Teaching Diversity across Disciplines: Reflections from African American Faculty in Four Different Academic Settings

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Teaching Diversity across Disciplines: Reflections from African-American Faculty in Four Different Academic Settings

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Abstract
The authors, male and female African-American faculty from different academic disciplines at predominantly white institutions, share personal reflections on their experiences teaching postsecondary graduate and professional courses that focus on diversity and multicultural themes. This article provides tools and strategies for improving the overall effectiveness for those who teach diversity courses from a framework the authors have codified as a “3-C” perspective: context, characters, and curriculum.

Key words: African American, diversity, faculty, higher education, multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism has made a powerful entrance into various disciplines, including medicine, education, counseling, and law (Banks 2004; Arredondo et al. 2005; Banks and Banks 2007). As such, following the ideas of psychoanalytic, behavioral, and humanistic movements, multiculturalism is considered the fourth force in counseling and psychotherapy (Pedersen 1991, 1999; Hoffman 1993).
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Historically, multiculturalism can be traced to the black civil rights and feminist movements and other social justice movements of 1960s in the United States and outside (movements of non-European migrants in Anglophone countries). Regardless of its origin, Pedersen (1991, 4) broadly defined multiculturalism as "a wide range of multiple groups without grading, comparing, or ranking them as better or worse than one another and without denying the very distinct and complementary or even contradictory perspectives that each group brings with it."

Since its emergence, academic programs have responded to the multicultural phenomenon with major efforts, such as adding courses in cultural diversity, hiring more women and faculty of color, admitting more students of color, and increasing awareness of multicultural issues (D'Andrea and Daniels 1997). Ironically, administrators have begun to understand that increased numbers of people of color alone are not enough to create a positive multicultural environment, but rather there is a need to create welcoming, growth-oriented, and supportive campus environments conducive to academic success (Valverde 1998; Jackson 2006). Although women faculty and faculty of color have made significant gains, people of color in the academy continue to be underrepresented in tenured positions and senior faculty positions. They tend to be employed at four-year colleges (Manzo 2000; Antonio 2002; Opp and Gosetti 2002; Perna 2003). In fact, the lack of a critical mass of administrators and faculty of color hired and retained in academe is thought to hinder the retention and graduation of students of color in predominantly white institutions [PWIs] (Turner and Myers 2000; Liang and Sedlacek 2003).

In terms of the retention of African-American faculty and other faculty of color, particularly challenging is teaching and training students in PWIs to become multiculturally competent; that is, preparing future professionals and educators who have critical multicultural competences and skills to work with diverse people. A lack of factual training about whiteness, privilege, diverse groups, and social justice issues, in general, tends to foster intense emotions among white students when they are exposed to multicultural training (such as anger, resistance, guilt, confusion, and self-doubt). Sadly, by challenging privilege or covering sensitive content dealing with race, class, gender, or sexual orientation, women and faculty of color have paid a price professionally and personally with defiant and resentful student reactions, attacks on their credibility, challenges to their competency to teach, and even lower student evaluations.

Keeping the origin of multiculturalism in mind, a primary objective of this article relates to the experiences of people of color—specifically, African Americans who have had negative classroom experiences that impacted faculty and students. Strictly speaking, the goal is to cultivate an understanding of the pain and hurt resulting from unhealthy human interactions between students and faculty of color from the lived experiences of African-American faculty from various professional disciplines that teach diversity.

Several of the scenarios that follow include an awareness of the institutional micropolitics and stereotypes of people of color, as well as the developmental processes that culturally encapsulated students tend to undergo over the course of the semester.
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(Students often change from being highly defensive and set in their ways, to being more open-minded, with abilities to question and critically examine their own biases and ignorance of differences.)

Underpinning our nontraditional approach to writing this article is the assumption that storytelling is more than a recounting of events or one person telling something to another. Rather, narratives offer a powerful way to get first-hand knowledge. They also arise from a tradition grounded in African and African-American culture. Thus, in contrast to traditional research, we intentionally present our stories intact and uncensored.

Narratives are symbolic and often have hidden messages, such as parables with morals or lessons to be learned. Similarly, in our narratives, there are subtle cultural messages, universal truths, and the affirmation and validation of the experiences of African-American professors that will draw out head nods from black people and other people of color. Further, we make no broad claims, but we invite the reader to make connections between elements of our narratives and their own experiences.

The last and most important objective of this article is to provide, perhaps ambitiously, a synthesis of authentic personal and literature-based experiences (i.e., theory and praxis) of African-American faculty from the disciplines of counseling, law, higher education, and educational psychology. The assumption is that adding our personal experiences will provide more validation for African-American students taking courses on predominantly white campuses and to African-American faculty teaching diversity and other courses. They also should ring louder than merely describing approaches to teaching diversity. For African-American faculty, this is more than just a teaching experience; it is an emotional experience. In other words, in our experiences, when we step into the classroom to teach, race enters with us.

