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Clashes in the Contact Zone: Student, Faculty, and Administrative Resistance to Intersectional Pedagogies in the Writing Classroom

Gina Marie Lawrence

University of Texas at El Paso, ginamarielawrence@gmail.com

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CLASHES IN THE CONTACT ZONE: STUDENT, FACULTY, AND ADMINISTRATIVE
RESISTANCE TO INTERSECTIONAL PEDAGOGIES
IN THE WRITING CLASSROOM

GINA MARIE LAWRENCE

Doctoral Program in Rhetoric and Composition

APPROVED:

Kate Mangelsdorf, Ph.D., Chair

Lucía Dura, Ph.D.

Char Ullman, Ph.D.

Charles Ambler, Ph.D.
Dean of the Graduate School

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2018

Dedication

To Reese and Jordan --

You can do anything!

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ADMINISTRATIVE RESISTANCE TO INTERSECTIONAL
PEDAGOGIES IN THE WRITING CLASSROOM

by

GINA MARIE LAWRENCE, MA

DISSERTATION

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for the Degree of

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

When I started this project in 2015, I had been teaching writing courses on gender and race for about a year and had only just begun to unearth the swath of conversations that could be had about student resistance. Throughout this dissertation, student resistance is defined as students who disagree, do not comply, or disrupt class because they oppose the material discussed or assigned in the writing classroom. This is a topic that has grown from a small interest in the beginning of my teaching career to something that has consumed me in recent months. And while my dissertation data was gathered well over a year ago, I can't help but connect all this work that is in the following pages with the intensely organized anti-racist graduate student uprising that has been occurring at my current institution.

I'm a firm believer that the personal is political, and when I got my job, I had marketed myself as a writing center specialist who does anti-racist work. I did not know at the time that my department was in the midst of a very large whiteness problem. I was hired and began work in mid-August of 2017, and by early September, it was evident to me that something was clearly wrong. Our department, which markets itself online as a diverse border-institution was actually made up entirely of white faculty. The students were largely students of color who had moved to the city in order to pursue an MFA in Creative Writing or PhD in Rhetoric and Professional Communication. Needless to say, their expectations of the department hardly met the reality, and as early as September, there was talk of an organized protest by the graduate students in the department.

In April of 2018, the graduate students initiated a takeover of the department listervs, emailing every tenured faculty member, college track faculty member,

administrator, office assistant, graduate assistant, adjunct, and anybody else who had subscribed to the listervs. The takeover lasted a full day, and students from all of our graduate degree programs recounted experiences of feeling tokenized, not taken seriously, belittled, and victimized through acts of verbal racial violence. The students then requested that nobody respond or act and that faculty only listen, close-read, and think about what the students had to say.

This did not happen. The department was in uproar for the weeks following for a variety of reasons, including some faculty that were feeling called out, others who felt that the listserv was not used for its proper function (i.e. “department business”), and others who wanted to take action immediately, despite being asked not to by the graduate students. The graduate students had a plan and while all of the faculty were exhibiting various levels of resistance toward the graduate students’ requests and call-outs, the graduate students waited. Two weeks later, they unveiled a four-part plan that included amendments to the bylaws and a plan of action for faculty to be trained in anti-racism.

I bring up this anecdote because this was unfolding -- and continues to unfold -- as I was writing my dissertation. It is impossible to ignore the connections and similarities I see from my colleagues, who are mostly seasoned academics with tenure in positions of power, and the way that they resisted student requests for anti-racism, accountability, diversity, and other core values that they saw were not being addressed in our department. Several months after the graduate students released their requests, the department is still in a stage of hand-wringing, denial of power, and resistance to take any action that would subvert the status-quo.

The newest development is that a few dedicated faculty members, myself included, took action to create an anti-racist syllabus statement for the department. This statement would be included in all general education writing course syllabi, and included provisions against hate speech as well as protections for students from various oppressed groups. When we presented this syllabus statement to the dean of our college, he sent it to the university's general counsel, who said that the statement could not be used in any way, especially in a syllabus, and that we would need to remove the "offending language" from our documents. The so-called offending language was highlighted on the document: "language or actions that are racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, or otherwise discriminatory will not be tolerated." The counsel argued that the students had free speech and could say whatever they wanted in our classrooms, even if it was explicitly racist. We are still in the process of moving forward with a statement against racism as a writing program.

In the research for this dissertation, I had expected to find many instances of students who were resistant to discussing issues of race, gender, class, language, or sexuality in the writing classroom. This is what had inspired me to begin this research, as I had been teaching an explicitly intersectional feminist first-year writing curriculum for several years. In my personal experience as an instructor, many students were unable to see past what they called my biased opinion on matters such as race, gender, and sexuality. This was noted on my course evaluations, and was backed up by the literature I read on working with students in a feminist curriculum. But, I did not expect to find countless examples of administrators who were resistant to curriculum that talked about these issues (issues of race, gender, sexuality, class, etc. which I will call "intersectional issues,"

after Crenshaw's [1989] term "intersectionality," from this point forward). The resistance that an intersectional pedagogue encounters does not just come from the students, but also from the administration and gatekeepers within the institution. While the bulk of this dissertation does focus on students in early college writing classes who resist discussing intersectional issues in the classroom, it also addresses issues of administrative resistance - an area that I now know needs far more research. It is also something that has become increasingly illuminated to me in my experience as a non-tenure-track faculty member in an all-white department.

This dissertation looks at instructors who teach using intersectional pedagogy in their classrooms -- a term that is loosely defined throughout this dissertation as a pedagogy in which an instructor either takes an intersectional approach to teaching writing or teaches about intersectional issues. This project seeks to answer five core research questions about intersectional pedagogy and student resistance, which are:

- What does an intersectional pedagogy look like in the writing classroom?
- Why do instructors choose to teach using intersectional pedagogy?
- What does student resistance look like in and out of the classroom?
- What can we learn from how student resistance to this pedagogy emerges?
- How do instructors address student resistance?

In order to answer these questions, I combine observations of my own teaching -- autoethnographic notes -- and semi-structured interviews of several instructors who identify as intersectional pedagogues. I do believe that this dissertation creates a great starting point for a conversation about how to incorporate intersectionality into a writing classroom and what to do when students resist, but I realize its implications are limited.

The sample size is small and only contains personal anecdotes -- not any significant quantitative data -- on how student resistance emerged and what was done about it. The interviewed instructors had to rely on their memory of past semesters, while I was taking notes after each class session, so each of our recollections of our experiences vary greatly.

However, what can be gleaned from this data is a deeper understanding of why instructors choose to teach using intersectional pedagogy, as well as a collective admittance that teaching with this approach is quite difficult. We can learn why some instructors choose to continue teaching this way, and why others chose to modify their courses. This project also gathers several examples of ways that resistance to intersectional pedagogy emerges, including in writing, online, face-to-face, through administration, and through interpersonal conflict.

The instructors who were interviewed for this project come from a variety of backgrounds, locations, abilities, gender expressions, sexualities, and racial identities. I discovered how instructor identity informs pedagogy and why many instructors who come from traditionally marginalized backgrounds often choose intersectional pedagogy because they feel it represents a part of them so that they can be their true selves in the classroom. The diversity in my sample was important to me because I did not want to interview a group of similar instructors, who would have likely been all white, straight women -- representative of the field of Rhetoric and Composition as a whole -- had I not sought out a diverse pool. They also come from a variety of types of institutions, including public, 2-year, and private, from all over the country. This provides readers with a wide variety of data to examine and consider when thinking about implementing or reflecting on their own intersectional pedagogy.

In Chapter 2, the review of literature, I will discuss the origins of the term intersectionality, which was coined in 1989 by black feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, although the term had existed in legal studies prior to her publication of it. I also discuss the presence of other texts on specific intersectional issues in the field of rhetoric and composition studies, including sexuality, race, gender, and standard language ideology. I additionally address critiques to intersectional pedagogies from scholars who think that intersectional approaches have no place in the classroom, perhaps most famously, Stanley Fish.

Chapter 3 is the methodology section, where I will go more in-depth and discuss how I gathered and analyzed my data, as well as why autoethnography was an appropriate choice given the personal nature of this project. I also discuss the issues I had with my first data collection and how I improved the process in my second round.

The bulk of this dissertation focus is in Chapter 4, the results and discussion. In this chapter, I answer the five research questions through examples that were gathered in the semi-structured interviews and in my own autoethnography. This chapter discusses why instructors choose to teach with an intersectional focus, ways that resistance has cropped up in their classrooms, and how they addressed -- or didn't address -- the resistance. I also discuss the issue of administrative resistance that I mentioned earlier.

Chapter 5 concludes the project, but truly provides ideas for further research, next steps, and what needs to be done in the future for intersectional pedagogy. Given our current political climate, I do not foresee intersectional pedagogy fading away, but I do imagine more instances of resistance will continue to emerge. The goal of this project is ultimately to help instructors think about resistance before it happens in their classrooms

so that they can have thoughtful, rather than reactionary responses to it, allowing the class to be more productive and more conducive to the goals of intersectional pedagogy.

While this dissertation is far from comprehensive, the experience of writing it while going through a departmental upheaval of both administrative and student resistance has been simultaneously inspiring and disheartening. I have witnessed how much work still needs to be done in institutions in order to make space for intersectional pedagogies to both be taught and practiced. I have also discovered the deepest extent of the problem is not where I had originally thought it was. Student resistance is a problem and discussing how and why students resist is a valuable pedagogical practice for intersectional pedagogues to engage in. However, faculty who teach intersectional pedagogy -- especially graduate student instructors, adjuncts, and full-time faculty off the tenure track -- have to reckon with whether or not the goals of the pedagogy are worth the administrative resistance and obstacles that will be put in place to prevent the change that intersectional pedagogy strives to achieve.

CHAPTER 2: THE INTERSECTIONALITY UMBRELLA: THROUGH RACE, GENDER, QUEERNESS, STANDARD LANGUAGE IDEOLOGY, AND MORE

Introduction to Topic

What this project hopes to explore is what instructors who identify as intersectional pedagogues teach and address students who resist. It also looks at how exactly students resist intersectional pedagogy, why they resist it, and what can be done about it. It is important to note that white scholars in critical pedagogy, myself included, are not saying anything entirely new. Paulo Freire and bell hooks, as well as other scholars and instructors of color, pioneered and continue to influence critical pedagogy. However, I hope to provide a new way to examine and evaluate an intersectional approach in the rhetoric and writing classroom, and begin to answer the question of its effectiveness.

Critical pedagogy saw its peak in the early 1990s, but saw a revival in scholarship in the late 2000s. However, not much has been said or critiqued since then, even though the effects of critical pedagogy can still be seen in classrooms across the country, mostly through what I will call intersectional pedagogy in this dissertation. This dissertation seeks to continue the conversation on critical/intersectional pedagogy, its effectiveness, and how it can best be used while addressing student resistance.

Personal Connections

As an instructor of composition, my work has always been with linguistically and culturally diverse student populations in the southwest. My classroom focuses largely on issues of identity, allowing students to explore writing through intersectional feminism, critical race theory, and sexuality studies. As students discuss complex and controversial issues of identity, they often experience discomfort, but it is in this discomfort that students

learn to cope with complex ideas and differing opinions. When approaching uncomfortable situations, students are more rhetorically aware of their words and the effect of their approaches, providing a means of critical and rhetorical engagement, as well as more thoughtful and reflective writing. My interest in this pedagogy stems from Jonathan Alexander's *Literacy, Sexuality, Pedagogy*, where he advocates for a sexuality-based pedagogy that challenges the idea of the ideologically "neutral" classroom, making students rhetorically aware of their choices in composition.

I challenge the notion of the classroom as a neutral, ideologically pure, hegemonic, and comfortable space, specifically by exposing students to the philosophies that inform our collective experiences in academia. This approach to writing instruction makes my courses culturally relevant and applicable to student lives, promoting students to take what they learn in the class, as learning and application does not occur solely within the classroom. By promoting students to reflect upon how their various identities inform how they are received, I also openly acknowledge and challenge my own whiteness and positionality in the classroom, using this discussion to raise awareness regarding privilege and systemic oppression both in and outside of academia.

My pedagogy explores ethical and critical ways for students to write their selves in various contexts, by creating websites and videos, and selecting their own audiences for their assignments. While writing is traditionally conceived as inscription on a page, writing and composing can be understood as much more than conventional literacy practices (Ball, Sheppard & Arola 2014; Haas, 2007; Shipka, 2011). People write their identities in electronic, personal, civic, and academic spaces. Different identities show up in different spaces--digital and otherwise-- and my pedagogy invites students to explore how they

perform and be receptive to alternative ways of approaching identity. Technology allows students critical engagement with the various digital environments they traverse, both in the classroom and in their worlds, which is important as students first begin engaging in academic rhetorical practices.

Intersectionality

In this project, pedagogies of class, race, sexuality, and gender come together to form a pedagogy that goes beyond critical pedagogy, which is focused solely on class, and feminist pedagogy, which privileges the experiences of educated white women. I will call this pedagogy “Intersectional Pedagogy” after Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1989) landmark article, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics” where she coins the term “intersectionality” to push back against divisive identity politics in social justice circles. She notes that solely using identity politics as a framework for social change “sets forth a problematic consequence of the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis” (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 139). Intersectionality is defined in terms of “how the experiences of women of color are frequently the products of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism, and how these experiences tend not to be represented in discourses of feminism or anti-racism” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244). She notes that women of color are marginalized in both feminist and antiracist circles because “discourse is shaped to respond to one *or* the other” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244) and “the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 140). Using this

framework is helpful in understanding the way that *oppressions*, rather than oppression, work in society; it also helps shape a classroom pedagogy that is social justice centered.

Beginnings

Critical pedagogy, pioneered by Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire (1968), seeks to combine education and social justice, breaking down traditional systems of education, and providing students with tools to create change both inside and outside the classroom. Proponents of critical pedagogy argue that it creates critical thinkers in ways that traditional ways of learning cannot, due to the challenging of one's values and the importance of personal experience and identity.

The arguably one-dimensional approach through the lens of Marxist critiques of class that Freire's critical pedagogy utilized was seen as problematic by many feminist scholars of color, including Audre Lorde, Toni Morrison, Gloria Anzaldua, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, and bell hooks. These scholars' initial critiques of critical pedagogy in the late 1980s/early 1990s were dismissed by critical pedagogues as racialized and gender-based essentialism, fueling a split within the schools of thought. This, paired with Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality, led to the critique that critical pedagogy is "grounded in the notion that critical theorists with their link to Marxist analysis and classical European philosophical roots were not only ethnocentric but also reductionist" (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2008). This new movement within pedagogy became known as Critical Race Theory (CRT) -- a theory which centers the issue of race within pedagogy, as well as other issues that people experience at the margins of society, particularly linguistic violence, border issues, and indigenous erasure.

An important aspect of Critical Pedagogy that I believe is preserved in all of its variations and critiques is the notion that knowledge is socially constructed. McLaren (2008) notes that “the world we live in is constructed symbolically by the mind through social interaction with others and is heavily dependent on culture, context, custom, and historical specificity” (pp. 63). Critical Pedagogy allows students and instructors to look at our social constructions and personal subjectivities and critique them. This includes how knowledge is constructed and why certain systems privilege some groups over others. A study of rhetoric and composition would not be complete without questioning these very systems and constructions; this is why Critical Pedagogy and rhetoric pair so well, particularly in a composition classroom.

Feminism and Gender

The roots of my interest in what I call “intersectional pedagogy” is in feminist and gender studies. For the same reasons that scholars renamed Critical Pedagogy to Critical Race Theory, I think it is important to not prioritize one facet of identity over another when talking about the multitude of experiences and perspectives that instructors teach and teach from. Crenshaw’s (1989) term “intersectionality” incorporated my beliefs as an instructor; that is, we do not live single-issue lives. Teaching from a single perspective, whether that is class or gender or race, does not fit my philosophy. Intersectionality shows that these issues exist at the intersections of race AND gender AND class, among other identities, and all of these experiences have a place in the writing classroom.

My experience as a woman greatly informed my experience as an instructor, and I knew I wanted to incorporate a study of gender in my classroom. My pedagogical reasons then are different than they are now, and I discuss that in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

This section will discuss the literature regarding bias against instructors who are women and the problems and challenges that gender pose in the classroom.

