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Radically Inclusive Pedagogy and Praxis

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RADICALLY INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY AND PRAXIS

by

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B.A. May 2009, City University of New York - York College

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ABSTRACT

RADICALLY INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY AND PRAXIS

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Old Dominion University, 2022
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Although the current definition exists at the intersection of critical pedagogy, disability studies, critical race theory, critical embodiment pedagogy, feminism, cultural rhetoric, expressivism, and queer theory, as it stands now, radical inclusive pedagogy has few, if any, identifiable, distinctive qualities of its own. The pedagogies and theories from which radically inclusive pedagogy draws from speak to the mind, the body, and the spirit separately, or will focus on two aspects while neglecting the third. As I envision it for the classroom practice I have designed and would like others to adopt, radically inclusive pedagogy addresses the mind (embracing students' knowledge, cultures, and languages), the body (recognizing the need for accessibility and individualistic inclusion), *and* the spirit (offering compassion and understanding) and has the potential to respond to contemporary concerns of accessibility, language, racism, and multiculturalism that affect every classroom. This project intends to not only fill in the gaps where the definition and praxis for radically inclusive pedagogy lack but also demonstrate how this pedagogy looks within the classroom every day with an emphasis on addressing language in the classroom.

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I dedicate this work to Stephen who made as many routes as possible for me to reach my dreams,
to Lothaire who inspired my love of writing and maintains endless faith in my abilities, & to

Heggie, for my survival through it all.

Many thanks and love to my whole family and friends who encouraged me throughout this
process.

And lastly, this work is dedicated to my fellow outsiders, existing on the fringes and fearing
isolation and loneliness. Believe me, you belong.

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CHAPTER I

AN INTRODUCTION TO RADICALLY INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

And of course I am afraid, because the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation and that always seems fraught with danger.

Audre Lorde

Introduction: The Outsider's Eloquence

I inherited my parents' awkwardness. They stood out as Haitian immigrants who willfully decided not to assimilate into American culture. Although it was an active decision they made, they were uncomfortable with their positionality in America. In non-Haitian spaces, they were self-conscious, bitterly aware of their accents and their Caribbean culture that graced every gesture and gesticulation they made. Every day, my parents carried the awareness that they were outsiders in a country very different from their home. Despite this awareness, they actively maintained their dream that their daughters will belong and be successful in America. My parents dreamed that their children would hide the Haitian work ethic and culture behind the guise of an American mask. My sister and I were supposed to embody these perfect amalgamations of my parents' ambition and the American dream. They thought their children could do this because we were raised in a Haitian household but are Americans who speak perfect Standardized White English without accents. My parents thought the prejudice and racism they experienced was because of their accents and their foreign status. They never considered their skin color as a reason for their sometimes deplorable treatment. They felt removed from Black people in America. Despite also being the descendants of slaves, my parents knew the history of Haiti and understood that theirs was a successful slave revolt. Thus,

they never discussed racism or prejudice in America; and they never thought that my sister and I would absorb and appropriate their discomfort of being outsiders.

I am an outsider. My identity exists at the intersection of a cisgendered black woman who is a first-generation American college student and the daughter of self-isolated Haitian immigrants. What do I mean by self-isolated? My parents, who worked more hours than I can remember, spent their hard-earned salary to send my older sister and me to private catholic school; and for that reason alone, my parents did not want us associating with the neighborhood kids who went to public schools. I remember sitting at the window of my father's office, watching them laugh and play with a sinking feeling that there had to be something wrong with me. While my parents were attempting to build our esteem by being socioeconomic snobs, I maintained the feeling that I was odd. It wasn't just playing with the neighborhood kids: my parents' resistance to assimilation meant there were endless experiences that my sister and I did not have as children. My parents ran their house like we lived in the Republic of Haiti, and I felt ill-equipped in my Americanness and Americanist learnings. Their expectations were high, and they demanded perfect English with perfect pronunciation and perfect grades. I fell short and outside of their expectations and demands. I was too American to them, and to Americans, I was too foreign. To my peers, I spoke too White to be Black—they called me 'Oreo cookie'—but I am too Black to White. Respectability politics and assimilation for their children were my parents' answers to American success. At the time, I did not perceive my engagement with respectability politics as a dance with self-hate. I was living my parents' dream, being Haitian and American enough to succeed and be accepted in this country, but I was disconnected from the rich tapestry that should have been my linguistic heritage. My experiences as a child inform my pedagogy. My positionality as an outsider, outside the confines of the norm as a fully

recognized “other,” engendered a desire in me to belong, to be myself in every space. More so, I desire to create a space of belonging, of inclusivity for everyone no matter their circumstances, backgrounds, and cultures.

I carried this struggle with my social identities into my academic career even though it was within academia that I discovered a sense of belonging. Since most of my youth was spent perfecting my use of standard English, ascribing to linguistic hegemony, and mastering linguistic airs in my writing, I fit in, and I say “fit in” loosely. As a black woman, I was still an outsider, but I was granted a tentative pass for my abilities to assimilate and my admonishment of everything outside of the mainstream. Before I developed critical awareness, I felt encouraged and complimented when I would receive the “you are so eloquent” or “you are so articulate” compliments. I use the word “compliments” as that was the intention when they were applied to me; however, these words acted as a means to delete my blackness. My eloquence surprised them. My ability to articulate my point of view in the mainstream dialect meant I was above average and that I was assimilated, fully rejecting my race and heritage. These ‘compliments’ gave me a false sense of self. I thought I truly belonged within these spaces provided that I neglected my true positionality within the world.

My tentative inclusion within these spaces ignored my race or permitted me in despite it. Reading Audre Lorde as an undergraduate senior opened my eyes to the reality of true inclusivity in academia. My introduction to Lorde’s work was *Zami, a New Spelling of My Name*; and reading this text made me understand the ability to exist accepting a position as an outsider. She explains:

In a paradoxical sense, once I accepted my position as different from the larger society as well as from any single sub-society—Black or gay--! felt I didn't have to

try so hard. To be accepted. To look femme. To be straight. To look straight. To be proper. To look 'nice.' To be liked. To be loved. To be approved. What I didn't realize was how much harder I had to try merely to stay alive, or rather, to stay human. How much stronger a person I became in that trying (181).

In accepting her differences as an outsider, Lorde finds her way. Despite her positionality, Lorde, in her biomythography, recognizes how she stands at the periphery of 'normalcy' yet composes prose that reinforces inclusivity and belonging despite our myriad of differences. Furthermore, being an outsider permits the ability to critique systematic falsehoods of 'normalcy,' emphasizing the significance of individuality (and individual experiences) in all spaces. Before my introduction to Lorde's prose, my perceptions were like sitting in a dark room, with only a flashlight for light. Once I read her biomythography, it was like an overhead light flicked on, and illuminated the entire room. I understood. All I have to do is be, and that is enough. With these insights, I became engaged with academia, and in doing so, I felt empowered. The more engrossed I became in academia, the more I saw the potential to belong to something regardless of my positionality. More specifically, I recognized the ability of those in academia, particularly pedagogy, to encourage outsiders to create spaces for themselves and others that allows room to express and grapple with their social identities.

Above all else, the ability of the instructor to create inclusive spaces appeals to me. The instructor of the course has an opportunity to construct an environment of belonging, permitting students to take risks and do the work required to engender compassion among one another. To do this, instructors must perform tasks they will require of their students to understand their personal identities and unmake personal biases. Another aspect of this self-reflection demands instructors to be immersed in the literature of multiculturalism, disabilities studies, Universal

Design Learning, and social justice. As an instructor, I can create assignments that ease students' sense of not belonging and empower them to recognize, celebrate, and unify their disparate social identities and voices.

While I have experienced feelings of inclusivity glittered throughout my post-secondary academic career, my time in the master's program at Old Dominion University (ODU) has demonstrated what compassion and inclusivity looks like in the classroom. The various theories I learned in ENGL 664 Teaching First-Year Composition opened my eyes to the need for more inclusivity in classrooms; furthermore, this course encouraged me to consider the relationship students have with writing and imagine ways to engender a love for it (and themselves and their language) that grows beyond their academic careers. Having obtained the opportunity to teach as a graduate teaching assistant in a first-year composition course, I find myself asking how I can incite inclusivity, empowerment, autonomy, agency within my classroom. With every passing day, I find myself asking more questions, such as: how do we engender love or reverence of writing in first-year composition students despite their pasts filled with contentious relationships with literacy? How can I foster a classroom dynamic that allows students to feel empowered? How can I encourage students to use more unified and authentic voices in their writing? And by unified, I mean a voice that reconciles the variety of identities within an individual. How can we, as educators, create classrooms that recognize, support, and celebrate the radical differences between and the individuality of each student within a class?

Although the current definition exists at the intersection of critical pedagogy, disability studies, critical race theory, critical embodiment pedagogy, feminism, cultural rhetorics, expressivism, and queer theory, the pedagogy of radical inclusion has yet to specify how to address language in the classroom. As it stands now, radical inclusive pedagogy exists as a

coalescence of parts of the pedagogies indicated above with few, if any, identifiable, distinctive qualities of its own. Differentiating the pedagogy of radical inclusion from the amalgamation of pedagogies it emerges from enables instructors to seek and apply elements of this pedagogy in their classrooms. Furthermore, radical inclusive pedagogy lacks a specific definition and praxis that addresses how to foster radically inclusive teaching and classrooms. This project intends to not only fill in the gaps where the definition and praxis for radically inclusive pedagogy lack but also demonstrate how this pedagogy looks within the classroom every day. Additionally, providing clear goals and hopes for this pedagogy will provide a means of enticement to apply and include some, if not all, of the elements of radical inclusion in their working pedagogies. This pedagogy would thrive in any composition classroom, but I envision its use within first-year composition classrooms. Consider the positionality of first-year students, including their differing races, ethnicities, faiths, genders, embodiedness, education, experiences, etc. Consider their anxiety and nervousness taking their first steps into higher education, and now think about how, upon their first introduction to college, many instructors work to further strip their dialects, their means of providing the world with their depiction of self and identity, from them. In doing so, we remove parts of their identity, competence, and autonomy. With the various ways that identity and language intertwine, how could we anticipate their communication, if we call their dialect, their means of shaping their worlds, an error or less than?

Defining Key Terms and Exploring the Literature: What Is Radically Inclusive Pedagogy?

Part of the exigence for this project emerges from the lack of a thorough and coherent pedagogically inclusive definition for radically inclusive pedagogy. Though slowly gaining traction and visibility within Writing Studies and across other disciplines such as disability studies, scholars who fully align themselves as learned experts of this pedagogy are few and far

between. However, it is within disability studies radically inclusive pedagogy first appears. In the introduction to *Radical Inclusive Education*, Anat Greenstein disassembles and then defines “radical pedagogy” and “inclusive pedagogy” separately. According to Greenstein, “radical” means a location of interrogation, or “questioning the taken-for-granted assumption of the social order and the role of education within this order,” and “inclusive” means assisting individual students, or “not about a ‘one size fits all’ provision but is about supporting students and families in constructing their own meanings and goals by adjusting the material environment as well as by engaging in a dialogue to mutually (re)define pedagogies and cultures in the classroom,” (7-9) In order to dismantle and circumvent ableism and forced inclusion/segregation, Greenstein attaches these terminologies and issues a working understanding of radical inclusive pedagogy. This is the site for disability activism: inclusion, which aims to provide access for every individual, cannot occur without a radical critique of the status quo. Greenstein renders a foundation for radically inclusive pedagogy insofar as defining the work necessary for implementing it in classrooms.

While Greenstein provides this foundation, his use of radical inclusive pedagogy reaches only within the confines of disability studies, despite its ability for application at the intersectionality of various pedagogies and theories. The pedagogy of radical inclusion, as I envision it, embodies an amalgamation of critical pedagogy, disability studies, critical race theory, critical embodiment pedagogy, feminism, cultural rhetorics, expressivism, and queer theory and, in doing so, provides a framework for responding to the questions I have been asking myself (listed above). In addition to working to provide accessible spaces and instruction and fostering a culture of accessibility (disability studies), this pedagogy can acknowledge the experiences and knowledge diverse students bring to the classroom and ask teachers to act as

guides in allowing them to discover and put into practice their own voice, agency, and autonomy. Radically inclusive pedagogy asks that composition students and instructors go beyond *recognizing* their discourse communities and sponsors of literacy. Central to the pedagogy of radical inclusion are aims to empower students in the writing classroom to:

- *interrogate and confront* biases and past and present roadblocks that prevent their agency and recognize and grapple with injustices and internalized barriers, such as internalized racism and ableism, in recognition of their positionality in the world and the changes that need be made to make the world a better, more inclusive, and compassionate place.
- engender a love (or at least understanding) of writing, composition, and expression as a socially situated and amenable means to express themselves, intentionally and thoughtfully celebrating and merging their various identities to obtain a unified voice that speaks to both their multiculturalism and their academic persona.

Much of this work, such as wrestling with and confronting one's biases, allows space to develop compassion, understanding, and community while reconciling personal discomforts within the classroom. While requiring the difficult work of recognizing one's positionality in addition to the positionality of others, this pedagogy creates a room where the differences between each individual within the classroom are seen and celebrated. I intend to further explore the intersections and various ways in which feminist and queer pedagogies can deeply inform this pedagogy in future projects, but for now, the emphasis of this work rests mostly on the integration of language and compassion pedagogies into radically inclusive pedagogy.

Celebration and inclusivity begin with the instructor. The pedagogy of radical inclusion asks educators to strive for accessibility in space, instruction, materials, and policies and model inclusivity and compassion, and acknowledge and appreciate the similarities and differences among their students. To honor the diversity of student populations, the more capacious pedagogy of radical inclusion for which I advocate also implores educators to be enthusiastic and eager for linguistic, racial, multicultural, and embodied differences. These differences are not deficiencies or issues to be dealt with; they are opportunities for learning, inclusion, and new perspectives. Essential to this preparation are practicing mindfulness and self-reflection on the part of instructors. Literature that speaks to these differences offers preparation to create access and spaces of inclusivity within the classroom. Introducing such literature to our students that not only undermines but resists the existing classroom hegemony emerges as a necessity to access and enact radically inclusive pedagogy. Studying the literature of linguistic justice, anti-racism, disability studies, and compassion pedagogies emerge as a means for us to confront and unpack previous experiences that they bring to the classroom and imagine (and advocate for and create) alternate, more inclusive spaces.