The ultimate goal of this article is to provide strategies grounded in our personal journeys as African-American faculty teaching in PWIs. We hope these strategies will assist other African-American faculty and faculty of color teaching courses in diversity and multiculturalism to mitigate students’ attacks and resistance, which is often found to exist when faculty of color teach about these issues. Therefore, in many ways, this article is replacing one view with our view of a multicultural pedagogical approach for teaching diversity courses.

Frameworks that Undergird Our Teaching Diversity

From a philosophical and theoretical design, as opposed to presenting techniques and curriculum, our 3-C (i.e., context, characters, and curriculum) perspective models on teaching are immersed in the basic tenets of Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis’s (1992) multicultural counseling competences and Baxter Magolda (2001) and Kegan’s (1982, 1994) self-authorship and college student development research. The models also are consistent with Walker’s (1993) feminist pedagogy; Helms’s (1995) racial identity development model; and Ivey, Ivey, and Simek-Morgan’s (1993) cultural intentionality. We offer these frameworks as lenses to help the reader understand the complexity of teaching diversity and multicultural courses to defensive and resistant students. We used the term multiculturalism.
to describe those courses that focus on ethnic and racial diversity, whereas *diversity* is the broader term referring to those courses that focus not only on ethnic and racial diversity but also on gender, age, sexuality, socioeconomics, and so forth.

**Cross-Cultural Competencies**

For us, Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis’s (1992) cross-cultural competencies provide a promising framework for understanding students’ and faculty’s attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills; awareness of their own cultural values, biases, and culturally different worldviews; and the ability to provide culturally appropriate intervention strategies. This framework provides a $3 \times 3$ matrix of awareness, knowledge, and skills.

For Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992), the awareness level for training multiculturally skilled faculty requires developing an awareness that begins with the faculty member and extends to the student—that is, culturally competent faculty move from being culturally unaware to being aware and sensitive to their own cultural heritage; then, they progress to valuing and respecting differences and having an awareness of how their own cultural backgrounds and experiences and attitudes, values, and biases affect their classroom environment. At this point, faculty members are knowledgeable about their own cultural heritages, as well as those of their students. Finally, at the skills level, faculty members need the cultural and effective tools and skills to work with students from diverse backgrounds so that students also can effectively work with cultural differences.

**Self-Authorship**

According to Baxter Magolda’s (1992; 1998) framework for self-authorship, college students progress through aspects of knowing that include absolute knowing, transitional knowing, independent knowing, and contextual knowing (in three domains of learning: cognitive, affective, and behavioral). *Self-authorship* is defined by Pizzolato (2006, 32) as, “A relatively enduring way of orienting oneself toward provocative situations that includes recognizing the contextual nature of knowledge and balancing this understanding with one’s own internally defined beliefs, goals, and sense of self” (see also Kegan 1994; Baxter Magolda 2001). Specifically, Baxter Magolda (1998, 143) defined self-authorship as, “the ability to collect, interpret, and analyze information and reflect on one’s own beliefs in order to form judgments.”

Baxter Magolda (2001) introduced empirical evidence for self-authorship as a way of knowing originally described by Kegan (1994) that ignited a new push for reform focused on improving college student outcomes. In her longitudinal study, self-authored participants used their internally defined sense of self and goals to direct their decision making and knowledge construction. The ability to assess competing ideas and to generate new ideas, together with the development of a coherent, consistent sense of self, supports the development of reflection skills, problem-solving skills, and a coherent identity in college students (e.g., Astin 1984; Baxter Magolda 1992, 2001).

**Cultural Intentionality**

Developing this self-authorship is consistent with what Ivey, Ivey, and Simek-Morgan (1993) referred to as *cultural intentionality*, incorporating diversity in thoughts, feelings,
and behaviors. According to Ivey, Ivey, and Simek-Morgan, the person who acts with intentionality is a fully functioning person who has a sense of capability. This person can generate alternative behaviors in a given situation and approach a problem from different vantage points; generate the thoughts, words, and behaviors necessary to communicate with a variety of diverse groups and individuals; and formulate plans, act on many possibilities existing in a culture, and reflect on these actions.