An article titled “Students Praise Male Professors” by Mulhere in *Inside Higher Ed* discusses students’ perceptions of the effectiveness of male instructors versus female instructors. The article reports on a study by Lillian MacNell, Adam Driscoll, and Andrea N. Hunt of North Carolina State University entitled “What’s in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching.” The study determined that “College students’ assessments of their instructors’ teaching ability is linked to whether they think those instructors are male or female” (Mulhere, 2014). Similar to Jarratt’s critiques of the decentered classroom for female instructors, the study noted that the expectations of female instructors were different than those of males. Mulhere summarizes:

In teaching evaluations, previous studies have focused on how female instructors are expected to be nurturing and supportive; when they’re not, it may count against them in evaluations. At the same time, if they are nurturing and supportive, female instructors risk being perceived as less authoritative and knowledgeable than their male counterparts, according to the study. (Mulhere, 2014)

In her article “The Other ‘F’ Word: The Feminist in the Classroom,” Dale M. Bauer examines the feedback that students provide teachers who teach feminist ideologies in their classrooms. She challenges the notion about the “ideologically neutral” classroom space that students expect when they get to the university. When following several self-identified feminist instructors, Bauer discovered that students often expressed a desire for the instructors to separate their ideologies from their pedagogies. Bauer argues that, “for

most feminists, there is no separation between the outer world and the inner world, let alone between politics and intellectual work” (Bauer, 2014, p. 181). In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, hooks (1994) also advocates for the feminist political classroom. She argues, “The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy” (p. 13). This is a major tenet of critical pedagogy: the personal is political, and we can use this to facilitate student learning.

In “Feminism and Composition: The Case for Conflict,” Jarratt (2003) argues against Elbow’s notion of a “value-free” classroom, criticizing that because of his white male status, it is easy for him to still be respected by students while still leading a decentered authority in the classroom. Jarratt argues that women teachers have a disadvantage here, and it is because of the way that students perceive professors in the academy. Most students come into the university from high school, where the majority of their teachers were women. These women, most often, are viewed in a maternal role, where they are the “nurturer” of the students, and are not taken seriously as an authority in the classroom. Jarratt argues that this perception of instructors continues a “childish pattern” in the classroom, which students often view as a rule-free zone. She blames expressivist compositionist feminists for furthering these ideologies and fallaciously assuming a classroom that is “undifferentiated by gender—not to mention race or class” (Jarratt, 2003, p. 270), which does not exist. She urges, instead, for a “confrontational classroom,” which she asserts empowers students by exposing them to confrontational ideologies. She notes: “In taking on a confrontational teaching style, we are both able to assert our own authority in the classroom and ensure that our students leave our courses with skills that will empower

them” (Jarratt, 2003, p. 276). This goal is reflected in many of the interviews that are discussed in Chapter 4.

Queerness

Feminist, gender, and sexuality approaches to composition studies have been well documented in rhetoric and composition literature (Elliott, 2003; Gibson, Marinara, Meem, 2003; Luhmann, 1998); however, the conversations about teaching writing through a gender and sexuality focused lens are largely focused on literature-based approaches to writing, or are highly theoretical, lacking concrete examples. In *Literacy, Sexuality, Pedagogy*, Jonathan Alexander (2008) advocates that a gender and sexuality approach to composition is not only effective, but also, “[a]s we learn about sex and sexuality, we become more literate about our society and culture” (Alexander, 2008, p. 74). Luhmann also affirms: “[w]hat is at stake in this pedagogy is the deeply social or dialogic situation of subject formation, the processes of how we make ourselves through and against others” (Luhmann, 1998). These approaches to writing courses are controversial and complicated, and fear of offending is common (Bauer, 2014; Luhmann, 1998); critics argue that this approach to teaching writing is a form of “assimilationist” politics.

However, in *Literacy, Sexuality, Pedagogy*, Alexander argues that studying gender and sexuality “demystif[ies] seemingly private topics so that students can understand their sociocultural and political valences. Doing so also serves to sensitize students broadly to how language is used, providing students access to talking and writing intelligently and critically about some of the most important contemporary issues they are facing” (Alexander, 2008, p. 73). By teaching students about writing through the lens of gender and sexuality, students are better able to engage in critical conversations about social and

political issues, but also, the analysis and critiques of heteronormativity are great exercises in rhetorical analysis. By encouraging students to look at the way that gender is performed, packaged, sold, and policed in society, they are learning about rhetoric and communication. Because it is a topic that they are often subconsciously but deeply familiar with, students have a wealth of material to engage with for analysis. Although sex is often a “taboo” and private topic, challenging students to step out of their comfort zones and challenge their traditional notions of what academic writing is “supposed” to be.

In “Coming out in the Classroom: The Return to the Hard Place,” Elliott (2003) discusses the politics of queer teachers who choose to self-identify themselves to their students. Elliott argues that coming out is necessary for the “professional legitimization” of the queer community. Often non-queer administration and students often view the classroom as a “neutral” space, free of ideology; however, this ideology is false. What is currently viewed as “neutral” is, in fact, a heteronormative and patriarchal ideology that many people, including well-read academics, are blind to because it saturates each and every facet of our lives. Elliott explains:

Since dominant ideologies are already present in the classroom, the debate over coming out need no longer hinge on whether the gay or lesbian instructor is ‘contaminating’ the classroom with ideology itself; rather he or she is simply setting one ideology alongside another and helping the students to make critical distinctions between them and also to make connections between those ideologies and their consequences. (Elliott, 2003, p. 419)

By assuming this neutral classroom space and some sort of objective education, we are doing our students a disservice. Choosing not to come out is a symptom of internalized and

institutionalized homophobia and only increases the invisibility of queer faculty on campus.

The needs for coming out far outnumber the arguments against coming out to students. First, queer students need to feel a safe space on campus and by knowing a faculty member that can relate to queer issues, they are more likely to find that safe space and a personal contact in the queer community during a vulnerable time of change, such as college. Additionally, if students perceive that an instructor has a “secret,” it is automatically assumed to be a “dirty secret.” They will only continue talking about the instructor’s rumored sexuality until it is placed in the open, away from speculation. Finally, by coming out, we are challenging dominant thinking and institutional heterosexism. I talk more about my own experiences and rationale for coming out in the classroom in Chapter 3.

This move toward “queering” composition is traced in Alexander’s (2009) article, “The Queer Turn in Composition: Reviewing and Assessing an Emerging Scholarship.” He notes three major turns in the field of composition at the intersection of queerness: “confronting homophobia, becoming inclusive, and queering the homo/hetero binary” (W300). This process of deconstructing homophobia and queering academia -- especially rhetoric and composition studies -- is important, and Alexander argues that it fits squarely in the responsibilities of our field as it currently exists. A field that has taken pedagogy seriously, diversity seriously, and has been the workspace for much of the scholarship in Critical Race Theory is the space where a “queer turn” can and should take place. He notes: “Our field has a longstanding commitment to inclusive and multicultural pedagogies that address how identity can serve as a tool for helping students and teachers analyze the

socioculturally and historically constructed nature of culture and individual agency” (pp. W303). Therefore, just as gender and class belong in pedagogy, so does queerness.

On Race

Like gender, race is a part of identity that is constantly in play in the classroom. However, unlike with gender or sexuality, my race is in the position of the oppressor because of my whiteness. Many white teachers shy away from talking about race, just as many white folks do in general, but I believe that it is an important part of intersectional pedagogy, especially when teaching at a Hispanic Serving Institution on the border. This philosophy comes from bell hooks (1994).

In true intersectional fashion, bell hooks’ work also comes into conversation with discussions of race pedagogy. Her book, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as a Practice of Freedom*, came out in 1994, just shortly after the term intersectionality was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw; it was not in mainstream practice at that point, but her book, which discusses critical pedagogy, is truly a practice of intersectional pedagogy. On the issue of race, she discusses her experience being a black student taught by white teachers, and how her education was inherently political because of this:

“School was still a political place, since we were always having to counter white racist assumptions that we were genetically inferior, never as capable as white peers, even unable to learn. Yet, the politics were no longer counter-hegemonic. We were always and only responding and reacting to white folks” (p.4).

While this practice was harmful to her and her education, it informed her pedagogy of education as a practice of freedom, which she argues helped her to become a self-

educated woman. However, there were some instructors who resisted the status quo, to challenge the racist hegemony: “The rare white teacher who dared to resist, who would not allow racist biases to determine how we were taught, sustained the belief that learning at its most powerful could indeed liberate” (p. 4).

Teaching Tolerance, a nonprofit organization project from the Southern Poverty Law Center, focuses on k-12 teacher resources for teaching about race. Tamrah Rash, a black teacher at Meredith School in Philadelphia notes that “[t]here is a fear among white teachers to talk about race with white teachers and teachers of color [. . .] But we have to move past that [fear]. To talk about race with students, we have to be able to have honest conversations ourselves” (Anderson, 2014).

In *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing for a Socially Just Future*, Inoue discusses ways to teach and assess writing in ways that are not just racially conscious, but deliberately *antiracist*. He does this by creating a grading system that attempts to sidestep the traditional grading system of colleges and universities by implementing a grading contract. He sees the writing classroom as more of a “studio situation” in which “instructors provide students/participants with evaluative feedback from time to time, pointing out where, say, they’ve done well and where the instructor suggests improvement” (Inoue, 2015, p. 331). Inoue, too, addresses intersectionality through Crenshaw’s (1991) definition. He notes that “racism is one product of all writing assessments,” and that acknowledging race in the class allows instructors to “see the way biases against non-heterosexual orientations might be, or certain religious affiliations, or gender bias, or economic bias” (Inoue, 2015, p. 5). Because of this, Inoue urges his readers to consider definitions of racism that go beyond isolated acts of prejudice, and look at

systemic racism. He does this through the antiracist philosophy in his book, which stems from a concern in his educational background. He states: "I'm concerned with structural racism, the institutional kind, the kind that makes many students of color like me when I was younger believe that their failures in school were purely due to their own lacking in ability, desire, or work ethic" (Inoue, 2015, p. 4). Racism, he argues, is ingrained in every part of the university, and especially in writing classes, due to their explicit goal of teaching students to write and speak in Standard Edited American English (SEAE). This approach unfairly affects multilingual and black students negatively.

Standard Language Ideology

Much of Canagarajah's work focuses on global Englishes, leaning heavily toward the idea of translanguaging. In "The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued," Canagarajah argues that "English should be treated as a multinational language, one that belongs to diverse communities and not owned only by the metropolitan communities" (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 589). He talks extensively about how language and the way one speaks is very much tied to identity and cultural values, and how it is important to have a personal connection to the language a person uses. He notes that "to use a language without any personal engagement, even for temporary utilitarian and pragmatic reasons, is to mimic not speak" (597).

Canagarajah (2006) examines the concept of "code-meshing," which is combining different languages or dialects into the same sentence for rhetorical purposes. Canagarajah argues that "Code meshing calls for multidialectalism not monodialectalism. Holding that knowledge of the vernacular is solely sufficient for minority students would ignore the reality of multilingualism demanded by globalization," (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 598) which

pushes against any notion of a standard language ideology. Canagarajah posits that it is difficult to even label anything as “nonstandard” today since the standard varies greatly and cannot be pinpointed (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 604); it is an ideology that is constructed.

The idea of standard language ideology can be harmful to students in the writing classroom, especially those raised in households that did not speak standard academic English. Canagarajah explains the harm in assuming there is a standard language and holding students to perform it: “The assumption that multilingual students are always bound to err in a second language denies them agency [. . .] In being this judgmental, teachers sometimes ignore the creativity of the students who negotiate unique meanings. Teachers may suppress other explanations for why a structure may sound unusual—i.e., explanations that testify to students’ rhetorical independence and critical thinking” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 609). Students can be effective rhetoricians using their own languages, by code-meshing, and by using their unique perspective to create meanings that might not be possible using standard academic English.

In “Indexicality and ‘Standard’ Edited American English: Examining the Link Between Conceptions of Standardness and Perceived Authorial Identity,” Davila (2012) examines the results of a study of instructors and their perceptions of student errors. In her study, she found a tie between the perceived race of students and how the instructors categorized issues in those students’ papers: either as “error” or “mistake.” Students who were perceived to be white were assumed to have made a “mistake,” such as a typo or temporary lapse in judgment. The interesting discovery was with teachers who perceived a student to be black. Davila notes: “The perception of African American students as coming from Metropolis Public Schools contributed to instructors’ sense that White students are

often better prepared educationally than Black students. When instructors talked about “urban” or “inner city” students, they always did so to signal race (African American) and class (low SES)” (Davila, 2012, p. 191). The instructors classified these students papers as “errored,” implying that they did not understand the standard language rules. Davila argues that the instructors used their standard language ideology to “justify existing stereotypes” about poor students of color (Davila, 2012, p. 198).

Davila’s study is directly related to the field of Rhetoric and Composition Studies, with particularly strong pedagogical implications. She notes:

Clearly, the stakes surrounding SEAE and identity are high. This research suggests that gatekeeping associated with SEAE, then, is not only a result of insisting that academic writing be produced in SEAE but is connected to the reception of and indexicality associated with non/standardness. Traditionally underrepresented students may be held at a distance from academia due to their language use and due to the fact that there are no allowable identities that are linked to standardness and representative of their various social groups. (Davila, 2012, p. 199)

With composition’s role as a gatekeeping course becoming increasingly important, writing instructors have a duty to prepare students for college writing. But, a standard language ideology marginalizes students from other backgrounds by silencing their identities, and making them feel that they are not welcome in the academy, when in fact, their language does have value.

In “Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach,” Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur (2011) examine the nature of language norms. The examination notes that language norms are constructed and that standard language ideology is harmful

to student success. They argue that “By addressing how language norms are actually heterogeneous, fluid, and negotiable, a translingual approach directly counters demands that writers must conform to fixed, uniform standards” (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011, p. 305). The translingual approach is a direct rebellion to the standard language ideology, opening up possibilities for new ways of instructing and encouraging students. The authors argue that we should view language differences “not as a barrier to overcome or as a problem to manage, but as a resource for producing meaning in writing, speaking, reading, and listening” (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011, p. 303). Horner et al highlight recent changes in the field that have caused rhetoric and composition scholars to step back from the current-traditional roots and embrace a more translingual approach, noting that there are “forward efforts of a growing movement among teacher-scholars of composition and the language arts generally to develop alternatives to conventional treatments of language difference” (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011, p. 304). Most notably, they refer to a CCCCs resolution that actually encourages embracing “differences within and across all languages” (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011, p. 304). The rationale is that this approach:

encourages reading with patience, respect for perceived differences within and across languages, and an attitude of deliberative inquiry [. . .] questions language practices more generally, even those that appear to conform to dominant standards [. . .] asks what produces the appearance of conformity--what it might/might not do, for whom/how--calls for more conscious and critical attention to how writers deploy diction, syntax, and style as well as form, register, and media [. . . and]

acknowledges deviations from dominant expectations need not be errors. (Horner, Lu, Royster, & Trimbur, 2011, p. 304)

Horner et al.'s argument is supportive of pushing aside standard language ideology in favor of a translingual approach to teaching writing, which is not unlike other current theory in writing studies, including the code-switching and code-meshing supporters (Young, 2010; Canagarajah, 2006).

This discussion, as most discussions regarding standard language ideology and translingualism, brings us back to Canagarajah. He argues that language is changing rapidly and "We are losing the ability to classify certain items as categorically 'nonstandard.' The deft mixing of codes in this article confronts readers with their own biases—i.e., what do we consider as unsuitable for academic writing, and why?" (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 604).

Vershawn Ashanti Young (2010) confronts this question directly in his tongue-in-cheek article, "Should Writers Use They Own English?" He uses his own English -- he refers to it as African American English -- to critique the idea that certain writing is more suitable for academic writing than others, namely through a direct response to Stanley Fish's 3-part *New York Times* op-ed entitled "What Should Colleges Teach?" Fish -- and I'll come back to Fish again later in this chapter -- argues that students from marginalized communities should be excited to learn academic English, but Young sharply sees the contradiction in his request:

If he meant everybody should be thrilled to learn another dialect, then wouldnt everybody be learnin everybody's dialect? Wouldnt we all become multidialectal and pluralingual? And that's my exact argument, that we all should know

everybody's dialect, at least as many as we can, and be open to the mix of them in oral and written communication (pp. 110).

Young points out the racism in assuming that students of color should adapt to academic English, but also argues against not teaching grammar in response to this. His solution? "Instead of prescribing how folks should write or speak, I say we teach language descriptively. This mean we should, for instance, teach how language functions within and from various cultural perspectives" (pp. 112).

The idea that a standard English is also an issue of race, which puts it in direct conversation with critical and intersectional pedagogies. In *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies*, Inoue recounts the story of a colleague, Frankie, who wrote down a quote conversation that she overheard some fellow English faculty members say during a committee meeting break: "oh sure that English you're using might be just fine where you come from, but around here we speak white English" (Inoue, 2015, p. 6). Inoue breaks down this conversation, not into terms of standard language ideology, which instructors of English will use to disguise the racism of the academy, but in terms of what "white English" really meant in this conversation:

But Frankie also knows, she knows, that even if her colleague has used the word "formal" or "professional" or "academic" beneath the surface of these other words would have roiled the truth: in the context of a predominantly white university and a predominantly white department (in which nearly every faculty person of color has left or struggled to achieve tenure and promotion), to an audience composed of either one or a few students of color or a white colleague—white is what she meant

to say. But we live in a post-racial America and work in post-racial universities where we have learned (unless we slip up) to substitute words like “professional” for white so that any racism that might be revealed is semantically concealed. (Inoue, 2015, p. 6)

This discussion demonstrates how closely our notions around language and race are intertwined. European students who take courses in American colleges are rarely subject to the same linguistic scrutiny that domestic multilingual students are; this in and of itself is a product of institutional whiteness and globalized white supremacy.