Extracting from various pedagogies and theories allows for radically inclusive pedagogy to open up additional spaces for interrogation and investigation. This pedagogy asks students to bring their knowledge and experiences into the classroom as resources of data and information to begin the process of questioning the status quo. The use of personal characteristics falls very much in line with cultural rhetorics (Powell et al) and counterstory (Martinez) as reflected in critical race theory (Crenshaw). Radically inclusive pedagogy demands that students tell and write their stories in their unique voices and dialects (hooks; Young), which reflects the ideology of linguistic justice (Baker Bell) and antiracist pedagogy (Inoue). Additionally, interrogating the

uses of languages and dialects in and outside the classroom speaks to antiracist pedagogy and incites part of the work that radically inclusive pedagogy intends to do. Antiracist pedagogy seeks to encourage students to interrogate and examine the dynamics of oppression and power within and outside the classroom. This pedagogy confronts and lays bare the truth and reality about racism: “Racism, on the other hand, is real. It is experienced daily, often in unseen ways, but always felt. We may call the racism we see something else, like the product of laziness, or just the way things are, or the result of personal choices or economics, but it is racism” (Inoue 4).

Kyoko Kishimoto argues for the inclusion of antiracist practices in our everyday teaching that goes beyond simply “incorporating racial content” into course readings and materials.

Recognition of the body of each individual within the classroom and of the world at large while considering accessibility and providing access emerges as essential to embodiment and radically inclusive pedagogies. Drawing inspiration from compassionate pedagogy insofar as instructors being attentive to the emotional status of their students exists as a necessary aspect of radically inclusive pedagogy. Compassionate pedagogy strives to meet and interact with students with an open heartedness and open mindedness. Michalinos Zembylas applies compassionate pedagogy as a means of protest against injustices and a way to enact solidarity and community within the classroom. Theories within compassionate pedagogy offer solutions to possible resistance to radically inclusive pedagogy, including students who are disruptive and desirous to maintain racist, misogynist, ableist, homophobic, xenophobic beliefs and agendas. This pedagogy seeks to include every individual and identity that enters a classroom. In order to do the work of inclusion, radically inclusive pedagogy uses methodology used within queer and feminist theories. Queer pedagogy exists at the intersection with critical pedagogy. This pedagogy seeks to interrogate dominant discourses and norms surrounding sexuality and gender. G.D. Shalsco

and Jack Halberstam reflect on the influences of queer theory and pedagogy within classroom dynamics. Similarly, feminist pedagogy strives to confront and unpack the power dynamics of the patriarchy while upholding the validity of lived experiences. Scholars like Judith Butler, bell hooks, and Laura Micciche provide contextual practices for applying this theory into classrooms.

Despite existing at the intersection of various pedagogies and theories, radically inclusive pedagogy addresses the limitations of current scholarship in its ability to speak to the holistic needs of students. The pedagogies and theories from which radically inclusive pedagogy draws from at the present speak to the mind, the body, and the spirit separately, or will focus on two aspects while neglecting the third. However, radically inclusive pedagogy, as I envision it, addresses the mind (embracing students' knowledge, cultures, and languages), the body (recognizing the need for accessibility and individualistic inclusion), and the spirit (offering compassion and understanding). This pedagogy answers the contemporary concerns of accessibility, language, racism, and multiculturalism that affect every classroom. The necessity of this pedagogy emerges from the need to address the diversity within our student populations. We need this pedagogy not only to empower ourselves as educators with the tools necessary to create inclusive and compassionate spaces within our classrooms, but radically inclusive pedagogy also guides our students to become empowered, autonomous, and compassionate writers and human beings. The pedagogy of radical inclusion initiates and enacts conversations necessary to begin true change.

Addressing Language in Radically Inclusive Pedagogy

I recognize the potential of radically inclusive pedagogy to ratify change within the classroom. I am expanding my knowledge by the process of self-reflection and immersing

myself in the fundamental literature of social justice, anti-racist pedagogy, disabilities studies, multiculturalism, and Universal Design Learning. In doing so, I have come to understand a foundational principle of this pedagogy is embracing not only the knowledge and bodies students bring to the classroom, but their languages and dialects. The works of April Baker-Bell, Suresh Canagarajah, and Vershawn Ashanti Young, to name a few, have answered and shaped my understanding of language in the classroom. Their collective indictment against code-switching speaks to how respectability politics in the classroom enforces the act of an ununified voice within our students, separating their public and private personas, which leaves them fragmented with a false sense of self. This is against the principles of education, as Paulo Freire describes in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Ultimately, we must seek to subvert power hierarchies in the classroom that undermine the knowledge students possess. Radically inclusive pedagogy demands the creation of spaces that facilitate a unified voice for students. At the perils of code-switching, the advantages of code-meshing emerge.

Code-meshing encourages students to bring their various identities and personas together while answering the resistance to allowing students to write and speak outside of standard English. In “Code-Meshing and Creative Assignments: How Students Can Stop Worrying and Learn to Write Like Da Bomb,” Theresa Malphrus Welford argues that content supersedes the language and style: “language and style are not everything. Substance is crucial” (22). Students knowing that their ideas matter more than perfect grammar will inspire them to engage with the course material more. Furthermore, allowing students to use familiar home dialects mingled with formal academic dialects will engender a love of writing within students: “students write more confidently and enthusiastically when they are allowed to mesh academic language with their own language” (Welford 23). In “Should They Use They Own English,” Vershawn Ashanti

Young believes that everyone's dialect should be learned and shared to not only strengthen bonds of communication but also to honor everyone's dialect in all spaces, especially within the classroom: "we all should know everybody's dialect at least as many as we can and be open to the mix of them in oral and written communication" (111). Young argues that linguistic hegemony--or the perpetration of it--leads to students suffering from low self-esteem and fragmented identities. Standard language ideology demands perfect use of Standard English, especially for minority students to be successful, and this deviates from their natural voices: "students put on verbal airs to sound clever and intelligent, complicating their sentences and muddling they expressions" (113). Putting "on verbal airs" is the perpetuation of linguistic hegemony, attempting to sound like a bougie, highfalutin scholar, and that might not be who they are. In perpetrating linguistic hegemony, academia encourages various students to believe that they lack the knowledge of self-expression, despite how in everyday speech, everybody code-meshes: as Young explains, "code-meshing what we all do wheneva we communicate--written, speaking whateva...code-meshing blends dialects, international languages, local idioms, chat tool lingo and the rhetorical styles of various ethnic and cultural groups in both formal and informal speech acts" (114). If this is what we do naturally, why not permit students to do this within the classroom, in their writing? Why force students to sound nothing like who they are? Young argues that linguistic hegemony dances as a mask for oppression:

That be hegemony. Internalized oppression. Linguistic self-hate. But we should be mo flexible mo accepting of language diversity, language expansion, and creative language usage from ourselves and from others both in formal and informal settings. Why? Cuz nobody can or gone really master all the rules of any language or dialect (112).

Linguistic hegemony asks for the impossible. If we long to obtain a classroom of successful students, whatever that looks like, then we must ask them to reach for obtainable goals that allow them to realize a whole, unified self.

Demanding perfect mastery of standard English to be successful is an unattainable and misguided goal. Furthermore, such a demand executes the continued oppression of students inside and outside the classroom. In *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*, April Baker-Bell declares that linguistic hegemony, or what she describes as “Anti Black Linguistic Racism,” is a racist device used to oppress Black language: “Anti Black Linguistic Racism that is used to diminish Black language and Black students in schools is no separate from the rampant and deliberate Anti Black Racism and violence inflicted upon Black people in society” (3). To Baker-Bell, the demand to use standard English, or what she calls “Mainstream White English,” (MWE) in classrooms is tantamount to declaring linguistic violence against Black students who must reject their language, culture, and identities in order to not only belong but to be successful in society. However, Baker-Bell cites the death of Eric Garner, who used grammatically perfect MWE to the police officers to tell them he could not breathe, as an indication of how language mastery of that dialect will not save Black lives. Baker-Bell advocates for the use of Black Languages in classrooms, citing the need to use it as a means to confront and dismantle anti Black Linguistic Racism and anti-Black Racism at large. Additionally, Baker-Bell deems this confrontation as a necessity and as a means to ratify Black voices and identities. The rejection of non-Standard English does not stop at the Black language. The damage done by forcing multilingual students to adhere to the confines of writing in only Standard American English emerges as a means to undermine their sense of self, breeding doubt, and low esteem in their ability to communicate. In “The Place of World Englishes in

Composition: Pluralization Continued,” A. Suresh Canagarajah also argues about variations of English, or what he refers to as “World English” (WE), as being rejected in classrooms: “though the stigma attached to WE is changing, these varieties are still treated as unsuitable for classroom purposes” (588). Consider the ill effects of someone’s speech being labeled and treated as “unsuitable.” How can we as instructors expect the self-esteem necessary for academic success if parts of students’ identities are being torn from them? Furthermore, Canagarajah describes the lengths of separation between WE and Metropolitan English (ME):

we may accept WE for informal classroom activities (students text discussions whether in groups or as peer critiques: student-instructor conversations, and ‘low stakes’ written assignments such as peer commentary, e-mail, and online discussions) but insists on traditional norms for graded formal assignments (essays and examinations) (595).

Canagarajah implies that we readily ask students to code switch and maintain linguistic hierarchies--ultimately deeming the languages used at home as lesser and unworthy of use in informal spaces. Code-switching enforces the act of dividing an individual voice between public and private personas, creating an ununified voice and identity. Telling students to leave their personal dialect at home is tantamount to leaving part of themselves outside the classroom, working against engendering a unified voice and a stronger sense of self. Canagarajah seeks to provide a means of having various forms of English within a composition, advocating for a “heterogeneous system of Global English” in the classroom. Canagarajah believes that allowing multilingual content in composition classrooms will develop improved communication and connection among students, citing that “multilingual people always make adjustments to each other as they modify their accents or syntax to facilitate communication with those who are not

proficient in their language. Furthermore, they come with psychological and attitudinal resources, such as patience, tolerance, and humility to negotiate the differences of interlocutors” (593). Thus, in addition to building students’ sense of self, ratifying a unified voice and identity, the introduction of various forms of English will engender tolerance.

Dialects and languages vary with their speakers. The introduction and inclusion of diverse ways of speaking strengthen not only language and writing skills in terms of communication but also the bond among students, encouraging diversity. The nature of language moves as the people who speak it travels; thus, the transitional nature of language means it cannot be confined to one area. As Canagarajah suggests, “diaspora communities have brought their Englishes physically to the neighborhoods and doorsteps of American families. If they are not working with multilingual people in their offices or studying with them in schools, Anglo Americans are exposed to WE in other ways” (Canagarajah 590). With the increasing globalization of our classrooms, the continued resistance to permitting non-standard English dialects in the classroom depicts antiquated methods of teaching. Additionally, Richard Westbury Nettell discusses language binaries regarding pidgin and language prejudice in “Depreciating Diversity: Language Prejudice, Pidgin, and the Aloha State,”: “it ultimately does nothing more than put a kinder face on the same normative binary of correctness and incorrectness, and telling students that their language is good but not good enough for most contexts--that it serves, at best as a bridge to something better is not particularly kind” (175). Nettell expounds upon the nature of linguistic hegemony, and how it engages diversity: “unquestioning respect for one language and one nation as well as for the well-defined and even better-defended borders both require. Dealing with linguistic diversity, tends to center on ways to contain it.” Since linguistic diversity cannot be contained, similar to Young, Nettell advocates

for code-sharing (or code-meshing) and encourages his students “to post online discussions and submit essays written according to their own conventions.” Nettell believes code-switching does not promote linguistic tolerance. Despite the different identities of students that Baker-Bell and Canagarajah consider in their respective texts, both too speak of the harmful effects of linguistic hegemony on non-Standard English speakers. As the previous scholars have indicated, the ill effects of pushing a monolingual agenda onto students’ writing are undeniable. These scholars note the ill effects of the use of one dialect despite the increasing diversity within the classroom. Linguistic hegemony and its pursuit of it is toxic to administrators, instructors, and specifically students. Asking students to reject part of their knowledge base leaves them feeling deficient, inadequate, and ill-prepared to engage in a world that is rapidly becoming more and more diverse and globalized.

Self-Determination

In my short time instructing, generating, and maintaining motivation in my students remains a top priority. Every time I prepare a lesson and step in front of my class, I worry if they will be motivated and inspired by the lesson I intend to teach. The pedagogy of radical inclusion intrinsically promotes self-motivation in students, as it appeals to fulfill what Katheryn C. Oleson calls the “Self-Determination Theory,” which “suggests that individuals’ self-motivation and well-being is promoted when they feel that their fundamental psychological needs of competence, autonomy and belonging are satisfied” (28). In *Promoting Inclusive Classroom Dynamics in Higher Education*, Oleson claims the part of encouraging motivation in students comes from satisfying fundamental psychological needs: “Extensive research has documented the important role of autonomy, competence, and belonging on students’ intrinsic motivation and well-being in classrooms from kindergarten through higher education” (28-9). The primary focus

of radically inclusive pedagogy materializes within compassionate acknowledgment and acceptance of the knowledge each student brings to the classroom. This acknowledgment recognizes students' disparate experiences through their positionality and intersecting identities and welcomes their specific understanding and perception of the world as means of information shared among each other within the classroom. Recognition of each other's positionality and identities provides a deeper understanding, yielding conversation, compassion, and curiosity: "By supporting these basic psychological needs in the higher education classroom, instructors foster students' intellectual curiosity, promote their intrinsic motivation to learn for the challenge and enjoyment inherent in discovering new ideas and skills, and help them flourish and achieve" (Oleson 28). The Self-Determination Theory stands as a basis for the kind of comfort, communication, and motivation that instructors hope to kindle in their students and the space they create within their classrooms. The initial step to constructing a space that meets the elements signified by the Self-Determination Theory emanates from language.