Further, according to Baxter Magolda (2004), self-authorship is not just an individual characteristic, but also a quality shaped by the environment. Thus, perhaps the failure to find many individuals who are fully self-authored and culturally intentional is not a failure in students, but a reflection of an educational system that rewards a reliance on authority and the quest for the right answer. If college students were armed with cultural intentionality and self-authorship and taught to challenge their assumptions, they would be able to develop reflection, problem-solving, and decision-making skills; integrate their identity development with their cognitive skills; and also develop multicultural competency skills that help them better prepare to cope with a pluralistic multicultural society during and after college (see Baxter Magolda 2001).

Feminist Pedagogy
The following principles of research and praxis derived from Walker’s (1993) feminist pedagogy also offer a significant promise in meeting the goal of inclusive teaching:
1. adopting a critical perspective toward sources of knowledge about family life, thus rejecting the illusion of objectivity and absolute truth in the classroom, linking individual and familial experiences to external, structural processes;
2. focusing on variations within groups as opposed to differences between groups;
3. attending to family conflicts, competition, and structural arrangements that increase the likelihood that relationships and family processes will be harmful; and
4. incorporating within the syllabus or program outline the work of those who have been underrepresented. In a similar vein, cultural competence is inherently related to multiple identities and contexts regardless of the discipline.

Similarly, the four voices in the following sections represent multiple perspectives from multiple curriculum traditions. The authors are also the participants, each briefly discussing his or her points of departure for teaching a multiculturally oriented course to majority students. In each case, the destinations led to moments of professional and even personal transcendence. In this series of accounts, we take note of and try to explain this transcendence and show how it is necessary for teaching diversity courses—just as necessary, in fact, as a critical, multicultural perspective itself.

How Do You Know?—Marble
Instead of one memorable encounter with students’ stereotypic and racist attitudes, there are many (both old and recent) that remain plastered all over my dignity. After being a therapist for more than 20 years and serving on the other side of the academy in positions such as dean of students, director of student counseling, and as an academic counselor, I returned to my home state to pursue a doctorate at a PWI located in a small southern city that was 97 percent white. The institution was considered research intensive. The lack
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of diversity was especially challenging after living more than 20 years in Chicago, in a community area that was considered the most diverse in the Midwest.

As part of my duties as a graduate assistant, I taught undergraduate and master’s level counseling courses (e.g., on clinical approaches, diversity, and counseling techniques). I came to academia prepared to teach, but I was not prepared for the nasty, subtle attacks on my selfhood. For example, I was in the midst of a lecture on racial and ethnic groups, talking about labels and how important it was to allow different groups and individuals to self-identify, when a lovely, 55-ish, white woman with a sweet smile and soft voice raised her hand. With a puzzled expression on her face and an innocent, unwavering voice, she presented me with the question, “Do I call you nigger, black, or what?” I was shocked! My heart stopped, my mouth dropped, and I could not breathe for what seemed like an eternity, but in reality was about two seconds. After regaining my breath, I exhaled and told her, “When I left college, we were referred to as blacks, and when I returned to college in 1994, we were called African Americans. I prefer African American, but black would be okay.”

A few years later, as a tenure-track African-American female professor in a PWI, this type of little nasty assail continued with increased intensity, masquerading as resistance, criticism, and constant attacks on and challenges to my credibility in the form of questions and statements like, “How do you know that is true?,” “That’s not what my supervisor said,” or “That’s not what Dr. Tom said.” After years of scholarly work in diversity training, I accepted that this behavior would occur when I was teaching diversity courses or challenging a student’s beliefs and value systems. Ironically, I received even more attacks on my credibility from students when teaching other content courses from a diversity perspective. To my professional chagrin, I was written up and hauled to the principal’s (department chair’s) office for sheer nonsense (a perfectly expected reaction from a student facing his or her biases).

As a result of these classroom experiences, it has become my professional and ethical charge as a counselor educator and licensed professional counselor to increase students’ awareness and knowledge and challenge their stereotypic beliefs, not only about people of color, but also about other diverse groups such as people with disabilities; gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered; the elderly; and populations from a global perspective. Teaching diversity courses reaches far beyond 3-C to what Ivey, Ivey, and Simek-Morgan (1993) termed a “call to consciousness,” what feminists describe as the “personal is political,” and what I modestly refer to as “living the life you talk about.” As a result, I have developed a relational-collaborative-reciprocity (RCR) curriculum model as a tool to promote diversity and social justice in teaching diversity counseling courses (context) to graduate students and interns (characters).

RCR Model

In the RCR model, the R stands for relational as an acknowledgment that teaching diversity is curvilinear. Therefore, in a pluralistic society, we have to foster healthy relationships with our students, and they need to do the same with their clients and peers. The C refers to the need to collaborate. The collaborative effort is an acknowledgment of the collectivism in relationships, where the “primary focus is on group goals with a strong orientation
toward interpersonal cooperation and in-group interdependence” (Lee and Kelly 1996, 254). The final R, reciprocity, is the giving back and not just taking from or exploiting the people from whom we learn. I strongly believe that, morally and ethically, we ought to be givers and not just takers, especially when it concerns those who allow us to enter the sacredness of their worlds.

