

For a long time now, my teaching is empowered by critical philosophy. Criticalism covers a broad array of orientations, such as feminist, communicative action theory, post-modernism, post-structuralism, and new materialism. Some common threads include being open in the first place to a critique of one's own epistemological and truth claims; recognizing that all knowledge is positioned, and therefore not neutral; and engaging in anti-oppressive social science substantively, pedagogically, and methodologically. Living out this philosophy in my teaching activities suggests that in teaching/learning moments, I am always a learner – never solely and, certainly, not always, a teacher. Reflecting back to 2017 teaching, I want to focus on 3 ways in which I deepened my inclusion practices in 2017 as a teacher-learner – of course there are many more.

I know that who I am when I walk into the classroom has consequences and that my teaching is not untethered to the work for justice and consciousness-raising that I do “on my own time.” To foster inclusivity in my educational practices, I increased my commitments to learning outside the classroom. For example, in the fall, I attended the largest trans/ally conference in the USA with the Prism youth community where I attended many sessions intended for educators. Among the many things I learned were lessons on the use of gender pronouns. For example, I learned to share my own preferred pronouns at the beginning of class to indicate to others in the room that gender variance was acknowledged and accepted by me. No one else needed to follow suit as this was a way for me to make clear my own openness and not a way to insist that others identify or out themselves. Though I am never mis-gendered, naming my own cis-ness has positive impacts on how gender non-binary people feel included – even if they are not out. Additionally, I joined the Monroe Country Standing Up for Racial Justice group in order to facilitate my own personal work with racism. In support of the Black Lives Matter movement

and in response to the visible and invisible racism seeded in our country, I held myself more accountable to the outcomes of even the most subtle forms of racism, classism, ableism, hetero/sexism, immigration status. My work outside the classroom space fostered changes within those spaces. I learned ways to encourage transformative engagement with oppression as anti-racist pedagogy. I changed the readings in my Fall Y612 class to more directly examine how methodologies can contribute to anti-racist educational ideals. The links between critical inquiry and anti-oppressive educational efforts was made stronger through these changes. I have been doing readings on whiteness and intersectionality and rethinking my own perspectives on this by drawing on the work of Karen Barad and Kimberely Crenshaw. This scholarship has helped me situate my own privilege in the teaching/learning space which in turn opens up a space for difference and equity to be discursively available and for inclusivity to be directly expected. In order to create increased opportunities for self-reflection and teaching improvement, I began asking students “In what ways did the instructor promote diversity?” (see course evaluations Fall, 2017).

Another way I focused on inclusivity this year was by increasing my attention to challenges that are traditionally unspoken in graduate school – chronic illness, class knowledge, ableness, and socio-emotional/mental issues. Of course, one must engage in this work of opening up the learning spaces without knowing what specific invisibilities students might be wrestling with during any given course or semester because in the first place students might not disclose. When one is informed, then there is an imperative for both learning about student experiences and planning with students to create the most inclusive situation possible. In 2017, I had a student who lived with chronic Lyme’s disease, a student with a chronic eye dysfunction, and several students diagnosed with cancer, just to name a few. We had to be creative with practical

challenges, figuring out, for example, how to enable participation without betraying health confidences. As I created alternative ways for people to be included in the learning, benefits for all students showed up. For example, by using technology to offer opportunities for people to reflect together after class, all students felt more included. Working to be more inclusive of invisibilities was the impetus for a scholarly presentation. In 2017 a contingent of Y633 students linked their experiences of feminist pedagogies with their own hidden struggles with fatness, assault histories, subtle racial dynamics, and status as a first generation college attender. They fashioned these links into a presentation for an international qualitative research conference (see Borowski, White, Jordan, Korth, and Dennis). I learned from them that pedagogies matter.

This year, as in years past, I had students preparing to/publically identify as LGBTQIA+. I will share one example. In 2017, a student who was coming out as queer suggested I read *The Argonauts* as a way of better of understanding her experiences. Reading that book inspired me to engage in more inclusive citational practices. I write extensive class notes for students so citational practices are relevant to my teaching and now my class notes use an expansive web of references and styles, queering as it were citational traditions. Additionally, my syllabi this year reflect a more robust effort to draw on articles and authors that embody diverse statuses and experiences. Lastly, this shared reading and the conversation resulted in a publication (see Clark and Dennis). Across these examples, and many others, I have found that inclusivity is critical to self-transformation and critical education practices.