you know where we teach in the communities that we work in (.) families and parents with very different perspectives on things and so how do you (.) how do you love those people and love their children and hm provide them the same learning opportunities as everyone else?↑ How do you not buy into and hm (.) fall prey to the teacher lounge discussions that marginalize and demonize those parents for not giving their kids what they need or (.) those are (.) Jenna?↑ No? I thought you (.) Renae?↑ Was that a stretch?	6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
Renae:	It was a half stretch I want to say something [I think	14
Greg:	[<u>Ah-hah</u>	15
Renae:	= hm ↑ (<i>turning to Rachel</i>) Could you explain the dog situation again? ↑ Like the guard dog?	16 17
Rachel:	Oh in Guatemala? Yeah they hm like (.) from my understanding there's hm just a lot of crime in Guatemala city and hm (.) which you could talk about that a lot =	18 19 20
Greg:	= Which is horrendous (.) I stepped over a dead man on the sidewalk in Guatemala [city	21 22
Kristi:	[Oh my <u>gosh</u> !	23
Greg:	my first the <u>second</u> night I was there (.) and it was just like you know Guatemala city is a you know slum huge metropolis you know there's stuff everywhere there yeah	24 25 26
Rachel:	Just where we stayed hm (.) from I mean this is information that I got and that I remember from when I was like twelve so hm but just they told us and my mom told me that hm someone would be particularly interested that I just needed to watch out because someone would be interested in like kidnapping me for a ransom or like that's what she told <u>me</u> to protect <u>me</u> but just the hm the Guatemalan the doctor who lived there and his family hm because they had a lot of hm American teams coming down to help them hm they had this compound attached to their house and hm I'm pretty sure as far as I know it's a very common precaution to have a guard dog and a wired fence like I mean this wall was like 10 feet high and it was just cement blocks and it had curly barbed wire at the top =	27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37
Greg:	= Very often they have broken glass bottles like you know glued or cemented to the top of the walls and stuff so people cannot climb (.) (<i>lowered voice</i>) see those there?	38 39 40
Rachel:	And hm the dog just was another safety measure to protect their family to protect people staying with them hm she was a Rottweiler and she was really	41 42

	sweet like we played ball with her and stuff but she was also trained to attack if	43
	someone were to break in or try to get in (0.2) so (0.4) Is that the way you	44
	looked upon it you'd say or =	45
Renae:	= Yah (.) it's okay now	46
Rachel:	(<i>hesitant</i>) Well I I can=	47
Renae:	(<i>lowered volume</i>) = You kinda (<i>undecipherable</i>)	48
Greg:	I I picked up on you you took that the dog was predispositioned to be	49
	aggressive or sensitive to dark-skinned colored	50
Rachel:	(<i>lowered volume</i>) Oh [hm=	51
Greg:	[darker folks ↑ and =	52
Rachel:	(<i>lowered volume</i>) = Yeah	53
Greg:	[The darker you are	54
Renae:	[And you mentioned that (.) (<i>Greg pauses to listen to Renae</i>) all Americans	55
	were lighter ↓	56
Rachel:	Yeah that's [true ↑	57
Renae:	[(<i>laughs out loud</i>)	58
Greg:	(<i>lowered volume</i>) Excellent (<i>Renae laughs again.</i>) Excellent =	59
Rachel:	= No I totally that's as I was talking about that I was like wow I don't mean	60
	like a only a thin(g) like I hadn't thought about that in a while like to me then it	61
	was just like the people [who] committed crimes there are likely gonna look	62
	like Guatemalans so she would fear bad hm and that all Americans are good	63
	but I think I like (0.4) played into that stereotype of not having a larger	64
	understanding of either American culture or Guatemalan culture (<i>lowered</i>	65
	<i>volume</i>) I guess (.) And I hope that I've grown in that (0.4) but (.) yeah is that	66
	what you were kind of going after?	67
Renae:	Yeah (<i>very casually</i>) (.) (<i>lowered volume</i>) I just wanted to make sure that	68
	everyone knew I was American	69
	(<i>Students' embarrassed chuckles/smiles.</i>)	70
Rachel:	Yeah =	71
Greg:	= Yeah no I think (0.4) (<i>Renae laughs</i>) Exactly (0.4) (<i>lowered volume</i>) Yeah	72
Rachel:	(<i>lowered volume</i>) Yeah	73
Kristi:	I think the dog just wouldn't know what to do with you	74
Renae:	= (raised volume) <u>Dogs</u> don't like me (<i>Renae laughs. Whole class laughs.</i>)	75
	Dogs don't like me anyway (.) Every single dog < like everybody can be like >	76
	that dog is so sweet and as soon as I come in they'll like attack (.) I don't know	77
	why (0.4) Dogs hate me <u>but</u> (<i>to Rachel</i>) that was against me ↓ it was just I	78
	know when you <u>said</u> it and I was just like "hmm"	79
Rachel:	Yeah you're so right that's true (<i>Renae giggles.</i>) Thanks for bringing that up	80
Greg:	Awesome ↓ (0.8) Who's got the time?	81

Onset – “Could you explain the dog situation again? Like the guard dog?”

After Rachel finished her presentation, the class engaged in a follow-up conversation that started out with comments and questions about specific points in Rachel’s presentation but soon evolved into a broader discussion on the differences, similarities, and intersections between beliefs and culture, and the need to nurture feelings of compassion and love when interacting with diverse others. Subsequently, the second section of this speech event began. Something in Renae’s body language called Greg’s attention, and he thought she might want to say something. “Renae? Was that a stretch?” (line 13) Greg asked. Renae picked up Greg’s cue and posed a rather unexpected, peculiar question to Rachel: “Could you explain the dog situation again? Like the guard dog?” (line 16) Since the guard dog had been neither a focus of Rachel’s presentation nor a topic raised in the follow-up discussion, the illocutionary force of Renae’s question—what this interrogative was being used to do interpersonally, what sort of speech act it constituted—was not clear. Was Renae really asking a question, and if so, was it a question about the dog or what? Was it charged with some sort of embedded complaint? What was going wrong; what “misunderstanding” did the question indicate that required the participants to try to “repair” a communicative problem? (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 230).

Immediately prior to asking the question, Renae had shown some hedging in the subjective modality marker “I think” in her utterance “I want to say something I think” (line 14). The unexpected rheme of her question—“explain the dog situation”—also suggested hedging on her part. Apparently, in phrasing the question as a request for clarification on the “dog situation,” Renae in reality had her mind set on the “skin situation” or the “being American situation,” but she seemed to want to avoid naming the sensitive topic. Yet, Renae seemed to hope that Rachel would understand her implicit intent, what she was trying to get at.

Development

Rachel, however, did not get it. Nonetheless, Rachel *did* proceed to answer Renae’s literal question as completely as she could (lines 18-20, 27-37, 41-45). Alluding to the crime situation in Guatemala, Rachel told the same story again, almost verbatim, of the guard dog serving as a safety

measure to protect the doctor's family and friends. Towards the end of her account, she added a few details absent from her original narrative, such as the dog's breed and its sweet, playful nature (lines 42-43). However, this time Rachel did not remember to divert to the aside she had made earlier, of how the dog reacted differently towards people's darker or lighter skin color. It was not until she got to the end of her detailed response that Rachel began to realize that she might have missed the intended force in Renae's question—when Rachel's request for feedback, "Is that the way you looked upon it" (lines 44-45), was met with Renae's succinct, evasive answer, "Yah (.) it's okay now" (line 46). At the same time, contextualization cues that Renae used, such as latching onto Rachel's utterance (thus interrupting her), speaking in a lowered volume, and possibly mumbling (line 48), would have further reinforced Rachel's impression that she had failed to provide a satisfactory answer to Renae's question.

The speech event might very well have ended there had Greg not stepped in to keep the conversation going, in an attempt to make sense of Renae's intention behind her puzzling question. Greg did not understand what Renae was trying to get at, but he remembered Rachel's earlier aside comment on the guard dog's behavior.³⁸ Rather hesitantly, as indicated in the repetition of the subject pronouns "I" and "you," Greg sought to offer the missing piece to help clarify the matter: "I I picked up on you you took that the dog was predispositioned to be aggressive or sensitive to dark skinned colored" (lines 49-50). By introducing a new element to the conversation, Greg provided a stimulus to keep it going. Rachel, in turn, responded with a surprised acknowledgment and agreement: "Oh hm yeah" (lines 51, 53).

Pre-climax – "and you mentioned that all Americans were lighter"

Renae:	[And you mentioned that (.) (<i>Greg pauses to listen to Renae</i>) all	55
	Americans were lighter ↓	56
Rachel:	Yeah that's [true ↑	57
Renae:	[<i>(laughs out loud)</i>	58
Greg:	(<i>lowered volume</i>) Excellent (<i>Renae laughs again.</i>) Excellent =	59
Rachel:	= No I totally that's as I was talking about that I was like wow I don't	60

³⁸ In a conversation at a later date, Greg confirmed that when he had taken the conversational floor to recall Rachel's earlier reference to the guard dog's behavior toward darker skinned people, he was unsure of Renae's intention behind her question, since at first Greg himself had failed to recognize the naturalized racial presupposition implicit in Rachel's **trigger** utterance ("Americans just people with lighter skin").

mean like a only a thin(g) like I hadn't thought about that in a while like	61
to me then it was just like the people [who] committed crimes there are	62
likely gonna look like Guatemalans so she would fear bad hm and that all	63
Americans are good but I think I like (0.4) played into that stereotype of	64
not having a larger understanding of either American culture or	65
Guatemalan culture (<i>lowered volume</i>) I guess (.) And I hope that I've	66
grown in that (0.4) but (.) yeah is that what you were kind of going after?	67

Greg's input also had an immediate effect on Renae, stimulating her to jump back into the conversation and claim the floor again. While just one minute earlier Renae had dodged the sensitive topic (lines 46, 48), this time respectfully but bluntly she chose to question Rachel's earlier utterance and confront her: "and you mentioned that all Americans were lighter" (lines 55-56). Without hesitation, Rachel agreed with Renae and accepted the cue to try to explain and excuse herself. At the same time, the contextualization cue expressed in Renae's repeated laughter (lines 58, 59) signaled her expectation that Rachel and the other students would have finally realized the racial undertones in Rachel's account. Had they realized it, this might have been the **climax** of the speech event. However, aside from Greg's "Excellent" response (line 59), no one gave any external indication of such. As for Rachel, she proceeded speaking in a series of split, fragmented clauses, interspersed with a number of modals/modifiers (such as "totally," "like," "wow"), ellipsis, and pauses (lines 60-67). Rachel's utterance shows uncertainty and hesitation; she was trying to make sense of the topic at hand in order to offer Renae a proper answer. Rachel's justification to Renae for her lapse could be paraphrased in these terms: *I played into the stereotype of not having a larger understanding that the culture of Americans, lighter-skinned people, is not necessarily good (superior), and the culture of Guatemalans, darker-skinned people, is not necessarily bad (inferior)*. Thus Rachel ended up foregrounding good/bad and American culture/Guatemalan culture binaries, and possible cross-cultural differences and biases associated with them, rather than race and ethnicity within the American context. So, despite her obvious effort, Rachel missed it again, as her own words expressed that she suspected she might have (lines 66-67). Wrapping up with subjective modality markers ("I guess," "I hope"), a longer pause, the coordinating conjunction

“but,” and an explicit question to Renae for feedback (“Is that what you were kind of going after?”), Rachel showed she continued open to clarifying whether or not she had got it this time.

Climax – “I just wanted to make sure that everyone knew I was American”

Renae:	Yeah (<i>very casually</i>) (.) (<i>lowered volume</i>) I just wanted to make sure that	68
	everyone knew I was American	69
	(<i>Students’ embarrassed chuckles/smiles.</i>)	70
Rachel:	Yeah =	71
Greg:	= Yeah no I think (0.4) (<i>Renae laughs</i>) Exactly (0.4) (<i>lowered volume</i>) Yeah	72
Rachel:	(<i>lowered volume</i>) Yeah	73
Kristi:	I think the dog just wouldn’t know what to do with you	74
Renae:	= (raised volume) <u>Dogs</u> don’t like me (<i>Renae laughs. Whole class laughs.</i>)	75
	Dogs don’t like me anyway (.) Every single dog < like everybody can be	76
	like > that dog is so sweet and as soon as I come in they’ll like attack (.) I	77
	don’t know why (0.4) Dogs hate me <u>but</u> (<i>to Rachel</i>) that was against me ↓ it	78
	was just I know when you <u>said</u> it and I was just like “hmm”	79

The **climax** of the speech event—the revelation—came then. The dialogue had come too far for Renae to back away now. She responded with a casual “yeah” that had the force of a negative, followed by a strikingly revealing utterance: “I just wanted to make sure that everyone knew I was American” (lines 68-69). The class was rendered speechless for a couple of brief but conspicuous seconds (lines 70-73). The intertextual connections implied in Renae’s words can be fleshed out as: *You (Rachel) said that Americans have light skin. I don’t have light skin, but I am definitely American. So I just wanted to make sure that you (and everyone else) knew that I was American.* This was an interestingly subtle use of irony (Fairclough, 1992a); an intertextual resource that was ironic in the sense that “it echoes your utterance, but there is disparity between the meaning I am giving voice to, so to speak, in echoing your utterance, and the real function of my utterance which is to express some sort of negative attitude towards your utterance” (p. 123). Fairclough further explained that “irony depends upon interpreters being able to recognize that the meaning of an echoed text is not the text producer’s meaning” (p. 123). Because all the students obviously knew that Renae was American, the force of her ironic statement could not have been

to provide new information about herself, but rather to come out, complain and confront Rachel about the naturalized racial assumption in her words.

Renae's blunt revelation caught everyone off guard (lines 70-73). Kristi was the first person to snap out of the embarrassing situation and respond to Renae. In an attempt to break the tension, Kristi, friendly and talkative by nature, sidetracked with a humorous comment (though also potentially dubious; see discussion ahead) that tied back intertextually to the guard dog story: "I think the dog just wouldn't know what to do with you" (line 74). Although Kristi's comment was meant to be funny, no one laughed or reacted in any way. That is, no one reacted but Renae, who immediately accepted Kristi's cue in collaborating to appease the embarrassing situation. Renae laughed and agreed that dogs didn't like her, offering a personal illustrative example (lines 75-78). The other students also laughed and the tension was broken. Nonetheless, sensing the renewed atmosphere, Renae did not hesitate to resume the heart of the matter in order to complete the disclosure of her thinking (lines 78-79). Renae explicitly held Rachel accountable for her earlier words, in a respectful but straightforward manner: "you said it" (line 79).

Resolution – "Yeah you're so right that's true"

Rachel: Yeah you're so right that's true (*Renae giggles.*) Thanks for bringing that up

Greg: Awesome↓ (0.8) Who's got the time?

Once again, Rachel did not hesitate to agree with Renae in recognition of her lapse. Rachel did so with a double affirmative, "you're so right that's true" (line 80), subsequently thanking Renae for "bringing that up" (line 80). Such actions demonstrated Rachel's sincere and humble acknowledgement of the lesson learned. She did not try to evade the matter by offering excuses or suggesting that Renae had misunderstood her or missed her intentions. There was no, "Oh, this was not what I meant to say." Rather, Rachel publicly owned her flaw. In turn, Renae's giggles (line 80), in contrast to her previous outbursts of laughter (lines 58, 59, 72), indicated her satisfaction with Rachel's humble recognition. This resolved and ended the second section of the speech event.

Table 5.4 Section 3 of the Moment of Crisis

Section 3 (5 minutes after Section 2)

Following this interaction, Erika asked for the class's attention to read aloud a few hate messages that educator Dell Perry Giles had received through e-mail; the messages came when Dell was taking action to open up the first English-Spanish bilingual charter school in the state of Georgia. The e-mails were loaded with biased, derogatory terms, mostly towards the Hispanic population. Erika pointed out that "real people out there" were thinking like that. Greg in turn personalized the matter by turning the focus to who those people might be:

Greg:	I think it's also important to think that it's not you know it's not completely	82
	our naivety that those people aren't out there <u>we</u> are those people (.) We have	83
	lived you know I grew up in a very racist lifestyle in a very racist family (.) hm	84
	you know our teacher next door to us may have those same viewpoints hm (.)	85
	some of us ↑ may struggle with those viewpoints you know and I don't think	86
	you know I don't think we're above reflecting on the fact that just you know	87
	hm (0.4) So it's never as simple as us versus them in any situation hm=	88
Rachel:	= In like Renae just pointed out that I had this like it's like underlying just	89
	assumption that I made of American equals White like I didn't even that was	90
	so buried but [like it's there	91
Greg:	[Exactly wow↓	92
Rachel:	(smiling, looking at Renae) Thank you for brin[ging it up.	93
Renae:	(sweetly) [Any time girl	94
	(Whole class laughs.)	95

Coda – “It's like underlying just assumption that I made of American equals White”

The speech event could very well have satisfactorily ended with Rachel's recognition and thank you to Renae during the **resolution**, but the fact of the matter is that it did not end there. A third section took place; a powerful **coda** that foregrounded and reinforced the **resolution**. Following the conclusion of the second section, Erika read aloud a few e-mail messages that Dell Perry Giles, an educator of her acquaintance, had received a few years earlier. Dell Giles had got the messages while taking action to open up the first bilingual English-Spanish charter school in the state.³⁹ The e-mails were hate messages

³⁹ Dell Perry Giles' (2010) dissertation was an autoethnographic study of the process and challenges of starting this public two-way immersion school in the state of Georgia. In her work, Giles provided an emic perspective of the procedures, struggles, strategies, and emotions involved in creating an educational program that defies the monolingual norms that dominate public education in the United States in general and in Georgia in particular.

loaded with derogatory terms, mostly directed at the Hispanic population, from people who opposed the opening of the bilingual school. Erika noted that there were “real people out there” who thought like that; Greg, however, went one step further and personalized the matter by pointing out that “we are those people” (line 83), highlighting the culpability of members of the White middle class: Greg’s family, the teacher next door, perhaps even some of the students in the class. Greg stressed that no one was above and beyond reflecting on how they might “struggle with” or be affected by racist viewpoints (lines 82-88). Tagging onto Greg’s utterance, Rachel spontaneously took the cue and resumed the earlier topic that “Renae just pointed out” (line 89). While five minutes earlier Rachel had humbly accepted Renae’s confrontation, this time Rachel went beyond simple acknowledgement—she put herself back in the spotlight, truly naming the elephant in the room: “it’s like underlying just assumption that I made of American equals White” (lines 89-90). As Rachel publicly named and described her own racist and stereotypical view, she also deconstructed and rejected it. In doing so, Rachel contributed to reconstructing and renaming the world of what it means to be American. Once again, Rachel thanked Renae, who in turn responded in a light-hearted, good-humored way: “Any time girl” (line 94). Renae’s words, typical of African American vernacular, expressed not just camaraderie but closeness and bonding. The class’s laughter (line 95) crowned this powerful speech event.

What Made This Moment of Crisis a Dialogic Speech Event?

If moments of crisis “make visible aspects of practices which might normally be naturalized” and “also show change in process, the actual ways in which people deal with the problematization of practices” (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 230), that is not to say that moments of crisis inherently indicate or lead to democratic, symmetrical or empowering processes or practices. It is likely that many moments of crisis end up in one or more interlocutors being silenced, ignored, and disempowered. Nonetheless, the moment of crisis examined above was a democratic and dialogic speech event because it aligned with Freire’s (1970) conception of dialogue and Burbules’ (1993) rules of dialogue⁴⁰. Burbules’ thinking has been

⁴⁰ Burbules (1993) was careful to properly note: “A few caveats about these rules are in order . . . for many participants in dialogue they will not be experienced as “rules,” but simply as extensions of their general

strongly influenced by three pillars of Freire's pedagogical theory—"the relational character of dialogue, a constructivist view of knowledge, and a nonauthoritarian conception of teaching" (Burbules, 1993, p. 6); these pillars are reflected in Burbules' rules of dialogue. Therefore such rules provide a solid basis to frame the analysis of this speech event.

Burbules' first rule of dialogue is called the *rule of participation*: Engagement in this type of communicative relation must be voluntary and open to active involvement by any of its participants. "What this means in practice is that any participant should be able to raise topics, pose questions, challenge other points of view, or engage in any of the other activities that define the dialogical relation" (Burbules, 1993, p. 80). The *rule of participation* entails democratic interactional organization of the conversation, that is, non-hierarchical, collaborative distribution of turns, selection and change of topics, and opening and closing of interactions (Fairclough, 1992a). In the speech event examined in this chapter, turn-taking was collaboratively managed among Greg and the students, rather than being asymmetrically controlled by the instructor. The participants were willing to share the conversational floor (Appendix F⁴¹), and all were free to raise topics (such as "I want to say something," Renae, line 14), pose questions ("Could you explain the dog situation again?" Renae, line 16), make comments ("I think the dog just wouldn't know what to do with you," Kristi, line 74), or just listen (the four students who did not speak during the interaction). Contextualization cues, such as intonation patterns, volume shifts, pausing, and facial expressions, signaled collaboration and respect among the participants (Appendix F).

Burbules' second rule of dialogue is the *rule of commitment*: Engagement in this type of communicative relation must allow the flow of conversation to be persistent and extensive across a range of shared concerns, even difficult or divisive ones. This entails willingness to pursue intersubjective understanding (which may or may not result in agreement), openness to disclose one's own underlying reasons, feelings and motivations, and engagement with the process, even in light of unclear or uncertain

communicative disposition . . . these principles are obviously not expressed as strict, formal injunctions . . . such rules should be subject to flexible interpretation and judgment . . . these principles are not laid down as absolute mandates" (p. 82).

⁴¹ For a detailed, line-by-line discourse analysis of this speech event, with a focus on social interactions/relations and proposed intertextuality and intercontextuality, see Appendix F.

outcomes (Burbules, 1993, p. 81). A significant instance in this speech event that illustrates commitment to the dialogic process was Greg's initiative to introduce a comment—that the guard dog was predispositioned to be aggressive or sensitive to dark-skinned people (lines 49-50)—in order to keep the conversation going. Greg was willing and determined to mediate the situation and stay with the process all the way, even in face of the unknown; he refused to let the topic drop unresolved when he sensed that might happen. He was in no hurry to get on with a pre-set agenda. Another relevant example of commitment to the communicative process can be seen in Rachel's questions to Renae requesting feedback (lines 44-45, 66-67), showing Rachel's willingness to pursue intersubjective understanding. Not less significant, of course, was Renae's courage to respectfully confront Rachel on a sensitive and potentially divisive subject (lines 68-69, 79), as well as Rachel's openness to face and name her own bias, the elephant in the room (lines 89-91).

Burbules' third rule of dialogue is called the *rule of reciprocity*: Engagement must be undertaken in a spirit of mutual respect and concern, and must not take for granted roles of privilege or expertise. This rule entails recognizing dialogue as a *relation* infused with respect, concern and care that participants share for one of another, even in face of disagreements. In this speech event, Rachel sincerely and warmly thanked Renae (lines 80, 93) for bringing up the sensitive topic, despite the clear confrontation she had faced. Rachel's action showed that she was able to *relate* to Renae with solidarity and care; that that was more important than any embarrassment Rachel might have felt. As for Renae, her actions also complied with the principle of reciprocity. Burbules (1993) argued that "a dialogical relation must be *reversible* and *reflexive*. In other words, what we ask of others we must be prepared for them to ask of us; and what we expect of others we must expect of ourselves. If we ask others questions, they can ask us questions" (p. 82). This aspect of reciprocity can be noticed in Renae's brief interaction with Kristi (lines 74-77). In other contexts or circumstances, a humorous aside comment such as Kristi's—"I think the dog just wouldn't know what to do with you" (line 74) — might have been met by her interlocutor with displeasure, irritation or suspicion at the least. However, Renae, who had just confronted Rachel (lines 68-69), accepted Kristi's comment good-willingly and went as far as expanding on it. Furthermore, Renae

was able to recognize Kristi's good intentions behind her otherwise dubious comment, because in previous classes Kristi had consistently taken the initiative to connect and interact with Renae in a spirit of friendliness and authentic care. This example foregrounds an aspect to be considered next; that "a dialogical relation needs to be sustained over time in order to be pedagogically beneficial" (Burbules, 1993, p. 82).

Clearly this moment of crisis did not happen out of a context, in a vacuum. In order to grasp its meaning more fully, it is important to consider its intertextual and intercontextual connections, since people, through interactions, construct relationships between and among past and future texts and between and among past and future events (Bloome et al., 2005). This dialogic speech event was made possible due to its intertextual and intercontextual ties to previous classes and texts, going all the way back to the first day of class, when Greg began to lay the foundation for teaching and learning in community. Greg had been enacting and modeling relational actions and dialogic patterns with "consistency and durability" (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 65) in his approach to the students, and they had been responding to and acting upon Greg's actions accordingly. The class had been learning how to engage in dialogue about complex, sensitive issues (see Chapter 4). On more than one occasion, Greg had explicitly argued for the need to discuss and deal with taboo issues that marginalize certain people based on social categories, rather than choose to ignore these difficult issues.

Some of Greg's pedagogical trademarks (see Chapter 4) that manifested in this moment of crisis were:

- paying close attention to students' nonverbal language, such as in "Renae? Was that a stretch?" (line 13)— In previous classes, Greg would frequently attempt to read the students' body language and facial expressions for the purpose of cuing them and encouraging them to speak up;
- "stretching" the dialogue, that is, taking action to mediate and stay with the process all the way to its completion, even in face of the unknown, at times even beyond scheduled class time;

- yielding and listening, such as when he immediately paused in the middle of an utterance to allow Renae to speak (line 55);
- using discourse markers that established non-hierarchical, democratic interactions with students (lines 82-88), such as subjective modality markers (“I think,” “I don’t think”) and other modals (“you know,” “may have”) that show solidarity with the speakers (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 160), and also inclusive pronouns (“some of us,” “we have lived,” “we are those people”).

So Rachel’s and Renae’s actions in this dialogic speech event mirrored the dialogic patterns that Greg had been consistently enacting and modeling in class. It was an empowering learning experience not just for Rachel and Renae, but for the other students, and Greg and Erika as well. In terms of knowledge, the speech event generated an expanded understanding of what it means to be American, ethnically speaking. Naturalized racial/ethnic aspects associated with this concept were contested, deconstructed, rejected and reconstructed in a more realistic and inclusive light. Furthermore, the event yielded a renewed understanding of the pervasiveness of racism, even in the presence of a sincere attempt to avoid the practice of racism. In terms of social relationships, democratic, respectful and caring relations were reflected and constructed among teacher and students through linguistic (verbal and nonverbal) elements in the interaction. As for social identities, Renae’s identity as an American was publicly reconstructed, affirmed, and recognized.

CHAPTER 6

DOING RESEARCH (AND TEACHING AND LEARNING) DIALOGICALLY

Greg (*to Erika*): Your field notes and memos add such depth to my understanding of what is occurring in class, and thus inform my pedagogy and development as a dialogic teacher and thinker. I am in dialogue with you as I read your notes, engaging internally with your observations, thoughts and questions, and as a result, in turn, I am in dialogue with the class as well.

In this chapter, I continue to tell the story of the Language and Culture class. I do so by honing in on actions and circumstances that happened out of the classroom but clearly impacted the development of the story that took place in the classroom over those fifteen weeks (see Chapter 4). An understanding of what went on in and out of the classroom provides a fuller and more accurate picture of what it meant to teach, learn, *and* do research dialogically in this context. This research study (and I) influenced the development of the class in ways I could never have anticipated. In the first few weeks of the semester, I was the researcher who rather naively tried to behave as inconspicuously as any “regular student” would in the classroom; this is the same person who, fifteen weeks later, read a very personal letter to the class in their last meeting at a Mexican restaurant. What happened in between that led me to write the students that letter, where I chose to publicly address each of them in an intimate way? Where did all that come from? How did I as the researcher get to that level of personalization and intimacy with the class? Answers to these questions should become clearer as I describe and examine what went on behind the scenes, in e-mail and personal interactions between Greg, the students and me throughout the semester.

I use *out* of the classroom in the sense of *out of scheduled class time*. So the term also encompasses a number of actions and interactions that took place in the physical space of the classroom, before and after class. Several series of interactions developed behind the scenes, in a complex, multilayered and multidirectional network. Dialogue was at the center of this complex network: between Greg and me, the students and me, Greg and the students, and possibly among the students themselves. In

this chapter I describe and examine the dialogical interactions between Greg and me, the students and me, and Greg and the students. I discuss some of the ways in which my actions influenced the participants of this study, and not less significantly, how their actions impacted me and the development of the study.

My Dialogical Interactions with Greg

Prior to the onset of this study, Greg and I already had a collaborative research partnership in place, since we had worked together on an earlier study (Study A) that investigated aspects of Greg's teaching practice (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011). Through this previous experience, we developed a research relationship marked by mutual respect, trust, and admiration. What had not taken place in our previous study, though, was the type of real-time, continuous, sustained, and recursive dialogical interactions that developed between us in this second study (Study B). This time, the two of us were communicating continually through e-mail messages, brief conversations before and after class, and longer "debriefing dialogues" (recorded sessions where we sought to make sense of the development of the class by sharing our perceptions and critiquing each other's assertions).⁴² During Stages 1 (Laying down the foundation) and 2 (Learning how to dialogue) in the class development (see Chapter 4), I took the initiative to e-mail Greg nearly every day to share my thoughts with him. I also sent him my fieldnotes and memos as e-mail attachments.⁴³ More often than not, Greg would e-mail me back with a note or two, or he might comment on the content of the messages the next time we met face to face. As this dynamic took shape, I wrote down in a memo for Week 3: *Greg's and my thoughts are meshed; it's hard to tell where our collaboration begins and ends... What he says and does influences my thinking; what I say and do impacts his thinking and teaching as well.* The dialogical relations between Greg and me formed the main core of the complex network of interactions that developed in the class.