Whiteness

Whiteness is not easily definable, nor does it have any clear boundaries in our cultural definitions. There are many different constructions of whiteness; three discussed in this section include Leonardo’s examination of whiteness by fiat, Gross’ by ethnicity, and Omi and Winant’s by social structure. These three theorists each address the issue of whiteness through explications of both social and structural phenomena.

Each of the theorists defines whiteness in different ways, with largely different implications. In “The Souls of White Folk: Critical pedagogy, Whiteness Studies, and globalization discourse,” Leonardo (2002) examines the idea of whiteness by fiat, which is a societally defined value of whiteness as a race. He notes: “‘Whiteness’ is a racial discourse, whereas the category ‘white people’ represents a socially constructed identity, usually based on skin color. For practical purposes, we are born with certain bodies that are inscribed with social meaning” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 31). White people are socially constructed by their skin color, meaning that their skin color itself is assigned an arbitrary value with attached social significance, simply because it is light. Gross (2013) examines a

similar idea, but with a more complex lens because it also addresses the notion of citizenship. In "The 'Caucasian Cloak,'" she notes that different groups of people were given the citizenry attached to whiteness while others were not. She notes that while Japanese and South Asian Indians would not be considered white, and therefore, not citizens, Mexican Americans had a different experience in American history. She explicates that "Mexican Americans were held by federal and state courts to be white because they were citizens--'white by treaty'" (Gross, 2013, p. 156), which refers to the boundaries that were drawn after the Mexican American war, which made many former Mexican people automatically American. The significance of this contradiction will be explained later. Finally, Omi and Winant discuss what they call "racial formation," which is similar to Leonardo's idea of race. While many lay assumptions of race either assume that race is innate and unchanging--that is, a race holds certain characteristics that are always fixed--others believe that race is an illusion--often leading to notions of "colorblindness." Omi and Winant argue that race is actually a social structure, and that "we should see race as a dimension of human representation rather than an illusion" (Omi and Winant, 2013, p. 124). Socially and culturally speaking, there are many definitions of whiteness, and it is not the rigid category that many assumptions have led to the stereotypes that we are all familiar with. Rather, whiteness is a rather fuzzy category with no real boundaries, and has been shifted throughout history when it best serves the power structure.

In Gross' "The 'Caucasian Cloak,'" the history of Mexican American identities is traced through the definition of whiteness. She argues that "Whiteness operated as a 'Caucasian cloak' to obscure the practices of Jim Crow and make them appear benign, whether in the jury or school setting" (Gross, 2013, p. 154), discussing the many ways that

by defining Mexican Americans as white allowed blatantly racist practices to be dismissed. She continues, saying that “If Mexican Americans were white, then they were represented as long as whites were” (Gross, 2013, p. 154). This applies to jury settings; when a Mexican American went on trial, if his or her jury was all white, that was okay because they were of the “same race” by this definition. Gross notes that this debate isn’t about the “question of whether Mexican Americans were or are “really” white” (Gross, 2013, p. 157), but rather how systemic racism and definitions of whiteness were used to create, protect, and disguise Jim Crow practices. While it can be argued that considering Mexican Americans white and giving them citizen had many benefits that were not afforded to other groups, Gross cautions us, noting that “whiteness was used against Mexican Americans far more often than on their behalf” (Gross, 2013, p. 157). Quite simply, these practices were the exploitation of the Mexican American identity to benefit a power structure.

On the flip side of the exploitation of identities is white privilege. Leonardo discusses the issue of white privilege in depth, noting the systemic and globalized advantages that conceptions of whiteness have given white people. He looks at the subject of whiteness and white privilege, which he characterizes “by the unwillingness to name the contours of racism, the avoidance of identifying with a racial experience or group, the minimization of racist legacy, and other similar evasions” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 32). He insists that the problem with whiteness is not whiteness itself, but rather the tendency of white people to ignore the systemic racism in the world and the privileges that whiteness itself has bestowed upon them. The antidote to this, he argues, is education for white people, allowing them “to ‘see’ the formation in full view” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 37). The difficulty with this is that whites would have to understand “‘how they came to be’ in a

position of power” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 37), which is a notion that many white people resist because of the longstanding idea of the myth of white privilege. Often, the focus is shifted to ideas of “individual merit, exceptionalism, or hard work” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 37) being the key to success in society, rather than systemic racial barriers that exist.

Omi and Winant bring more depth into the source of this problem, as well as possible solutions. They argue that it is really easy to focus on these widely held beliefs about racism (often arguing that they are just “misconceptions left over from the past”) and just try to banish them; of course, this is very hard, if not impossible to do on a systemic level (Omi and Winant, 2013, p. 124). Omi and Winant explain that race is not an “illusion we can somehow ‘get beyond’” (Omi and Winant, 2013, p. 124), but rather a social structure, as noted earlier. They look at what they call “racial formation” in two ways: neoconservative and liberal. Neoconservative notions of race argue that “we may notice someone’s race, but we cannot act upon that awareness. We must act in a ‘color-blind’ fashion” (Omi and Winant, 2013, p. 126). This point of view argues that the government/social structure cannot adopt different policies based on race (such as affirmative action) because talking about race is attached to racism itself. Liberal analyses look at race through the social structure itself, positing that “racialized social structure is immediately linked to an interpretation of the meaning of race” (Omi and Winant, 2013, p. 126). This approach focuses on minority programs that benefit certain disadvantaged racial groups, such as employment opportunities. Omi and Winant do diverge from some very commonly agreed upon points in current race critical theory. They argue that some of these special programs “often do have deleterious consequences for whites who are not personally the source of the discriminatory practices the program seeks to overcome” and

that these can lead to “the charge of ‘reverse discrimination’” (Omi and Winant, 2013, p. 137). “Reverse discrimination” becomes a sticky topic because it argues that it is possible for those who have experienced systemic privilege because of their race (whiteness) to experience some sort of discrimination because of it, when the world at large still privileges whiteness.

Finally, the issue of whiteness still makes its way into our composition classrooms, and it needs to be addressed. Leonardo provides some theory and tools in order to consider effective incorporations into the classroom. He contends that “the issues of globalization and whiteness are critical components of a pedagogy attempting to understand the oppressive structures that distort clear knowledge. These structural features filter into micro-interactions between students and teachers” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 31). Students who understand the oppressive structures that they are living and interacting with are better able to learn and understand what they are learning about. It also makes their knowledge applicable to real life social situations, bringing their knowledge outside of the classroom. He also suggests that “teachers and students work together to name, reflect on, and dismantle discourses of whiteness” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 31), which will lead to a disruption of white discourse. This is important in order to incite change, a value that Rhetoric and Composition Studies as a field has always valued. Finally, Leonardo notes that “Students of color benefit from an education that analyzes the implications of whiteness” and that this helps them to understand and deal with the world around them. Also, “in the process, [students] also realize that their ‘colorness’ is relational to whiteness’s claims of color-blindness and both are burst asunder in the process” (Leonardo, 2002, p. 31). It is this knowledge that will empower students of color to find a stake in their education and,

in turn, become better students. This will also benefit the white students, who may not have understood oppression or systemic racism in their lives before college. By creating an awareness of white privilege and the power that whiteness holds, students of all races will be better prepared to discuss and engage with the discourses of racism and racial politics that saturate our culture and media.

Resistance

Resistance can be defined in numerous ways, and these various definitions are illuminated in more depth in the following chapters. The first year at a university is a formative experience for students, especially students who are living away from home or attending a large school with newly formed friends and social groups. Many students, for the first time, are meeting people who aren't from their hometown or neighborhood. Their classmates may not be the same ethnicity or religion as them, and some students may have never had contact with a queer student or group of students. Pratt (1991) refers to melting pots of ideologies and cultures as "contact zones" in her article "Arts of the Contact Zone." Contact zones are "[w]here cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power" (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). Composition scholars have latched onto Pratt's definition, and have adapted it to fit into composition pedagogical theory. In "'Ye are Witnesses': Pedagogy and the Politics of Identity," Hesford connects Pratt's notion of the contact zone to the university:

Pratt's concept of the contact zone challenges images of colleges and universities as stable and unified cultural sites where the principles of cooperation and equality obtain. In fact, colleges and universities are sites where the contradictions of power,

politics of representation, and construction of historical memory are made visible.

(Hesford, 2003, p. 134)

As an instructor of first year composition, my class is one of the first exposures that students get to the academy. This is a reason I love teaching writing. However, with this role comes a great deal of responsibility. In his article, "Validating Cultural Difference in the Writing Center," Greg Lyons argues that "We should value students' alternative ways of thinking and communicating and not, in our gatekeeping roles, deny their personal histories or cultural identities" (Lyons 145). It is important that we keep in mind that students come in with their own values and identities, but it is also our job to challenge those ideologies in order to create critical thinkers and successful academics.

In "Teaching for Social Justice? Resituating Student Resistance," Hinshaw contends that "issues of social justice are not only appropriate content for an English class, they are necessary content" (Hinshaw, 2007, p. 223). Ignoring issues of social justice in the classroom "dismiss[es] our potential impact as teachers" and creates a "docile student [body] accepting of the status quo" (Hinshaw, 2007, p. 223). In contrast with critical pedagogy work from the twentieth century, Hinshaw builds off Bracher's (2006) work, where they both argue in favor of actually attempting to change students' minds about controversial topics. Hinshaw, building off Bracher's (2006) work, argues that in order "to change our students' minds, we must reeducate their cognitive causal schemas to 'understand the complete array of causes of social problems, rather than simply attributing these problems to their immediate bearers or perpetrators'" (Bracher, 2006, p. 479; qtd in Hinshaw, 2007, p. 224). However, Hinshaw breaks from Bracher, explaining that knowledge is not a binary (known/unknown; right;wrong), and students' minds are often

not made up. That is where the resistance shows up. Hinshaw notes that “our choice of knowledge we validate doesn’t occur in a vacuum, [and] it is crucial to understand the dialectical relationship between personal experiences and cognitive schemas. Not only do our personal experiences shape our cognitive schemas, but our cognitive schemas, in turn, shape our experiences” (Hinshaw, 2007, p. 227).

In “Fault Lines in the Contact Zone,” Miller (1994) discusses a student paper titled “Queers, Bums, and Magic,” where a student recounts a violent gay-bashing that he initiated in San Francisco for an essay assignment where he was asked to observe a group of people. Miller lists three ways to possibly respond to a student paper that is so blatantly offensive: “read the essay as factual and respond accordingly; read the essay as fictional and respond accordingly; momentarily suspend the question of the essay’s factual or fictional status and respond accordingly” (Miller, 1994, p. 392). In these three responses to the student’s writing, Miller notes that there are distinct advantages and disadvantages. The first approach would ultimately demand that the instructor report the student to the dean’s office, due to concern for public safety or the possibility of the record of a crime. The second option leaves the instructor grading all student papers as works of fiction. Ultimately, the student’s instructor, Scott Lankford, gave the student a low B on the paper, opting to grade the paper as a work of fiction with a strong “imagined audience” and “reasonable detail” (Miller, 1993, p. 393). At a CCCC convention in 1993, a roundtable was dedicated solely to responses to this essay:

These respondents spoke of the essay’s faulty organization, the problems evident in its plot development, the number of mechanical errors. On these grounds alone, one panelist assured the audience, the paper ought to have received a failing mark. If the

first category of response displays a curious willingness to dispense with the formality of reading the student's essay, Lankford's strategy asks teachers to look away from what the student's writing is attempting to do -- at the havoc it is trying to wreak in the contact zone -- and restrict their comments to the essay's surface features and formal qualities, affixing the "usual star" or black mark as the situation warrants. (Miller, 1994, p. 393)

The controversy about the assessment of this paper is complex and begs the question -- how do we assess controversial writing in composition classrooms? While I might argue, through this dissertation, that the approach that Lankford took with this student paper -- grading it as if it was a fictional short story rather than a homophobic research paper -- is ineffective and possibly dangerous.

Miller defends the assessment: "this kind of response made it possible for both the teacher and student to remain in the contact zone of his classroom, allowing them to negotiate the difficult business of working with and through important issues of cultural and sexual difference" (Miller, 1994, p. 394), while also conceding that all the options leave the instructor largely unequipped to deal with the complex issues that come up in student writing. The lack of instructor training is clear each time instructors grade student work, and "it's just that the pedagogical shortcomings of restricting such commentary to the surface features and formal aspects of the writing aren't as readily visible in a response to an essay on a summer vacation as they are in a response to an essay about beating up the homeless" (Miller, 1994, p. 394). Miller's analysis of "Queers, Bums, and Magic" is of particular interest, because it does anticipate the possibility of student resistance in a variety of actions. When one faculty member suggested that a possible course of action for

the student would be to ask him to revise the essay from the perspective of a queer, homeless person, Miller shies away. He fears that the student would likely create a “seamless parody,” which would be a common response for students in the “hyperconformative” environment that the contact zone creates. Miller argues that if the student was asked to do that assignment, he would not learn, as heuristic composition pedagogy would hope (Miller, 1994, p. 396). Instead, the student’s “hatred would simply curl up and go underground for the duration of the course” (Miller, 1994, p. 396).

What is important to take from this example is the contact zone often silences student resistance and forces students to conform. This is discussed in-depth in the later chapters. For Miller, to think of this essay as a rare anomaly in the composition classroom would be a mistake. Rather, it highlights the lack of preparedness composition teachers have to respond to student resistance and cultural misinformed student papers. Miller concludes that creating a curriculum and pedagogy that focuses on “articulating, investigating, and questioning the affiliated cultural forces that underwrite the ways of thinking that find expression in this student’s essay -- a classroom, in short, that studies the forces that make such thoughts not only permissible but prevalent” (Miller, 1994, p. 397). Unfortunately, Miller does not provide any suggestions for preventing student writing like “Queers, Bums, and Magic” beyond telling students that “language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, or that degrades the working class will not be allowed in our discussions” (Miller, 1994, p. 407), which he admits falls back onto asymmetrical structures of power that composition classrooms tend to avoid. His best suggestion: pay close attention to what students are writing, saying, and how they are responding to readings.

In *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies*, Inoue pushes against reprimanding or punishing a student who writes using racist hate speech. He argues: "Such a discussion frames racism as the product of individual actions that deviate from the *normal, non-racist* actions of *most of us* or from the *sensitive* practice of suppressing our racism" (Inoue, 2015, p. 6). Various non-confrontational approaches to addressing racism or student resistance are discussed in Chapter 4.

Critiques

The critics of critical pedagogy are numerous, just as the critics of any so-called liberal ideology are. In his book *Save the World on your Own Time*, Stanley Fish (2008) critiques writing instructors who teach composition with a critical pedagogy lens, arguing that "more often than not anthologies of provocative readings take center stage and the actual teaching of writing is shunted to the sidelines" (Fish, 2008, p. 40). He believes that college instructors are experts in a subject matter first and foremost, and that writing instructors should stick to teaching writing -- not politics, activism, or social change. In an article by the same name, Fish (2003) "no university, and therefore no university official, should ever take a stand on any social, political, or moral issue" (Fish, 2003). His conclusion is "that it is immoral for academics or for academic institutions to proclaim moral views" (Fish, 2003), citing the purpose of a university as being a place solely for teaching and research and the need for academic neutrality and objectivism, which I believe is a myth.

Bizzell (2009) responded to Fish's book in an article titled "Composition Studies Saves the World!" In it, she notes that changing demographics of college students, including larger populations of students who struggle with English and academic argument, created a new purpose for composition studies. Rather than focusing on teaching the literary canon,

which Bizzell and other scholars of critical pedagogy see as overly white and academic, “students succeeded better if they saw their home communities represented in some way in the course materials -- a major reason for the development of the ‘provocative’ anthologies that Fish scorns” (Bizzell, 2009, p. 95). For Bizzell, the course material of composition courses did not needlessly become more diverse; rather, it evolved as the student populations evolved, and the university is still doing its job of serving its students and teaching them. The idea that the white academic canon is somehow ideologically neutral, as Fish seems to contend, is false. Bizzell argues that the role of composition classes should not be an “acculturation process” with the goal of “making all comers into little clones of the traditional, skeptical, agonistic, gender- and race-neutral academic” (Bizzell, 2009, p. 95). Bizzell also points out that Fish is not himself a composition teacher -- he’s a professor of humanities and law -- and that he is leaving out a large part of what composition teachers do when he refers to them as just composition teachers, as they also teach rhetoric, and rhetoric is best taught through these “provocative anthologies” (Bizzell, 2009, p. 96).