Though I have developed this RCR model of teaching diversity and promoting social justice, I have not found a way to make the situations less hurtful or harmful; the attacks still hurt. As an African-American educator and dean once said in response to Graff’s book, Beyond the Culture Wars (1992), “It is one thing to debate and another thing to be the subject of the debate. Being the subject of the debate changes and unevens the playing field.” As long as racism exists in our society, the playing field is not level, and people of color are the subject and not the verb or object.

Giving Them Something They Can Remember—Bonner

My motivation for teaching courses on diversity and multiculturalism stems from what I perceive to be the lack or cursory treatment of these topics during my own graduate school experiences. As I reflect on my days as both a master’s and doctoral student, and now as an associate professor, I see that the lessons I learned from bumping up against obstacles and “stABBing my toe” on adversities taught me how to navigate the academy as an African-American male. Yet, what would have made my foray into academe during the tumultuous and uncertain times a bit more palatable, particularly when I questioned my own sense of agency and identity, is the shared sense of being that comes from a discourse community that has at least been exposed to and can somewhat empathize with “your pain.”

One of my most vivid experiences as a student of color occurred during a favorite graduate school class—History of American Higher Education. To my surprise, this particular course fascinated me. I was never a history buff, so I had immediately chalked up this course as one I would just have to suffer through in order to get to the other side (i.e., to graduate). From the virtuosity of the professor, who not only wrote the book, but also served as one of the major forerunners in the field of higher education history, to the complex and interesting readings we completed for each class session, I found that this class quickly became one of my favorites.

Then, that fateful evening, it happened. During an engaging classroom discussion about early Negro education and the advent of the historically black colleges and universities, a class member—a white, male student—raised his hand and stated, “So, if these institutions are so great, why don’t they just go there.” What had been an ongoing lively and spirited classroom discussion quickly degenerated into an acerbic back-and-forth sparring match. Before we were allowed to venture too much further into this conversational abyss, the professor stood up and said, “Well, let’s just take a break.”

When the class resumed, there was no continued discussion, debate, or even mention of what had just previously occurred. An African-American student, and peer in the
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class, turned to me and said, “These white folks don’t want to know who we really are and what we are really about—we are to only be seen and not heard.”

Co-Creators of Teaching and Learning

Although the context for me has changed, I now stand on the other side of the lectern; the discussions around topics associated with diversity and multiculturalism, in many ways, have remained the same. As a faculty member who teaches courses in this area, it is my goal to provide students with an opportunity to focus on their individual, as well as their collective, learning, growth, and development. It is my goal to ensure that they are not just seen but also heard, and subsequently valued for who they are and what they bring to the academy. Classroom is the first C, the context, in this proposed 3-C model that I attend to as an instructor. Creating classroom environments in which all students have the opportunity to participate and share their views and perspectives is what I attempt to promote. According to Bonner, Marbley, and Agnello (2004, 253), “In breaking the traditional boundaries of teaching and learning, both academics and students become co-creators of the teaching and learning context. This process requires a transactional approach, a departure from teacher-centered teaching and an approach toward student-centered learning.”

While all Cs in the proposed model in my view are interrelated, I find some of the closest ties among the characters (students) and the curriculum. Any decision I make regarding classroom content is intimately connected to the students I instruct. What I want the students to appreciate and gain is a better understanding of self. Consequently, as a first approach in my diversity course, I require students to engage in an activity that forces them to look at themselves as cultural beings (Banks and Banks 1993). Students explore what this activity defines as their macro- as well as micro-cultural identities. One of the most important outcomes of this activity is that all students begin to see the congeries of cultures that constitute their backgrounds. Additionally, students who had not previously viewed themselves from a cultural perspective—typically white students—are challenged to view themselves differently. It is the range of works I use—from Bell Hooks, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Paulo Friere, Sylvia Hurtado, Deryl Wing Sue, and William Tierney; to Peggy McIntosh, Jerome Bruner, Gloria Ladsen-Billings, and Cornel West—to fill their three-ring binders and heads. Embracing diversity and multiculturalism is not something one can solely experience temporarily; in order for it to matter, students must have something they can feel.

Welcome to My World—Ross

What was your first experience with racism? I posed this question to my Race and Racism class and a similar class called Jurisprudence at another law school where I previously taught. However, with the Jurisprudence class, an interesting phenomenon occurred when discussing the racism question with my colleagues. The two white professors could easily recall vivid memories of observing racism and prejudice directed toward a person of color, while the professors of color, like me, had a different experience. Surprisingly, we could not recall the first time we experienced racism—my whole life was full of racial incidents.