⁴² While in Study A Greg and I also had a couple of "debriefing dialogues," they were neither recorded nor as long and frequent as in Study B. Also, in Study A these debriefing dialogues took place after the course had ended.

⁴³ In Study A, I did not think of sending Greg my fieldnotes during the semester; I only shared some of my fieldnotes with him once the course was over.

My impact on Greg's actions

I start out this section focusing on one example that illustrates how my actions were having an impact on Greg's pedagogy. I go back to a classroom event that happened in Week 3. That day Greg had the students pair up to talk about definitions they had written for the concept of culture. The students were asked to consider where they had been in their thinking before reading and discussing Nieto's (1999) chapter on the characteristics of culture, and where they got after reading the chapter, when they revisited their original definitions. After five minutes of pair work, Greg brought the class back together.

- Greg: Would anyone want to share something from their partner? Anything? Changes?
- Isabella: My partner had that culture is always changing. And I know that's been in the book a whole bunch, but it still, like, hasn't filtered into my mind, if that makes sense. I'm always, like, "so and so is from this culture and they, I don't know, eat rice and this, and historically do that," but I don't remember it's always changing. So I thought that's really important.
- Greg: Yeah, thanks for sharing that. I think it's a great point. What does it mean to latch on to that? What does it mean to really understand that culture is dynamic and it's always changing? To read it over and over, and to hear it over and over, but to really understand it, think about what that means in real life is difficult. It's difficult because it's reinforced through media, through stereotypes, through all these things that, you know, come from somewhere, right? Puerto Ricans do eat a lot of rice. Most Puerto Ricans do speak Spanish. But you do not have to speak Spanish or eat rice to be Puerto Rican, to be part of Puerto Rican culture. Those are two examples that Nieto talks about. And so it's hard to get away from what is thrown at us, you know, from media and common perceptions of other cultures, right? Yeah.
- Erika: Yeah. I was thinking, thinking back to Rosanna and Renae's poster last class, the example of the wall that you (*addressing Renae*) were talking about, so powerful, right, your sense that we construct the wall, the wall being culture and culture constructs us, and [which is] learned of course, within the wall, or on one side of the wall. Then I was thinking, when I view this wall, I view it more like a porous—Is that the word?—surface. You know? And I'm trying to relate that with the idea of [culture] being dynamic, it's changeable, it's like a wall that's always somehow changing, you know. So it doesn't separate us from the outside completely, but the way things come and go, that surface it's very...can't find a word for it...uh... you know?
- Greg: I like—it may not be what you're thinking of—but I liked the word you used. It's porous, it's permeable.
- Erika: Uh-huh. Somehow, yeah.
- Greg: If I can jump in, in the discussion we were having, Renae talked about initially her thinking about culture, it's very clear that culture is who you are, it's your identity. And immediately when she said that, I drew a bi-directional arrow on my little notepad here, that I would agree that culture is who you are in a sense, but it's also very bi-directional. By being who you are, which is heavily influenced by your culture, you then impact that culture and change it. You know, that wall that we construct as our culture is also constructing who we are. Did that help? Make sense?

- Erika: Yeah, yeah. And the older you get, the more... Because when you see your identity changing all the time, that you're not the same. I am not the same any longer as compared to when I was your age (*looking at the students*). You probably hear that, right, from your parents as well, I mean, but it's so true. Change. It's just that you don't realize it, how much you change, unless you walk the road, you know.
- Greg: Yeah, that brings us to a great point and it's really the heart behind why we do, in this course, we begin these I Am poems and we work towards the cultural autobiography. If your goal is to teach, and many folks have written about this, if our goal is to teach, whether we choose to be ESL teachers or not, this nation is changing toward a more diverse place. Period. Culturally, linguistically, ethnically, racially. No longer is it Black, White, Hispanic. You know, it's incredibly complicated in terms of biracial, in terms of all of these things. To be a successful citizen in that country is one thing; to be a successful educator whose charge is to prepare young people to go out and be successful in this nation, you have to have given some deep, sustained consideration of who you are culturally, and how you understand your place in teaching as a result of that. And so this is kind of the beginning of that process, thinking, you know, like Erika talks about, thinking of and reflecting on who you are culturally and how that has changed. That's an incredibly important step in becoming competent and skilled and at least open to working with culturally and linguistically diverse kids and families. Yeah. Some of us may have had extremely diverse experiences growing up in our schools, in our communities, but most of us really haven't. And then to think about going into public schools that more and more will look like that, it's certainly a challenge. Okay? Uh... I don't want to cut anyone off. Does anyone else want to say something before we move on?

In my fieldnotes for that class, written later that day, I recorded:

Today in class initially I had the sense that I was talking too much. That made me feel uncomfortable. I even jotted down to myself at 11:20: "Cala a boca, Erika!" ("Shut up, Erika!") This right after Greg and I had talked about culture being dynamic, changeable, having a porous, permeable surface; our evolving identities; and the increasing cultural diversity in public schools, and the need for teachers to acknowledge and respond to that. After listening to the class recording, however, I realized that Greg and I had actually modeled⁴⁴ for the students what a dialogical interaction could look like in the classroom; that is, Greg and I each built on, clarified and/or added to a point that the other had just made. So together we were constructing a broader whole that wouldn't have been constructed without our individual participation. I've noticed that when Greg asks a question and someone replies, it is uncommon for another student to spontaneously respond to or comment on what that someone has just said, even when Greg asks the class, "What do you think?" Perhaps Greg should ask them to "stretch" the dialogue more among themselves?

The following morning, I e-mailed Greg these unedited fieldnotes and reflective memo. Just one day later, in our next class, Greg introduced the "piggyback" activity, prompting the students to "stretch"

⁴⁴ Much later, in our interview at the end of the semester, Isabella spontaneously made the comment that, by actively speaking up, I had been a model for what they were supposed to do in the class. "You modeled for us the whole teaching and student at the same time," she observed.

their dialogue by listening carefully and responding to what the others were saying in order to build connections among the circulating contributions. A lively class discussion ensued (see Chapter 4, p. 105).

This was not the first time I noticed that my fieldnotes and memos were having an influence on Greg and his teaching; a week earlier I had already sensed it, when Greg introduced The Multicultural Me activity in class and made comments that responded to and expanded on at least one thing each student had shared (see Table 6.1, 08/28). It didn't take long for Greg himself to acknowledge and seek to understand that influence as well. In Week 3, he wrote in an e-mail to me:

The sharing of memos and field notes leads me to very explicitly rethink what's happening in the classroom and how I should/need to respond to it. This to me is almost like carrying out an "experimental" study—Erika's memo's/feedback on what's happening in the classroom act as the "treatment"---If my goal is to create the best classroom environment that invites student experience into the classroom in ways that enrich and extend our thinking about language, learning, and culture, then how can I NOT respond/react to the information I take in from Erika's observations?

On several occasions, Greg also brought up the subject in our conversations. He described what he was experiencing: "I'm sitting there reading [your fieldnotes], and I'm sure there was one line or one observation, or something in particular, I don't know what it is right now, that made me think, "I need to do this, boom." You know, and instantly it's transformed, it's taken my teaching to a different place."

I had not anticipated **at all** that my fieldnotes could have such an impact on Greg's teaching. At first, I basically had two reasons for sending him the notes: I wanted to demonstrate respect and transparency in my research relationship with him, and I was seeking his member's checking for accuracy of what I had written.⁴⁵ Ultimately, I believed that sharing my fieldnotes with Greg would help validate my study. However, pretty soon it struck me that I had totally underestimated the reach of my actions; I had underestimated the use Greg himself might make of the material I was sending him. When I began to realize that Greg was drawing on my fieldnotes to effect changes in his own teaching practice, this in turn motivated me to not just record the facts, but also expand on my questions, reflections, and critique in the memo sections. So Greg's reactions were also affecting my new actions. I was excited that my notes were

⁴⁵ As it happened, only once did Greg question the accuracy of something that I had written. He was right on in his observation, and I corrected my fieldnotes accordingly.

resonating with Greg and were serving as a tool that could positively impact the class development, and I wanted to see how far it could go, or how effective it could be.

Table 6.1 Erika↔Greg Actions↔Reactions⁴⁶

Date	Action	Date	Reaction
08/11	Erika asks Greg to administer a questionnaire to the students on the first day of class, to collect their previous experiences with university classes following a dialogic format.	08/18	Greg administers the questionnaire. Some students write that they are uncomfortable with or don't like dialogic classes. In the 2nd class, Greg decides to be "more subtle in terms of letting it [his dialogic teaching] evolve."
08/26	Erika e-mails Greg her fieldnotes and memo for the 3rd class (08/25). The memo is packed with questions, such as: "Why are the students so reticent? Should Greg try to explore the short answers they're giving to his questions? Should he have tried to "stretch" their answers?"	08/28	During the Multicultural Me activity, Greg comments and expands on at least one thing that each student shares about herself. Greg tries to relate to the students by finding points in common or simply showing interest in what they say and asking them follow-up questions.
09/01	Erika shares with Greg the struggle she's facing navigating her roles and trying to minimize her interference in the classroom. She says that she has been making an effort to speak less in class because she wants to sound like a "normal student" rather than a teacher.	09/01 09/03	Greg replies that the point is that all students should become teachers too; he encourages Erika to continue participating and speaking up. Greg e-mails Erika to encourage her to reflect upon her influence in the study, in order to fully understand its impact.
09/02	Erika e-mails Greg her fieldnotes and memo for the 5th class (09/01): "I've noticed that when Greg asks a question and someone replies, it is uncommon for another student to spontaneously comment on what that person just said. If I were Greg, after someone's initial answer I would encourage the others to add to it; I would only disclose my opinion after all the volunteers had shared."	09/03	Greg e-mails Erika his reflections: "The sharing of memos and fieldnotes leads me to very explicitly rethink what's happening in the classroom and how I should/need to respond to it." Later in class, Greg introduces a "piggyback" activity to prompt the students to respond to what the others are saying. He explains that the goal is to go "more than just one deep" in the discussions, on their dialogue.
09/03	In their 2nd debriefing dialogue, Greg tells Erika about his dual aims for the class: (1) creating a space for the group to do things that foster building a learning community and (2) debriefing with the students about the process they're experiencing. He points out his struggle with achieving both aims in a 75-minute class.	09/04	Erika e-mails Greg the transcript of their 2nd debriefing dialogue (09/03) and suggests: "Why not send this transcript to the students and see what they make of it? Could this be the springboard for talking in class about the process you were looking for?"
09/08	Greg suggests to Erika that she should feel free to choose to share her notes with the students, because it's her study after all.	09/10	Erika e-mails the students two pages of her fieldnotes and a 30-minute transcript of her 2nd debriefing dialogue with Greg.

⁴⁶ A fuller, more detailed version of this table is available in Appendix E.

09/21	Erika e-mails Greg a 5-page letter with her views on the development of the class and how she is reading each student. She describes what she perceives is Greg's understanding of dialogue, and defines her own. She says that she thinks that the topic "Dialogue in Education" is missing from the course syllabus, since the class aims to prepare dialogic educators. She offers to put something together in order to lead a class session on the topic.	10/01 10/01 & 10/05	Greg e-mails Erika a 2-page response letter. He notes the importance of member checking. He explains his understanding of dialogue, and how it differs from how Erika is perceiving it. Greg e-mails the students to inform that they would be having a mid-semester discussion the next class to address a few questions, including: "What is this kind of teaching? What are you learning? What does it mean to dialogue? Have we engaged in dialogue in this class? What examples can you identify?"
10/05	Erika e-mails Greg her fieldnotes for the 10/01 class.	10/06	Greg e-mails Erika back to ask her to double-check her fieldnotes. He highlights a couple of sentences in them: "Erika, I really think you've missed something here. I don't recall anything about a "sister"...maybe check the tape..."
11/17	In their 5th debriefing dialogue, Erika suggests to Greg that he might be overloading the students with two back-to-back assignments due right after Thanksgiving break.	11/17	Greg reviews his decision and later that day e-mails the students with new instructions on one of the assignments, that would make it simpler and "LOW stress, ungraded, but very beneficial (and fun)."

Greg's impact on my actions

Before I consciously decided to seek to influence Greg's teaching and thus also the development of the class, I had to make a few choices pertaining to my various roles in the study. Greg's influence was crucial in helping me decide how I was going to position myself and behave in and out of the classroom.

During the first couple of weeks of class (Stage 1: Laying down the foundation), I tried to behave as inconspicuously as possible in the classroom. I made a conscious effort to refrain from speaking much during the lessons so as not to affect the development of the class and the study. At first, I was naively missing the perspective that I too was a participant; I was a member of the group seated at the square of desks. Whether I had intended it or not, I was part of the evolving culture of the class. As I began to reach this understanding, my participation in class started to change. Initially, I took on the student role more actively, for instance, by signing up to be a discussion leader like everybody else; doing the weekly readings and course assignments; and seeking to respond to the students' contributions during discussions as I perceived a "regular undergraduate student" might respond (with shorter, objective comments).

Still, I continued to struggle with navigating my roles in the class. I wondered how I could minimize my interference while contributing my views and multicultural experiences to the class. Given my background in teaching and my varied life experiences, playing just the “regular student” role was not satisfying to me. I was unsure of what to do with my teacher role, though. Neither did I want to overdo my researcher role (which would be how I would have felt, had the students kept a distance and identified and treated me as “the researcher in the classroom”). I was desperately seeking some sort of balance in my participation in class and in the study.

It was Greg who helped me get out of that “between a rock and hard place” situation. During Week 3, as I shared my struggles with him in one of our brief conversations after class, he enlightened me by making the point that the goal in teaching and learning is that *all students become teachers too*, that is, teachers *and* students should feel free to share and contribute to the joint construction of knowledge. Greg encouraged me to continue participating and speaking up in class, since I was a member of the community. A couple days later, he added to this point by e-mailing me his reflections: “While I understand Erika’s feelings of not wanting to “influence the study,” I also assert that this goal is rather pointless. The influence must be acknowledged, considered and reflected upon, in order to fully understand its impact.” Greg’s comments motivated me to ponder my roles and take a stand. The ensuing landmark was a memo I wrote at the end of Week 3:

How do I see myself in regards to this study? Is it more like a researcher or a co-teacher? What is the most important thing for me to accomplish? Is it a beautiful dissertation, with all the trimmings, or is it a dialogic learning community where ALL THE STUDENTS HAVE HAD A SUCCESSFUL, POWERFUL, MEMORABLE learning experience, something to treasure and remember for the rest of their teaching-learning lives? Would I give up the PhD title for that? Of course, it is highly unlikely that I would have to choose one or the other... But what is guiding my actions in this research, what is my compass? Are my thoughts, actions, suggestions to Greg on classroom procedures directed at fostering better DATA for my study? Is data what I want the most? Or is it to fulfill my own teacher beliefs and pedagogy through Greg’s capable hands? He’s amazing as a teacher, in so many ways! I tend to think it is the teacher in me that motivates me the most; the exciting expectation to see my deep beliefs fulfilled through Greg. So that, in the end, the students have been empowered, have learned, have grown, have been encouraged to do the same [teach the same way], and to write their own stories. My recently discovered “persona” of teacher-educator may be behind it all, perhaps surpassing and somehow also encompassing my researcher and teacher identities. Who knows??

So once I looked into myself and began to reach the understanding that my teacher role prevailed over the other roles, I was able to reconcile with myself and reach the balance I was searching for. From then on, I made a conscious choice to participate and offer my two cents in class as a teacher-learner whenever I felt I had a contribution to make. At the same time, the researcher in me continued to strive to understand and document my influence in the study as thoroughly as possible, as Greg had suggested.

I later came to see that it was Greg's attitude towards me and his reactions to my feedback that made all the difference in the choices I made. Not only did Greg welcome me into his classroom, he welcomed me as a co-teacher in and out of his classroom. In class, I was encouraged to participate and contribute my life experiences and views in the field of multicultural studies and language learning; out of class, my fieldnotes and memos were welcomed and valued as pedagogical tools. An effective cycle was set in motion: Greg would take my feedback, consider it and often translate it into some innovative approach or activity in the classroom. His reactions, in turn, were actions that fueled new reactions in me—I would reflect on the developments in the class and act on these reflections by writing and sending Greg new fieldnotes that might continue influencing his teaching practice. At the end of the semester, Greg's "inner voice" summed up how he felt about receiving this feedback; the positive, fruitful experience he had: "Look! I'm learning so much about how I teach and what I'm doing because you [Erika] are sharing this with me, and you sharing this with me is going to influence what I choose to do tomorrow; and so, yes, you're going to impact it; so embrace it. Because if you chose to withhold these fieldnotes, you may get a more authentic picture about how my teaching really is throughout the semester, but is that the point?"⁴⁷

If I put on my co-teacher hat in this study, so did Greg put on a hat—his co-researcher hat. Or, most likely, he simply did not take it off once we completed our earlier study (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011). Our research partnership evidently did not end with this new study; our roles just shifted somewhat. This time I was the principal investigator and invested considerably more time and effort in the study than he did—it was my dissertation, after all—still, Greg was also wholeheartedly engaged in

⁴⁷ No, Greg, I soon realized that was definitely not the point!

the process. It was Greg the researcher who suggested that I consider and reflect upon my influence in the study; who, as early as Week 3, said to me in anticipation: “I think there’s a fascinating conversation that will evolve throughout this process that is more about how this interaction between you and me directly impacts and influences what happens in the classroom”; who, in a series of conversations and e-mails, engaged with me in the challenging task of understanding and defining dialogue; who took the time to write down and e-mail me a note that looked more like a reminder to himself (something that he should get back to): “I think there is much to be written and developed regarding our dialogues as an approach to research analysis and consequently ways of knowing; just writing myself a little note/memo here....”; who, in short, was always willing to discuss the developing study with me. I consistently drew on Greg’s feedback and observations to help me decide on my subsequent steps. Since this study was obviously a top priority for me but was also meaningful to Greg, we ended up taking our research partnership to a new, more intense, sustained and recursive level, as compared to our previous study.

As a result, as Stages 1 (Laying down the foundation) and 2 (Learning how to dialogue) were taking place in the classroom, behind the scenes Greg and I were influencing each other in a continuous and sustained dialogue, and in ways totally beyond an absolute understanding and description. Pretty soon, what started out with the two of us turned into a chain of dialogical interactions (actions and reactions) that ended up binding and affecting all the members of the classroom community in a complex, multilayered and multidirectional network. The next section examines the dialogical interactions that developed between the students and me in this network.

My Dialogical Interactions with the Students

A useful way to start out this section is by considering the farewell letter I wrote and read to the students in our last get-together (see Chapter 4, p. 137). I presume that most people would be willing to concur that the intimate tone and content of the letter is not typical of what would be expected in communication between a researcher and participants in a research study. While I certainly had on my researcher hat throughout the study, from the moment Greg issued the green light and I put on my co-teacher hat, I never took it off. To me, donning this co-teacher hat entailed not just participating with my

two cents in class and offering Greg feedback on his teaching; it also meant fostering personal relations with the students, since theory and practice have convinced me that relationships are at the heart of teaching and learning (Vasconcelos, 2011). Given the circumstances of this study—the limited time for one-on-one interactions with the students during class, and the fact that Greg, not I, was the instructor of record and the teacher per se—it so happened that the bulk of my personal relationships with the students as a co-teacher developed out of the classroom, in face-to-face and e-mail interactions.

Had I acted solely as a traditional researcher in interacting with the students, I doubt I would have gotten very far. It is true that all but one of the students promptly accepted my invitation to participate in the study, by returning signed participant consent forms to me within the first two weeks of classes. However, that was pretty much the only response—other than silence—that I got from them to my researcher actions for most of the semester. More specifically, during the fieldwork stage of the study, none of the students ever replied back to my e-mail messages addressed to the whole group where I provided information on the study or requested feedback on a couple of drafts of preliminary analyses that I sent them. Seldom did I get the sense that this study was of particular interest to them.⁴⁸

Had I put on just the researcher and the student hats, I would have gotten farther, but would still have been limited in my results. On the one hand, playing the student role offered me the opportunity to engage with the students in class activities such as pair and group work; I had access to the views and thoughts they shared in class. As such, I was able to form one picture of the evolving culture and development of the learning community. On the other hand, playing just the researcher and student roles would have frustrated my wish to contribute my knowledge and experiences as an educator to the class, and perhaps more significantly, would have limited my opportunities to get to know the students at a deeper level and gain access to the views and thoughts that, for whatever reason, they could not share in

⁴⁸ However, there were two occasions when two students showed some interest during the field work stage of the study. Once, Rachel asked Greg a question in class about something that she said she had read in the transcript of a debriefing dialogue between Greg and me. I had e-mailed the students the transcript a couple of weeks before. On another occasion, Isabella wrote in an e-mail addressed to Greg (she copied me on it): “As you are studying dialogic communities and their effects on your class’s learning (...)” and “I hope my comments will be helpful in your study.”

class. I would have missed forming a fuller picture of the evolving culture and development of the learning community.

By combining the co-teacher role, both in and out of the classroom, with my researcher and student roles, I was able to maximize my results. As I prioritized establishing personal, dialogical relations with each student as a co-teacher, I would observe and listen to them carefully in order to reach out to them with something—a question, a comment, a suggestion—that might resonate with or be useful to them. As I interacted with the students as a co-teacher, the focus was not me or this study; the focus was each of them. Whether in face-to-face conversations or e-mail interactions, I wanted to help them learn, grow, and experience the class to the fullest. Interestingly enough, while no one would respond to my researcher messages addressed to them all, whenever I sent them individual e-mails tailored to each of them, they *always* answered back. Most of these e-mail exchanges initiated around the beginning of Stage 3 in the class development (Engaging in critical reflection and self-inquiry), when the students started presenting their cultural autobiographies. Usually, aspects of their presentations prompted me to e-mail them with compliments, comments and questions.

By putting on my co-teacher hat, not only was I tangibly able to contribute to their learning, thus fulfilling my own aspirations as a multicultural educator, I also got to know them better and gained access to a number of their views and thoughts that they did not share in the classroom. As far as this study goes, I reaped the fruits of doing research dialogically; relating to each student individually ultimately provided me with rich data and allowed for a fuller, multi-angled picture of the development of the learning community. To me, it was no coincidence that in the last couple weeks of classes, as the students were dealing with final exams and “all that jazz” (as Kristi would say), all of them, without exception, gladly and generously made time to meet with me for individual interviews. The students also brought me hard copies of the written work they had produced in the course or sent it to me as e-mail attachments. I doubt that these responses were borne out of a newly-found interest in my study; rather, I believe they stemmed from the students’ wish to relate back to me and help me in my work.

Developing personal relationships with the students did not come without its challenges, however. It became a learning process tailored to each student. It was certainly more challenging with some than others. With a few of the young women, it came quite naturally; with a couple of others, it turned into a rather time-consuming task that demanded varying degrees of attention and effort on my part. Next I describe characteristics of the personal dialogical relations that developed between the students and me, from the least challenging to the most challenging endeavor: 1) Kristi, Rachel, Rosanna, and Jenna, 2) Lauren and Isabella, and (last but definitely not least) 3) Renae.

Kristi, Rachel, Rosanna, and Jenna

I group these four students together not because of the similarities among my interactions with them, but essentially because from the start I felt comfortable striking up a relationship with each of them. One way or another, getting to know them happened smoothly and enjoyably. I believe it also helped that I had the chance to engage in pair work activities with all four of them early on in the course.

Rosanna and Jenna didn't speak much, but I could count on their kind smiles and/or smiling eyes any time, making it easy even for an introvert like me to approach them. Rosanna and Jenna looked shy, but also friendly and receptive to me. In brief conversations with Rosanna before and after class, I learned the meaning of her name ("Test me," in a language from her father's birthplace in Africa), and a little about her family and professional background. One day, Rosanna took the initiative to greet me in Portuguese, "Como vai?" "Tudo bem," I was delighted to reply. She explained that she had learned the greeting "Como vai?" at the school where she used to teach. After that, I would often say hello and goodbye to Rosanna in Portuguese, prompting her to answer back, which she always did.

As for Jenna, since we were scheduled to lead one of the class discussions together, I had the chance to meet with her out of class to plan our lesson. As we were planning the lesson, I called her attention to the basics of doing a critical reading of a text (from the standpoint of identifying and questioning undemocratic, biased ideological assumptions; see Wallace, 1995, 2003)—something she had never been exposed to in school. On another, more personal note, several weeks later she shared in her cultural autobiography presentation about the negative effects of her parents' divorce and her father's

absence in her life. The next day, I e-mailed her to commend her on her courage to talk about such an intimate matter in class; I also wrote about my own experience dealing with my parents' divorce and learning to relate to my father. Jenna promptly e-mailed me back: "Thank you so much for sharing your similar experience that you have had with your father. It really makes me feel good that someone can somewhat relate and actually cares to listen."

Of all the students in the class, Rachel was the one whom I met the most with out of the classroom. It was not unusual for the two of us to converse for thirty minutes to an hour at a time. I first approached Rachel right after our third class (Week 2), to tag onto an example that she had just shared in class illustrating the importance of teachers valuing cultural differences (see Chapter 4, p. 97). Drawing on my personal experience as an immigrant child and the mother of Latino children, I spoke to Rachel of the importance of teachers connecting to their students and finding ways to help diverse kids fit in and be accepted in class. Rachel, in turn, commented that she had never had a teacher that impacted her that way, as a mentor. Her answer surprised me, and I told her I would like to hear more about that. I also mentioned that I had been working on a draft of my autoethnography of my teacher-student self (Vasconcelos, 2011), and since Rachel showed interest in reading it, I said I would e-mail it to her. From that first conversation, our subsequent interactions developed into a sort of relationship that might resemble that of a mentor-mentee. Rachel read my autoethnography and, at her request, we met over lunch halfway through the semester to talk about my experiences and ideas about education. Our conversations recurrently revolved around Rachel's effort and need to make sense of course concepts such as political education, critical pedagogy, and social justice in light of her religious upbringing and beliefs. Coming from a Christian background myself, I was motivated to help Rachel find common ground between her deep religious beliefs and a political educational practice that at heart validates the humanizing values inherent in Christianity (such as love, freedom, trust, care, justice). As I wrote to her in my farewell letter, "You reminded me that faith, science, and knowledge are totally compatible and interconnected. You made me want to search for those connections this semester." Indeed, I did find such

connections in a couple of authors (Osborn, 2006; Kristjánsson, 2007; Shepard-Wong & Canagarajah, 2009) and I shared some of their work and ideas with Rachel.

As for Kristi—bubbly, outgoing, friendly Kristi—had I not wished to relate personally to her, she would have made sure I did so anyway! In the very first day of class, she picked me as a partner in the introductions activity proposed by Greg. That same day, we shared more about ourselves after class, as we walked together out the building back home (Kristi) and to the parking lot (me). My interactions with Kristi happened mostly in person (rather than through e-mail). On the day Kristi delivered her cultural autobiography, I came up to her after class to say that I was very touched by her presentation. I also emphasized that I was learning very much with her attitudes and participation in the class. Later that day I found an e-mail from Kristi in my mailbox:

Hey Erika! I just want to say thank you for what you said to me after class! It means so much to me that you would take the time to tell me those sweet things! I don't know if you noticed, but what you said to me really caught me off guard and I wasn't expecting it! To say that I inspire YOU... I can't fathom it. You are such an outstanding individual and I learn so much from you every class period. Our conversation this afternoon has really encouraged me to continue on this path and allow my heart to open up to new people and opportunities! Thank you so much for your kind words this afternoon! Oh, and if you do want to interview me for your study you are more than welcome to ;) Thanks again, Kristi.

Lauren and Isabella

Developing personal relations with Lauren and Isabella did not come as naturally to me. At first, something in their demeanor—which I read as polite but reserved—intimidated me; I was unsure of how to read their body language or how to approach them. This sentiment was more pronounced and lasted longer towards Isabella than Lauren, so I devoted more time and thought to figuring out how to connect to Isabella than Lauren. It so happened that, rather unexpectedly, I had my breakthrough with Lauren during a pair work activity in the classroom itself, when we were asked to brainstorm ideas on the cultural autobiography assignment. The opportunity allowed me to give personal, undivided attention to Lauren; I started out telling her that I was all ears because I would not be doing the assignment just then. Lauren, in turn, gave me a preview of the content and format she chose for her project: a collage portraying topics and themes that ought to be incorporated into an ideal multicultural classroom (see Chapter 4, p. 125).

Lauren emphasized that she wished to make her future classroom a safe place where all students are treated fairly. As she confessed her struggle with topics like homosexuality, condemned by her religious dogmas, she also affirmed that she was willing to deal with it. I told Lauren that it sounded like a great plan, and I let her know that her struggle was my own. I also said that I felt that the purpose of the assignment was precisely for each of us to explore possible struggles and clashes between our culture and viewpoints and other people's culture and viewpoints, with a focus on finding ways to successfully address such clashes in our teaching practice, in order to respect everyone's truths. Lauren and I had a good conversation that day, one whose effects in a sense lasted throughout the semester. That first contact was enough to establish commonality and bind us as a student-teacher and teacher-student working towards pursuing the same goal in education.

As for Isabella, she was the first student to whom I sent an individual e-mail because by Week 5 I still hadn't found a way to get through to her. The e-mail served the purpose quite well. It read:

Hi Isabella,

This is just a short note to say that I really enjoyed listening to the Runaway Bunny story you read to us in class today. I had never heard it and I found it very sweet and poetic. I can understand why it was one of your childhood favorites. I missed not having time in class to respond to your sharing and to ask a few questions. I feel that stories like the Runaway Bunny, "universal" in nature, can make great resources in teaching young and older students from all cultures.