Further challenging the notion of academic neutrality, Bizzell reflects on her own presence in the classroom: “When my students encounter me as a writing teacher, they encounter all of me, my entire personality, informed by all my religious, political, and moral commitments” (Bizzell, 2009, p. 97). In her conclusion, however, Bizzell brings up an interesting fact -- one that has long been a critique of critical pedagogy: “I have never found students to be as easily manipulated as the opponents of so-called political correctness seem to think they are” (Bizzell, 2009, p. 98).

In his response to Bizzell's "Composition Saves the World!" Fish balks at Bizzell's point about students learning better when their home communities when they are represented in the coursework. Fish falls back on a current-traditional notion of rhetoric, diluting composition studies down to studying the structure of sentences. In response to Bizzell's account of student success, Fish writes: "Succeeded better at what? Not at understanding what sentences are and how they work," and he continues to describe the importance of understanding a (standard, white, academic) sentence structure (Fish, 2009, p. 100)

Similarly, Hairston (1992) also believes that "writing courses, especially required freshman courses, should not be *for* anything or *about* anything other than writing itself, and how one uses learn and think and communicate" (Hairston, 1992, p. 179). She argues against critical pedagogy and the strides it made in the early 1990s, calling it "a model that puts dogma before diversity, politics before craft, ideology before critical thinking, and the social goals the teacher before the educational needs of the student" (Hairston, 1992, p. 180). In their article "The Myth of the Colorblind Writing Classroom: White Instructors Confront White Privilege in Their Classrooms" in Inoue's *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies*, Pimental, Pimental, and Dean (2015) respond to Hairston's conviction that race has no place in the writing classroom. For one, the authors pointedly note that teaching from a "colorblind" perspective "rarely works to the advantage of people of color" (Pimental, Pimental, & Dean, 2015, p. 109). Similarly, they argue against a "diversity" approach to teaching writing, where readings written by people of color are supplemented into the usual curriculum due to the "othering effect" that this approach causes (p. 110). This approach still leaves white, standard language writers being taught as the norm, or

ideologically neutral, with the “others” being relegated to the margins of the class discussion -- often labelled as texts that are ideological or “diverse,” while texts by white authors are not. The authors argue that this approach is actually more harmful than the colorblind approach, because it falsely perpetuates the idea that the solution to racism is people of different races “just getting along,” as well as essentializing race into a biologically defined, objective category, when it is, in fact, much more complex than that. Rather, the authors say that the diversity approach “prohibits any critical analysis of race and eliminates any opportunity by the educator or the student to acknowledge white privilege, while at the same time strengthening white privilege” adding that “what needs to happen is a deconstruction of race, but perhaps most importantly the white race” (Pimental, Pimental, & Dean, 2015, p. 111). The best approach to incorporating these “diverse” texts into the classroom would be by providing a foundation of racial theory. The authors question instructors that bring hooks, Malcolm X, Sherman Alexie, and others into their classroom:

What could be the result if the compositionist had brought these writers into the classroom without first illustrating to students how race is socially constructed?

Including these works without deconstructing race reifies these writers’ place on the cultural fringe. (Pimental, Pimental, & Dean, 2015, p. 111)

No instructors took this approach to incorporating diverse texts into their classrooms, but the idea of incorporating readings as a way to engage in intersectional pedagogy is discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3: QUESTIONS, METHODS, AND DESIGN

Research Questions

- What does an intersectional pedagogy look like in the writing classroom?
- Why do instructors choose to teach using intersectional pedagogy?
- What does student resistance look like in and out of the classroom?
- What can we learn from how student resistance to this pedagogy emerges?
- How do instructors address student resistance?

Methods

Autoethnography works to value the personal experience, which is especially important in the classroom. When reflecting upon our own teaching, we are better able to implement new pedagogies into our work. In the case of these research questions, I knew that my own experience as an instructor who had experienced resistance from students to intersectional topics would be valuable. However, I also knew that my experiences were not unique and far from universal. I wanted to compare my own experiences as a teacher using intersectional pedagogies to other instructors who were also experiencing similar things. I knew that this method would be limited and would not allow me for any specific answers about what to do, but could provide a framework of what to expect for other instructors who are hesitant to teach topics like this due to the potential of student resistance. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) recommend mixing methods when doing autoethnographic research, such as “comparing and contrasting personal experience against existing research, interviewing cultural members, and/or examining relevant cultural artifacts” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Using this approach of autoethnography

and semi-structured interviews, I aimed to provide answers to my research questions and serve as an account for future instructors' reference.

For this project, I analyzed five separate instances of student resistance in my classroom, looking to identify why the resistance emerged and what we can learn about students' resistance from these experiences. Over the 2015-2016 academic year, I kept a teaching journal, documenting instances of resistance immediately after the class in which they happened, with thick description. I would revisit the journal entries after one day to revise, and then after one month to synthesize. After analyzing these journals, I selected five instances of student resistance that represent a variety of the types of resistance I witnessed in a mix of teaching settings (online, in-person, and hybrid).

Autoethnography is both a process and a product (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011), meaning that going through the process of autoethnography through reflection and self-observation will actually inform and change the results of the study. This can be seen as a good thing or a bad thing, but for the purposes of my study, I felt that it was important to continually reflect and improve my own pedagogy while discussing reflection and improvement with my interviewees.

In the 1980s, social researchers became troubled with the results that ethnographic studies were producing. They saw that "scholars began illustrating how the 'facts' and 'truths' scientists 'found' were inextricably tied to the vocabularies and paradigms the scientists used to represent them" and were, thus, intertwining their own subjectivity into a supposedly objective process (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Additionally, social researchers began to see an imperative "to resist colonialist, sterile research impulses of authoritatively entering a culture, exploiting cultural members, and then recklessly leaving

to write about the culture for monetary and/or professional gain, while disregarding relational ties to cultural members” (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Autoethnography is a response to this need.

Ellis, Adams, & Bochner (2011) see autoethnography as a hybrid of autobiography, writing about one’s life -- usually an epiphany -- and ethnography, the system of observation of groups of people pioneered by communications scholars. Combining these two writing/research processes results in autoethnography:

When researchers do autoethnography, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity. However, in addition to telling about experiences, autoethnographers often are required by social science publishing conventions to analyze these experiences. (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011)

What makes autoethnography different than autobiography is that the experience must be critically analyzed -- without analysis, people are just writing and telling their own stories, but there is no academic or social value in that.

Autoethnography does have its limits. There may have been instances of student resistance that I was unaware of due to my position in the classroom or what was occupying my time at the moment. It would be impossible for me as an instructor to know what each and every student was thinking during class and while composing their assignments. However, autoethnography provides me a position of analysis that would not be afforded through other research methods. I was able to reflect upon my own experiences and be engaged with the resistance in the moment. Objectivity is not ever fully

possible, and many critiques of autoethnography are rooted in the idea that autoethnography cannot be objective. Rather than strive for objectivity, I utilized the advantages of autoethnography to immerse myself in my pedagogy and reflect on my teaching. I was able to tailor my assignments and lesson plans to address the student resistance that I anticipated or in response to resistance to the previous class period. I would have gotten completely different data if I had chosen to observe an instructor for a semester as an outsider; being personally engaged while doing research on resistance allowed me to participate in a much more hands-on way, creating what I think is a richer data set, or triangulation of the data itself..

In order to further understand my data and experiences, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with instructors who self-identified themselves as feminist or social justice teachers of writing who have experienced student resistance. It was important for me, a queer white woman, to make sure that I had perspectives of other instructors who have experienced resistance from students because resistance can show up in many forms, especially when students perceive instructors as less of an authority due to their identity. This phenomenon has been documented for instructors who are women, instructors who are minorities, instructors whose first language is not English, young instructors, and queer instructors.

I originally conducted eight total interviews. The first set of interviewees were selected through a snowballing process on social media. I reached out to my networks of teachers of writing, which included several feminist rhetoric and composition Facebook groups, the WPA listerv, and the CCCC Queer Caucus. I asked if anybody had experience with student resistance in their classroom, and that I was especially interested in

instructors who identified as feminist or anti-racist who experienced student resistance. I was able to connect with several people and conduct interviews, but due to technology issues, I actually lost all but one of those first interviews. I discovered this when I sent in my data for transcribing through rev.com; the video files had all been corrupted.

After some frustration, I decided to start the interview process over. I could not re-interview the same instructors because they had already heard the questions and had several months to reflect on them, which may have caused them to change their original answers. I performed the same outreach process again and connected with eight different instructors from a variety of institutions and set up interview times with them. The content of the email can be found in Appendix A. In retrospect, I should have defined resistance more clearly in my call for interviews because each instructor I interviewed had variations on their definitions of resistance. However, I think that the variation of definitions provided for some rich and unexpected data, which I will discuss later.

I received ten new responses to my listserv call for interviews. Once I received a sufficient number of responses, I sent out an email to the interested interviewees, which can be viewed in Appendix B. Out of the ten interested instructors, I was able to coordinate schedules for interviews with six of them, bringing the total number of interviews I was able to complete and analyze to seven, which includes the one interview I was able to preserve from the first round.

I set up interviews with each of the instructors through Google Calendar, held the interviews through Google Hangouts, and recorded the interviews with the audio recording feature on my MacBook Pro and a backup recording with my iPhone Voice Memos app, because of the issues with the video files in the previous data set. Prior to the interview, I

sent each interviewee a consent form for them to fill out and sign. The consent form, which also indicates that the study had IRB approval, can be viewed in Appendix C.

The interview questions were sent out to the instructors ahead of time so that they could prepare, and a simple scope of the project was provided.

The questions I asked were:

1. What course(s) do you teach?
2. What is the subject matter discussed in these courses?
3. Have you ever experienced a student who was resistant to that subject matter or a specific assignment?
4. How did the student exhibit resistance?
5. What was your response to the students' resistance?
6. Did it work well? Why or why not?
7. What would you do if a similar situation happened in your classroom again?

In addition, I asked the instructors for notes on their identity, because intersectional identities affect the way that students perceive and act with instructors (Bauer, 2014), as well as institutional demographic information. I realize that other institutions have very different demographics than my institution on the border in the southwest, so I found it important and interesting to note the cultural demographics that may also shape student resistance at other institutions. Tables with the interviewees demographic information and interview notes can be found in Appendix D.

During the interviews, I took notes in a table form, highlighting important and relevant ideas that the instructors discussed, and leaving timing reminders for myself if

there was something particular I wanted to revisit. Each of the interviews lasted between twenty minutes and one hour. After each interview, I wrote a synthesis of how the interview went, and any reflecting thoughts I had about the interview. Once all of the interviews were conducted, I used the online transcription service, Rev.com, to transcribe the recordings.

After reading through the transcriptions of the interviews and editing any errors or sections that the transcription service deemed inaudible, I coded the interview data. Using the qualitative research coding program Dedoose, I went through the interviews again, taking note of when certain key concepts came up in the interviews. After a preliminary read-through of the data, the categories I decided to look for in each interview are the recurring themes of:

- Instructor Identity
- Assignment Types
 - Subcategory: Readings
- Campus Culture
- Defining Resistance
- Administrative Resistance
- Student Resistance
- Student Identity
 - Subcategory: Student Change
- Instructor Response
 - Subcategories: Regret in Response; Instructor Change
- Rationale

This list is far from comprehensive of the ways that resistance can occur in the writing classroom, but these codes were recurring themes that happened in most of the interviews that I conducted and also answered the research questions that I set out to answer. I will also not be able to cover all of the findings from these interviews in this dissertation. Rather, I will focus on the larger categories of instructor identity and how that informs instructor rationale, student resistance, and instructor response to the resistance. Future projects will go more in-depth on assignments and readings that bring up the strongest sense of resistance, ways that instructors manage administrative resistance, how campus culture informs or cultivates resistance, and whether or not intersectional pedagogies can incite student change.

CHAPTER 4: PEDAGOGY, PRACTICE, AND PRAXIS

“There are times when personal experience keeps us from reaching the mountain top and so we let it go because the weight of it is too heavy. And sometimes the mountain top is difficult to reach with all our resources, factual and confessional, so we are just there, collectively grasping, feeling the limitations of knowledge, longing together, yearning for a way to reach that highest point. Even this yearning is a way to know.”

--bell hooks (1994), *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*

Results

This chapter will discuss the results and findings from both the interviews and my own autoethnography notes. The questions that will guide this chapter are the research questions, which are:

- What does an intersectional pedagogy look like in the writing classroom?
- Why do instructors choose to teach using intersectional pedagogy?
- What does student resistance look like in and out of the classroom?
- What can we learn from how student resistance to this pedagogy emerges?
- How do instructors address student resistance?

Intersectional Pedagogy in Practice

In doing this research, I found that instructors all defined intersectional pedagogy differently. This was partly expected, because my call for interviews included a wide variety of topics and potential ways that instructors could choose to identify with my study:

My study looks at student resistance to intersectional topics (Examples: race, gender, sexuality, class, and other identities) in the writing classroom. Student resistance might include students who disagree with the subject matter vocally in class, students who disengage from the course, and/or students who use writing assignments as a place to express disagreement.

While I had a good idea of what intersectional pedagogy looked like in my own classroom, I was largely unfamiliar with how other instructors across the nation were engaging with intersectional pedagogy, and how they defined it themselves. This became one of my defining research questions: What does an intersectional pedagogy look like in the writing classroom? My interviewees gave me a variety of responses -- some just focused on an assignment or two that dealt with issues of race, gender, or even something as specific as the 2016 Presidential Election. Some respondents had a more intentional focus on intersectionality for the entire course. The interviewees self-selected themselves because they identified as instructors who taught intersectional topics. The ways that each of the instructors constructed their intersectional pedagogy was unique, and often had a strong personal rationale for the reasons behind using intersectional pedagogy. This will be discussed more in a later section.

Bringing Perspective through Readings

Many of the instructors that I interviewed used readings as a way to backup their approach to the classroom. One interviewee, Krista, thought that readings were an important way to make the course material not seem that it was overly biased to her point of view -- it was a way that she could bring in her perspective without “forcing” students to

think it was her own opinion. Krista's course was "organized around ideas of genre and literacy and discourse communities," in her words, or a critical literacy perspective. She continued to explain how she turned this general course theme into an intersectionality course:

The way in which I make that intersectional is I try to bring in a unit early on in the literacy, I try to bring in a lesson in the literacy unit early on where students are asked to consider the ways in which literacy is not neutral. The ways in which poor structures dictate what is accepted as standard. We talk about how people who seek a vernacular that's not accepted as the standard or are viewed as less than, we read a ... And we do that through reading, primarily through reading an essay by Amy Tan, "Mother Tongue," in which she talks about the many Englishes her mother speaks and the ways in which that affects people's perception of her mother. And also through bell hooks' excerpt from her book *Teaching to Transgress*, she has a chapter in that book on language. And those are the primary direct readings I bring that perspective in, with which I bring that perspective in. It's the kind of thing where I try to bring that awareness in our discussions throughout the semester.

"Mother Tongue" was a popular reading amongst my interviewees, with nearly half of the respondents mentioning using the text in their course. "Mother Tongue" is a short essay in which Tan reflects on the challenges and dynamics of being raised bilingual in the United States. She recounts the challenges of having a mother who spoke much less English than her, as well as the ways that she was forced to grow up faster due to her mother's language barrier. I also use "Mother Tongue" in my classroom, but did not realize how popular Tan's

text was amongst instructors using intersectional pedagogy. It is a great way to get students to talk about issues of race, gender, age, and multilingualism and I have found great success using it in the classroom at UTEP because many students, especially those raised in El Paso/Juarez by parents whose first language is Spanish, can relate to the experiences of Tan.

While other instructors took a more focused approach to intersectional readings in their classes, most of my respondents admitted to “sneaking in” readings about intersectional issues rather than focusing the course on it. This is noteworthy, especially when considering how many instructors felt that they did not have administrative support to teach intersectional pedagogy. Simon, an instructor who is a trans man teaching at a conservative college in the rural midwest, wanted to use his writing class as a place where students can engage with intersectionality without explicitly theming the course around intersectionality. He recounts:

One article that I taught . . . I was trying to unpack this concept of social construction so I taught Susan Wendell's article about disability as a social construction. And that elicited some really strong responses from students. I think that they were, I don't know if they were resistant was the right word but they were really struggling with this concept that disability wasn't just a medical condition, but actually part of how we produce social relation.

That's kind of an overview of some of the stuff that I teach. It's less focused around a particular, it focuses more like, this culture of [the Midwest] which I intentionally do because I think students can then dig in to whatever they're most interested in and also learn from each other about what other people are learning

about. That's helpful. And I usually have a student who has a project that really engages with different variations on identity. Through peer review and talking about each other's work they get some cross pollination alongside the readings.