The Project: From Theory to Praxis

Part of the ongoing conversation includes a discussion of the best means of praxis for this developing pedagogy. The goal of my study is to explore the promise and chronicle my implementation of a more spacious radical inclusion pedagogy within the composition classroom. While, at this time, much of the scholarly discussion surrounding radically inclusive pedagogy resides in evaluating the deficiencies of current educational pedagogies and praxes, I will frame my exploration and discussion of radically inclusive pedagogy in terms of its possibilities and affordances, specifically through the inclusion of linguistic justice, anti-racist and anti-ableist teachings, and compassionate pedagogy. I must reiterate that anti-ableist teaching and accessibility exist as significant influences on radically inclusive pedagogy, and

while my intention is to explore anti-ableist teaching and radically inclusive pedagogy in future projects, for the scope of this project, my focus is on integration language and compassion pedagogies into radically inclusive pedagogy. Maintaining a resistance to assimilationist modes with those stances in mind, I aim to develop a praxis that can be used in every classroom but specifically for first-year composition.

As a first-time educator within a first-year composition classroom, I see the necessity of this pedagogy. My students have implied and outright stated their experiences of isolation while sitting in the classroom. Many have indicated feeling like outsiders within classrooms as they did not fit the mold of an ideal student. They have discussed the fragmented personas they maintained to satisfy various assignments of their past. Thus, the first intention of this study is to better inform me as an educator about radically inclusive pedagogy and the pedagogies that inform it and learn how to provide space for my students to discover their voice and agency and engage their identities and positionality in a compassionate space of learning. Thus, in the next chapter, I intend to provide a centralized definition for radically inclusive pedagogy that addresses its fundamental principles, which will ultimately inform my replicable, working praxis that I will share with my community of educators.

Above, I provide a general and brief summary of what several scholars offer as solutions to univocal, monolingual classrooms and their respective solutions to the question of how to honor the language that students bring with them to the classroom without requiring them to disassemble and reject their identities, knowledge, and voice. I argue that the answer exists in the center of the ideologies and ideas posed within social linguistic justice, code-meshing, multilingualism, and World Englishes by Baker-Bell, Canagarajah, Young, Welford, and Nettell.

While code meshing emerges as a means to facilitate communication with instructors who are not proficient in students' specific dialects and can be a very useful tool for communication, we as instructors should empower students to simply use their voices or write how they speak. We should offer assignments that allow for students to tell their own stories with their unique voices--not in just low-stakes writing, but with polished drafts. For example, the first assignment I conducted within my classroom was the literacy narrative. My lessons included readings that tackle the power of language in one's connection to literacy. We read Audre Lorde's "Transformation of Silence into Language" and Amy Tan's "Mother's Tongue" as examples of literacy narratives and I emphasized to my students the importance of speech, languages, and reflection. Each student engaged the assignment as though they were telling a story to their peers; they code-meshed, artfully used dialects, and made active decisions with their writing. In short, they engaged their texts. They proactively processed and made decisions on how to relay their literacy narratives. They produced insightful, mindful texts that reflected their journeys with literacy. If our goal is to teach students who to write, making active, rhetorical choices, aren't these the kinds of texts we want our students to produce? More importantly, don't we as instructors want to incite a love of writing in our students? The result of approaching the literacy narrative this way was a vast majority of my students telling me outright how much they enjoyed writing this assignment, anecdotal data that I will share throughout this project. One student, who claimed to "not be a writer" and "hates writing" stated that she may reconsider her feelings about writing if she could write "like this" all the time. I offered my students linguistic freedom, and they basked and thrived in that space. Furthermore, having written in the way of their speech, my students have indicated to me that they felt seen, heard,

and acknowledged, and those statements meant more to me than accomplishing Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).

This chapter to this project begins the process of demystifying the pedagogy of radical inclusion and makes an argument for the urgent necessity of this pedagogy. Additionally, it provides context for my interests in this pedagogy and its exigence within first-year composition classrooms. Chapter Two will contain my working definition of radical inclusive pedagogy. As mentioned previously, this definition lies at the intersection of anti-racist pedagogy, critical race theory, anti-ableist pedagogy, linguistic justice pedagogy, critical theory, critical embodiment pedagogy, disability studies, feminist theory, cultural rhetorics, expressivism, compassion theory, and queer theory. Drawing from these pedagogies and theories will provide clearer insight and understanding of the pedagogical approaches to radical inclusion in the classroom. I will take the most pertinent and radically inclusive practices and outlooks from each theory and pedagogy in order to create a comprehensive, working definition for my classroom and, by extension, hopefully one other educator can adapt for their own needs.

Chapter Three will focus on language and the potential influence of linguistic justice on radically inclusive pedagogy, which demands students remove linguistic performances and personas from their approach to academic writing and allow students to combine public and private personas into a unified voice that represent the entirety of their identities and positionality. Additionally, this chapter will share classroom praxis. First, I must acknowledge that one of the gaps in the scholarship of radically inclusive pedagogy subsists in the lack of a defined praxis. In order to create a praxis for radically inclusive pedagogy, the goals must be considered: providing radical access, developing respect, love, or appreciation of writing, emphasizing the process of writing, initiating a new relationship with academic writing, inspiring

inclusivity in the classroom, encouraging a unified voice within the students, and dispelling the myths surrounding standard language. While these goals do not differ severely from previously mentioned pedagogies, the approach to building self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-trust in students' abilities diverges. In questioning language, we ask students to take an anti-racist stance, which requires them to be self-reflective and question power dynamics, privileges, and positionality. Chapter Four will include a reflection of this work, looking at what I have learned. I will examine what went well and what did not and my own knowledge gaps. The reflection is a practice that one performs in a radically inclusive classroom, in which case I am enacting the pedagogical approach within this paper.

Since this project seeks to discuss the significance of language in the classroom first before diving into the other pedagogical theories from which radical inclusive pedagogy employs. Thus, for this project, it should be understood that I may deviate from Standard American English. This is intentional. I intend to express my ideas in ways that feel natural and clear to me. I will be code-meshing, writing in Black Language, standard English, and vernacular, whichever best serves me and the project rhetorically, as I envision this as a means to model and embody radically inclusive pedagogy in academic writing. Much like how I requested my students to do in their literacy narratives by asking them to tell their stories in their unique voices, I encouraged them to make specific rhetorical choices to depict their narratives artfully. In this scholarship, I will do the same. By using non-standard academic language, I will demonstrate the usefulness of applying the pedagogy of radically inclusive language to convey the significance of permitting students to write and speak in their natural dialects. Particularly in composition classrooms, we as instructors hope to engage students in understanding deliberate choices while writing, demonstrating knowledge of genre and rhetoric, and breeding some kind

of joy, love, or respect for writing. Allowing students to maintain--keep--their specific dialects and language in the classroom while writing will facilitate students' engagement in higher education literacy. Students need to have the whole of their identities embraced for them to reach their full potential, and part of reaching that potential is acknowledging, recognizing, and celebrating their selfhood and being able to share their experiences with others in the classroom. Using their lived knowledge in the classroom not only engenders compassion among classmates but also provides increased feelings of competence as they get to use their perceptions to engage course materials. This is one of the goals of radically inclusive pedagogy: welcoming students into the classroom and including their experiences as contextual knowledge that can be applied within the course. As with my introduction to this project, my intention is to employ my personal experiences and positionality as a source of useful information to provide context and the necessity of this pedagogy within first-year composition classrooms. The amalgamation of my various identities and experiences inside and outside the classroom guided me to this study and the pursuit of radically inclusive pedagogy. Now more than ever, students need to feel welcomed, acknowledged and celebrated within the classroom to engender compassion and mindfulness within the world. The war for equity and human rights requires space for negotiation, compromise, and communication, the basis for that emerges from radical compassion and radical inclusivity. This is the exigence of my project. Creating radically inclusive and compassionate spaces for students will engender them to do the same in other classrooms, causing a chain effect. Ultimately, this project intends to replicate patterns and strategies of radical inclusive pedagogy to motivate the reader to enact these methods within their own practices.

CHAPTER II

DEFINING RADICALLY INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

As they become known to and accepted by us, our feelings and the honest exploration of them become sanctuaries and spawning grounds for the most radical and daring of ideas. They become a safe-house for that difference so necessary to change and the conceptualization of any meaningful action.

Audre Lorde

In my experiences, pedagogical approaches to the teaching of writing tend to completely neglect or singularly highlight emotive practices. Depending on the genre of writing, it is wholly accepted or rejected to engage emotions in academic spaces. Vulnerability must only serve the rhetorical purpose of persuading readers. And in the classroom, emotions, feelings, and vulnerability become the objects to dissect and use, but never encouraged to exchange openly between students and instructors. I have bore witness to many teachers who refused to engage the emotions of their students, spurning vulnerability that did not serve a rhetorical purpose within the course. How can that kind of praxis create a safe space for students to engage new ideas? Conversely, while writing literacy narratives, we ask students to divulge personal stories and involvement with writing and reading that can unearth the most tumultuous of memories and feelings, but we instructors do not do the same, maintaining a power dynamic between instructors and students. How can practices like the aforementioned examples generate trust and transformation between students and teachers instead? In “Poetry Is Not a Luxury” Audre Lorde identifies “feelings” as the essential location for transformation and change (37). Although Lorde wrote this with poetry in mind, this belief can easily translate into the composition classroom. As instructors, we want students to journey through the depths of their understanding to discover

“the most radical and daring of ideas.” We want them to be innovative, inspired, and refreshed with new ideas, but the question remains, how do we engender this? How can we create trusting relationships between teachers and students that will allow all participants to be open and available to new ideas?

As I approach answering these questions, I will continue to engage in story-as-rhetorical-practice as encouraged by cultural rhetorics and explore how and why I came to radically inclusive pedagogy (Cedillo et al). The amalgamation of both positive and negative experiences with various professors and instructors throughout my years of schooling informed the kind of instructor I longed to become. Despite the negative encounters, I can recall special moments with my previous educators. In these moments, I experienced instances of honesty and compassion from my instructors and professors. They demonstrated a generosity of spirit that felt motivating, inspiring, and dare I say empowering to me. One instructor confessed struggles with writing her dissertation, and another professor admitted how he was not the best student as an undergraduate but managed to be successful even if his educational trajectory was not a straight, perfect line. From these encounters, I felt less alone and more supported. Their faith provided me with the single-minded focus necessary to survive and excel in times of turmoil and affliction. They demonstrated the uses and power of vulnerability in the classroom.

In my introduction, I share why radically inclusive pedagogy has appealed to me. My childhood was a haven of isolation, but academia provided me with a space of belonging. A place where I could forge my own way and explore ideas and theories, creating spaces of inclusivity for other curious minds while neglecting all that made us stand out and outside of normalcy and acceptance. In sharing my experiences within this text, I am practicing a necessary aspect of radically inclusive pedagogy: vulnerability. Vulnerability exists as a gateway to

feelings; and emotions emerge as the foundation to radically inclusive pedagogy. In order to explore concepts within the mind and spirit, one has to examine the truth within their emotions, experiences, and their effects. However, the history of engaging vulnerability in the classroom does not begin with radically inclusive pedagogy and using experiences and emotional realizations in pedagogy and praxis is not a new concept. Vulnerability is just one of the several pedagogical approaches, praxes, and theories that coalesce to form radically inclusive pedagogy. And in order to understand the variety of components that contribute to the amalgamation of radically inclusive pedagogy, we must explore the theories and praxis that inform it.

This chapter will explore the existing definition and practice of radically inclusive pedagogy. As I have previously mentioned, the pedagogy of radical inclusion currently consists of distinguished principles of disability studies. Although its current definition depicts components submerged in critical pedagogy and “New Social Movements,” I argue that this definition of radically inclusive pedagogy implies the inclusion of other pedagogical approaches, such as critical pedagogy, critical embodiment theory, expressivism, feminism, and critical race theory/anti-racist pedagogy. These existing components must be analyzed, examining the main pedagogies, pedagogical approaches, praxis, and theories that inform radically inclusive pedagogy. In taking the most prominent features of these pedagogies, a working definition that surpasses the existing one will emerge, providing a more specific understanding of radically inclusive pedagogy. I should mention for the size of this project and the additional time restrictions, I will limit my exploration of radically inclusive pedagogy to the theories I have just mentioned. And while radically inclusive pedagogy reflects additional pedagogies, such as queer theory and cultural rhetorics, the hope is to explore these connections in a bigger future project.

Before exploring a more expanded definition of radically inclusive pedagogy, I should discuss the significance of this pedagogy beyond its potential to change classroom dynamics. I first learned about radically inclusive pedagogy in a conversation with my mentor. We were discussing how to engender a love of writing in students while creating an atmosphere of belonging. My mentor, Dr. Kristi Murray Costello answered this question with radically inclusive pedagogy. Immediately after this conversation, I began looking through my library database and googling to learn more about this pedagogy but, I did not find much information about it. As I have come to understand it, radically inclusive pedagogy is the compassionate, holistic approach to education which nurtures students' needs—mind, body, and spirit—through engaging their individual identities, existing knowledge, lived experiences, and language to encourage learning, collaboration, and knowledge building within inclusive and accessible classrooms.

As I write this, there is still a lack of information about radically inclusive pedagogy within the field of writing studies, rhetoric, and composition. In tackling this subject for this project and future projects, my hope is to spread the word about this pedagogy. Therefore, in providing a definition of radically inclusive pedagogy that emerges from the essential components of critical pedagogy, critical embodiment theory, expressivism, feminism, and critical race theory/anti-racist pedagogy, I plan to develop a working praxis that is applicable in composition classrooms. By “essential components,” I will focus my discussion of these theories and pedagogies on their specific aspects that reflect the primary characteristics of the pedagogy of radical inclusion. Ultimately, part of the exigence of this project is to provide a new definition of radically inclusive pedagogy that celebrates its many influences and position it as a path for composition and writing studies scholars and educators to meet goals of inclusion and equity.