I also want to say that I really appreciated working with you on our debate [on structural inequality vs. meritocracy] and hearing your insightful and solid comments and critique. I'm glad we had you in our group, and I encourage you to offer your knowledge more often in our class discussions. You're definitely a critical thinker!

Thanks again, and see you in class,

Erika

Isabella answered back just 50 minutes later:

Erika,

I'm so glad you enjoyed the Runaway Bunny! I personally love sharing books with others and it is my hope to instill the love of reading in everyone.

I was actually dreading our class discussion today! I honestly see truth in both views. I don't know a possible solution for structural inequality and I can't say that there isn't some merit in meritocracy either. Anyway, I really enjoyed our discussion today and I appreciate your interest in what I had to say, as well as your encouragement.

Have a great rest of week and weekend!

Cordially,

Isabella Hunt

Two hours later, I wrote her back, starting out: “Yes, Isabella, I have to admit there is truth in both views. And part of being critical is admitting that as well, so I understand your discomfort in taking up a position so “one-sidedly”. Thanks for sharing your candid view with me. I can’t resist sharing a personal example that attests to the complexity of the matter.” I went on to share a pertinent example involving my own son. Three days later, Isabella e-mailed me back to comment on the example I had shared. (In hindsight, I wish I had kept the conversation going—it was an interesting discussion—but her second e-mail was the end of that interactional chain.)

Nevertheless, the dialogue between the two of us continued, whether through a few more e-mails or a couple of brief conversations after class. On the day she very competently led class discussion, I approached her after the lesson to commend her on the great job she had done. We further engaged in a follow-up conversation on tracking, the topic of the lesson, for another 10 minutes or so. As I came to know her better, Isabella in several ways reminded me of the student I had been at her age—reserved, serious, disciplined, self-assured, content-driven, grade-oriented—and I let her know so more than once.

Renae

*Renae, you gave me an insider’s perspective and understanding of international education. You showed me the importance of being authentic and standing up **in your way** for what you believe in. You taught me that **fabulous mysteries** are all around us, and that it is so worth undertaking the challenge of figuring out those mysteries. You reminded me that relationships are **always** worth the effort.*

I weighed with extreme care each of the words (above) that I wrote and read to Renae in our last class meeting. I meant every single one of them, even before I came to understand the “mystery” a little better, when I interviewed Renae a couple days after writing those words. In any event, by the time I wrote them, I had already unmistakably learned with Renae that I should always look beyond appearances and double-check my first (and second, and third) impressions of students.

From the first day of class, Renae’s deep, serious, penetrating look caught my attention. Before I learned her name, I met her gaze. It stood out among the other students’ either receptive or neutral eye expressions. When I realized I could not make out the message behind her eyes, I felt disconcerted and

intimidated. In the classroom, I was conscious of Renae's presence; out of the classroom, she was on my mind far longer than any of the other students. But for half of the course, I was at a total loss with Renae.

It didn't help that she was the only student who did not return the signed participant consent form to me within the first couple weeks of classes. Renae just silenced in regards to my invitation to participate in the study. I tried to put the matter on the back burner and make the best with what I had. And I resorted to my fieldnotes and memos, where my comments about Renae—the “mystery” in the class—soon took on a diary-like tone. For the first half of the semester, she was a sustained presence in my fieldnotes for most classes. In Week 3, I wrote: “I would love for Renae to participate in the study, but she hasn't returned the signed participant consent form. She is so insightful and smart. It's a shame that she doesn't seem to wish to participate...” Week 4: “Renae to me is still much of a mystery. She seems to be interested, but she is often late and sometimes gives me the sense she's “playing a game” to please the teacher; at other times, she contributes comments that give me the sense she is really engaged. She still hasn't brought me the signed participant consent form, though.” Week 6: “Renae continues to be a mystery to me. Why is her look so intense, but so serious, so standoffish, so surly? I just can't look into her. I doubt she will let me figure her out. She's very disconcerting; at times, apparently engaged; at others, so disconnected and looking bored...” And Week 7: “As she frequently does, Renae put on a “detached” attitude and sat by herself. When I was speaking to the class, the few times I risked looking her way I faced that typical, now well-known gaze of hers, a mix of suspicion, reservation, and who knows what else. I'm always uncomfortable looking her in the eye...” My fieldnotes for Week 7 continued: “As usual, Renae was one of the last ones to leave, lingering back to talk to Greg about assignments. She said that now that she had seen some examples of the cultural autobiography, she had an idea of what she wanted to do for her own presentation. I've felt that she's been trying to “suck out” information and tips from Greg to make up for her own lack of reading and work. Am I being biased towards Renae and her intentions here??”

Much later, after the semester was over and I reread and examined my fieldnotes, I was ashamed to realize how inherently biased and inaccurate my perceptions of Renae had been—just because I could

not grasp her. While I was taking note of all the walls that Renae was building around herself, *I* had been the one to build the most walls against her! Nonetheless, I was very grateful that my co-teacher role, not my researcher role, prevailed and took over in my relationship with Renae. Perhaps, had I been just a researcher in this situation, I might have written her off, since apparently she had refused to participate in the study anyway. However, the co-teacher in me didn't let me do that; I could not give up on Renae, I just *had* to figure her out. Gradually, I guess, I made it my mission to understand Renae; my investigative teacher spirit *needed* to know what she was all about. "There's got to be more," I told myself. "The person I'm seeing is not who she is; it's just that we are not coming from the same places."

So, despite the biased impressions in my fieldnotes, I simultaneously took action to behave naturally and "neutrally," and to somehow make a connection with Renae. My first two attempts did not take us far. During a Week 4 class, Greg mentioned that Renae was not feeling well and might be absent that day, but she ended up coming to class. After the lesson, I approached her to ask if she was feeling better; I also commented on how pretty I found the black dress she had on. Her response was short and objective: "Thank you, I'm feeling better, but I'm seeing a doctor later today." I felt that was all she wanted to say (or wanted me to say). My next attempt to approach her, a week later, didn't go any better. She had missed the previous lesson and was coughing a bit in class. Meaning to sound sympathetic, I said to her, "I see you still have a cold." From her response, I sensed she thought I underestimated her condition: "No, I had a respiratory [something]" (the word she used has not yet made it into my active English vocabulary). I felt embarrassed and tried to explain what I had meant to say; that I could see she was not completely well and healed. But she had trouble hearing me because of the noise in the classroom—we were moving desks around just then—so I doubt I was able to clear it up with her.

Still, I persisted. And like I had done with Isabella, I turned to e-mail. In Week 8, I decided to give Renae feedback on her excellent cultural autobiography presentation (see Chapter 4, p. 121), in a long, two-page single-spaced letter attached to an e-mail. On the one hand, I pointed out what I had learned from her and how it related to my own cultural background: "Getting to see and hear a little about your family made me understand a bit better where you're coming from and what is valuable to you;

notions such as discipline, hierarchy, closeness, family ties, authenticity (being authentic), education, religion, among others. You have a truly fascinating family, and in a sense I could relate to a lot of what you showed because I too come from a large, close-knit family where everybody is there for everybody.” On the other hand, I questioned her understanding of multicultural education, shared my own, and further invited her thoughts on the matter in light of her experiences as a high school student in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program: “You said that you feel education as a whole should be just education, rather than having multicultural education, that might seclude some students (...) It seems to me that several of the IB goals overlap with what advocates of multicultural education aim for. International education programs basically aim to equip students with a broader world view and cross-cultural communication skills, clearly valuing ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity. Isn’t that in many ways what multicultural education is and/or should be about? You seem uncomfortable with multicultural education. How do you feel about the label “international education”?” In the letter, I stressed that her presentation had lingered on with me, as I was trying to understand her and get a sense of where she was coming from. I repeatedly expressed that I was looking forward to getting to know Renae and her ideas better.

The next day, to my surprise Renae took the initiative to come up to me, and we talked for a few minutes after class. She shared her thoughts on similarities and differences between multicultural education and international education. A couple days later, I e-mailed her again with another question on the topic. “I myself am clueless about the answer. Any thoughts?” I asked. This time, Renae e-mailed me back a long message detailing her experiences in the IB program and how it differed from multicultural education as currently practiced. She raised interesting points that I felt drawn to respond to in yet another e-mail (the last one in this chain; but a few other e-mails between the two of us followed).

And so it was that, at last, I had found a way to connect to Renae: through intellectual curiosity. If Renae learned from our e-mail exchange on multicultural education and international education and revisited her initial ideas on multicultural education (as I later realized she did), so did I learn about international education from Renae’s experiences. And just a couple days after Renae first approached me in class, something even more unexpected happened, and I learned such a striking lesson. During our oral

midterm evaluation, Renae spoke of Greg and me as “lovely people who had a lot to pass on” (see Chapter 4, p. 119). I was flabbergasted! Renae—who seemed intent on keeping a distance from us all in her choice of seat, who hardly ever smiled, and who looked at us in such a penetrating, undecipherable way—was taking the opportunity to *spontaneously* verbalize that she enjoyed participating and learning from other people’s experiences. She expressed appreciation for the class and how it was conducted. It was quite evident that she was honest about it.

That day was a turning point in my view of Renae. For one, I came face to face with the fact that I had been utterly misreading her. Second, more than ever I decided to drop my preconceptions and try to learn to read her correctly. This meant learning and accepting that Renae would relate to me, and also to the class, in her own terms. Who knows, maybe Renae just needed her own space; maybe she did want to connect and interrelate with the class and me, but not intermingle as much. Maybe that was how she was, who she was, and that was okay. Even if that was the best I could expect as far as figuring her out, it was more than enough, because it was enough for her. I will not deny that in many ways Renae remained a mystery to me. But I was willing to pursue a relationship with her in *her* way, whether through brief conversations or e-mail messages, and I believe she sensed that. Some time later, during Week 14, in a personal interaction out of class I built up the courage to ask Renae, once again, to participate in the study. She smiled and did not hesitate to return the signed participant consent form to me this time.

Greg’s Dialogical Interactions with the Students

A description of what happened out of the classroom is not complete without an account of the dialogical interactions between Greg and the students. The personal connections that Greg sought to establish and foster with the students in the classroom from the first day of class extended to his relations with them out of the classroom space. Many of Greg’s interactions with the students took place online, through e-mail. E-mail was a useful tool that functioned as an extension of the classroom and helped strengthen the class network. Greg would use it once or twice a week to interact with the class as a whole. In addition, he often communicated with individual students through e-mail. Greg also let the class know that he was available and willing to meet with them out of regular class time if they so wished.

Table 6.2 Erika's Roles In and Out of the Classroom

Erika's Roles	In the Classroom	Out of the Classroom
Researcher	Observed and recorded classes, took notes, provided participants with information on the study, gave out and collected participant consent forms and interview sign-up sheet.	Wrote fieldnotes and memos, interviewed participants, had debriefing dialogues with Greg, e-mailed participants with information on the study, analyzed data, wrote preliminary analyses.
Student	Participated in class activities and discussions, presented her cultural autobiography, signed up to be discussion leader, led class discussion.	Read course material/readings, completed some course assignments, met with a classmate (Jenna) to plan out class lesson.
Co-teacher	Contributed her life experiences as a multicultural and multilingual educator; offered her views on multicultural studies, language learning, and other course topics; carefully observed and listened to Greg and the students.	Provided continuous feedback to Greg on his teaching by sending him her fieldnotes and memos; shared her perceptions of the development of the class and the students' behavior and actions in conversations with Greg; fostered personal relationships with the students in face-to-face and e-mail interactions—sought to connect with them with questions, comments and suggestions that resonated with or were useful to them.

Greg's e-mails to the whole class served several purposes, illustrated in these examples:

- to remind students of plans made for the following class, as well as upcoming assignments:

“As you prepare for Tuesday, please revisit your writing on culture that I asked you to do last week. Jot down some thoughts about how reading and discussing Chapter 3 influenced your thinking about culture and how it relates to teaching and learning. We will start off class on Tuesday with this.”
- to communicate a change in plans: “Please “push” your reading (Nieto, Ch. 7) back to next Thursday. [Next class] I would like us to get into the discussion I mentioned today at the beginning of class.”
- to introduce a new task: “Tuesday we will be talking mostly about the Rethinking our Classrooms text and beginning to write I Am poems. If you have written one in the past, perhaps you can bring it as a starting point??”

- to make requests: “Thursday we will devote to hearing from 4 people on their cultural autobiographies. I already have 2 signed up: Lauren, Evelinne. We need 2 more volunteers! First to e-mail will be put on the list! Please “reply to all” so that others will see as well. Thanks.”
- to express appreciation of students’ work (often with individual compliments and feedback): “GREAT JOB to all those who presented today. Thank you to all of you for sharing. Lauren, you demonstrated both the importance and the difficulty of investigating ourselves. What DOES it mean to think about who we are, where we come from, and HOW do we go about doing it? To me it seems like you figured out how to go about doing it. You did an excellent job connecting this process to the realities of working and teaching in real classrooms.”
- to inform absent students of the content they had missed: “Today in class we talked a bit about “structural inequalities,” and looked at lots of data and statistics that showed racial breakdowns of economic gains/income, educational achievement/gifted/AP placement, and prison rates, to name a few. I’m working to get this data posted on our eLCommons site so you can check it out.”
- to send reading material as attachments: “Read the article by Skutnabb-Kangas (2002) that is attached to this e-mail (print and bring to class, or bring on laptop).”
- to share teaching resources: “This is an amazing collection of primary source information (pictures, paintings, journal entries, letters to the newspaper, etc.) from those that were in internment camps and the communities that surrounded them. Take some time to look around this site! <http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/jarda/>
- to pose follow-up open-ended questions for reflection: “What cultural norms exist in our schools and communities that may be problematic for ELLs and how does this impact teaching and learning?”; “What do you learn about yourself as a result of listening to each other’s cultural autobiographies? About building community? About the role it plays in valuing multicultural identities in classrooms?”

- to invite students' responses: "As always, please talk with me if you have questions or concerns."

At times, the students would be the ones to initiate an e-mail contact with Greg. They would ask questions on course assignments, submit papers, or request feedback on handouts they prepared for leading class discussions. Once, Rachel e-mailed Greg with a different question—a question on his teaching: "I was wondering if you have a theory as to why this kind of teaching encounters opposition, like you've experienced in our class, particularly in the South? Do you think that there are any specific cultural components that contribute to that?" Rachel explained that her question was motivated by something that Greg himself had said in one of our debriefing dialogues (the one whose transcript I sent the class; see Table 6.1, 09/10), namely, that Greg felt that undergraduate students in the Southeast usually struggled with an open, dialogic teaching approach in his classes, in the beginning. Greg welcomed Rachel's question warmly: "I do have a theory, not the answer, but some thoughts. I would love to share some of those thoughts with you, and I will start by sharing a manuscript that Erika and I co-wrote over the past 2 years that talks about our experience with these issues in another class I taught. I think this will make for a fantastic discussion!" During our next class meeting, Greg referred briefly to a "fabulous question" that Rachel had asked him. He called the students' attention to a consideration of "this kind of teaching": What was it, after all? Greg asked them to think about this question and to read our manuscript (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011) in preparation for the oral midterm discussion (see Chapter 4, p. 118).

While Rachel's e-mail to Greg influenced the shaping of the oral midterm assessment, another student's e-mail to Greg stemmed from this midterm discussion. This time, the message came from Isabella. Isabella's e-mail—which she spontaneously copied me on—read:

Mr. McClure,
Thank you for asking for, and for hearing my opinions today. I appreciate your willingness to listen to your students.
I wanted to clarify my position, if it is not already clear. I enjoy your class, and I do think that discussion and the sharing of our experiences as a class and as individuals is relevant to the topics and to learning. My only suggestion in regards to this was that if you would like more structure,

perhaps you could restrict the time for personal stories/opinions at the beginning of class, and then just have work that solely relates to the text(s). However, I know that this is very constricting and I'm not even sure this would be the best approach. What if a topic comes up that you feel very strongly about and have something to add? Saying, "Oh, personal sharing time expired 5 minutes ago" would just be ridiculous. I don't know what the answer is in regards to allocating the perfect amount of time for sharing and for the texts. For the record, I have never felt that we went off into never-never land. I also do not dislike the general setup of the class. As you are studying dialogic communities and their effects on your class's learning, it would make sense to base each class off discussion and have the group sit in a circle (how can you talk to each others' backs?) However, my only complaint is what you said on personal learning styles. I believe my favorite part of TLITE [The Light in Their Eyes] text this year is what Nieto said on identifying different learning styles/preferences across whatever characteristics by which students are usually categorized. Because there is little variation in the approach to the material, I feel slighted at times. I can learn in any environment because I will do what I need to do to learn. But, I do have a learning preference. I like discussion...but not all the time, throughout the entire period. If there were another way to incorporate more approaches to the content, I would enjoy the class all the more. And I do not mean that I hate group work and discussion, because I like them just fine, but I like other approaches as well. [ex: the skit I tried to incorporate,⁴⁹ sharing books, writing responses, etc.]

Even after re-reading this e-mail, I do not feel that I have expressed all I needed to say the way that I would like to express it. I hope my comments will be helpful in your study. Thanks for your time.

Isabella Hunt

Greg e-mailed Isabella back that same afternoon (he also copied me on his response):

Hi Isabella,

Thanks so much for sending this and for sharing your thoughts today in class. Your contribution helped keep things authentic. I think it's important for you to know that your comments tapped directly into my struggles as a teacher, finding a balance between making space for students to connect the content to their individual experiences into the class and also keeping a focus on the content of our learning. It's quite difficult to achieve this balance, and without candid feedback from all of us, we're often shooting in the dark! So thanks for your contribution!

I think I would agree with you that we haven't quite teetered off into "never-never land," but I do think there are times when we overemphasize personal experiences to the exclusion of information/knowledge presented in the texts. And also that the discussion approach has certainly dominated. I also agree with other comments shared that affirm that we indeed learn from what others share and that this contributes to our learning as individuals and as a class. At the same time, I am still cautious and indeed a bit concerned when personal sharing tends to dominate. As indicated in the paper Erika and I wrote, when this happens too much, I begin to question whether or not I'm actually teaching and whether or not you all are learning. Or are we just sharing? Your willingness to share your thoughts on this as it relates to your learning helped to reaffirm this challenge and to also make it public, something for the rest of us, as a class, to consider.

I think your comments and suggestions regarding how to enhance things in our class were **excellent**. I love the way you are actively talking-dialoguing with yourself, with me, with us here in your e-mail—making suggestions, etc. I agree with you, that there probably are no "answers"

⁴⁹ In the class that Isabella was discussion leader, she had the students work in two groups to put on skits. One of the skits depicted tracking in a negative light and the other skit, in a positive light.

per se...we may not actually figure out the best way to approach it, but what's more important in my opinion is the fact that you are willing to take the risk of saying—"Hey, I think we could improve things by considering x, y, or z." Not so much that we find the answer, but that we are willing to pursue it!

My comment regarding learning styles... I felt like Kristi's response to your comments was focusing in too much on the point of students sharing their personal experiences. I felt like you weren't commenting on that so much, but more about how class is actually conducted overall (group oriented, discussion lead, etc.). I was trying to agree with you that we should try other approaches—that I have oriented my teaching to how I like to be taught, and that obviously can't be everyone's preference. I was trying to convey that your concern was more about different learning styles (learning from direct instruction of material alongside discussion and sharing; having material presented in a variety of formats; seating arrangements, etc.). Hope I haven't boggled this up a second time!!!

I also completely concur with the last part of your e-mail about not being able to fully convey exactly what we're thinking—the limitations of language AND e-mail certainly make it difficult for letting others in on our thinking!!! In that spirit I do hope to keep this dialogue going! Have a super weekend!

Best, Greg

The e-mail exchange between Greg and Isabella allowed them to elaborate on points that were brought up in class, in the oral midterm discussion. Isabella was able to "clarify my [her] position" and voice her opinion and critique of the class as well as "Mr. McClure's" pedagogical approach. Greg, in turn, had the opportunity to respond to and validate the points Isabella made. The two of them were able to continue the dialogue that had started in class. It is interesting to note that Isabella recognized and addressed Greg not just as a teacher, but also as a researcher: "As you are studying dialogic communities and their effects on your class's learning..."; "I hope my comments will be helpful in your study." By copying me on the message, she also brought me into the conversation; she made sure I was in dialogue with them as well.

A significant evolution in the dialogical interaction between Greg and Isabella is that he did not remain "Mr. McClure" for too long. A month later, during Week 13, Isabella e-mailed him again, now in a rather informal tone:

Greg,
here is my boundary crossing paper! I'm having printer complications! sorry! be there soon!
thanks, and I apologize again!
Isabella Hunt

Did Greg notice the change? His prompt response to Isabella says it all:

no problem! got it! Greg
ps--I love that I'm now "Greg" in your e-mails; no longer "Mr. McClure" !!!! cu soon!

The Influence I Did Not Have on Greg

In this chapter's final section, I resume my discussion of the dialogical interactions between Greg and me, with a closer look at the influence my actions had and did not have on Greg's pedagogy. Reading and reflecting on my fieldnotes and memos inspired Greg to approach the students during The Multicultural Me activity with comments that elaborated on their individual participation and demonstrated interest in what they shared (Chapter 4, p. 98). My fieldnotes also helped Greg come up with the idea for the "piggyback" activity to prompt the students to listen to one another and build on each other's comments (Chapter 4, p. 105), like Greg and I had done in the dialogical interaction we modeled for the class (Chapter 6, p. 159). In a conversation that the two of us had, I pointed out that Greg might be overloading the students with two back-to-back assignments. He agreed and simplified one of the assignments. Those were a few specific instances in which my actions affected Greg's subsequent actions.

A problematic questionnaire

Actually, the impact of my study on Greg's pedagogy can be traced to as early as our second class. In the first class, at my request, Greg had the students answer a brief questionnaire about their previous experiences with university classes that followed a dialogic format (Appendix B). No preliminary instructions or explanations were given to the students. They took about 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire. After class, Greg read their responses; three of the seven students wrote that they were uncomfortable with or didn't like classes in a dialogic format. The students' answers affected the way Greg approached them in the second class; he decided not to spell out his pedagogical and theoretical stance as a dialogic teacher. "I've had some hesitation about my being as direct or perhaps overbearing as in the past, in terms of presenting the position that I'm taking; I feel I've been much more

subtle in terms of letting it evolve, but also having it explicitly there, in writing [in the syllabus],” Greg said to me in our first debriefing dialogue.

The consequences of this decision on the class became a focus of my attention throughout the semester. In retrospect, I wish I had not asked Greg to administer the questionnaire to the students. For one, the questionnaire had a formulaic, dichotomic definition of dialogic education that I should not have offered the students: “Dialogic education is an egalitarian and inclusive approach based on Paulo Freire’s concept of a “culture circle” where instead of a teacher, there is a coordinator (who is also a learner) that guides the circle; instead of lectures and other forms of transmitting knowledge, there is dialogic inquiry into the conditions of life; instead of pupils who come to listen and observe, there are group participants who contribute their viewpoints; instead of fixed syllabi, there are negotiated and jointly constructed programs that guide the activities of the participants.” This definition was followed by a question: “Have you ever taken a class at this university that followed a “dialogic” format, encouraging all students to actively participate in class discussions and activities, and to draw on their own prior knowledge and experiences as “food for thought”? Please describe this class and your response to it.”

I definitely missed the mark in preparing the questionnaire. I ended up putting dialogic education into a box, reducing it to little more than a teaching method, so unlike Freire’s own views. A flawed, “either/or” questionnaire could not have yielded answers above suspicion. Freire himself, rather than dismiss the role of the teacher, spoke strongly against teachers renouncing the task of teaching to become mere facilitators (Freire & Macedo, 1996). Freire also recognized that traditional instructional methods, such as lectures, if adequately employed could aid the teacher in the indispensable task of teaching (Freire, 1998a, p. 118). However, the flawed definition of dialogue education in the questionnaire might have led the students to think otherwise. As a result, their various answers reflected and generated a number of assumptions. Not surprisingly, some of the students apparently took “dialogic education” to be synonymous with “group discussions.” Other characteristics included in their responses were: “the lack of structure and set expectations” in this approach; “a schedule that was always up for changing;” “coming

up with our own rules for the class;” and sharing prior knowledge (“often times time consuming and irrelevant”), as opposed to “learning, discussing, and reinforcing the material.”

Despite the heterogeneity in the students’ answers, Greg took their like or dislike for dialogic classes at face value. Greg assumed that they knew what dialogic education was about; he did not feel the need to discuss and clarify the meaning of the term with them in a future class. Quite the contrary; he chose not to present his teaching position directly and clearly, but to be more subtle and “let it evolve.” In doing so, Greg had the best of democratic and humanizing intentions. He was trying to refrain from imposing his own views upon those in the class who might prefer another teaching approach.

“Letting it evolve,” in practical terms, meant that Greg took on a double role as a teacher–student while carrying out relational, structure-oriented, and content-eliciting actions to lay down a democratic foundation for the course (see Chapter 4, Stage 1). He engaged in relating personally to the students, invited them to “run the show” with him, asked them open-ended questions, and valued and built on their contributions. He was *living* the dialogue that he had diverted from *naming*. And he was no doubt great at living the dialogue! But the closest Greg came to explaining his stance was a three-minute reference to the notion of building community—“a place where students and folks can get together and build relationships where they can trust one another and grow”—as speaking directly to his approach to teaching and learning (see Chapter 4, p. 96).

Our differing perceptions of the students’ responses

As reflective teacher-researchers, both Greg and I continuously strive to make sense of our students’ verbal and non-verbal actions, what they are telling us. In our experience doing research together, our perceptions of students’ responses have coincided several times. However, that was not the case during the first few weeks of classes—we were getting mixed messages. It started out with our differing interpretations of the students’ answers in the questionnaire. Greg took for granted that some students did not like dialogic classes. As for me, I doubted that they had a clear understanding of what dialogic education meant, at least the way Greg seeks to enact it. Our views also began to differ on how the students were experiencing the class. Greg sensed “the need on the part of the students for some

content, direct instruction, explicit knowledge, information from the teacher, as opposed to eliciting perspectives and responses.” He was feeling that the students were “struggling with an open, dialogic manner; an open, a less structured classroom where the focus is more on getting to know one another, getting to feel each other out in terms of what’s behind our thinking and how we make sense of the material and the information in the course.” Greg’s perceptions did make sense to me, and I agreed with them to a certain extent. However, I began to ponder the nature of the students’ struggle. Were they struggling with an open, dialogic class just because they resisted it or didn’t like it? Or were they struggling because this class format was so unfamiliar to them that they didn’t know exactly what to do, what was expected of them, what rules to follow, what the point was? I wondered... Greg wanted the students to “get into the dialogue.” I felt that they were unsure of what dialogue really meant, or why and how they should “get into the dialogue”—because Greg hadn’t spelled out his teaching approach to them in the first place.

Then, at the end of Week 3, in our second debriefing dialogue, Greg spoke to me about his dual aims for the course: (1) creating the structure and space for the class to do things that foster building a learning community (such as sitting in a circle, sharing something, reading a poem, etc.) and (2) debriefing with the students about the process they were experiencing; about what it meant to build a learning community. He also pointed out his struggle dealing with the complexity of achieving these dual aims within the structure of a 75-minute class. In his view, debriefing with the students about the process of building community would take time away from more explicit, direct instruction that he felt the class was expecting. Greg’s concern tapped into two challenges or tensions he was navigating. One of them—which he recurrently faces in his teaching practice—was finding a balance between allowing space for students to share their personal experiences while upholding his responsibility to teach. The second tension—which he was facing this semester and often complained about—was managing time well to achieve that balance. Greg was used to teaching classes in 3-hour slots, and preferred them any time. “I’m so much more comfortable with space and time, to let things sit, to let folks have time to write about

things and then get into a discussion,” he said. He often felt that he fell short of managing time effectively this semester.

My “pushing” action

When I learned from Greg of his dual aims for the class—more specifically, that he wanted to discuss the process of building a learning community with the students—I began trying to help him find ways to make that happen. I thought it would be a nice opportunity for the class to talk about dialogue as pedagogy—as a means to build a learning community—as well. For three weeks (Weeks 3 through 5), I brought up the topic with Greg. In an e-mail, I suggested: “Why not send this transcript [of our debriefing dialogue] to the students and see what they make of it? Could this be the springboard for talking in class about the process, that you were looking for?” His answer was hesitant: “I’m not sure if/how I want to approach this during class time....” He was concerned that talking about process could further marginalize the students who, in his view, were already uncomfortable with the format of the class. I continued to try to “push” him. I pondered the matter in my fieldnotes and memos, which I shared with him: “What is the scope of teaching and learning dialogically? Can a teacher truly be dialogic in a class if her focus is predominantly on dialogue for content learning, without attention to dialogue as (pedagogic) process (i.e. speaking candidly and jointly about what, why, how, when choices and decisions have been made on how the class is conducted)? Shouldn’t Greg make room for explaining his pedagogy, just like he makes room for listening to students’ opinions and contributions about content dialogically?” Finally, I sent Greg a five-page letter with my views on the development of the class, my understanding of dialogue, and my perception of his view of dialogue. I also included a suggestion in the letter:

(...) I think that dialogue as content is missing from the course syllabus, I really do. Because when you’re able to discuss dialogue as content, or as a way of learning and knowing, of engaging with the object of knowledge, this makes room for you to talk about “dialogue as process” or even, who knows, “dialogue as method” (the practical applications, how to make it come alive in the classroom, etc.). I really feel that in order to change the world, we somehow have to be able to, or at least attempt to name it first. And right now I’m thinking specifically of the value of leading the students into a reflection about dialogue in order to better equip them to become multicultural, dialogic teachers of minority students. I mean, I think that a conversation about the “epistemology of dialogue,” while not relevant or necessary or appropriate in every dialogic class, is particularly significant in a class that aims to prepare dialogic educators. (...)