But I don't explicitly theme it around race and racism, which one of my peers does.

Simon, while simultaneously telling me that his curriculum was a space for engagement with intersectionality, confessed that his course was implicitly advocating for colorblindness. The early critiques of Critical Pedagogy from feminist scholars of color were that CP did not engage explicitly enough with issues of race. Yet, more than thirty years later, an instructor like Simon who otherwise identifies along the margins of who is privileged in academia is still avoiding race.

One way that he is engaging with the original tenets Freire's critical pedagogy is how he presents a variety of topics for his students to engage with. He allows his students to "dig into" whatever interests them the most, allowing them to explore ideas around identity and place that they feel are the most important. In *When Students Have Power*, Ira Shor (1996) discusses his own approach to giving students agency in their educational exploration, just as Simon did. Shor argues that students should be viewed as independent citizens, not subordinates, in the classroom and that students that engage in choices about their education are better able to participate in democracy and are "trying on civic authority for size" (p. 33)

Simon saw the purpose of his course as a community space to talk about issues that they were all engaging with, but without explicitly discussing intersectionality, which is more in line with critical pedagogy than it is with intersectional pedagogy. Simon's

geopolitical space that he occupied in the rural Midwest and his positionality as a trans man both shape his approach to intersectional pedagogy. In the next section on instructor identity, I discuss more of Simon's rationale, including how his identity as a trans man in the midwest helped shape his pedagogy.

Katy, a community college English instructor at a rural Chicago suburb campus at a predominantly white institution (PWI), took a more explicit approach to intersectional pedagogy. She focuses her course on privilege and diversity, with her rationale being that the students may not realize that more people around them are not the same as them -- similar to Pratt's notion of the Contact Zone.

I reviewed her syllabus as a way to further examine her pedagogy and was surprised to find that her syllabus was a template from her department, with a key exception. Her syllabus begins with a note about respect, which appears before the catalog description and remainder of the template syllabus:

Respect: The most basic ground rule for our classroom is respect. As we hope to promote a community of diversity, I require that we (myself included) regard each other with acceptance, open-mindedness, civility, and a desire to learn from each other. Racist, sexist, classist, ageist, ableist, homophobic, or any other discriminatory language will not be tolerated. If you feel that you and/or your beliefs are not being respected by me or another student, please come speak to me about it.

I was unable to ask her why she used a template syllabus for her course, but included an explicit statement standing against racism, sexism, and other discriminatory language. Often, instructors are required to use the department's template syllabus -- especially if the instructor is an adjunct or a graduate student -- and I found this to be true in many of the

syllabi that I reviewed (notes on each of the syllabi can be viewed in Appendix D).

However, Katy's was the only one that had an explicit statement on anti-discrimination that was not the university's own statement. While I was unable to ask Katy her reasoning for this statement, I found it to be a bold nudge toward intersectionality in her class. In her interview, Katy discussed her reasoning for being more explicit in her approach to intersectional pedagogy and her results:

This is a very rural campus. So a lot of these kids have grown up in farm towns where they might not have ever met a person of color before they come to college. So it's a little less about the personal reflection of privilege and more about meeting the new and different people. So students did write short reflection pieces about that privilege. Maybe they were blowing smoke because they had to write the paper, but on the whole, I was pleased with how little resistance I seem to get. Nobody really responded with, this was stupid, or it's not my fault I'm rich. For the most part it was a little more understood why we were doing that, and they were excited to meet other people.

While there are many ways that intersectional pedagogy can look in the classroom, what each of the interviewees had in common was a sense of trying to expose students to ideas that they may not have encountered prior to a university writing course. Each of the instructors cited a sort of responsibility that they felt for providing alternative viewpoints to their students. Although the approach varied from providing some readings and attempting to appear unbiased through trying to theme an entire course around

intersectional issues, the common goal here seemed to be the desire to give students new perspectives.

Hesitations and “I would worry I would get in trouble”

What happens when instructors have a desire to try teaching with intersectional pedagogy but have fear? This was a common anxiety that my interviewees conveyed. Many interviewees had experienced institutional or departmental pushback, or even just fear of how students would react to talking about complex and sensitive issues like race in the writing classroom. Katy, the instructor at a rural predominantly white institution (PWI), reflected on her experience teaching a course on privilege after some student resistance had emerged. A student had reported her curriculum to her department, stating that it was biased, and Katy was asked to justify why it was necessary to theme her course around privilege when it was a writing class. In this course in particular, she had not introduced the term “privilege” until the latter half of the semester. In the interview, Katy had expressed some remorse about waiting too long to introduce the term. I asked her what she would do or change in the future, given that she had experienced resistance from both a student and her administration due to this course.:

Honestly, that's a very tricky question. Primarily because I think I would worry I would get in trouble. I worked hard to not make it, here I'm teaching privilege, especially because I was teaching a college writing course. I might [introduce privilege], during the middle of the semester when we're first talking about rhetorical analysis, I suppose I could bring that reading in as an example of rhetorical analysis, and do an in class activity, or take home reading and writing assignment.

[. . .] But I felt like there were enough students that if I said, today we're going to talk about privilege and what it means to have privilege, I would think for sure I would have gotten push back from students on, this isn't writing, this is an English [class]... While teaching at that college, was talking about, we spent some time doing rhetorical analysis of advertisements, and a student came to me and said, "Why are we doing this? This isn't English, this isn't what I need to learn to get my AS." And that was just advertisements, talking about, we were analyzing gender in advertisements, and I got push back on that too.

Katy did have ideas about how she would modify the course in the future, when I pushed her to be more specific in her reflection. She did not want to teach a course specifically on privilege again, but still wanted to touch on the same issues. She continued:

I would very much have to couch it somehow, in writing and rhetoric, to feel like I can bring that in. I [would] sneak it in when possible. We were talking about an assignment I did called the cultural artifact analysis [. . .] Where we talk about what is it about American culture that makes the thing the way it is. And so I would bring two different deodorant sticks and I would go to the drugstore and purposely get the most feminized deodorant stick I could and the most masculinized deodorant stick I could, and when I would ask the students, "Why do you think they are this way?" We would come up with theses of like, society makes women feel like they need to be dainty. I would slide a line in about how, and this men's deodorant stick is saying that all men need to be athletic. Because patriarchy hurts the men too. But I [would] play that as a joke and not like, here's a lesson about patriarchy.

I worked hard to not make it [explicitly about privilege], here I'm teaching privilege, especially because I was teaching a college writing course [. . .] But I think as long as I didn't make it, here today, we're going to talk about privilege, but today we're going to talk about rhetorical analysis and we're going to use this article, I think then that would be something I would consider.

Katy was not the only instructor that had expressed hesitations about teaching intersectional pedagogy again after encountering resistance to the approach. In fact, each person that I interviewed for this project had some regrets upon reflection and would change some aspect of the course. However, the type of resistance that was hardest for the interviewees to deal with was resistance from administration. When instructors do not feel that their administrators stand behind their curriculum or approach, it can be more difficult to commit to intersectional pedagogy completely in the classroom.

One interviewee, Lucy, who was an adjunct at a large flagship state institution in the Midwest, taught a course called Capitalism and Democracy in the English department. She recounted a type of resistance that none of the other interviewees discussed but has become increasingly relevant in my own experiences at my new institution -- a sort of silent resistance where administrators did not offer any support, but also did not try to stop her from teaching the course that she intended. This can be seen as an endorsement of institutional whitewashing of curriculum. In Lucy's opinion, her department saw her teaching a course with intersectional pedagogy as extra work, and work that really didn't need to be done:

At the [university] no one seemed to care what I was teaching, and so I taught this course called Capitalism and Democracy, and it was just about the way that capitalism crushes and strangles democracy, and you couldn't have an alternate point of view, I mean, it was like a really propagandistic class. And only one administrator critiqued me for it, and he did not have any power. And so I got away with murder as a grad student, but as an adjunct I toed the line [. . .] Because I knew that my contract wouldn't be renewed if student evaluations weren't good.

This was an interesting statement because Lucy is revealing a lot about her perception of systems of power within her institution, as well as the material conditions of her job.

Instructors who practice intersectional pedagogy, or what many outside of the academy might blatantly call “liberal bias,” put themselves at considerable risk when they are temporary faculty. The attack on so-called liberal professors is currently a coordinated right-wing effort that has been funded by the conservative think tank Turning Point USA. Their website, ProfessorWatchlist.org, claims to be a directory of liberal instructors with the goal “to expose and document college professors who discriminate against conservative students and advance leftist propaganda in the classroom” (Turning Point, 2018). In fact, Lucy is included on this website, under her real name.

Lists like Turning Point’s Professor Watchlist have the goal of getting instructors in trouble -- usually administratively -- for talking about “liberal” causes, which are often intersectional issues. When asked about whether her department was supportive of her pedagogy, Lucy’s answer was mixed. It is important to note that Lucy has tenure and has not been disciplined for her teaching.

But that's like two percent of it is supportive. I think that [administrators] are kind of like, "What is Lucy doing?" You know, like, shrug. Like, "She's always causing trouble, and is courting too much hardship," you know, like, "Why is she making it so hard on herself?" So now that I think of it, I wouldn't say that they're supportive, they're kind of surprised, I think, that somebody would take this on.

This response to teaching intersectional pedagogy is one that I often get from my colleagues -- why teach something that takes so much extra work, especially when the students resist? Why teach something if it goes against what your administration wants you to be teaching in your course? For Lucy, the goals of her pedagogy and her eventual security in her job made the risk and controversy worth the effort. But, for many instructors, the fear of getting listed on a right-wing website or being disciplined by administration for a "biased" curriculum is enough to scare them away from teaching controversial topics.

This sentiment is what brought me to my next research question: why do instructors choose to teach intersectional pedagogies?

Instructor Identity and Other Reasons Instructors Choose Intersectional Pedagogy

The research for this dissertation was largely started because of my identity. As a woman, a white person, a lesbian, and a borderlands transplant, my lived experience informs every aspect of my pedagogy in the classroom. Perhaps unsurprisingly, my interviews with other instructors indicated similar experiences. To separate the identity of an instructor from their pedagogy would be impossible; instructors who live intersectional lives will often be intersectional teachers. The next sections will discuss how the identities

of myself and several interviewees informed our pedagogies, including why we chose to approach the writing classroom with an intersectional lens.

Personal Anecdote on my Identity as an Instructor

Personally, I feel that as a femme lesbian (as opposed to “butch” or other gender performance descriptors for queer women), I have a greater responsibility to represent myself on campus as a member of the queer community. In “Bi, Butch, and Bar Dyke” by Gibson, Marinara, and Meem (2003), the authors note that femme lesbians face a double-edged sword when it comes to university politics. First, they are “invisible” on campus, which means that many people are unable to “read” their sexualities from a purely outward perspective. Because of this, queerness is erased institutionally. However, the advantage that many femme lesbians have is “greater access to jobs and relative immunity from harassment (at least, from harassment based on their lesbianism)” (Gibson, Marinara, & Meem, 2003, p. 479).

Because of this, I choose to follow Elliott’s tactics for coming out in the classroom to my students; rather than coming out while passing out the syllabus or during a planned lesson, I think it is important to come out “spontaneously at the ‘golden moment’” (Elliott, 2003, p. 422). It seems more natural and genuine to represent myself in a “real” way to my students. This also helps create that safe space for other queer students that the scholarship urges for.

Fall 2014 was the first semester that I came out to my students as queer. It happened shortly after reading Elliott, and I was defining the terms of the LGBTQ spectrum and gender identity for my students after reading a current event article on Facebook’s new gender identity options. In the middle of my lecture, one of my students raised his

hand and asked curiously, “Which one do you identify as?” It was easier than I expected; I simply answered “cis-female and queer” and the class knowingly nodded. There was no more discussion after that. The students did not question my identity or speculate behind my back and I no longer felt I was holding a dirty secret. It was liberating, in a way, to have my first class of students know who I am and understand my perspective as an educator, scholar, and human being in the classroom.

Prior to coming out in 2014, my personal experiences as a woman also informed my pedagogy and interest in intersectionality in the classroom. My awareness of being constantly objectified in public spaces, not being taken seriously as an instructor due to my gender, and knowing that my expertise may always be questioned or seen as subpar caused me to become passionate about gender rights early in my teaching career. When I needed to write my own syllabus for the first time and choose a theme for the course, I chose gender studies even long before I had started work in intersectional pedagogy because of my prior interests in women’s rights. Even subconsciously, before I embarked on this project, my identity was informing my pedagogy.

The final aspect of my identity that has informed the rationale for my pedagogy is my age. As a young instructor, I often have students in my classes who are older than me or the same age as me. My first year of teaching first-year composition, I was twenty-one years old, the same age as many undergraduate college students. I knew that one of my biggest challenges as an instructor would be for my students to take me seriously as an instructor and not look at me like a peer in their classroom (my philosophy on this has since shifted). Instead of trying to seem more authoritative in the classroom, as many of my peers suggested as a way to combat ageist attitudes from students, I worked in ways to talk

about age and identity in the classroom so that that barrier could be broken down in the classroom. Students would see that age is still a very real factor in our lives, but they could also see the way that expectations surrounding age can be oppressive and cause them to hold preconceived notions about people they encounter in their lives. Again, before I had knowledge of intersectional pedagogy, my intersectional life was informing my approach to the writing classroom.

Connecting with Students Culturally

Each of the instructors that I interviewed for this project had different reasons for approaching their classroom with intersectional pedagogy. Aspects of the interviewees' identities became important to them in the classroom -- identity categories such as gender, race, class, urban/rural, religion, familial educational background, immigration status, and much more came up during the interviews. One instructor, Simon, discussed how his identity as somebody from a rural town helped him connect with his students and address resistance from his colleagues:

I am a white, gay trans guy, from a middle class background, I grew up in rural Tennessee, so that's really affected my experience being a teacher. I don't normally talk a ton about that, it's not a huge part ... It is a big part of my identity but it's not one that I often...I do talk about that in terms of teaching, because it affects how I teach a lot because I, in some ways I often have a more similar experience with a lot of my students. They're white rural students and I get them more than a lot of people do. [. . .] sometimes people who are teaching [English] 100 will be like, "I don't let my students write about football or basketball or their sport they played in high school because they just think it's so boring." And to me, I don't find it

interesting but I also understand, from a rural perspective how important those things are for the social fabric of your hometown. I can't imagine not writing a story about my hometown without writing about Friday night football. Those are things that play a role in my teaching, I'm able to connect with students about these kinds of cultural things.

Another instructor at a PWI in the midwest, Krista, also felt that her identity came into play when determining how she wanted intersectional pedagogy to look in her classroom. She noted that her religion, gender, sexuality, and race all influenced her classroom approaches. I asked her about how her identity connected to her pedagogy, and she said:

I identify as Catholic, I identify as a woman, I identify and present pretty straight. I identify as mixed race, I am both white and Asian heritage. I feel more white and pass very much as white with a tinge of ethnicity if that kind of makes sense. I'm able to bring in discussions about my mother's family being immigrants from the Philippines when we have those discussions about Amy Tan. I was raised away from, across the country from most of my Asian family. My mom tried very hard to assimilate when she moved here. She didn't want to have an accent, she didn't want to be a weird person who had different customs, and she wanted to be American when she moved here and fit in. So my upbringing and my cultural identity reflect that.

This particular aspect of intersectional pedagogy -- the fact that an instructor's identity has some sort of connection to why the instructor chose to teach a specific reading, assignment, or theme -- was intriguing to me because of my own personal connection to my pedagogy. However, there was one outlier in my research -- an instructor named Dillon at a medium-sized institution in rural East Texas. While Dillon is a 40-something year old, straight, white, cis man (his own description), his students were largely Hispanic or African American. The university that Dillon taught at is a minority-serving institution, and Dillon notes that any given composition course he taught was made up of about one-third black students. I was unable to confirm this estimate with his institution's demographics because the institution says that about 18% of the student population is black but that black students have a significantly lower graduation rate, and thus would probably make up a higher percentage of students in first-year courses.

Dillon's rationale for teaching an intersectional pedagogy differed because he actually had not connected his own identity to his pedagogy at all. In fact, when I asked him about his identity, he responded, "I never really think about it in that sense. That's a tough question." Instead, his rationale for teaching intersectional pedagogy was to connect with his students. I see this as a product of whiteness in academia: whiteness is invisible until it is explicitly called out. He taught a course focused on the Black Lives Matter movement because he thought that the students would be interested in that subject matter -- he did not consider his own positionality on the issue of race when designing his course. Dillon's interview itself was actually an outlier in all the senses, and it was largely because of his identity as the only cis white male I interviewed. He defined resistance differently as well. He had responded to my call for interviews because he wanted to talk about his

experiences with intersectional pedagogy, but could only recall one time when there was student resistance -- and it was in relation to his identity:

I actually had a student this semester tell me ... she said ... Because I'm a little bit stern when I first start class. I kind of want to set down the rules and make sure that there's no ... these are the rules. Stick with them. As an African American female, she said, "I wasn't sure I was going to stick with you because you intimidated me." I said, "I'm sorry I did that." She goes, "I'm not used to ... " She said, "What it felt like, it felt at the time like it was just going to be another white guy teaching the class. It was going to be what I've already had and nothing to it." [. . .]She goes, "But then you started talking about things that are important to me, and that made me put my guard down and made me listen to what you had to say, as opposed to looking at you in a negative light." Does that make sense?