Literature Review

This is not to say that the current definition is insufficient. Within disability studies, radically inclusive pedagogy exists as a site of social movements, upholding the demand for inclusion and accessibility for disabled students, “explicitly address[ing] the social processes of disablement, deprivation, and exclusion” (Greenstein 7). Arguably, the existing definition of radically inclusive pedagogy is sufficient in the ways in which it functions within disability studies, but its definition can be expanded to encapsulate the variety of subjectivities that exist within the classroom.

The beginning of my examination of radically inclusive pedagogy comes from Anat Greenstein’s *Radically Inclusive Education: Disability, Teaching, and Practices*, and although this research is removed from the discipline of composition and writing studies in higher education, this text contains a thorough exploration of this pedagogy that is helpful to my research. However, Greenstein’s analysis of radically inclusive pedagogy remains restrictive as it only interrogates the power dynamic that maintains ableist rhetoric and idealism which governs the construction of classroom spaces, dividing people according to ableist standards. Greenstein’s definition of radically inclusive pedagogy divides this pedagogy into two parts. The first half of this definition deliberately seeks to use principles of disabled studies and the second relies on both the “disabled people’s movement (DPM) and inclusive education campaigns” (Greenstein 5). Therefore, Greenstein’s definition divides the phrase “radically inclusive pedagogy” into two parts: “radical” that critiques the status quo of ableist rhetoric and idealism and “inclusive” which looks to erase the space and assumptions between abled and disabled bodies. However, this definition does not provide a specific pedagogical approach or praxis, and Greenstein intentionally avoids doing so, explaining: “I take *a stance of inspiration* to research,

meaning that as a researcher I do not seek to arrive at an accurate representation of any existing practice, but rather try to create thick and rich descriptions of what education might look like if we imagined it under radically different conditions” (5). Thus, this text conveys hope for a holistic pedagogy that pursues removing the assumptions of the status quo among differing individual embodiments while changing the community for which these assumptions exist: “This thinking starts with recognizing and valuing the endless diversity of human embodiments, many of which are classified as impairments under current social and medical discourse, rather than understanding inclusion as the integration of disabled students into an already thought-out system” (Greenstein 5). Yes, we need to respect and appreciate the limitless differing individual embodiments; however, this should include the other forms of diversity that enter the classroom. This is not to belittle or dismiss the necessity of this pedagogy as Greenstein defines it or to discount how thinking in terms of radically inclusive pedagogy would benefit disability studies. I envision radical inclusion as a means to encompass, consider, and provide all forms of human embodiment as a given, not an accommodation. The definition of radically inclusive pedagogy should not be divided into two parts; instead, should be considered as a whole phrase that defines not only a hopeful visualization of what can be but what can be practiced in every classroom towards every individual and their subjectivity and positionality.

As previously mentioned, Greenstein argues that power dynamics are everlasting within every social space, including the classroom. Greenstein believes there is no means of escaping them, saying: “Subjectivity is constructed through the dynamic power relations in which individuals do not only comply with hegemonic rules but also resist and transgress them. Either alone or as part of mobilized collectives. This means that we cannot do away with power, as in the very act of emancipating ourselves from one form of power we are reconstructing ourselves

as subjects of another” (117). Although calling a thing a thing or pointing out the power dynamics reflects principles of critical pedagogy, critical race theory, and feminism, Greenstein’s assertion of inescapable power dynamics is a downer, and more specifically, ignores the potential of radically inclusive pedagogy to mend the antagonism in which these dynamics emerges. Greenstein’s assumptions of this pedagogy depict cynicism that repositions object to the subject position in these power dynamics while continuing to perpetuate the same object/subject dynamic. According to Greenstein, power is omnipresent in the classroom without freedom from it and can shift to three forms called a *power-over* (controlling another person), a *power-to* (“the capacity to change reality”), and a *power-among* (“working together with others to achieve a common goal”) (118-9). Greenstein emphasizes a *power-among* as the goal of radically inclusive pedagogy: “the task for radically inclusive pedagogy is not just to recognize subjectivity as constructed through relationships, but also to shift the power within those relationships so as to minimize the *power-over* while maximizing *power-to* and *power-among*” (119). Perhaps this is true. Yes, subjectivity, as humanity possesses it, does not exist in isolation. Human subjectivity exists in relation to individual positionality and intersectionality within the world, but that does not necessarily mean that power dynamics infiltrates the composite creation of one’s perceptions. Additionally, as I envision and redefine it, radically inclusive pedagogy explores and expresses the *power-within* each individual subjectivity as a means to examine positionality, quelling connections between each individual within the classroom. It is difficult to create sincere connections among individuals in the classroom if we are thinking of each other in terms of power dynamics. And although power dynamics are undeniable in relationships, if we as instructors focus on the internal power of our subjectivity (not dissimilar to Paulo Freire’s “problem-posing education”), modeling this for our students, we will create the kind of

connections among one another in which radically inclusive pedagogy asks (59). While Greenstein applies radically inclusive pedagogy as a call for change within these models, his distinction only applies to ableism: “Instead of a social and educational model that is based on the assumption of independent subjects, clearly separated from other such subjects and from the world, [Greenstein] argue[s] alongside writers in disability studies for models that value interdependence and connection” (9). Greenstein calls for a range of inclusivity that recognizes the connections between individual subjectivities that rely on each other, but only in terms of the ableist/disabled dynamics. The necessity of inclusivity in the classroom should apply to all diverse subjectivities that cross the classroom’s threshold.

More than focusing on the power dynamics that govern the classroom, Greenstein’s analysis of radically inclusive pedagogy reflects a relationship between politics and education. In “The Disabled People’s Movement as a Site of Radical Inclusive Pedagogy,” Greenstein explores the Disabled People’s Movement (DPM) as a resource for the further development of radical inclusive pedagogy. Greenstein divides his discussion of disability and radically inclusive pedagogy into six parts. The first section, named “Critical Pedagogy,” Greenstein explores principles of critical pedagogy by examining foundational ideals as conveyed in Paulo Freire’s 1972 text *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which seeks to be socially transformative by applying specific praxis on a collective level. “Social Movements as Educational Sites--What Movements Know” is the next section which explores subaltern knowledge--a specific kind of knowledge that emerges from the power dynamics between the oppressed, the oppressor, and social movements--and how the Disabled People’s Movement (DPM) creates this kind of knowledge innately by recognizing the collective history of disability. Greenstein connects social movements to educational sites within critical pedagogy. Greenstein employs this work of DPM

to substantiate not only how critical pedagogy needs to be more inclusive of disability peoples, studies, and concerns, but also how the DPM is a resistance movement that critical pedagogy should model itself after. The third section is called “The Disabled People’s Movement as a Site of Radical Inclusive Pedagogy.” This part of the article defines the DPM and its objectives. The connection between the individual and the collective experiences produced within DPM act as a means to overcome barriers, making it a resource for radical inclusive pedagogy. In the following section, called “Conscientisation - Connecting Personal Experience with The Social Circumstances in Which They Occur to Produce New, Life-Changing Understandings of Disability,” Greenstein applies the theoretical literature of critical pedagogy and the work of DPM to frame and define an understanding of radical inclusive pedagogy. “Praxis - Utilizing Social Model Understanding into Action and Social Change - The Case of Direct Action” is the fifth section; and in this section, Greenstein provides a theoretical praxis based on radically inclusive pedagogy that acknowledges and utilizes the objectives and goals of DPM in creative advocacy for individual students and the collective. In the final section, “Accessibility - Creating Spaces that Enable People with a Variety of Needs and Abilities to Take Part in Dialogue Conscientisation and Praxis,” Greenstein applies the theories of critical pedagogy as a part of the critical discourse genre to frame the discussion, and the evaluation between the relationship between DPM and pedagogy of radical inclusion is a cultural study. Greenstein uses the theoretical literature of critical pedagogy and the work of DPM to frame and define an understanding of radical inclusive pedagogy.

A Democratic Space for Inquiry and Confession: Critical Pedagogy

While emphasizing the role of activism within radically inclusive pedagogy, Greenstien demonstrates the deep connection between radically inclusive pedagogy, critical pedagogy, and

reform. The demand for reform emerges as a necessary aspect to both pedagogies: “Critical pedagogies envision a society not simply pledged to, but successfully enacting the principles of freedom and social justice” (George 77). However, the means by which the reform takes place differs from traditional critical pedagogy. Before defining those differences, I must explore the ways in which radically inclusive pedagogy draws inspiration from critical pedagogy. The reflective practices that critical pedagogy incites emerge as the largest similarity between these two approaches.

While critical pedagogy asks its practitioners to critique modes of education, status quo, and all that is external to the student and instructor, radically inclusive pedagogy requests all to turn the critiquing eyes inward. Questioning and interrogating these ideas and concepts work inward toward the self then move outward from the classroom to the world. By this, I mean an integral aspect of both pedagogical practices require the instructor and the student to examine and question their positionality and the reasons for that placement within the classroom and the world at large: “critical pedagogies attempt to reinvent the roles of teachers and students in the classroom and the kind of activities they engage in” (George 78). Critical to these processes of external critique necessitates an internal introspection of self. This is the process of internal introspection. For radically inclusive pedagogy, the process towards education begins inside the practitioner: “When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice” (hooks 61). Radically inclusive pedagogy practices acceptance, which is both an internal process within each individual and their reconciliation with the external forces that inform their past. This “self-recovery” connects to self-reflection and self-awareness, and the act of applying these processes will lead to the “collective liberation” that hooks describes. “Lived experiences” testifies to the

individual's understanding within their own personal lives that help inform the process of education. Radically inclusive pedagogy recognizes the power of education in terms of freedom and democracy in which both principles are focal points of critical pedagogy.

Arguably, the true goal of education is to have students live and enact theories of liberation, democracy, and freedom so that the knowledge explored within the classroom provides real-world understandings and contexts. Celebrated critical theorist and pedagogue Paulo Freire articulates this sentiment in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, a text many claim as a foremost significant text in critical pedagogy:

Education as the practice of freedom—as opposed to education as the practice of domination—denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people. Authentic reflection considers neither the abstract man nor the world without people but people in their relations with the world. In these relations consciousness and world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it. (54)

An education of dominion seeks to isolate and diminish the spirit of the learner, leaving them blind to the makings of the world. Freire emphasizes the collective experience that education as freedom provides. With self-reflection and analysis, connection with others and the world becomes more and more established. He writes: “as women and men, simultaneously reflecting on themselves and on the world, increase the scope of their perception, they begin to direct their observations towards previously inconspicuous phenomena” (Freire 55). And as critical pedagogy emerges as a pedagogy of freedom, I argue that true freedom must establish itself within the self before it can move outward to the world. In *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks,

an advocate for critical and feminist pedagogy, calls attention to the various ways of knowing that students bring into the classroom: “Critical pedagogies of liberation respond to... and necessarily embrace experience, confessions, testimony as relevant ways of knowing, as important vital dimensions of any learning process (89). Like critical pedagogy, radically inclusive pedagogy recognizes the many and varied ways of knowing that students bring with them and asks them to turn their critical thinking towards these various ways of knowing.

Acknowledging and even celebrating students’ ways of knowing demands a decentralized classroom that places students and their needs in the foreground. By “decentralized,” I mean a democratic space for learning, expression, and the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and feelings. This method reflects principles of both critical pedagogy and radically inclusive pedagogy. Additionally, Freire elaborates on problem-posing education as another aspect of critical pedagogy that seeks to develop students’ self-analysis while engaging their positionality in relation to each other and the world, explaining: “In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (56). Radically inclusive pedagogy seeks to do the same, positing subjectivity and positionality as essential components to the route of transformation.

The shared goal between critical pedagogy and radically inclusive pedagogy emerges from critique and evaluation in the pursuit of freedom and expression. While one pedagogy emphasizes a critical eye outside of oneself, the pedagogy of radical inclusion asks its practitioners to turn their analysis inwards. Internal and external critiques remain central and a necessity in teaching students how to write: “That includes helping students become better writers but also examining academic notions of authorship and authority as well as how students

might navigate—and rhetorically intervene in—networks of power that authorize some voices and silence others” (George 82). These analyses place students in a powerful position to obtain autonomy, access their voice.

Accessing Their Voices: The Performance of Expressivism

Radically inclusive pedagogy demands centralizing students and placing their subjectivity at the forefront. In doing so, it asks students and instructors to process their thoughts, feelings, and observations internally, fostering self-reflection within the classroom. This process becomes a means to which students access their voice, whether actively articulating their perceptions, subjectivity, or positionality. The pedagogy of radical inclusion draws much of these practices from expressivism, as the various tools of self-reflection emerge from expressivist exercises. As Burnham and Powell explain, "Expressivism places the writer at the center of its theory and pedagogy, assigning highest value to the writer's imaginative, psychological, social, and spiritual development and how that development influences individual consciousness and social behavior" (Burnham and Powell 113). Many critics of expressive pedagogy argue that emphasizing students' expression leads to isolation and disconnection between them and the world. Critics, such as C. H. Knoblauch, Burton Hatlen, James Berlin, Richard Hofstadter, David Bartholomae, and John Trimbur, claim that this kind of teaching misguides students, arguing that this pedagogy leads to "a type of self-actualization which the outside world would indict as sentimental and dangerous" (Fishman and McCarthy 648). Some of them, perhaps most notably Berlin and Bartholomae, argue against the assumptions that students possess within themselves an innate wealth of knowledge about writing and language, considering it to be naivety of expressivist thinking. However, expressivist praxis necessitates self-reflection that looks at the students' relationship with themselves and to the world.

Expressivism believes the journey to expression occurs within the process of self-discovery, and advocates for “the writing-to-learn” method: “the artistic process is not just an expression of something already known, but also a groping toward destinations and forms that are not understood until artists arrive to them” (Fishman and McCarthy 650).

