EDUCATION DOCTORAL CLASSROOMS: A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS OR A COMMUNITY OF RESISTANCE?

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ABSTRACT

Since its beginning, doctoral education has been designed to serve largely a White male student population, which has resulted in prescribed forms of scholar identity, teaching, and scholarship (Gardner, 2009; Berelson, 1960). This prescribed norm, mold, and fit persist today even as doctoral education continues to diversify its faculty and student populations.

Acknowledging the White supremacy structure that is the academy begins to give room to questioning the prescribed scholar identity and the illusion of a scholar community. This disquisition examines the experiences of doctoral students in a mainstream education doctoral classroom through autoethnography, *testimonios*, and Photo Voice. In Chapter 2, I will utilize autoethnography to connect my personal narrative and reflections on my experiences early in education, and most recently, in the doctoral education classroom.

In essence, autoethnography is my tool to let my wild tongue speak and create a space for counter narratives of doctoral students' experiences in the epicenter of White supremacy scholarship, the doctoral classroom. Chapter 3 examines the experiences of six doctoral students in the doctoral classrooms and how they have responded to the academic socialization and culture through the use of *testimonios*.

Chapter 4 is a practitioner piece envisioning what a counter hegemonic pedagogy and curriculum would look like in doctoral education through the use of Photo Voice in a first-year doctoral student classroom. The dissertation concludes in Chapter 5 with a reflection on the doctoral classroom as a Third Space and future directions for research.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving parents, Aida Machal and Wandix Ramirez and in memory of my grandmother Margarita Asencio. I honor their testimonies about life’s struggles, hardships and triumphs through this accomplishment. They all taught me to be of service to humanity, to be courageous in the face of challenges, and never apologize for who I am. Last but not least, I dedicate this dissertation to my loving husband and best friend, Chris Freeman and to the coolest little girl in the world, Isabelle Freeman. You were always there to fill my spirit and to cheer me on until the end. I love you both.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This is a dissertation about the experiences of doctoral students in a mainstream doctoral program. The intent is not to assume that all doctoral programs are oppressive spaces. However, it is important to not look at the doctoral classroom from a romanticized perspective, but to look to understand the realities of it, the experiences of students and how we reproduce White supremacy.

This is my story, the story of other students in this doctoral program, a story that no one likes to discuss openly because somehow it has become an acceptable part of the journey to becoming a scholar. In this context, the experiences appear binary in nature, where a scholar community can be understood as simultaneously oppressive and liberatory. The voices will be experienced as blunt, raw, filled with hope and pain. In the words of Audre Lorde,

> I have a duty to speak the truth as I see it and share not just my triumphs, not just the things that felt good, but the pain, the intense, often unmitigated pain. It is important to share how I know survival is survival and not just a walk through the rain.

Doctoral Education Classrooms: A Community of Scholars or of Resistance?

Since its beginning, doctoral education has been designed to serve largely a White male student population, which has resulted in prescribed forms of scholar identity, teaching, and scholarship (Gardner, 2009; Berelson, 1960). This prescribed norm, mold and fit persist today even as doctoral education continues to diversify its faculty and student populations. Acknowledging the White supremacy structure that is the academy begins to give room to questioning the prescribed scholar identity and the illusion of a scholar community. Such terms

are loosely defined yet commonly understood as academic rites of passage and tradition. Few studies have examined the role of scholar community in the negotiation of scholar identity, the potential impact in the doctoral classroom as a place of community building, and scholar identity development.

A growing body of literature has documented the development of doctoral identity (Gardner, 2009), doctoral student socialization (Austin, Cameron, Glass, Kosko, Marsh, Abdelmagid & Burge, 2009; Golde, 1998), and the experiences of women and students of color in doctoral programs (Espino, Munoz & Kiyama, 2010; Hopwood & Paulson, 2012). Together, these studies highlighted difficulties doctoral students experience as they reach milestones in the programs and the importance of supervision and faculty mentorship (Craddock, Birnbaum, Rodriguez, Cobb & Zeeh, 2011; Barnacle & Mewburn, 2010). Conversely, studies focused on women and students of color continue to bring to the surface barriers faced in the classroom as traditional academic culture, institutional racism, and sexism collide with diverse ways of knowing and resistance toward the normative (Ramirez, 2014; Collins, 2001).

The scholar community can become a critical social construct as it attempts to focus attention away from the role of competition, power, and White-centered scholarship, to a place inhabited by nurturing knowledge seekers and creators. It is by crossing the boundaries between the illusion of community and scholar community that this dissertation offers a much-needed framework for educational theory, research, and practice. If the doctoral education classroom serves as the epicenter of White male scholarship, how can it then function as an authentic community to those who have been historically oppressed? In other words, the classroom is more of a battleground (i.e., survival of the fittest) than a community.

The challenge to the creation and sustainability of the scholar community is that the project of doctoral identity and community continues to be mediated by White faculty. So how does one create a community of scholars in increasingly diverse doctoral classrooms when research on doctoral identity, socialization, structure and pedagogy is generated by White faculty and their seemingly covert desire to sustain White scholarship? And that question then begs another: Do we inhabit a community of scholars or a community of resistance? This framework maintains that scholars seek a place of belonging in the academy; thus the concern is how doctoral classrooms can begin to re-define the classroom experience to teach community as a form of resistance. While community cannot be confined to the doctoral classroom experience, it is a place to highlight the issues to the academy as well as, acknowledge and own the responsibility to interrupt the cycle of academic trauma.

What makes a scholar community? What role does it play in the journey of a doctoral student? Is the scholar community a place of support and mentoring as doctoral students go through the various checkpoints in their doctoral programs? Or is the scholar community part of the academic hierarchy filled with rituals, promotions, and the ability to approve or disapprove who enters the ivory tower? What if the role of the scholar community is to uphold the dominant cultural standards of the academy?

While critical contributions have been made to the understanding of the doctoral student experiences, limited studies have focused on the role of the doctoral classroom as a place of power, resistance, and domination (Bettez, 2011; Gomez, Khurshid, Freitag & Lachuk, 2011; hooks, 2003). Ramirez (2014) noted:

> the extant first-year doctoral student literature typically underscores the psychological challenges (e.g. feelings of stress, self-doubt) that students experience during their first year but does not examine structural inequalities entrenched in graduate education and how these negatively impinge on entering doctoral students, particularly historically underrepresented students (p. 169).

This gap in knowledge highlights the need to examine the dynamics at play in the negotiation of identity and the creation of scholar community. In addition, it illustrates the critical role that the scholar community plays in the potential reproduction of power, dominance, and inequalities. Because of the limited research produced on this topic, a great level of *trenzas*, a weaving together of ideas, was employed with the desire to expand knowledge and discourse on such a critical topic (Espino, Munoz & Kiyama, 2012).

This dissertation will weave together critical concepts from Giroux, Gramsci, Freire, Gardner, and hooks in the current context of doctoral education classrooms. In addition, this dissertation will investigate the intersection of identity, community, scholarship and critical pedagogy as a way to examine the scholarly community early in the life of the doctoral student.

Foundations

Before turning to a brief overview of the next chapters, it is essential to explain some of the terminology used in the document. The term *scholar* is used to refer to a person who has done advanced study in a particular field. In his book, *The Different Drum:Community Making and Peace*, M. Scott Peck (1998) defines *community* as "the coming together of a group of individuals who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment

to ‘rejoice together, mourn together,’ and ‘to delight in each other’ and make the conditions of other’s our own” (p. 196). The term *scholar community* generally refers to a group of individuals who hold advanced academic degrees. *Critical pedagogy* refers to “the concern with transforming oppressive relations of power in a variety of domains that led to human oppression” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 45). Critical pedagogy assumes that the classroom is inherently political (Kincheloe, 2008). As with critical pedagogy’s concern with the educational vision of justice and equality, the term Critical Race Theory (CRT) assumes that race and racism are always present especially in theoretical frameworks, texts and other forms of discourse to explain the experiences of students of color in any given context (Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998).

The term *hegemony* refers to “the process used by dominant power wielders to maintain power. The key dimension of this process is the manipulation of public opinion to gain consensus” (Kincheloe, 2008 p. 65). Hegemony is central to critical pedagogy and the understanding of power (Kincheloe, 2008; Gramsci, 1971). Lastly, the term *academic trauma* refers to what hooks (2003) personally explains as the “constant harassment I received, the psychological assaults that are usually impossible to document” (p.188) as part of the process of acculturation and failure to conform to the academy. One of the most common forms of academic trauma comes at the hands of subtle displays of racism and sexism, among others, known as microaggressions. Gomez, Khurshid, Freitag and Lachuck (2010) examined the context of microaggressions early in the academic career of graduate teaching assistants of color and international graduate students in a teacher education program. Gomez et al. (2010) noted:

> Graduate teaching assistants of color and of international background often complain that White, European American prospective teachers perpetrate

> “microaggressions” by subtly challenging their teaching. Such microaggressions come about as a result of prospective teachers framing both groups of graduate teaching assistants as “different” from themselves different in race, ethnic background, cultural background, language background, country of origin, and sometimes, religious background. Frequently, White, European American prospective teachers interpret such differences as making graduate teaching assistants unable to understand their beliefs, experiences, and pedagogical choices, and as a result, prospective teachers often use subtle techniques for challenging graduate teaching assistants’ instructional choices (p. 1189).

In the doctoral classroom, microaggressions present themselves in the dismissal of various ways of knowing to outright verbal attacks by both classmates and faculty aimed at silencing doctoral student voices actively resisting to conform to the status quo (Sue, 2010). Additionally, the faculty may choose to disprove selected proposals by specific students, critical milestones may be delayed, and a departmental/program culture is created in which doctoral students are labeled as lacking academic disposition putting them in jeopardy of degree completion. Microaggressions experienced by doctoral students may escalate to more seemingly overt forms of what Twale and De Luca (2008) considered to be the culture of academic bullying.

These concepts, derived from the experiences of scholars of color within the academic community, will serve as building blocks of understanding, examining and illuminating scholar identity within predominantly White doctoral classrooms. In the next section, I will address the complexities of the development and experiences of doctoral students.

The Project of Doctoral Identity

In *The Development of Doctoral Students: Phases of Challenge and Support*, Gardner (2009) argues that student development theories have been mostly concerned with the development of undergraduate students. The literature rarely addressed the development of doctoral students. In the last decade, much attention has been given to the 50% of doctoral students who do not complete their doctoral degrees (Council of Graduate Schools, 2008). In an effort to better understand the doctoral student experience, Gardner (2009) presented a doctoral student development model that attempts to address the complexities of the experiences of students in doctoral studies and poses questions to ponder about the need to re-consider the structure of graduate education.

Literature on the doctoral student experience has focused on areas such as student completion and attrition, socialization, supervision, relationship with faculty or discipline specific research (Lovitts, 2001; Gardner, & Mendoza, 2010; Sweitzer, 2009; Tooms & English, 2010). The conceptual framework used by Gardner (2009) argued that doctoral identity development could be explained into three very distinctive phases. Phase I is determined by the decision to apply to a graduate program, admission process and when coursework begins. Phase II is defined by coursework and progress toward candidacy. Phase III is defined by comprehensive examinations and the transition to dissertation stage. While it is important to understand the structure and milestones of graduate education, what is often missed in this process is what happens and is experienced by the doctoral student in this journey to completion. When does the doctoral student become a scholar? What does it mean to have a scholar community, and how does one "fit" in?

Tooms and English (2010) defined fit as a "postmodern construct best understood as a game specific to the politics and relationships" between academe and the communities they serve (p. 222). In their study, Tooms and English (2010) argued that the dynamics of tenure are a great example of how a faculty member is recognized by colleagues and their community as knowing "the rules of how to "be" an academic" (p. 223). In other words, the community of scholars has determined "fit" and has granted status and conferred identity as a scholar. The notion of fit can also be used in the process of attaining the doctoral degree and can serve as a window for uncovering the process of scholar identity and the social construction and hegemonic influences of the academy on such development.

The social construction of the academy outlines how every emerging scholar should relate to the community (Tooms & English, 2010). Essentially, it can be argued that the training to prepare students to understand and abide by the rules and culture of the academy begins with doctoral education. The scholar is trained to acculturate to academic language in verbal and written form, to the behavioral etiquette that is acceptable of a scholar, resulting in a prescribed version of scholar identity (Twale & De Luca, 2008). This scholar identity mimics the community in which it exits. What this means is that in this process of acculturation, the scholar is constantly negotiating his or her identity within/against the framework of the academy.

Research conducted on the experience of graduate teaching assistants highlights how graduate students begin to negotiate scholar identity early in their careers. From reporting that they are lacking close ties with the department, feeling less confident and more anxious, and struggling to locate or maintain a faculty mentor, graduate students begin to experience the hegemonic culture of academia (Woods, 2001; Grant & Simmons, 2008). Physical, social, and

intellectual isolation are some of the dimensions that Gay (2004) noted as marginality experienced in the academy. In essence, students begin to make sense of scholar identity and community while dealing with isolation in the classroom through the minimization of their lived experiences and contributions and seemingly passive and active neglect by faculty in the department (Gay, 2004).

Sue (2010) argued that microaggressions are:

> the constants and continuing everyday reality of slights, insults, invalidations, and indignities upon marginalized groups with well-intentioned, moral, and decent family members, friends, neighbors, co-workers, students, teachers, clerks, waitresses, employers, health care professionals, and educators. The power of microaggressions lies in their invisibility to the perpetrator, who is unaware that he or she is engaged in a behavior that threatens and demeans the recipient of such communication (p.1).

Referring to the context of higher education, microaggressions can be manifested in various forms, including racial and sexist jokes to White-centered program missions and policies. Sue et al. (2007) developed what they call a taxonomy of microaggressions, including microassaults, which are "explicit racial derogation characterized by a verbal or nonverbal attacks meant to hurt the victim thorough name-calling, avoidant behaviors, and purposeful discriminatory actions" (p. 274). Microinvalidations are "characterized by communications that exclude, negate or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color" (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Esquilin, Holder & Nadal, 2007, p. 274). Thus, microaggressions

are a way in which hegemony is quietly but consistently exercised in the classroom and the scholar community masks power (Sue, 2010).

Can scholar identity be examined without the impact of academic hegemony? Gramsci (1971) noted that hegemony is how groups can maintain power over other groups through an active internalization of what, in this case, the academy deems as normal and legitimate. Tooms and English (2010) stated, "hegemony tenders social and intellectual capital to certain selected lines of inquiry traveled on the way to tenure, promotion and acceptance" (p. 224). Doctoral education and its rituals are part of these "lines of inquiry" that begin to prepare scholars for the process of internalizing the hegemonic culture of the academy (Tooms & English, 2010).

The process of transitioning from a dependent student to an independent student is often highlighted as part of the enlightenment movement that is doctoral education (Gardner, 2009; Sweitzer, 2009). Students must embrace objectivity, rationality, and individuality to be seen as successful scholars. Scholar is often defined as a person with specialized knowledge in a particular field. On the other hand, community is defined as a group who share common perspectives. If we combined both terms, scholar community, then we have a group of individuals with advanced degrees. How do we then come to rely upon the scholar community to successfully complete the doctoral journey? What is the role of the scholar community in the life of the doctoral student? What should community look like in practice and action? Collins (2001) stated that the community of scholars ultimately decides whether other scholars are deemed to be a fit to the academy. Hegemony plays a critical role in the scholar identity, experiences in the doctoral classroom and who gets to complete the doctoral project. With that said, the doctoral classroom becomes the epicenter of the indoctrination into the academy.

Culture and Power in the Doctoral Classroom

Much of the literature on power in the classroom seems to be mostly focused on feminist, multicultural, bilingual education (Darder, 1991; Collins, 2000; Kincheloe, 2008). It seems that any exploration of academic culture and the relationship to power in the doctoral classroom is sorely missed from pedagogical practices. The more likely pedagogical practices that would engage in discourse are those often marginalized such as critical pedagogy, red pedagogy, feminist pedagogy and more. The culture of the academy embraces a presumed value neutral pedagogy, knowledge, rituals and values that enforce the dominant culture (Grande, 2008). Values that are critical to the Western culture and fully displayed in the classroom include competition, individuality, and upward social mobility. This value system, coupled with the phases of doctoral student identity by Gardner (2009), create the systemic structure and culture of doctoral education with faculty and students participating in and perpetuating White domination. It is this understanding of neutrality, rationality and objectivity that highlights the many reasons as to why academic culture and power in the classrooms are systematically ignored. Foucault (1980) noted that "power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere...power is not an institution , and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex situation in a particular society" (p. 93).

In her book, *Culture and Power in the Classroom*, Darder (2012), notes that for us to understand the relationship between power and culture, we must understand the relationship between knowledge and power. It this relationship between knowledge and power that shapes the academic identities, the culture of the classroom, and it is efficiently influencing consciousness

and the values of the academy. It can then be said that the doctoral classroom through its theories, practices, research and pedagogies, resorts to power as a way to support the hegemony. Kincheloe (2008) noted:

> power shaped consciousness is what Foucault called its capillary expression-that point where power connects with the heart and soul of individuals, disciplines their bodies, shapes their attitudes, their language, the ways they learn and their phenomenological level of existence. In such a disciplined society power wielders would not have to use violence as often, as they could count on the citizen's individual consciousness to mold their behaviors, their allegiance to the dominant, regimes of truths (p. 219).

Thus, the creation of knowledge is about upholding the dominant "truth." It is this relationship between truth/knowledge and power that shapes the current community of scholars. The scholars who dare to step outside the power lines of such a regime of truth will have to endure the wrath of violence (Gramsci, 1971). In thinking about the need to occupy the doctoral classroom and the impact on the doctoral student identity, we must address academic culture, the regime of truth, and the power permeating doctoral classrooms.

Academic culture is historically rooted in the belief that it is apolitical and value neutral, thus disregarding the role of power in the academy all together (Kincheloe, 2008; Giroux, 1997). Understanding the process of knowledge creation and dissemination, coupled with rituals and traditions of the academy, can begin to uncover the dominant power innate in the doctoral classroom. It is this environment that coexists with power and culture that is inherent in the doctoral curriculum and classroom. Darder (2010) noted:

> subordinate cultures are maintained in oppressive conditions not only through the dominant culture's function to legitimate the interests and values of the dominant groups, but also through an ideology that functions to marginalize and invalidate cultural values, heritage, language, knowledge, and lived experiences which fall outside of the purview of capitalist domination and exploitation (p. 29).

This is where critical pedagogy can interrupt this consciousness created and expressed by the dominant academic culture. This dominant culture, which hides behind objectivity, produces and reproduces power in teaching and researching. This is where knowledge creation becomes more about establishing the values and rituals of the dominant academic culture. Knowledge becomes the unquestionable truth of the academy (Foucault, 1980).

It is no mistake that emerging scholars who come from historically marginalized backgrounds in this power focused "scholarly" environment experience fragmentation by the system's pressure to accept the prescribed scholar identity or to form a newly developed academic identity. Gramsci (1971) argued "educators need to understand how the dominant culture structures ideology and produces social practices in schools, for the purpose of shattering the mystification of the existing power relationships and the social arrangements that sustain domination" (Darder, 2010, p. 32). Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony notes that domination expresses itself as intellectual and moral scholarship in the academy Thus, this domination becomes simple common knowledge and/or the measurement of academic disposition, which continues to maintain power resulting in forced acculturation or silence through the management of what is deemed legitimate. The notion of academic disposition as it is often referred to in doctoral education is simply an exercise of the dominant/subordinate dynamic of power.

Academic language plays the most powerful form of transmission of culture (Lovitts, 2005). The acculturation into the academic language systematically silences and oppresses other forms of language and knowledge. The doctoral student indoctrination into the academic language rips away voice, and it gets replaced with doctoral values, missions and belief systems that further "form" dominant scholar identity and intellectual formation (Twale & De Luca, 2008). Negating people's language and voices is not just a form of psychological trauma, but an excellent example of cultural invasion. Doctoral students start early on in this hazing process, estranged from the very language with which they make sense of the experience and the world.

The cultural invasion becomes part of the doctoral consciousness. Critical pedagogy is one way in which we can create resistance as part of the consciousness to challenge dominant ideology. Giroux (1997) noted that resistance is much like the creation of a personal space in which critical consciousness and praxis come together to humanize the experience of those marginalized and oppressed in the doctoral classroom. It is with empowerment in mind that critical pedagogy examines the relationship between culture and power in the classroom to deconstruct these toxic relationships, scholar identity and the challenge of developing an authentic scholar community (Kincheloe, 2008; Gardner, 2010; hooks, 2003). To move forward with resisting the cultural hegemony that is the doctoral classroom, we must develop a new consciousness rooted in carving a space for voice, liberation, and empowerment (Freire, 2000). How do we actively develop a doctoral pedagogy that emerges from hope and love, not from power and cultural domination? Critical pedagogy raises the importance of resisting and changing the power structure of the doctoral classroom in a way that guarantees equal participation, maintenance of identity, and voice (Kincheloe, 2008). How do we ensure that the

often hidden in plain sight power curriculum and culture do not infiltrate the beloved community?

Love, Hope, and the Circle of Trust

The earlier in the path of the doctoral students that we can begin to interrupt power and culture in the doctoral classroom, the more opportunity we have to revolutionize the curriculum, demystify the doctoral experiences, openly and truthfully discuss the power, oppressive culture of the doctoral structure, and address in dialogue how to make sense of it while negotiating identity. The rituals and values of the academy, which begin in the doctoral classroom and continue through tenure and promotion, are less of a community of scholars than they are a playground for academic bully culture (Twale & De Luca, 2008). For those who have survived the indoctrination into the academy, now their role is to ensure that if this is their place, then others must follow their rules. The facade of the scholar community is a way to sustain hegemony. The bullying is filtered through cultural values, rituals, and expectations, including challenges that are purposely hidden from view (Twale & De Luca, 2008). Silence is not permitted, but encouraged, if not brutally enforced, and becomes a necessity for survival if we are to stay in the academy. The control over who is conferred and possesses a scholarly disposition is an exercise into the culture of academic bullying (Twale & De Luca, 2008).