In Dillon's case, the resistance happened *prior* to getting into the course's content, and was ameliorated due to its content. This was an anomaly in my data and I would like to explore this further. Did Dillon's identity as a white man silence some student resistance, make him unable to see it, or did it truly only exist until he had proven himself as an ally? This also leads into my next research question -- what does student resistance look like?

How Student Resistance Looks

The bulk of each interview consisted of instructors recounting how their students resisted and why they think the resistance emerged. This section will discuss the various ways that student resistance manifested, including ways that I observed in a class that I was conducting research in as well as in my own classroom. In all of my interviews and

observations, the resistance never occurred directly face-to-face with an instructor, and this was fascinating to me because when I think of resistance, I think of interpersonal conflict. That is not to say that students never resist face-to-face, but it may be less common than we think it is. The instances of resistance that I collected for this dissertation all took place in the form of writing (reflections, in the essays, email -- except for one in-person conflict between two students) or through an administrative complaint. I also observed some instances of resistance where students simply disengaged from the class, but did not appear to otherwise have conflict with the professor. This is important for instructors who are considering intersectional pedagogy to note -- resistance takes many forms, and many may be unexpected or invisible to us as instructors. For example, I did not interview any students for this dissertation, so I am unable to know what students in the courses were thinking. It would be unfair to assume that a student who performed well in the class and did not have any outbursts was completely on board with intersectional pedagogy in the classroom. For the purposes of this project, I am focusing on visible forms of resistance, which each instructor defined through their examples in their interview. This section will discuss a few such examples of how student resistance emerged.

Resistance and Power in the Age of Trump

It would be foolish to assume that the topic of student resistance would not include at least some mention of Trump and the 2016 election. These interviews were conducted in the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, so the election was fresh on many instructors' and students' minds. Trump came up in many of the courses, whether implicitly or explicitly, and instructors had to learn to navigate a world in which students felt compelled to exhibit pro-Trump -- or even white supremacist -- views.

One interviewee, Jess, who describes herself as hard-of-hearing and deaf interchangeably, is an adjunct at a community college in South Carolina. While her hearing impairment did not seem like it would play into this specific example, she did feel that it was important to state that her deafness does determine the way that she interacts with students who resist because it can often be part of a misunderstanding or mishearing or a conversation that is too complex to engage with in a large classroom without direct eye contact. However, her deafness does come into play as a sort of tokenization and resistance from the administrative response. In this particular example of student resistance, Jess was talking about voting in her state of South Carolina, which had just had a contentious special election after the 2016 Presidential election. Her class was discussing the implications of the former South Carolina governor becoming UN representative when the student resistance emerged:

It ended up ... I don't know ... Apparently I made a comment that really came out with me being anti-Trump, and one of the students emailed my department chair, saying that they felt really uncomfortable with the content of the class, and felt like they were gonna get graded harshly based on their own political views. My department chair had to email me and just be like, "Hey. Don't talk about politics in class." I'm like, "Huh? Okay. I've been in college since 2002. If you can't talk about politics in a college classroom, what's going on?"

In this example, Jess also encountered administrative resistance, which made this situation all the more complex. Rather than a comment about Trump being considered a part of the academic freedom that she had as an instructor or just a political element that could be

discussed in class, Jess was shut down. It is also important to note that she was an adjunct at this institution, which gives her little power and means her job can be at risk on a semester-to-semester basis. She reflected on how that made her feel and how her discussion with her department head went:

That really just threw me for a loop. She's a new department chair this year, but she's been in the department since 1991, and I'm figuring out that she is very, very, very old school. I'm hard of hearing, and one of the ways I talk to my students at the beginning of the semester, is I talk to them about the fact that I'm hard of hearing, how did I become hard of hearing? I had radiation treatments on my head because I had a brain tumor when I was a freshman in high school, so the nerve died, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Let's see ... I've had hearing aids now for three years, so I've found in three years of teaching, having that conversation with them the first day of class helps get them to understand that you need to get my attention, blah, blah, blah.

My department chair's solution for that is, "Talk to them about being professional." I'm like, "What?" This was ... that conversation was about not talking about politics in class. I was like, "Okay."

The derailing of a conversation that is about politics or other intersectional issues when a person is resistant is a common response to the discomfort that emerges when people are confronted with ideas that they are unsure how to respond to. Disability scholar Stephanie Kerschbaum (2014) warns against "treating difference as a stable thing or property that can be identified and fixed in place" (p. 6). Disability, she argues, is not fixed,

nor should we try to make it that way. Rather, we should “mark” difference, where “speakers and audiences alike display and respond to markers of difference, those rhetorical cues that signal the presence of difference between two or more participants” (p. 7). By marking difference, it calls attention to the difference and to the accommodation of that difference. When Jess tells her students that she cannot hear and that they should not leave voicemails on her phone, but rather email her, she is engaging in marking her difference. However, when her department head tells Jess to “act professional,” she is engaging in the oppressive and ableist practice of fixing -- which does nothing to address the problem.

I discussed examples of administrative resistance in my own department in my introduction, but Jess’s example is particularly interesting. When she was called in to discuss her supposedly political classroom content, the discussion became about her disability and her (in)ability to communicate with her students in her classroom. The discussion with her department head was not about her politics, or about bringing up Trump and the UN representative, but rather about her need to be “professional” with her students, and her need to be more clear about her disability.

In her book *The Power Manual*, Cyndi Suarez (2018) outlines seven patterns of domination, or ways that supremacist power is enacted in systems. They include:

Tolerance: Small doses of difference are allowed

Objectification: Removes history from the interaction

Assimilation: Incapable of seeing difference

Authority: Rationality is hidden

Objectivity: Ignores power-laden realities

Accumulation: Quantity stands in for quality

Certainty: Asserting one's reality as if there is no other (p. 22)

When Jess told me about her experience with her department head, I had not yet read *The Power Manual*, but as part of an anti-racism training that the department head at my current institution required for faculty in response to the student action outlined in my introduction, we read Suarez' book. Immediately, I thought about Jess and how her department head used her disability absurdly against her. Her department head was in a position of power over her, as an adjunct, and was supposed to be responding to a student complaint filed against her. However, her department head wielded her power and used tolerance, objectification, and assimilation to minimize the situation at hand (the complaint against Jess) and make the situation about Jess' supposed lack of professionalism in needing accommodations for her hearing.

The significance of the patterns of domination that Suarez outlines is that they can be found in any institution or organization that is not actively striving for equity and power sharing. The classroom, the department, the university, and the system(s) of higher education all rely on these patterns of domination to hold the same systems up in place. Suarez argues that these patterns emerge in times of resistance, which she defines as an "encounter with difference" (p. 20).

What I found the most striking was that in my current department we were asked by an outside anti-racism training facilitator, who we hired in response to the graduate students' requests, to read this book for professional development, in response to student critiques that our department had a racism problem, yet the department itself was also

engaging in patterns of domination on varying levels. When students at my institution called out racism in the department, they were told that the problems that they noted were isolated (objectification), that we need to hold students, regardless of background, to the same standard (assimilation), that we as a faculty did not have the power to make any change in our department (objectivity), that many students of color made it through the program without problems in the past (both accumulation and objectification), among other things. I bring this up because I find the fact that these patterns of domination in institutions are a direct response to resistance, whether that resistance comes because a student disagrees with an instructor's pedagogy or administration wishes to discipline a faculty member for teaching that pedagogy. What shifts is the person who is in power and the consequences for the person in the subordinate position. When some students may fear that their grades will be affected, as Jess' student did, the instructor is in the position of power. But, when that student goes to administration to complain about the instructor, the instructor is then in the subordinate position. This creates an ecology of power, where multiple layers of power can exist with varying consequences.

Who Should be Talking about These Issues?

Another common theme that became apparent in the interviews was students of color who resisted the course material because they felt that the instructors were not qualified to talk about these topics. This is also similar to the example I recount from my own department in my introduction section. The graduate students at my institution felt that an all-white faculty could not engage critically in anti-racism, especially since they were tasked with hiring a new literature faculty member and claimed that the best-qualified candidates were all white. How can a department claim to do anti-racist work but

only see white folks as qualified for the jobs? Comparably, each of the white instructors I spoke to had indicated that they had doubts that they were “supposed” to be talking about race in the classroom. However, instructors of color also experienced similar pushback from students.

One interviewee, Haylee, is an Asian American instructor who was teaching as a graduate instructor at a large, diverse, urban university in Los Angeles. Haylee was teaching a course that focused on race in both literature and rhetoric. In her interview, she discussed how the resistance to the racial subject matter emerged in the course from an African American student:

So I had a student in my very last semester teaching at [that university] that ... I think she had a lot of issues that were separate from the topics that we were talking about in class, but she kind of ... I mean she basically wrote in one of her reflections that she didn't ... So she was an African American woman and she didn't feel like I should be talking about this issues, that I didn't have a right to be talking to her about these issues. Which I think because that's something that I struggle with as a teacher, especially ... I am a woman of color, but I'm a woman of color that can pass as white, and so ... Yeah, and there's this sort of a whole overlay also of Asian American privilege and all of that so ... Yeah, because that was sort of a not very deeply buried insecurity of mine ... Yeah, that was kind of hard for me to ... I couldn't necessarily just be like, "Oh, well she has issues about other things in the class. I'm just gonna write off whatever she's saying." Yeah, so there was a little bit of soul-searching that happened with that.

Haylee touches on a lot of important dynamics at play in her classroom. As a white-passing Asian American woman, she was already self conscious of her position as a woman of color in academia. The tropes of the Asian model-minority, the minority that somehow belonged in college more than other communities of color, weighed heavily on Haylee. Something that is important to note as well is that this student's resistance happened in writing, in the form of a reflection. She talks about how she could have easily ignored the reflection -- some instructors assign credit/no credit reflections and only skim them. But Haylee took what her student said to heart, allowing her student to have some agency in the class democratic process and have a voice, as Shor (1996) advocates for. In Haylee's case, the student resistance was not detrimental to any productivity that the course had, but did provide the instructor with more to consider going forward.

The Complications of Silence and Resistance in Online Teaching

When teaching an in-person course, resistance can be more apparent because instructors can visually see if students are disengaging, but teaching online creates its own set of dynamics. The anonymity of online interaction in forums can allow people to feel safer in expressing radical or offensive viewpoints. This presents its own challenges for online teachers trying to use intersectional pedagogy because students have a screen rather than an instructor in front of them.

Krista, the instructor in the previous section who taught at a PWI in the Midwest had a lot of experience teaching online and experiencing resistance from students. She was the only interviewee with extensive online teaching experience, so unfortunately, her data stands alone, but it still brings up some interesting scenarios to consider when examining how students resist. It is worth noting that this situation could have easily happened in a

face-to-face class as well; email exchanges are not exclusive to online courses. She recounted an exchange through email where a student disagreed with her reading assignment choices:

I had another student email me this semester [. . .] very aggressively. He is a history student, and he emailed me a really thoughtful email that said, "As a history student I fully understand the importance of talking about colonization and talking about power dynamics, and power structures, and this and that. I don't feel comfortable responding to this reading [by bell hooks]. Can I have permission to not respond?"

I emailed him back and I said "I respect, I don't know what's going on, but I respect that you came to me to talk about it. So, sure, maybe just respond to Amy Tan['s "Mother Tongue"], since you're expressing discomfort with the bell hooks reading specifically." I said, "But also would really help me is to know why you're so uncomfortable. Because maybe other students are having the same problem, can you respond?" And he never did.

Unfortunately, because of the distance that online instruction puts me at with my students, in a way. I feel I get to know them pretty well as individuals because I schedule more conferences with them, about what we're doing online, because I feel like I have less opportunity to give feedback in the ways I usually do, like through in class discussion. I feel like I get to know them well on an individual level, but when it comes to stuff like this, I'm just at such a distance that student resistance just blossoms in that distance between us.

The distance that online teaching puts between instructors and students presents many problems, as well as many benefits -- students are often writing much more in online classes due to the nature of the course, even if that writing takes the form of an angrily-worded email. What is interesting about Krista's exchange is that she was kind in offering the student an alternative assignment and did ask him what about the other reading made him uncomfortable. He did complete the alternative assignment, but did not respond to Krista's question about what he was uncomfortable with. She expressed frustration at this issue, with a particularly eloquent statement at the end of that excerpt, which bear repeating: "I'm just at such a distance that student resistance just blossoms in that distance between us."

Because I had not had any online student resistance at that point in my teaching career, and neither had any of my other interviewees, I asked Krista to elaborate on her experiences with online teaching and resistance from students. She discussed the contrast between her face-to-face and online courses:

I've been really interested in why it's so much more pronounced online. I wonder if it's something to do with the fact that we are all not bodies sitting in a classroom talking about it. Maybe that makes it more difficult. [. . .] And the resistance looks different online than it does in person. In person, what happens is students are asked in this class to respond to readings through a short and formal low stakes piece of writing. Usually I'll post questions for students to respond directly to to help them think through major ideas in the readings because a lot of the readings in

this course are fairly advanced and fairly challenging. It's a writing about writing approach. They're not necessarily the primary audience.

[. . .] Part of what I wonder erases that resistance in-person might be that, I don't know if they're changing their minds, or they just suddenly feel more shy about sharing that resistance in person, but it's interesting that usually, I try to leave space for resistance. I try to ask at some point, who's having trouble with these ideas, or what other perspective are there, and students usually don't speak up. So resistance in person kind of ends up simmering beneath the surface, when we're having a discussion together in person.

Online though, it looks really different [. . .] What's happened is I've taught ... The online course, I have tried to replicate what I do in-person and just translate that online because I had to for myself for time reasons. And that same unit, same exact unit, same exact questions, I get students emailing me individually telling me how unhappy they are with the reading.

What Krista is discussing here is not a unique phenomenon. Online pedagogy is inherently different than face-to-face pedagogy because the ways that the student is learning is different. Assigning a reading within the context of a class discussion can come off very differently to a student who has only interacted online with the materials and does not have the advantage of the classroom context, which often needs to be more intentionally set up through various learning methods.

Krista continued recounting her experiences with online student resistance:

Last fall I had a student email me really aggressively too, he'd been contacting me aggressively just in the past in general. I sensed that this was partly wrapped up with his resistance to me as an instructor. I don't know if it's worth noting that he is a male student and I am a female instructor. He emailed me a five paragraph e-mail asking me why I could possibly assign this, telling me bell hooks is a reverse racist. He excerpted a paragraph of the reading and said, "I'm going to replace the word black with the word white ... Or the word white with the word black, and you'll see how she's a reverse racist." As if I really need to be enlightened by this student...

Something interesting to note here is that many of my interviewees, Krista included, discounted certain aspects of their identities when recounting these experiences. Notice how Krista says, "I don't know if it's worth noting that he is a male student and I am a female instructor." The identity here *is* important, just as context is important for online students who are reading a text for the first time. It is impossible to ignore the significance of a female instructor's experience with male students, who may not view their instructor's authority, expertise, or credibility in the same way they might view a male instructors. This important phenomenon was discussed in Bauer (2014) and Mulhere (2014). This student's attempt to explain how bell hooks -- and by extension, the instructor herself -- is racist is a tacit example of mansplaining, where a less-experienced or less-knowledgeable man tries to explain a woman's area of expertise to her, often condescendingly. This is also a behavior that got named online due to men explaining things to women in online forums, such as

Reddit and Twitter. The fact that this behavior emerged in Krista's online class is a parallel worth noting.

Observation of Resistance: The Aggressive Egg

While I have always identified as a feminist instructor, I did not question student resistance until conducting observations of another first year writing course taught by a feminist instructor. It was in this experience that I realized that student resistance can affect students' perceptions of the course as well as their classmates' experiences.

In Fall 2014, I observed a first-year composition course as part of a graduate seminar in ethnographic research. I attended the class approximately once per week for seven sessions during the semester, gathered notes from interactions in the classroom, read student sample work, and conducted interviews with students who were interested. This was early on in my research and I did not know that I would be specifically studying feminism, gender, identity, or intersectionality. This study was conducted in one semester in a first-year composition class of twenty-five first year students; a total of approximately 2,000 students are required to take this course each semester at the university. However, the demographic makeup for this particular section were atypical for the university; the class had a white student majority, while the university is traditionally a Hispanic-serving institution with 85% of students identifying as Hispanic or Latinx. Additionally, eight out of twenty-five students in this class were athletes on the university football team. As a Division 1 school, football is both a regional and university pastime. The instructor, Kari Ross, who identifies as a feminist, is a white female in her mid twenties who has taught this course for approximately three years.