I shared this and another incident that involved an interview for my first job as an attorney with my Race and Racism class. I recalled sitting in the office of the managing
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attorney (an obese, chain-smoking, white man), answering questions. Then, without warning, he asked, "Wendy, what are you going to do when someone calls you a nigger?" I was taken aback. I could not believe this was happening to me. I was thinking, "This is the 1990s. Why do I still have to deal with this? This is supposed to be a profession where justice is blind and color should not make a difference." Somehow, I managed to pull myself and my thoughts together and responded, "Well, it wouldn't be the first time."

This story is one of many that I share with my students to illustrate the many indignities that I have suffered throughout my life and professional career. In fact, I found myself using my personal experiences as teaching tools to expose students to racism.

Firsthand experience catapulted the discussions on diversity and racism in my Race and Racism law course. By exploring the historical foundation of race and the law in America, this course focuses on race and the law as a social microcosm. Students are exposed to the dichotomy of approaches that challenge contemporary race and the law issues. Accordingly, I have framed my approach as the social mirroring bias and privilege (SMBP) approach with a social impetus of change component.

SMBP

The SMBP approach hinges on the reality that law reflects societal views (Martinez 1997). In effect, the law is used to reflect (or mirror) majority perspectives, biases, prejudices, stereotypical ideas, and notions of privilege (Davis, Johnson, and Martinez 2001). The impetus of change component advocates that the law be used as a catalyst for change. For example, it can be used to right wrongs that have historically been overlooked. These examples can be seen in affirmative action, hate speech, and anti-discrimination laws.

From the aforementioned SMBP framework (curriculum) and from the 3-C perspective, students (the characters) are often challenged to face the roots of their own personal biases (known and unknown), prejudices, and stereotypes toward people from diverse backgrounds. Students are forced to reckon with their newly found self-awareness. It is only through challenging their privilege and biases that students' unconscious beliefs and feelings are exposed (Wildman and Davis 1995). Throughout my years of teaching, students on numerous occasions have revealed that they were unaware that they harbored racist beliefs and attitudes.

For students of color, sharing their own experiences of racism and discrimination affords them an opportunity to vent, be validated, and be vindicated. They have, on countless occasions, come to me to express their gratitude and relief for this type of forum in their law school curriculum.

Finally, to solidify all aspects of this model, students are asked to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the ways social bias and privilege play out in society and law such as how we, as lawyers, are agents and, thus, the impetus of change. One way this is done is through the use of small-group discussions where students are assigned topics to discuss. Additionally, through the use of research papers, students are given
the opportunity to share their findings and entertain questions from the rest of the class. This approach results in students educating themselves and one another on racism and the way in which it affects people of color, as well as society as a whole. This approach to contextualizing teaching diversity in law has required me to become comfortable teaching outside the box, challenging students’ beliefs and attitudes, and allowing them to choose their own approach while keeping them safe. In fact, this forum has allowed me to share my experiences of racism, a glimpse of my world; and, as a result, my suffering is not in vain.

**Her Eyes Were Wide as Headlights—Burley**

Her eyes were wide as headlights, and her face a ghostly white. She looked right through me, glaring directly at the African-American students filling the narrow, middle-school hallways. She whispered, “Dr. Burley, I’m going to be sick.” Indeed, it was an old building with yellowing and rusting lockers inside and slightly crumbling brick on the outside. Also, that September day in Texas the air sweltered, windless and thick. Even the scent of the nearby stockyards was no match for the broken air conditioning and the sweaty adolescent bodies pushing, running, cursing, laughing, and shouting in the halls that afternoon. “Please,” she said, “I’ve got to leave right now.” She did leave. And she never returned. She got special permission to complete her diversity requirement at another school that was overwhelmingly white. During one of our reflective discussion sessions, another young, white woman boldly blurted, “I don’t know why you bring us way over here. I’m never going to teach in a school like this.”

This was my introduction to teaching School, Society, and Diversity to preservice teachers at a predominately white, research-intensive university in the Southwest. We met once a week in a predominately African-American middle school that seemed to squat between two decaying government housing projects. School here started at 8.00 a.m., but at 7.20 in the morning, the cafeteria was packed with students getting breakfast because 95 percent of the students were on free meals. As expected, pass rates on the state exams were low, but truancy was high. Often I saw assistant principals trying to catch students escaping the school. I soon found myself doing the same thing, trying to stop my nearly all white college students from slipping away from the school and faking their observation reports. I got sick too. “I don’t want these people teaching my kids,” I thought. So I escaped. It seemed like no one wanted to be at this school.