The silence is best presented by the denial or assumptions that nothing is wrong in the academy; that this is how it has always been and unless you are in it you could not possibly understand the culture (Espino, Munoz & Kiyama, 2010). As doctoral students, we are taught early that to become part of the elite club, we must accept it, survive it, and ensure it. The academic values and the responsibility to protect knowledge become even more exclusive and

vicious (Gomez, Khurshid, Freitag & Lachuk, 2011). Bullying becomes fully integrated into the socialization of the doctoral student and the classroom becomes the training ground for those who may be selected unto "the circle of trust." Bullying presents itself in the classroom in the form of microaggressions; faculty who, once they believe that you have no scholarly disposition, will make sure others in the circle of trust know this (Sue, 2010). Common academic knowledge becomes a game of who do we approve of in becoming one of us. The gatekeepers' ultimate responsibility is to protect the status quo.

The classroom is a great space for faculty to begin indoctrinating students into what is overall accepted in the academic culture (Twale & De Luca, 2008). It turns the doctoral classroom into a place that enforces bully type behaviors, where faculty are free to provide words of warning (often posed as humor) such as insinuating that your marriage will surely end as part of the doctoral experience or that women will stop wearing makeup and start wearing yoga pants as a sign of the abandonment of the feminine ways. In this bully culture, the classroom becomes a place of competition, individualism, and status. Students begin to reinforce the culture of hegemony, adopted as their own by actively excluding, marginalizing, patronizing and silencing their peers in the classroom (Sue, 2010). This is, in essence, the perfect training ground on how to behave in the academy. So then, if the classroom is the epicenter of hegemony, the scholar community is simply the support group for academic bullies. The structure of the academy is perfect for a culture of bullying. The committees created to approve or disapprove the continuation of doctoral study, graduation, tenure and promotion support an environment of the survival of the fittest and superimposed group think (Tooms & English, 2010; Twale & De Luca, 2008; Collins, 2001). Academic culture, then, becomes even more protective of the intention to

create White scholarship and produce White scholars, which then creates a White controlled and dominated classroom experience. Such deeply rooted colonialist attitudes shape a different kind of community.

In this spirit, it is essential to put into action critical pedagogy in the doctoral classroom as a way to uncovering the power and domination innate in the classroom but also initiate an effort to upset the church of reason and rationality and threaten to take down the regime of truth/knowledge. It will then create a space where a true community based on care, compassion, and solidarity can emerge. Kincheloe (2008) noted that both critical theory and critical pedagogy are considered "undeniable dangerous knowledge, the kind of information and insight that upsets institutions and threatens to overturn sovereign regimes of truth" (p. 46). Critical pedagogy provides educators with a reinterpretation of what scholar community should be, making it possible for justice and love to shape the community of scholars. Because we are dealing with a well-established and supported power order, the role of critical pedagogy in the doctoral education classroom provides a venue to begin to liberate the classroom, thus liberating academic work from the claws of power.

The scholar community is a window to how disciplines manifest power, historical contexts, and social constructs through discourses created by the discipline itself (Kincheloe, 2008). Critical pedagogy aims to deconstruct power and domination in discourses to provide new insights, seek connections across disciplines and openly make sense of power as it relates to not just the classroom and the academy, but to our diverse human experience (Freire, 2000). Critical pedagogy supports knowledge production that is always evolving and seeking new ways to interrupt power. "In the epistemological domain, White, male, class elitist, heterosexist, imperial,

and colonial privilege often operates by asserting the power to claim objectivity and rationality. Indeed, the owners of such privilege often own the "franchise" on reason and rationality" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 50). Scholar community as it stands now has a deep historical interest in supporting status quo to protect their privileges which are central to their "formation" of scholars, what they consider to be legitimate research, and thus, shapes the classroom to serve to form and mold hopeful educators into the gatekeepers of the academy.

The doctoral classroom serves as the epicenter of rationality in that students are taught very specifically what knowledge is valued and given strict orders on correct research procedures and methodologies that are acceptable in the academy, including the delineation of how academic language is to be used and exercised in oral and written forms (Bettez, 2011; Austin, 2002). As part of the student's journey into doctoral programs, courses are focused on the responsibility of a scholar to be objective and value neutral, and the standards that are placed before them by the academy on what constitutes successful completion of the doctoral identify development (Gardner, 2009). At each checkpoint, committees of faculty or a faculty advisor evaluate progress in acculturation into the academy through course completion, mentoring, adequate integration of dominant scholar identity, and non-critical understanding of dominant ideology. However, this scholar community gives enough guidance on some rituals but leaves out others as a way to test endurance and ensure acculturation and devoted commitment to the academy. It is a regulatory practice that defines rules, rituals, and behavior as a form of authority while validating its power position.

Critical pedagogy aims to interrupt the forces that are preventing us from creating and sustaining a caring scholarly community. A caring scholarly community seeks to create room to

be in charge of its own development as scholars and become part of a community of solidarity and justice not of competition and status (Darder, 2002; Bettez, 2011). The scholar's journey, envisioned through the concept of a community, centers on the process of lived experiences, non-dominant cultural and historical expertise, and respect of our various ways of disseminating such a personal journey and knowledge (hooks, 2003; Freire, 2000). In his book, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life,* Palmer (2010) noted:

> education at its best--this profound human transaction called teaching and learning--is not just about getting information or getting a job. Education is about healing and wholeness. It is about empowerment, liberation, transcendence, about renewing the vitality of life. It is about finding and claiming ourselves and our place in the world." (p. 26).

The work of creating a caring scholar community entails opening a space of learning and teaching that is inclusive, that acknowledges and challenges power and dominance, all of which are critical in the sustenance of a caring scholar community.

The chapters of this dissertation will cover the role of ideology in my scholar identity, the lived experience of other students in the doctoral program, and a picture of a pedagogical project that could aid in the journey of a first-year doctoral student. The analytical framework used is critical race theory and critical pedagogy as they apply to chapters using the methodologies of autoethnography, *testimonios,* and Photo Voice. Particularly, storytelling is weaved throughout the document as a way to give voice to self, community and practice while recognizing the impact of power within the spaces we occupy.

In the next section the methodologies of autoethnography, *testimonios* and Photo Voice will be addressed to uncover doctoral students' experiences and meaning making in doctoral classrooms.

Autoethnography as a Methodology

As a qualitative research methodology, autoethnography involves a personal narrative of the researcher's lived experiences (Bochner & Ellis, 2003). Autoethnography is positioned to intentionally embrace subjectivity, engage in critical self-reflexivity, interrogate power and resist oppression (Denzin, 1997, Jones, 2005). Bochner and Ellis (2003) noted that autoethnography is "an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural" (p. 209). Furthermore, this autoethnography bridges the understanding of individual and culture in that doctoral students "look in (at themselves) and out (at the world)" describing personal connections to their experiences in the doctoral classroom (Boylorn, 2008, p. 413). Collins (2009), speaking to the experiences of women of color in the academy argues that they offer unique experiences and insights often excluded from the epistemological realm. Autoethnography provides for those on the margins of the academy a standpoint to interrogate, resist, and engage in praxis as a form of empowerment.

Ellis (2004) stated:

> autoethnography refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness. Back and forth autoethnographers gaze: First they look though an ethnographic wide angle lens, focusing outward on social and

> cultural aspects of their personal experience; then they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations. As they zoom backward and forward, inward and outward, distinctions between the personal and the cultural become blurred, sometimes beyond distinct recognition (p. 38).

This methodology positions me, as both the researcher and researched, at the center of my own educational experience in the doctoral classroom. If done well, autoethnographic work can create conditions at the most basic of human levels with the marginalized "Other." Coles (2014) stated that "stories are renderings of life; they can not only keep us company, but admonish us, point us in new directions, or give us the courage to stay in a given course. They can offer us kinsmen, kinswomen, comrades, advisers—offer us eyes through which we might see, other ears with we might make surroundings" (p. 159-160).

In essence, autoethnography has the ability to uproot those firmly planted, off the hegemonic epicenter by bridging relationships with the margins. The epicenter can then be redefined as a place of empathy, justice and care. As a methodology, autoethnography continues to hold a place of marginality in dominant research methodologies. Autoethnography confronts and challenges the illusion of objectivity in research by intentionally foregrounding the voice of an individual's experiences within a defined cultural context. Autoethnography is an intentional form of storying personal experiences in order to understand cultural experiences (Ellis, 2010). This methodology treats research as a political, socially just and conscious act by applying an analytical eye to the relationship between the individual and the culture they are experiencing (Ellis, 2010). It should not be surprising that autoethnography and critical race theory become a

bridge to reclaim my voice and power in the doctoral classroom.

Autoethnography and Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Within the context of autoethnography, critical race theory (CRT) becomes part of my framework for meaning making. CRT theorist like Solorzano and Villalpando (1998) noted that storytelling can be both liberatory and empowering. They understood the margins as a place of counter-storytelling as

> important social locations and processes, with many positive strengths, and as a rich source of information used to empower or transform those at the social margins…the margins can and should be viewed as both sites of oppression and sites of resistance, empowerment, and transformation" (p. 215).

Critical race theorists centers race and racism in all aspects of the research process while intersecting race, class and gender to uncover the lived experiences of people of color. In addition, critical race theory challenges dominant research agendas by viewing the experiences of people of color as sources of strengths (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Solorzano and Yosso (2002) argued that critical race theory in education is better explained as "a set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seek to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom" (p. 25). Additionally, Solorzano and Yosso (2002) developed five elements of the theoretical framework which include the following: 1) the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination; 2) the challenge to dominant ideology; 3) commitment to social justice; 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and 5) transdisciplinary perspective.

Critical race theorists call for the validations of methods by which people who are marginalize choose to describe their knowledge including autoethnographic narratives and *testimonios* just to name a few (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). In addition critical race theorist call for the recognition of producing new knowledge across disciplines to better understand the effects of racism, sexism, and classism in the life of people of color.

***Testimonio* as Methodology**

The genre of *testimonios* has its roots in Latin American oral tradition, exposing power, domination, and brutality; interrupting silence; and creating a call to action for voice and solidarity (Anzaldua, 1990). Chicana/Latina and feminist scholars have been adopting *testimonios* as an epistemology, pedagogy, and approach to social justice in academia. *Testimonio* directly challenges objectivity by "situating the individual in communion with a collective experience marked by marginalization, oppression, or resistance" (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga & Carmona, 2012, p. 363). *Testimonios* have a political purpose to actively resist power and build solidarity to challenge systems of oppression. *Testimonios* were first used to make visible the struggles of people who had experienced persecution by mostly Latin American governments and agencies (Burgos-Debray, 1984). As a research approach, *testimonio* blends the social, political, historical and cultural histories embedded in one's lived experiences as a means to bring about change.

As a methodological tool, *testimonio* is both a product and a process. As a methodological strategy, *testimonio* allows for mind, body, and spirit to serve as legitimate knowledge and engage in social transformation (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001). It is about enacting resistance by transforming silence into language and transgressing the boundaries of an

academic “mainstream space.” *Testimonio* makes the private public, with stories of pain, triumph, uncertainty, conviction, and growth. Reflection as part of *testimonio* challenges us to examine self and share with a dialogue partner in order to move from self-inquiry to shared experience (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001). Feedback is provided by dialogue partners to engage in meaning making and craft a collective consciousness, which could potentially lead to change of self and immediate environments. This adds a culturally relevant epistemological and analytic lens to the autoethnographic approach, which examines individuals and cultures of oppression.

The Latina Feminist Group (2001), a collective of 18 women who documented their private stories, answered Cherry Moraga’s call for “theory in the flesh…where the physical realities in our lives…all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity…by naming ourselves and by telling our stories in our own words (Moraga & Anzaldua, 2002, p. 21). The Latina Feminist Group (2001) created a space where the personal positioned within/against social, political, and cultural created a critical foundation of knowledge. This foundation honors the various subjectivities of our intersections of identity, exposing the complexities within the lived experience, both connections and tensions. “*Testimonio* has been critical in movements for liberation in Latin America, offering an artistic form and methodology to create politized understandings of identity and community…Similarly, many Latinas participated in the important political praxis of feminist consciousness-raising…Drawing from the various experiences, *testimonio* can be a powerful method for feminist research and praxis” (Latina Feminist Group, 2001, p. 79). Within the field of education, *testimonio* continues to serve as a powerful methodological tool to uncover systemic domination of students of color. In addition, it

privileges the oppressed by revealing the resistance, resilience, and hope transforming collectively to social justice (Huber, 2012). *Testimonio* is often used to deconstruct the apartheid of knowledge that exists in the academy allowing scholars like me to enter our knowledge, positionalities, and experiences into the process of theorizing, analyzing, researching, teaching, and reflecting. In essence, *testimonios* is a way of passing knowledge from one generation of scholars to another.

The Chapters: Data Collection and Analysis

This dissertation is written following a theme of exploration of self, community, and praxis. This paper will contain five chapters each with their own theme around scholar identity and the doctoral classroom. **Chapter 2, "When My Wild Tongue Speaks: An Autoethnography of Resistance in the Education Doctoral Classroom"** looks closely at my personal experiences in educational environments and specifically the doctoral classroom. In this chapter, I will adopt the metaphor of "taming the wild tongue" in an effort to highlight the borderland I occupy as a woman of color in the education doctoral classroom. Anzaldua (1990) notes that "wild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out" (p.54), illustrating the impact of speaking against injustice and resisting the status quo experienced in the doctoral classroom. With oral and written expression being at the heart of the academic acculturation process, one can argue that by robbing students of their own form of non-dominant academic expression to fit the academic mold, narratives are silenced or cut in order to sustain hegemony.

This chapter will utilize autoethnography to weave together my personal narrative in the context of the doctoral classroom. In essence, autoethnography is my tool to let my wild tongue speak and create a space for counter narratives of the experience of doctoral students in the

epicenter of White supremacy scholarship--the doctoral classroom. Jones (2008) noted that authoethnography "works to hold self and culture together, albeit not in equilibrium or stasis. Autoethnography writes a world in a state of flux and movement—between story and context, writer and reader, crisis and denouement. It creates charged moments of clarity, connection, and change" (p. 764). Much like praxis, autoethnography is a coming together of reflection, theory, and action. Literature often defines autoethnography as a narrative that critiques our positionality (of self) within particular social, cultural, and economic spaces (Ellis, 2004; Spry 2001).

Because we are actively in relationship with the established hierarchy of social, political, and economic conditions, it is critical to do research that unveils domination, power and control in academe. From "common sense" knowledge to the effect of how students experience the doctoral classroom, ideology is at the center of scholar identity impacting our lived experiences in doctoral education. This autoethnography will explore the tension between my existing identity and the newly imposed scholar identity in relation to my experiences in the doctoral classroom. In addition, I call attention to ideology as a tool for sorting students who have scholarly dispositions and those who do not. In his book, *Education and Power*, Apple (2013) spoke about ideology as being filled with contradictions and lacking a set of beliefs (p. 14). Ideology is a set of:

> lived meanings, practices, and social relations that are often internally inconsistent. They have elements within themselves that see through to the heart of the unequal benefits of a society and at one and the same time tend to reproduce the ideological relations and meanings that maintain the hegemony of

dominant classes. Because of this, ideologies are contested; they are continually struggled over (p. 14).

Being that the doctoral classroom is the epicenter of White supremacist scholarship, ideology is produced and distributed to the masses, making it a critical site to investigate.

My objective is to use my narratives from my time in the doctoral classroom to draw attention to the tension between scholar identity and the ideology present in the hegemonic classroom culture. This autoethnography will rely on personal memories and experiences as my primary source of information for this chapter (Chang, 2008). All memories and experiences have been chronicled in narrative form in a personal journal for the past three years. An evaluation and organization of these journal writings is useful in discovering patterns or themes that consistently emerge (Chang, 2008). In addition, thematic categories were created and expanded to analyze how I interact with the culture of the doctoral classroom.

Chapter 3, "Our *Testimonio*: Negotiating Scholar Identity and Positionality in the Doctoral Classroom" examines the lived experiences of six doctoral students at various level of completion in an education doctoral program (EDP) at a mid-sized public institution located in the Midwest. *Testimonios* is used as a method of resistance while weaving in the development of scholar identity against a hegemonic doctoral classroom culture. The intention is to create a space for support and encouragement, as well as to expose systemic oppression, isolation, and indoctrination of doctoral students into the academy. This narrative is intended to push the boundaries set forth by the hegemonic doctoral classroom culture, thus transforming the academic socialization process in order to open the doors to various ways of creating and contributing knowledge.

The focus of this chapter is: 1) to interview six doctoral students at various stages of completion in an education doctoral program; 2) to explore the roots of their *testimonios;* 3) to critically view and reflect on various dimensions of experiences in the classroom and its systemic forms of assimilation, oppression, and isolation; and 4) to urgently create a space for consciousness raising and formulate strategies for change in the EDP. With a mix of oral and written accounts, we collectively theorize connecting themes and make meaning of them. As part of this participatory research, the data reflect in detail the lived experiences of individual current students in the EDP. Written *testimonios* were collected and conversations recorded and transcribed with the permission of the participants. Through *testimonio* and positioned within critical race theory and Latina feminist epistemology, participants learned to trust our ways of knowing, how we understand and interpret the world of a doctoral classroom, and acknowledge that this lived knowledge is valid and valuable research. Lastly, I reviewed the data collected and the identified themes, developed a coding scheme, analyzed themes, and provided closing comments.

Chapter 4, "Counter-Hegemonic Pedagogy: Creating Space for First Year Doctoral Students" focuses on envisioning what a counter-hegemonic pedagogy and curriculum would look like in doctoral education. A counter-hegemonic pedagogy is guided by democratic and social justice principles that promote equity, respect for human beings, improvement of the human condition, and the pursuit of knowledge. Accordingly, a doctoral pedagogy and curriculum is then practiced as a dialogic process that fully engages doctoral students and liberates them from the hegemonic ideology and practices of doctoral education. This dialogic process generate thoughtful interactions that have the potential of transforming the immediate

social environment and experience within a doctoral classroom. Based on critical pedagogy principles as well as experiential knowledge, I explored the use of Photo Voice as a project in the Foundations of Scholarship course taught to students entering the doctoral education program. From the development of the syllabus and selection of readings to careful design of projects, this teaching process was caring, nurturing and dialogic and served as an immediate counter-hegemonic pedagogy and challenge to the normative culture of doctoral classrooms. Dominant pedagogies can be dehumanizing, harmful, and isolating. The objective is to add to the scholarly conversations about transforming doctoral education by creating intentional courses and experiences that nurture first-year doctoral students while creating a sense of community. I argue that starting this process right at the beginning of their career as doctoral students set a foundation for comradery and support not previously experienced inside the classroom. This chapter makes explicit the ways in which doctoral faculty can better support and provide enriching environments that nurture scholars. Though not exhaustive, the literature review highlights critical pedagogy most notably the works by Freire (1970), hooks (1994), McLaren and Kincheloe (2007), and Peters (2009).

McLaren and Giroux (1996) defined pedagogy as a "process where meaning is continuously (re) created and where identities of the self and others are enacted within discursive practices and power/knowledge relations" (p. 34). In this chapter, critical pedagogy takes on the challenge of addressing the tensions within and between identities. Critical pedagogy compliments Freire's notion of praxis in that it is a dialogic relationship of reciprocal action and reflection between faculty and students. Critical pedagogy gives students an opportunity to acquire a dialectical consideration of social life (McLaren, 2006), enabling the student and

faculty to engage in learning that interrogates knowledge and assumes that no curriculum is neutral (Shor, 1992). Critical pedagogy is concerned with locating hidden biases and colonizing concepts that re-inscribe racist and sexist practices in society (hooks, 1994). Such an engaged and caring pedagogy requires an ethic of caring (Noddings, 2008), or a state of being in relation, characterized by receptivity, relatedness, and engrossment. In this pedagogy, there is an understanding that both student and faculty are in a mutual state of seeking knowledge without promoting the dehumanizing culture of objectivism (hooks, 1994).

There is little discussion or research pointing to ways in which doctoral faculty and instructors can rethink their courses to assist first-year doctoral students in their entry into a doctoral program, address their fears, and assist in developing a sense of community and support from the beginning. This chapter represents one example of the way in which a Photo Voice project can be used as a tool to enhance the experiences of first-year students in the doctoral classroom. Wang (1999) defined Photo Voice as a "process which people can use to identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (p. 185).

As the Photo Voice tool was used in the doctoral classroom, it enabled first-year students to share their stories by using photographs and creating a video that most accurately communicated how they made sense of their scholar identity, their journey to and from the doctoral program. Photo Voice as a learning tool is often used in community-based participatory research with the intent to empower those who have been silenced and promote social change (Wang, 2005). The instructors assigned a Photo Voice based in the concept developed by Wang and Burris (1997). The focus of the assignment, through the application of photos and video, was intended to foster a sense of community, enhance the understanding of the program and the

doctoral journey, honor lived experiences, and provide insight about issues critical to first year doctoral students. This project details the active practice of praxis in which both students and teachers are active participants in the creation of community in the classroom. The project required first-year doctoral students to take or collect as many photographs as they wished with a focus on scholar identity as the theme. Students were free to determine the value of the photographs and how they connected to their understanding of their scholar identity. Students took the entire semester to complete this project with the idea that course readings will help them better reflect and analyze their concept of scholar identity. At the end of the semester, students emailed their projects to the entire class as a means to value lived experiences as knowledge and create community.