In my interviews of students from the course, I asked students what their least favorite assignment of the semester was. Several students indicated that reading “The Aggressive Egg” by David H. Freedman (1992) was their least favorite reading assignment. As a feminist, I was surprised to hear this, especially from one of the highest-scoring students in the class, Andy. The text has always been a favorite of mine, especially as a way to illustrate patriarchal bias for students. Andy, a white male and biological sciences major, was very adamant that “The Aggressive Egg” is a perfect example of what he calls “crazy feminism.”

“The Aggressive Egg” is an article from *Discover Magazine* that challenges the language we use to discuss reproduction. It argues that the language that is used to describe eggs and sperm is very male-favored, and may even be describing reproduction wrong all together. For example, the article notes that some scientists in a study at the University of Wisconsin argued they were using neutral language without metaphors in their paper about reproduction, but the article demonstrated otherwise: “the sperm’s filament shoots out and harpoons the egg” was used, rather than saying that the egg has the ability to clasp and intertwine the sperm (Freeman, 1992). Criticisms of junk science have been made of the article since its publication, but it is a clear example of feminist strong objectivity or standpoint theory, as developed by Sandra Harding (1991). Standpoint theory acknowledges that nothing can be truly objective, and people's biases color their perception of seemingly straightforward events. A standpoint theorist would argue that science is riddled with patriarchal biases.

When I asked Andy more about “The Aggressive Egg,” he was candid and well spoken, although resistant, on his opinions of feminism. Of the article said, “Because it's

basically used and... It's basically propaganda and I do not like saying this...but it's like propaganda for the wrong kind of feminism. Like, there's good feminism, but it's like that stereotypical bad one that everyone just is ashamed of feminism..." Andy's attitudes toward feminism were very opinionated and based in new media representations of the negativity of feminism. He provided an example in recent news of "crazy" feminists that he believed destroyed the conversation about a recent probe landing on a comet. While this news was extremely remarkable, Andy was upset that many feminists had taken issue with the fact that the scientist who landed the probe was wearing a shirt that depicted scantily clad women. He pointed out that the accomplishment of the scientist was diminished in the media "because he [the scientist] was doing this AMAZING thing... he landed a probe on a comet. And then they [the feminists] derailed the entire conversation to the shirt. Like, yeah, it's very bad fashion, but there's nothing very offensive about it." It was reading "The Aggressive Egg" that prompted this zealous attack on feminists.

Andy's white male science student perspective of "The Aggressive Egg" is an interesting representation of white male masculinity and resistance in the academy, but especially in this particular class. Despite the instructor's best efforts to show her students that science is not necessarily completely objective and that descriptions of science can often have a patriarchal slant to them, none of the students that I interviewed were unable to identify the purpose or significance of this article. Andy's outrage over the assignment illustrates the general resistance to the reading among students

It was this experience where I realized that students who are performing well in a writing class can still be harboring resistance to particular pedagogies, which can color their perception of progressive ideologies--often providing reason for students to either

shut down in classroom discussions, or bring other classmates into their mindset. Neither situation is ideal as productive dialogue about complex issues requires that students are both engaged and open to difference of opinions. Student resistance to critical pedagogy is common, but the way that the resistance is addressed can greatly affect whether a student leaves the classroom feeling slighted, angry, or satisfied with the experience.

In “The Other ‘F’ Word: The Feminist in the Classroom,” Dale M. Bauer (1990) notes that many students object to feminist discussion and ideology in the classroom because these students “insist that the classroom ought to be an ideologically neutral space free from the instructors’ interests and concerns” (p. 180). Bauer discusses a case study where she examined student feedback forms from feminist-ideological instructors and found that the students were brought into a mind space of ideological conflict because of feminist discussions, which disrupts the traditional heteronormativity, that students often view as neutral. Bauer does not discuss any solutions to the student resistance, but it is important to note that even today, students are still resistant to feminist ideology in the classroom, and it is still “our task to make compelling the wider implications of the feminist dialogue in the classroom” (p. 190), despite discomfort.

In My Own Classroom: “White People are Oppressed, Too”

In my experience of teaching courses focused on intersectionality, but especially race, I have encountered many instances of resistance. When confronted by a student who believes that their whiteness is not a privilege or that race is not a real problem, I tried many approaches in order to try to curb the situation.

In my first year of teaching, I was afraid to tell students they were wrong, and I chose to comment solely on the students’ writing instead of having a disagreement or

uncomfortable situation. However, I did notice that approach did not affect the students, and many of them left the class unchanged and unchallenged. After reading Susan Jarratt's (2003) "Feminism and Composition: The Case for Conflict," I adjusted my pedagogy from passive to more confrontational. Jarratt advocates for a "confrontational classroom," which she argues empowers students by exposing them to confrontational ideologies. She notes: "In taking on a confrontational teaching style, we are both able to assert our own authority in the classroom and ensure that our students leave our courses with skills that will empower them" (276). To me, the key is that students leave the course with skills that are useful, transferable, and empowering; without confrontation, I was not achieving that.

More recently, in the spring of 2016, I was teaching a course that specifically dealt with oppression. Listed in the course catalog as "Rhetorics of Oppression," this course was a sophomore level writing course that served as a humanities block requirement. After reading "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," the diverse class was having a lively and passionate discussion about the various ways that oppression had affected them, as well as things they had never noticed before. A white student, Andrea, became visibly uncomfortable and rolling her eyes at some of the statements her classmates of color made about their experiences with job interviews and police encounters. Andrea then raised her hand and said "I think white people can be oppressed too. I grew up in Indiana, and my school was a really big basketball school. All the time, the black kids at my school would tell me that I couldn't jump because I was white." This comment made me very uncomfortable, as most instances of student resistance do, but especially because I was trying to make these instances of resistance as productive as possible. It connects strongly to Leonardo's (2002) "The Souls of White Folk," where he talks about the myriad ways that white

students resist race-focused critical pedagogy: “In the USA, whites feel minimized under the sign of multiculturalism, victimized by affirmative action, and perceive that they suffer from group discrimination despite the fact that white women are the largest beneficiaries of such policies, and the utter lack of empirical evidence for ‘imaginary white disadvantage’” (pp. 35-6). An imagined singular disadvantage, like Andrea’s white-girls-can’t-jump example, is an illustration of the reversal of focus, when white students will try to reverse the discussion so they can perceive themselves as institutionally oppressed, that Leonardo outlines in his article. This was also seen in the example with Krista’s online student trying to “prove” reverse racism.

Rather than flat out disagreeing with Andrea or shutting her down, I instead turned the discussion to the class: “What do you all think of that? Can you be oppressed because you were made fun of in school?” I did not hide my bias, although this confrontation was fairly indirect.

This instance was a gamble for me, but because of the discussion that had been occurring prior to Andrea’s comment, I hoped that some students would see the absurdity in her comment. One student, Wade, a white gay male, decided to tackle the question and asked Andrea if she believed that there was a difference between meanness and systemic oppression. He used his own identity as a white male as an example, saying that while he has been picked on for being gay, he would never claim that it was racism against him because of the privileges that his whiteness brings. Andrea, still visibly uncomfortable, with her arms crossed across her chest, sat in silence for the remainder of the class, and the discussion continued to resonate in my head.

I debated on whether I should send the class an email about the situation, providing more evidence, readings, or videos to drive home the point we were trying to make. I considered writing Andrea an email that explained my viewpoint more specifically. I ultimately decided against both options, instead letting the students sit with the discomfort of the class discussion and think about it. I did not want to come off as hostile or accusatory, and I wanted to give the students a chance to learn and reflect before bombarding them with more information. The goal of this discussion was not to prove that I was right, but to give the students tools to think in the real world. Ira Shor (1992) discusses the importance of this pedagogy, whose goals “are to relate personal growth to public life, by developing strong skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry, and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality, and change” (p. 15). Alexander (2008) notes that the purpose of these tough discussions about identity in the classroom is to give students the tools to “become comfortable in dealing with such material in a mature, reasonable, and rhetorically savvy fashion” (p. 2).

Upon returning for the following class session, my lesson focused largely on students recognizing the importance of what they read, creating their own discussion questions based on the readings. Here are some of the questions the students came up with:

- What’s the difference between being racist and being prejudice? What about non-racist vs. anti-racist?
- Why does white privilege prevent us from seeing race within ourselves?
- What is black lives matter and why is it a controversy to say all lives matter instead?

-Do you think that a lack of discussion about race can lead to a lack of sophistication and understanding about race? Why or why not?

Without any prodding or prompting on my part, students were consciously thinking of the discussion that we had prior, and the questions reflected it. Surprisingly, Andrea was open to the discussion and apologized for the misunderstanding she had in class earlier. She was forthcoming about her mistake and was interested in what her classmates had to say about these discussion questions. Additionally, she has not had any other instances of tangible resistance to discussions of race in the class.

While it is absolutely possible that she is simply performing the part of an interested student, I saw the forthcomingness and ability to admit her mistakes as a sign that Andrea was receptive to this particular pedagogy.

Step into Somebody's Intersectional Shoes

Another example of how an instructor dealt with resistance is one that many feminist scholars may see as problematic -- the "what if this was your mother/daughter/sister?" trope to help counteract patriarchal and misogynistic statements. This has been critiqued largely in feminist circles because it assumes that men cannot accept responsibility for rape culture without imagining a woman in their life being directly affected by it. And while this is not an approach that I would personally use in the classroom, interviewee Dillon, the sole cis white male that I interviewed, discussed this approach as his most successful:

It's happened before this, but I think of last fall when the audio came out of Trump and his infamous statement. I talked about it in class. I figured this is someone who ... I did it this semester too. This is someone who is going to be leader of the free

world. Listen to the rhetoric. How do you respond to it, and how does the use of that language, even though he thought it was a private conversation, how does that affect how we view and you feel about yourself? I framed it that way. Many of the women, but not all, were like, "This makes me upset. Da da da.", but there were a few that kind of condoned his behavior and said, "Well, it's a private conversation. Men are going to be men. What someone says in their private life we shouldn't worry about."

Then I said, "How many of you are going to have children?" I will often play devil's advocate, just because I like to, and I'll say, "Okay. Now imagine that's your daughter he's talking about. Or your mother. Or your sister. Does that change how you feel about things?" That kind of gets them to kind of see it from a different point of view sometimes. A little bit there, but sometimes some of them get very ingrained in their ideology that they will say, "I'm voting for what he represents in terms of ..." whatever the reason is. I don't think of what it is. That's one instance I've used it and the resistance is, "Yes, but we shouldn't have access to that type of information [-- the audio recordings of Trump]."

While I personally disagree with Dillon's classroom approach for this example of resistance, it is my role as a researcher to present his anecdote and voice. However, it is also my role as a feminist researcher to say that any critique of rape culture which requires men to assume that they can only care about women if those women are related to them is not a good critique of rape culture.

On Not Tokenizing Students or Assuming their Position

It can feel easy to assume that the white students will be the resistant ones when talking about race, but it is important to not make those assumptions. Simon, the gay trans male instructor from the rural Midwest, took this mission very seriously, and discussed how he navigated the possibility of tokenization in his classroom:

I was already thinking a lot about how can I not tokenize my students of color in these conversations. I think it made me more aware of the complexity of what that means. There are gonna be times where one or two students of color in my class are very invested in the particular rhetoric that we're looking at. They're invested in whatever activist piece we're examining is. And I think that would require a different approach than what happened here. And I was prepared for that. I was prepared for the student who would be very upset with their fellow classmates about not getting it. I was less prepared for a student of color to be resistant but also having this like kind of ... Being on the border of, being aware that if I share my position it will legitimize racism.

Here, Simon is reflecting on the very real issue that comes up whenever we talk about identity -- tokenization. In her TED talk, "The Danger of a Single Story," Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) warns against stereotyping people, calling it a dangerous practice. She warns: "So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become." When we expect people to react a certain way, such as expecting all students of color to be excited about intersectional pedagogies, or expecting all white students to be resistant, we create that story in our head

as instructors and fail to prepare for when other possibilities emerge. Part of what Simon is talking about here is adaptability and being prepared for all students to have different types of reactions, and not expecting students of color to be the ones to bear the burden of not only being on board with what is being discussed, but also being resident experts because of their own lived experiences.

On Emotional Responses

It is impossible to talk about resistance without talking about emotion. Emotions come into play whenever a student is resistant to subject matter in a course, so naturally there will often be emotional times for both instructors and students. One interviewee, Lucy, discussed her intense fear of student emotions and how that has affected her approach in the classroom:

My biggest fear is that a student's gonna cry. I don't know if you have this, but, like, when a student cries in my office I just go into panic mode. And also when a student gets emotional in any way, I'm freaked out by that, so I'm trying lately to learn more, like, whenever I'm at a conference and they're doing a panel on affect, I go to that because I need to learn how to deal with affect in my students. And I have a real problem when a student gets angry, when a student gets emotional, when a student gets hurt. I just fucking don't know what to do.

So anyway, so, my hesitation, and the reason I'm scared of students is because I am scared of emotions. I know that I'm teaching really heavy shit, you know, like you called it, intersectional shit. Right, and so whenever you teach that, especially to predominantly white privileged, economically privileged student body, people are gonna push back. And I don't mind the push back, I see it as part of the

process, but I also have to acknowledge that any time that someone tells you that you've benefited from a system, and any time someone tells you you may not personally be racist but there's such a thing as systemic racism that you've benefited from, like, of course they're gonna get emotional. So this is a piece that I think that I need to think about in my teaching.

Due to Lucy's aversion to student emotions, she still struggled with what she found to be the incredibly important work of navigating student resistance, rather than ignore it. This was how she defined resistance throughout her interview -- as an outburst of student emotion. She was passionate about allowing students to dive deep into difficult material and her syllabus made this very clear, including policies on different modes of participation in class (she didn't require all students to participate and promised to never call on a student who did not raise their hand), specific anti-discrimination language, a two-page explanation of disability and accommodations, and advice from past students on how to succeed. However, despite her forthright efforts to teach what she calls "difficult subject matter," she admittedly struggled with this work. For her interview, she recounted a class she taught that was entirely white, except for three international students who were all black students, two from Ghana and one from Rwanda. One of her Ghanaian students got defensive in class when a white student was talking negatively about code-switching:

... she said, "Look. English was forced down my throat when I was a kid. I was ostracized for trying to speak my home dialect, my vernacular, and my African vernacular. You have no idea what it's like to grow up like that."

And then my white student started to back down a little bit, but got really defensive. And she said, "You totally misunderstood what I'm saying," and then she shut down, she started to pack up her bookbag, and then she just folded her arms and for the rest of the class. And it was just like, people were watching her, and people were very uncomfortable. And they came to talk to me about it later. One student in particular, who's really a leftie, she's white, came to talk to me. She's like, "I can't stand that white student, she's so closed minded, blah blah blah," and I was like, "I know. It can be really hard."

But anyway, I talked to them individually afterwards. I emailed my student of color from Rwanda and I said, "I feel like I wasn't really showing up for you today as a white anti-racist ally. I feel like instead of saying, well, there are multiple points of view," which I think I kinda did, which is a total cop-out and it's really problematic, it's like, totally a white racial habitus thing to do, is to be like, "Well, there are multiple viewpoints," you know what I mean?

She said that the student never responded to her apology email, but she felt that it was necessary as a white ally involved in racial justice work. She still feels guilt about how she responded in the classroom, though, which is when most of her (white) students could have seen an example of a white ally and how to stand up for racial justice. She had expressed a lot of regret about the way that she responded to this instance of resistance, so I asked her what she would do if something similar happened in the future. She thought:

...Well, there's two things I'd do. First of all, I know that as a teacher, I need to get over being scared of students who have views that are problematic and hurtful. Not

just views that I disagree with, because there's plenty of people I disagree with, but I don't get scared of. But when people disagree with me about colonization and say hurtful things, like, "Oh, you know, it was fine for the colonized and there's upshots to colonization," I take it really personally, and I get really hot because of that. And so as a result, I know that what happened with that student, there's a student every semester in my class that I get scared of and don't know how to stand up to. So the first thing is I know I need long-term to work on that. And the second thing is that with her, I think that I would have tried to push back a little bit in that one on one conference, and I would have said, "Tell me more about what you've learned or how your viewpoint has changed on colonization since we've started this unit." And I would have asked more questions, to see where she was coming from. But that would have required me to get over my fear of her.