All this said, now comes my suggestion: What if we had a class session, or a segment of a class session, on the topic “Dialogue in Education” or something along the lines of “Debunking the myths of dialogue—What dialogue is and isn’t?” How does that sound? Off the top of my head, I can think of a few of those myths:

- Dialogue is “a romantic pedagogical mode that exoticizes discussing lived experiences as a process of coming to voice.”
- Teachers who subscribe to dialogue become facilitators.
- Dialogue is at odds with lecture-teaching.
- Dialogue consists of “ground rules for classroom interaction using language,” including “the assumptions that all members have equal opportunity to speak, all members respect other members’ rights to speak and feel safe to speak, and all ideas are tolerated and subjected to rational critical assessment against fundamental judgments and moral principles.”
- Dialogue doesn’t make room for dissonance and divergence; etc., etc.

If you wish, I would be willing to put together a handout or some Power Point slides in order to try to dialogue metalinguistically about dialogue with the students. It seems like a daunting task already, but I see so much potential in it!

Greg’s reaction: The oral midterm evaluation

Ten days later, at the end of Week 7, Greg wrote me a two-page letter in response to my letter.

Greg started out, “This has been sitting in the back of my mind since I read [your letter] and I knew what I needed to say, but haven’t found the right moment to put it into words. As I write, I wonder how I’ve come to the conclusion that NOW is that moment, as I’m trying desperately to complete 3 other tasks before class begins in 90 minutes!” He went on to explain his understanding of dialogue and clarified how it differed from my perception of it (his view). He said he wanted to share some other thoughts, but “just didn’t have the time right now.” Greg did not comment on the suggestion that I had offered. However, that same day he e-mailed the whole class to invite them to talk about their experiences in the course and assess themselves in a midterm discussion. In his e-mail, he posed a number of questions: What is this kind of teaching? What are you learning and how do you know? What are some underlying tensions in our class that need to be discussed and aired out? What does it mean to dialogue? How does it differ from discussion, conversation? Have we engaged in dialogue in this class? What examples can you identify?

In the next class, Greg reserved the last thirty minutes for the midterm discussion. Although he started out reading his questions to the students, he soon turned the focus to the constant struggle he faced in his teaching, of finding a balance between making space for students’ voices and experiences while keeping a focus on the course content, the “object of inquiry.” In their responses, the students for the most

part expressed that they enjoyed hearing each other's experiences and felt that these experiences tied to the course content (see Chapter 4, p. 118). The midterm discussion was no doubt an important moment in the class development, as it made room for the students to assess Greg, the course and themselves face to face.⁵⁰ However, the midterm discussion barely touched the surface of most of the questions Greg had posed. Greg did not take on an active role in terms of spelling out his view of dialogue or the fundamentals of dialogic education. We never got down to discussing the questions: What does it mean to dialogue? How does it differ from discussion, conversation? Have we engaged in dialogue in this class?

The rest of this story

At this point, I gave up trying to influence Greg on this matter. I had gone as far as I should. I felt that, all in all, progress had been made and the students had benefited from the oral midterm discussion. Also, the class had reached a stage in their development (Stage 3: Engaging in critical reflection and self-inquiry) where they were participating more actively and engaging dialogically with crucial questions, with each other and with their own selves. So I just set the matter aside, and moved on quite contentedly.

Nevertheless, the fact that Greg did not get down to fleshing out his teaching approach to the students had effects that should not be dismissed. Because Greg did not really *name* the dialogue, in spite of practicing it and *living* it so authentically and effectively, it is likely that some students were limited in their understanding of Greg's role as a teacher as well as their experiences in the class. These limitations in their understanding did not surface until the course had ended, when they shared their perceptions in end-of-course evaluations, final reflection papers, and in interviews with me. In the next chapter, I focus on the students and their views on the course.

⁵⁰ The oral midterm evaluation, per se, can be seen as a reaction that Greg had to an observation I made during Study A (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011). On that occasion, I noted that I would have had a round table with the students to discuss the feedback they gave in the written midterm evaluation. Greg agreed that bringing up in front of the group the issues that were relevant for the whole group would have benefited the class.

CHAPTER 7

LISTENING TO THE STUDENTS

Lauren (*in a letter to herself*): You are going to want to relate to your students. You are going to want to be able to make connections with your students on a more personal level than how you were taught because you will come to believe that the more personal the connection, the more open the classroom, the more safe the community, the more dialogue, and the more learning that will take place.

How did the students experience the Language and Culture class? Was Greg's teaching practice successful in facilitating their critical awareness raising and critical self-reflection,⁵¹ as Greg hoped for? How did they come to view and understand the class and Greg's dialogic pedagogy? What effects, if any, did the experience have on their development as prospective ESOL teachers? Drawing on my interviews with the students during the last week of classes, their final reflection papers, and end-of-course evaluations, in this chapter I examine the students' voices for answers to these questions.

Anonymous end-of-course evaluations confirmed that the Language and Culture class was a pleasurable experience for all students. Six of them strongly agreed and the seventh student agreed that the course challenged them to think and learn. A couple of students specifically wrote: "I had never learned as much in a class as in this one. Extraordinary experience!" and "Overall, this may have been the best class that I have been in thus far here at the university, especially from the LLED department." All students strongly agreed that Greg the instructor was open to their questions and comments, presented new skills and concepts in ways they could understand, provided useful feedback on their work, and evaluated their work according to clear expectations. The evaluations also revealed that the students

⁵¹ By critical awareness, I mean consciousness about the ways in which power relations are constructed and function in society, and the extent to which historical, social, and political practices structure educational inequity and affect language learners. By critical self-reflection, I mean reflection on the relationship between one's own identities and positioning in society, with attention to questions of privilege and marginalization. (Hawkins & Norton, 2009; Sleeter, 2008).

found Greg knowledgeable, well prepared, accessible, helpful, and engaged with the course material and with the class.

What ended in unanimous recognition of the fecund learning derived from the course, and of the relevance of the course itself, did not begin exactly that way, though. Greg's unorthodox actions on the first day of class—such as inviting the class to sit in a circle arrangement, introducing himself with pictures of his children, having the students pair up to introduce one another, and not spending time going over a road map for the course (the syllabus)—generated a good deal of surprise and suspicion. Kristi remembered that she was quick to judge the class to be “lame,” while thinking to herself, “What is this class? This professor seems like a hippie... What's his deal? Why is he so passionate?” Kristi could pick up right away that Greg was “passionate about language, linguistics, cultural barriers and stuff like that,” which disconcerted her, since “men in the U.S. just aren't passionate; it's weird to see a guy passionate.” Rachel remembered thinking, “I just hope this is not one of those loopy education courses where they make me think about weird stuff, and they see things differently... I'm not going to like this class.” Isabella was concerned that the class would lack structure; that the students would be expected to decide what they needed to do. Lauren was surprised that Greg showed pictures of his children. “No teacher ever does that! It puts himself out there. It's very vulnerable. If I put myself out there like that, I would consider myself very vulnerable to show my family like that,” Lauren observed.

The students entered the classroom that first day expecting to learn in the normative, technocratic mode of instruction that they were accustomed to; classes in which they were “talked at,” as Rosanna phrased it. That was the pattern across the board for Rosanna in undergraduate school, where her professors' actions communicated, “Here's a desk, sit in it. I'm going to lecture to you for an hour and 15 minutes about, you know, whatever. And then you go.” In the same vein, Rachel explained that “learn” in her experience presupposed the sense of “the traditional classroom of students sitting in rows with a teacher lecturing; of students studying for tests that the teacher gives to ensure that they know the information.” Rachel also pointed out that “This [Greg's] class was completely different from that.”

Indeed, from the start, Greg's approach was very different from what the students had typically experienced in their undergraduate coursework. And while a few months later the students would indicate that their experience in the class had been overwhelmingly positive, even transformative for some, the experience was continuously compared to and mediated by normative educational expectations. Or, perhaps, "non-expectations" more properly denotes it. Some students (Rachel, Rosanna, Isabella, and Jenna) observed that they didn't really have any expectations coming into the course. Rachel explained, "You just kind of, I mean, take classes. I guess you never expect to be extremely interested in them. So I think my expectations [for this course] were very low. It was a much richer experience than I expected." "Taking classes" in the traditional perspective presupposes not nourishing expectations, but just going through the same old banking motions in order to do school.

Whether the students came into the course with clear expectations or not, their voices confirmed that they experienced the class in varied ways. While undertaking a comprehensive description of the range of their perceptions is not just irrelevant but also unfeasible, still it is worth considering herein some of the ways in which the students experienced the class. I start with their perceptions of Greg's role and of their own role in the class. It seems fair to say that the students held divergent views on Greg's role and convergent views on their own role in the class. As I elaborate below, I suggest that the perceptions that some students developed of Greg's role and pedagogy can be explained at least in part by Greg's action of not spelling out, or not naming, his dialogic teaching approach to the class.

The Students' Divergent Views on Greg's Role in the Class

"I don't see Greg bringing a lot to the table."

A couple of students thought that Greg's role in the classroom was more of a passive one of a guide or facilitator. Rachel and Isabella are deep thinkers that throughout the course consistently demonstrated their engagement with the material by participating at a high level in class discussions. Rachel felt that Greg "was good at listening and evaluating and processing, but as far as teaching, it was almost like he came into the class not feeling like he had much to offer to the class, but just was going to serve as a guide to the class." While Rachel affirmed that she did not doubt Greg's expertise and grasp of

the material, she added, “I don’t see him bringing a lot to the table, I guess.” Rachel also alluded to a class discussion on the questions for Nieto (see Chapter 4, p. 135). During the discussion, a question had crossed Rachel’s mind, “If you were to define this politically, is it anarchy? What is Greg’s role in this?” She was getting tired of the lengthy discussion, which “was taking forever,” making her think of how the Spanish government was run during the Spanish civil war. Rachel further explained, “To me, in a lot of ways it [Greg’s teaching approach] looks a lot like anarchy, but in a classroom, because everyone had a say all the time. I think I would have appreciated seeing Greg lead and step up more, I think, rather than have us run the class in some ways.”⁵²

Along the same lines, Isabella described Greg’s role as that of a facilitator whose approach was “just for us to construct our own knowledge and for him to guide us in the direction that we needed to go through dialogue and through being a classroom of equals or a community.” Isabella felt that Greg’s role in the process of knowledge construction was mostly passive; that although “he wanted to contribute and get his two cents in, sometimes it seemed like this was just to make sure we were aware of his opinion.”

“Greg is a very inspirational teacher.”

At odds with Rachel and Isabella’s perceptions, Lauren, Rosanna, Renae, and Kristi saw Greg as an active teacher presence in the class, albeit not in a strictly conventional way. “Greg is a very inspirational teacher,” said Lauren. “It’s very refreshing and positive to walk into the classroom, and to learn from him, but I think when people think of teacher they think of more direct instruction.” Rosanna felt that she learned a lot from Greg without ever being “talked at.” She explained that she learned “just with him being open and honest, and sharing a lot of his experiences; not holding back his opinions and stuff. If he came across something that he didn’t feel was necessarily right for him, he spoke up and

⁵² It is important to note that, despite Rachel’s opinion of the way Greg carried out his role and pedagogy in the classroom, she clearly recognized him as a thoughtful and caring presence in and out of the classroom. More than once she took the initiative to show her appreciation and gratitude for his personal approach and care in relating to her and the other students. Rachel wrote to Greg, “It means a lot to me, and speaks volumes about the integrity of your teaching, that you treated me and my classmates as highly important, in the way you conducted class and in your comments on our papers. I’ve never felt like I could talk to a teacher as easily as I talked with you, and I have never had a teacher who took time to interestedly answer my deeper questions and treat my concerns and struggles with the material as legitimate.”

talked about it; and giving us an opportunity to do the same.” Renae indicated Greg’s dual role as teacher and learner, who in many ways showed the students that “I am the expert of this topic, but your comments and feedback are still welcome, and we’re all learning from each other.” Renae felt that the students’ input was not just welcomed—it was wanted. Still, she saw Greg as the expert, the more knowledgeable participant.

My take on the students’ views

As a member of the classroom community myself, one specific moment in the class comes to mind, a moment that I vividly recall, even now as I write this chapter. It was Week 12, and Jenna and I were conducting discussion on Sonia Nieto’s (2006) article *Solidarity, courage and heart: What teacher educators can learn from a new generation of teachers*. We started out asking for the students’ initial opinions on the article. Rachel called attention to one sentence in the text: “Given the current conservative political climate in the US and elsewhere that I described at the beginning of this paper, we also need to be mindful of the fact that ideas that seem ‘soft’ and ‘unscientific’ are likely to be attacked as romantic and unrealistic” (p. 462). Rachel couldn’t make out the sense of the terms “soft” and “unscientific” in the text; Lauren was puzzled as well. It was an unanticipated question (since it was not the focus of the article), but someone was prepared to step in and clarify:

Greg: With the introduction of No Child Left Behind came this wave of this phrase called “scientifically-based research.” It’s in the bill, like, 385 times, the term. “Scientifically-based research,” according to the legislation, is pretty restricted in terms of quantitative science; analysis that looks at double-blind experiments and control groups that says, “Well, if we want to teach students of color better, let’s set up a design experiment. In Ms. Reese’s room, we’re going to inject this treatment teaching protocol; in Ms. Casting’s room we’re not. We’re going to observe both those settings and control all the factors like a natural science experiment.” That’s how research has been categorized largely under No Child Left Behind, and studies that ask teachers about their perceptions of working with African-American students, or studies that look at students’ and parents’ perceptions, things that look more at issues of care or relationships, those kinds of things, are considered “soft,” and are not valued in terms of contributing to policy development in education currently. It comes from the mid-nineties and it still very much actively applies to what type of research gets funded; what type of research directs big, high-level policy change at the federal level. The National Reading Panel report in 2000 is probably the most influential document in the past 100 years on how we influence how teachers teach reading. These are huge, long studies that use scholars, and they look at all the studies done on reading, and then they say, “Well, here’s a result of what we read. Here’s a result of all the studies.” But all the studies that they looked at had to be scientifically based, according to those parameters. I

think that's what she's getting at. (...) I think what's very important to take away from this type of discussion is not that scientific and experimental research is not effective; it's amazing, it's incredibly effective. But when one approach dominates an entire perspective on learning, human development is completely ignored, and we miss an opportunity for a balance to perspective. That is kind of the real lament here.

As often happened throughout the course, in this example Greg took the opportunity to provide the students with solid instruction on an important and timely topic. He seized the moment to competently teach the class a lesson on research paradigms in education: the prevailing prestigious paradigm and an alternative stigmatized one. Whereas in this example Greg responded to a specific question that a student raised, on most occasions he would build on the students' voices by collecting their contributions, making something new out of them while connecting to the topic at hand, and then offering content back to the students in a purposeful way, while cuing them to further reflect on the matter. Chapter 4 has a few examples of this (see pages 109, 129, 135 and 136). However, Chapter 4 does not do justice to Greg's amazing ability to teach that way; neither can this dissertation show the many times I recorded in my memos my pleasure and admiration in observing such moments. From my experience, not many teachers can do what Greg did so naturally, so effortlessly, it seemed; I myself struggle with drawing connections or conclusions on the spur of the moment. I was constantly motivated to learn with Greg's ways.

Yet, for Rachel and Isabella Greg did not carry out an active teacher role in the class. Still, it is critical that Rachel and Isabella's voices be validated, because they express how each student actually experienced the class. On another but correlated level, not just Isabella, but also some of the other students who viewed Greg as an active teacher presence in the class, had trouble fully grasping the tenets of and purpose behind the dialogic pedagogy that Greg enacted. Rosanna, for instance, struggled with describing her understanding of dialogue in teaching: "I honestly don't know; this is almost, like, how I had a hard time defining critical pedagogy at first. I think I keep thinking of it from the regular standpoint of dialogue. I know it's not; I know it's way beyond that, but I'm grasping and I'm picking up nothing."

Another example came from Kristi, who seemed to have reached a somewhat "laissez-faire, feel-good pedagogy" (Freire & Macedo, 1996, p. 203) idea of dialogic pedagogy, with its emphasis on the

learning community as an end in itself; a type of group therapy space focused on the psychology of the individual, rather than on the object of collective inquiry, the content. As Kristi shared, “Probably the sense that I got from dialogic teaching from this semester is just a classroom community where we’re all comfortable to express feelings, and emotions, and thoughts with our teacher without being reprimanded. And the teacher can feel free to share thoughts and feelings without hurting a child, I guess, something kind of like that. Just a really good sense of community in your classroom; that sense of community that everyone’s important, and everyone contributes, and you need everybody.”

Isabella, too, developed a limited understanding of dialogic pedagogy, which had to do with the format of content delivery. Isabella perceived dialogic pedagogy as equivalent to group discussions. “I know it was a dialogic study, like maybe group discussions, but it shouldn’t all be about that,” she reasoned. “I feel like the format [of the class] should have varied more. There are lots of learning styles out there and part of having a good class is having different approaches.” It seems that Isabella came to view dialogic pedagogy as a mere teaching method or technique for promoting conversation and discussion among learners, rather than an epistemological stance towards teaching and learning. As early as in the oral midterm evaluation, Isabella expressed her preference for learning content through more approaches than group work and discussions (Chapter 4, p. 119). She e-mailed Greg to suggest incorporating a variety of techniques (more written work, book sharing, skits, videos, games, etc.) into his teaching. When she e-mailed Greg to suggest that, in her message she also implied that the dialogic approach disregarded different personal learning styles, so she felt “slighted” at times (Chapter 6, pp. 180-181). While Isabella’s suggestion to Greg was a legitimate and very pertinent one, her e-mail also showed that she ignored that dialogic pedagogy can and should make room for an array of instructional techniques and strategies, including lectures (Freire, 1998a, p. 118). Because most of Greg’s classes were indeed discussion-based, it is understandable that Isabella developed a narrow understanding of dialogic pedagogy.

Why did the students form these perceptions? I suggest that Rachel and Isabella’s perception of Greg as a passive presence in the class resulted from a combination of two main factors. The first factor

was the force of the dominant technocratic discourse of teaching and learning in which the students have been indoctrinated all their life; the second, the fact that Greg did not flesh out his unorthodox teaching approach to them; he did not teach them on dialogue. Had Greg rationalized with the students about the fundamentals of dialogic pedagogy, as well as the role the teacher plays in this approach—and had done so recursively, debriefing with them about his actions and their perceptions throughout the course—it is possible that this would have counteracted the oppositional effects of the dominant technocratic discourse in the students’ minds. I feel that Rachel and Isabella might have come to view Greg as an active teacher, rather than just a facilitator or guide, and Kristi, Rosanna, and, again, Rachel and Isabella would have reached a fuller understanding of dialogue as pedagogy.

A closer look at the effects of the traditional discourse of teaching and learning upon Rachel and Isabella reveals different degrees of intensity. In Rachel’s case, it seems that her perception of Greg’s role was mediated by and compared to college classes where she had “something to put my [her] feet on.” In such classes, the teachers would give out handouts that summarized the material, on which the students were subsequently tested. Rachel often felt that it was important for her to take down notes on what was covered in class. For Rachel, those procedures indicated that she was learning relevant content and acquiring valuable knowledge. In Greg’s class, where those procedures were not in place or were not encouraged, at times Rachel felt that she didn’t have anything to put her feet on. On the other hand, while Rachel a few times questioned Sonia Nieto’s standpoint and the accuracy and credibility of the information presented in her textbook, Rachel did not question the academic relevance of the topics addressed in the Language and Culture class.

As for Isabella, her case was more complex; the cumulative effects of the technocratic discourse of teaching and learning on Isabella seemed more salient. Isabella herself represented the product of the traditional educational culture at its best: she had been valedictorian of her high school graduating class, at first she embraced the principles of meritocracy,⁵³ and she strived to be successful in school; in her words, “I like to do the best that I possibly can, and take pride when that endeavor exceeds the endeavors

⁵³ Isabella did revisit her thoughts on meritocracy throughout the course. (See her comment on p. 202.)

of others.” It was thus not surprising that Isabella’s understanding of schooling and knowledge was mediated and impacted by the normative discourse of teaching and learning, on which all her prior educational experiences were based. As a result, Isabella struggled both with the format and the content of Greg’s class. Not only did she resist a class that was discussion-based, rather than lecture-oriented and assignment- or activity-driven, she also questioned the relevance of the course content per se, which for her “didn’t seem as academic as something else would.” Isabella valued classes with “tangible” content; classes “that have measurable studies where you can look at the evidence.” For Isabella, “the problem with Nieto is that a lot of what she reports has to do with emotions, feelings, and studies that aren’t quantifiable or historical.”

These perceptions held by Rachel and Isabella, in my view, would make a formal presentation on dialogic pedagogy—direct instruction on dialogue—to the class all the more timely and called for. A discussion of dialogue as pedagogy, with its focus on the joint construction of transformed and transformative knowledge, could lead quite naturally and effectively to an exploration of the nature of knowledge itself—what it is and isn’t, what makes it valid or not, what makes it academic or not, and whose interests are included and excluded.⁵⁴ Again, naming the world upfront in regard to what a progressive, dialogic pedagogy entails, proposes, and rules out would have been a clarifying learning experience on content and format for Rachel, Isabella, and the other students as well. This learning experience, with follow-up debriefing moments, might have challenged their thinking and prompted them to question and revisit their prior assumptions and perspectives on these topics.⁵⁵

Nevertheless, all things said and done, if Greg resisted naming the dialogue, the fact is that no educator I know could have lived it better. In this sense, his actions truly spoke for him, and that made all

⁵⁴ A moment such as this one happened during Study A, with promising outcomes. That moment is narrated and examined in McClure and Vasconcelos (2011).

⁵⁵ In reviewing an earlier draft of this chapter, Greg observed the following in regards to the excerpt “Again, naming the world upfront (...) prior assumptions and perspectives on these topics”: “Very well said here. And might have better prepared them for teaching and learning from a dialogic perspective.” Greg also noted: “I must say, it’s really quite something to read such a deep, well crafted and considered account of your own teaching and then try to fashion a reasonable response. In many ways you’ve clearly given much more consideration to my pedagogy than I have!”

the difference. From the get-go, Greg laid down the foundation for a democratic class conducive to the emergence of teacher-students and student-teachers, where all members were expected to contribute to the teaching and learning process by “running the show” together (see Chapter 4, Stage 1). As Rosanna put it, “Greg allowed us to be the teachers. At the same time, he was there, and his presence was definitely needed because he was the reason why we were able to learn things from one another.” And, for Kristi, “It always seemed like Greg cared. I can tell that he’s passionate about change within the classroom; not judging students and being more accepting to them. He made me feel like my contributions were important too, and everyone else’s.” Because Greg authentically lived the dialogue as he fostered personal caring relations with the students, consistently valuing and building on their contributions in class, the students had no trouble recognizing themselves as knowledge-producers. So if the students held divergent views on Greg’s role and pedagogy, that was definitely not the case as far as their own role was concerned. All students saw themselves and one another as active knowledge-producers—teachers in their own right.

The Students’ Convergent Views on Their Role in the Class

Isabella’s description of the process of learning with and from one another sums up the students’ views on what took place in the class:

The construction of knowledge through readings and discussions was center stage in this class. We learned together in a community, and everyone got to know each other’s culture and lives through projects, group work, and discussions. First, we learned individually when we did readings and assignments. After we did assignments on our own, we came together in groups or as a class to discuss what we learned, what we didn’t understand, and our opinions on the material. In this way, each of us could learn from one another by seeing the material in a different point of view. Therefore, the diverse experiences throughout the classroom that shape each student’s opinions helped to shape other classmates’ opinions as well. When we participated in group dialogue, everyone benefited because everyone has diverse experiences.

The students identified a few aspects that characterized this process of learning from and with one another, what it had been like for them:

Learning together entailed listening to one another. For Rachel, “hearing each other’s opinions and each other’s views” meant “really listening to what people say, not just being quiet when

someone else is talking, but listening.” Jenna noted that she was motivated to listen to the other students because she got to know everyone in the class to some extent, so she knew a little bit about their background. Jenna’s attitude was like, “Oh, Isabella is talking; let me listen to what she has to say.”

Talking things through helped clarify the content. Kristi pointed out that “You talk through things that you don’t understand and it helps you understand them better.” And Jenna, who shared that she “didn’t really enjoy group discussions that much,” (because she would rather not be expected to speak up) admitted, “I feel like if we didn’t have the discussions, half the time I would not have understood what I read the night before. Some of the readings I didn’t understand, but the discussions really helped me understand.” In another example, an anonymous student indicated that at first she could not figure out what the term “critical pedagogy” meant, but “the more we ‘dialogued’ the more clear it became to me,” she noted.

Sharing perspectives helped the students learn about each other’s different views in an instructive and non-judgmental manner. As Lauren put it, “If we’re talking about a specific topic, you might have one view and I might have another, but the way the class is set up, when we walk out of it, you may not agree with me still, and I may not agree with you, but at least we know where each other is coming from, and it can help maybe understand that person better.” On the same note, Isabella shared, “Sometimes I would have an opinion after reading something, and it would be really strong, and I’d hear other people’s opinions and it would kind of negate what I said, or put it in a new light where that I could understand maybe where the person was coming from, or understand it at all, or something like that. Talking with others forces the material in a new light, and most of the time it’s definitely a learning experience.” Renae observed, “You’re able to see and realize that not everyone has the same opinion, and I think it helps to build tolerance and respect, and get somewhat of a glimpse of the other side of the world.” And Rachel suggested, “The environment Greg created bred unity, not dissention. The community is key; it’s about the atmosphere of unconditional acceptance. I think that people are wired in such a way as to need to know of their unconditional acceptance before they can ever be open enough to learn in the way we did in Greg’s class.”

Learning together over time helped students learn how to communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds. As Renae explained, “When you’re talking to people from another background, sometimes they don’t understand. They listen to the way you say it opposed to what you’re saying, and it defeats the purpose of the message. And so I had to learn that there’s a way to say things and then there’s a way to say things. So I had to sit back and think about the best way to say what I wanted to say, and make sure that people are listening and hear what I’m saying.” Rosanna illustrated, “I’m learning how to say it in a good way, as opposed to saying, “That’s the stupidest thing I’ve ever heard,” but saying, “You know, I can see where you’re coming from, but this is how I feel.” So I’m learning how to do that still.” Lauren indicated some changes that happened over the course of the semester: “We started out as strangers in the class, but I don’t think we left like that. As we went further into the course, we became more comfortable with ourselves and with our peers. Towards the end of the semester, we were more open with our feelings, we were better able to express ourselves, we knew how to word things so we wouldn’t hurt anyone’s feelings, and so we were being heard in the way we wanted to be heard.”

Because the students perceived themselves and each other as knowledge-producers, they engaged in listening carefully to one another, talking things through, sharing different perspectives in a safe community, and learning cross-cultural communication. As they developed horizontal relationships with one another, they were also able to engage deeply with the object of inquiry. In the process, the students began to develop critical awareness and critical self-reflection in regard to the topics being discussed.

Jenna described how this happened for her:

Listening about each of the class member’s diverse backgrounds and experiences contributed to my learning in this class a great deal. This was because I am from the dominant culture and I never was forced or never actually took the time to think about what people from minority and/or diverse backgrounds and cultures have to go through each and every day. This class put me in a position to take the time to actually listen to other people’s stories and to think critically about the “what if” factor. By the “what if” factor, I mean to say “what if I was not a part of the dominant culture and I had to face the obstacles and challenges that my classmates do every day?”

Examples of the Students' Critical Awareness Raising and Critical Self-Reflection in the Class

Developing critical awareness and critical self-reflection manifested in a number of ways among the students. For Jenna, it meant recognizing herself as a member of the privileged dominant culture and thinking critically about the “what if” factor. In a similar vein, Kristi learned how to put herself in minority students’ shoes, and to really give consideration to what they go through and might be feeling. Isabella recognized that “there’s just a lot of diversity that I hadn’t thought about or things that are different from my experiences that I hadn’t pictured.” Admitting her own privileged position, Isabella was prompted to revisit and change her thoughts about specific issues such as bilingual education and meritocracy. “Where I was once completely a fan of meritocracy, now I must allow room for social inequality,” she affirmed. For Rosanna, critical awareness implied a praxis stance, a preparedness for practice. Rosanna shared, “I didn’t know this class was going to be as revolutionary as it was. It opened my eyes to certain issues that you don’t really want to think about. After being in this class, I want to go out and change the world, or at least be that change in the world that you are looking for.”

Through the class, Rachel reevaluated her thinking on issues such as the effects of capitalism in US society and economy. She realized that capitalism negatively affects the impoverished classes because it “encourages pushing others out of the way to get what you need.” Critical awareness and self-reflection also happened for Rachel in another, more personal way, a propos of a specific class interaction (see Chapter 5). Rachel alluded to this experience in her final reflection paper (which all the students had the opportunity to read):

Even though I do care about people who are either minorities or disadvantaged, I was very humbled one day in class when I realized that I do still hold many of the same stereotypes as the white people Nieto views as enemies to her cause. At the end of my presentation of my cultural autobiography, Renae shyly asked a question about a comment I had made offhand. I didn’t understand what she wanted me to address, so she said explicitly that what I had said implied that all Americans are white. I was very grateful to her for bringing that up, because I know it was hard for her to confront me on it, and because it was a very important realization for me in terms of my views on race. Although I was not extremely surprised, I did not know for sure that I really embraced these types of generalizations and stereotypes. I really want to thank Renae for having the guts to confront me on that, and I also want to thank Greg for creating a classroom environment that encouraged her to confront me about that, and made me able to take what she said and learn from it without being ashamed that I have not arrived at embracing equality in my thinking.