I ran to my favorite tool for understanding this world—research. As any good researcher should, I decided to examine the program. Was it the context? Was it the students? Was it the curriculum? Was it me and, of course, was it my African-American heritage? I interviewed students and colleagues. I read. I worried and lost sleep. I cursed and hated my students and my job. I stopped reading my student evaluations and advised others teaching the course to do the same. Only after years of routinely changing the textbooks and the curriculum did I find an approach that worked for me.

**Inductive Learning**

Inevitably in these courses, students must confront their biases and racist tendencies. I could always count on pronouncements like, “I believe everybody is the same,”
or "You're making me feel like I'm a racist, and I'm not." I always struggled with a meaningful rebuttal. I had students watch certain movies and read the right novels. As I spoke, I waved Kozol's *Savage Inequalities* (1991) around like a backwoods Baptist preacher waving the New Testament. Nothing worked until I challenged students *to live the life that they were talking about*. I stopped preaching about multiculturalism, and I had students interview an older minority person, spend time with a minority adolescent, and attend a religious event with people who saw religion differently than they did.

Amazingly, by saving the ideology, suppressing the preaching, and focusing on inductive learning, I began to see students connecting the dots. In a report on attending a prayer service at a predominately African-American church, one future teacher said that he had never been more scared of anything in his life. He realized that, for the first time in his life, he was in a room where he was in the minority—something minority professors experience daily. He was deeply embarrassed by his biases, taught to him by family and friends. Finally, I found my students leading me to admit my own fears and biases. Was it my own low expectations of my students that led to some of my problems? I began to think like one of my students, who interviewed a Mexican American who, for years, had changed the oil in the student's car. In broken English, this man told of his passionate love of freedom and America and his family's battles, victories over racist law enforcement, and bigoted landlords. In two hours, the interviewee smashed every Latino stereotype the student had. He concluded in his report that, "I can no longer pretend to know what a student is thinking before hearing his story—whether black, brown, green, or blue—or even white." Like this student, I too am forever changed.

**Resiliency—A Necessary Skill Set When Teaching Diversity**

Though not a core design in our teaching, braiding together our stories produces an interesting and emergent powerful theme of *resilience*—one made taut by being steeped in resiliency and one that transcends what we typically call multiculturalism. This resiliency is one feature of a necessary skill set for the professor of color in a predominately white teaching context. We believe that this skill set includes three major features: (a) dispositions anchored in high self-efficacy (Spradlin and Parson 2007); (b) protective relationships that support self-efficacy and provide validation of perceptions; and (c) external support systems, usually from institutions in the African-American community and other communities of color.

First, each of the authors was resilient because of high self-efficacy. Not only were they confident in their content knowledge and their ability to deliver this knowledge to students, but they also exhibited high expectations for students. Though each African-American faculty member experienced critical harangues from students—related in stories about confrontations with students (and even colleagues) that ended positively—each of them validated, encouraged, and praised students' or colleagues' cultural intentionality; that is, their willingness to examine other worldviews and points of view and the ability to generate alternative behaviors.

Second, the characters of these professors have roots in reality. Despite all the self-efficacy in the world, racist attacks hurt, as mentioned by Marbley. They can cause one to
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lose oneself in eternal battles that cannot be won. However, this group found colleagues who helped them to see the multicultural classroom context for what it was. The reality is that no amount of insisting that students learn the precepts of multiculturalism will change overnight the reality of racial biases, stereotypes, and racism existing in the academy. The following scenario of reciprocity between two of these African-American authors illustrates this point.

After exerting considerable effort in the development of a multicultural course, one author, as an African-American faculty member, became nearly despondent after examining evaluations of instruction. Students accused her of suggesting that they were racists; however, she earnestly had no recollections of even coming close to doing this.

One of the authors, her colleague at that time, encouraged her to ignore the evaluations and to trust herself and her teaching. She did, and she recognized that she had somehow actually pricked a few consciences, and they were actively projecting their racism on to her—a particularly effective defense mechanism used by those unable to confront their own issues. Recognizing the projection herself and receiving positive coaching from teammates allowed her to reclaim her inner strength. Not only did her evaluations improve, but also she later learned that the low evaluations were, in part, the result of a white colleague’s deliberate efforts to encourage her students to submit less-than-favorable evaluations. Eventually, to their credit, her colleagues (white and African American) exposed this covertly aggressive person, and he left the university discredited, while the African-American faculty member emerged as a well-respected, award-winning recipient and researcher.