Theorizing the experiences of doctoral students in the classroom is a difficult yet important task. Doctoral education is deeply embedded within the White supremacist educational system to the extent that it has been left unquestioned. Without a caring, nurturing doctoral classroom, it becomes more fundamentally critical to illuminate the hegemonic modes of teaching, researching and mentoring emerging scholars. There is a direct connection between the active maintenance of hegemony and the experiences of doctoral students in classrooms. "For us, true speaking is not solely an expression of creative power, it is an act of resistance, a political gesture that challenges the politics of domination that render us nameless and voiceless" (hooks, 1997, p. 33). This dissertation is my act of resistance.

CHAPTER 2. WHEN MY WILD TONGUE SPEAKS: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF RESISTANCE IN THE EDUCATION DOCTORAL CLASSROOM

"If I do not bring all of who I am to whatever I do,
then I bring nothing, or nothing of lasting worth,
for I have withheld my essence"
-Audre Lorde, 2009 (p. 182-183).

Positioning Myself: *Catholic School meets RUN D.M.C.*

I should have never made it as far as I have….I'm an only child, born in Puerto Rico, to a single mother who worked 3-4 jobs to keep a roof over my head and food on the table. I began my education in a dead end public school system where teachers did not care to teach. We were not expected to become anything anyway, so why bother teaching these poor kids? I could not understand the point of school outside of the fact that it served as free daycare so that my mother could work.

At an early age, I learned to run rather quickly. See, my home was located in a war zone. I was surrounded by gangs, drive bys and drugs. I literally ran everyday as fast as I could between a lines of fire: home and school, school and home. This was supposed to be my sacred place…a place in between…the borderlands of my life. Instead, my journey to and from school was a minefield. While I was never good at praying, I would pray so that I would not get shot, or raped. Invisibility became a survival technique. An easy prey for the drug addicts and miserable souls that had lost their humanity in the process of life.

Soon after my mother accepted a government job, she enrolled me in Catholic school. "This will ensure you have the best education," she said. I did not belong there. And so I entered the polished halls with my new pressed uniform into what felt like a prison. How is a girl from the streets supposed to act and behave like a good Catholic middle class girl? Chapel was every Wednesday morning. Usually this meant I needed to list my sins, pray, sing and wait for my turn to talk to a priest in a dark room. Was my sin poverty? Or being the child of a single mother? Or was it that incident where a girl annoyed me, and I smacked her upside the head with a Bible? Yes…I know. That Bible was easily accessible, but I guess I should not have screamed that God was on my side as I threw the book at her. This, of course, sent me on a round trip to confession, again.

You know how teachers keep the most troubled children as close to them as possible? Well, let's just say they were getting to know me well. After my third trip to confession, I was given a task: be in charge of music, which involved a vinyl record and a turntable. It was the 1980's, and I was a huge fan of Run D.M.C. I looked around the Chapel. It was quiet except for the few girls praying and holding their rosaries. I turned to review the selections of vinyl provided by the nuns and found *Ave Maria*, a crowd favorite. The vinyl shined against the light and after dusting the turn table, I was ready to amuse the masses. I gently placed the needle on the vinyl; the music began, and so did my beat mixing…*Aaaa-VE...Aaaa-Ve Maaaa-riaria.* To say the least, I was relegated to the back of the Chapel with a tall order of 100 Hail Mary's. Instead of saying my Hail Mary's, I would say "melon, melon, melon" (watermelon in Spanish). From a far, it looked like I was doing what I was told to do, but instead, I was resisting….

Introduction

In her book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldua (1987) began the fifth chapter by narrating her experience during a dentist appointment. Anzaldua (1987) noted that the dentist finds her tongue to be unruly and disobedient. Thus, the central metaphor of "taming the wild tongue" sets the stage for analysis of identity and the doctoral classroom. In this chapter, I will adopt the metaphor of "taming the wild tongue" in an effort to highlight the borderland I occupy as a woman of color in the education doctoral classroom. Anzaldua (1987) noted that "wild tongues can't be tamed, they can only be cut out" (p.54), illustrating the impact of speaking against injustice and resisting the status quo experienced in the doctoral classroom. With oral and written expression at the heart of the academic acculturation process, one can argue that by robbing students of their own form of non-dominant academic expression to fit the academic mold, narratives are silenced or cut to sustain hegemony.

Women of color in doctoral education are highly under-represented (Asher, 2010). They are often attempting to function in a traditional academic environment deeply rooted in a culture of domination and bullying (Twale & De Luca, 2008). Microaggressions, subtle discrimination, and intellectual intimidation only scratch the surface of the challenges experienced by women of color trying to have a presence in doctoral education. Yet, their presence contributes to the academy by bringing new perspectives and frameworks to research and directly challenging White dominated scholarship (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991). In my case, I have travelled to and from various educational settings, including most recently the doctoral classroom. My own educational biography is permeated by race, gender, and class issues which are innate in the ivory tower. My educational experiences shape my autoethnographic work in this chapter.

Because the doctoral classroom is the epicenter of White supremacist scholarship, ideology is produced and distributed to the masses, making it a critical site to investigate. My objective is to use my narratives from my time in the doctoral classroom to draw attention to the tension between scholar identity and the ideology present in the hegemonic classroom culture.

hooks (2003) stated that people of color struggle certain foundational elements in a White supremacy: self-esteem; confidence in our ability to think; confidence in our ability to cope with the basic challenges of life, confidence in our right to be successful and happy; the feeling of being worthy, deserving, entitled to assert our needs and wants, achieving our values, and enjoying the fruits of our efforts. In an academic culture that reinforces an impostor syndrome, this mask helps hide a potentially chronic anxiety, fear, and shame that conceal part of our identities in an effort to survive the academy (Craddock, Birnbaum, Rodriguez, Cobb & Zeeh, 2011). The notion of masking one's identity in the hegemony of the academy serves the need to survive this very racist and patriarchal institution of higher learning. Whether we acknowledge it or not, doctoral programs across the country are not just teaching emerging scholars the art of objectivity and the values, traditions and expectations of the academy; they are also teaching us to construct a certain persona through our academic speech and normative believe systems that play the part of what is considered to be a scholar.

The mask is both an acculturation process and a survival strategy. To a person of color, these masks can be steeped in self-doubt, self-hatred, and other forms of internalized oppression. Anzaldua (2002) argued that between our masks exist spaces that can provide us with the ability to break through these masks. If I am either compelled or forced to wear masks, how can I as a person of color fight this masking process and stand strong in my commitment to stay my

authentic self? What if I honored my identity not only as part of the struggle but in direct opposition to the dehumanization of self in the doctoral classroom? A mere opposition is not enough. Through the use of autoethnography, I come to a deeper understanding of how doctoral classrooms work and how they attempted to swallow me whole.

This chapter will utilize autoethnography to connect my personal narrative and reflections on my experiences early in education, and most recently, in the doctoral education classroom. In essence, autoethnography is my tool to let my wild tongue speak and create a space for counter narratives of doctoral students' experiences in the epicenter of White supremacy scholarship, the doctoral classroom. Literature often defines autoethnography as a narrative that critiques our positionality (of self) within particular social, cultural and economic spaces (Ellis, 2004; Spry 2001).

Culture of Doctoral Education

Lovitts (2005) argued that the culture of doctoral education can be understood as a normative socio-cultural institutional context that prepares students to earn their doctoral degrees. Wulff and Nerad (2006) highlighted three major effects of the culture of doctoral education that impact the doctoral student experience. The major impacts are outside the institution, within the institution, and within individual program (Wulff and Nerad, 2006). The impact of the culture of doctoral education manifests itself through the socialization process of the students where they are indoctrinated into the customs, values and traditions of the program. This effect is disseminated by faculty through orientations, advising, mentorship, teaching, and supervision of students (Bieber & Worley, 2006). This process begins to assert the hegemonic culture of doctoral education, the haves and have nots of scholarly disposition. Austin (2002)

noted in his qualitative study that “students must make sense of the academy and its values, its expectations of them as graduate students, the academy’s conceptions and definitions of success, and the models of professional and personal life that it offers to those aspiring to join the academic ranks” (p. 103). As students begin to make sense of the culture of doctoral education, students begin a process of assimilation to the values and norms of the academy. This assimilation holds a hegemonic kind of knowledge, research and practice in high regard that begins to devalue diverse perspectives (Gonzalez, 2007; Solorzano & Villalpando, 1998).

The assimilation process into doctoral education can leave students feeling isolated, questioning and doubting their academic abilities (Gay, 2004). Doctoral education is challenging enough, it is further complicated if one is a doctoral student of color. With racism and other isms being so inherent in the culture of higher education, students of color have to additionally deal with perceived individual and institutional racism, cultural isolation, tokenism, and lack of diverse perspectives regarding teaching, research, and practice in the curriculum, as well as an overall discouragement from using culturally appropriate theories, frameworks, and epistemologies (Burciaga & Tavares, 2006; Gay, 2004; Watt, 2007) These often dehumanizing experiences contribute greatly to the low completion rates of doctoral students of color (Solozarno & Yosso, 2001). As part of the assimilation process into doctoral education, this system has the potential to push students out of the hall of doctoral education (Gay, 2004). The tension between upholding the status quo for the sake of protecting the White supremacy culture of doctoral education makes the experience of students of color much more academically, socially, culturally and emotionally difficult. Gonzalez (2007) noted “the academy has a history of exclusivity and racism…that works against people of color…to preserve the status quo”

(p. 298). Hence, there continues to be a need to question and expose the culture of doctoral education and the experiences of students of color. Thus, I lean on the use of narrative with a theoretical foundation in Critical Race Theory (CRT).

Autoethnography as a Means for Self-Recovery

Denzin (1997) noted that scholars should create new sorts of experiential texts such as narratives of self, including poems, memoirs, and autoethnographies, to name a few. Autoethnography can serve as a powerful means of creating resistance, survival and liberation. Solorzano and Yosso (2002) argued that narratives unmask power and privilege as a way to challenge the status quo. Stories about marginalization and oppression can heal by legitimizing the lived experiences and perspectives of those on the margin of the doctoral classroom. Delgado (1989) noted that counter stories can build a sense of community among those on the margins by providing a space to share their reality, a shared understanding while challenging the dominant ideology permeating academe. It is critical to consider that the selection of autoethnography as a research tool is a commitment to my own critical consciousness.

This autoethnography places me in the center for the study. It is my unapologetic emotion that is captured in writing with the intent to place the reader along side of me. The process entails telling vignettes, analyzing the general themes, and making sense of my reflections (Denzin, 1997). In essence, autoethnography can empower the one telling the story as well as those listening. hooks (1997) noted that “when the radical voice speaks about domination we are speaking to those who dominate” (p. 28). After all, academic language is a place of struggle. I went to graduate school to sanitize my language so that I can finish doctoral education, write this

dissertation, and fit perfectly into the mold of academe. But silence began to attempt to get a hold of me early in my life.

Silence Became Me

Catholic school beat the Jesus out of me and so did my mom. With the new job came new pressures, and there was a price to be paid. My mother was unhappy with her life, and to have a child who questioned and challenged everything was constant struggle. She wanted me quiet, invisible yet accessible when she needed to release some pressure.

One afternoon, I had completed my chores and had asked to go to a movie with friends. The answer was no. I questioned it. She hated that. After a few verbal exchanges, in typical teenage fashion, I slammed my door and locked it. My mother was enraged. She began to hit my door with a hammer until she put two huge holes in it. "Open the damn door, you bitch, I'm going to teach you a lesson about questioning my authority." I knew what was coming; it was too familiar. Once she kicked the door open, I noticed something shiny in her hand…a knife. She jumped on me, cornered me, grabbed my neck tightly, and placed the knife across it. I could feel the cold blade and its sharpened edge. I pleaded with her for what felt like hours, but she would not let go. Finally, she did and told me to clean the mess.

I was 14 years old, and at that moment, I decided that I needed to find a way out of this place. My only escape was education. I immersed myself in books, became silent. At school, I endured teachers reminding me that I was a charity case…they allowed me in the school because they felt sorry for me. The reality is that they had made up their minds. I was not school material, certainly not college material. I was meant to be poor, barefoot, and pregnant. I was good enough for welfare. I did not speak of this until years later.

Sadly, these realities created an educational atmosphere where not only college was rarely discussed with students like me, but speaking against the established order often resulted in social, cultural, and even physical punishment. Silence became both a tool of resistance and an oppressive chokehold that could cause my death. My voice was a weapon against the oppressive side of education and a tool to democratize and liberate my experiences as a scholar on the margins of the academy. My voice has allowed me to be critically reflective of my educational surroundings especially as I became a student in a doctoral program. I relate my own sense of awakening, of releasing my tongue after years of silence to the words of Gloria Anzaldua (2002), telling me to unleash my tongue and hooks (1997) encouraging me to talk back.

From the onset, my entrance into the education doctoral program was in direct conflict with my identity as a professional woman of color and the embedded hegemonic ideological and structural constructs deep in the fabric of the doctoral educational context. In essence, how I live my life and make sense of it socially, politically, and culturally may not align with the "common knowledge" academic culture formed in a White dominated doctoral program. Thus, it is inevitable that from the beginning of my doctoral experience, I would interrogate the role of doctoral education in the development and production of hegemonic ideologies and how it influences the development of the scholar, especially scholars of color.

Am I behaving and acting as a scholar? How do I know I'm playing the role well? Should I fool myself into believing that if I keep my nose in the studies, do as they say, not question, and display the proper etiquette for the education doctoral program that I will somehow get through this journey conflict-free? My mere presence in the doctoral classroom is a reminder of racial and class inequality. O'Connor and Cordova (2010) noted:

> our presence, as working-class people of color (especially women of color), in an institution which values itself on its elitist criteria for admission, forces the debates and challenges previously sacred canons of objective truth. Our presence, therefore, and the issues we raise, threaten the class legitimation function of the University. It is probably for this reason that our presence here is so complex—and so important (p. 18).

In the next session, I will explore the intersection between autoethnography and critical race theory as a way to examine my scholar identity in the education doctoral classroom.

Autoethnography and Critical Race Theory (CRT)

This autoethnography aims to infuse both narrative and theory as a way to examine how my identity as a scholar has been marginalized in the education doctoral classroom. My arguments are derived from personal experiences in the doctoral classroom. For this reason, I have selected authoethnography as my methodology of choice, coupled with Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a way to highlight voices often excluded in the academy. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) stated that voice in the form of storytelling is integral to critical race theory. Tate also argued:

> a first step on the road to justice that provides a way to communicate the experiences and realities of the oppressed. Thus, without authentic voices of people of color (as teachers, parents, administrators, students, and community members) it is doubtful that we can say or know anything useful about education in their communities" (p. 58).

Without this voice, the education doctoral program fails to realize its mission, and in practice, only serves as a beacon to the hegemonic established order of the academy. The use of autoethnography gives me room to acknowledge and validate my presence in the doctoral classroom while drawing attention to my marginalized state within the dominant structure of the program.

Autoethnography as a methodology is positioned to embrace subjectivity, engage critical self-reflexivity, speak rather than being spoken for, interrogate power, and resist oppression (Denzin, 1997; Calafell & Moreman, 2009). Autoethnography combined with critical race theory is like breathing life into what bell hooks (1989) called “talking back”:

> moving from silence into speech is for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and those who stand and struggle side by side a gesture of defiance that heals, that makes new life and new growth possible. It is that act of speech, of “talking back,” that is no mere gesture of empty words, that is the expression of our movement from object to subject—the liberated voice” (p. 9).

Weaving CRT and autoethnography asks for an explicit commitment to move from merely looking at life to an active standpoint rooted in resistance and praxis. Collins (2009) noted that “knowledge for knowledge’s sake is not enough--Black feminist thought must be tied to Black women’s lived experiences and aim to better those experiences in some fashion” (p. 35). This intersection is a means to raise consciousness regarding the experience of doctoral students in doctoral classrooms, as well as embrace the ability to humanize us within the intersecting oppressions.

In an effort to make sense of my experiences, I drew from Critical Race Theory (CRT) to provide a window into the ways in which my Latina, gendered, classed identities were in constant tension with the culture of the education doctoral program. CRT helps center race in the conversation while examining the active resistance of a scholar identity prescribed by academe. In addition, CRT combined with my personal narrative can bring to the surface the analysis of oppression and resistance while creating a space for lived experiences. By intertwining my narrative with CRT, my lived experiences of marginalization in the education doctoral program are at the center of this discussion. My writing reflects my personal experiences. For this reason, I have selected autoethnography as a methodology. The partnership of CRT and autoethnography provides a much needed space in the academy to hear the voices that continue to be excluded in academe. Without the room for voice, doctoral programs would be unable to examine new ways in which they can provide more equitable, supportive environments for the future generation of scholars.

Killing Me Softly

I had no intention of keeping the personal private because doing so would allow for racism, sexism, and classism to kill me softly. To ensure that I do not die a slow death, or pass away in silence, I am going to speak of my experiences in the doctoral classroom. Lorde (1984) reminded me that

> we can sit in our corners mute forever while our sisters and ourselves are wasted, while our children are distorted and destroyed, while our earth is poisoned; we can sit in our safe corners mute as bottles, and we will still be no less afraid (p. 42).

And her words stuck in my head. Thus, I gathered strength to page-by-page fight harder because if I shut up in all the ways the world tells me to, I will still be no less afraid.

My journey into the education doctoral program has had its share of turns, dead ends and straight ahead lights. I have come to this space with an awareness and understanding of the complexity that defines my being in higher education. I have entered a hegemonic culture of academe as a first generation, low income woman of color who has defined and redefined her role in this world and has strengthened her sense of self and thus embraced fully her various identities. Both dominant and oppressive identities shape my thinking, my inclination to critical theory, and my curiosity expressed via qualitative research. It is all of this that also places me in a precarious location within the academy.

Education has been both a sanctuary and a prison. It has given me a space where I could explore, examine, and discover aspects of myself in ways that have been life transforming. However, that which I have loved has also hurt me. The classroom walls have served as a prison in which I needed to acculturate and morph myself into an abstract definition of scholar. Suddenly, I felt the tension…a pressure cooker inside of me…a prescribed scholar identity. This scholar identity was everything I knew to be aware of. It is dominant, dismissive, distant, elitist, classist, racist…at least I had understood it that way. The classroom was a place of contingency. A warfare between oppressed and dominant self, brown and White selves, rich and poor selves.

My first years in the education doctoral program I spent resisting the scholar identity. There was too much at stake. I could lose so much of myself in this process, and this degree was definitely not worth that. And yet, I could not stay away from it. There was something keeping me in the doctoral program. While I have come to understand that my dissatisfaction with the

doctoral program has been my resistance to a dominant scholar identity, I am on a quest to redefine my version of scholar in a way that it does not eat me alive. The journey into doctoral education is complicated on its own, add intersections of identities and academic culture to the mix, the system of academe will push back.

This is the Oppressor, I Need to Talk to You

My computer says it is 3:30 p.m. It is time to start packing my belongings and heading to my 4 p.m. class. Thanks to a supportive boss, I'm able to work full-time and get approval to take a class each semester. This is not mentioning that I have a toddler at home. The classroom is not too far from my office. I walk out of my building through the Memorial Union to stay warm and into the classroom. It is a great thing that many of these buildings are connected, especially when it is 30 degrees below outside. I enter that classroom and know a few people who work at the college as well as one who is a Dean. I immediately notice a few students of color, mostly international, but I'm so happy to see them.

I quickly introduce myself to them to establish rapport. It is something that as a person of color you do. You acknowledge the other people of color in the room either with a nod, hello or an introduction. The faculty members are mostly White with more men than women in the ranks. The class seems like a usual class. The professor stands in front of the classroom, Power Point slides running through the screen, a few jokes, but much lectured in style. This really surprises me. I guess I imagined doctoral education being more dialogue-oriented with thoughtful discourse, especially in an Adult Education Program. Instead, the class became filled with reflection papers that were more a regurgitation of what we had read or talked about in class. As

long as the class was managed in this fashion, I had no real need to speak with certainty of anything seen as controversial. Everything was kept very polite and on the surface.

In essence, doctoral courses were presenting me with an opportunity to absorb the information being given and spit it back on a paper. I had mistaken this program for what I had understood Adult Education to be: a justice-oriented approach to education. As part of the class, we were introduced to the faculty. This was an interesting exercise in who could out do the others' credentials. Words of wisdom to a successful completion of the program included a warning about a potential divorce, for those who were married, and a point about how women will wear yoga pants and stop wearing makeup. I could not believe what I was hearing, yet people were laughing it up, maybe nervously. What kind of advice is that? After all, I had already completed several courses, and they were not at all challenging. This was the faculty welcome to the program for doctoral students. Immediately, I began to question whether this was a program I wanted to continue.

As I continued to take courses, I noticed that the newer faculty had more of an interest in dialogue and critical thought than others did. There was less time lecturing and more time discussing as a big group and in small groups. This gave me the opportunity to get to know classmates a little more and speak a little more. At times, in my speaking, a few opportunities became exciting in the open dialogue. My voice was different. I highlighted inequities, gave food for thought around language that I found to be racist, classist, or sexist. I began to speak, and this became a problem. As long as I was in classes, where students sat in a medically induced coma pretending to expand their doctoral minds, I was ok. The minute I opened my mouth, and my

sharp tongue challenged what was being discussed, I became a problem. I felt alone. A professor noticed, a few others, especially the international students, heard me and agreed with me.