Finally, for their particularities, it is worth showcasing Lauren's and Renae's experiences with critical awareness raising and critical self-reflection in the class:

Renae: "In this class, I revitalized my voice, which is such an important part of understanding me and my culture."

As I expressed in Chapter 6 (p. 173), throughout the course Renae was a mystery to me. "Everyone always says that to me, I don't know why," Renae commented in our interview. I suggested that her body language might be sending the wrong message to those around her. Renae gave me her deep, penetrating look. I could tell that she was mulling over what I had said. Now I could tell.

Renae was a mystery worth trying to figure out. Although I am sure I did not quite solve the mystery (which would not have been the point anyway), by the end of the semester I had learned quite a bit about and with Renae. I came to understand that Renae's deep, penetrating look more than anything else denoted intense concentration over the content under discussion. "A lot of times when I look at people it seems that I am looking through them, to try to understand and focus in on what they are saying," she clarified. I also learned that Renae was often late to class because she is not a morning person and likes to sleep in, but also because she would rather come into the classroom after everything has settled down and the teacher is teaching, so that she can focus on the lesson and does not have to talk to other people. So Renae preferred to keep to herself, and she needed her space (or "bubble," as she called it), which did not surprise me. What did surprise me at first was learning why Renae never referred to Greg or me by our first names (we were Professor/Mr. McClure and Mrs. Vasconcelos). "Everybody else is older than me in class. My parents would have a fit if I was calling people by their first names. So I call all my teachers by their last names," she explained. Yes, it made perfect sense, of course.

There was more to Renae, though. While she had taken other courses on multicultural education in the past, she did not anticipate that she would be engaging so deeply in critical self-reflection in Greg's class. For Renae, this undertaking took the form of a complex process of revitalizing her voice without fitting into the stereotype of the minority African-American woman. "I have often worried about being seen as "the voice of the people" in classes where many minorities are not present," Renae shared. This is

why she struggled with completing the cultural autobiography project (see Chapter 4, p. 121), because she felt that “Mr. McClure” had an expectation that she could not and did not want to meet. When Renae was preparing the project, she approached Greg to say that she couldn’t find connections to privilege, prejudice, racism, class, etc. in her life. Greg responded, “Well, I’m sure you’ve had an experience, or you know someone that’s had an experience where they have gone into a store and someone’s followed them around.” And Renae, who had never had such an experience, couldn’t meet that expectation, and therefore didn’t want to do the project.

At the same time, Renae acknowledged the inherent, unavoidable emphasis placed on race and ethnicity in regards to minority students. In her experience, “We are singled out in our classes. When our teachers and peers talk about our culture or our people they look to us for verification, making us uncomfortable and, at times, frustrated. We are the first name that the teacher remembers from their role sheet. We are uneasy because everyone knows that we were in their class, but we never remember their presence.” In the Language and Culture class, in order to reach a balance or a position of growth, Renae “sought refuge in Sonia Nieto’s words,” while learning a valuable lesson on cross-cultural communication. Renae witnessed some of the other students’ resistance to Nieto’s text (Nieto’s blunt, “harsh” way of delivering her message), but, as a minority herself, Renae was able to relate to the message that the author delivered. By engaging in self-reflection, Renae developed the awareness that “when speaking from a minority voice you have to learn how to speak to the dominant culture in a way that they will not only hear you but listen. Our message has to be indirect and, in a way, sugar-coated, so that people do not feel like they are being subjected to criticism. In discussing Nieto’s book, in class, I understood the necessity of eloquent, yet passive writing.” So, for Renae, regaining her voice entailed learning how to express her feelings and opinions indirectly, in order to get her point across in a more effective manner. Renae felt that this happened in the class, and her voice was revitalized.

Lauren: “Greg’s class made me love and respect multicultural education, and to know that it is important.”

Lauren decided to enroll in the Language and Culture class because she wanted an “easy A.” At her previous college, she had taken a course on multicultural education that covered many of the same topics addressed in the Language and Culture course. That previous course was not a good experience for Lauren, though. As she described it, “My teacher was Puerto Rican, and it felt like she was just kind of hating on us [students], because we were White. So it just felt like she was saying it’s all our fault, we’re the majority, and we’re always wrong, and all this and all that.” Lauren heard a lot about Paulo Freire in that class, but “it was more like word for word, and not put into practice so much.” So Lauren left the class thinking that multicultural education was “stupid,” and no one would ever practice it, “especially down here in Georgia, the heart of the Bible belt, where no one’s ever going to want social justice or equity. We like things the way they are in the South and we don’t want it changed.”

When Lauren enrolled in Greg’s Language and Culture class, she thought, “Well, I’ve already had all this before, so I could just go ahead and knock this out of the way; it’s an easy A.” However, this class turned out to be Lauren’s most challenging one; she was pushed to step out of her comfort zone, and for the first time to think about what makes her who she is. She learned to question what and how she was taught, and to consider how she could change “the typical misconception of a White, middle class, female teacher.” The class broke down a lot of barriers for her, but it was “by far” her favorite, despite the internal struggle she went through. “I loved every minute of it,” she shared.

As the students engaged with the readings while bringing their experiences to the table, Lauren was able to relate to the content of the readings and to find ways to relate everyone’s experiences to her own life. The dialogic process helped her become more open-minded and to consider other people’s diverse perspectives, regardless of her own personal beliefs. This process, in turn, contributed to changing her views on multicultural education. Lauren decided that she wanted to be an advocate for multicultural education. In her final reflection paper, which took the format of a letter to herself, she wrote:

This class made you view social justice in a more open and positive light than the narrow minded way you used to view it. As you went along in the semester, you felt your goals and yourself transforming. You felt your goals becoming more for the benefit of the students you will teach and the society you hope to change. You felt yourself wanting to fight for social justice and equity for all. You felt yourself wanting to bring to light the issues discussed in the class: the political struggle of education, the issue with being socially and politically correct in textbooks, and the social justice for all, not just the select few. You want to bring these to light because these are the things that can possibly improve the education system and the way people tend to view it. You want to bring these issues to light because you want children to be able to want to change the future; you want them to question the things that go unquestioned. You want them to think critically.

Effects of the Class on the Students' Development as Prospective ESOL Teachers

So what did the students take away from the course for their own prospective teaching practice?

All the students in the class felt that their experience in the Language and Culture course contributed to their preparation as future ESOL teachers. Both the class content and its dialogic format facilitated deep learning, critical awareness raising, and critical self-reflection on crucial sociopolitical and cultural issues among the students. Such outcome per se contributed to their preparation as prospective teachers of minority students, language learners or otherwise. A few students in the class who, on top of that, recognized Greg's active teacher role and understood, in full or in part, his dialogic pedagogy benefited even more from the course. For them, Greg's dialogic teaching had a "double-loop effect;" it served as a model that they aspire to follow in their own teaching practice. These students were very motivated to seek ways to enact a dialogic pedagogy in the future.

In terms of content, all students highlighted that the course was an eye-opener to diversity. They realized that they will teach diverse students—"kids that just look different than you and who have different backgrounds and different family situations," said Kristi. Along with this lesson came another important realization, of the need to practice culturally responsive teaching. As Jenna put it, "Before this class, I thought I could just look at all my students the same. But after this class, I can't do that. I can't just look at my whole class and treat everybody equally. When it comes to cultural aspects and disabilities, you have to know what you need to do for each of your students." The class also recognized, as Renae phrased it, "the importance of becoming multicultural in order to teach multiculturalism;

teachers being open-minded and inviting to differences among their students, their community, and the world, and teaching them not to downplay cultures because of stereotypes and bias.” Additionally, the class learned the relevance of critical pedagogy; in Isabella’s words, “As a teacher, I must always encourage each and every student to question the system when they deem necessary. Students should feel entitled to knowing the motives behind actions, and the reality in society. For example, traditional taboo topics such as racism will not be excluded from my classroom.” In the same vein, Rachel said, “I feel like I’ve really gotten to know what the thinking is with critical pedagogy and Sonia Nieto, and I can take that and use it, and I have learned from it. I can take what I agree with and apply that to my teaching and to my life.”

In terms of course format, a few students indicated that one of the purposes of the Language and Culture class was to teach how to conduct that kind of dialogic class. “It was, like, we are the teachers at some point, but now we’re the students, and so we’re seeing the class and the classroom setting how our students will see it in the future,” Renae suggested. As Kristi put it, “We were learning how to teach a class by not shutting the students out, by including the students and making them an active part in learning.” This was one of the main lessons that Lauren took away from the class, as she described in the letter to herself:

You are going to want to relate to your students. You are going to want to be able to make connections with your students on a more personal level than how you were taught because you will come to believe that the more personal the connection, the more open the classroom, the more safe the community, the more dialogue, and the more learning that will take place. A safe, close, open classroom community where every person, be them teacher, student, or visitor feels safe enough and welcomed enough to want to express their views without the fear of being judged, but with the hope of being more understood.

Thus it seems safe to say that the students who benefited the most from the class were the ones who both developed critical awareness and critical self-reflection *and* got a fuller grasp of Greg’s active teacher role and dialogic, humanizing pedagogy. Lauren was clearly one of these students. The theory of Freire’s pedagogy and multicultural education that Lauren had been presented with, but not been positively impacted by in her previous college course, came alive in bright colors in the Language and

Culture class, making it a transformative experience for her, one that is indeed likely to inform her future teaching practice.

A Word from Greg

After hearing and examining the students' voices, in closing this chapter I make room for a word from Greg on the outcome of the Language and Culture class. In the last debriefing dialogue the two of us had, I asked him if he was satisfied with the class, if it had met his original plans and expectations. Always profoundly self-reflective and continuously engaged in a self-study of his pedagogy, Greg initially brought up a couple of shortcomings and challenges that he faced in teaching the class (These are addressed in the next chapter). He also brainstormed some ideas for improvement (such as devising more diversified activities, strategies, and individual tasks that accommodate task-oriented learners like Isabella)—He would try these ideas out the next time he taught the course, starting the following month. Finally, Greg—always the teacher-learner—offered his brief but balanced appraisal:

I am happy with what we achieved in the class, for sure. I think we have some very relevant examples of a dialogic learning community, and you know, I think it's false to say that we achieved a dialogic learning community and sustained and were there. I don't think that's a reality. I don't think that ever happens; I think it's something that we constantly move in and out of. I think we had wonderful examples of engaging in dialogue as a process of coming to know ourselves, coming to know others, and also dialogue as a way of knowing and learning. I think it really happened. Moments like the dialogue between Rachel and Renae, you know, and this notion when Rachel conflated being American to being White, Renae choosing to confront her, point out the fact, the obvious submission, and Rachel's willingness to engage that, own it, think about it, and even respond to the tune of where she felt it came from—the hegemony of White dominance. At the same time, I think I was able to learn a lot about myself and my own pedagogy through dialoguing with individual students, through the papers, through the writings, as well as in the class, in so many ways.

CHAPTER 8

DIALOGUE, DIALOGUE EVERYWHERE!

Greg (*to Erika*): I should emphasize, very clearly, that my understanding of dialogue is in constant process. Due in large part to discussions with you, I feel my understanding evolving regularly. However, from the beginning, I have understood dialogue as a **particular orientation, or relationship with the world**. Dialogue for me creates the immediate sense that everything is in flux; knowledge, certainty, relations with others, etc., these things are constantly evolving. To be in dialogue with the world, and thus others in the world, means to engage that uncertainty with intentions of learning from other ways of seeing, being in the world. It requires critically investigating where one stands and what influences shape our thinking in order to make sense of what happens in our dialogue with others. It, of course, is much more as well, an act of deep listening and considering another's position and experience in the world. And much more...

This dissertation is infused with an array of dialogic threads. This study started out as an investigation of dialogue as pedagogy, with a focus on the interactions (actions and reactions) among a teacher and his students. As this main thread wove its way through the different stages of the study, other dialogic threads came along. Dialogue as pedagogy made room for dialogue as research method too. The new threads were the interactions among me (the researcher) and the participants of the study. There have also been the threads of my implicit and explicit dialogue with the authors I have read and the people who will read me—the members of my committee and my projected future readers. Underlying this complex whole has been the continuous, nonstop, recursive, ever challenging, often painful, dialogue with my own self—my thoughts, my questions, my uncertainties, my discoveries, and my new questions. Dialogue, dialogue everywhere! The challenge in this final chapter is to pull these dialogic threads together and fashion them into a coherent whole that does justice to all who have been in dialogue with me and to the knowledge we have constructed together.

Undergirding this study as a whole is the fundamental understanding of dialogue as a pedagogical communicative relation (Burbules, 1993). I cannot stress this enough. Dialogue is a relation that acts directly on the social world as it mediates learning and knowing among people bound by habits of heart,

but who are also free to differ and diverge from one another. The relational aspect is the most characteristic thing about dialogue and the element that sustains it over time.

In this final chapter, I consider both substantive and procedural issues (Holliday, 2007) that have comprised this study. Substantive issues have to do with the substance of social life and consider the contribution of the study to the understanding of particular phenomena within a particular social setting. The substantive issue in my study pertains to **dialogue as pedagogy**. Procedural issues have to do with particular methodological procedures that are developed throughout the research for addressing particular questions about a particular social setting. Procedural issues consider the implications and effectiveness of using a particular procedure. Questions for consideration are: “Have I developed a way of looking, and of interacting with the social setting, which has enabled me better to understand the types of phenomena I am interested in? Is there something significant in this procedure which could be of interest to other researchers? What contribution can it make to understanding how to do qualitative research?” (Holliday, 2007, p. 57) The procedural issue to which I draw attention is **dialogue as research method**.

At this point I refer back to the research questions that have guided this work:

1. What does it mean to approach teaching and learning dialogically in this ESOL teacher education class? What are the evolving configurations and characteristics of the class? What roles do the teacher and students play, and how do they relate to one another?
2. What are the constraints to seeking to teach and learn dialogically in this specific case within this university context?
3. Does this teaching approach facilitate raising the students’ critical awareness and critical self-reflection, and their understanding of dialogic pedagogy? If so, how does that in turn affect their development as prospective ESOL teachers?

These research questions have to do with **dialogue as pedagogy**. Chapters 4, 5, and one section of Chapter 6 (**Greg’s Dialogical Interactions with the Students**, p. 177) addressed research question #1. Chapter 5 and sections of Chapter 4 also pertained to question #3. Chapter 7 responded to research questions #1 and #3. Sections of Chapters 4, 6, and 7 also addressed research question #2, although

somewhat indirectly. In this last chapter, I dedicate a specific section (**Challenges and constraints in the class**, p. 218) to compiling and examining the findings pertaining to question #2. In this conclusion, I sum up the answers to the other two research questions as well.

A fourth research question—an unstated, unanticipated one—has also been considered in this dissertation. This underlying question emerged during field work, prompted by my methodological approach towards the participants. This question could be phrased as: What does (did) it mean to do research dialogically in this ESOL teacher education class? And also: What is the place of dialogue as a research method in ESOL teacher education? This fourth, emergent research question was addressed in Chapter 6, and will be further developed into a substantive response in the **dialogue as research method** section in this chapter.

Dialogue as Pedagogy

This study represented the multilayered and multithreaded story of an ESOL teacher education class. One of the central threads or layers in this story underscored dialogue as pedagogy, and described and examined the week-by-week, evolving process of a teacher's actions—his unorthodox, innovative, excellent teaching practice—and the students' reactions—their responses to the dialogic pedagogy that the teacher enacted.

From the first day of class, Greg laid the foundation for a democratic class conducive to the emergence of teacher-students and student-teachers, all knowledge-producers who were expected to contribute to the teaching process and to learn from one another. Committed to the course content and to his view of education as a political act, from the start Greg foregrounded his purpose of building community that would lead towards some sort of critical approach to learning and thinking together. Greg's double role as a teacher *and* a student helped neutralize the traditional hierarchical relation between teacher and students in the class. Throughout the course, Greg fostered personal caring relations with the students, planned participatory, discussion-based lessons, consistently encouraged the students to contribute their knowledge and experiences, and valued and built on their contributions. As Greg enacted and modeled relational actions and dialogic patterns with consistency and durability, the students

responded to Greg's actions accordingly.⁵⁶ Because Greg authentically *lived* the dialogue, the students had no trouble recognizing themselves and one another as knowledge-producers—teachers in their own right.

In the midst of moments of sharing, camaraderie and fun, bonded by the square-shaped desk arrangement that allowed making constant eye contact, the students gradually and consistently learned to listen to and speak with one another. Still true to their individual personalities, some students preferred to speak more while others chose to listen more; however, the “active speakers,” the “active listeners” and the “in-between” students engaged in critical dialogue with one another, with the course material, and with their own selves. Demonstrating their trust in the class as a supportive learning community, the students practiced dialogue as they shared personal stories and struggles, faced and confronted biases and misconceptions, and raised and discussed critical questions. Learning with and from one another entailed listening carefully to each other's viewpoints; talking things through to understand the content better; sharing different perspectives and accepting them as legitimate and valid; and learning how to communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds. As the students nourished horizontal relationships with one another, they also engaged deeply with the course content, developing critical awareness and critical self-reflection in regard to crucial sociopolitical and cultural issues. Their eyes were opened to diversity and multiculturalism. They realized the importance of practicing culturally responsive teaching, becoming multicultural in order to teach multiculturalism, and applying critical pedagogy principles in their prospective work with diverse students, language learners or otherwise.

In sum, the study found that the dialogic and humanizing pedagogy practiced by Greg challenged the traditional teacher–student hierarchical structure and positioned the students as important knowledge-

⁵⁶ In Chapter 3 (p. 56), I noted that from the outset I chose to address my research questions from a qualitative approach. The critical ethnography lens was a nice fit with the narrative, storylike format in which, aiming for a “thick description in motion” (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 53), I represented the actions and reactions of the participants over time (Chapter 4). Having completed this analysis, I have come to perceive that the rich data in my study would also go well with a quantitative approach. For instance, it would be possible to quantify and measure the evolution and changes in instructor versus student time talking, as well as the increases in student talk turns. Thus it seems that a mixed-methods (qualitative and quantitative) approach would have a contribution to offer to studies such as this one, and should be considered in the design of future studies that investigate dialogic actions and reactions.

producers. Sharing individual lived experiences and connecting those experiences to course content resulted in the joint construction of meaningful knowledge and contributed to the development of caring relationships and, ultimately, an engaged learning community unlike that typically experienced in the students' undergraduate coursework. Throughout the course, the class engaged in vigorous, productive, and respectful dialogue on difficult, controversial issues that at times intersected and collided with the participants' own personal, religious, and political selves. In class discussions, room was made for a democracy of consonant and dissonant voices. Both the class content and its dialogic format facilitated deep learning, critical awareness raising, and critical self-reflection among the students, contributing to their development as prospective ESOL teachers.

Moments of crisis as opportunities for learning and growth

Among the many dialogic speech events that took place in the class throughout the course, one interaction stood out for its striking qualities. This speech event stemmed from an unanticipated, rather peculiar question that one student asked another, "Can you explain the dog situation again? Like, the guard dog?" This dialogic speech event was a "moment of crisis" (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 230) that turned out to be a powerful experience in which the notion of what it means to "be American" was problematized, deconstructed, and reconstructed to add diverse ethnicities to the White majority. Respectfully but firmly, Renae confronted Rachel about an offhand remark that Rachel made which excluded non-Whites from the U.S./American identity. Rachel, in turn, humbly and good-willingly recognized the stereotype and racism embedded in her own words, and publicly rejected the naturalized notion they conveyed. This dialogic speech event mirrored the relational actions and dialogic patterns that Greg had been enacting and modeling in the class from their first meeting. The students had been consistently learning how to engage in respectful, non-judgmental, and productive dialogue about complex, polarizing issues. Because Greg created a safe, constructive atmosphere that fostered community, care, and mutual acceptance, the students felt safe to be vulnerable and honest in the class.

Other recent studies in the field of teacher education have noted the potential of crucial questions, polarizing issues, and moments of conflict for pushing the boundaries of dialogue among participants in

the classroom. In the classes he teaches, Fecho (Fecho, Collier, Friese, & Wilson, 2010) seeks to create an atmosphere in which students enter a state of “wobble,” characterized by a shift in balance in one’s belief system that asks them to pay attention to potentially difficult and controversial issues at hand and to author a response. Students are encouraged to work within dialogical tensions and vulnerabilities in hopes of reaching moments of learning and growth. Beth, one of Fecho’s students, opened herself to a state of wobble around the complicated issue of ability tracking. While initially Beth felt silenced during a class discussion on the topic, she decided to trust the process and speak with Fecho about her feelings. The process led Beth to a deeper reflection on the complexities and challenges that teachers face in making room for all cultures to be expressed in diverse classroom settings. Beth opened herself to further dialogue and learned through the process.

Hermann-Wilmarth (2008) explored the creation of dialogic spaces around perceived controversial or risky topics such as religion and homosexuality. Jill, the instructor, and Jianna, one of her students, were successful in opening up a dialogic space to respectfully lay out their disparate understandings of religion and homosexuality while attentively considering each other’s histories and perspectives. As a result, both teacher and student reached a position of growth in which they learned from one another without compromising their own identities and beliefs.

Allen (2010) related how the negative feedback she received from a student—“This is the most frustrating class I’ve ever taken ... The discussion is dominated by people who seem to think and talk simultaneously”—led her to take action to invite the students in the class to develop a more democratic and inclusive pedagogical practice. As a result, the class developed instructional strategies that helped make room for everyone to participate and be heard.

In the context of ESOL teacher education, McClure & Vasconcelos (2011) examined how a student’s candid question raised in class—“Am I learning in this class?”—not only questioned the instructor’s unconventional pedagogy but created the opportunity for the group to reflect on the nature of teaching, learning, and knowledge. Emerging from a moment of individual critical reflection, the

student's question laid the foundation for critical and dissident voices in the classroom community while promoting collective learning and growth.

My study aligns with the studies above in confirming the potential of critical questions and moments of crisis in dialogic teacher education. As Tolentino (2007) so properly noted, "Learning comes in the cracks when we are open and willing to deal with the uncomfortable conversations, the unpredictable questions, and the spontaneous outbursts." In my study, what started out quite inconspicuously with a peculiar question from Renae to Rachel evolved into an epiphanic moment for Rachel and a learning experience for all. This epiphany was all the more powerful and transformative because it was mediated by humility, mutual trust and care borne out of true dialogue. It was a moment of *conscientização* that led Rachel to realize that, despite her best intentions, she embodied both protagonist and antagonist subjectivities (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010). In other words, Rachel experienced and realized that all individuals, each one of us, can embody multiple, often antithetical subjectivities, given the very dynamism and fluidity of human nature and human relations. Clear-cut personifications of oppressor and oppressed, or antagonist and protagonist, are, at best, incomplete (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010). Through words and actions, depending on contexts and circumstances, the same individuals can perpetuate existing stereotypes and power imbalances, or contest and transform them.

In Rachel's case, prior to the dialogic speech event in question she viewed herself exclusively as the protagonist who "cared about people who are either minorities or disadvantaged." Having been to several trips abroad, Rachel was certain that she had learned not to stereotype people and to successfully navigate and value different cultures. However, she came face to face with the antagonist within her when she was confronted by Renae on the racism embedded in her inconspicuous but ethnocentric comment. This speaks to the pervasiveness of racism, even in the presence of a sincere attempt to avoid or oppose it. The epiphany was still powerful, though, because Rachel was willing to own the realization and to be transformed by it. And, as she noted,

I *know* that the realization could never have been so personal, so profound, and so lasting were it not for the format of Greg's class—a safe environment for authenticity in which people know there is unconditional acceptance and that they will not be devalued for being honest. The fact that I was presenting about my life because Greg valued that enabled that comment [“Americans just people with lighter skin”] to be made by me; the fact that Renae was comfortable saying something about my offensive comment was also a product of the structure of Greg's class. The difference was that Greg *cared* and demonstrated that he *cared*. I had the mental space (free from fear or worry created by criticism/rejection) to process what had happened and learn from it.

In this safe, non-judgmental atmosphere, Rachel was open to being honest and humble. The protagonist and the antagonist within her met one another and also entered into productive, transformative, mindset-changing dialogue. Not only that, but through this moment of crisis, Rachel grasped “this idea that your perspective is limited, and you must learn to see through others' eyes as well. Greg's class expanded my understanding of seeing through others' eyes and gave me the tools to verbalize my opinion of the importance of doing that.”

Hence this research study intersects with the aforementioned studies, as well as with several other qualitative studies conducted in elementary through secondary education contexts (Moje, 1996; Nieto, 2005; Robinson, 1994; Trueba, 1999; Valenzuela, 1999), in the overall finding that relationships are paramount in classroom teaching and learning. In and of itself, this idea is not a new one. According to Nieto (2006), “By now it is a taken-for-granted truth that relationships are at the heart of teaching” (p. 466). What seems to be lacking are more ethnographic studies that acknowledge and show that caring, humanizing relations between teachers and students, and among students, create the optimal atmosphere for making the most of crucial questions and moments of crisis, fostering collective learning, empowerment, and growth.

On another level, my approach to examining the interaction between Rachel and Renae has transcended the studies above in regards to the detailed discourse analysis that I have undertaken. By providing a step-by-step critical discourse analysis of the structure of a dialogic speech event, my study seeks to offer a contribution that illustrates, examines, and models dialogic practices associated with preparing ESOL pre-service teachers. Using a range of approaches, discourse analysts often have examined types of interaction in which participants are positioned asymmetrically in classroom discourse

(Cameron, 2001, p. 162; Talmy, 2009). Teacher educators and student teachers, however, have the opportunity to draw on counter-discourses that resist and challenge dominant ones; such was the case in the moment of crisis between Rachel and Renae. Using critical discourse analysis to examine classroom interactions such as theirs “can give teachers ideas for making more space for student contributions in class and for building relationships with students which might lead to more effective learning outcomes” (Butt et al., 2000, p. 106).

Additionally, studies such as this one foreground language use for agency, resistance, creativity, and caring relations; that is, my study shows how language can be used “to create loving and mutually respectful and caring relationships among individuals and among groups; to find agency even in the midst of subordinating institutions; to adapt and transform oppressive linguistic and cultural forms; and to create new ones, for liberating uses” (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 47). It is worth investigating what people do to their language and literacy practices when they place caring, humanizing relations at the center of their social relationships. Classes that seek to be dialogic learning communities provide an innovative alternative to the hegemonic hierarchical or banking order of discourse, and the discursive practices of their teachers and students should be examined if one aims to understand, theorize, and influence the “articulation and rearticulation” (Fairclough, 1992a, p. 93) of educational discourse.

Challenges and constraints in the class

In spite of the evident positive outcomes of this ESOL teacher education class, the participants faced challenges and struggles in teaching and learning dialogically in this setting. These challenges were time management, class size, and the influence of the dominant institutional discourse of teaching and learning. The extent to which these challenges can be seen as constraints to what ultimately took place in the class is unclear. It appears that the challenges of less-than-ideal time management and small class size remained more as personal perceptions or struggles that might not have notably impinged on the dialogic teaching and learning that effectively went on in the class. Alternatively, some student data suggest that these challenges may even have contributed to the development of the class. As for the third challenge, the picture is more complex. The pervasiveness of the institutional technocratic discourse of instruction

appears to have affected all the participants, students *and* teacher, albeit in different ways. While Greg's dialogic actions effectively counteracted the impact of the banking model of instruction on what effectively took place in the class, still the banking discourse was a factor that affected both Greg himself and some students' perceptions on their experiences in the class. Thus this factor can be regarded as a constraint to enacting a dialogic pedagogy in overall terms.

The three challenges identified above are examined in the sequence:

Time. Time management was a big struggle of Greg's in teaching this class. In previous semesters, Greg had taught the Language and Culture course in one 3-hour weekly meeting, rather than two 75-minute sessions. Greg did not get used to the 75-minute slot. He felt the need for more time both to "let things sit" (make room for personal interactions and activities that foster community) and to follow through class discussions. Greg described the challenge that he faced:

You deal with the details for the day, or questions about assignments, or what's coming up, introduce what you're doing, do some small individual or activity work, and then try to have meaningful discussion, you know, there's no time. That was the struggle. If I try to break that up, do something, do activities, and then go to the discussion on Thursday, you know, the lead-in is lost. There's not the opportunity to follow through and follow up on things as much as I'd like.

Indeed, class discussions were often cut short and activities left out because of lack of time. That happened on the day we had to interrupt the engaging discussion on the sensitive topic of White privilege (see Chapter 4, p. 112), since we were already 10 minutes over regular class time. On other occasions, a couple of videos scheduled for the last 10 minutes of class were not watched; a few ticket-outs were not written. While lack of time, or less-than-ideal time management, at first sight might be regarded as a constraint to achieving the best results in the class, the matter warrants further consideration. In spite of Greg's struggle with time and the interrupted class discussions, student-related data do not suggest that their learning was negatively affected by the time-management factor. In light of the fruitful dialogic teaching and learning that clearly took place within scheduled class time, where ample opportunities were made for meaningful discussions and activities, one is left to wonder whether a few interrupted discussions and dropped activities produced negative effects. In fact, for one student the interruptions

were actually beneficial.⁵⁷ “In this class, if we don’t understand something and time runs out, we pick it back up the next day, which I think helps us be able to think about it over the night, or over the next two days, and formulate a better, more comprehensive opinion about it, and then come back and share it with the class, collectively,” Renae said. So it appears that the correlation between Greg’s apparent less-than-ideal time management and the dialogic teaching and learning that took place in the class remains unclear. I am inclined to think that lack of time was more of a personal struggle that Greg faced in his teaching (perhaps derived from the need he felt for a sense of completion, of “following through things”), rather than a factor that significantly affected the development and outcome of the class.