Self-reflection is not in a vacuum. It exists as a collective with other students and their positionality in and outside the classroom. Expressive pedagogy demands not only the centralizing of students’ voices, but it engenders an engagement with self-reflection that marries the process of writing with the discovery of internal ideas, feelings, and observations that lead to a connection with the world at large. As Burnham and Powell explain, “Expressivist pedagogy encourages, even insists upon, a sense of writer presence even in research-based writing. This presence— “voice” or ethos—whether explicit, implicit, or absent, functions as a key evaluation criterion when expressivists examine writing” (113). The process of self-reflection, self-critique, and self-analysis stipulates for agency. Voice, and its mere existence, necessitate the autonomy of the writer, and provide a means to evaluate inside and outside themselves. Evaluating and analyzing one’s feelings is a mode of self-discovery that leads into seeking connection with others: “Although this concern for embodying a clarifying one’s feelings sounds self-absorbed, both Elbow and Herder see expression as more than self-discovery. They also see it as a means of social connection. As we strive to understand our own expressions, we seek insight in the work of others” (Fishman and McCarthy 650). John Dewey, an early expressivist pedagogue, provided the foundation of community in the expressivist self-reflective practices, outlining: “The goal of education within the community, therefore, was for students to achieve ‘a transformation of the quality of experience till it part[ook] in the interests, purposes, and ideas current in the social group’” (Adler-Kassner 211). Additionally, part of the praxis of this

pedagogy relies on peer review, collaboration, and feedback in this process of self-reflection. Expressivism also explores the relationship with instructors to their students in the ways in which they would offer guidance to their student writers: “This pedagogy used nondirective [sic] feedback to return the responsibility for writing back to the student. It encouraged students to use their own languages and to reject ‘English,’ the academic language of schools for making meaning and creating identity” (Burnham and Powell 114). Languages, specifically the application of students’ voices coinciding with various forms of English, hold a very pivotal role in education and the pedagogy of radical inclusion, which is something I will elaborate on in Chapter 3 of this project.

Despite an ongoing discussion of its role in expressivism, voice remains essential in the kind of writing that this pedagogy produces. Expressivism strives to unearth personal perspectives, in the pursuit of self-discovery, while acknowledging the undeniable connection between the writer and their audience. These personal narratives act as a means to bridge differences and excite connections between individuals within the classroom because “when our exchanges with others are based upon self-expression, our exchanges can be transformative, can transform or make clearer who we are to ourselves and others” (Fishman and McCarthy 652). Thus, expressivism aspires to be transformative practice. And in transforming the writer and their readers, relationships begin to change. As Fishman and McCarthy delineate, “Unless our expressions testify to our inner lives, we are unable to see ourselves mirrored or clarified by them. And unless we are so mirrored, our opportunities for finding common cause or identifying with others are greatly reduced” (651). The personal writings expressivist methods act as a conduit to connect the writers to their internal self and to their readers creating connections between them: “Although expressivist theory often begins with the personal, it relies on the

relations between language, meaning-making, and self-development” (Burnham and Powell 115). Though expressivism constitutes a tactile relationship between self-reflection and external connection to others, the process must begin with the self.

Within The Whole Self: Embodied Pedagogy

The self consists of physical, mental, and spiritual parts. Radically inclusive pedagogy seeks to not only unify these aspects of the self but to nourish growth and connection in them. In order to do so, this pedagogy draws inspiration from embodied pedagogy, which is a pedagogy that acknowledges the connection between body and mind in learning. In “Don’t Forget About the Body: Exploring the Curricular Possibilities of Embodied Pedagogy,” Davide J. Nguyen and Jay B. Larson use critical theories, combining definitions offered by both Dewey and Freire, to discuss the unification of mind and body that occurs through praxis, arguing: “Critical pedagogy socially contextualizes ‘body/mind worlds’ through praxis, which was described by Freire (1968/2007) as unified action and reflection operating antithetically to traditional pedagogy’s basis in dialectical mind/body separation” (333). The definition they offer for embodied pedagogy conveys a similarity to radically inclusive pedagogy in describing it as “learning that joins body and mind in a physical and mental act of knowledge construction” (332) They further explain: This union entails thoughtful awareness of body, space, and social context” (332). Despite theorists claiming its holistic approach to education, the one aspect that embodied pedagogy fails to address is the nourishment of the spiritual aspect of the student’s self in constructing knowledge. Nguyen and Laron explain, “Not merely an instructional methodology, embodied pedagogy in its fullest expression provides a perspective based in holistic knowledge construction and social contextualization” (332). They describe “embodied critical consciousness,” which consists of “awareness of our physical and social selves in acts of

knowledge construction” (333). The point of departure for embodied critical consciousness from critical pedagogy and theory is in how it places significance on the physical connection to the mental work of knowledge construction. Embodied pedagogy calls to question existing power dynamics while emphasizing the physical embodiment of students’ positionality within these roles: “By facilitating perception and disruption of the ways in which we physically enact roles of *oppressed* and *oppressor*, embodied learning contextualizes the physical self in such areas of feminism and critical race theory” (Nguyen and Larson 333). An essential principle of radically inclusive pedagogy emerges from the idea of disruption in terms of hierarchies and status quo. In order to enact this pedagogy, practitioners must be willing to acknowledge the ways in which they have engaged in continuing the oppressed/oppressor dynamic to subvert it.

Christian V. Cedillo applies embodied learning and the disruption of oppression dynamics within her discussion of dominant narratives. In “Rethinking Critical Pedagogy: Implications on Silence and Silent Bodies,” Cedillo divides her discussion of critical embodiment theory into the five different parts that substantiate her claim of applying personal narratives to dispel default, dominant narratives. The first section, titled “Embodied Deficit: Race, Disability, and Rhetoric’s In/visible Bodies,” imparts the theoretical context for her examination of this pedagogy: the consistent, defaulting narratives erases--renders invisible--the non-normative bodies. “Contesting Whitemain Narratives: Life Writing in Critical Race Studies and Disability Studies” is the next section and designates the use of critical race theory (CRT) and disabilities studies in creating narratives that speak to individuals’ life experiences, facilitating resistance to racism and ableism. In the third section, “On the Author’s Relationships to Race and Disability: Two Stories,” Cedillo employs her positionality and life experiences as examples of “salient anecdotal relations.” “What Anecdotal Relations Can Teach Us” is the next

section of Cedillo's article; this section examines the relationship between her anecdotal relational stories and academia's disinclination to accept the voices of the Other. The last section of this article is "Whose Experiences Count? A Call for Critical Embodiment Pedagogies." This section situates critical embodiment pedagogy to the foreground, indicating the necessity of this pedagogy uplifting the voices of minorities. Lastly, Cedillo imparts a literacy narrative assignment sheet. While using autoethnography, Cedillo argues for inclusion that applies critical embodiment pedagogy to fight exclusion that is based on varying visible and invisible diversities and disabilities.

Call A Thing, A Thing: Critical Race Theory and Anti-Racist Pedagogy

Despite differences in methodology, both radically inclusive pedagogy and anti-racist pedagogy maintain a similarity insofar as honesty. In other words, both pedagogies call a thing a thing. Both pedagogies seek to identify injustices, inequalities, and inconsistencies in treatment, calling them out as they exist within the classroom and beyond. While anti-racist pedagogy pursues this honesty bluntly, radically inclusive pedagogy seeks to utilize this honesty to call into question the logic that supports racist and unjust beliefs. Radically inclusive pedagogy seeks to subvert systems of oppression and anti-racist pedagogy aims to overthrow them. Both pedagogies seek to delineate and entice anti-racist discussion in the classroom, consistently calling into question systemic racism. Pedagogues within these disciplines articulate their struggles with assumptions, perceptions, and positionalities regarding race, and use confessional rhetoric to discuss them. In "Deconstructing Whiteness in the Globalized Classroom" Dae-Joong Kim and Bobbi Olson examine the relationship between instructors/students' identities and positionalities and "raced-white rhetorics" (Young and Condon). For them, the initiation of anti-racist pedagogy in the classroom exists in dialogue with one's positionality within

individualized, systemic, and institutionalized racism. According to Kim and Olson, the authoritative position of the instructor will exemplify whiteness regardless of a specific instructor's race. Whiteness emerges from the dominant positionality of whiteness within institutional racism, and can be enacted by anyone in the position of authority: "[w]hitely teachers do not see themselves as perpetrators of institutional racism in the classroom...[t]hese roles offer a facade for our behaviors, allowing us to see our behaviors as not racist, but in the students' 'best interests.' The best interests, however, are whitely interests" (Kim and Olson). Thus, the white-race rhetoric persists within the classroom. With this understanding of their positionality within the classroom and perpetuation of whiteness values, Kim and Olson employ this knowledge to initiate a dialogue that grapples with their specific positionality in front of the classroom: Kim as a non-native English speaker with mostly white students and Olson as a native English speaker engaging with non-native English speakers. They use their personal narratives, unpacking their respective engagements with race and racism while being in the position of authority. They explain, "we use our own narratives in attempt to do the work we are calling for: to deconstruct our identities and consider whitely teachers' unearned authority, which left unchecked, reinscribes oppressive race relations in the globalized classroom" (Kim and Olson). Kim and Olson call this work "unlearning" as they wrestle with the rhetoric of whiteness and race. The dialogue they create within their text emerges as the work of anti-racist pedagogy insofar as their rhetoric forges a space of initiation of change and activism.

In "Reframing Race in Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum," Mya Poe argues for the myriad of opportunities within the WAC curriculum to discuss race and racism, as writing provides space to establish and enact anti-racist pedagogy. Establishing the limitations of WAC in terms of interacting with racism, Poe declares that equipping administrators, faculty, and

graduate students across the curriculum with the means to infuse race into ongoing dialogues within the classroom and in students' writing will improve the ways in which they engage, teach, and reply to students. Poe's essay emphasizes the significance of language and rhetoric necessary to enact antiracist pedagogy, arguing: "language teaching is not merely about the dissemination of technical skills but about the interactions that inform those instructional contexts both in the classroom and in the ideologies that pervade those contexts." Central to Poe's beliefs emerges from the ability to write allowing opportunities to discuss race and identity. Specifically, the use of stories and narratives avail chance for introspection and producing a collective that speaks to truly engaging diverse student population: "[d]rawing on the notion of frames allows us to interrogate the stories we already have available to discuss race and writing as well as related notions about achievement and language us" (Poe). By "situating race locally" or delineating specific information about students' identities, Poe attests to the ability of teachers to truly cater to their students: "by reframing race as one situated within the specific contexts in which we teach writing, we can move to specific contexts in which we teach writing, we can move to specific strategies for teaching writing across the curriculum that are attuned to the identities of the students at our institutions." Learning students' identities are akin to hearing and engaging their personal narratives. Thus, the use of personal, individual narratives act as a means to enact anti-racist rhetoric in the classroom. According to Poe, teaching writing provides context for engaging anti-racist rhetoric and language, availing space for WAC instructors to enter into conversations about race that nurtures activism.

In "Making Commitments to Racial Justice Actionable," Rasha Diab, Neil Simpkins, Thomas Ferrell, and Beth Godbee question the constitutions of commitment towards anti-racist pedagogy and activism and argue for a behavioral commitment that surpasses narrative. While

Diab *et al.* attest to the narrative being an integral part of anti-racist activism and pedagogy in its exposure of racism and oppression, they argue that it falls short of displaying true “actionable” commitment, saying: “[c]ritique is differently defied but is always consider an essential condition to making change... Power structures and systems of oppression are not changed enough by critique alone, but can become more entrenched by each conversation, presentation, and article that reveals oppression.” “Critique” is akin to narrative, as narrative offers space to criticize and analyze while offering a personal account of one’s experience. Ironically, Diab *et al.* applies anecdotal narratives to exemplify the necessity of actionable commitment: “writing center literature posits tutors and directors as white, American, and native speakers of English and then recounts a story where his inability to recognize the systemic nature of racism leads to a tutor or writer of color ending their relationship with their writing center. These narratives tend to posit justice as teaching white tutors and writing center staff how to approach tutoring writers of color.” Although they confine narrative to the initial steps to enacting anti-racist activism, central to Diab *et al.*’s argument begins with morphing confessional narratives to transformative ones: “confessional narratives share a larger purpose, as they are often written in response to two frequent critiques of anti-racist work.” They claim that “the local is global and... the personal is political;” thus, personal narrative and its rhetoric provide the necessary bridge to initiate anti-racist activism and pedagogy.

Aja Y. Martinez, in “Critical Race Theory Counterstory as Allegory,” uses narrative, allegory and rhetoric in her application of anti-racist pedagogy. Martinez grounds her allegory in a real-life context, “surfac[ing] both the underlying racial logics of the assault on ethnic studies in states like Arizona, but also the long-term consequences of suppressing the histories, cultures, and culture production of peoples of color in the U.S.” (Young and Condon). In doing so,

Martinez draws the attention of the audience to ponder over the ramifications of racial fallacies, making her allegory more personal to the witness of this counterstory: “[Martinez] define[s] allegory as a trope by which to render invisible forms of racism (structural or colorblind), visible.” Significantly, Martinez’s allegory mimics the tradition of classic rhetoric that utilizes dialogue to generate thought, consideration, and discussion. Martinez’s allegory supplies her audience with a relatable account that could mimic their personal experiences: “[Martinez] explore[s] assimilation, especially with regard to the protagonist, and the colonizing effects of an education that conquers the mind, crushes, and essentially obliterates a people’s world view.” Although Martinez’s allegory is a counterstory, a fictional narrative inspired by real-life circumstances and individuals, it remains a kind of narrative that utilizes rhetoric to persuade the audience to contextualize racism and anti-racist activism within their real lives. The narrative itself engages language and rhetoric, creating a space—an outward context—to enact anti-racism. Before the allegory, Martinez presents a context for her specific use of counterstory: her use of “I” throughout this portion of the article assembles a more personal and subjective narrative as if the following narrative could come from personal experience. The storytelling, in and of itself, attests to the use of story-as-rhetorical-practice in anti-racist activism and pedagogy.