Since the beginning of my doctoral experience, I have found that my voice, both oral and written, switches depending on my relationship, a type of code. As I wrote my candidacy paper, I found myself struggling to make sense of this academic distance between the paper to be submitted to faculty and the voice of my experiences. The acknowledgement of this distance helped me make better sense of the split personality type of experience that permeates higher education. Somehow, higher education values the distance between the self from educational practices. As a woman of color who has grown up honoring storytelling as a viable, respected form of knowledge, I was being indoctrinated away from honoring the voice to detaching from the voice. The ability to do this successfully creates a sense of invisibility. As one of very few Latinas in the doctoral classroom, how am I to be both visible (the mere fact that I look Latina), and yet invisible at the same time? Keeping this in mind, there is an expectation that you disconnect from self and connect into a distorted version of self that somehow informs theories, writes texts, and makes valuable contributions to the academy. To break away from this hegemonic, suffocating pattern in doctoral discourse and courses, I have needed to locate myself on the margin to distance myself from the academic bullying, to honor community, but most of all, to evolve into a scholar whose identity has stayed whole.

The use of autoethnography validates, honors and draws attention to my marginality within the structure of doctoral education. In essence, it is my version of the borderland. Anzaldua (1987) introduced us to the concept of borderland as the ability to "inhabit multiple selves without feeling incoherence." While I cannot deny that I have felt disjointed many times, I

have been able to sustain a space that makes it possible to theorize my narrative, both personal and political, as well as advance my beliefs and turn them into action. Without this space, I am unsure if I would have been at this stage of the program. As a scholar from the margins, it is my obligation to contribute toward my own critical consciousness, even as my reflections may at times be fragmented, my humanness is what serves to fuel the understanding of identity and the relationship (or lack of) with existing dominant structures.

Solorzano and Villalpando (1998) noted that critical race theorists rationalize the margins as a place for counternarrative, as a liberatory and empowering form of storytelling. Solorzano and Villalpando (1998) stated:

> race, gender, or class marginality as important social locations and processes, with many positive strengths, and as a rich source of information used to empower or transform those at the social margins…the margins can and should be viewed as both sites of oppression and sites of resistance, empowerment, and transformation (p. 215).

In addition, Solorzano and Yosso (2002) developed five elements that highlight how critical race theory as a framework aims to identify, analyze, and transform structural, ideological, and cultural aspects of hegemony in the doctoral classroom. The first element,

> the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination," calls attention to race and racism as they relate to other forms of oppression. The second element is "the challenge to dominant ideology" which questions the notion of neutrality and equal opportunity as a way to protect the White supremacy system. Commitment to social justice, the third element, requires us to

> eradicate racism, sexism, and poverty and the empowering of subordinated minority groups (p. 26).

The fourth element calls for "the centrality of experiential knowledge" as a way to recognize and legitimize diverse ways of knowing, including forms to express them like storytelling. This recognition challenges hegemonic ways of understanding the experience of the "Other." Lastly, the fifth element argues for a "transdisciplinary perspective" by recognizing the importance of generating new knowledge through intersecting diverse academic disciplines.

"Am I Losing My Shit?"

I am losing my shit. Unapologetically, fearlessly, and rightfully so. Before I go to class, I take a deep breath in hopes the sharp pain and headache I have been experiencing go away. This is the world I inhale, a woman of color in the doctoral classroom. My expectations are low; I will more likely experience frustration and hurt, but most importantly, the blatant reminder that I am invisible. My knowledge, my people's histories, my voice…they are all invisible, and when I make them visible, there is hell to pay. I pay with dismissals, the up and down looks from disapprovals, the gang-related violence that a White scholarly mob can create for a woman of color. It does not matter where I have been, what matters is that I'm an outspoken Latina, not White. If I was White, I would be praised and encouraged to publish my shit.

To bite or not bite my tongue? I need to protect my mind, my body, my existence in this classroom. Sometimes I had to bite my tongue so hard that it hurt and bled. I could taste it, and it angered me. If I chose silence for one day in the classroom, my blood pressure would be sky high; I would lose my shit. I am not willing to stay silent at the expense of my health, and the bleeding will need to stop immediately. I am tired of having to participate in class as a way to

enlighten classmates' racist ideology as it relates to poor people. One classmate noted that we have a lot to learn from the Europeans when it comes to racism. I think this person actually thought that this was a good thing. But history and the lived experiences of many tell a different story. We did learn a lot from the Europeans; for example, slavery as an economic endeavor. We still have a lot to learn. I was once optimistic in believing that I can step into this White space and my voice of resistance will be heard, maybe even taken seriously…maybe. I will speak my mind without regret and wear my ancestral armor to protect myself. I will not regret it one bit because I am worth standing up for; we are worth standing up for. I will finish what I started—"shaken but not shattered" (Yancy, 2008, p. 2).

My sharp tongue might just have created a space for people like me to be remembered, considered, and fought for. I immersed myself in hooks, Lorde, and Davis' work as a way to regain strength, practice some self-love, and create a sanctuary that would legitimize me as a human being. This is my shield. One day I began to wonder if I could channel this frustration, anger, and pain in a healthier, more productive way. I began to reflect on who I am as a scholar and as a person; what is my world and how do I move in and out of it? Audre Lorde (1984) whispered that "every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being. Focused with precision it can become a powerful energy serving progress and change" (p. 127). I found clarity between the lines and why autoethnography is my home place.

I'm finally in a class that is open to explore various ways of knowing and challenges what the academics consider the Holy Grail--objectivity. The course requires reading *Mismeasure of Man*. The book questioned unethical, racist practices in research and pressed us to

think about our roles as scholars in the academy. This book was like a breath of fresh air. I devoured the book, and it showed. It was highlighted from cover to cover, pages marked, quotes underlined. I was ready for a thoughtful dialogue. The professor divided us into small discussion groups to provide a more intimate setting for discussion. The group of mostly White women began to critique the actions of the researchers, but from a judgmental angle, and a clear distance between the then and now. "We are different," was said by one of the researchers. The question of the value of objectivity surfaced. A stale silence took hold in that room. I once again dared to speak. This simple action seemed like such a daring act in this environment.

I dared to speak, and questioned this superficial distance created between the researchers then and the researchers now. They hid behind objectivity and neutrality as a way to get away with inhumane and racist practices of the time. How is that different now? Are we not innately racist, sexist etc.? Thus our topics, literature selection, methodology, and conclusions are steeped in that ideology. You would think I farted in the room the way they looked at me. I had just violated a cardinal rule in the culture of doctoral education, and yet I did not know what it was. After all, I have been left intentionally isolated. My rebellious self sat there defiantly. The group simply disregarded my contributions to the discussion by sitting there, staring and deferring to the professor who by then had entered the room to check on the discussion. Frustrated, I returned to the big classroom angry at the dismissal of me as another student in the classroom. It was clear I had not received the memo about participating in the dialogue that sustains status quo only.

The context of the "Am I Losing My Shit?" shows how academic cultural values and expectations can be projected onto the doctoral student of color. The vignette above also shows an example of the level of struggle and resilience needed to navigate doctoral programs. In

essence, I am navigating a racialized and gendered terrain as I am interacting with other doctoral students and making meaning of my daily experience in the doctoral classroom.

I Am More Afraid of Silence than Harsh Responses

A group of classmates came together to write a proposal for a regional conference. We agreed that the focus should be on the doctoral student experience especially in the classroom and remotely. Our program is considered a hybrid program in which students can either attend classes on the main campus or connect remotely via Interactive Video Network (IVN). We had a meeting where I came into the office of my advisor, who was assisting us with this presentation, while the other students connected via Skype. As we struggled to ensure the proposal was an accurate view of the experiences, I provided an example of an experience mostly to highlight the inequities, essentially ensuring that I stayed honest to all perspectives. What happened next was completely the opposite of what we were attempting to do in the first place. As I was providing an example of personal experience as a way to make a point and challenge what had just been said, one of my White classmates cut me off and began to say that he was tired of listening to me complain about the program and invited me to leave if I did not like it. I sat back, shocked and hurt. The other two classmates (a White woman and a White man) stayed silent. The room felt heavy. My advisor attempted to keep the conversation going. By then, I sat silent with tears flowing. The worst of it all is that no one challenged what just happened. I was left there, wounded. I walked out of the office and vowed to myself that I would not allow myself to be in that situation again. The little bit of what I thought was a possible community in the program had not been what I thought it was after all. I had tears in my eyes and a tightness in my throat. I

felt so angry by how much I had to try to convince others of my existence and humanity. I am far more afraid of silence than I am of harsh responses.

This narrative provides an example of the ways in which race, gender and class play a role in the interactions with other students and faculty in the program. Sue (2007) identified the experiences as microaggressions, “commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicates hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults” (p.278). Because of the lack of discussion or inclusion of various ways of knowing and perspectives, I have shared my perspective as a counter narrative to what is being discussed. Often times, I was the only U.S. person of color, with a few international students in the classroom. As an act of resistance, I spoke even at the risk of being further isolated, labeled or simply invited to exit the program if I did not like it. As the most outspoken one, I could see my international brothers and sisters shaking their heads often and approaching me afterwards about their experiences or opinions in the matter. I could have chosen to stay quiet and let issues go unchallenged. But, I had to reflect on who I am as a person. I speak, sharply at times, but I speak. Is it better for me to speak and risk being hurt or being hurt anyhow in silence? I decided that it was better to speak. These experiences in turn present an added pressure for doctoral students of color in the classroom (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). As students of color continue to experience microaggressions on a daily basis, it affects the way in which they experience their graduate education. These experiences can be so isolating that it can feel as though you are the only one experiencing these hegemonic behaviors. Without an adequate, supportive community, students question whether they fit into the program or if it is even worth the hassle. Other students may resort to silence or letting it go, I go to my classes, and do what they ask me to do, and maybe I

will get through the program unharmed. Because I understood the need to protect myself, I left the classroom and began a series of independent studies with two faculty members--one of them my advisor--who were committed to do better as educators, as researchers, as allies to myself and others.

I could not stand the thought of having my participation in the doctoral classes be ruled by self-censorship. I could not let it go; I could not silence myself. The consequences for me not just socially and academically but to my physical and emotional wellbeing were too great. A critical aspect of being a doctoral student is being able to acculturate to the values, expectations, rules, and norms of the doctoral program. This means that doctoral students must integrate and practice dominant-centered epistemological and philosophical ideologies. The narrative above highlights another way in which the "Am I Losing My Shit?" represents how doctoral students of color are engaging with their graduate school environment and their negotiation of what can be a very dehumanizing narrative that literally can push students to their limits. The perception of the absence of scholarship that focuses on diverse ways of knowing places a burden on doctoral students to function as the sole advocate for such scholarship.

The narrative emerges from specific moments in my doctoral experience marked by the resistance between the normative and lived experience. These moments pressed me to reflect on what I am willing to tolerate and what I simply cannot. These experiences for the most part were completely dismissed or normalized by many in the program. This struggle in engaging with the dominant environment creates a space for questioning our own experiences. This is where the narrative of "Am I Losing My Shit?" is a borderland of both confrontation of hegemonic practices and a negotiation of identity and every day experiences as part of the doctoral program.

Conclusion

Critical race theory (CRT) argues that dominant modes of scholarship have disenfranchised people of color and others to further reproduce inequities in doctoral education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). These narratives connect to the struggles to negotiate this environment while attempting to attain a doctoral degree. CRT challenges faculty, students and administrators to examine and interrogate dominant ideologies that could shift what is valued as knowledge and scholarship through curriculum development, recruitment of both faculty and students, and the level of support afforded to graduate students in general. The ideology of objectivity and meritocracy are exactly what CRT attempts to dismantle (Bell, 1995). However, the culture of doctoral education continues to expect students to assimilate to the normative vine at the expense of exclusion.

The narrative shows clearly a lack of peer support networks, which are necessary for coping within these environments. Even with my daring to speak, both the institutional and programmatic practices are steeped in power. My support network became two junior faculty members at the time who took interest and began reaching out. Their act is a clear interruption of the normative practices of doctoral education. Since then, we have been actively engaging in dialogue and action to question assumptions about standing inequities and ideologies in doctoral education. We have begun to re-imagine the experience of students in these classrooms and have actively engaged in changes, from openly discussing various ways of knowing to providing room for students to building networks for support. Further exploration is needed on the diversity of narrative experiences in the doctoral classroom and a-how-to guide for faculty, students and administrators interested in improving the experiences of students in doctoral classrooms.

The narrative is constituted in the graduate hegemonic practices and racialized and gendered aggressions experienced by students like me. The narrative highlighted the silencing effect, the questioning and doubting of self, the forced assimilation to the rules, values and expectations of doctoral education. The normative characteristic of doctoral education permeates students' experiences making it a challenge to persist in an environment that prides itself in teaching and contributing to White scholarship. Thus, the environment produces and reproduces a narrative of dominance. This narrative invalidates and dismisses diverse ways of knowing and thinking. Thus, the existence of students of color in doctoral classrooms (among other types of diversity) occupy the space in constant struggle and dehumanization.

Faculty and scholars committed to social justice must recognize that their struggles exist, persist and command the need to interrupt these dominant cultural practices. Critical race theory challenges faculty and administrators in these programs to begin to re-think more than just the curriculum but the culture of their doctoral programs. Although this work is grounded in my personal experience in one program, critical race theory demands that we put race at the center of the discussion, as well as oppressed voices, to directly challenge the White supremacy culture of doctoral education (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

CHAPTER 3. OUR *TESTIMONIO*: NEGOTIATING SCHOLAR IDENTITY AND POSITIONALITY IN THE DOCTORAL CLASSROOM

"We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community…Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others for their sakes and for our own." –Cesar E. Chavez

Brief Overview of Doctoral Education

Established in the late 1800's in the United States, doctoral education's primary focus was gaining teaching experience that enabled the doctoral student to have the ability to communicate the knowledge they acquired in the field (Schatte, 1977, p. 77). Later, universities expanded the purpose of the Ph.D. to include philosophical dimensions, which included teaching methodology and the scientific method. As a result, new traditions and rituals were created as part of doctoral education that included seminars, scholarly associations, publications, and the principle of academic freedom and colloquia (Schatte, 1977). The original process of conferring doctorate included: preparing for approximately seven years under individual mentorship by the student's advisor.

In addition, Schatte (1977) noted that Ph.D. candidates needed to declare under oath that they had fulfilled requirements for the degree and completed an examination in front of college professors, which involved preparing a lecture on two randomly selected passages of civil or canon law in an eight-hour period. Once the lectures were completed, the candidate would have to answer questions posed by those in attendance. Having passed this examination, the candidate would present at a public examination in front of students with the official title of Ph.D. The advisor would then present the new Ph.D. to the archdeacon who would officially confer the

degree of Ph.D. In many ways, the journey to the contemporary Ph.D., with some variations, is quite similar to the 19th century model.

Today, doctoral programs compete for the best students and to become programs with national recognition. To that end, admission into doctoral programs can be extremely competitive. Nerad (2010) stated:

> in general, doctoral students have a fairly close relationship to their main dissertation adviser. In recent years, much attention has been paid to the faculty/student relationship and mentoring has become a preferred model. A mentor, in contrast to an adviser, nurtures, protects, guides and socializes the student into a professional of their field. A faculty mentor plays an active role in the student's job search after degree completion. In short, faculty often take on a role beyond simply advising on program requirements (p. 139).

Doctoral education follows a preparatory model that begins with prescribed coursework, teaching research methodology and skills particular to the field of study. Nerad (2010) noted that the doctoral process typically encompasses coursework, candidacy exam (oral and written), dissertation proposal, dissertation, and a public defense of the dissertation. Throughout this process, the supervisory committee oversees the work, ensuring that the student is making adequate progress, but most importantly, assisting in the emerging scholar identity (Nettles & Millett, 2006; Hall & Burns, 2009).

Doctoral Student Identity

A recurring theme in the literature is doctoral identity development, specifically as it relates to scholarly and research identity. The truth is that the doctoral journey is as much about

the milestones that needed to be met as part of program and graduate school requirements, as it is about scholar identity. Austin (2002) argued that doctoral students experience many identity transitions from becoming a doctoral student to an emerging scholar to a doctoral candidate to a faculty member. However, these traditional transitions assume that race, gender, class and other identities are not intersecting or present within a very dominant, prescribed, White scholar identity. The lack of ease that students experience in each part of this doctoral journey is critical to their attrition rates and decisions to stay in the academy (Austin, 2002).

Upon entering a doctoral program, students are immediately exposed to the values and expectations of the academic culture and begin to either willingly undertake a scholar identity or resist it in lieu of intersecting identities (Austin, 2002). Because academic culture and scholar identity are closely connected, as students begin to interact with other students and faculty in the program, they begin to engage in making sense of their identities as it relates to the academic culture (Austin, 2002). Holley (2011) noted that academia is a site of many intersecting cultures and identities in that doctoral students begin to negotiate their identities within various contexts, including the doctoral classroom.

Examining the Culture of the Doctoral Classroom

The culture of the doctoral classroom is a combination of processes by which rituals and values are prioritized and legitimized by the faculty (Lovitts, 2005; Nettles & Millett, 2006). Therefore, the emergent scholar's understanding, actions, and ideas are direct products of the culture and politics of the academy. Because of this, the doctoral classroom must be occupied with liberatory critical pedagogy that actively creates a space where agency and praxis can be found. Sutcliffe (2013) noted that Giroux's critical pedagogy meant "reminding ourselves, and

each other, that we can transcend the erasure of history by empowering active, democratic participants rather than subjects" (p. 175).

In order to understand academic culture, we must understand the relationship between knowledge and power; how it shapes scholar identity and the culture of the doctoral classroom (Darder, 2010). Through the production of theories, practices, research, and pedagogy, the culture of the academy defines the value of community, how it is understood, enacted and to what end it is acceptable as a legitimate extension of its cultural values. Consequently, academic culture has been traditionally all embracing of neutrality. From this perspective, community becomes a reflection of the dominant traditions and values of the academy. The classroom community is where the relationship of power and culture must be questioned with respect to its effect on community and its control of what constitutes community (Darder, 2010).

Knowing how power and culture of the academy play a role in the doctoral classroom, is it then possible to create a beloved community located in the epicenter of hegemony? Referring to the importance of the doctoral classroom, it is essential to examine power and culture as a critical step toward developing a beloved community. Through this understanding, we can begin to interrupt power relations that ultimately result in the marginalization, trauma, and violence perpetuated onto scholars as a passage ritual present in all aspects of the academic ladder.

Theoretical Frameworks

Theory in the flesh. Moraga and Anzaldua (1981) noted that theory in the flesh is a theory rooted from human experiences that does not allow us to separate ‘the fibers of experience’ as struggling people. The first theoretical framework is from Moraga and Anzaldua’s (1981) *Entering the Lives of Others,* which defined theory in the flesh as “the physical realities

of our lives—our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longing—all fuse[d] to create a politic born out of necessity," as our call for revolution and rebellion begins at home. In addition, Moraga and Anzaldua (1981) called for "theory in the flesh… where the physical realities of our lives . . . all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity...by naming ourselves and by telling our stories in our own words" (p. 21). Theory in the flesh serves as a tool that allows to theorize from the intersectionality's or the physical realities we occupy, our experiential knowledge, and it bodies as discursive sites of knowledge construction that is created from a need to challenge and inscribe ourselves into dominant discourses (Moraga & Anzaldua, 1981).

Theory in the flesh asserts that knowledge is produced through their bodies, as trauma and pain are imbedded within us through memories. Lara (2002) noted that this allows people on the margins to recognize the role of our own body, mind, and spirit in the creation of knowledge. It challenges normative hegemonic processes, which allows us to honor history, and document the voices of the *other* through *testimonios*. *Testimonios* allows us to reflect, analyze and theorize the bully culture and assaults on mind, body and spirit enacted in the academy. Theory in the flesh does not only uncover the effects of oppression but the coping mechanisms employed to survive these academic spaces.

This theory represents an early articulation of the main components of my argument, which includes themes of trauma and pain, creation of knowledge, documenting voices, and academic bully culture. Theory in the flesh emerged as a critical framework to refuse to accept silence and any justification for subordination or domination. Anzaldua and Moraga (1981) noted that this method is used to challenge the White supremacy system by capturing

experiential and cultural knowledge produced by people on the margins. In essence, theory in the flesh identifies and produces lived knowledge as a legitimate source of knowledge creation. This knowledge is often connected to intersections of race, gender, and class among others. In addition, this framework creates a space for reflection while developing a discourse of survival regarding the effects of the academic bully culture. Theory of the flesh humanizes the experiences of doctoral students in the classrooms and strategically situates their voices at the center knowledge creation.

Critical Race Theory (CRT). Critical Race Theory (CRT) originated in the late 1970's among legal scholars as a social justice epistemology aimed at challenging racism and White privilege and dealing with the post-Civil Rights racial structure in the United States. CRT provides a framework that does not assume that we exist within a "color-blind" society; nor does it concur with the notion that all citizens are granted equal opportunities. CRT is characterized as a transformative epistemology that seeks to eliminate all forms of domination (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

In education, CRT includes a radical call to challenge institutional racism in academia and to expose the ways in which racism reproduces educational inequalities (i.e. policy, theory, and pedagogical practice). Historically, racism in the United States reveals how racialized and ethnic communities have been subjected to racial hatred and discrimination, as well as economic and political disparities through White privilege and domination. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) argued that White supremacy strategically positions Whites as the "entitled beneficiaries" of privilege and status, thus, normalizing White values, beliefs, and their experiences as dominant. Thus, racism and other forms of oppression manifests itself in educational systems, even in more

covert and subtle forms such as microaggressions. For instance, microaggressions are subtle, automatic, and typically consist of verbal and non-verbal offensive “put-downs” directed towards marginalized people.