Class size. Most if not all the students in the class had never studied in a college class as small as this one. For Isabella and Jenna, this was a challenge. Because there were few students in the class, Isabella and Jenna felt the pressure to have to speak up. It was a challenge that Jenna welcomed, but Isabella did not. At first, when Isabella saw how small the class was, she even considered dropping it. In time, though, she got used to the class size and felt more comfortable speaking up. On the other hand, for Rachel, the opportunity that the small class made for her to speak and be heard was something that she enjoyed from the start. And Lauren, who did not always feel like speaking up, nonetheless suggested that being expected to participate was preparing her for other contexts and situations, since “there are times when you have to speak up, when you don’t necessarily feel like it or when you don’t necessarily want to, but you need to.” So, despite the challenge presented to some students, the small class size appears not to have been a constraint to teaching and learning dialogically in this setting. If nothing else, it actually may have contributed to elicit more participation from the quieter students who might not have spoken up as much in a larger class.

Influence of the technocratic discourse of instruction. Research shows that students who are accustomed to top-down, transmission-based modes of instruction may experience uneasiness, discomfort, or even resistance to adapting to an unconventional, more participatory classroom approach.

⁵⁷ This student, Renae, spontaneously brought up the subject in our interview. I do not know the other students’ opinions on the topic, because it did not occur to me to ask them about it in my interviews with them.

Scholars have written of the “inertia” of traditional didactic pedagogies (Chow, Fleck, Fan, Joseph, & Lyter, 2003) and how this force from non-dialogic classrooms can “spill over” into dialogic ones (Shor, 1992, p. 93). The prevailing technocratic mode of instruction characteristic of this college culture did “spill over” into Greg’s class, affecting teacher and students, albeit in different ways.

First, the students. While at the end of the semester the students indicated that their experience in the class had been overwhelmingly positive, even transformative for some, the experience was continuously compared to and mediated by normative educational expectations. These expectations were not met in Greg’s class, which gave rise to diverse reactions and understandings of Greg’s role and pedagogy among the students. Most of them came to see Greg as an active teacher presence in the class, but for a couple of students, he was a passive facilitator. The few students who thought of Greg as a facilitator at times resisted the discussion-based format of the class in favor of a lecture-oriented and assignment- or activity-driven format, as this mode more closely aligns with how schooling is typically experienced. These students demonstrated some level of adherence to technocratic instruction. However, most students, despite initial reactions of surprise and suspicion, came to appreciate and prefer the dialogic format of the class. Thus, in practice, the constraint represented by the oppositional influence of the institutional banking discourse was effectively counteracted by Greg’s caring, humanizing teaching practice. As a result, all students participated actively as knowledge-producers in the dialogic teaching and learning that took place.

The influence of the technocratic discourse of instruction on Greg himself was of a different, more subtle, nature. Greg embraces his role as a progressive, dialogic teacher wholeheartedly; still, his teacher identity appears to be affected by the banking discourse that he utterly rejects. In his teaching practice, Greg describes a recurrent tension that he faces, of making room for students’ voices and experiences while upholding his responsibility to teach the content. On the one hand, Greg seeks to be the dialogic teacher that invites and values students’ knowledge and experiences. On the other, he is committed to the content, the object of education. Despite the struggle that Greg experiences, there is no

inherent tension between these two goals; actually, at the heart of Freire's (1993) dialogic pedagogy is the purpose to engage learners' knowledge and lived experiences with the content, the object of inquiry.

So where would Greg's tension come from? Would this tension somehow be connected to the very instructional model that Greg steers away from? It appears that, perhaps at some subconscious level, Greg is mistakenly blurring the teacher role, imbued with the responsibility to teach, with the banking teacher-depositor of information. He seems to be mistaking *authoritative* for *authoritarian*.

Authoritarian teachers talk from top to bottom, certain of their correctness and of the truth and completeness of what they say. They speak to, for, and about the learners, subjecting them to their discourse. *Authoritative* teachers, on the other hand, "dare to teach" (Freire, 2005), that is, they face up to the hard work of setting forth their knowledgeable yet partial, incomplete understanding of the content before the students while leading them into further inquiry and investigation. "The more efficaciously I manage to provoke the student into an exploration and refinement of his or her curiosity [of the object of knowledge], the better I am as a teacher," said Freire (1998b, p. 106). The authoritative teacher is successful in achieving that goal.

Would Greg be eschewing teaching explicitly—through moments of lecture and presentation of information—because of a flawed association or identification of a (good) teacher-lecturer role with a (bad) teacher-depositor role? It seems this could be the case. While at times Greg teaches through short lectures and explicit presentation of information, he most often plans instruction in inductive ways that draw out students' opinions and experiences and build on them. Because of the ever-present tension that Greg faces, in his desire to value the students' voices he might hesitate to offer the class instruction in any delivery format that might look prescriptive or transmission-based. As Greg admits, "At times, I'm hypersensitive about the position of power that I hold as the teacher, in terms of influencing or over-influencing the direction of the discussion or the take-away message. I don't want to appear as, you know, 'This is the situation, and I'm telling you what it is, and I want you to think about it more.'" In his reluctance, Greg resembles ESL/EFL teacher educators Crookes and Lehner (1998), who experienced a similar tension in their classroom study. As instructors in position of authority, Crookes and Lehner

(1998) eschewed advocating their own views on the content in the presence of their students because they resisted “being pushed back into banking education and away from a model reflecting the idea of a community of learners” (p. 326).

As this study has shown, Greg’s inductive teaching approach is no doubt very effective. His ability to draw out the students’ knowledge and experiences, connect these to the subject matter, build on them, and co-construct new knowledge is truly admirable. Moreover, Greg authentically lives the dialogue through his caring, humanizing interactions with the students, who recognize their own position as knowledge-producers. The students highly appreciate Greg’s commitment and care. However, a few of his ESOL student teachers have failed to recognize his teacher role in his inductive approach. Yet Greg does not want to be mistaken for a facilitator or guide, because that feeds into his ever-present tension of upholding his responsibility to teach while making room for the students to teach. What could Greg do to try to counteract and neutralize this tension? At times Greg senses “the need on the part of the students for some content, direct instruction, explicit knowledge, information from the teacher, as opposed to eliciting perspectives and responses.” He might want to capitalize on these occasions. He might want to step out on that scary limb and be the authoritative dialogic teacher-lecturer who does not risk becoming the authoritarian teacher-depositor. Balance here is key; it is clear that the need for dialogue does not rule out the need to teach.

So, where to begin? Moss (2004) suggested a good place to begin dialogue for critical instruction:

From my 13 years’ experience as a middle school teacher and academic study of learning, I would say that the way to begin is for the teacher to open up the idea of dialogue in teaching to students. A teacher desiring to shift from teacher-directed instruction to a conversational style of teaching should read current literature on dialogue in teaching and conduct an open class dialogue about dialogue. Give students a chance to think about how it could be used for critical thinking and learning. Listen to what the students have to say. Build from there. (pp. 45-46)

In the same vein, Burbules (1993) wrote, “The capacities, or virtues, that foster an effective dialogical relation frequently need to be developed and improved among the participants as they learn together, not only about the topic at hand, but also about the communicative/pedagogical process itself” (p. 82). So the goal would be to meet the challenge head-on by addressing the fundamentals of dialogue

and dialogic pedagogy with the students. A productive dialogue on dialogue could ensue. This way, Greg would be counteracting or at least mitigating both 1) his recurrent tension—by stepping up as an authoritative teacher who keeps a clear focus on the content, in this case, dialogue itself—and 2) the oppositional effects of the prevailing banking discourse in the students’ minds. In practical terms, as far as this study goes, naming the world upfront in regard to what a dialogic pedagogy entails, proposes, and rules out could have been a beneficial learning experience to the students in their development as ESOL pre-service teachers. This learning experience, with follow-up debriefing moments throughout the course, might have clarified the matter and challenged the students’ thinking, prompting them to question and revisit their prior assumptions and perspectives on the topic.

Through my continued dialogue with Greg throughout the final writing stage of this study, I heard back from him on this analysis. Greg, ever humble and self-reflective, wrote:

Well, you’ve really nailed it, I think. I think you are right on here; and quite a helpful analysis of my pedagogy, I must say. I would only add that perhaps there is another minor issue related to the influence of a technocratic perspective on my teaching—my resistance to going into an explicit dialogue about the nature of dialogue and dialogic pedagogy was largely influenced by a technocratic perspective on teaching. The need to be efficient, to cover course material, and to not take time away from what I sensed students wanted—this fueled my resistance. A sense that this would look even MORE like facilitating and not teaching.

I could see Greg’s point—his struggle and challenge. I was also reminded of something Greg himself said to me a couple of years ago, which I, in turn, quoted to him: “I have learned that in order to reach our greatest dialogical potential, we cannot be selective in our dialogical efforts. Dialogue applies both to our relationship to the object of inquiry *and* to the *process* of learning and growing together as a community of learners” (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011, p. 116) [italics in original]. Perhaps a take-away message and lesson here is that putting dialogue—in all its identifiable forms—on the agenda is surely no simple task, but one that is certainly worth the effort and risk, especially when preparing ESOL teachers for the multiple challenges associated with dealing with ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity in today’s schools.

To wrap up this section, I remember Freire's (1998a) initiative to clarify that the real evil, what he criticized as a kind of banking, was not in the expository lesson—the explanation given by the teacher—but in the teacher attempting to transfer knowledge to students considered as pure recipients. Freire recognized that traditional instructional methods, such as lectures, if adequately employed could aid the teacher in the task of teaching. He viewed a certain kind of expository lesson as profoundly valid:

That [lesson] in which the teacher makes a little presentation of the subject and then the group of students joins with the teacher in an analysis precisely of that presentation. In this fashion, in the little introductory exposition, the teacher challenges the students, who thereupon question themselves and question the teacher, and thereby share in plumbing the depths of, developing, the initial exposition. This kind of work may in no wise be regarded as negative, as traditional schooling in the pejorative sense. (p. 118)

Hence Freire validated balance in dialogic pedagogy. Again, balance is key. The challenge of balance in dialogue is set before all of us progressive educators who aspire to follow Freire's inspiring example and to enact and develop his lofty, perhaps utopian, but, all the same, indispensable ideals.

Dialogue as Research Method

Having tied the main threads of dialogue as pedagogy, I now turn to another important layer in this study, one which emerged during the field work stage and persisted through the final write-up of this work. The representation of dialogue as pedagogy in this study went so far because dialogue was also used as a research method. The feedback I received from Greg, above, is just one illustration of this. Our continuous, recursive, productive dialogue impacted Greg's pedagogy and this study all the way to the end (and our subjectivities as teachers and researchers even beyond that, as our dialogue continues).

In Chapter 3 (p. 67), I offered a brief review of collaborative research as it has applied to classroom-based research in critical ethnography and in the field of TESOL and multicultural education. I noted that studies conducted in these fields often have not considered, detailed or discussed in depth the nature, process, and implications of collaboration between researchers, and between researcher and participants, in their respective settings. Now, in this section, I situate my study in relation to current discussions within which the topic of collaboration is located by drawing connections to one study that I

reviewed in Chapter 3 (Doecke et al., 2009), which addressed the task of documenting and discussing the collaboration between a teacher and a researcher.

Collaboration in my study

In their collaborative study, Doecke et al. (2009) constructed an account of the pedagogy of Gill, a teacher of literature who shared her lesson plans and engaged in conversations with Illesca, a “critical friend” who observed Gill giving lessons over a period of two weeks. The study took place in a literature class in an Australian secondary school. Like Illesca, in Study A (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011) I played the role of a “critical friend” to Greg, but field work lasted significantly longer (one academic semester) than in the case of the Doecke et al. (2009) study. Study A investigated the process of building a dialogic learning community in an ESOL teacher education class. Although I did not audio-record the class meetings, I participated actively in the class and wrote fieldnotes and reflections for all sessions that I attended. Greg also maintained a reflective journal that probed his efforts to enact a dialogic and humanizing pedagogy. Greg and I developed a professional dialogue that, for the duration of the course, consisted mostly of informal, spontaneous (not scheduled) conversations about our perceptions of the development of the class. Gradually, we fostered a relationship marked by mutual respect and trust. Once the course had ended, our collaboration intensified, since by then we had decided to put together a conference presentation on our experience. We met a few times for our “debriefing dialogues,” scheduled sessions in which we shared our fieldnotes, journal entries, and reflections with one another. The debriefing dialogues facilitated more data generation and analysis. Throughout this fluid and recursive process, we came to clearer understandings of what we had experienced in the class; we created new texts to be analyzed, and engaged in representing our study in the form of a dialogical exchange emblematic of our unique perspectives and common findings.

In this follow-up study (Study B), the collaboration between Greg and me shifted in a couple of ways. First, I became the principal investigator, since Study B was prompted by my dissertation plan. In practical terms, this did not mean that Greg became less involved or interested in the investigation; it meant that I conceived from the study design to the final product, and did all the writing for its

representation. Secondly, more than ever, dialogue was placed front and center in our interactions; now our dialogue was real-time, continuous, sustained, and recursive, throughout the stages of data collection, analysis, and writing the dissertation. This dialogue, documented in audio-recordings, e-mails, and fieldnotes, was maintained in and out of the classroom. Greg and I had brief conversations before and after class, exchanged frequent e-mails in which I shared my fieldnotes and reflections with him (and he often commented on them), and met regularly (once or twice a month) for our longer debriefing dialogues. This continued collaboration began to impact Greg's teaching practice and the development of the class; it also affected my participation in the classroom and my subsequent steps in the study, as Greg's actions evidenced that he welcomed me as a co-teacher in and out of the classroom. An effective cycle was set in motion: He would take the feedback I gave him, ponder on my questions and reflections, and often respond to them and translate them into an activity or approach in subsequent classes. These reactions of Greg's, in turn, were actions that fueled new reactions in me—I would reflect on the developments in the class and consider new observations to take down and new points to make to Greg. I would act on these reflections by talking to Greg and/or writing and sending him new fieldnotes that might continue influencing his teaching practice.

In regards to my interactions with the students, unlike what had taken place during Study A, dialogue was also paramount in Study B. By capitalizing on my role as a co-teacher, I engaged in dialogue with the students not just in the classroom (as I had done with a few students in Study A), but most notably out of scheduled class time. This dialogue took the form of individual, face-to-face conversations before, during, and after class, as well as personalized e-mail exchanges. These interactions impacted the students and me as well. They were opportunities in which we built relationships and learned from one another.

Hence what had been a collaborative approach to investigating aspects of Greg's dialogic pedagogy in Study A, in our second experience doing research together evolved into a dialogic approach to examining Greg's dialogic pedagogy and also the topic of dialogic research itself. While Study A was a

study on teaching and learning dialogically, Study B developed into a study on teaching, learning, and doing research dialogically. In the next section, I detail a few specific aspects of this dialogue.

Characteristics of dialogue as a research method in this study

To start, I reiterate that my understanding of dialogue as a research method is grounded on the same overall principles that I discussed for classroom dialogue (Chapter 2): That dialogue is a pedagogical communicative relation (Burbules, 1993) that acts directly on the social world as it mediates learning and knowing (and inquiry) between people (here, researcher and participants). Because dialogue is first and foremost a humanizing relation, it entails the nourishment of habits of heart among the people involved in the process of resolving the “researcher–participant contradiction,” here taken as the differentiated or unequal position they occupy in relation to each other. This democratic process, or drive toward reconciliation, should be mediated by a relationship marked by respect, humility, trust, and care—which also makes room for dissonance and disagreement. These are the fundamental, the ideal principles.

In the context of the Language and Culture class, dialogue as a research method assumed a few specific characteristics, a couple of which can also be seen as outcomes: Dialogue was a process; it was tailored to each participant; it was productive; it facilitated learning; and it mediated change.

Dialogue was a process. This aspect connects directly to the relational feature of dialogue. Dialogue was a fluid, dynamic, and recursive process comprised of actions and reactions that the participants and I practiced over time. This dialogue extended beyond the end of the course, through e-mail exchanges. To be precise, it was not just *one* process, but a number of processes, each one maintained with the individual participants. These processes were differentiated by aspects such as frequency, breadth, and communication channel. With Greg, the chain of actions and reactions was non-stop, carried out through frequent, often daily, e-mail and/or face-to-face communication, covering multiple topics concerning the theory and practice of dialogic pedagogy, Greg’s teaching practice, the development of the class, and other subjects. As for the students, some of them I communicated with more often and more repeatedly than others, and some conversations (or e-mail exchanges) lasted longer and covered more topics than others. What all these dialogic processes had in common, though, was that

they were made up of more than one action and one reaction; that is, I contacted each student more than once (usually several times), and each of them responded more than once (at least a couple of times) to my contact.⁵⁸

Dialogue was tailored to each participant. Dialogic research is culturally responsive research. In other words, my approach towards each participant took into account their individual particularities and agendas. With Greg, from the outset this happened quite naturally for me, as a result of the research partnership that we already had in place, grounded on mutual respect and trust. There was no power imbalance between Greg and me; no “researcher–participant contradiction” to resolve. We had already reached a position where we viewed our collaboration as *teachers’ research* (Stewart, 2006). Not to mention that, as peer graduate students, we were also, literally, teacher-students. So instead of regarding our roles as potentially distinct and separate, Greg and I recognized ourselves as teachers-as-researchers and teacher educators engaged in developing our knowledge, teaching practice, and research skills and capabilities. Our agendas coincided because both Greg himself and I were interested in investigating his pedagogy. So, all in all, tailoring my approach towards Greg simply meant continuing to carefully nourish and build on our dialogic relationship initiated during Study A, and to count on the good fruit. It was no doubt an extremely favorable position for me, with such optimal conditions in place.⁵⁹

From this follows that the tailoring endeavor more accurately applied to the students in the class. This meant that I needed to find out what their individual agendas (their needs and interests) were, in order to figure if I might have something to offer them. So I made it my task to observe and listen to them, and to somehow let them know that I could “see” each of them (cf. Vasconcelos, 2011). As I sought to interact personally with each student, I realized that the best way I could serve them as a researcher and

⁵⁸ As a note, as I write this chapter in February 2011, just in the last couple of months I have heard from five students who participated in this study. A couple of them e-mailed me just to “check on how I was doing.”

⁵⁹ In this sense, this study can be seen as “opportunistic research” (Holliday, 2007, p. 22). According to Holliday (2007), opportunism is of the essence of qualitative research; as he argued “Getting into qualitative research is very often about grasping opportunities that address a good idea or longer-standing preoccupation ... We have to capitalize on those [settings] that are available to us ... ‘Opportunistic research’ is to be considered neither second best nor deceitful, but central to the way in which research can address reality (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 40), given that the principles and rigour of research are maintained” (p. 22).

attend to their agendas was by relating to them as a co-teacher, but in a manner that went beyond participating with my views and experiences on course topics, in the classroom. Being a co-teacher to the students also happened out of the classroom, in distinct, personalized ways, some of which demanded more time and effort than others. With Rachel, for instance, it translated into mentoring her through the tension she experienced in finding common ground between her religious beliefs and concepts such as political education, critical pedagogy, and social justice. With Jenna, it meant offering supportive feedback and encouragement after she shared about her struggle dealing with her parents' divorce and her father's absence in her life. As for Renae and Isabella, being a co-teacher took the form of offering them comments on their coursework and posing follow-up questions that both stimulated their intellectual curiosity and demonstrated that I viewed them as critical thinkers with knowledge and ideas worthy of consideration. With Renae, it also meant taking a step at a time in the challenge of learning to read her, while practicing patience and persistence.

Dialogue was productive. I use *productive* here in the sense of research that yielded rich, solid, multi-angled data, allowing for thick description—the emergence and weaving together of so many threads—in this study. Simply stated, the participants and I engaged in dialogue that resulted in an array of oral and written texts. From the periodic debriefing dialogues with Greg, to the one-on-one encounters, e-mails, and interviews with all the students at the end of the semester, everything generated rich data. Clearly, not only was I in dialogue with the participants, but they were in dialogue with me too—It was a reciprocal relationship, as demonstrated by the time they generously and unanimously made to meet with me for the interviews, and the samples of their written work that they made sure to deliver to me. Additionally, in the interviews, because of our relation marked by trust and care, the students did not hesitate to share with me their candid detailed critique of the course and Greg's teaching practice, even before the final grades were posted. They were sure that nothing that they could possibly say would be counted against them concerning their grade in the course. This also speaks to the quality of the collected data. And, to me, the cream of the crop was no doubt Renae's decision to participate in the study, just a few weeks away from the end of the course. Had it not been for the use of dialogue as a research method

in my approach to Renae, this study would not have turned out the way it did. We would have missed out on Renae's powerful presence, participation, and voice, and all the illuminating lessons that came along with them. That would have been truly regrettable. Last but not least, I can think of at least one more way in which dialogue was productive in this study: Since, in regards to several participants, the dialogue has continued following the end of the course, the potential to generate new data on the study and to create new texts for further examination—the potential for productivity—remains as well.

Dialogue facilitated learning. It was not just dialogue as pedagogy that facilitated student, teacher, and researcher learning in this class; so did dialogue as research method. On a few occasions, several students let me know that they learned from the feedback I had offered them, and that they appreciated my attention and/or encouragement. A few students also commented that they enjoyed receiving the transcriptions of their interviews with me. Rachel, for instance, wrote in a card that she left for me in my departmental mailbox:

Being able to wrestle with and talk about Nieto's ideas and critical pedagogy with you last semester really helped me learn and reshape my ideas about teaching, learning, and relating to other people. I so appreciate your desire to get to know me and the others in our class. It really means a lot to me that you encouraged me in my love for language-learning. Also, I was really excited to receive your e-mail with the transcription of my cultural autobiography presentation. It was very cool to go back and read the dialogue that happened!

Another example, which focused on my participation in class, came from Lauren, in our interview:

I feel like you're a teacher just like Greg is. I feel like I've learned from you just as much as I have from Greg, even though you're not technically the instructor for the class, but I feel like you still are. Because you've helped lead the discussion, and you've helped, you know, be an active member. Because you could just sit in the class, and work on your research, and not say anything, but I feel like by participating you've helped me learn more about myself. And I feel like you're the instructor to me, like, I've learned from you just as much as I have from Greg.

As for Greg, he often spoke of the positive experience it was for him to learn so much about his teaching because of my continued feedback. This despite my candid critique of his pedagogy—my pointing out and discussing in detail what I felt were his shortcomings in teaching the class. What a lesson in humility Greg was for me! The kind of humility that Freire talked about, which admits that, as unfinished beings, we should always be willing to listen to and learn from one another. Not once did our

dialogic relation waver; our disagreements and differing perceptions were taken for granted (perceived as a natural part of the process) and caused no drawbacks. At times Greg and I talked them through on the spot; on other occasions, we put them on the back burner, while we mulled them over and sometimes revisited them. Because we trusted the process, we learned tremendously. Greg described the “incredible opportunity” that our dialogue was for him:

If you can ever remove your ego from the situation, it's an incredible opportunity that teachers never have, to have someone paying so much attention to everything about their pedagogy; how are students learning, what are they learning, who's saying what, how are they interpreting, what's going on, in detailed attention to the teaching and learning and community building and the interactions going on in the classroom. If you can get past the fact that someone's interpreting and evaluating everything you're doing, and take it for the value that it is, it's an amazing opportunity. You know, your role for me was a pretty amazing once-in-a-lifetime experience, to have so much feedback on your pedagogy, right?

And what to say about the amazing once-in-a-lifetime experience that this study was for me?? As I wrote to the students in the letter that I read to them in our last meeting (p. 137), I cannot think of another class in my whole educational life where I learned so much, at so many levels. This was so unanticipated, and yet it was and still is so true! From the fruitful, thought-provoking class discussions to the engaging, often insightful, interactions with individual participants, the learning opportunities just never ended. I was drawn into an ongoing state of deep thinking and inquiry, as I engaged in dialogue with myself and all around me. What a memorable experience indeed! I think of the many conversations Greg and I had on the “epistemology of dialogue,” its forms and manifestations, which inspired me greatly in crafting Chapter 2 in this dissertation. I think of the light in Rachel's eyes when she discovered Freire's Christian roots, in one of our conversations—the same light that had shone in my eyes, when I had found those roots. I think of each student, their qualities and idiosyncrasies. Most of all, I think of the unexpected, but oh! so profound lesson I learned from dialoguing with Renae. Only after interacting with Renae did I truly, irrevocably grasp the meaning of the taken-for-granted principle that “Teachers should meet their students where they are.” Looking beyond appearances, revisiting assumptions and biases, and questioning my own certainties took on a whole new dimension after I met Renae. This study was a learning experience that empowered me all the way around.

Dialogue mediated change. All in all, dialogue contributed towards changing the culture of the Language and Culture class for the better (Thomas, 2003). The dialogic cycle of actions and reactions between Greg and me clearly impacted both Greg's pedagogy and the evolving culture and story of this class. This speaks to Freire's (1993) view of praxis as a dialectical movement that goes from action to reflection, and from reflection upon action to a new action. This praxis is what took place in the dialogue Greg and I maintained throughout the course: My actions (offering feedback) led Greg to reflections that prompted him to new actions in his teaching practice; Greg's new actions in class led me to new reflections (and knowledge) that prompted new actions (feedback) from me to him. This cycle fulfilled the goal of critical ethnography of asking "what could be" (Thomas, 1993) in the class, and acted upon possible answers to this question, fostering better pedagogy and more effective learning.

On another, more personal level, this dialogue impacted me as an educator, researcher, and human being who strives to learn how to "be" while letting and/or helping others "be" as well. The changes that I have experienced in my thinking and understanding tie directly to the deep learning I referred to above, but go beyond that; they are part of an ongoing process whose effects are still very tangibly with me, in memories, thoughts, readings, etc., and are bound to influence my future actions.

In concluding this section, a couple of comments on the characteristics above are called for. First, I should say that, while all the features above were a part of this study, I do not mean to imply that they will all emerge in contexts where dialogue is used as a research method, nor do I suggest that all contexts are fit for applying this methodological approach. Nonetheless, based on my experience in this study, I do affirm that, under adequate circumstances and conditions, dialogue as a research method can become a process tailored to the participants, with the potential to produce rich research data as well as promote personal and collective learning and positive change. In the context of research on ESOL teacher education, this study has shown that dialogue is an approach to collaboration that is worthy to be pursued. Dialogue can be an effective means to fulfill the transformative goal of critical ethnography within the context of a teacher education classroom, by generating conversations that can impact the evolving

culture for the better, towards more democratic and humanizing relations and more effective teaching and learning.

Secondly, I note that the characteristics above can also apply to dialogic pedagogy. Ideally, dialogic, humanizing teaching should be seen as a process tailored to each student, and should lead to productive learning and positive change for teacher and students. This in a way speaks to the interrelated nature of teaching and research, the blurred borders between the two. Freire (1998b) articulated this clearly, asserting that “research is not a quality in a teacher nor a way of teaching or acting that can be added to the one of simply teaching. To question, to search, and to research are parts of the nature of teaching practice” (p. 133).

Final Considerations: What Could We Be?

In tying up the final loose threads in this work, at this point I go back to Nieto’s (2006) timely question: “What does it mean to teach with solidarity, courage and heart, and what can we do to change current practices in teacher education programs to reflect these ideals?” (p. 458). In the same 2006 article, Nieto suggested that practicing and prospective teachers should seek to expand their list of essential qualities. In addition to widely acknowledged qualities (a solid general education background; a deep knowledge of subject matter; familiarity with numerous pedagogical approaches; strong communication skills; and effective organizational skills), this expanded list should include: a sense of mission; solidarity with, and empathy for, their students; the courage to challenge mainstream knowledge and conventional wisdom; improvisation; and a passion for social justice. Nieto also recommended transforming teacher education programs to help prospective teachers become critical, multicultural thinkers, through dialogue in courses and seminars, through interactions with excellent teachers, through critical readings, through reflection in journals and essays, and through field experiences and meaningful assignments.

This critical classroom ethnographic study portrayed the successful experience of an ESOL teacher education class that lived out Nieto’s (2006) recommendations above. Greg McClure taught the class with “solidarity, courage and heart,” and the students also learned with “solidarity, courage and heart.” Both the class content and its dialogic format facilitated humanizing relations, deep learning,

critical awareness raising, and critical self-reflection among the students, contributing to their preparation as critical ESOL teachers. In reference to the title of this dissertation, this study is an example of how “I am” can become “we are,” without ceasing to be “I am.” The relation here is not one of “either/or,” but rather “both/and,” that is, individuality/subjectivity along with collectivity/community. The “I am” in the title of this work refers to the autobiographical poem that each student wrote and shared about her individual history, culture, and values. These poems launched a search for creative and meaningful connections to the histories, cultures, and values of the collectivity, mediated by conceptual and theoretical course concepts. As the class evolved into a democratic, caring community of learners, where diverse cultures, values, and beliefs coexisted harmoniously, each student’s “I am” became “we are” as well. At the same time, the students (and I) got a glimpse of what “we could be” as dialogic teacher-learners and caring human beings, all of us charged with the task of pursuing dignity and social justice for all in our multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual schools and society.