Interestingly, a few years later, she had the opportunity to return the favor in-kind. The African-American male colleague found himself mired in draining administrative wars that basically pitted him against a powerful crony network in the college. Her advice was to steer clear of the mess and go back to what he loved best—teaching and scholarship—with the goal of attaining full professorship. In both cases, this supportive relationship helped the authors remember the values that made up self-efficacy, realize their own assets, and see the reality of the situation and the value of supportive relationships.

The third feature of the resilient response of the authors is the use of community organizations as touchstones. One of the classic ways of dealing with the types of racism presented here is simply to stay away, just as one would respond to the narcissistic personality. When that is impossible, creating clear boundaries, limiting contact, and surrounding oneself with healthier people is helpful (Hotchkiss 2003). Something similar can be said for dealing with context and characters that constitute the multicultural curriculum. Places of worship, fraternal organizations, and community organizations were critical aspects of building these professors’ resiliency. These organizations tended to be predominately African American and represented distance and relief from an academic atmosphere that could be suffocating. The authors went so far as to form a faculty-of-color support group, a black faculty and staff association, a support group for African-American students, and a 100 black women chapter in the community. Often, the work
of these groups took the authors into the local African-American community, where they could provide support, tutoring, training, and advising. Being active in these organizations required one to be positive and to think about others, even while working daily in an unwelcoming and sometimes hostile environment. As they coached and encouraged others, such as young African-American women, they found themselves being coached. These touchstone organizations presented them with emotional healing from the actual classroom and workplace injuries and, most importantly, from the anger of dealing with energy-draining racism.

Synthesizing Teaching Experiences across Disciplines

In each scenario, the authors reported success—either successful teaching or successful negotiation of the situation. All had to make sure that students were equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to work with diverse students and clients. Students had to sharpen not only their knowledge and skills, but also their intercultural awareness and sensitivities so that they could better meet the needs of diverse students and clients.

Further, in each scenario, they took risks as African-American professors, experienced a threat of failure, and repeatedly confronted racism. When attacked by those demonstrating racism and intolerance, each bounced back; and, despite the context being routinely hostile, they remained steadfast and resilient. For example, when the potential employer tried to rattle Ross by use of the “N” word, her response was instructive on multiple levels for the potential employer. Most importantly, she moved forward from this experience to success.

In the words of poet Maya Angelou, “You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it” (in Barnes 1997, 10). This resiliency is not a necessary feature of multiculturalism, but rather a necessary attribute of professors of color.

In many ways, for these African-American authors, confronting a hostile majority environment is akin to having a relationship with malignant narcissism; that is, an exaggerated sense of grandiose self-importance. Sometimes, students’ relentlessness is shameless, hurtful, and completely without boundaries. They will demand entitlements, even while accusing affected minority groups of being unduly entitled.

This is not necessarily a personal character issue, but one of cultural narcissism; a self-absorbed pathology innately entrenched in our American culture. For example, Burley remembered memorizing fact after fact about American history that began with the phrase, “The first white man to ... land on U.S. soil, cross the Mississippi, traverse the continental divide,” and the like. He recalls being thrown out of the classroom after asking a white junior high history teacher, “What difference did the guys’ race make?”

To him, this notion of being unique feeds mores like, “free, white, and 21” and reinforces the idea that there is nothing better in society than being part of the majority. This
type of cultural hegemony can explain much of the drive for new immigrants to assimilate and erase their own cultural heritages. Therefore, when a professor of color challenges this culturally derived view of white privilege in the world, some students respond with disbelief and anger. In the end, a faculty of color must be fully armored with dispositions and skills that produce resiliency or, in more everyday terms, a very thick skin.

**Theory to Practice to Teaching**

Though not readily obvious or directly articulated in this article, the basic tenets of Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis's (1992) multicultural counseling competences; Baxter Magolda (2001) and Kegan's (1982, 1994) self-authorship and college student development; Walker's (1993) feminist pedagogy; Helms's (1995) racial identity development; and Ivey, Ivey, and Simk-Morgan's (1993) cultural intentionality are theoretically different and often overlap. Nevertheless, collectively, they are the adhesive for Marbly's RCR model, Bonner's co-creators of teaching and learning model, Ross's SMBP model, and Burley's inductive learning 3-C perspective model.

Teasing out the specific role each of these frameworks play in our teaching is beyond the scope of this article. Yet collectively, the frameworks are an integral part of each of our teaching and provide excellent frameworks for codifying our experiences as faculty of color in PWIs.