In the book, *Challenging Racial Battle Fatigue on Historically White Campuses*, Smith, Solorzano and Yosso (2006) argued that racial microaggressions, when unchallenged, produce psychological and physiological impacts on people of color. In other words, race-based stress can lead to various types of mental, emotional, and physical strains (i.e., racial battle fatigue). In addition, activating one’s stress response system to cope with chronic stress, microaggressions, and other forms of race-based tension will take a toll on the lives and health of people of color (Solorzano & Yosso, 2006). Some of the symptoms of racial battle fatigue include constant anxiety, ulcers, insomnia, mood swings, emotional and social withdrawal, as well as feeling mentally, emotionally, and physically drained (Solorzano & Yosso, 2006).

In this study, CRT provides an analytical tool to analyze, identify, and challenge various forms of oppressions, power relations, and White privilege within a study that focuses on the experiences of doctoral students in a mainstream doctoral classroom using *testimonio*s as both a process and methodology. *Testimonio* is in essence a narrative of redemption, those who have been oppressed tell their stories, reflect, theorize, analyze the themes and create a foundation of knowledge that honors various subjectivities of self (Reyes & Curry, 2012). *Testimonio* provides an avenue to expose the complexities of scholar identity, and doctoral students’ experiences in the doctoral classroom (Espino et al, 2012).

As a methodological approach, *testimonio* provide participants with the room to discuss and reflect on their experiences in doctoral programs. It is intended to document struggle,

survival, and resistance within the context of the doctoral classroom. This study will draw insight from the works by Burciaga and Tavares (2006) who used *testimonio* to establish sisterhood pedagogy within the academy in defiance of hostile, competitive environments which breed contempt among graduate students, and the works by Espino, Munoz, and Kiyama (2010) who also employed *testimonio* to expose the challenges they faced in negotiating their evolving identities as they transitioned to faculty life.

***Testimonio* as methodology.** *Testimonios* has its roots in Latin American oral tradition, exposing power, domination, and brutality; interrupting silence; and creating a call to action for voice and solidarity (Anzaldua, 1990). Chicana/Latina and Feminist scholars have been adopting *testimonios* as an epistemology, a pedagogy, and an approach to social justice in academia. *Testimonio* directly challenges objectivity by "situating the individual in communion with a collective experience marked by marginalization, oppression, or resistance" (Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Carmona, 2012). *Testimonio* has a political purpose to actively resist power and build solidarity to challenge systems of oppression. *Testimonios* were first used to make visible the struggles of people who had experienced persecution by mostly Latin American government and agencies (Burgos-Debray, 1984). As a research approach, *testimonio* blends the social, political, historical and cultural histories embedded in one's lived experiences as a means to bring about change. Each participant is engaged in critical reflection, linking "the spoken word to social action and privileging oral narratives of lived experiences as knowledge, empowerment and political action" (Burgos-Debray, 1984).

Reyes and Curry (2012) stated that *testimonios* entails a "first person oral and written account, drawing on experiential, self-conscious, narrative practice to articulate an urgent

voicing of something to which one bears witness (p. 525)." This process is significant in that *testimonio* is a multifaceted approach to educational research. It is rarely exposed as a narrative and methodology in doctoral classrooms; thus this silence enforces the hegemonic nature of the current doctoral classroom. As a methodological tool, *testimonio* is both a product and a process (Beverley, 2004). As a methodological strategy, *testimonio* allows the mind, body and spirit to serve as legitimate knowledge and engage in social transformation (Beverley, 2004). It is about enacting resistance by transforming silence into language and transgressing the boundaries of an academic "mainstream space" (Beverley, 2004). *Testimonio* makes the private public with stories of pain, triumph, uncertainty, conviction and growth. Reflection, as part of *testimonio*, challenges the participant to examine self, observe themes and engage in meaning making potentially leading to change of self and the immediate environments (i.e. doctoral classrooms). *Testimonio* positions the participant at the center of the research study. The Latina Feminist Group (2001) asserts that lived experiences must place participants in central positions of not only telling but also analyzing how their lives are depicted.

The Methodological Research Design: Data Collection

Participants, recruitment, and informed consent. Participants for this study were selected based on the following criteria: part-time and full-time education doctoral students enrolled in a doctoral program at least for a year. Six doctoral students were identified for this study and contacted via email. Once selected, participants received an email explaining the purpose and goals of the research and request for an initial meeting to explore their interest in participating. Following the method of *testimonio*, the initial interview established rapport with the participant (Burgos-Debray, 1984). During this interview, I briefly explained the purpose and

scope of the study and explained the three-stage interview process. At this interview, I obtained written consent to participate and audio record the interview. In addition, all participants were presented with the opportunity to select a pseudonym as an identifier. In all cases, second and third interviews were conducted on the same day to fit participant schedules.

Research Measures and Procedures

Data collection and analysis. Qualitative data collection methods were used in this study to explore the following guiding questions: What are the experiences of doctoral students in the doctoral classroom? How have they responded to the academic socialization and culture? This section reviews the steps taken for qualitative data collection and how data analysis was completed. The researcher's role is discussed.

Once identified, all six participants selected pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. Following *testimonios*, the initial stage began by students sharing their lived experiences in the doctoral classroom. *Testimonio* is similar to oral history; the focus is to gain insight and information on a person's development, in this case as a scholar, and how they make sense of their experiences in doctoral education. In agreement with *testimonio*, each participant was included in all stages of qualitative data analysis. Delgado Bernal (1998) noted that participant analysis provides an opportunity for participants to "be speaking subjects who take part in producing and validating knowledge" (p.575). Participant analysis served as a form of member checking that ensure there is no misinterpretation. Participants reviewed the data collected and identified themes, developed a coding scheme, analyzed and provided closing comments.

The first stage of data collection was individual, semi-structured, in-depth interviews to provide a foundation of the experiences of participants in doctoral education. Each participant

was contacted via email with a request to set up an initial meeting to explore interest in participating in this study. This first interview was intended to provide an opportunity for the participant to meet me and ask questions they may have had about the study. In addition, this initial meeting also provided me to gather basic demographic data and signed research consent forms. The second interview focused on a reflection of their personal and professional experiences as students in a doctoral program. The third interview explored their hopes for the future and suggested changes to doctoral education. All interviews were audio taped. I kept brief field notes, such as reflections and ideas, during the interviews. These field notes served as supplements to audio transcriptions and provided concise descriptions of larger themes that emerged in the interviews.

The second phase of documenting participants' *testimonios* involved sending each participant a copy of the transcription for their review. At this time, they could make any changes to what was recorded in their first interview. Once this was completed, each participant was asked to identify the themes and reflect on what emerged in the interview. In all cases, participants were very reflective from the onset; thus a separate session for this was less necessary as it was immediately a part of the interview for each participant. The third and last stage involved gathering all of approved transcripts, themes and reflections. Each participant was contacted via email with the compilation of analysis and my findings as they would appear in the final paper. This process was essential to ensure that participant experiences had been accurately captured and understood. The final phase brought all stages of the data analysis together to summarize the findings and reflective comments.

Researcher's role, and limitations. I was fully aware of my bias in researching this topic because I was a current doctoral student with similar experiences to that of the participants in this study. My role in this process was to capture their voices, create a space for their experiences and present strategies for improving doctoral classrooms. Although the findings may not be generalizable, they were helpful in illuminating additional aspects of the doctoral student experience that influence their retention in the program and thus the contributions to the field.

Giving Voice to Doctoral Students

This section includes the *testimonios* of Carmen, Meg Tori, Bahati, Kelsey, and Wonder, as they make sense of their doctoral experience.

***Testimonio* of Carmen: mom in academia**. It is noon on a Tuesday, and it is time to meet Carmen in her office. As I knock on her door, she is in front of her computer, eating her lunch as fast as she can to prepare for our dialogue. Lately, life is a bit more stressful. Carmen has gotten a nice, well-deserved promotion and is working a practicum in a doctoral program. What is mostly on her mind is that her nine-month old baby is still not sleeping through the night. Carmen is exhausted yet happy to visit with me. At the time of the *testimonio*, Carmen is in her third year in a doctoral program.

As we began to chitchat, I asked her about her experiences in doctoral education. "That is a great question," says Carmen. She continued:

> doctoral education has been a lesson in self-reflection. My experience has been one that has challenged me more than any other experience I've had, and certainly has challenged me to be more open to both what my definition of scholarship is

> for both myself and for others. It's not just to interpret things the way that I immediately would, but rather just stop and hear others' experiences.

I paused for a moment and asked Carmen how it has been balancing work, school, and being a mom. She noted:

> when I found out I was pregnant, the first person I told was my advisor, other than my husband and other people. I was terrified of what that would mean for my program completion. Is this going to set me back? Am I going to be able to do this? Can I do this and still figure out this really important part of me that now is more important than anything else? I'm really emotional because it's worked out so well for me, and I just know that's not the experience so many other women have.

Carmen's experiences in the doctoral classroom have been positive. Carmen shared:

> my experiences in the classroom have been generally good in that I felt I was able to question and felt connected most of the time to those who are in classes with me. I have had some experiences that show me how easy it is to change that. It was a philosophy of education class, and we were talking about feminist theory. There was a discussion board online that got slightly heated. The class discussion didn't go well. I had a hard time after basically being invalidated. I said something about my experience as a woman and was told, "Well, that's really just your interpretation of that event," from a middle-aged White male. That was hard to hear. Then it was sort of this feeling of being frozen.

Carmen remembers the first night in the doctoral classroom like it was yesterday. She said:

> I think about the very first night that I came into the program, that really overwhelming first night when they all scare you. They don't mean to. Some of them mean to; most of them don't. You go around the circle and you introduce yourself and they want you to talk about your experiences and what brought you here and what you're hoping to get out of it, what your research interests are. You think you know, or you're nervous that you're not enough. That was certainly my experience; that I was nervous I was not enough. It almost became something like I had to prove it. I had to talk about all the research I'd already done and why somebody had recommended that I apply for the program and why I was doing a Ph.D. not an Ed.D. I can look back now and see it as what it was, which was trying to overcompensate for what for me was a very vulnerable position to be in. I feel like I've had enough experiences or I've built enough confidence, but that first night as we went around I remember being in awe of everyone else around me. Then feeling like I had to sort of prove myself, and then going home and being overwhelmed. I literally cried myself to sleep. I was just so overwhelmed by it. The next day two people didn't return. Two members of the original; they never came back. They quit after the first night. I remember thinking, "Wow. Why wouldn't they have come back? What was the impact on them?"

When asked to reflect on what that first night felt like as a first year doctoral student and whether there was a sense of community, Carmen responded:

Great question because that little piece, it’s a bit hazing-like. It's sort of this initiation ritual. We're going to sort of scare you by sharing things like statistics, like only two percent of the population has a Ph.D. Statistically, one of you in this room will get divorced before the end of it. I'm not kidding. Those were actually things that were told, that were said, during either that first night or that first weekend. I don't know what the overt purpose is, whether it's to actually prepare us for the rigor that we're about to experience, though I would argue that there is almost nothing that could have prepared me for the rigor. I don't think that anything actually could have. While I was feeling like I had to put on this scholarly identity that wasn't necessarily comfortable or that I didn't necessarily feel like I belonged in, they did too. They all did, too, or at least all of the ones that I talked to that day and as we went along. Everyone had those feelings of vulnerability. Everybody had that self-doubt. I think that's part of what made us all come together so quickly, and I know that there's, that's something that we've talked about other times, too, why is it that, because our cohort bonded pretty well. I think we found some great ways to dig into issues that others maybe haven't felt as safe to do so, but because it was a safer place, where people weren't as afraid to make mistakes or that they would be interpreted badly. I think that was sort of the beginning of it, that willingness for people to be vulnerable and to create a social connection. Other members, they started a Facebook page and then somebody said, "Let's do a potluck," and so there was, and "Let's have a party at the end of the year." There was sort of these, there was this care for one another

that grew out of that, that helped you be okay with all these conflicting things that were happening. However, our program, being a hybrid program where students can join either in the classroom or via IVN, my experience was bad. It was not a good experience. I had some technical difficulties and I felt like the entire classroom of eighteen people was just sitting there waiting for me to figure my shit out. That's what I thought. Now, I don't think that any of them actually felt that. That's how I felt. That's my experience. I don't think anybody was sitting there like, "Oh God! Carmen can't figure out how to see the computer screen. Seriously?" I couldn't get connected, so I was five minutes late, and I had to interrupt class because then I couldn't see when he would shift views. I couldn't see it.

I could hardly hear the instructor. Any noise in the background, I am so aware of that now. You can't snicker, you can't whisper, you can't be eating a bag of chips. We need to be cognizant of the experience of the people on the other side and then asking a question is something that I just didn't even want to do. It was hard for me to even interrupt and say I can't see the screen. Then finally after an hour I still couldn't see the screen; most of what he was doing was on the computer, and so I just disconnected. I told him I was going to disconnect, but there was no reason for me to be connected any longer.

It's a lack of connection. It's a lack of presence. You're not really in the classroom when you're coming in via IVN. I don't know what the answer is. I don't, because he tried. He tried everything. He was very patient. There's nothing wrong with the

> instructor. I can put myself in that position of, "I've got these 18 people and we need to continue to teach them, but I've got this one person who really needs to be connected." I could see the guilt on his face when he said, "I'm so sorry." He sent me an email afterwards, so it's not like there wasn't a follow-up. If I were to experience that on a regular basis, I wouldn't do it.

When asked to observe any recurring themes in her *testimonio*, Carmen said the following: vulnerability, insecurity, isolation, and need for community. After Carmen reflected on her *testimonio,* she noted how powerful it was to take a step back and read what she had shared in the interviews. She expressed seeing clearly the various aspects of her experience in the program from her initial vulnerability and insecurity to finding community. Her experience via IVN impacted her greatly. She noted several times how isolating the experience was, this feeling of being disconnected and “outside” the doctoral classroom. She reflected:

> it is so important to bring to light these experiences – especially for those for whom this IS an everyday experience and they persist, nonetheless. We must find a way to help all members find that sense of community and security in the doctoral program.

***Testimonio* of Meg: I’m more of a ghost**. Meg was enrolled in a doctoral program for two years. After negotiating her time with work, school, four kids and a spouse, she decided to leave the program and transfer to a master’s program. Meg identifies this process of leaving the doctoral program as a critical moment in her life. She hopes she quit the program but not the scholarship. Meg’s current priorities are to be present with her kids and build a strong relationship with them.

Meg reflected on scholar identity:

> in terms of outside the class, I was so fragmented because I wanted to be able to write and read and work, but there were these other things tugging at me, namely four kids and the husband, two dogs, a cat, two turtles and a rabbit. They were tugging at me; my garden was tugging at me, my other life was tugging at me. I couldn't give it the same amount of focus outside of the classroom that I could inside the classroom, not that anyone can, except maybe somebody who's single. I think the minute we have a spouse or a family or both, we're not going to have that ability to be in the moment in everything outside of the classroom. I found that it was such a fragmented experience outside of the classroom, that for me to totally involve myself in a paper or whatever in order to be that present to accomplish something, I had to literally pick up, move away from my family for the weekend, hole up, be a hermit, and then come back to this altered reality.
>
> I just found that there was a constant crunch between identities that I didn't have enough time to give to my identity as a mom. I didn't have enough time to give to my identity as a faculty member, I didn't have time to give to my identity as a scholar, and they kept bumping into each other. That was probably the hardest part for me, is how much they kept bumping into each other. Then again, maybe it has something to do with how many kids I've got and how many needs they have and the fact that they're all teenagers.

Regarding her experiences in the doctoral classroom, Meg shared:

I also have to separate out into my experience in the classroom and outside of the classroom connected with my job. Most of the time in the classroom, I found it exhilarating. It was a time when time stood still; I was in a different time and place in the classroom. I guess I have to separate out my face-to-face experiences from my online experiences. Not online, but IVN, because in my IVN experiences, time didn't stand still, time dragged on—painfully, slowly. In the face to face experiences, time stood still and we were in the moment, in the present, discussing, thinking, cogitating, bantering--everything else went out the window; my awareness of anything other than the moment was thrown out the window. With IVN classes, I had to really work to even be halfway connected to the moment and that's one of the reasons I started driving in to the face-to-face class, because I was having such a hard time staying connected in the moment in IVN. I just felt I wasn't getting the richness of the experience through IVN.

I think part of the difference between face-to-face and IVN experiences, it is you don't get to read everything the same way. In the face-to-face classroom, you can read everybody's non-verbal along with what they're saying. IVN, it's all such a flat world, so you don't quite get that. In IVN, there are a lot of sidebar conversations in many cases that make it more difficult to hear the main conversation. There's background noise, even when you ask people to turn the speaker off or turn it down or whatever. If you want to hear what's going on, there's also going to be people squeaking in their chairs and having sidebar conversations and all of that. It makes it difficult to take in everything the same

way. I felt like when things were being said, I was maybe getting 85% to 90% of it, which you think is pretty good, but in the doctoral program, it really isn't. You need to be there 100%. When I found that it was difficult to engage, then I needed to make choices that inhibited my learning even further. I would say, "Okay, I'm not hearing all of this right now." I'd zip over and create something really fast for a class I was teaching the next day, or I'd check my Facebook or my email or whatever, and I would disengage for a few minutes or more, and that's not good, either.

To me, if I wanted to use more Eastern terminology, there just wasn't the same energy happening when I was in IVN. Even if I had other people in the room with me, it wasn't the same energy. We would get off on tangents when we were in our break out rooms, but it wasn't the same energy. I just didn't feel the connection to the people. Then, there's the piece of you miss out on the people coming into the room, you miss out on the after conversations and if there's any group work at all; if you're in the IVN environment, it's always the same people that are together. I like all those people, but once again, it's a flat-screen world, you just don't get the same kinds of connections and interpersonal relationships that you do when you're there upfront and personal and in the same room. It's a different energy level.

I think placement in the academic world is for me more of what the doctoral program was about. It wasn't entering the academic world as much as it was placement within the academic world. I was constantly asking myself, "Where am

> I in here?" I felt like someone who would be living on the continent for a while, that academic continent for a while, but I still haven't figured out yet where on the continent I am, even after living there. Now, I feel like I'm still living there, in the academic world, but I'm more of a ghost. I'm not really there, but I am there.

When asked to observe any recurring themes in her *testimonio*, Meg said the following: being a mother of teenagers, the crunch between scholarship and family, and feeling like a ghost.

Meg explained:

> teenagers want you to think they're independent, but they also want you available, and when they need you, they need you at that minute—often to help resolve an emotional moment, or to assist with a paper or project that is due the next day, or to drive them someplace or chaperone an event or help with a fundraiser. I found myself saying "no" to their needs and seeing looks of true disappointment on their faces. When I talked to our Vice President of Academic Affairs about potentially changing from the doctoral program to the master's program, she gave what I felt was extremely wise advice. "Many people," she said, "think that it's harder to work on a doctorate when your children are young. I think it's harder when they're teenagers." She went on to tell me that she worked on her doctorate when her children were younger, and in the evenings, they played on the floor at her feet with their Legos and she sat and read and wrote "and everyone was happy." On the other hand, she explained, when her children were teenagers they had bigger needs than Legos—similar to the ones I described above--and she felt needed to be available to meet those needs because "the

> teenage years are so important. They’re the years when, hopefully, you’re establishing the kind of relationship you’ll have with your children when they become adults.” That line was what convinced me that I no longer wanted to live the crunch between scholarship and family. I made arrangements the very next day to leave the doctoral program.

Meg shared a poem she wrote about her experiences in the doctoral program.

Third Degree

In what paradigm

am I situated?

I might as well ask

what specific corner I inhabit

on spherical earth.

I attempt to ground myself:

one foot here,

another continents away,

silently wishing for a third.

Then, when I am pretty sure

my footings are secure,

another discussion

triggers an axial shift.

And I try again

to place myself

in this academic world.

Meg found the use of the word "ghost" interesting. She said:

> prior to this interview, I hadn't ever used it to describe how I felt. It works, though. I had to really think about where it came from. I think it must have come from my experience last summer. When I quit the doctoral program last spring, I felt relieved, free, energized, empowered to finish a second master's degree. Then summer came, and one professor's accusations had a profound effect on my identity as a teacher, a scholar, a person. Even though I held my ground and her accusations were determined to be unjustified, even though I was totally vindicated, I felt like I died as a scholar last summer. No, let me clarify: I felt like I had been murdered last summer. For weeks, I was unable to write, and when I did, I couldn't find words and the structure was off. I was unable to even go onto the floor that houses the education program, the doctoral program offices, and my own office at the University. Healing was a slow process. It has been a slow process returning to my research work. I don't think I am the same person who left the doctorate and moved into the master's program. I am a ghost. And though I eventually returned to my research, I didn't return to the program. I watch people who are still active in the doctoral program—my cohort, especially, and I see them preparing for their capstone, writing, looking forward to the end.

Meg is in the process of writing her master's thesis but does not consider her work up to dissertation quality:

> academically, I am still living with one foot here and one foot there. It's just that now, instead of trying to find my footing as a bonified academic, anticipating that someday I will have more meaningful letters after my name, I have one ghost foot loosely planted in the doctoral program and one ghost foot loosely planted in the master's program, and the intent of my current journey is to finish and spend time with my children during the next three years, while they are transitioning into adulthood. I am still hoping that, regardless of my experiences last summer or the degree earned, I will still be able to grow in scholarship; I am still hoping to be seen—by people who I respect, anyway—as someone who has a place in "this academic world."