Stepping back from the experience represented in this study, I see implications for dialogic work in ESOL teacher education. I recognize schools (from K-12 to doctoral studies) as one of society’s most pervasive and influential cultural institutions and suggest that they are uniquely positioned to inspire and empower participants towards more critical and thoughtful participation in society. Given recent demographic trends and the resulting ethnic, linguistic, and cultural diversity of today’s classrooms, attainment of such a vision has never been more urgent in the United States. In this context, ESOL teacher education programs have the unique opportunity to model humanizing pedagogies that value diverse students’ culture, knowledge, and life experiences. Based on the opportunity that I had to research such a stance in this study, I offer a few recommendations for ESOL teachers and teacher educators.

Before making such recommendations, I would like to note that dialogic pedagogy is “antimethod pedagogy that refuses the rigidity of models and methodological paradigms” (Macedo & Freire, 2005, p. xxiii). Teaching and learning dialogically will always remain an art, a situated engagement between people, never simply a procedural technique or method for promoting conversation and discussion among learners. While I hope that the experience of the Language and Culture class may offer ideas and

inspiration for teachers and teacher educators wishing to enact a humanizing pedagogy, I maintain that this study should not be seen as a prescriptive model or template. Rather than fall back on formulaic enterprises, dialogue must be recreated and reinvented within specific contexts (Macedo & Freire, 2005, p. x). This recreation or reinvention should consider sociocultural and political nuances as well as the constraints and possibilities of everyday teaching in each context. Our challenge as critical educators is to translate this epistemological stance into classroom practices that include diversified strategies and activities, so as to accommodate our students' different personal traits, learning styles, and needs. In this study, I researched an atypically small class within the context of the ESOL teacher education program in this setting. This notwithstanding, Greg was just as successful in teaching these 8 students as he was in teaching the 15 students in Study A (McClure & Vasconcelos, 2011). I could easily see Greg making the necessary instructional adjustments in order to effectively teach an even larger class of 25-30 students. Variables such as class size, student background and ethnicity (all-White class makeup versus a combination of White students and students of other ethnicities), and institutional context will no doubt affect the implementation of a dialogic pedagogy. These variables call for effort, creativity, and imagination on the part of the teacher to recreate and reinvent dialogue within each particular context.

As for my recommendations, first we must recognize that our work with prospective teachers is always embedded in broader sociocultural and political contexts as well as the local specific institutional settings that have real and lasting implications on our dialogic work. As evidenced by the adverse effects of the dominant technocratic discourse of instruction on the students in this study, we who choose to teach from dialogic and humanizing perspectives cannot do so selectively. In order to transform the world, it is paramount to name the world (Freire, 1993). Living the dialogue through democratic and caring actions is great, but living *and* naming the dialogue is even better. The successes we may experience in fostering rich, critical discussions remain incomplete and fractured unless we also attend to the importance of naming the world of dialogue and dialogic education. We should, however, be mindful of the inertia created by traditional didactic pedagogies and the initial resistance to critical approaches that they can provoke. In order to counteract the effects of the inertia of technocratic approaches, we should

invite student teachers into a dialogue on dialogue. This initiative, with follow-up debriefing moments on the teacher educator's dialogic actions and the student teachers' perceptions of those actions, can be a fruitful and enlightening teaching and learning process. Possible questions to address could include: What is dialogue for critical education? What are the essential characteristics of dialogue in a classroom setting? Why do I (the teacher) choose to teach this way? What difference does it make? What are the myths of dialogue? What is dialogue mistakenly taken for? Is dialogue a method, a theory, an approach? What does dialogue have to do with theory, practice and experience? How can a dialogic pedagogy translate into specific classroom teaching (instructional procedures and activities)? How can a dialogic pedagogy enhance student learning? How can a humanizing pedagogy help confront prevailing deficit perspectives regarding cultural and linguistic diversity? How can it help diverse students, language learners or otherwise, learn better and be successful in school? These questions can help introduce the topic of dialogue in education. When we attend to questions such as these, we increase our potential not just for building caring learning communities but also for preparing theoretically conscious dialogic educators that can seek to translate their critical awareness into humanizing classroom practices, for the benefit of all their students.

Additionally, we cannot disregard dialogue as a form of social praxis that seeks to promote critical reflection, political action and social change. This is particularly relevant in the context of teacher education, where opportunities should be made for rehearsing new dialogues for personal and social change (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010). As we encourage pre-service teachers to share their individual experiences as protagonists and antagonists in education (Cahnmann-Taylor & Souto-Manning, 2010), we can stimulate consideration of the roles that they (better said, we all) play in oppressive structures and cycles. We should encourage candid dialogue on crucial questions and polarizing issues. In this way, student teachers can rehearse their voices as agents for change by considering approaches to instruction that promote increased equity and more fully human participation for their diverse students as well as other players in education, such as parents and administrators.

In regards to research methodology, I suggest the use of dialogue as a research method in ESOL and multicultural teacher education programs. Dialogue as an approach to researcher-participant collaboration should be employed and developed. This study has demonstrated the potential of dialogic research to produce rich data, facilitate learning, and positively influence a teacher educator's teaching practice. It is just one introductory study, though, and further investigation is called for. We teacher educators should seek out opportunities to use dialogue in collaborative research between teacher educators, as well as between teacher educators and student teachers. We should rethink our teacher-researcher roles in research that takes place in the classrooms of "others." We should explore the possibilities of collaboration through real-time, continuous, sustained, and recursive dialogic interactions. Opportunities to ascribe to dialogic methodology should be cogitated both in the context of teacher education and in other social and institutional contexts where it is viable to pursue sustained one-on-one relationships with individual participants.

Finally, this study reaffirmed my belief that teaching and learning from a dialogic and humanizing perspective should be regarded as a constituent component of our process of becoming more fully human, our "ontological vocation," as Freire put it (1993, p. 55). Furthermore, this study enlightened me on ways in which a dialogic approach to research can contribute to the same purpose of humanization, for researchers and participants alike. As the title of this dissertation suggests, our work as critical dialogic educators and researchers—always essentially learners—is never finished, is always under way. We are constantly striving towards more equitable and democratic learning environments, towards what we can all become. May the dialogue go on!

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- Willis, A. I., Montavon, M., Hall, H., Hunter, C., Burke, L., & Herrera, A. (2008). *On critically conscious research: Approaches to language and literacy research*. New York; London: Teachers College Press.
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APPENDIX A

Language and Culture in the Classroom Course Syllabus ELAN 5040

Instructor: Greg McClure
Telephone: 542-4624
Email: gregmcclure@gmail.com

Meeting Day & Time: (T/Th) 11 – 12:15
Location: Aderhold 119
Office Hours: by appt

Course Description

This course examines the concepts of language and culture and their relationships to teaching and learning in U.S. public schools. We will discuss different perspectives concerning school achievement of diverse student populations and strive to expand our notions of what it means to develop a multicultural perspective regarding teaching and learning. As we approach this important work, we will draw heavily from the writings of Sonia Nieto, who defines multicultural education as

embedded in a sociopolitical context and as antiracist and basic education for all students that permeates all areas of schooling, and that is characterized by a commitment to social justice and critical approaches to learning (Nieto, 1996).

Course Objectives

We will develop an understanding of 1) socio-cultural factors that both promote and impede school achievement; 2) critical perspectives on curriculum, pedagogy, and learning, 3) multicultural school reform efforts, and 4) tools that enable teachers to link theory with practice in order to create responsive learning environments for diverse student populations.

As ELAN 5040 is one of the required courses for the completion of the ESOL teaching endorsement for the state of Georgia, students are expected to prepare, participate, and interact in a thoughtful & professional manner at all times. One of the goals of ELAN 5040 is to help inculcate in pre-service teachers a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities that accompany the commitment you make as a teacher of linguistically and culturally diverse students.

CLASS ATMOSPHERE

- Contributions to a Safe Space: The content and structure of this course tends to facilitate discussions concerning differences in cultural and racial identities, personal beliefs, political positions and ideologies. These conversations will likely engender passionate dialogue about issues close to many of our concepts of self and/or styles of teaching. It is crucial that we each take full responsibility for creating a safe environment in which open and respectful dialogue can occur. By safe environment I do not mean that we should not actively challenge each other on important issues because I find this to be, when done respectfully, a powerful learning tool. Rather, I mean that the course must be a place in which we can bring our (often differing) beliefs and discuss them without being judged as “naive” or “ignorant” or pigeon-holed into categories such as “racist,”

“p.c.” or “sexist.” For this to happen, we will all need to work hard to remain respectfully tentative about others’ opinions (and critically self-reflective of our own), realizing that we all hold dear certain points of view and have unique perspectives on the world. Remaining respectful of others is not only a request; it is a central requirement of this course.

- **A note on the framework for this course:** Based on my experience working with linguistically and culturally diverse students and my own readings in education, I have designed this course to spark discussions around how to best educate such students. I have chosen readings and assignments that I both like and have been successful in the past. *But these are only suggestions.* Yes, there are certain objectives and goals for the course that I hope we will cover. At the same time, however, **I firmly believe that each educational experience is most successful when all participants (students and teachers) engage in selecting, evaluating, challenging, and critiquing course material as well as the process and presentation of that material.** All this to say that your input is highly valued here. I aim to listen for your suggestions on how we can make this a meaningful learning experience for you as an individual student, as well as for our class as an integrated learning community.
- This course format will mainly be a seminar. We will engage in discussions, small group activities, and student/group presentations. Students will be encouraged and expected to share in the presentation and discussion of course readings on a rotating basis.
- **Please turn off all cell phones before entering class.**

READINGS

Bigelow, B., Harvey, B., Karp, S., & Miller, L. (Eds.). (2001). *Rethinking our classrooms: Teaching for equity and justice. Volume 2.* Rethinking Schools: Milwaukee, WI.

Nieto, S. (1999). *The light in their eyes: Creating multicultural learning communities.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

*Additional readings as assigned by instructor

Learning Tasks – (Depending on class size—and the direction our inquiry leads us...—these assignments may be modified, expanded, replaced, expunged, etc.)

- **Participation/Attendance (10 %)**- Students are expected to complete weekly readings *before* class and bring hard copies to class in order to refer to them during class discussions. Throughout the course students are also expected to participate in a variety of ways including spoken and written responses to course readings. Since this class emphasizes the class community as a resource for our learning, it is critical that you are present at all sessions. Missing more than 2 classes will result in your grade being lowered by one letter grade and your total possible grade will be an 89. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to get all information from a classmate. If you are absent all due dates are still in effect.
- **Violation of a Cultural Norm (5 %)**- For this assignment you will purposely violate an invisible cultural norm. For example, you might:
 - stare at someone while you are speaking to them, or look away while you are listening
 - face the back of the elevator
 - hold someone's gaze as you walk past them

- stand too close or too far away while you are conversing with someone (He's a bit of a "close-talker"—Seinfeld anyone?)
- sit next to somebody on a bus with seats open
- use conversational norms typically associated with the opposite sex
- bring up topics generally considered taboo or rude in the U.S. (e.g., ask someone their age or their salary)

Feel free to be creative and have fun with this assignment! Briefly record what you did and the reaction of others around you and bring it to class to discuss by the due date listed in the course assignment schedule.

- **Cultural Autobiography (15%)** - For educators interested in issues of language and culture, self-reflection is vital. By examining our own attitudes, beliefs, and cultural values and behaviors, we begin to discover what has influenced our value systems. Each student will produce a cultural autobiography in which you will describe and analyze how you came to be who you are at this point in your life and what contributes to how you view your culture. You will identify salient characteristics in your life, which may include your gender, ethnicity, race, religion, etc. You may also choose to discuss particular people in your life, or an event, which symbolically reflects your cultural identity. The key for this paper is *depth* rather than *breadth*. I encourage you to focus on key details, a singular event, or aspect instead of just creating a biography or timeline. We will share several of these each class after the due date.

Some suggestions and guiding questions:

- Be creative, but authentic to the task
- Multimedia is acceptable, but must also contain a significant writing component
- Incorporate song, poetry, other art form
- Cultural artifacts accompanied by narration/text
- Analyze current events relating to language, race, culture, etc. and consider how these reflect your own experiences growing up (can you relate?, are you shocked, are you not?, how are your views expanding as a result of aging/maturity, more education, broader social networks, etc.) *Look into the situation in [Jena, LA](#), the [arrest of Henry Louis Gates, Jr.](#), discussions of Obama's election signifying the arrival of a "post-racial" era, etc. for an interesting starting point, but there are certainly others more local and perhaps more relevant to you. The key here is to connect your thinking on culture and your experiences with contemporary issues concerning race, language, culture, inequality, etc.*

Consider the following:

- How did I get my name? What does it mean? Who am I named for and why?
- How do you connect to American values of individualism, competition, hard work, self-reliance?
 - Do you tend to ask for help, or go it alone?
 - Are you comfortable "promoting yourself" as in an interview or evaluation setting?
- What was the knowledge environment like in your home? What type of reading was done in the home by parents and others?
- What is your best memory from elementary school? How would you describe your favorite teacher?
- Was your school experience ethnically and racially diverse?

- What is your ethnic group? What symbols or traditions do you participate in that derive from this group? What do they mean to you? How do they fit into or clash with dominant cultural traditions around you?
 - Describe a time when you felt extremely proud of your ethnic heritage. A time when you felt particularly shamed.
 - What has been your experience with ethnic diversity? What are some of your earliest images and experiences with race and skin color? Has there been a time in your life when you sought out diverse contacts to expand your experience and understanding of the world?
 - What contact do you have now with people of dissimilar racial or ethnic backgrounds? How would you characterize your desire to learn more? What are your plans for making this happen?
- **Discussion Leader Presentation (10 %):** Each student will be expected to prepare and lead class discussions based on the assigned readings for that day. Depending on class size, this assignment may be completed with a partner. On the day a particular reading set is assigned, the Discussion Leader(s) will be the “expert” and will have 30 minutes to present her/his materials/activities to the class. I encourage you to make the presentation as interactive as possible. The Discussion Leader(s) should prepare a 1-2 page handout that includes:
 - Summary/overview of concepts
 - key terms & definitions/explanations
 - 4-6 discussion questions

Discussion Leaders need to email a copy of the handout by 10:00am on the day they are presenting, and bring enough copies of the handout to distribute to all members of the class.

- **Book Review and Response (15 %).** As part of our exploration of the experiences of various language learning communities in the U.S., you will read and review one of the books below. For this assignment you will write up an individual 3-5 page review and response. You will also work in a group (or pair) to present a review to the class (20-30 min).

Campano, G. (2007). *Immigrant students and literacy: Reading, writing, and remembering*.

Fu, D. (1995). *My trouble is my English: Asian students and the American dream*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fu, D. (2003). *An island of English: Teaching ESL in Chinatown*. NH: Heinemann.

Hamman, E. (2003). *The educational welcome of Latinos in the new south*. Praeger/Greenwood.

Valdés, G. (2001). *Learning and not learning English: Latino students in American schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Fadiman, A. (1998). *The spirit catches you and you fall down: A Hmong child, her American doctors, and the collision of two cultures*.

MANY others available if interested.

Your paper should be organized as follows:

- Begin with a *brief* summary of the book (perhaps 1 to 2 pages at most). Your summary can describe, for instance, the structure of the book or chapters, the main themes, the conclusions, the style, etc.
- Discuss how this book helps illustrate concepts we have addressed in this course. You may want to include brief excerpts, where appropriate.
- You should also **explicitly address** how this book may be helpful in preparing us for teaching immigrant students and interacting with their families.

Presentation Suggestions:

- Have 1 person provide a BRIEF summary of the book
 - Excerpt key passages that allow us to experience student/teacher voices from the book
 - Incorporate outside info on the author, location, cultural group, etc.
 - Write 2-3 line “book jacket” reviews to entice us...
 - ENGAGE US & HAVE FUN!
- **Boundary Crossing Field Experience (20%)** - For this element of our course, you will immerse yourself in an unfamiliar cultural environment. The purpose of this assignment is to give you a short firsthand experience with culture shock. For this assignment there are many possibilities; for example, you might:
 - assist nurses at a hospital or nursing home
 - attend services for a religious denomination unfamiliar to you
 - attend social gatherings of a cultural group or association unfamiliar to you (e.g., Chinese Student Association meeting on a university campus, a Saturday language school in an immigrant community, etc.)

***Respect is KEY in choosing the location for your experience. Things to consider: is this a “safe space”, both for you and the group/community. How would I feel on the other end of this assignment? Is my interest sincere?**

You must spend at least **four hours** in this environment (best if spread out over at least 2 visits). Keep a record of your experiences, thoughts, and feelings. Begin your “documenting” of this assignment when you are considering possible locations—like *right now* possibly! Watch especially for reactions such as “I wouldn’t go *there!*” or other feelings of discomfort. Reflect on how you respond to “foreign” environments. When you are done with the experience, reflect on the experience and how it ties in with things we’ve discussed in this course.

Your response should be a **three to five page paper** (excluding title and bibliography pages) describing what you did and where you went (including times/dates), how it made you feel, how your “culture shock” experience relates to topics from the course, and what analogies you can draw for new immigrants’ culture shock. Writing in a descriptive narrative style is encouraged.

- **Final Course Reflection (20%)** – This assignment is designed to give you the space to reflect on your learning experience this semester. Think about the diversity of backgrounds and experiences of the members of the class. How has this diversity contributed to your learning? To our development as a learning community? What were your goals in taking a course on language & culture? How have they changed, been influenced, strengthened or silenced by the presence of other goals and directions of the course? How will you carry the themes addressed in this course out into other areas of your life? The key here is to conduct a thoughtful and critical reflection on your learning. This piece of

writing should document the ways your thinking was challenged, changed, and/or reinforced this semester. A few options:

- Write a letter to yourself as a future teacher. What stands out from your experiences this semester that you think is worth pointing out? What did you learn from classmates, readings, assignments? Were there any resources you discovered that may be helpful in the future?
- Write a letter to a future student you will one day teach.
- Write a letter to me, another classmate, or the class as a whole. Share some of your experiences with us and document how the ways your thinking changed, was challenged, or reinforced.

GRADING POLICY

Excellent work in the course will entail active and respectful participation in the class, thorough preparation of the readings before each class meeting, a concise in-class presentation, and writing that is organized, shows evidence of critical thinking, makes connections to course readings, has original thought/expression, and has excellent form (i.e. grammar, syntax, spelling). You must have no more than one absence from class to receive an excellent final grade.

100-95 = A (Evaluated at 4.0 GPA); 94-90= A-; 89-86= B+; 85-83= B; 82-80= B-; 79-76= C+; 75-73= C; 72-70= C-; 69-66= D+; 65-63= D; 62-60 = D-; 59 and below = F

Grades include:

Participation/Attendance	10 %
Violation of Cultural Norm	5%
Cultural Autobiography	15 %
Discussion Leader Presentation	15 %
Book Review and Response	15 %
Boundary Crossing Field Experience	20 %
Final Project	<u>20%</u>
Total	100 %

NO LATE PAPERS. All assignments are due on the due date as listed in the course syllabus. Please type all assignments, 12-point, Times New Roman font, and have standard 1” margins. All work should be double-spaced. All references should be in APA format (<http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/citation.html>). I encourage you to have your peers edit your papers before turning them in and/or consult a writing center. Clarity, organization, demonstrated understanding of key terms and engaging and creative writing are all necessary for an A-level grade.

***Grading rubrics for all assignments will be handed out in advance of due dates. As a part of EVERY assignment, you will self-assess your work using the rubrics and turn them in with your assignments.**

Notification of Teacher Research

As a Teacher Researcher, I routinely collect, analyze, interpret and report on data as it concerns my courses. This allows me to improve the way I teach as well as to add to the body of knowledge we know about critical inquiry pedagogy. Normal observation, recording of sessions and teacher/student exchanges, teacher-initiated journals and field notes, and samples of student work are all within the realm of access by the teacher for research purposes, since they constitute accepted practice for understanding the nature of pedagogy. Any students who prefer that their work in this class not be considered for

purposes of research should indicate so in writing to me. If you have any questions or concerns about this, please do not hesitate to ask me in person or via email.

Academic Honesty: All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will be handed over to The Office of the Vice President of Instruction who will determine your woeful fate.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Department of Language Education welcomes you to what we hope will be a productive and enjoyable semester. We recognize the University of Georgia's contributions to the nation's intellectual, cultural, linguistic, and environmental heritage. We share the College of Education's stated mission to (1) recognize, respect, and affirm differences among peoples; and (2) challenge oppression and structural and procedural inequities that exist in society, generally, and in local educational settings, specifically. These inequities arise from social, historical, economic, and political structures that influence and are influenced by culture, race, religion, language, ethnicity, age, gender, educational and socioeconomic status, disability status, sexual orientation, world-view, and community. Through our programs and courses the Department of Language Education is engaged in a process of continual reflection and evaluation to work toward an equitable democratic society.

We value your participation in this process. If you feel that our department program or courses fall short of this commitment, we encourage dialogue with your instructor. Enjoy your learning this semester!

JoBeth Allen, Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor, Rebecca Callahan, Laurent Cammarata, Viktoria Driagina-Hasko, Linda DeGroff, Mark Faust, Peg Graham, Linda Harklau, Don Rubin, Peter Smagorinsky, Bettie St. Pierre, and Joel Taxel.

COURSE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

<u>Date Topic</u>	<u>Texts</u> TLITE ROC	<u>Other Readings</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Week 1- 8/18 Goals and Beginnings- Syllabus, course overview, assignments, introductions 8/20	TLITE- Intro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building the Syllabus UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html <i>Affirming Diversity</i>, forward, Jim Cummins 	Begin working definitions of culture
Week 2- 8/25 Defining culture; culture and learning Discussion Leader: 8/27	TLITE Ch. 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (BROWSE) Youth perspective on UNESCO Declaration http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001345/134556e.pdf 	
Week 3 9/1 Learning & social context Discussion Leader: 9/3	TLITE- Ch. 1; ROC- pp. 5-10, 33-42		“I Am” poems- beginnings of Cultural Autobiography

Week 4 9/8 Crossing cultures and culture shock: On gaining intercultural competence Discussion Leader: 9/10 Guest Speaker?	ROC- pp. 57-62, 72-75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diaz-Rico & Weed (1995). The Nature of Culture and Cultures in Contact 	Violation of Cultural Norm Due
Week 5- 9/15 Learning & inequality Discussion Leader: 9/17	TLITE Ch. 2		Turn in proposal for your Boundary Crossing Field Experience location
Week 6- 9/22 Deficit thinking & tracking Discussion Leader: 9/24 Film: “Off Track”	ROC- pp. 214 - 218	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oakes (1986) Keeping Track; http://academic.sun.ac.za/mathed/malati/Files/Oakes.pdf Valencia, R. R., & Solórzano, D. G. (2004). Today's deficit thinking about the education of minority students. In O. Santa Ana (Ed.), <i>Tongue-tied: The lives of multilingual children in public education</i> (pp. 124-133). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 	
Week 7- 9/29 Racism & Privilege Discussion Leader: 10/1	ROC- 105-106, 112-134	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *McIntosh (1990) White Privilege http://www.case.edu/president/aaction/UnpackingTheKnapsack.pdf 	Cultural Autobi Due

Week 8- 10/6 The Immigrant experience in the U.S. Discussion Leader: 10/8 Film: Do You Speak American?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nieto (2008) Affirming Diversity. Ch. 7 	30 minutes for book review groups
Week 9- 10/13 Accommodations to promote student learning Discussion Leader: 10/15	TLITE- Ch. 4 ROC- 207-210, 219-224		
Week 10- 10/20 Critical pedagogy & empowerment Discussion Leader: 10/22	Ch. 5	Brown, H. D. (2004). Some practical thoughts about student sensitive critical pedagogy. <i>The Language Teacher</i> , 28(7), 23-27. http://jalt-publications.org/jlt/articles/692-some-practical-thoughts-about-student-sensitive-critical-pedagogy	
Week 11- 10/27 10/29		Book review discussions	Book Review Due

Week 12- 11/3 Transformations of teachers Discussion Leader: 11/5	TLITE- Ch. 6	Jennings, L., & Potter Smith, C. (2002). Examining the role of critical inquiry for transformative practices: Two joint case studies of multicultural teacher education. <i>The Teachers College Record</i> , 104(3), 456-481.	
Week 13- 11/10 11/12 Implications for MCE Discussion Leader:	TLITE- Ch. 7	Boundary Crossing Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cummins (1999). This Place Nurtures my Spirit 	Boundary Crossing Field Experience Due
Week 14- 11/17 Language policy & ethics in TESOL Discussion Leader: 11/19		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fine (1996) Silencing in Public Schools • Tollefson (2000) Policy and Ideology in the Spread of English • Anzaldúa (1987) Borderlands: The New Mestiza OR Cummins (1999). This Place Nurtures my Spirit	
Week 15- 11/23 – 27 THANKSGIVING!			
Week 16- 12/1 Using children's literature to promote equity 12/3 Celebrate our learning!	TBD	Various texts will be available in class for readings & discussions Select a piece of your final project to share with the class.	Final Projects DUE

** Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.*

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Major: _____ Expected date of graduation: _____

1. Why did you decide to enroll in this class? What do you think this course is about?

2. What are your expectations regarding this course?

3. How would you describe your previous learning experiences in UGA classes as regards:

- a) average class size;
- b) course style or format (lecture-type, seminar-based, group-oriented, community-based, participatory, etc.);
- c) teacher–student interaction;
- d) teacher involvement;
- e) your overall satisfaction;
- f) anything else you find relevant?

(Feel free to consider your “average” classes and also “the exception to the rule”.)

4. Dialogic education is an egalitarian and inclusive approach based on Paulo Freire's concept of a "culture circle" where instead of a teacher, there is a coordinator (who is also a learner) that guides the circle; instead of lectures and other forms of transmitting knowledge, there is dialogic inquiry into the conditions of life; instead of pupils who come to listen and observe, there are group participants who contribute their viewpoints; instead of fixed syllabi, there are negotiated and jointly constructed programs that guide the activities of the participants.

A. Have you ever taken a class at UGA that followed a "dialogic" format, encouraging all students to actively participate in class discussions and activities, and to draw on their own prior knowledge and experiences as "food for thought"? In the space below please describe this class and your response to it:

B. Did you ever have a "dialogic" learning experience outside of UGA? Please describe:

APPENDIX C

STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Please tell me your overall impressions on this course (what you liked/didn't like about it; what strikes you the most about it; why you will remember/won't remember it 20 years from today).
2. Why did you decide to take this course? Did it meet your expectations?
3. How was the format of this class similar to or different from other classes you've taken at UGA? How was it better or worse?
4. Please describe the instructor's teaching approach/pedagogy in this class. (Also, what do you think of him as a teacher?) Do you remember when and in what terms the instructor explained to the students how he planned to conduct the course?
5. Do you feel that the class format, atmosphere, instructor, and/or assignments helped you to learn? If so, please tell me more about your experience.
6. Do you feel that the class format, atmosphere, instructor, and/or assignments helped you know yourself better (as a multicultural being)? If so, please tell me more about your experience.
7. What impact did the instructor's approach and attitudes have on your learning and motivation for this class?
8. Brazilian educator Paulo Freire defined a culture circle as "a new institution of popular culture" where "instead of a teacher, we had a coordinator; instead of lectures, dialogue; instead of pupils, group participants; in the culture circles, we attempted through group debate either to clarify situations or to seek actions arising from that clarification." To what extent do you see your experience in this class reflected (or not) in this definition?
9. For you what does it mean to teach and learn dialogically, in a "culture circle" or learning community format? Do you see yourself applying this format when you start teaching?
10. Was there any specific moment when you felt or realized this class had become a learning community? For you what does it take for a class to become a learning community?
11. What advantages and disadvantages do you see in teaching and learning within a dialogic community style?
12. Do you feel this class has contributed to your preparation as a prospective ESOL teacher? If so, how?
13. Do you have a metaphor or an illustration to describe this class or your experience in it?
14. Who was I in this class? (How do you see me in this class?)
15. Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX D

CODE MAPPING for Dialogic Teaching and Learning: Three Iterations of Analysis (TO BE READ FROM THE BOTTOM UP)				
Stage 1 – Laying down the foundation: Setting the community mood (WEEKS 1 & 2)				
RQ#1: Dialogic Pedagogy (What does it mean? Configurations & characteristics of class; roles of participants & relationships among them)				
THIRD ITERATION (THEMES/STATEMENTS)				
1. Teacher’s actions emphasized setting up structure (physical setting and instructional/discussion patterns) and establishing relations/connections between teacher and students, and among students.				
2. Content was mediated through relations.				
3. Teacher explicitly foregrounded his approach to teaching and learning as building community.				
4. One student (Kristi) began to take the initiative to connect with others/establish relations.				
SECOND ITERATION (PATTERN VARIABLES)				
1A - CONTENT (content activities tied to relations)		2A - CONTENT		
1B - STRUCTURE		2B - STRUCTURE		
1C - RELATIONS (continued emphasis; building community)		2C - RELATIONS		
FIRST ITERATION (INITIAL/PROCESS CODES)				
Teacher’s (T’s) Actions				
1A (1B) - posing open-ended questions to elicit content ⁶	1B (1C) - arranging tables in a circle	1C - bringing own children’s photos for introductions	2A- responding to T’s open-ended questions	2C - introducing each other to the class
1A (1B, 1C) - elaborating on SS’ answers and personal examples to teach content ⁷	1B - handing out “tentative syllabus” with SS	1C - sharing in detail with SS about own background and experiences	2A – participating briefly during content discussion	2C - asking T questions about background (during T’s self introduction)
1A (1C) - sharing about “multicultural self” ⁸	1B (1C) - inviting SS to participate in decision-making on “handling discussions” (course management) ⁹	1C - asking SS to introduce each other to class	2B – listening to T	2C – one student (Kristi) asking teacher personal question (about dog)
1A (1B) - interspersing class activities with information/teaching content	1B (1C) - joining small group work as a “regular participant” ¹⁰	1C - noticing student’s absence	2B – asking questions about activities and assignments	2C (2A) – Kristi encouraging other SS to share personal info
	1B (1C) - accepting SS’ suggestions on conducting discussions ¹¹	1C - apologizing for speaking up for small group ¹²	2A (2C)– volunteering to share about multicultural self	2B - offering suggestions on conducting discussions
	1B – doing housekeeping	1C – greeting SS warmly		
	1B – using eLC to project class notes	1C – checking if new ELL student understands instruction		
	1B – explaining course assignments	1C – “sidetracking” to share personal experience (dog accident) during work time		
	1B – giving instructions on class activities	1C (1A, 1B) – presenting approach to teaching & learning as building community		
	1B – asking SS to sign up for book review and “show & tell”	1C – staying after class to talk with SS		
DATA: FIELDNOTES, CLASS AUDIO-RECORDINGS, CLASS HANDOUTS				

⁶ Examples: 1) Why the emphasis on multicultural education, equity in public schools in a democracy where all have access to school? 2) How do you wrestle with that stuff? 3) Is that something you need to be aware of as teachers? 4) What happens when research and educational policies clash with state law or legal policies?"