Lucy's fear is not unique, and is discussed in Leonardo's (2002) "The Souls of White Folk." In particular he discusses anger, which he does not feel is necessarily a bad thing in the critical pedagogy classroom: "Feelings have to be respected and educators can establish the conditions for radical empathy. That said, anger is also a valid and legitimate feeling; when complemented by clear thought, anger is frighteningly lucid" (p. 39). He advocates against what he calls a "pedagogy of politeness," where instructors fear hurting students' feelings and eliciting emotional responses in the name of keeping peace in the classroom. Rather, he argues that a classroom cannot be radical or progressive without dissent, which he also notes is not the same as hostility.

When I asked Lucy to reflect on a situation that she described as hostile-feeling in her classroom, and what she would do differently in the future, she responded:

It was the day after the election, and a student of color of mine cried in class as she was telling her story. And I didn't know how to handle it. And what I wish I would have done was taken a five minute break, because students came up to her after class to offer their support, and I think it would have been better if we had just taken a breather and acknowledged that we had a really heavy moment.

A breather sounds like a great way to harness Leonardo's clear-thought-filled, lucid anger.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND POSSIBLE FUTURE WORK

While this dissertation is far from comprehensive when it comes to discussing student resistance to intersectional pedagogies, it does present some new voices and considerations to the conversation. Student resistance and intersectional pedagogy are large topics could not feasibly be covered by a small sample of interviews and an autoethnography. However, the data do provide some framework for instructors who are considering intersectional pedagogy, including how to go about it, some reasons why intersectional pedagogy is an approach to consider, how student resistance looks, what that teaches us, and how we can address the resistance.

Admittedly, the scope of this study is very limited but does function as a good starting point for a discussion on student resistance to intersectional pedagogies in post-Trump America. While intersectional pedagogy was discussed widely as critical pedagogy in the late 20th century, there has been a lack of current scholarship on the subject as a whole, but rather more focused research on various identities in the writing classroom. However, an intersectional approach is important because it takes into account the various layers and intersections of identity, providing a framework to talk about oppression in a more productive way without dangerous generalizations.

This dissertation examined the history behind the term intersectionality and an abbreviated history of critical pedagogy. It also examined the various approaches to teaching writing that have been focused on sexuality, gender, and language. While there are many critiques to intersectional pedagogy's goals, I examined and refuted those claims and provided further reasoning that intersectional pedagogy is still important and relevant.

Chapter 4 provided analysis of seven semi-structured interviews with instructors from across the country and a year's worth of autoethnographic notes. Some large takeaways from this chapter were that there are many reasons to choose to teach intersectional pedagogy -- but instructors are often drawn to it because of various aspects of their identity and a need to feel authentic in front of their students. We also learned what different types of intersectional pedagogy might look like, which included providing readings from various diverse authors, or engaging with specific content related to race, gender, sexuality, language, etc. The remainder of the chapter recounted instances of student resistance, why the resistance emerged, and how the instructors chose to respond to the resistance. The most common way cited was the "audience awareness" approach to student resistance, which gave instructors a way to tell students that their ideas were offensive but did not require them to disagree directly. Arguably, this approach does not directly address student resistance because it only shows them that they cannot disagree in front of certain audiences, but can still hold problematic and/or racist, sexist, classist, homophobic or transphobic viewpoints.

So, What Can We Do to Address Resistance?

If my interviews and my own experience has proven anything, it is that there is no one right way to address resistance to intersectional pedagogy. Each situation that arises is unique and has its own set of parameters that need to be examined -- similar to how we think of intersectional identities. I did not set out to create a how-to guide for instructors on what to do when resistance emerges in the classroom, but the anecdotes that follow in this section do a good job of providing some examples and context for ways that instructors can address resistance in their classrooms.

One practice that many of the interviewees found extremely useful in their classrooms was the use of reflective writing. Reflections -- especially credit/no credit reflections -- are a great way to get a sample of your students' thoughts and feelings about the course material without them feeling that their opinion will have a bearing on their performance in the classroom. Haylee was able to find that a student was uncomfortable with the subject matter and address the issue privately, before any high-stakes assignments affected the student's grade.

Who's Your Audience? Students vs. The Straw Man

A common approach to dealing with student resistance is to make students aware of their audience, whether or not the audience is the instructor. This is a common approach in writing center pedagogy, and half of my interviewees also discussed this approach. Making students consider their audience when they write things that can be seen as inflammatory, racist, or sexist, etc. While many instructors discussed this approach, Katy, who teaches at a community college in the Midwest, discussed the audience awareness approach to resistance succinctly and effectively when reflecting on a student who went on a rant about an blog post they disagreed with:

I always have this standard of when I'm reading student writing [. . .] if they're reading student writing that has racist or ableist or sexist language or whatever, that you make it about your audience, they tell the student writer, this may turn off your audience, this may not make your argument very strong as opposed to directly attacking the student's beliefs. I took the similar tact with this student where I said, based on your response to ... Based on what you've written it seems that you didn't carefully read the blog post. I focused it much more on, there are several sections of

this that are distinctly using the phrase, not your fault. I really made it a lesson about, reading comprehension more so than anything else. I definitely didn't ... I may have paraphrased the blog post, and said something like, the author was trying to point out that it's not anyone's fault, rather than just saying to the student, no privilege doesn't mean that.

So I wasn't necessarily trying to correct his position on privilege, so much ... Well, I was again, but I was able to frame it as, you didn't clearly read the position. You aren't even ... It's fair to say, he created a straw man, he wasn't arguing against the actual argument of the blog post, he was arguing against what he wanted the argument to be, I suppose.

This approach, while effective and easy to weave into currently rhetorical teaching practices, can become an issue if students are allowed to choose their audiences and they choose something like a group of white supremacists, or the ever-elusive group of friends. However, if a department is particularly resistant to instructors using intersectional pedagogy, an audience-centered approach can help mitigate some of that conflict.

Future Work

This research started off narrow in scope. I had originally only had the intention of looking at students who resisted intersectional pedagogy, but later found that instructor responses and administrative pushback and apathy were also very dynamic in these systems. In the future there are several aspects of this research that I would like to study further:

- How institutional demographics play a role in student resistance

- How to effectively persuade administration that intersectionality has value in the writing classroom
- How to create an online intersectional pedagogy that accounts for the lack of face-to-face interaction and context
- Does intersectional pedagogy give students further ammunition for their resistant viewpoints?

Through analysis of specific student work, administrative responses, institutional demographics, online pedagogical theory, and a long-term longitudinal study of student behaviors, I hope one day to dive further into this research and provide more answers for instructors who are teaching or hope to teach intersectional pedagogy in the future.

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APPENDIX

A. Email to WPA Listerv seeking interview participants

Dear Colleagues:

I am a PhD Candidate in Rhetoric & Composition at the University of Texas at El Paso and I am currently seeking participants to interview for a chapter in my dissertation. My study looks at student resistance to intersectional topics (Examples: race, gender, sexuality, class, and other identities) in the writing classroom. Student resistance might include students who disagree with the subject matter vocally in class, students who disengage from the course, and/or students who use writing assignments as a place to express disagreement.

I am looking for participants who:

- Teach writing (First-Year Composition, Technical Writing, Business Writing, Developmental Writing, etc.) at a 2 or 4 year college or university
- Include discussions, writing assignments, or topic foci on intersectional topics, such as (but not limited to) race, gender, sexuality, or class, whether explicitly or in passing
- Have experienced students who resisted the subject matter

The study is IRB approved through the University of Texas at El Paso, and interviews are expected to last about 30 minutes. If you are interested, or know somebody who may be interested, please contact me at gmlawrence@utep.edu

Sincerely,

Gina Lawrence

B. Email to Interested Interview Respondents

Hello and thank you for your interest in my dissertation project regarding student resistance to intersectional topics in the writing classroom. If you are still interested in participating in this project, please select three times for an interview from the list below. Interviews are anticipated to last between 30 and 45 minutes.

If possible, please send your response by Thursday, May 4 so that I can coordinate the schedule. I will be emailing you your confirmation, along with a consent form and video chat link no later than Friday, May 5. The interviews will be video chats, but only audio will be recorded. The study is IRB approved.

The available times are:

[list of available time slots]

If none of these times work, please suggest some times that will work for you and I will fit them into my schedule. I realize it is finals season, and schedules may be tight.

Thank you for your time and cooperation,

Gina

*MST is 1 hour ahead of Pacific Time and 2 hours behind Eastern Time.

C. Interview Consent Form

Responding to Resistance Interview Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study of how instructors respond to student resistance to issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality (“intersectional issues”). I am asking you to take part because you indicated that you teach courses that contain this subject matter. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn how instructors respond to students who resist discussions of intersectional issues in the classroom. The researcher is interested in both successful and unsuccessful approaches from your classroom experience.

What I will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, the researcher will conduct an interview with you. The interview will include questions about your job, the classes you teach, the assignments and readings that are taught, and your student body demographics. The interview will take about 60 minutes to complete. With your permission, we would also like to record the interview.

Risks and benefits:

Risk: I do not anticipate any risks to you participating in this study other than those

encountered in day-to-day life.

Benefits: There are no benefits to you for participating in this study, except for possible self-reflexive benefits from speaking about your own experience.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this study

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private in a password protected folder. In any sort of report we make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a password protected file; only the researcher will have access to the records.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions, it will not affect your job or participation. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Gina Lawrence. Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact Gina Lawrence at 661-755-0786 or gmlawrence@utep.edu. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a subject in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) by accessing their website at

<http://research.utep.edu/>.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview video recorded.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent _____ Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study.

D. Chart of Interview and Syllabus Notes

Names listed in order of appearance in dissertation

Name	Krista
Courses Taught	Intermediate Composition: "Writing about Writing"
Type of resistance discussed	Online student who wrote aggressive emails
Instructor Response	<p>Emailed student twice:</p> <p>Email 1: let's talk about it over skype. Student never got in touch</p> <p>Email 2: Asked why student didn't feel comfortable, never got a response</p>
Campus Location	Midwestern suburbs
Campus Culture	Mostly white, traditional college-age students
Instructor Identity	Catholic, woman, straight, mixed-race (white/Asian) but white passing, child of immigrant mother
Syllabus notes	Generic department syllabus template with department's assignment guidelines

	The webcasts were customized and made more intersectional
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Name	Simon
Courses Taught	English 100: First Year Composition English 201: Intermediate Composition, "Writing Wisconsin"
Type of resistance discussed	Less overt resistance Checking out of the conversation Not going in depth or engaging Transphobia
Instructor Response	Give the student space to talk
Campus Location	Rural Wisconsin
Campus Culture	Very white; 1-2 students of color per class
Instructor Identity	Trans; legal name is on the system for registration, so students know right away that he is trans.

	White gay trans guy from middle class background; Rural Tennessee. 1st person in family to get doctorate; family of educators. Disabled (mental illness). Raised Evangelical, no longer practicing but still Christian (Protestant)
Syllabus notes	Syllabus is highly customized. The first section has a local photo that is relevant and cited. This is followed by a paragraph grounding the course in context. Disability statement is customized. There is an interactive campus map to locate the instructor's office. Contains an alternative grading policy. Personal funny "Easter Egg" hidden in the syllabus. Collaborative office hours planning.

Name	Katy
Courses Taught	English 121: Words Matter
Type of resistance discussed	White male students felt like privilege did not exist and latched on to that idea, feeling like it was attacking them
Instructor Response	Make it about audience -- this may turn off your audience Rather than attacking students' belief

	<p>Maybe you didn't read the blog post</p> <p>Reading comprehension</p> <p>Not trying to correct student, but make it about the reading</p>
<p>Campus Location</p>	Rural Chicago suburb
<p>Campus Culture</p>	Community College, rich suburb students mixed with urban chicago students
<p>Instructor Identity</p>	Straight white able bodied middle class educated woman; young; unmarried
<p>Syllabus notes</p>	<p>Most of the template seems like a department template, except the first section, which is about respect. Even before the course description, the syllabus states:</p> <p>"Racist, sexist, classist, ageist, ableist, homophobic, or any other discriminatory language will not be tolerated. If you feel that you and/or your beliefs are not being respected by me or another student, please come speak to me about it."</p>

Name	Lucy
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Courses Taught	English 204: Perspectives on Language, Culture, and Literature, “Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Language”
Type of resistance discussed	Emotional outbursts “I can’t relate to what you are talking about” Whiteness “I haven’t come into contact with many PoC” In order to feel comfortable talking about something, white students need to feel like they are experts Silence
Instructor Response	Gave up Made supplemental assignments
Campus Location	Suburban Midwest
Campus Culture	predominantly white; rich; suburbia; private catholic school Students of color are mostly exchange students from overseas
Instructor Identity	Straight cis white middle class woman; atheist

Syllabus notes	<p>Most highly customized syllabus. Explicitly intersectional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -includes the cost of the book and the materials, including alternatives for disabled students -the parts from the university/department are clearly pasted and denoted in different font -specific course description for this section was listed -"brave space" philosophy & citations -section on triggers -participation expectations and alternatives to participation including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ways to start talking for students who struggle ~ways to talk less for students who talk too much ~times that you will have to talk and times you can opt out -extremely customized, conversational, and explanatory disability section (2 pages!) -advice from students on how to succeed
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Name	Dillon
Courses Taught	English 131: Composition and Critical Thinking

	English 132: Argument and Research
Type of resistance discussed	<p>Audio of Trump (pussy statement) talked about it in class</p> <p>Some women condoned his behavior: "Men will be men." "It was a private conversation"</p> <p>"Black Lives Matter? white lives matter, too"</p> <p>Use of pronouns - how can you offend somebody if you don't know the language?</p>
Instructor Response	<p>Group discussion to address issue</p> <p>1-1 doesn't allow them to hear multiple voices. Utilize peer pressure</p> <p>Discuss history of race</p> <p>Examples in pop culture</p> <p>Misogyny On essays: you can't say this -- audience</p> <p>"I didn't mean for it to come across that way"</p>

Campus Location	Rural East Texas
Campus Culture	Public State University Diverse; Large black population relative to area (~20%) 57% white Largely working class and first generation students
Instructor Identity	40 year old cis hetero white man, non religious
Syllabus notes	Did not provide

Name	Jess
Courses Taught	English 101: English Composition English 102: English Composition II
Type of resistance discussed	Jess made a comment that made it clear that she was anti-Trump shortly after the election. Student emailed the department chair and said they felt uncomfortable with the content of the class and thought they would get graded harshly for political views. Department chair emailed Jess and said not to discuss politics in the class

Instructor Response	Was shocked and felt silenced; frustrated. Meaningful conversations felt more difficult
Campus Location	South Carolina
Campus Culture	Multi campus 2 year college; 2 different campuses 1- urban: 50% white, 50% minority, mostly black 2- rural: 95% white
Instructor Identity	Questioning white female, disabled (deaf), cancer survivor, pagan, gen x/millennial, 1st gen college grad Phd student online while adjuncting Prefers to teach online or blended due to disability
Syllabus notes	Template with no customization, including disability statement

Name	Haylee
Courses Taught	English 114: First Year Composition

Type of resistance discussed	<p>Latino conservative student. Really resistant, but not in class. He would be silent in class and listen. But in his journaling in class, he would write about how he thought that bringing up these problems made them worse. "Much ado about nothing." These things were already dealt with. Victim mentality made issues worse than they needed to be.</p> <p>Black woman, thought instructor didn't have a right to talk about these issues. (instructor is an Asian woman of color, but white passing).</p>
Instructor Response	Tried to write to students to get them to understand a multiplicity of experiences. Was not successful (no response)
Campus Location	Los Angeles
Campus Culture	Highly diverse; working class; commuter
Instructor Identity	Asian American woman, mixed race also, but does not identify as white; monolingual California vernacular, straight, privileged class, feminist
Syllabus notes	Did not provide

VITA

Gina Lawrence received her Bachelor's degree in English Subject Matter with an emphasis in Poetry in 2010 and her Master's degree in English - Rhetoric and Composition in 2013, both from California State University, Northridge. While working on her PhD in Rhetoric and Composition at UTEP, Gina also earned a graduate certificate in Women's and Gender Studies, which gave her the framework for much of her research in this dissertation.

Gina was the recipient of the Community Engaged Graduate Student award and the English Outstanding PhD Student in Service award for her work in the Writing Center and in the community. In addition to her work in intersectional pedagogies, Gina also studies writing centers and activist spaces and sees them as a contact zone for intersectional pedagogies to take hold.

While completing her PhD at UTEP, Gina worked as a College Assistant Professor and the Writing Center Director at New Mexico State University. Prior to that, she served as the Assistant Director of the UTEP University Writing Center from 2014-2017.

Gina's dissertation, "Clashes in the Contact Zone: Student, Faculty, and Administrative Resistance to Intersectional Pedagogies in the Writing Classroom" was supervised by Dr. Kate Mangelsdorf.

Permanent address: 1009 Ferndale Drive

Las Cruces, NM 88005

Email address: ginamarielawrence@gmail.com

This dissertation was typed by Gina Lawrence.