***Testimonio* of Tori: if you see someone sinking, pull them back up**. Tori is a first year doctoral student who is also a grandmother. She moved 250 miles away from home to pursue both her master's and Ph.D. Tori's husband still lives 250 miles away, and the distance is starting to take a toll on their marriage. Although she is questioning if at her age she should be working on a Ph.D., she feels determined to complete it. Tori stated:

> I'm struggling to be a wife, mother, and grandmother and am not doing well in any of these areas. I don't think so. Identity as a wife, which has been extremely difficult because.... Well, I've been 250 miles apart from him for three years and it really has played a huge toll on us. We struggle. In fact, we're struggling really badly right now. Those identities, I think you have to keep them close and to play into each other but you can't.... I don't think you can entirely shut one off to get

> into another. I think you have to make them fit together and that's hard to explain. I don't know how to explain that.

When asked about her experiences in the doctoral classroom, Tori noted:

> so far my experiences have been extremely positive. I have a cohort that is very supportive of one another. I've been in other department cohorts where that did not happen, so I compare them. In this doctoral program now, it's fantastic. Along with the support and the instructors have been very ... How do I want to put it? Down to earth, very willing to come to our level and to speak to us, not in that pretentious manner but in a human manner where it makes sense where we can collaborate and to connect those things with our backgrounds. It's been extremely positive for me with both the cohorts of students and the faculty.

Tori reflected on the sense of community in the classroom, especially with her cohort:

> if we see somebody sinking, then you pull him back up. To me, that was the biggest thing that he could have done was, like I said, when you come from an area where that does not happen, the opposite happens. I think he also expressed an interest in everybody's areas of expertise and allowed everybody to pull that together.

When asked to observe any recurring themes in her *testimonio*, Tori said the following: personal sacrifices to achieve Ph.D. (i.e. family), support from classmates, and age. After revisiting her *testimonio,* Tori notices that the many struggles at this time are not course or classroom related but family related. She speaks to a clear division felt between doctoral education and her family. Among the most permanent statements, Tori noted:

> the struggles are all personal…family. It takes great sacrifice and hard work to keep a family alive and well while attending graduate school. My internship keeps me apart from my husband, and I struggle greatly with that. But this is a partnered choice. We have decided to go forth with this. Time spent on graduate school takes away from time from someone or somewhere else. This is a huge sacrifice with family.

Despite the support she is getting from family, it is much easier to justify a ‘real’ job than intellectual work. Often times, this creates a lack of understanding of doctoral work based on how the concept of work is understood. According to Espinoza (2001), graduate students in these situations often don’t want their family to feel as though graduate school is more valued than they are. These concerns and the day-to-day struggle to keep a marriage together and care for children and others serves as an aspiration to make a difference and affecting change through research. In regards to the classroom experience, Tori said:

> it makes such a huge difference to have a supportive program. One thing I might ask is to find ways for doctoral education to keep the students’ well-being and families in mind. So much of our survival in graduate school depends on the well-being of our families and communities.

Tori hopes to use her doctoral education to create a space in the academy for K-12 teachers. This vision is shared in relation to others, such as family and community.

***Testimonio* of Bahati: not a typical scholar.** Bahati is a mother of two, and she is in dissertation proposal stage. She has applied for several faculty positions, but nothing has come of

it. She is feeling discouraged but determined to finish her degree. When asked about how she has experienced the doctoral classroom, Bahati said:

> my first class in the program was definitely intimidating. I would say in a lot of different ways. The professor in that class was really intimidating, and I felt intimidated by the other students because a lot of the other students had a really strong background in either education, like some high school or elementary education, but mostly higher education which I didn't have, and so that was definitely intimidating. That was one of the first things we did is when we went around the classroom, say your name, where you work, where you went to school, a little bit of the background on yourself so obviously everybody's saying where they worked at and being one of the few people who didn't actually work in higher education, that was intimidating. Also people who know me probably wouldn't say this, but I can be very introverted and quiet so especially at first it's hard too...because I'm not one of those personalities who is really outspoken and wants to be friends with everybody, it can be more difficult to fit in when you meet a new group of people.
>
> I don't want to say a turning point, but it's like that thing that sticks in my mind about my experience. One of my professors would often break unto small groups for almost the entire class period or the majority of the class period. This one particular group, I know it was in the winter because everybody was all bundled up and we were all just exhausted, you know that feeling of exhaustion that you get in the middle of winter. There were four of us girls and we were sitting in a

> small room; we'd broken into a small group in a different room, and we just started talking, and one of us was having a hard time, and it just ended up being every single one of us just started crying while we were in class. It was that experience of being uncomfortable but also feeling comfortable at the same time. I feel that it's uncomfortable to cry in front of other people any time, even if they're family members or really close to you, but then it was also comforting because we were able to do it in front of each other and we all just had something that was really, whether it had to do with class or work or family or whatever, we all had something that was just really weighing on us. So just having a group of people, even though we were supposed to be talking about whatever the subject was that night, we started talking about it but it's hard to concentrate when you have something really big going on in your life. Eventually the conversation strayed, and we all were just sitting there crying. Then the professor walks in who was actually totally understanding. I think he asked if he should step out for a minute and at that point obviously we felt comfortable enough with our group and with the class that we didn't think that him being there was going to be a problem.

In her t*estimonio*, Bahati reflected on scholar identity:

> I've always felt like I'm that person that doesn't really fit in perfectly anywhere. I don't necessarily go against the flow on purpose, but I don't necessarily fit in, and I just deal with that uncomfortableness, and I just keep moving. My scholar identity, I would say it's not a typical scholar identity and it's not my idea of what a typical scholar is. I feel like I'm a lot more relatable, and I think part of that I've

done to myself. I have a hard time having academic conversations at times because I try to have conversations with the regular people in my life and try to explain the concepts and explain the ideas that I'm working on in a way that I feel is, I don't want to say easier to understand because then that sounds like I don't think they're capable of understanding it, but just in a way that's more accessible I guess for a larger audience than specifically for people in academia. I guess some people think scholars are professors that are full of themselves and they think that they know everything and I guess I see myself as fighting hard to go against that particular identity because that isn't what it should be about.

Being a mom and being a wife, it just completely goes against having that scholar identity. I wish that it didn't feel that way, but it does. My son is seven years old and he asks me really hard and difficult questions. He'll ask me questions about the universe. Last night before we went to bed, he goes, "Mom what's a comet?" I tried to explain that a comet is a piece of rock hurling through space and eventually it burns up. He's like, "Well, what happens if that hits the earth, though?" "Well usually it's not going to hit the earth because it will disintegrate in the atmosphere, so we don't really need to worry about that." He's like, "But what if it doesn't completely disintegrate in the atmosphere?" "Well if it doesn't, then it's going to hit the earth, and there will probably be a fire." He's like, "What if it's so big that it causes another ice age like when the dinosaurs got killed." I'm like, "Well, I think NASA is monitoring that kind of stuff, so I don't think we need to worry about it. You can go to bed. You don't need to worry about that, just go to

> sleep." He just kept asking questions. I said, "Brian, I gotta go. You need to sleep right now." Those are the kinds of things that I truly live for, those are the moments when I think, “Geez, if he's only seven and he's having thoughts like this, what can't he do in the future?” I know that when I was younger, I had those same kind of thoughts, but I take the practical route, I need to do this, I need to follow the right steps, I need to just try to fit in with everybody else. I hate that, but I still do it. I still go along with it and do what everybody else is doing.

A big part of Bahati’s experience as a doctoral student has been negotiating being a mom. Bahati stated:

> I had some professors who if I said “Hey, my kid is sick and I don't have anybody to watch them, because I was going to take them over to my friend’s house and they have a baby and they don't want to take my kid when he's sick, so I'm going to have to stay home tonight and I'm going to have to take class at home.” I'd have some professors that would be like “Okay cool, make sure to have your microphone muted or whatever if your kids are in the room or whatever so that other people don't get distracted, which I totally understand that. Then other professors who were like, “Well, I don't think you're going to be engaged enough to make it worth your while to be there, so why don't you just go ahead and listen to the recording.” Then I try to listen to the recording the next day, come to find out nobody else joined on IVN and there is no recording, so I missed the entire class even though I wanted to be there, but just because the professor was put off

> by the fact that my kids were going to be there or that I'd be doing more than one thing at a time.

In her *testimonio*, Bahati struggled with the notion of being an academic, what it means in terms of her identity, but most importantly, where she felt she fit in.

> I don't like that feeling of having to be a certain type of person to be accepted into something, and I definitely get that that's how academia works. My husband and I have these conversations, so I applied for all these academic jobs and turned off my Facebook account and was worried about my appearance and things like that because I was worried about what happens if I get called into an interview and I don't look the way that they're expecting that I should look? You know? And what is that? Well, I know it's very conservative, and I'm definitely not a very conservative-looking type of person. I think in the last couple months that's been part of what's changing my mind as well. I don't think I want to be somewhere or work with people that think I need to be a certain way to do my job which doesn't have anything to do with the way that I look or the way that I talk or the way that other people see me.

When asked to observe any recurring themes in her *testimonio*, Bahati said, "Uncomfortableness, feeling as though I don't belong or that I am not supposed to belong, and tired of trying to be somebody I am not."

After reviewing her *testimonio*, Bahati noticed that what stands out the most is how uncomfortable she felt in her current situation: working full time, being a mom, and trying to write her dissertation proposal. She felt she was allowing outside societal expectations of what a

scholar is dictate how she should be as a scholar. She stated that she knows what she wants, who she is as a person, even if this is unacceptable. During her reflection, she noted she is working hard on all fronts but does not understand why there is not enough flexibility built in the program for students like her. The majority of the students in this program fit this profile. She questioned:

> why would a doctoral education program try to get rid of students who are passionate enough about their area of study to forego time with their own children, time to make their homes habitable, and time to just live? I hope the sacrifices I have made over the last three years will be worth it.

Her *testimonio* shed lights on the importance of the structure of doctoral programs and how they should reflect the needs and profile of their student population. Bahati's *testimonio* revealed important information on her marginalization as a woman, wife and mother and how it contributes to hegemony in the classroom. Furthermore, her *testimonio* shed light on the feelings of inadequacy, lack of belonging and the internal struggle of identity negotiation permeating her experience, even at her doctoral candidacy level.

***Testimonio* of Kelsey: I don't like the term scholar.** Kelsey is a second-year student in a doctoral program. For much of her life, she has struggled to make ends meet and raise her daughter as a single mother. She keeps these experiences close to her heart as a way to motivate herself and others. Kelsey came into the program with a strong desire to make a difference as a teacher. When asked how she has experienced and navigated doctoral education she said:

> It's almost been very informal. You know, when I first came into the program I didn't know much about doctoral education at all and I still don't feel it's clear. Not knowing if "Okay, so once I'm done with this, is this what I do, is this what I

do?" And "What does this look like?" Like the capstone, what does that look like? I felt that's been really disorganized within the department. That they didn't do a very good job at setting us up that way, so we know what's to come and maybe we can prepare more with the classroom assignments, so that we're better prepared for future assignments.

There's been a lot of general sense of "We don't know what we're doing." I know for myself, and for someone else in the program, we went and asked other people that have either graduated from the program or are much farther along in the program. I've asked a couple people because I still don't completely get it, because sometimes they have different examples, different stories of "This is what really happened." So I feel there's nothing really set in stone, as "Okay, these are the steps you take." Even as far as taking classes, they say "These are the core classes," and sometimes it's like, "Well, maybe you don't have to take that one" or "You have to take that one." It's like, why do I have to take that one and not that one? It is so difficult to navigate doctoral education like this. I feel very anxious; I don't think they did, well not necessarily they, the department maybe, hasn't done a good job of mentoring us. I feel like I kind of got thrown into a program and they had this introductory course, 801, or whatever it's called now. Yet it doesn't talk about the process. It didn't in our section. Either that or have someone come along and mentor us. Have someone in the dissertation stage and just say "Okay, this has been my path, this is what I've done." Just to kind of give us that guidance.

Kelsey felt like overall she has had some good experiences in the classroom. She noted:

> They've been very good. I've enjoyed it. There's been a couple classes where it's just been pure lecture and that bores me to death. Especially from 7 to 10 o'clock. So that's hard for me because that's not how I learn. I really enjoy where we read something and we actually talk about it in class. There have been classes where that does not happen at all. A lot of reading, no discussion. It's mainly the professor telling us what he or she thinks.
>
> However, I did not imagine doctoral education to be this way. I've learned a lot from my peers. Sometimes maybe more so than my professors. I did have one class where we actually did the activity and that was our assignment throughout the whole class. I learned way more doing that than I would of any lecture. It was a good class.

As she reflected on her scholar identity, Kelsey said:

> I don’t know if I have come to understand my scholar identity. Because we go into the program and people are like all of a sudden, "You're a scholar now." That becomes kind of another layer of identity. I don’t like the term scholar. Because I feel it has sometimes a negative connotation to it. That "Scholar." Like it puts you above other people. People think "Oh, you have your Ph.D.," or "Oh, you're a scholar." No, I'm a human being and I just happen to be in a program. I think that's how I look at it, so I don't put that label to myself. So, there’s a certain level of resistance to it.

> I'm really big on social justice, and I just feel like this program isn't making me any better than anyone else. I'm learning a lot from it and it's going to hopefully help me help others, but it doesn't make me any better than them. Anybody that works at McDonald's.
>
> I'm a single mom. I have been on welfare before, prior, years before. I've been suppressed. I've been oppressed. I think that greatly impacts how I don't want to put myself up there, because I've been at the bottom of the hierarchy for so long. I've hated what the people have pushed upon me, because I was at the bottom. I don't ever want to be that person.
>
> The Ph.D. is not going to tell me who I am. I mean I'm going to be different just because of the experiences, but I'll still be the person, as a Ph.D., as I was when I was on welfare. If you can't look at me positively when I'm on welfare, I certainly don't want you looking at me positive when I have my Ph.D.

Kelsey noted that what has helped her stay in the program are mostly her peers and a couple of faculty members. She has always been passionate about teaching, but when asked about what she hoped to do after the program, she said:

> I don't know yet. Teaching, obviously, is one. I really feel like maybe something else, too. I don't know yet; I'm not sure where my dissertation will take me. See what happens there and where that guides me. When I walked in it was teaching, that's what I wanted to do. I taught for many years and I just wanted to keep doing that. Now that I'm in the program, I don't know if I want to keep doing that. I'm open to new opportunities.

When asked to observe any recurring themes in her *testimonio*, Kelsey said, “Isolation, identity as single mom on welfare, and lack of guidance and/or mentoring.”

Kelsey reported that her identity as a mom on welfare has shaped how she navigates the doctoral program. The lack of structure in the program has left her feeling students are "thrown" into the program without guidance. This lack of guidance makes it difficult to navigate doctoral education, thus creating a sense of isolation from the very beginning. She did note that peers in the program have been critical to saving her sanity. Kelsey is teaching several undergraduate courses while going through her doctorate.

***Testimonio* of Wonder: feeling alone in this journey**. Wonder is a fourth year international student in the program. She has dreams to work for a non-governmental organization (NGO) to make an impact in her community. She is a mother of two children. When asked about her experiences in doctoral education, she said:

> my experience has been that there is so much out there to be learned, and my initial classes, too, showed me that some of the instructors were equally new in their areas, and I say that so loud, so clearly, that they, too were trying out some of the classes that I started with. "Oh no, this is my first time to teach this course." I thought, "Oh, okay so that makes us two people learning together." Then there were so many expectations that were not clearly stipulated in that program and yet they were taken quite seriously by the department.
>
> My experiences in the classroom were both good and bad. The good experiences were when I was given feedback on my assignments. I feel that feedback is a

connection between the instructors, the students, and the material they are exploring together. Its absence breeds uncertainty.

I'm the kind of person who has to get that acknowledgment, or somebody to shake your hand say, "Okay, keep going." There is also the opposite of that where you really don't know whether you are on the right track or not. It's until the end of the semester or the course that you submit the work, but you never get any feedback at all. Nothing. It left me feeling so alone in this journey.

Learning is supposed to be a continuous process for both the instructors and the students: first time to teach the course, and first time to take the course, therefore they become "people learning together."

Wonder shared an example about her experiences in the classroom; she recollected:

my biggest challenge I think, of all, was the fact that many of the professors are not so exposed to international context in terms of education or anything and so in those classes where I was really excited because I had a lot to offer in terms of experience around that are. It was difficult to connect first of all to the instructor and then to my colleagues because then I would bring an example and really elaborate on it and say just connecting what you are talking about to a real-world experience, but then unfortunately, there would be no follow-up.

Once I finished talking, the focus just expired, and my first impression is like they are thinking about what I have just said, maybe someone is going to make an input. Because the professor would not pick it up and maybe take that conversation a little further, a little bit, or even say something, make a comment

about it. It just ends there with me, and then the class moves on like nothing has happened and I feel wounded, like, "Oh my Gosh! What have I done here?" I'm that kind of person who quickly withdraws. When I try to bring that ... Even where in my mind I am really thinking and sometimes because I haven't said it somehow somebody else is thinking the same way and the person will say it then I say, "Okay, at least somebody has said it, so I don't have to struggle to say it." In a situation where nobody will say because I'm trying to connect it to the international level, then it remains there outside. I felt like I always killed the conversations.

I would share my contributions and there will be just silence in the room. No response from anyone. That was very common, and it frustrated me a lot. It diminished my self-esteem in a way. I felt like I wasn't.... It was worse at one time when one of the students shouted at me and I said that was really insulting: "I can't hear you, and you have an accent; what have you just been saying?" I was like I think she was expecting me to say it again. I simply shut my mouth. I just closed my mouth and said, “Don't say anything again.” The classroom became to me a shared space with silent exclusion.

It's not that I said things that were completely outrageous; they were things that were so close to my heart in terms of education, in terms of society, in terms of culture all the things that are going around and most of which we have recently just started talking about in the class. Those experiences were very profound.

When asked if she ever shared these concerns with anyone in the program, she noted:

> It is difficult not to feel like you will be judged or seen as though you are criticizing the program, when in reality you are trying to contribute to make it better…Not just for yourself but for whoever else who will come into the program. Yes, they tell us you all have advisors but that's a different thing. Advisors may not necessarily be the people to improve the program as much. It would be nice to have the students themselves also have a say.
>
> There are so many, many serious issues that I saw in some of the courses and I would share with classes, and they would tell me, "Don't rock the boat. You have come to get your qualifications; don't rock the boat. Such comments will not be welcome." This is coming from an American. This is a very common understanding among students. From that time even when I'm writing an evaluation of the program, I won't say a word. I will write what they want to hear. I learned quickly the culture of not rocking the boat even when I come from a community where there are *no boats*!

Wonder noted that it was really hard for her to see herself as a scholar. She said:

> That's a very hard one for me; I must be very frank. It's one area that I feel like it's just a journey beginning for me to even just understand that whole concept of scholarly things. I think it's such a challenge. It's something that I'm very much interested in learning to do and become a very recognized scholar, but I also feel like there is so much talk from the program about being a scholar, but there is no.... I don't know whether I'm using the right words but I don't get the feel of

> how the people talking about it really connect with the people they are preparing to become....Scholars. I would have expected a situation where there is so much scholarly activity between these people who are talking about it, who think they are there now with those they are preparing to be. That there is so much engagement of, and they are producing some results you can actually see like this person with that person made this and here they are. That is very, very minimal.

As she got ready to defend her dissertation, she reflected on what has helped retain her as a doctoral student. She said:

> My own passion for learning because that is one driving force for me. I've always wanted to learn, I've always wanted to help myself, to make sure that I know. The other thing was having a friend who believes in me and is ready to go an extra mile with you as a sister and giving you the support that you really need. Then when you want to cry a little bit allows you to do that and they fix you up and say, "Okay, now it's time to move on." Many times I have wanted to give up. But, thank God, I did not.

When asked to observe any recurring themes in her *testimonio*, Wonder said the following: feeling alone, feeling silenced, frustrated, and excluded. Wonder reflected how isolating the classroom experience has felt to her:

> Some students (knowingly or unknowingly) do not listen to a contribution made by one like them, especially while working in a group or sharing in the class. Comments about my accent and constant demand to repeat what I was saying, made me *shy* (read weary) to participate in class. I got a sense of the hegemonic

> attitude, hence, in my mind I kept hearing "If you cannot speak our language the way we do, then you don't make sense in the class."

In re-reading her *testimonio*, she saw how her response to the classroom has been dictated by her colonially-influenced schooling experiences:

> "Don't look for trouble." The western (read: White) education has taught me to "respect" authority. So when my colleague told me not to rock the boat, it only made me more intent to look into the way education (read: classrooms) become avenues of control. *Scholarship* is like eight blind people touching the elephant; each describes it from his or her vantage point. We need to have eyes to see the whole picture: both theory of it and the actual practice.

Analytical Summary

The six doctoral students interviewed for this chapter used *testimonios* as a venue to use their experiences, knowledge, and memories in the service of helping other doctoral students. With this in mind, each participant developed her own way to survive and stay the course in a matter that allowed her to honor her family, her identity as woman, and the many intersectionalities such as class, race, gender and age that emerged in the *testimonios*. Students reported navigating through a hegemonic doctoral system and experiencing various forms of microaggressions based on their race, ethnicity, class, gender, age, and accents. The contexts of racial and gendered microaggressions varied case to case. The contexts of microaggressions occurred in classrooms both in small and group dialogues, with faculty and other students. Additionally, the hegemonic system of doctoral education was often enacted upon these students through isolation, exclusion, and the perception of an unfriendly classroom environment.