⁷ STUDENT AMONG STUDENTS

⁸ TEACHER AMONG TEACHERS

APPENDIX E

TABLE OF ACTIONS AND REACTIONS ERIKA↔GREG

Date	Action	Date	Reaction
08/11	Erika asks Greg to administer a questionnaire to students on the first day of class in order to collect information on their previous experiences with university classes following a dialogic format.	08/18	Greg administers the questionnaire and reads students' answers after class. Three of the seven students write that they are uncomfortable with or don't like classes following a dialogic format. The students' responses influence Greg's actions in the second class; he chooses not to spell out his teaching approach to the class, but to be "more subtle in terms of letting it evolve."
08/26	Erika emails Greg her fieldnotes and memo for the third class (08/25). The memo is packed with questions that Erika asks herself: "Why are the students so reticent? Are they not speaking up because of their previous didactic, banking experiences or simply because they're not quite sure yet about how to react to the new class format? Because they need more "silence time," like when students are learning a foreign language? Should Greg try to explore more the short answers they are giving to his questions, such as when he asked if they had ever written I Am poems and some of them responded affirmatively? Should he have tried to "stretch" their answers? A couple of times today I felt like speaking up when he was switching topics, so I ended up keeping to myself. Would some students have felt the same?"	08/28	Greg leads two interactive activities in class (The Multicultural Me and producing posters about Nieto's 7 characteristics of culture). The students open up and participate actively in sharing aspects of their multicultural selves. Greg comments and expands on at least one thing everyone says. He tries to relate to them somehow by finding points in common or simply showing interest in what they say and asking them follow-up questions.
09/01	Right after class, Erika shares with Greg the struggle she's facing navigating her roles and trying to minimize her interference in the classroom. She tells him that she has been making an effort to speak less in class because she wants to sound like a "normal student" rather than a teacher.	09/01 09/03	Greg replies that the point is that all students should become teachers too; he encourages Erika to continue participating and speaking up. Greg emails Erika his reflections: "While I understand the feelings of not wanting to "influence the study," I also assert that this goal is rather pointless. The influence must be acknowledged, considered and reflected upon, in order to fully understand its impact."
09/02	Erika emails Greg her fieldnotes and memo for the fifth class (09/01) with a few specific comments at the end: "I've noticed that when Greg asks a question and someone replies, it is uncommon for another student to	09/03	Greg emails Erika his reflections, where he writes: "The sharing of memos and fieldnotes leads me to very explicitly rethink what's happening in the classroom and how I should/need to respond to it." Later in class,

	spontaneously respond to or comment on what that person has just said, even when Greg asks the class, “What do you think?” Perhaps Greg should ask them to “stretch” the dialogue more among themselves? If I were Greg, I would try to give students more time to respond to their classmates’ answers; after someone’s initial answer, I would encourage others (as many as would volunteer) to add to that; I would only disclose my opinion after all had shared.”		Greg introduces a “piggyback” activity to prompt the students to respond to something that sparks their interest in what the others are saying. He explains that the goal is to go “more than just one deep” into the discussions, on their dialogue.
09/03	In their second debriefing dialogue, Greg tells Erika about the dual aims he has for the class: (1) creating a space for the group to do things that foster building a learning community (such as sitting in a circle, sharing something, reading a poem) and (2) talking/debriefing with the students about the process they’re experiencing; about what it means to build a community. He points out his struggle of dealing with the complexity of achieving those dual aims within the structure/timeframe of a 75-minute class—Debriefing with the students about the process would take time away from more explicit teaching that he feels the class is expecting.	09/04	Erika emails Greg the transcript of their second debriefing dialogue (09/03) and suggests: “Why not send this transcript to the students and see what they make of it? Could this be the springboard for talking in class about the process you were looking for?? Just a crazy, radical idea... You’re in charge, and I trust you know best. I really do!!”
09/08	Greg emails Erika back: “I’m not sure if/how I want to approach this [talking about process] during class time....that goes right back to the heart of what I was talking about in the transcript—the conflict between spending time discussing the collective experience of community building and the process vs. responding to the tension I sense regarding the [students’] “desire” for more explicit & didactic teaching....” After class that day, Greg suggests to Erika that she should feel free to choose to share her notes with the students, because it’s her study after all.	09/10	Erika emails the students two pages of her fieldnotes and a 30-minute transcript of her second debriefing dialogue with Greg.
09/16	Erika emails Greg her fieldnotes and memo for the 09/15 class. The memo is packed with questions that Erika asks herself: “What is the scope of teaching and learning dialogically? Can a teacher truly be dialogic in a class if her focus is predominantly on dialogue for content learning, without attention to dialogue as (pedagogic) process (i.e. speaking candidly and jointly about what, why, how, when choices and decisions have been made on how the class is conducted)? Shouldn’t Greg make room for explaining his pedagogy, just like he makes room for listening to students’ opinions and contributions about content dialogically?”	09/16	Greg emails Erika back: “GREAT MEMO! Don’t have the time to dig in right now....but revisit what you have written there....I think you’ve identified some very important aspects of what’s happening/not happening in the classroom.....excellent insight! Follow it.....”
09/21	Erika emails Greg a five-page letter she has written him with her views on the development of the class and how she is reading each	09/24	Greg emails Erika back: “SO MUCH to say and respond to Erika. I appreciate your thoughtfulness and attention to my pedagogy,

	<p>student. She points out that she is sensing that Greg's and her understanding of dialogue differ somewhat. She describes what she perceives is Greg's understanding of dialogue, and defines her own. She says that she thinks that the topic "Dialogue in Education" is missing from the course syllabus, since the class aims to prepare dialogic educators. She offers to put something together (along the lines of "Debunking the myths of dialogue--what dialogue is and isn't") in order to lead a class session on the topic.</p>	<p>10/01</p> <p>10/01 & 10/05</p>	<p>my developing awareness and understanding of dialogue, and my efforts to engage students in meaningful and rigorous learning via community building."</p> <p>Greg emails Erika a two-page response letter. He notes the importance of member checking. He explains his understanding of dialogue and how it differs from how Erika is perceiving it.</p> <p>Greg emails the students to inform that they would be having a mid-semester discussion the following class to address a few questions, including: "What is this kind of teaching? What are you learning? What are some underlying tensions in our class that need to be discussed and aired out? What does it mean to dialogue? How does it differ from discussion, conversation? Have we engaged in dialogue in this class? What examples can you identify?"</p>
09/29	<p>Greg sends Erika a short email titled "researcher dialogues (aka debriefing dialogues)." The message read: "I think there is much to be written and developed regarding our dialogues as an approach to research analysis and consequently ways of knowing. just writing myself a little note/memo here....."</p>	09/30	<p>Erika answers back to Greg: "hahahaha...glad to see this study is clearly there, "haunting" you, not letting go of you..."</p>
10/05	<p>Erika emails Greg her fieldnotes for the class on 10/01.</p>	10/06	<p>Greg emails Erika back to ask her to double-check her fieldnotes. He highlights a couple of sentences in Erika's notes (<i>Renaë told Greg her sister would send it [the cultural autobiography assignment] to him. He replied, "What do you mean? You hand it to me."</i>) Greg points out: "Erika, I really think you've missed something here. I don't recall anything about a "sister"...maybe check the tape..."</p>
11/17	<p>In their fifth debriefing dialogue, Erika suggests to Greg that he might be overloading the students with two back-to-back assignments due right after Thanksgiving break.</p>	11/17	<p>Greg comments that he hadn't realized that. He reviews his decision and later that day he emails the students with new instructions on one of the assignments, that would make it simpler and "LOW stress, ungraded, but very beneficial (and fun)."</p>

APPENDIX F

LINE-BY-LINE DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MOMENT OF CRISIS

Line #	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interaction/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
	11:32am				Beginning of Section 1
1	Rachel	It was funny	Shifts from “reading mode” (reading from her notes) to addressing the class directly with an aside.		As Rachel was reading, a memory crossed her mind, one she considered funny; she interrupted reading about the topic (cultural aspects of her trip to Guatemala) to share the memory with the class.
1	Rachel	She actually hm the guard dog (.) had this preference for Americans	Sidetracks to the guard dog topic she had just been reading about.	Uses deixis (<i>the</i>) to direct attention to the immediately preceding text.	Rachel possibly wished to draw the class into her narrative/presentation by sharing specific, interesting details about her experiences.
2	Rachel	Like she associated Americans	Continues elaborating on sidetracked topic.		(Like = specifier “that is”)
2	Rachel	just (.) people with lighter skin ↑		Presupposition: taken-for-granted assumption that Americans have light skin.	TRIGGER OF THE MOMENT OF CRISIS Linguistically, an inconspicuous identifying relative clause, (significantly emphasized by the apparently plain qualifier “just”).
2	Rachel	> as (.) that they weren’t (.) a threat <	Contextualization cue (slower speech) for directing the class’ attention to that piece of information.		Rachel’s slower speech indicates the relevance of that piece of information—the guard dog not seeing light-skinned people as a threat—for the class to make sense of what she found funny or curious (coming up next).
3	Rachel	but when she met new Guatemalans	Shifts to the second part of her topic.		Coordinating conjunction <i>but</i> suggests a contrast to what Rachel had just said.
3	Rachel	she was threatened and would (.)			Established contrast: “as that they weren’t a threat” (noun) vs. “she was threatened” (verb)

Line #	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interaction/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
4	Rachel	but just be defensive if her family was around ↑(.)	Completes her thread of thought.		Rachel completes the sentence initiated before the bracketing (“she was threatened and would ... be defensive”).
5	Rachel	which I thought was really interesting	Comes full circle in developing the sidetracked topic on the guard dog’s behavior.	The adjective <i>interesting</i> ties back to the adjective <i>funny</i> (internal intertextuality).	Rachel describes her memory in such a way that informs not just the actual fact (that the guard dog was threatened by dark-skinned people but not light-skinned people), but significantly reveals the underlying assumption that Americans have light skin.
	12:07pm				Beginning of Section 2
6-12	Greg	So those are things that we’ll encounter in our classrooms you know where we teach in the communities that we work in (.) families and parents with very different perspectives on things and so how do you (.) how do you love those people and love their children and hm provide them the same learning opportunities as everyone else?↑ How do you not buy into and hm (.) fall prey to the teacher lounge discussions that marginalize and demonize those parents for not giving their kids what they need or	Wraps up the conversation on cultural differences in schools and communities. Poses open-ended “how do you” questions that invite students to consider ways in which they can practice compassion and love, and not stereotype and marginalize diverse students.	In previous classes, Greg has regularly posed open-ended questions to invite students’ into reflection on similar topics.	
12	Greg	(.) those are (.) Jenna?↑ No? I thought you (.)	Interrupts a sentence when he perceives that Jenna might wish to speak; calls on her to offer the floor, but he misreads her intention.	In previous classes, Greg has often cued students like this.	Greg’s recurrent practice: reading students’ non-verbal language in order to encourage them to claim the conversational floor (ask questions, make comments, add their thoughts).

Line #	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interaction/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
13	Greg	Renae? ↑ Was that a stretch?	Reading Renae's body language, Greg anticipates her intention to claim the floor and calls on her to offer her the floor.	In previous classes, Greg has often cued students like this.	Greg's recurrent practice: reading students' non-verbal language in order to encourage them to claim the conversational floor (ask questions, make comments, add their thoughts).
14	Renae	It was a half stretch I want to say something [I think	Accepts the floor.	Recognizes Greg's offer of the floor.	Renae's use of the subjective modality marker <i>I think</i> shows some hedging, as if she's not sure she wants to "go there" but will anyway.
15	Greg	[Ah-ha!	Contextualization cues (intonation, stress) function like "I knew it: go ahead, take the floor."		
16	Renae	=hm↑ (<i>turning to Rachel</i>) Could you explain	Addresses Rachel (the "teacher" on this day) with an interrogative about the content of her presentation.	Typical schooling pattern of students asking the teacher questions to clarify content.	Expected theme.
16	Renae	[explain] the dog situation again? Like the guard dog?	Completes the question.	Uses deixis and qualifier (<i>the, guard</i>) to direct attention to something Rachel had said earlier.	ONSET OF THE MOMENT OF CRISIS Unexpected rhyme. The dog was neither a focus in Rachel's presentation nor something brought up in the follow-up discussion session. Renae's question doesn't seem to make much sense, casting doubt on its intended "force."
18	Rachel	Oh in Guatemala?	Asks a rhetorical question to continue topic initiated by Renae; accepts the floor.	Draws back to previous description of her experiences in Guatemala.	Rachel doesn't wait for Renae to confirm that she (Renae) meant the dog in Guatemala, which shows that Rachel uses a rhetorical question to establish common ground with Renae.
18	Rachel	Yeah they hm like (.) from my understanding	Begins to develop her answer with an "authority disclaimer" ("from my understanding")		Rachel takes off the "teacher hat" and puts on the "student hat" whose understanding of the topic (Guatemala) is not prescriptive, but just illustrative.
18-19	Rachel	There's hm just a lot of crime in Guatemala city	Frames the focus of the answer to the question.		Rachel ties the guard dog reference introduced by Renae to the context of crime in Guatemala (to explain the function of the dog in the household).

Line #	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interactions/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
19	Rachel	and hm () which you could talk about that a lot=	Seeks to provide detail to support previous statement.		Relative clause used to add information.
21-22	Greg	= Which is horrendous (.) I stepped over a dead man on the sidewalk in Guatemala [city	Latching onto Rachel's utterance, Greg "steals" the floor in order to endorse Rachel's statement with an example derived from his personal experience.		Relative clause used to add information. Greg takes back his teacher role for a few seconds to explain and clarify the content under discussion.
23	Kristi	[Oh my <u>gosh</u> !	Spontaneous response shows she's participating as an active listener, engaged in the interaction.		
24-26	Greg	my first the <u>second</u> night I was there () and it was just like you know Guatemala city is a you know slum huge metropolis there's stuff everywhere there yeah	Holds the floor a little longer, to further contextualize his example of his experience in Guatemala.		
27-44	Rachel	Just where we stayed hm (...) just the hm the Guatemalan the doctor who lived there and his family (...) they had this compound attached to their house (...) And hm the dog just was another safety measure to protect their family to protect people staying with them hm she was a Rottweiler and she was really sweet like we played ball with her and stuff but she was also trained to attack if someone were to break in or try to get in	Begins narrating almost verbatim (in conversational style) the same passage she had read out from her notes to the class. Towards the end, adds a few details, such as the dog's breed and playful mood.	Connects to Rachel's written notes for her presentation.	(In this section, Rachel ties the crime situation in Guatemala to the need for the guard dog as a safety measure to protect the doctor's family and friends. This section was not broken down into message units for analysis because it serves the overall function to rephrase what had already been read to the class. It does not add any new details that affect my argument.)

Line #	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interactions/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
44	Rachel	(0.2) so (0.4)	After her detailed explanation about the dog (during which Renae hasn't said a word), Rachel pauses, apparently in an attempt to offer the floor to Renae.		Renae does not pick up her cue (Rachel's request for some type of feedback).
44	Rachel	Is that the way you looked upon it you'd say or=	Explicitly offers Renae the floor with a question requesting feedback on her proposed explanation.		Rachel's longer pause followed by her explicit question to Renae signals her emerging awareness that she might have missed the point in Renae's question, its intended "force". Rachel seems confused but seeks clarification from Renae.
46	Renae	=Yah (.) it's okay now	Replies with a short, succinct answer; does not attempt to hold the floor.	In previous classes Renae has usually been quite verbal and outspoken in expressing her opinions, which draws attention to the oddness of her response in this situation.	Renae's response is linguistically an affirmative clause, but functions as a negative, reinforced by the adverbial group "okay now." It seems that the underlying message/answer would be: "No, [that's not the way I looked upon it] but it's okay, let's just forget about it."
47	Rachel	(hesitant) Well I can=	Recognizes the underlying negative in Renae's response, but insists, doesn't give up on the topic; begins to formulate an offer to explain again.		Rachel is confused (hesitancy; modal <i>Well</i>). She has retold the guard dog story the way she had written about it. She does not remember her oral comment—the aside she had shared about the dog's contrasting behavior (towards White Americans and dark-skinned Guatemalans). Rachel's puzzlement is authentic (she is not dodging any topic), as shown in her offer to try to clarify and elaborate further ("I can").
48	Renae	= You kinda (<i>undecipherable</i>)	Latching onto Rachel's utterance (thus interrupting her), again Renae rejects the floor.	In previous classes, Renae has consistently spoken up clearly and articulately.	Contextualization cues (interruption, lowered volume, possible mumbling) suggest Renae's wish to end the subject.
49-50	Greg	I I picked up on you you took that the dog was predispositioned to be aggressive or sensitive to dark skinned colored	Takes the floor as teacher-mediator to keep the ball rolling; steps in to try to fill Rachel in; does not let the topic drop unresolved.	Remembers Rachel's earlier reference to the guard dog's behavior, and brings it up, in an attempt to provide the missing piece/context.	A certain hesitation is suggested in the repetition of the subject pronouns "I" and "you". Greg is not sure if that information is the missing piece.

Line #	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interaction/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
51	Rachel	(<i>lowered volume</i>) Oh hm=			The interjection <i>Oh</i> shows Rachel's surprise as she is probably reminded of her previous aside comment to the class.
52	Greg	[darker folks↑ and =	Holds the floor. Contextualization cue (raised pitch) draws attention to the point of emphasis.		
53	Rachel	(<i>lowered volume</i>) = Yeah	Listens and agrees.		The information highlighted by Greg (Guatemalans' dark skin) begins to "sink in."
54	Greg	[the darker you are	Continues to hold the floor in order to flesh out his point.		
55	Renae	[and you mentioned that (.)	Jumps in and takes the floor to add to Greg's input and address Rachel.		Renae is "back in the game again," which indicates that Greg had succeeded in providing the missing piece in reference to skin color.
55		(<i>Greg pauses to listen to Renae.</i>)	Immediately yields the floor to Renae.		Greg's goal of keeping the conversation/dialogue going is accomplished, so he steps back to let Renae elaborate on her point.
55	Renae	All Americans were lighter ↓	Renae's revealing utterance offers the floor back to Rachel, putting Rachel in the spotlight.	Paraphrases Rachel's earlier statement, but adds the modifier <i>all</i> (implied in Rachel's aside)	PRE-CLIMAX OF THE MOMENT OF CRISIS Renae respectfully confronts Rachel, questioning the presupposition/naturalized assumption in Rachel's earlier statement.
57	Rachel	Yeah that's [true ↑	Agrees without hesitation.		
58	Renae	[(<i>laughs out loud</i>)	Contextualization cue (<i>laughs</i>) aims to draw the class' attention to the importance of Renae's previous point and signals her expectation that Rachel and the others would have "got it."		

Line #	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interaction/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
59	Greg	(<i>lowered volume</i>) Excellent	Realizes what Renae was getting at; seems to speak more to himself than to the class.		Greg seems to realize what Renae's question was all about: her dissatisfaction with the racial undertone in Rachel's prior statement.
59	Renae	(<i>laughs again</i>)	Repeated contextualization cue signals Renae's expectation that Rachel and the other students would have got it.		It is significant that no other student reacts in any way to Renae's laughter (no smiles, laughs or comments). It seems that they are unsure of what to make of the conversation.
59	Greg	Excellent =	Seems to speak to himself.		
60	Rachel	No I totally that's as I was talking about that I was like wow	Takes the floor to try to explain and excuse herself		Rachel starts out with a linguistic negative that seems to function as an affirmative ("Yes, you're right"). Rachel's utterance reveals hedging/hesitation through split clauses and a sequence of modifiers (<i>totally, like, wow</i>); her rambling suggests that she's not sure where she's going with her explanation.
60	Rachel	I don't mean like a only a thin(g)			
61	Rachel	like I hadn't thought about that in a while			Excuse #1: She didn't remember the experience well.
61-63	Rachel	like to me then it was just like the people (who) committed crimes there are likely gonna look like Guatemalans so she would fear bad		Adverb <i>then</i> connects to Rachel's previous reference to years back (when she traveled to Guatemala).	Excuse #2: She was just a young girl then, unaware of social problems and racial relations in Guatemala.
63	Rachel	hm and that all Americans are good		The modifier <i>all</i> connects back to <i>all</i> in Renae's utterance "All Americans were lighter."	Fragmented utterance; ellipsis of its initial part; Rachel seemed to want to say: "I didn't mean to imply that all Americans are good."
64	Rachel	but I think I like (0.4)	Contextualization cue (long pause) and subjective modality marker "I think" signal hedging/hesitancy.		Rachel is searching for the right words to offer a justifiable excuse/explanation for her lapse.

Line #	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interaction/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
64-65	Rachel	Played into that stereotype of not having a larger understanding of either American culture or Guatemalan culture		Deixis (<i>that</i>) and noun choice (<i>stereotype</i> and <i>culture</i>) connect back to previous class texts and discussions on stereotypes/stereotyping and cultures; recurrent topics across several classes.	Rachel's explanation revolves around the good/bad and American/Guatemalan culture binaries; not race/ethnicity within the American context. Rachel is saying something like: "I played into that stereotype of not having a larger understanding that the culture of Americans, lighter-skinned people, is not necessarily good (superior), and the culture of Guatemalans, darker-skinned people, is not necessarily bad (inferior)." Her focus is on cross-cultural differences and biases; not on race per se.
66	Rachel	(<i>lowered volume</i>) I guess (.)	Begins to wrap up her explanation.		Subjective modality marker "I guess" shows uncertainty towards the accuracy of the proposition (explanation) and also expresses solidarity (Fairclough, 1992, p. 160) with Renae, that is, signals that she wants to hear from her again and to offer her the floor.
66	Rachel	And I hope that I've grown in that (0.4) but (.)	Again acknowledges her lapse/misinterpretation.		Subjective modality marker "I hope" expresses solidarity; has an apologetic effect. Longer pause followed by coordinating conjunction <i>but</i> show Rachel's uncertainty in regards to her previous explanation.
66-67	Rachel	yeah is that what you were kind of going after?	Offers Renae the floor with an interrogative requesting feedback on whether or not Rachel would have got it this time.		
68	Renae	(<i>very casually</i>) Yeah (.)	Accepts the floor.		Again, Renae's affirmative actually means a "no", but this time, rather than dodge the topic, she prepares to disclose her thoughts.
68-69	Renae	(<i>lowered volume</i>) I just wanted to make sure that everyone knew that I was American.	Addresses not just Rachel, but the whole class (<i>everyone</i>).	Intertextual chain: "You said that Americans have light skin. I am American but I don't have light skin. So I just wanted to make sure that you (and everyone else) knew I was American."	CLIMAX OF THE MOMENT OF CRISIS Interesting instance/use of "irony" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 123).

Line #	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interactions/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
70		(Student's embarrassed chuckles/smiles.)			
71	Rachel	Yeah =	Interlocutors Rachel and Greg respond hesitantly with a sequence of short affirmatives and modals (<i>yeah, I think, exactly</i>) and contextualization cues (longer pause, lowered volume).		Renae's blatant "revelation" catches everyone by surprise. Their hesitation shows that they are unsure of how to react and respond.
72	Greg	= Yeah no I think			
72	Renae	(laughs)			
72	Greg	(0.4) Exactly			
72	Greg	(lowered volume) Yeah.			
73	Rachel	(lowered volume) Yeah.			
74	Kristi	I think the dog just wouldn't know what to do with you	Steals the floor to try to "break the tension" and sidetrack with a humorous comment.	Friendly and outgoing by nature, in previous classes Kristi has consistently sought to connect and interact with Renae (and all the other students).	Subjective modality marker "I think" expresses solidarity with Renae, while also sidetracking back to the dog reference. Perhaps implied is also the hidden message: "You're so different from me/us. I/We don't know what to do with you." (?)
75	Renae	= (raised volume) Dogs don't like me	Latching onto Kristi's utterance, Renae picks up her cue to break the tension, and agrees with Kristi.	Based on their prior interactions, Renae sees Kristi's good intention behind her comment.	
75		(Renae laughs. Class general laughs.)	Everyone relaxes; the tension is broken.		
76	Renae	Dogs don't like me anyway (.)	Holds the floor with the repetition.		
76-78	Renae	Every single dog < like everybody can be like > that dog is so sweet and as soon as I come in they'll like attack (.) I don't know why	Sidetracks with a personal experience to help break the tension and signal the continuation of the friendly dialogue, despite her earlier revelation/confrontation.		
78	Renae	(0.4) Dogs hate me	Signals with a longer pause that she is preparing to resume the heart of the matter; the real topic.		

Line #	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interaction/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
78	Renae	but <i>(to Rachel)</i> that was against <i>(lowered volume me)</i> ↓	Addresses Rachel to elaborate on the heart of the matter.	Deixis <i>(that)</i> ties back to Rachel's utterance that Americans had lighter skin.	Contextualization cues (stressed <u>but</u> and lowered volume) signal emphasis.
78	Renae	it was just I know when you <u>said</u> it		Deixis <i>(it)</i> ties back to Rachel's utterance that Americans had lighter skin	Renae explicitly holds Rachel accountable for her action (words) and personalizes their interaction by addressing Rachel directly: "you <u>said</u> it."
79	Renae	and I was just like "hmm"			
80	Rachel	Yeah you're so right that's true	Recognizes her lapse without hesitation.		RESOLUTION OF THE MOMENT OF CRISIS Emphasis implied in double affirmative <i>(so right, that's true)</i> shows Rachel's sincere compliance with Renae's utterance.
80	Renae	<i>(giggles)</i>	Contextualization cue signals that Renae is pleased with Rachel's acknowledgement.		While earlier Renae had laughed out loud to call attention to the implied racism in Rachel's words, now she giggles discreetly in response to Rachel's humble recognition.
80	Rachel	Thanks for bringing that up			Rachel's thank you is clearly sincere.
81	Greg	Awesome			
81	Greg	(0.8) Who's got the time?	Long pause followed by unrelated question clearly indicates the end of this interactional moment.	In previous classes, Greg has consistently allowed time for the students to respond/react to each other's utterances.	Greg's long pause shows he's allowing time for others to respond or add a comment, it they so wish.
	12:16pm				Beginning of Section 3
82-84	Greg	I think it's also important to think that it's not you know it's not completely our naivety that those people are out there we are those people (.) We have lived you know I grew up a very racist lifestyle	Takes the floor.		In Greg's long utterance/turn of talk, he takes a stance that " <u>we</u> are those people," that is, anyone can hold racist viewpoints. Modality markers (such as a number of <i>I think, I don't think, you know, may have</i> , (some of us ↑) <i>may struggle</i>) show hedging and express solidarity with the students.

	Speaker	Transcript (Message Units)	Social Interaction/ Relations	Proposed Intertextuality, Intercontextuality	Comments
84-88	Greg	in a very racist family hm you know our teacher next door to us may have those same viewpoints hm some of us ↑ may struggle with those viewpoints you know and I don't think you know I don't think we're above reflecting on the fact that just you know hm (0.4) so it's never as simple as us versus them in any situation hm =			(Continuation of Greg's long utterance/turn of talk; he takes a stance that "we are those people," that is, anyone can hold racist viewpoints. Modality markers (such as a number of <i>I think</i> , <i>I don't think</i> , <i>you know</i> , <i>may have</i> , (some of us ↑) <i>may struggle</i>) show hedging and express solidarity with the students.)
89	Rachel	= In like Renae just pointed out that I had this like	Latching onto Greg's utterance, Rachel spontaneously takes the cue and resumes the earlier topic.	"Renae just pointed out" (Renae's earlier confrontation)	
89-91	Rachel	it's like underlying just assumption that I made of American equals White I didn't even that was so buried but [like it's there			CODA OF THE MOMENT OF CRISIS (REINFORCEMENT OF THE RESOLUTION) Rachel truly names the "elephant in the room;" while earlier she had agreed with Renae's confrontation, now she goes one step further and describes her own prejudice/stereotype in order to implicitly deconstruct and reject it.
92	Greg	[Exactly wow			
93	Rachel	(<i>smiling, looking at Renae</i>) Thank you for bring[ing it up	Addresses Rachel to thank her again.		
94	Renae	(<i>sweetly</i>) [Any time girl	Accepts Rachel's thank you in a light-hearted, good- humored way.		
95		<i>Whole class laughs.</i>			