Martinez also applies the use of narrative, storytelling, and rhetoric to enact anti-racist pedagogy. In “A Plea for Critical Race Theory Counterstory Stock Story Verses Counterstory Dialogues Concerning Alejandra’s ‘Fit’ in the Academy,” Martinez introduces her readers to her identity and her tribulations with academia as a student and a professor. Martinez imparts statistics of the growing population of Latinx and Chican@ students and their retention within higher education. She utilizes this information to substantiate the need for pedagogies and praxis

that offer support that extends to students of underrepresented backgrounds in rhetoric and composition classrooms. Martinez argues for Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a means to provide and serve underrepresented students within the classrooms, placing specific emphasis on CRT's counterstory: "CRT counterstory recognizes that the experiential and embodied knowledge of people of normalized structural values and practices." According to Martinez, counterstory equips access to the data of underrepresented students' experiences so that educators can better understand and serve these populations. Furthermore, these counterstories undermine the stock stories, or the narratives told by dominant peoples or cultures, which erode the experiences and stories of underrepresented peoples. Stock stories emerge as gaslighting narratives: "Stock stories feign neutrality and at all costs avoid any blame or responsibility for societal inequality...they are often repeated until canonized or normalized." Martinez describes how she utilizes counterstories as "composite dialogues" to provide a voice to the "composite character." Martinez offers a stock story and a counterstory of the same encounter between a Chicana Ph.D. student and her professor who believes the student should no longer be in the program, conveying the differences between perceptions of the same encounter. Martinez's example demonstrates the necessity of counterstories as conveying how maintaining hegemonic stock stories silences underrepresented peoples. Anti-racist scholarship seeks to use the strength of individual subjectivity and narrative to illuminate the experiences of the non-dominant cultures and to overthrow racism. The pedagogy of radical inclusion does the same, as it depends on individuals to speak of their experiences in order to undermine and subvert racist thoughts and practices.

Working As a Collective: The Feminist Point of View

Like all the pedagogical approaches and theories that proceed with this one, defining feminist pedagogical approaches is difficult and complex, but identifying the characteristics of this pedagogy in relation to each other will add further insight into the pedagogy of radical inclusion. Radically inclusive pedagogy and feminist pedagogy share much in common. Feminist pedagogy embraces lived experiences as a means of knowledge-making while encouraging the power of collective understanding and collaboration among one another. Fundamentally, these aspects reveal themselves in radically inclusive pedagogy. In *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks identifies feminism as a living, breathing organism that resides within her lived experiences. She writes, “To me, [feminist] theory emerges from the concrete from my efforts to make sense of everyday life experiences, from my efforts to intervene critically in my life and the lives of others. This to me is what makes feminist transformation possible” (70). “Making sense” indicates a practice of introspection on the part of the witness living these experiences, and this practice is as real or “concrete” as the encounters themselves. Calling these experiences and the internal analysis that follows them as concrete validates students who engage in these processes in writing. Feminist pedagogy seeks to affirm experiences as means of knowledge, recognizing the usefulness of everyday living that is grounded in the honesty of an individual’s subjectivity: “Yet I want to have a phrase that affirms the specialness of those ways of knowing rooted within experience. I know that experience can be a way to know and can inform how we know what we know” (hooks 90). As they grapple with complex occurrences in their lives and articulate them, they engage with collaboration with other students and their instructors. As Laura Micciche explains, “Feminist pedagogy is a hopeful practice that envisions learning spaces as sites where more just social relations can begin to take root” (129). Furthermore, students begin to

contextualize their experiences in theory and practice: “Personal testimony, personal experience, is such fertile ground the production of liberatory feminist theory because it usually forms the base of our theory making...we engage in a critical process of theorizing that enables and empowers” (hooks 70). In her bibliographic writing called “Feminist Pedagogies,” Laura R. Micciche depicts not only the fluidity of language, but its access to the population as a means to connect students’ agency to a collective understanding to enacting activism: “A rich body of rhetorical scholarship...unearthed and argued for the view of collaborative writing and links to feminist practices: sharing linguistic ownership and questioning the idea that anyone can ‘own’ language, distributing agency and authorship, and thereby casting doubt on writing models that enshrine the individual; and connecting writing practices to activism” (133). Feminist pedagogy hinge on the affirmation of lived experiences as valid and useful knowledge, while working collaboratively with peers. The amalgamation of subjective lived experiences with employing one another as a united front demonstrates the central principles of radically inclusive pedagogy. As they perform acts of self-analysis and self-reflection, this pedagogy labors to build a community of resources, support, and shared experiences.

Social Justice as a Form of Radical Inclusion

Having outlined the key characteristics and aspects of the aforementioned pedagogies, pedagogical approaches, and theories, which have included collaboration, disruption, utilization of narrative, and validation of lived experiences, I can now provide a working definition of radically inclusive pedagogy. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the definition of radically inclusive pedagogy should be considered as a whole phrase, instead of separate ideologies as Greenstein emphasizes in their studies of this pedagogy. However, I find Greenstein’s approach helpful insofar as bringing the definitions of these separate words of “radical” and “inclusion”

provides a foundation for the pedagogical approach. According to Google, “radical” means “(especially of change or action) relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough” or “advocating or based on thorough or complete political or social change; representing or supporting an extreme or progressive section of a political party.” “Inclusion,” according to Google, means “the action or state of including or of being included within a group or structure” or “the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or mental disabilities and members of other minority groups.” Ultimately, “radical” means changing the status quo and “inclusion” means creating a space of belonging. Bringing these meanings together signifies changing the existing conditions that interfere with creating a space of belonging. The phrase “radical inclusion” then can seek to disrupt current practices that support exclusion of *anyone*. Therefore, the pedagogy of radical inclusion has the potential and power to disrupt current practices that do not promote belonging and acceptance within the classroom, while promoting self-reflection, activism, community, and compassion with each individual in the classroom.

Disruption of existing conditions requires internal and external awareness on the part of instructors and students. As mentioned previously, being internally aware of one’s whole self, mentally, spiritually, and physically, as can be derived from expressivism, anti-racist pedagogy, critical race theory, embodied pedagogy, and feminist pedagogy, propounds a basis for analysis and critique of the work they produce in the classroom, the classroom in and of itself, the academic community as a whole, and the world at large. In borrowing from feminist pedagogy, recognizing their positionality emerges as a central component of radically inclusive pedagogy, in addition to critiques and analysis of the existing conditions for which they face, day to day. In

the composition classroom, they will be asked to navigate the internal and external awareness in their writing and responses within class discussions. Rooted in critical pedagogy, this means an understanding and questioning of their positionality as each student would define them and how the world engages these identities. This requires a transparency of spirit, an openness (or vulnerability), and honesty within this process of self-awareness. Turning their attention from inside to outside, both students and instructors will then be equipped to evaluate the existing power dynamics around them, as illustrated with embodied and disability pedagogies. This necessitates practitioners of the pedagogy of radical inclusion to have a sense of activism, insofar as to question and provoke the foundations of these power dynamics and actively recognize participation in or rejection of these existing structures. In asking students to recognize their places within these dynamics, we as instructors can begin the process of dismantling assumptions, prejudices, and the basis for these assumptions. Part of this process is confrontation, which is not dissimilar to the honesty and upfronts that anti-racist pedagogy and critical race theory demand. The other part rests in quelling students with assurances of acceptance and receptivity to their subjectivities and perceptions, which is more akin to compassionate pedagogy and the pedagogy of kindness. I will elaborate on the influences of compassionate pedagogy on radically inclusive pedagogy in Chapter 3 as it is a massive component of this pedagogy.

The pedagogy of radical inclusion places students, their needs, subjectivities, perceptions, flaws, assumptions, and prejudices in the forefront. This requires the instructors to welcome all opinions, beliefs, and ideas in the classroom, being firm that this is a space for learning and our many differences, which is the spine of diversity, aids in building a community among these differences. There are concerns for racist, ableist, homophobic, transphobic, and xenophobic

ideas, beliefs, and rhetoric, and I must recommend navigating those disagreements with communication and compassion, asking any individual who walks into your classroom to maintain an open mind. Radically inclusive pedagogy relies on building this community with trust between each individual in the classroom. Instructors must be prepared for disagreements and possibly to disagree with students while maintaining a welcoming environment for these ideologies. Instructors must allow their students to explore their understanding of the world. This will take time and practice to reach that balance, but in order to reach that steadiness, one must begin with offering and displaying compassion in every interaction with students. The assignments, free-writing, and class discussions will ask students to reflect on their experiences and beliefs that shape their understandings of their positionality. In addition to the student learning outcomes, which will vary between various institutions, tasks that radically inclusive pedagogues ask of their students will require internal/external critique, self-reflection, self-expression, and self-construction. This work will not be easy and will require compassion to create a comforting environment for this exploration. Additionally, approaching students with compassion and kindness will influence and inspire them to treat each other with the same respect, generating a sense of community which is another aspect of radically inclusive pedagogy.

Resistance to Inclusion?

As indicated by its definition and its goals in the classroom, radically inclusive pedagogy requires a lot of work from instructors. Although they are accustomed to labor-intensive work, this pedagogy asks composition instructors to walk and manage a fine line in addition to obtaining the learning outcomes of their respective institutions. Much rests on the shoulders of instructors as they endeavor to create community while balancing a diverse population of

personalities, positionalities, and perspectives while approaching each individual with compassion and kindness. This is a massive request and responsibility, and it should be acknowledged as intensive emotional labor on the part of instructors and students. Imagine in a room of nineteen first-year students and one of them does not subscribe to this pedagogy, actively resisting it. This will happen. In what way should an instructor address this student? Disagreements are a part of the process and should be as welcomed as perspectives that align with the instructor's pedagogy. The answer to the resistance of any kind will always be compassion. While that may sound new age and wishy-washy, compassion and kindness will continue the process of radically inclusive pedagogy while acknowledging and validating the student's resistance. This is a necessary step. Instructors need to continue to validate students' experiences and insights; the goal is to model the process of validation so students can in turn begin to validate themselves. Radical Inclusion looks to empower students to empower themselves, growing self-trust within instead of without. There might be students who do not want to participate in activism of any kind or even self-reflection. Both activism and self-reflection are ingrained into the assignments and class discussions, which I will discuss in detail in a later chapter; therefore, it will be difficult for them to avoid. Instead, instructors should encourage students to write and discuss topics that they care deeply about or consider important, providing ideas and topics that appeal to the student to encourage full engagement and participation. Exclusion is not an option. For the pedagogy of radical inclusion to work, instructors must accept students as they are and as they speak.

CHAPTER III

LINGUISTIC JUSTICE AND STUDENTS' VOICES

*For those of us who write, it is necessary to scrutinize not only the truth of what we speak, but
the truth of that language by which we speak it.*

Audre Lorde

In “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action,” Audre Lorde identifies the power of language in combating the tyranny of silence. Lorde argues that we must speak our truths; otherwise, we risk the denial of our subjectivities. However, dismantling silence with speech and subjectivity is not enough. According to Lorde, a fundamental—and necessary—act of writers is to speak the truth of our subjectivities and investigate “the truth of that language by which we speak it” (43). But how does one examine the truth of the language we use to speak our perceptions? Additionally, what does that look like in a first-year composition classroom? How can we apply radically inclusive pedagogy to this investigation of the truth of our language usage to first-year composition classrooms? With all the complications that emerge from students’ positionality in the world in addition to the emotional and linguistic baggage and ambivalence towards writing and language that they bring with them to the classroom, asking students to strip their natural language for standard american english¹ which is more likely than not unfamiliar or uncomfortable for them to learn appears to set students up for failure. There is also a moral dilemma. Perpetration of the use of standard american english maintains power dynamics, division, and more specifically systemic racism and racist practices. There is no way around that fact. Should we continue the current state of affairs, penalizing students for not perfecting a dialect they do not use in any other context beyond academia, because it has always

¹ Placing “standard american english” in lower case is an intentional act as a means of undermining the power of this phrase.

been? If so, we are doomed to repeat and enact the sins of the past that do not account for students' subjectivity, positionality, and expressions—ultimately, their true language. Maintaining these practices opposes inclusion. Drawing from the innovation of critical pedagogy and anti-racist pedagogy, radically inclusive pedagogy insists on transparency and an honest evaluation of current conditions and practices in order to assess and then make changes that will create room for inclusivity. Therefore, in order to apply Lorde's words to composition classrooms and ratify change with the pedagogy of radical inclusion, we must first look at the current condition and standards being enforced in these spaces.

In order to convey the significance of this chapter, I want to share with you a brief retelling of when I introduced the first major writing assignment to my class. In my very first semester of teaching, I was bushy-tailed and bright-eyed, excited to introduce the unit, which is my favorite, to my first-year students. The first assignment was called "We Are All Writers." I stood in front of my class, a modest-sized room filled with students fresh out of high school and told them, "we are all writers." A third of the students laughed. The rest either averted their eyes or snickered audibly. Radically inclusive pedagogy functions with transparency and honesty, so I asked my students, "what's so funny?" One young lady, who I admired for her continuous honesty and bravery, raised her hand. I gestured towards her, and she said, "I hate writing!" I will be honest with you; I wasn't prepared for that! Weeks fantasizing about my first group of students excited to write and express themselves freely in their dialects filled my mind as we led up to the first weeks of class. I didn't hide my surprise from them: "Really? Why?" This young lady continued, "because in high school, we had to write a certain way. We had to fill out these forms and create these outlines before we could start writing" I nodded and said, "None of you have to write that way if you don't want to. In this class, there are no rules to writing, and for this

assignment, I want you to write in your voice.” In response, I received a bunch of confused glances. The same student spoke up and asked, “What do you mean?” I replied, “I want you all to write your essay the way you speak in class.” And with that response, I received more confused glances. I went on to explain to them what it looks like to write how you speak. I discussed code meshing, something they do in their everyday life, inside and outside the classroom. I encouraged them, letting them know that standardized american english, the language of scholarly writing, is a dialect not dissimilar to the dialects they speak at home. But furthermore, I told them that this first unit explores their history with literacy and how their story should be communicated in their most comfortable language. When I informed them that all dialects are equal, they seemed shocked at this assertion as if they have spent a lifetime being told that their languages and dialects were not good enough, or as good as standard american english. Beginning this dialogue with my first-year composition students is a necessary step in radically inclusive pedagogy, as its purpose comes from the pursuit of students’ speaking from their authentic subjectivities.