The responses to the classroom environment varied depending on whether a classmate or professor attempted to interrupt the microaggressions and having a support group including classmates and family. Support groups are strategically situated in spaces within or outside the classrooms serving as counter spaces of advocacy, resistance, and activism, thus enabling the students in this study to have a place to breathe.

Summary of Chapter

Doctoral students in this study overwhelmingly reported that their doctoral classrooms and academic environment were either positive or negative, nothing in between. Some of the students identified the environment as intolerant of other ways of knowing or of being a scholar. The first introduction to the program seemed to have the most profound impact on many of the students interviewed. In some cases, the silence enforced by hegemonic practices in the classroom left some unable to fully participate in the classroom or seek support outside of their classmates as a form of self-preservation. Students used terms like “hazing,” “silencing, “frozen,” “don’t rock the boat,” to identify key episodes experienced in the doctoral classroom. Additional experiences reported but not recorded (out of fear of retaliation) included a classroom climate of isolation, verbal attacks (both in classroom and behind closed doors by other students and faculty, including being labeled as difficult to work with or lacking disposition), a Eurocentric curriculum, lack of support, lack of mentoring, and lack of funding.

In short, all students interviewed reported having to negotiate their identities while also negotiating the classroom dynamics. It is critical to note that many of the students interviewed self-censored and shared limited accounts because of fear of recognition or retaliation. Once the recorder was off, many more painful stories were shared, and names of other students were

given. In the case of additional names shared to interview, each student noted that I should talk to this and that student because their experiences will disclose very intentional hegemonic practices on behalf of faculty and students. Every effort was made to reach out to these students, but no one accepted the invitation.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following recommendations for future research are based on this small research study. The intention of this study was a call to advocacy in order to create greater classroom experiences for emerging scholars without the burden of hegemony and White supremacy-ridden environments. It is imperative to understand the experiences of students in this doctoral program and their challenges to create a counter-hegemonic classroom experience, a place that fosters mentorship and community. This brief study honors the lived experiences of students in a mainstream doctoral program. These students are creators of new knowledge and a new future for doctoral classrooms. Some of the recommendations include:

1. Conduct a larger sample size study, including students at various institutions to better understand the climate of doctoral classrooms.
2. Conduct a study that compares programs that are practicing critical pedagogy and those who are not.
3. Conduct additional studies that explore the lives of those students who left the program.
4. Further explore the experiences of doctoral students participating strictly via IVN.

The following chapter includes a practitioner-oriented approach to creating community in a first-year doctoral classroom.

CHAPTER 4. COUNTER-HEGEMONIC PEDAGOGY: CREATING SPACE FOR FIRST-YEAR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

"It is impossible to teach without the courage to love, without the courage a try a thousand times before giving in. In short it is impossible to teach without forged, invented, and well thought out capacity to love." -Paulo Freire

Introduction

In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (2000) noted that as part of the cause of liberation, teaching is a commitment to others. Freire (2000) insisted that dialogue should be central to any pedagogical project and that it could not exist without "a profound love for the world and for people" (p. 70). To that end, the introduction of love into teaching indicates that the faculty members are committed to the principles of solidarity and have a passion for teaching. This level of reflective teaching lends itself to a practice to interrupt hegemonic ideologies and practices in the classroom. In a sense, many educators who are committed to a liberatory teaching practice develop ways in which new projects, such as the use of Photo Voice, are created to enhance new learning opportunities that give way to reflection, hope, and love in the classroom.

Freire (1994) noted that hope and love must always be combined with reflection and action. This notion becomes even more critical in a doctoral classroom where future educators and researchers are being trained on how to be a scholar. Giroux (2002) noted:

> hope, in this instance, is the precondition for individual and social struggle, the ongoing practice of critical education in a wide variety of sites, the mark of

> courage on the part of intellectuals in and out of the academy who use the resources of theory to address pressing social problems (p. 157).

This chapter is about envisioning what a counter hegemonic pedagogy and curriculum would look like in doctoral education through the use of Photo Voice in a first-year doctoral student classroom. A counter-hegemonic pedagogy is guided by democratic and social justice principles that promote equity, respect for human beings, improvement of the human condition, and the pursuit of knowledge. Accordingly, a doctoral pedagogy and curriculum are then practiced as a dialogic process that fully engages doctoral students and liberates them from the hegemonic ideology and practices of doctoral education. This dialogic process would generate thoughtful interactions that have the potential of transforming the immediate social environment and experience within a doctoral classroom.

Based on critical pedagogy principles and experiential knowledge, I explore a teaching process through a Foundations of Scholarship course taught to students entering the doctoral education program. From the development of the syllabus and selection of readings to careful design of the Photo Voice project, this teaching process is caring, nurturing, and dialogic, which serves as an immediate counter hegemonic pedagogy and challenge to the normative culture of doctoral classrooms. Dominant pedagogies can be dehumanizing, harmful, and isolating. The objective is to add to the scholarly conversations about transforming doctoral education by creating intentional courses and experiences that nurture first year doctoral students while creating a sense of community. I argue that starting this process at the beginning of their career as doctoral students sets a foundation for community.

I hope to make explicit the ways in which doctoral faculty can better support and provide enriching environments that nurture scholars. Though not exhaustive, a literature review highlights critical pedagogy, most notably the works by Freire (2000), hooks (1994), and McLaren and Kincheloe (2007). I aim to explore the fabric of critical pedagogy and curriculum in doctoral education while emphasizing the role community as part of scholar identity.

Understanding Critical Pedagogy

McLaren and Giroux (1996) defined pedagogy as a "process where meaning is continuously (re) created and where identities of the self and others are enacted within discursive practices and power/knowledge relations" (p. 34). Critical pedagogy takes on the challenge of addressing the tensions within and between identities. Critical pedagogy compliments Freire's notion of praxis in that it is a dialogic relationship of reciprocal action and reflection between faculty and students. Critical pedagogy gives students an opportunity to acquire a dialectical consideration of social life (McLaren, 2006), enabling the student and faculty to engage in learning that interrogates knowledge and assumes that no curriculum is neutral (Shor, 1992). Critical pedagogy is concerned with locating hidden biases and colonizing concepts that reinforce racist and sexist practices in society (hooks, 1994). Such an engaged and caring pedagogy requires an ethic of caring (Noddings, 2003) or a state of being in relation, characterized by openness, empathy, and disposition. In this pedagogy, there is an understanding that both student and faculty are in a mutual state of seeking knowledge without promoting the dehumanizing culture of objectivism (hooks, 1994).

Freire's conceptualization of critical pedagogy is rooted in education, specifically the classroom, acknowledging private lives in the realm of learning. In doing so, Freire's critical

pedagogy identifies a notion of democracy that addresses issues of power such as dominance, oppression and exclusion. To this end, discourses about power can be brought into the classroom in order to facilitate critical inquiry and instigate social change.

The Doctoral Classroom as a Beloved Community

The beloved community is a term that was first coined in the early days of the 20th century by the philosopher-theologian Josiah Royce. However, it was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who popularized the term (The King Center, 2014). For Dr. King, the beloved community was a realistic, achievable goal that could be attained by a critical mass of people committed to and trained in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence. The global vision of Dr. King's beloved community is to eradicate the power structure and replace it with a community that values human experiences and expertise; is inclusive, peaceful and justice oriented, and, most of all, a community of love (The King Center, 2014; hooks, 2003; Freire, 2000). Is it possible that doctoral classrooms could become places where scholars can teach community, love, and nonviolence? In no way is the beloved community devoid of conflict; however, it is the absence of violence, bullying, and trauma in this conflict that best defines collaboration and cooperation as central to the doctoral classroom experience (Twale & De Luca, 2008; Freire, 2000).

In his 1959 “Sermon on Gandhi,” Dr. King elaborated on the ramifications of choosing nonviolence over violence: “The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, so that when the battle’s over, a new relationship comes into being between the oppressed and the oppressor” (The King Center, 2014). In the same sermon, he contrasted violent versus nonviolent resistance to oppression: “The way of acquiescence leads to moral and spiritual suicide. The way of violence leads to bitterness in the survivors and brutality in the

destroyers. But, the way of non-violence leads to redemption and the creation of the beloved community" (The King Center, 2014). The core value of the quest for Dr. King's beloved community was agape love. Agape love, Dr. King noted, "does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people…It begins by loving others for their sakes without distinction. Agape is love seeking to preserve and create community" (The King Center, 2014).

What would the community of scholars look and feel like if it strived to become the beloved community? In other words, a beloved community of scholars has the ability to interrupt the power-filled rituals of the academy and psychological trauma experienced by the many and stop the silence. The beloved community of scholars can create a classroom environment where emerging scholars get to navigate their journey in solidarity with others and in a justice-oriented community.

The Hidden Curriculum of Doctoral Education and Photo Voice

A hidden curriculum is one that is defined by "unstated norms, values and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure and meaning…in the social relations of the school and classroom life (Giroux & Penna, 1979). Margolis and Romero (1998) stated that the hidden curriculum in graduate programs maintains an implicit hierarchy of knowledge that validates practices of privilege. Jay (2003) connected to Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony with the hidden curriculum, asserting that hegemony can serve as a useful tool of analysis for understanding ways in which the hidden curriculum helps maintain dominance of academic knowledge.

The use of life projects, such as the Photo Voice project, connects to the idea by Gunzenhausser and Gerstl-Pepin (2006) that life projects incorporate an integrated identity, a

graduate student's desire to explore research questions that are meaningful to his or her own experiences. This project gave an opportunity to demystify the graduate school milestones while creating a space where community could occur. The design of a class for a first-year doctoral student can have a huge impact on the student's scholar identity and sense of adequacy (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2009). Some examples of hegemonic graduate experience may include: 1) lack of diverse ways of knowing in course materials and classes; 2) lack of diversity in faculty; 3) and unclear explanations and expectations regarding progress in the program and milestones to be met. Thus, hegemony continues to create a unifying discourse, curriculum and approach to the program that produces and reproduces the normative (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). These hegemonic environments lack supportive classrooms and programs, leaving students with unanswered questions and feeling isolated. hooks (1994) noted that such classroom structures pose only colonizing options to students with diverse epistemologies. Thus, students with ideas and thoughts outside of the normative are often marginalized and made to feel unwelcomed (hooks, 1994).

There is limited discussion or research pointing to ways in which doctoral faculty and instructors can rethink their courses to assist first-year doctoral students in their entry into a doctoral program, to address their fears, and to assist in developing a sense of community and support from the beginning. This paper represents one example of the way in which a Photo Voice project can be used as a tool to enhance the experiences of students in the doctoral classroom. Wang (1999) defined Photo Voice as a process in which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique. When the Photo Voice tool was used in the doctoral classroom, it enabled first-year students to share their

stories by using photographs and creating a video that most accurately communicated how they made sense of their scholar identity and their journey to and from the doctoral program, and allowed them to be grounded in areas of support and empowerment. Photo Voice as a learning tool is often used in community-based participatory research with the intent to empower those who have been silenced and promote social change (Wang, 2005).

Philosophical Foundations of Scholarship Course

The course, Foundations of Scholarship, is the first course taken by doctoral students entering the Education Doctoral Program. The class includes several assignments that encourage students to learn more about the expectations of the program, milestones, and tips for successful completion. The instructors assign a Photo Voice based in the concept developed by Wang and Burris (1997). The focus of the assignment, through the application of photos and video, is intended to foster a sense of community, enhance students' understanding of the program and the doctoral journey, honor lived experiences, and provide insight about issues critical to first-year doctoral students.

This chapter details the active practice of praxis in which both students and faculty participated in this assignment providing a unique insight into our lived experiences, the importance of having an ethic of care in the classroom, meaning making of knowledge, and learning processes. This experience was intended to give first-year doctoral students a positive environment in which they could explore their scholar identity and address any hesitancies while building a collaborative relationship between students and faculty. The class was introduced to the Photo Voice through articles, readings and discussions that incorporated personal experiences and the experiences of others who have written about the experience of doctoral students. The

goal was for students to feel empowered about their ability to be in a doctoral program and increase their sense of belonging. Through Photo Voice, students discussed and shared their videos and dialogued with peers about their lived experiences. This assignment was designed to make the notion of scholarship relatable to real world learning.

Engaging in Community

The goal was for students to examine their pilgrimage to the doctoral program, their identity and how it may or may not intersect with scholar identity. This assignment pushed us (doctoral students) as a community to adapt a research method, Photo Voice, whose primary goal was to give voice, empower, and press us as educators to act for justice. This project lasted all seven weeks of the course, and centered on critical research questions on scholarship. The Photo Voice project required students to take meaningful photographs and developed a theoretical framework. Photography should connect to our ecological map and safe community guide provided in the syllabus. This was an action-oriented project. It challenged us to observe, theorize, and analyze content. The second stage of the project was to contextualize the photographs through narrative/storytelling. The narrative was informed by lived experiences and theoretical underpinnings discussed in class. Collaboration and care for colleagues was necessary because this was a key element to building a scholar community. Periodic small and large group discussions were used to check on progress, share photographs, and discuss challenges related to the project.

Giving Voice to the Beloved Community

Critical pedagogy requires scholars to understand and value various ways of knowing, value student voices, encourage dialogue, and question dominant views. Power and culture are

acknowledged as inherently existent in the classroom. Scholars engage in active examination of self and practices as a way to emancipate thought from academic culture. It is also essential to understand that no practice or teaching is ever totally anti-oppressive or free of power (Bettez, 2011). In the process of developing a beloved doctoral classroom, it is critical that power and culture are always acknowledged as being inherently existent in the classroom. It is critical to strive to be self-reflective and understand our responsibilities as educators but also understand our journeys to and from the academy. Bettez (2011) noted:

> building community is an essential component to social activist teaching. Students not only need the skills and knowledge to reflect and act upon the world in order to transform it; they need support networks—critical communities—to sustain them in their practice and inevitable resultant struggles (p. 77).

The beloved community of scholars must go beyond the creation of “safe places” to a place where scholars are working cooperatively and compassionately with one another (Bettez, 2011). Bell (1995) noted that in building community, scholars must “have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole (p. 3). In other words, the creation and sustenance of a beloved community of scholars means that scholars must be responsible toward others. This concept begins to dismantle competition, individualism, and power. However, the concept of a beloved community of scholars can be daunting in the face of a hierarchy of domination and power, rituals, and traditions that have sustained the structure for centuries, and a common understanding that this is how the academy is. Because of these complexities, the beloved community of scholars is not just a process but a mission for a justice-oriented doctoral experience.

Critical pedagogy becomes a beacon in realizing solidarity and consciousness in the emergence of a beloved community in the doctoral classroom. The classroom can become a nurturing and supportive space that critically looks at scholars' social, psychological, economic and historical realities and how power impacts them. The beloved doctoral classroom can challenge domination and encourage caring, thoughtful discourse while empowering students to be responsible and accountable against forms of oppression, power and privilege in the academy. Because so much of the scholar community and the doctoral classroom are centered on independent, isolated work, it leaves too much room for competitive, dominant attitudes and behaviors to be sustained and maintained in a structure already created to mirror those same values. In other words, Lobnibe (2009) noted that "the system is set up to privilege particular kinds of knowledge, thoughts, and forms of participation that affirm the status quo" (p. 346).

How can we begin to build a beloved community of scholars in the doctoral classroom? How do we go beyond the creation of a safe place to a place of solidarity and hope? The creation of a beloved community of scholars must begin in the doctoral classroom. By working with doctoral students early in their academic career, it becomes possible that a new academic culture of nonviolence and hope can not only emerge but can become a new norm. In no way should we strive to replace one norm with another one. As a community of scholars, we should expect community to continue to self-reflect and evolve with time. A beloved community of scholars can begin in the critical and intentional development of course syllabi that take into account the power and culture present as well as the creation of space of various ways of knowing and thinking that can thrive and evolve in active discussion with other scholars. Readings should be carefully selected to expect the students to think critically and reflect, but most importantly find

connections to their lived experiences. The readings and assignments can encourage a process of exploration and also give room to demystify policies, procedures, and milestones as perceived barriers. Instead of perceiving them as barriers with thoughtful dialogue supported by attentive readings, students should see themselves more clearly as part of a beloved community that cares about their well-being, growth, and completion of the program. The notion of a beloved community challenges the doctoral classroom to be less about the individual and more about the communal.

Freire (2003) argued that education for liberation can be achieved through praxis "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 51). The beloved community of scholars has a classroom that thoughtfully and critically theorizes and analyzes the content while applying it to personal, community-oriented experiences. Through dialogue, scholars become more conscious about doctoral education, their role, and the importance of a beloved community. Assignments should be reflective of the process of a beloved community. The classroom should advance the readings and discourse while actively engaging scholars in their communities. In addition, community is built through active, compassionate listening and voicing counter narratives that challenge power and dominant perspectives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). This partnership is central to critical pedagogy principles and to the sustenance of a beloved community. For example, the use of various reflective pieces expressed through narrative and photography is a great guide to collectively make sense of the doctoral journey. This level of engagement calls for more group work to challenge the assumed isolation of the scholar community, opening up a space for more integrated connections among the community. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) emphasized that this deep engagement challenges hegemony and

the dominant form of doctoral learning that defaults to a White, male objective and rational ideology.

While the idea of integrating love and hope into the classroom is not a new concept, love and hope are often marginalized to selected classrooms, usually of undergraduates, and activist scholars. They are rarely invoked as necessities in the doctoral classroom. Critical pedagogy continues to highlight the struggle for love and hope to be not just guests in the doctoral classroom, but to be the beloved community of scholars. Bettez (2011) noted that "in an institution that generally devalues the importance of love and heart, we (professors and students) must muster the courage to love, to think with heart, and to interact with compassion. This is can be the cornerstone of creating critical communities" (p. 94). The beloved community of scholars should also extend beyond the doctoral classroom, to our home communities and the world. As we begin to approach the final frontier, doctoral education, it is essential to continue to work toward the beloved community of scholars.

Photo Voice as a Tool for Creating Community

Wang (1999) defined Photo Voice as a "process through which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (p. 185). It enables participants to share their stories by taking photographs and involves selecting images that most accurately reflect the issues, explaining what the photographs mean, and identifying theories, issues, and themes that appear (Wang, 2005). It is often used in community-based participatory research projects and employed with the intentions of 1) empowering those who are silenced and 2) promoting social change (Wang, 2005).

This study details a counter-hegemonic teaching and learning experience as observed by one of the instructors. Students participating in this assignment not only gave us unique insight into their social lives but also presented us with an opportunity to explore ideas and create our own meaning of scholar identity by applying our knowledge and actively engaging in the learning process. The inclusion of this visual project as a learning tool in the classroom proved to be very powerful. The literature suggests that the value of photographs to sociological research, however they are used, lies in their ability to create and support meaning making. Photographs are used to help focus responses to particular ideas, connect the world of the researcher and researched, create richer data, and act as a means to make meaning. Some literature presents the option of students generating knowledge in visual sociology by taking photographs themselves in order to create understanding of a particular topic such as scholar identity (Killion, 2001).

Supporting students sharing their own work and encouraging classroom discussions are also techniques that are beneficial to scholars teaching first-year doctoral courses. Looking at other people's work allows one to improve his or her own skills (Killion, 2001), discussion can impress in students the variety of perspectives that exist (Killion, 2001), and photographs can stimulate discussion and actually increase participation (Killion, 2001; Hanson, 2002).

Creating Community for First-Year Doctoral Students

The purpose of the Photo Voice project was to allow doctoral students to explore their voice as an emerging scholar and critically reflect and share their journey as it is unfolding. Because scholar identity is a huge part of the doctoral process, it is critical to explore. The following questions were asked: Would I have to give up who I am in other to become a scholar? Would the people I care about the most see me differently? The project was intended to be

empowering and instill a desire to create a sense of community. With this in mind, Photo Voice provided a great opportunity to show what a participatory research method looks like while carving a space for dialogue.

During the first class meeting, the instructors went over the syllabus, goals and objectives of the course. The Photo Voice project was discussed in greater detail three weeks into the class. No training in photography was given, just that the students needed to think of their narrative and be mindful on how the photograph connected with it. Because the Photo Voice project provides room for self-interpretation, a series of guiding questions were provided to better assist the process. Some of the questions included the following: Who are you? Who aren't you? What does it mean to be a scholar? In what ways do you do scholarship? How are you feeling about being identified as a scholar? The students were given the entire semester to work on their project. A Facebook page was created to provide another venue for students to share ideas, report the progress of their project, and support one another.

The requirements for the assignment were left intentionally open to focus the students on their own stories about their journey in doctoral education. Students gathered photos they considered most important to their own narratives. Small-group discussions both in the classroom and on Facebook facilitated a natural process of making sense of the experience as well as community support. Most presentations ranged from 3 to no more than 10 minutes in length. Final presentations were submitted electronically to the class as a way to learn and honor everyone's lived experiences early in the doctoral program. Students were able to describe their photographs and how they reflected critical aspects of their journey. In addition, students selected photos that began to make sense of their scholar identity and how it intersects with other

identities. As a group, they observed how each student made sense of his or her current experiences and how they interconnected to past experiences and the significance to self. This process gave way for all first-year students enrolled in this course be actively reflecting together for an entire semester. This active reflection opened the door for students to gain a certain level of comfort with one another and an understanding of community as it relates to their cohort.