For our teaching, multicultural counseling competences, self-authorship, and college student development; feminist pedagogy; racial identity development; and cultural intentionality are theoretical templates that describe, explain, and predict behaviors and influence the way in which we design and teach our courses. In essence, these theoretical approaches not only shape the content of the courses, but also the complexity of our behavior, philosophy, teaching, wellness, resiliency to adversity (e.g., defensive and resistant students and cold academic climate), and our personal journeys as multicultural educators and scholars.

For example, Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis's (1992) core multicultural competencies and standards have been adopted and endorsed in all our disciplines (counseling, higher education, law, and curriculum and instruction) as the foundation for multicultural education and training multiculturally competent professionals. Cultural competency begins with awareness and knowledge of our and our students' cultures, as well as the skills needed to work with culturally diverse students.

People are not socialized within a vacuum; thus, our training involves us acting with cultural intentionality by actively developing an awareness in ourselves and our students of how diversity issues such as race and ethnicity affect the way we all construct meaning in the classroom and in the world. From a feminist pedagogy perspective, classroom teaching is systemic; that is, it links the student's individual, familial, and community experiences to external, structural processes.

Being effective in classroom teaching requires us to be knowledgeable about and mindful of how our level of racial identity development and the levels of our students'
development affect our teaching and our relationships. We empower ourselves and our students. Similar to acting with cultural intentionality, we orient ourselves toward challenging situations that include seeking new knowledge and at the same time understanding our own internally defined beliefs, goals, and sense of self.

Conclusion

In an attempt to reframe our negative experiences, we uncovered the protective factors; however, the protective factors we eliminated included the irresistible gravitational pull of the simple act of teaching multiculturalism. After all, there is no joy in watching students wrestle with the realization that they might be racist, sexist, or homophobic; nor is the classroom context the protective factor. On the contrary, for us, these classrooms were cultural battlegrounds—battlegrounds in which students, because we are people of color, may decide to launch a quiet insurgency by questioning every sentence we utter; or battlegrounds where student evaluations have the power to destroy our personhood, dignity, and self-esteem while lessening our chances for promotion or tenure. Instead, we have not given up, succumbing to what Steele and Aronson (1995) called stereotype threat, where group performance suffers because of an internalized fear of being stereotyped. Rather, as evident in our teaching, we have chosen to reframe our negative experiences in teaching diversity; we have persevered and even thrived.

Having high self-efficacy, a focus on reality, plus resiliency equals real empowerment. We believe that this empowerment is the start of a pedagogy for teaching college courses on diversity and multiculturalism. It is important to note that this is not an empowerment based on any one in the majority group needing to do anything or give up something. In fact, a core principle of teaching in the multicultural class is that white students, in general, are unconscious of their white privilege.

This is nothing to lament; simply, it is a function of being part of the majority culture. We have discovered that when the instructor in a diversity class realizes that the course, at best, is merely a momentary lifting of the veil, then he or she can gain great strength from the experience. Further, this empowerment is anything but passive; rather, it is transformative. In one instance, one of the authors felt compelled to defend herself to students, colleagues, and supervisors, the majority of whom were white. The result was a severely eroded self-esteem. However, she refused to give in to hate and bigotry, recognized her high level of competence, realized that there may always be overt and covert racists in academia, and recommitted herself to resiliency. She, like all of us, rediscovered herself and helped others teaching these courses to rediscover themselves.

In conclusion, we call for much more research on the issue of pedagogy for multiculturalism. From our discussion, it appears that pedagogy for teaching diversity classes begins with the emotional readiness of the instructor. This is particularly true if the instructor is a person of color. Also, a person of color teaching a multicultural course to students in the majority requires taking many risks. As each of the writers testified, early failures are almost certain. These failures do not define the teacher of a multicultural course, however.
They can actually sharpen the teaching skills of the instructor. Each person improved the course by having students learn the content and gain insights with hands-on activities and projects. Of course, the difficulty here is that the hands-on activities involve touching worldviews, values, and mores that do not change easily; and this will certainly lead to challenges from students and a challenging situation, in general. Again, the instructor must be emotionally ready.

If used wisely, early failures (such as not being emotionally ready for a surprisingly hostile class) can be used to strengthen the person teaching this course. Therefore, in the multicultural classroom, the 3-Cs are inextricably intertwined and even knotted. To reiterate from our narratives, the issues in the classroom and the issues of the classroom are complex. This complexity does not mean defeat.

As in Professor Ross’s scenario, we ask African-American faculty, in particular, “What are you going to do when someone calls you the ‘N’ word? What will sustain you?” To recast the words of Angelou, with high self-efficacy and resilience, the teacher of the multicultural class need not become personally or professionally defeated (see Barnes 1997, 10). In fact, we believe that with the knowledge, the right tools, resiliency, and prayer, the class can become a way of fulfilling one’s own unlimited potential for growth.

References
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