Literature Review

My students’ reactions to this first unit assignment indicate a general discomfort with writing and language that emerges from a contentious history with both. My students either alluded to or outright expressed feelings of linguistic inadequacy. Arguably most students, at some point in their academic career, have had their language chin checked, being told that how they communicate, speak, and express themselves is inadequate. This story exemplifies why first-year composition classrooms can be an antagonistic space for many students, providing an exigence for a change in how students experience this course. Many scholars argue for a change regarding standard american english language usages in the classroom and offer a myriad of

reasons as to why this shift needs to take place. For example, in “Publishing in the Contact Zone: Strategies from the Cajun Canaille,” Nichole E. Stanford argues that academic scholarship uses stagnant standardized American English and provides linguistic history as the reasons to change the way scholars engage this language in writing to allow it to evolve (119). In his seminal text *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching*, Suresh Canagarajah delineates the pressure on English language learners to concede their home dialects in favor of academic discourses, believing that speaking American standardized English will bring them closer to “power and prestige;” therefore, English language learners lose parts of their culture for the hope of assimilation (147). In *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks observes the impact of language in the call for diversity in feminist spaces, and how those in power weaponizes standardized American English, restraining and oppressing those who speak other dialects and languages, quelling the invitation for diverse voices. Katherine Kellener Sohn, in “Language Awareness in An Appalachian Composition Classroom,” provides insight into the insidious effects of linguicism (language prejudice) in the classroom by articulating the experiences of her students who feel compelled to oscillate between their Appalachian dialect and standardized American English, which chips away at their selfhood. The scholarship depicts the power dynamics that hinder students’ relationship to writing and language, inexplicably harming the ways that they see themselves and their abilities to learn. Ultimately, a majority of first year students walk into composition classrooms with the negative effects of having to perform their selfhood in a dialect that does not speak their authentic subjectivity. This will affect how students engage in the course material and the processes necessary to embrace writing in first year composition courses. Part of the exigence of the pedagogy of radical inclusion emerges from the need to heal these negative effects by creating space for students to write in ways that feel comfortable to them.

Traditionally, composition instructors ask students, regardless of their feelings about writing, to become writers within a short period of time, under various restrictions (such as multiple, lengthy assignments and culminating projects and learning unfamiliar genres and difficult concepts) within a short amount of time. If they carry the burden of past linguistic inadequacies, this places most students at a greater disadvantage. Let's be real. Students' racial, ethnic, social, economic, gendered, ability, regional, sexual, and national identities bear witness to these inadequacies. By this, I mean their selfhood is irrefutably attached and akin to their means of expression: their language. Gloria Anzaldua emphasizes the bond between selfhood, identity, and language in "How to Tame a Wild Tongue": "if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity - I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself" (39). While discussing students' relationship to writing and language in "Inviting the Mother Tongue: Beyond 'Mistakes,' 'Bad English,' and 'Wrong Language,'" Peter Elbow not only depicts the connection between identity and language while portraying how people experience their dialects but also illustrates feelings of submission when having to write in standard American English. Similarly, Meredith A. Love explains, in "Performing New Identities," the ways in which we perform our identities through our usage of language. And in "Fiddlin' Tongue," Jeremy B. Jones exemplifies these elements of performance by using himself as an example: "the multiple personalities of my tongue have put many voices in my head" (200). Language communicates identity, conveying an explicable link between the two. Furthermore, language, expression, identity, and selfhood exemplify students' lived experiences, and stands as a means of conveying previous knowledge, perceptions, and understanding. In understanding the relationship between language, identity, selfhood, and performance, instructors will then begin to come to terms with the ways in which

pressuring students with standardization impedes and disrupts their selfhood, subjectivity, and authentic voice. With this knowledge in mind, instructors can begin to treat the classroom as a true equitable space by welcoming and affirming diversity. By removing the standard American English language as a benchmark for excelling in writing, instructors begin to enact the pedagogy of radical inclusion.

Part of implementing the pedagogy of radical inclusion in composition classrooms requires enacting linguistic justice and emphasizing and affirming the significance of students' individual voices within composition classrooms. The practices of linguistic justice, critical language pedagogy, code meshing, and multilingual writing models depict significant aspects of radically inclusive pedagogy. Innovative scholars, such as Vershawn Ashanti Young, April Baker-Bell, Asao B. Inoue, Suresh Canagarajah, Aja Y. Martinez, Carmen Kynard, and Geneva Smitherman to name a few, birthed the myriad of discussions, theories, and practices that prevail in social justice, linguistic justice, and antiracist theories and pedagogies. However, the components of critical languaging, code meshing, and the like which reflect radically inclusive pedagogy remain an area for further exploration. The following section of this literature review analyzes the ways in which linguistic justice, code meshing, and critical language pedagogy exemplify the practices of radically inclusive pedagogy.

Our Students' Rights to Their Dialects in Speech and Writing

According to *Students' Right to Their Own Language*, the Conference on College Composition and Communication Committee (CCCC) maintains that students have the right to use their specific dialects and languages within composition classrooms. CCCC affirms that the usage of standard American English in academic spaces sustains continuous power dynamics between those in power and those who are not. Advocating for one language to be taught over

others has become a means of weaponizing language: “[w]e have also taught, many of us, as though the ‘English of educated speakers,’ the language used by those in power in the community, and an inherent advantage over other dialects as a means of expressing thought or emotion, conveying information, or analyzing concepts” (21). The exigence of this document emerged from the understanding that no one language or dialect is better than the other and teaching one dialect over the other in academic spaces generates feelings of inadequacy, self-hate, and resentment in those who lack fluency in those dialects of power. *Students’ Right to Their Own Language* discusses the reasons behind rejecting non-standard dialects. The genre of this document exemplifies the necessity of reflection and coming to terms with feelings about race, culture, and socioeconomic status: “We need to ask ourselves whether our rejection of students who do not adopt the dialect most familiar to us is based on any real merit in our dialect or whether we are actually rejecting students themselves, rejecting them because of their racial, social, and cultural origins” (21). This statement signifies the importance of language to students’ identities, and thus, rejection of their dialects and languages is tantamount to a refusal of their race, culture, social standings, and status. This is the antithesis of radically inclusive pedagogy, which seeks to embrace students holistically. The phrase “the dialect most familiar to us” indicates the positions of those who composed this statement, enforcing and indicating their power to the readers. CCCC takes responsibility for their power and positioning and recognizes how those who speak these dialects of power stay ahead of others whose mother tongue differs. With these acknowledgments in mind, they declared students’ rights to their own dialects and languages, which is a central aspect of radically inclusive pedagogy.

By offering examples and reasons behind the differences between dialects in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, and word arrangement, CCCC substantiates students’ rights to their

dialects and provides the linguistic context which proves that each dialect is fundamentally equal. Furthermore, *Students' Right to Their Own Language* offers a historical and sociological perspective, indicating how certain dialects receive an advantage over others:

In a specific setting, because of historical and other factors, certain dialects may be endowed with more prestige than others. Such dialects are sometimes called 'standard' or 'consensus' dialects. These designations of prestige are not inherent in the dialect itself, but are *externally imposed*, and the prestige of a dialect shifts as the power relationships of the speakers shift (25).

"Specific settings" implies various places but within this context, academic spaces emerge as the primary setting indicated here. "Externally imposed" connotes not only the forcefulness in which specific dialects are held in higher regard than others but also the perpetuation of maintaining this hierarchy within society. As Asoue Inoue asserts, in *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing For a Socially Just Future*, , the interconnectedness of race to language, while attesting to the pitfalls of enforcing standardized language: "SEAE [Standardized Edited American English], of course, is often a racial marker, a marker of whiteness, but not a marker of one's racial formation, nor a marker of racism, unless it is used against students in a writing assessment as the standard" (23). Standardization depends on the community that speaks the dialect, further substantiating that advocating for standard American English in the classroom is inorganic as the diversity across the nation does not reflect one way of speaking or writing: "The diversity of our cultural heritage, however, has created a corresponding language diversity and, in the 20th century, most linguists agree that there is no single, homogeneous American 'standard.' They also agree that, although the amount of prestige and power possessed by a group can be recognized through its dialect, no dialect is inherently

good or bad” (25). A standard dialect, like standard american english, is a myth, yet it remains a means to identify and categorize communities of people. Categorization prevails as a method to divide people into easily identifiable groups, and also as an instrument in deleting and neglecting the individuality of the speaker. The pedagogy of radical inclusion exercises practices that nourish students’ individuality and subjectivity, rejecting any praxis that advocates for categorization and division.

As it provides evidence and reasoning to encourage composition instructors to accept students’ languages, *Students’ Right to Their Own Language* illustrates the ways in which dialects, or more specifically, the perpetuation of standardization continues and exacerbates divisions between people. In creating this statement, CCCC does several things that give birth to shifting the perception of dialects and language in composition classrooms today. This text uses modern-day linguistics to substantiate the lack of differentiation between dialects which implies the lack of difference between the various individuals who speak them: “Another insight from the linguistic study is that differences among dialects in a given language are always confined to a limited range of surface features that have no effect on what linguists call *deep structure*, a term that might be roughly translated as ‘meaning’” (26). Although some instructors would claim that they would not be able to understand students who speak a different dialect of english, linguistically there is no grounds for misunderstandings within speech patterns of similar dialects, as they remain connected insofar as retaining the same meanings. Since there is no superior dialect and a lack of significant differences between dialects of the same language, we must turn to meaning in students’ speech and writing to assess comprehension and ability. In doing so, the emphasis does not lie with correcting the grammar of a particular dialect, but rather on the message and content of expression. According to *Students’ Right to Their Own Language*,

maintaining differing dialects within composition classrooms generates emphasis on meaning-making: “If we name the essential functions of writing as expressing oneself, communicating information and attitudes, and discovering meaning through both logic and metaphor, then we view variety of dialects as an advantage” (29). For instructors who are concerned about how to “correct” students’ writing, who rely on standard American English and its grammatical structures for guidance, this document asks them to look toward the content, expression, and meaning that can emerge from the music of varying dialects and embracing diversity. This document embodies principles of radically inclusive pedagogy, which seeks to unearth the meaning and method of expression within students’ writing. For the pedagogy of radical inclusion, the emphasis of students’ writing lies in the authenticity of experience and the deliberate rhetorical choices that the writer makes within their expression.

Students’ Right to Their Own Language provides the basis in which radically inclusive pedagogues should approach language and dialect within composition classrooms. As creating equitable spaces while teaching first-year students remains one of the highest priorities of radically inclusive pedagogy, this document reflects principles of acceptance and inclusion of differing voices, speeches, dialects, and languages. Instead of stripping students of their dialects, languages, and knowledge upon entrance into the classroom, both radically inclusive pedagogy and *Students’ Right to Their Own Language* emphasize the importance of welcoming diverse voices and their expression. Significantly, both view these differences as advantageous to learning and knowledge building between students and instructors. In welcoming diverse speeches and dialects, we start to build trust between us and our students, making our classroom safe for learning and the exchange of ideas. This begins with the instructors’ attitudes towards language, which explains the many challenges this document has faced while trying to

implement its progressive ideologies within composition classrooms. Radically inclusive pedagogy and praxis fills the spaces and questions left unanswered by *Students' Right to Their Own Language* in that it offers guidelines and approaches as to how to create safe spaces for students' diverse voices.

“This Ain't Another Statement! This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice!”

In July 2020, a demand for a change in linguistic dealings within the classroom was issued on the CCCC website. “This Ain't Another Statement! This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice!” expands upon the power dynamics in which *Students' Right to Their Own Language* alludes, but specifically speaks to the anti-Black racist sentiments that motivate the policing and metaphoric killing of Black dialects within the classroom. “This Ain't Another Statement! This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice!” compares the killing of Black bodies by law enforcement and vigilantes to the contempt that Black dialects receive in academic spaces: “We are witnessing institutions and organizations craft statements condemning police brutality and anti-Black racism while ignoring the anti-Black skeletons in their own closets. As language and literacy researchers and educators, we acknowledge the same anti-Black violence that is going down in these academic streets.” Equating the murders of Black bodies with the metaphoric killing of Black dialects demonstrates the interconnection between identity and language. Thus, any rejection of the students' language or the quelling of their dialects, languages, and speech is tantamount to the death of their identity and sense of self, diminishing their self-confidence and their ability to fully realize their individual form of expression. Their list of demands does not simply ask teachers to accept Black dialects and languages but also urges them to be informed and inform their students about these diverse forms of speech, centralizing and celebrating Black dialects and language. Acceptance is not enough. Instructors

must learn about the languages and dialects of their students, embracing and celebrating the diversity of their identities and expressions to create equitable and inclusive spaces in the classroom.

Another notable aspect of “This Ain’t Another Statement! This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice!” emerges from it calling out the weaponization of standard american english against Black identities. In the spirit of anti-racist rhetoric, this document continues to call out and confront teachers who utilize standard american english as central and normative language in their teachings as racist or racist enablers. Many good-natured and well-intended instructors have continued the perpetration of standard american english to correct their students, blissfully unaware that they are degrading and dehumanizing every individual within their classroom who is not fluent in it. Instructors who still advocate for standard american english in their classroom despite the information available to them should ask themselves the significance of choosing this dialect above all others, and how can they justify placing the individuals who are fluent in it at an advantage over others. In “Dismantling Anti-Black Linguistic Racism in English Language Arts Classrooms: Toward an Anti-Racist Black Language Pedagogy,” April Baker-Bell depicts the advantages that standard american english speakers would have over non-speakers “while WME [white mainstream english] -speaking students come to school already prepared because their linguistic and cultural practices are deemed ‘academic,’ most linguistically and racially diverse students begin at a disadvantage because their language and culture do not reflect the dominant white culture that counts as academic” (10). More than placing certain students at an advantage, advocating for standard american english over other dialects causes very toxic and ill-effects on the communities of non-speakers. Baker-Bell discusses these effects with long-lasting consequences: “When Black students’ language practices are suppressed in classrooms or they

begin to absorb messages that imply that BL [Black Language] is deficient, wrong, and unintelligent, this could cause them to internalize anti-blackness and develop negative attitudes about their linguistic, racial, cultural, and intellectual identities and about themselves” (10). Thus, perpetrating standard american english will harm communities, increasing feelings of self-hate, worthlessness, and a lack of confidence, which are the opposite of the kind of feelings a classroom should generate. For an instructor to not participate in the weaponization of language, they must demonstrate a “decolonization of the mind (and/or) language, unlearn white supremacy, and unravel anti-Black linguistic racism,” ultimately recognizing any direct and indirect advocacy that supports one dialect over another.