What I Learned as a Co-Instructor

The Photo Voice project gave an opportunity right at the start of the doctoral program for students to interact individually and in small and large groups with others like them. Active mentoring from both instructors assisted in facilitating discussion on program policy, mission, and critical milestones and demystifying the doctoral experience. Critical pedagogy practices helped us create an effective and comfortable environment for students to share their ideas, stories, fears, and triumphs. The issues presented included the role of family and balancing being a parent and a doctoral student. Students also highlighted key people in their lives who inspired them to attain a Ph.D. This forum created room for open discussions about the graduate school journey, feelings of inadequacy, and an overall sense that we were all in this together.

Photo Voice is a valuable tool for first-year doctoral students. It empowered the students to see themselves as not having to leave who they are at the door in order to be scholars. At different stages of scholar identity, Photo Voice allowed students to have voice, influence their immediate classroom environment, and gain power to help shape the future of the program. Photo Voice is easy to replicate regardless of setting. The ability to visit with students regularly, whether in a large or small group, while also giving room for a virtual community via Facebook was an important part of the reflection and dialogue aspect of the process.

As a co-instructor, I was able to participate in a unique classroom environment that best aligned with critical pedagogy practices and praxis. This environment engaged not only the students but also the instructors in honoring our lived experiences and creating room for community. Photo Voice serves as a form of counter-hegemonic pedagogy that is guided by democratic and social justice principles which promote equity, respect for human beings, improvement of the human condition, and the pursuit of knowledge. In this case, a doctoral pedagogy is then practiced, using Photo Voice as a dialogic process that fully engages doctoral students and liberates them from the hegemonic ideology and practices of doctoral education. This dialogic and photographic process generated thoughtful interactions which transformed the immediate social environment and experience within a doctoral classroom. Photo Voice encouraged critical reflection, enhanced socialization, and expanded ideas on how we can create knowledge, understanding, and community.

Implications for Practice

Although this project was only applied one time to a doctoral first year course, it is critical to point out that the ability to engage students in the active examination of their scholar identity and doctoral journey assists in setting the tone for questioning a prescribed scholar identity from the beginning of their program. Lived experiences are constructed in relation to ways of knowing and deconstructed in a way to question the notion of objectivity and truth. The Photo Voice project created a space where scholarly work and lived experiences can co-exist in the classroom. In essence, the project connects the public sphere with the private sphere. By bringing the two together, it is possible to create a sense of responsibility to understanding and dismantling the contexts of power and privilege as well as domination and exclusion. To this

end, students can question their immediate classroom environment and set expectations for future classrooms. Students may begin to more actively ask: Who is being excluded/included? Who is silenced? Who has voice? This process begins to best integrate identities, reframe scholar responsibilities, and question issues of power in doctoral classrooms.

Photo Voice is an example of a tool that can be used in a classroom to examine identity, make sense of the doctoral journey, develop discourses, and interrupt practices that exclude some and not others. Specifically, faculty need to recognize that pedagogy is a raced, gendered, and classed practice. The mere opportunity to share stories in the classroom does not interrupt power and domination. In practice, educators need to address issues of power by creating opportunities where diverse voices and experiences are heard and accomplished equally. Moreover, educators must not only find ways to uncover the perspectives of those silenced, but to also understand the issues related to their silence.

The Photo Voice project provided first year doctoral students with an opportunity to intentionally create a beloved community. Several students articulated that the Photo Voice project was a powerfully personal assignment. It provided the students with a creative forum to critically discuss and reflect on their values and the identities most important to them. Many students noted the Photo Voice project helped them see the interconnection between developing as a scholar and the development of a scholar community. The themes that were most notable in the projects included: connecting scholar identity to spirituality, serving others, understanding gratitude as a source of growth, gaining clarity of the difference between Ph.D. and Ed.D. balancing work, family, and scholarship. As students shared their Photo Voice projects via the class Facebook page, it created a space for: praising each other’s lived experiences, resisting and

embracing scholar identity, celebrating baby news, and motivating each other with quotes like "never stop learning, because life never stops teaching." The sense of community was so strong that they came up with a nickname and even a Greek letter designation. Photo Voice empowered these first-year doctoral students to become more aware of their identity and the kind of scholar community they would like to have. The project amplified their voices in a way that they could influence and shape their doctoral experience.

Developing relationships is fundamental in the creation of community in the classroom. Photo Voice provided a venue for students and instructors to equally build connections using technology to support face-to-face interactions. By attending to these interactions, students and instructors work together to develop scholarly knowledge while making a commitment to developing positive and supportive relationships in the classroom. Regarding the student-instructor relationship, power has a presence in this process. Critical educators can use Photo Voice as a way to attend to voice, dialogue, and participation. Thus, the role of the instructor is perceived as a mutual collaboration to creating a positive classroom climate. A learning tool like Photo Voice assists in creating a space for voice in the doctoral classroom as a starting point to embody praxis and critical pedagogy in practice.

The Photo Voice project made the instructors aware of the needs of first-year doctoral students and the feelings that come with those needs, which may, in turn, affect their experiences in the classroom. The project provides a structure to better pay attention to classroom dynamics and student voice in the presence of tensions, silences, or active dialogues. Photo Voice provided a creative venue to unveil not only a supportive dialogue but to deconstruct power in the classroom. In doing so, we actualized critical pedagogy to develop a caring community.

CHAPTER 5. THE DOCTORAL CLASSROOM AS A THIRD SPACE

Reflections

When I first began to consider the three articles that created this dissertation, I knew that the time would come to address the "So, what? How do we fix this?" part of the dissertation. Frankly, I approached the topic desperate for a breathing, healing place. Although writing a dissertation may not seem like a recipe for health, the ability to share my story and create a space for others has been liberating. I was unsure how this project would end, but the emerging theme through it all has been hope. The kind of hope that is both inspiring and invigorating. What I did not expect was how much hope I have been carrying all along these wounded, painful spaces. I came into doctoral education filled with energy and the desire to emerge myself in deep thoughtful reflection that would help me grow as an educator-activist and researcher. I wanted the doctoral classroom to be a space of community. According to Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996), location is "the most basic aspect of human society which frames our interactions" (p. 31). Consequently, the classroom as a location plays a critical role within the larger White supremacy structure, and it must not be overlooked.

The title of this dissertation, "Doctoral Classrooms: Community of Scholars or Community of Resistance?" describes, in essence, the existence of a place that moves simultaneously between the center and the margins. A place where "*the other*" resides, a bridge "for the house of difference" (Sandoval, 1998, p. 358). This place is very similar to what feminists in the 1980's described as "Third Space" (hooks, 1984; Moraga & Anzaldua, 1981). In her book, *Yearning*, hooks (1990) discussed the concept of a "space of radical openness, a purposeful peripheralness, a strategic positioning that disorders, disrupts, and transgresses

center-periphery relationship" (hooks, 1990, p. 84). One can determine that in the case of the mainstream doctoral classroom studied in this dissertation, it is neither a community of scholars nor one of resistance, but a Third Space. Furthermore, as I reflected on my own place within this classroom, I realized that I already inhabited a Third Space, as a woman of color. It is a place that embodies the intersections of self as it relates to the places I occupy and provides me with the ability to transgress. Soja (1991) noted that transgressing entails "forced entry, disruption involves visibility, and disorder implies action" (p. 31). My mere presence in the doctoral classroom has created a Third Space. It is the space in the classroom some of us occupy that embodies other-ness and sets off the interplay between center and margins. The label of "other" within Third Space is the deliberate disruption and interruption of intersectionalities. Soja (1996) defined Third Space:

> A knowable and unknowable, real and imagined lifeworld of experiences, emotions, events, political choices that is existentially shaped by the generative and problematic interplay between centers and peripheries, the abstract and the concrete, the impassioned spaces of the conceptual and the lived, marked out materially and metaphorically…(p. 31).

The doctoral classroom as a Third Space creates a space where various forms of knowing and lived experiences can reside and thrive while reframing hegemonic discourses and moving counter narratives and experiences to the center. As I reflect on my autoethnography, *testimonios* and counter-hegemonic pedagogy articles, I can see the interplay between the physical classroom space on a superficial level and the meaning given to that space within the complex representation of power, hegemony, and ideology. As scholars, if we allow the doctoral

classroom to stay at the status quo or utopian level, the center becomes the eye of the storm. Thus, the Third Space has the ability to become both a place of community and resistance. The doctoral classroom as a Third Space enables doctoral students to question and transcend the representation of hope in this space. The existence of this Third Space will require us to be more mindful of issues of power, hegemony, oppression, and domination located at the center.

The idea of doctoral classrooms as a Third Space honors the space in the middle of community and resistance. It is a place that can contain agency and possibility, if we are willing to coexist there. In these classrooms, students and faculty challenge each other through critical dialogues, communities, and institutions in order to construct a more inclusive and mindful paradigm. Therefore, the classroom as a Third Space can contain the hope for transformation within doctoral education. In situations like these ones described in the autoethnography and *testimonios*, power is encountered but rather than ignore it, it can be continuously challenged to simultaneously framing and reframing the classroom space. A Third Space must develop praxis, which creates counter-hegemonic practices such as the Photo Voice project included in Chapter 4, discourses and pedagogy. It is not sufficient to simply recognize the existence of power and hegemony in the classroom but to rather interrupt and dismantle them. Not doing the latter can produce and reproduce academic trauma--the price to pay for living in the margins.

When I think of the classroom as a Third Space, I think about my autoethnography in Chapter 2 and the *testimonios* of students in the doctoral classrooms included in Chapter 3. These narratives highlight a firm distance between the center and the margins that emerged from experiences in the classroom. This is why writing this dissertation is so critical to the livelihood of the doctoral classroom. In order to bring justice and hope to the classroom, we must reflect

upon the politics and aspects for doctoral education that are open to transformative possibilities. The reality is that the doctoral classroom, much like any classroom, can be a place of contradictions that allow room for the binary culture that currently exists in our doctoral program. The binary culture of the doctoral classroom described in the narratives permeates our program. A classroom living in a Third Space can move power and domination to transformational opportunities that can only be cultivated in this space. It is in this place that lived knowledge can be translated into action resulting in agency (Soja, 1996). This deeply personal dissertation has brought clarity to the active negotiation of identity and positionality in the doctoral classroom.

The creation of a Third Space will engage both faculty and students in a critical analysis of multiple forms of oppression and illuminate the role of power and its impact in our classroom environments. We must strive for a more integrated education doctoral program which engages actively in the understanding of power as it is produced and reproduced in the academy. In addition, this understanding is deepened by the analysis of how power intersects with race, class and gender, to name a few. Third Space processes in the classroom focus on collaborative, non-hierarchical learning and teaching and value lived experiences that use dialogue as a way to empower student voices.

Future Directions for Research

This dissertation is foundational for my future research on the experiences of doctoral students in doctoral classrooms. I anticipate expanding each article with an eye to the notion of a Third Space. The possibility of a longitudinal approach to the *testimonios* article would allow me to continue learning how emerging scholars make their way through doctoral education and

academia and start work they have long aspired to begin. In addition, I would like to expand on the concept of the doctoral classroom as a Third Space.

In addition to specific areas of expansion, there arose many questions and ideas for future research. One of the most prominent questions inspired by this work are: How do doctoral students experience classrooms that are liberatory in focus? More specifically, how do doctoral students in liberatory classrooms experience the negotiation of scholar identity and positionality? What can we learn from these classrooms that could develop new expectations for the scholar community? In relation to our own classroom, what would critical pedagogy and Third Space look like?

Conclusions

This dissertation opened a small window into the lives of doctoral students and their experiences in the doctoral classrooms. As they have experienced a binary academic environment, they continue to create, write, resist, heal, and contribute to change for future students in the program. All students, whether silently sitting in class or actively participating in a Photo Voice project, drew upon various strengths, acts of faith/hope, and support to navigate through hegemonic classroom climates. This dissertation was designed to provide insight into to their real and lived "theories in the flesh" reflective of doctoral students' struggles, educational experiences, and resiliency to combat all sorts or types of oppression in the classroom. Through my autoethnography, *testimonio*s, and the Photo Voice project, we are reminded to use our memories, traumatic events, and lived experiences as politicized acts of survival that teach us to be strategic, as we navigate through various challenges in higher education.

Many of us stand alone and are continuously pushed outside….Many doctoral students are outcast. However, this dissertation as a place to give voice is significant and connected to creating change that honors social justice and adult education principles. Therefore, through a critical process of awakenings, reflection, healing, and transformations, the doctoral students' *testimonios* teach us the importance of connecting our educational aspirations to attain a Ph.D. to contribute to our immediate classroom community. Their *testimonios* reflect narratives that are grounded in acts of resistance, defiance, advocacy, and hope. Hernández-Avila (1995) asserts that there is a human obligation that we must all carry as educators, researchers, and human beings. Hernandez-Avila (1995) asserted:

> we also live our lives, and the evidence is in each act we take to end the terror and degradation of genocide, repression, criminalization, starvation of body and spirits, violation of our human rights, people-hating/earth-hating, and racism that remains our people's punishment for being so powerfully different. So that their/our suffering will not have been in vain, so that every ounce they gave for liberation will count, so that our spirits will draw and give from such strength, we get up; we rise up, in beauty, in dignity, and in conscious freedom…" (p. 181)

Therefore, it is imperative that we take time to heal, mend our wounds, and again rise up armed with hope and faith to continue to end the binary and hegemonic classroom cultures. We are part of a new generation of scholars who are armed with Anzaldua's *conocimiento* (consciousness-raising), striving for emancipatory changes as a conscious, political, and ethical choice in our doctoral experiences. I end my journey in this program embracing hope, vision and courage, believing the next generation of scholars is ready for justly revolutionary change.

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APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVAL

May 6, 2014 FederalWide Assurance FWA00002439

Dr. Elizabeth Roumell
School of Education
FLC 216B

Re: IRB Certification of Exempt Human Subjects Research:
Protocol **#HE14248 , "Our Testimonio: Negotiating Scholar Identity and Positionality in the Doctoral Classroom"**

Co-investigator(s) and research team: **Aida Martinez-Freeman**

Certification Date: 5/6/14 Expiration Date: 5/5/17
Study site(s): **varied**
Funding: **n/a**

The above referenced human subjects research project has been certified as exempt (category # 2) in accordance with federal regulations (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Part 46, *Protection of Human Subjects*). This determination is based on revised protocol materials and informed consent (received 5/2/14).

Please also note the following:

- If you wish to continue the research after the expiration, submit a request for recertification several weeks prior to the expiration.
- Conduct the study as described in the approved protocol. If you wish to make changes, obtain approval from the IRB prior to initiating, unless the changes are necessary to eliminate an immediate hazard to subjects.
- Notify the IRB promptly of any adverse events, complaints, or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others related to this project.
- Report any significant new findings that may affect the risks and benefits to the participants and the IRB.
- Research records may be subject to a random or directed audit at any time to verify compliance with IRB standard operating procedures.

Thank you for your cooperation with NDSU IRB procedures. Best wishes for a successful study.
Sincerely,

Kristy Shirley

Kristy Shirley, CIP, Research Compliance Administrator

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APPENDIX B. EMAIL INVITATION TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear ___________________:

My name is Aida Martinez-Freeman. I am a graduate student in the Education Doctoral Program at North Dakota State University, and I am conducting a research project to examine the experiences of doctoral students in doctoral classrooms. It is my hope, that with this research, we will learn more about scholar identity, experiences in the doctoral classroom and strategies to improve doctoral education.

Because you are a current graduate student, you are invited to take part in this research project. Your participation is entirely your choice, and you may change your mind or quit participating at any time, with no penalty to you. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but we have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known risks. These known risks include: loss of confidentiality, and emotional or psychological distress.

The benefits for participating in this study likely to include advancement of knowledge, and /or possible benefits to future graduate students. I will keep private all research records that identify you. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. You will not be identified in any of written materials except by your choice of first name. I may publish the results of the study; however any identifying information will be private.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact me at 701.231.6339 or email me at aida.martinezfreeman@ndsu.edu, or contact my advisor at Dr. Elizabeth Roumell at 701.231.5778 or email at elizabeth.roumell@ndsu.edu. You have rights as a research participant. If you have questions about your rights or complaints about this research, you may talk to the researcher or contact the NDSU Human Research Protection Program at 701.231.8908, toll-free at 1-855-800-6717, by email at ndsu.irb@ndsu.edu, or by mail at: NDSU HRPP Office, NDSU Dept. 4000, P.O. Box 6050, Fargo, ND 58108-6050.

Thank you for your taking part in this research.
Aida Martinez-Freeman

I, ____, agree to participate in this study.

Date signed: ____

APPENDIX C. EMAIL FOLLOW-UP

Hello!

Thank you for participating in this study. The next phase is to have you review the transcription attached to this email. Please note any themes you see showing up consistently in your *testimonio*, and provide a short reflection. The reflection does not need to be extensive just capture your initial thoughts, feelings and recollections.

Let me know if you have any questions. If you are able, I would love your thoughts by **Wed. March 11.**

Thank you!

Aida

APPENDIX D. PHOTO VOICE PROJECT GUIDELINES

The purpose of this Photo Voice assignment is to allow you to explore your voice as an emerging scholar - to critically reflect on and share your journey of doctoral education as it is unfolding. Taking on new identities (such as a scholar identity) is rarely straightforward or simple, because the process usually gives rise to questions about how the new identity will impact those existing identities that are already important to us. Will I have to give up an important part of who I am in order to become a scholar? Will I be accepted as a scholar? Will other people (especially those I care about) see me differently if I become a scholar? Will I still be able to do work that is worthwhile if I become a scholar? These are all natural questions to wrestle with as part of doctoral education process. This assignment is intended to empower you to be an active agent in your journey (or, perhaps it is better thought of as a pilgrimage) – so you are not left to just let doctoral education happen *TO* you. With that in mind, this assignment uses an adaptation of a research methodology, Photo Voice, whose primary goal is to give voice to, and empower, members of a community toward a common goal.

This project will last for the remainder of the semester. It will require you to make meaningful photographs (yes, you should ***make*** photographs, not merely ***take*** photographs), you can use to communicate important aspects of your scholarly journey (pilgrimage). The final product should be a multimedia presentation that includes a collection of the images you have captured, along with a narrative (written or spoken) that helps to unpack your experiences and insights about the identity work you are doing as an emerging scholar. You will have opportunities to share your preliminary ideas and phots via a Facebook group that has been created for our class – this is intended as a way for you to get feedback from your colleagues to help you craft what will become your final presentation.

As you plan your photographs and narrative for your presentation, please be mindful to make thoughtful connections to ideas in the course readings or class discussions. It may also help to frame your photos/narratives as responses to questions such as:

- Who are you?
- Who ***aren't*** you?
- What is important to you?
- Why are you here?
- What does it mean to be a scholar?
- How do you personally and professionally experience your scholar identity?
- In what ways do you "do scholarship"?
- What images does the term "scholar" invoke for you?
- How are you feeling about being identified as a scholar?

- Who will you seek to emulate as a scholar?
- In what ways do you embrace a scholar identity? In what ways do you resist a scholar identity?
- What identities do you seek (other than that of scholar)?
- What identities do you avoid?
- What identities are ascribed to you by other people whether you like it or not?
- Where/how does your scholar identity ***resonate*** with other important facets of who you are?
- Where/how does your scholar identity ***conflict*** with other important facets of who you are?
- With whom do you ***gain*** credibility if you are seen as a scholar?
- With whom do you ***lose*** credibility if you are seen as a scholar?
- Having just begun the EDP program, how are you feeling about the journey (pilgrimage) that lies ahead of you?
- What are your hopes, fears, expectations, etc. for what lies ahead of you?
- Who/what is your support system?
- What do you need from the EDP community in order to succeed?
- What are your responsibilities to the EDP community? How can you fulfill those obligations?
- What might you have to sacrifice (temporarily) while you are on this journey?
- What are you NOT willing to sacrifice in order to earn a doctoral degree?
- How does a given photographs depict your journey?
- How do photographs illustrate your positionality and identity?
- How do the photographs assist you in making sense of your scholar identity?
- etc… (you are encouraged to address any issues you found salient in the readings or class discussion - do not limit yourself to only the questions in this list)

REQUIREMENTS: The requirements for this assignment are intentionally being left ill-defined in order to allow you freedom to focus on the aspect(s) of your story that are most salient to you - and space to be creative in the telling of those stories. You must create a multimedia (photos and narrative) presentation that tells a story of your journey in doctoral education. Your presentation should be based primarily on photos you create intentionally for the purpose of this assignment. In other words, it is okay to use some existing images if they help to clarify your narrative – but the core of your presentation should be photos you capture specifically for this assignment. It is expected that most presentations will be 5-10 minutes in length – though the basic rule is that it should be as long as it needs to be to tell your story well (the same goes for numbers of photos: it takes as many as it takes). Final presentations should be submitted in an electronic format that

can be distributed to the rest of the class via email, Blackboard, or some other website. Powerpoint, iMovie, and Windows Movie Maker are some examples of software that can be used to create your multimedia presentation, but a host of other software and online photo or slideshow apps exist that you can use if you are familiar with them. If you wish, you can also get technical help for creating your presentation from the Technology Learning and Multimedia Center (though keep in mind this assignment should be focused on the content of your presentation much more than the mode of presentation – so do not get too caught-up in the technical aspects of your presentation). Please post your own preliminary ideas, photos, questions, etc. in the Facebook group at least twice during the semester. And please provide feedback to your colleagues by comment on their postings at least twice per week.

Any digital camera should be able to capture suitable images for this assignment – including cameras built into cell phones or other mobile devices. However, if you do not have easy access to a suitable digital camera, one can be checked-out from the NDSU Equipment Checkout