From Code-Switching to Code Meshing to Critical Pedagogy

In addition to evaluating the ill-effects of weaponizing standard american english, *This Ain't Another Statement! This is a DEMAND for Black Linguistic Justice!* discusses the detriment of code-switching to Black students. In “Publishing in the Contact Zone: Strategies from the Cajun Canaille,” Nichole E. Stanford offers a thorough description of “code-switching” and the toxicity it causes:

[code-switching is] the functional distribution of codes for different social domains, something to which I referred earlier as a form of censorship. While the concept of code-switching is often promoted as a great tool for managing the home-academic divide...it fails to challenge hegemonic discourses, sort of like practicing free speech but only at home. In this way, perfect code-switching ultimately maintains the status quo, the hierarchy of Englishes that was established unfairly in the first place (126).

Code switching maintains a divide between public and private spheres, causing a division of self and identity within students. It enforces the act of voice division, or what I call an ‘ununified

voice.’ Vershawn Ashanti Young expounds upon this concept of voice division that code-switching causes in “Nah, We Straight: An Argument Against Code Switching”: “by placing code switching within the discursive context of what sociologist W.E.B. DuBois deemed the problem of double consciousness” (51). Young believes that double consciousness, which DuBois argues as the product of living as a Black person during the Jim Crow Era and under racial segregation, reflects similar effects to code-switching, encouraging students to perceive the two dialects (standard american english and Black english) as disparate and unequal: “to teach students that the two language varieties cannot mix and must remain apart belies the claim of linguistic equality and replicates the same phony logic behind Jim Crow legislation—which held that the law recognized the equality of the races yet demanded their separation” (53). Young describes code-switch as a form of linguistic segregation, encouraging Black students to perform in inauthentic ways in public spaces, which leads to continued double consciousness and what DuBois calls “racial schizophrenia” (54). It is necessary to emphasize the problematic use of “schizophrenia” here. DuBois uses the negative assumptions attached to this disability to encapsulate the dual identities that emerge from being othered in the United States. Although these ways of thinking and speaking were very prevalent during his time, the intentional application of this phrase here allows opportunity to enact radically inclusive pedagogy. By confronting this ableist rhetoric and seeking ways to understand the perspective of the speaker while considering ways to be more comprehensive, we can learn new ways of thinking and speaking that allows for more holistic and inclusive behaviors. Moving forward, I will use the phrases “racial double consciousness” or “linguistic double consciousness” when referring to DuBois’ assertions. Despite understanding the necessity of Black dialects to Black students’ identities, well-meaning instructors, who still encourage Black students to participate in this form

of linguistic segregation, provide more insidious perpetuation of racism within composition classrooms. They present code-switching as a means for success, safety, or acceptance within mainstream white spaces, indirectly implying that the Black student is not enough as they are: “Code-switching is often an immediate solution for negotiating unfair barriers, but it skirts the political inequalities of our institutions by keeping languages separate and not necessarily equal. Moreover, in practice code-switching amounts to a policy of minority language eradication in educational contexts because the home discourse, as affirmed as it may be, is disallowed in writing” (Stanford 127). Being fluent in standard American English does not erase the barriers that Black people face while conducting themselves in the world. In *Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy*, April Baker-Bell sadly uses a best example of how language does not save lives: “ ‘If y’all actually believe that using ‘standard English’ will dismantle white supremacy, then you not paying attention...Eric Garner was choked to death by a police officer while saying ‘I cannot breath.’ Wouldn’t you consider ‘I cannot breathe’ ‘standard English’ syntax?’ ” (5). Thus, the performance of fluency in standard American English does not erase racism, the speaker’s racial or cultural identity, or the existing linguistic hierarchies. Code switching does not solve or change anything.

Additionally, the performative component of code switching emerges as a little-discussed topic in linguistic justice rhetoric. As previously mentioned, code switching creates a divide within students’ identities, creating a deep separation between public and private personas. The private persona speaks the language of home, conveying who the student is in their most comfortable and safest space. Here, the student can express themselves freely without much thought to grammar, structure, or performance. This private persona exists for expression, authenticity, and truth in communication with others. The public persona is the opposite. This

persona produces and performs for an audience and acceptance. This public persona adheres to rules, structure, and form, all of which supersede expression and authenticity in communication. If the thoughts illustrated do not follow conventional practices of the standardized dialect, this persona is rejected, and left on the fringes of mainstream society. Demanding students to just engage this public persona not only causes the racial double consciousness that DuBois and Young describe, but really and truly it is linguistic double consciousness where students are being asked to decipher what setting can they speak as of their authentic self or as a false self which exists to plead mainstream spaces for acceptance. Although writing requires engagement with the public insofar as writing for an audience, an authentic point of view should emerge as the primary reasoning for this expression. If we instructors tell students they must rock their public personas to be successful, accepted, and respected in the classroom and the world, then how are they to reach their authentic voices to write to their best potential? Truth be told, the classroom subsists as a vulnerable space for students and instructors. We are all left open and vulnerable, exposed in the classroom to what we know and what we don't. Tasking students to engage in this linguistic double consciousness will lead to inauthentic and uninspired writing.

Generating writing that authentically demonstrates students' unique perspectives, voices, and experiences remains essential to radically inclusive pedagogy. This pedagogy seeks to place the necessity of inclusivity and acceptance of students and their dialects and knowledge at the forefront of learning. Given the significance of language to students' identities and its central function within composition classrooms, grappling with how to negotiate diversity, radical inclusion, and radical compassion with language and dialect differences in these spaces emerges as a central and necessary question to ask. A mode of critical languaging that addresses and answers this fundamental question of language differentiation, acceptance, and radical inclusion

emerges from the practice of code meshing. Simply put, code meshing is the bringing together of two distinct codes (dialects) and using them concurrently, in speech and writing (Young 51). Scholars from social justice, linguistic justice, and anti-racist pedagogy offer a definition of and usage for code meshing can heal the linguistic wounds caused by language hierarchies and code switching. In “Introduction: Code Meshing as World English,” Vershawn Ashanti Young, Aja Y. Martinez, and Julie Anne Naviaux describe the act of code meshing as “blend[ing] accents, dialects, and varieties of English with school-based, academic, professional, and public Englishes, in any and all formal and informal contexts” (xxi). Similarly, with insight into the critical awareness necessary for students to write effectively, Suresh Canagarajah claims, in “Codemeshing in Academic Writing: Identifying Teachable Strategies of Translanguaging,” the benefits of code meshing which encourages and avail students to “question their choices, think critically about diverse options, assess the effectiveness of their choices, and develop more metacognitive awareness” (415). Additionally, in “‘Nah, We Straight’: An Argument Against Code Switching,” Vershawn Ashanti Young attests to the ability of code meshing to produce opportunities for students to make deliberate, rhetorical choices in their writing that standardized dialects do not provide to its non-speakers. Young *et al* argue the practice of code-meshing as a means “to promote the linguistic democracy of English and to increase the acquisition and egalitarian, effective use of English in school, in government, in public, and at home” (xx). In “Code Meshing and Creative Assignments: How Students Can Stop Worrying and Learn to Write Like Da Bomb,” Thersa Malphrus Welford claims students’ linguistic and written abilities flourish when they code mesh: “students write confidently and enthusiastically when they are allowed to mesh academic language with their own language. Best of all, this combination helps their writing crackle with energy” (23). By allowing and encouraging students to speak their

home dialects in unison with standard American English, instructors avail a myriad of linguistic opportunities for learning that approaches students holistically while creating space for authentic writing.

Radically inclusive pedagogy pursues principles of code meshing and the pedagogies espoused in “Students’ Right to Their Own Language” and “This Ain’t Another Statement!”), favoring the natural modes of speech from students above all else. In doing so, instructors create welcoming and affirming spaces for their students, removing linguistic barriers and hierarchies from the classroom while recognizing that any support or enforcement of the use of a dialect other than their students’ own emerges as perpetuation of white supremacy, racism, xenophobia, and “linguicism” (Sohn 88). As language is inexplicably linked to students’ selfhood, dialect acceptance, and affirmation remain a gateway to enacting radically inclusive pedagogy, which allows instructors the ability to meet students where they are and engage the knowledge that they bring upon entrance into the classroom.

Beyond Language: The Application of Radically Inclusive Pedagogy

Having established how to greet students and begin the process of self-empowerment through language, now further application of radically inclusive pedagogy can be discussed. In this section, I will offer recommendations for enacting radically inclusive pedagogy within composition classrooms. It is advisable to make adjustments as necessary, keeping in mind the central principle of radically inclusive pedagogy, which asks instructors to create inclusive spaces and to approach students holistically and compassionately while supporting their complete and acknowledged identities in order to inspire knowledge building, collaboration, and learning. The following list of suggestions are practical guidelines for course policies and

procedures and assignments. Keep in mind that the following list of recommendations is not complete and should be consistently updated.

Praxis for Enacting Radically Inclusive Pedagogy - Linguistic Justice

- Include reading and learning materials from BIOPIC, queer, trans, and non-binary writers and creators which illustrate “narratives of liberation, joy, and success, not just struggle” (Gelles).
- Select reading and learning materials that demonstrate language and rhetorical choices that deviate from standard American English.
- Offer other forms of class participation that are not confined to writing alone or speaking out loud in front of the class (Gelles). Give students options on ways to respond to and analyze the class discussions so they can use their voices in the ways most comfortable for them.
- Run the class like a democracy, providing space for students to choose how they learn and the pace at which they learn the course materials. Providing a democratic space for students to have some authority over their learning encourages self-empowerment and autonomy.
- Allow students to respond and engage in code meshing within their formal and informal written work. Advocating for code meshing offers a means of examining and subverting linguistic hierarchies.
- Create assignments and responses that encourage students to use their lived experiences.
- Encourage students to be rhetorically flexible and mindful, making choices that are authentic to their specific ways of speech and writing.

How Does Radically Inclusive Pedagogy Look in Assignments

To contextualize the aforementioned recommendations, the following assignment sheet provides an example of how to frame principles of radically inclusive pedagogy within course units. With an emphasis on expressivist theory and feminist theory, literacy memoir functions well as the first major assignment for a first-year composition course. The work required for this assignment provides space for students to confront and grapple with their educational pasts while creating opportunities to become more self-reflective about their current literacy identities. The introduction to this assignment sheet offers the linguistic groundwork that instructors can use to encourage students to write their literacy memoirs in their mother tongue or in meshed codes. Its central metaphor initiates the process of teaching students about making active and conscious choices within their writing, bringing more self-awareness to the writing process. In the spirit of uplifting the voices of those who inspire me, I would be remiss if I didn't let y'all know the basis and majority of the "Literacy Memoir" assignment comes from an assignment sheet created by my mentor, Dr. Kristi Costello. I received access to this document as a graduate teaching assistant. See Appendix A.

Uplifting Students with Compassion

In this chapter, we discussed the importance of uplifting students' voices by centralizing their mother tongue and allowing them to dictate their own narratives towards honoring their identities in ways that feel authentic to them. An act of linguistic justice is to ask students to mindfully regard how their literacy was formed. More significantly, by offering praxes and assignments that align with linguistic justice, we invite our students to examine the dynamics of power that encourage the subversion of linguistic hierarchies while encouraging the application of lived experiences in their authentic voices and languages. Radically inclusive pedagogy asks

students to interrogate their previous literacy experiences and implementing code meshing in classrooms allows students to engage in deliberate linguistic and rhetorical choices in their writing in meaningful ways.

I have discovered that the pedagogy of radical inclusion asks for honesty and transparency. Forgive me while I indulge this element of the practice here. Though significant to me and my goals, this chapter was, perhaps, the most difficult to write. This chapter is the heart of this project. Many of the scholars I studied were making similar recommendations regarding the connection between selfhood, identity, language, power dynamics, hierarchies, etc. Their links were implied through the arguments for code meshing, dismantling hierarchies, and honoring mother tongues, but not stated explicitly. In all my reading and research, I noticed a startling absence. There is something missing that belongs in the space between linguistic justice and radically inclusive pedagogy. Implicit within the scholarship of linguistic justice is the rhetoric of compassion, kindness, and inclusive pedagogy.

CHAPTER IV

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

*There are myths about self-protection that hold us separate from each other and breed harshness
and cruelty where we most need softness and understanding.*

Audre Lorde

*Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political
warfare.*

Audre Lorde

In “Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger,” Audre Lorde articulates the anger and the internalized self-hatred that keeps Black women from offering the comfort and support they need from one another. While Lorde specifically addresses Black women in this essay, her observations of the disconnection among each other can easily be applied to the classroom. Before expounding upon that thought I must make my intentions clear. My application of Lorde’s message in “Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger” is very specific and dear to me as a Black woman, more so as a Black woman educator. When I first read this essay many years ago, I became hyper aware of the internal work I had to do in order to meet the eyes of other Black women with love and encouragement. This is a lifelong commitment that I still struggle with from time to time. The many realizations that have emerged from reading this essay came before I envisioned myself as an educator but compounded themselves once I decided to educate diverse populations. When I read this essay now as an educator, the message of self-work strikes me as the most significant message of Lorde’s observations. We must work on ourselves internally to be capable of decentering pain and suspicion in how we approach students: “To search for power within myself means I must be willing to move through being

afraid to whatever lies beyond. If I look at my most vulnerable places and acknowledge the pain I have felt, I can remove the source of that pain from my enemies' arsenals" (Lorde 146).

Although Lorde directs her message to Black women's suffering, her observations about confronting fear while moving through personal pain can be applied to the internal self-work educators need to do to uphold the principles of radically inclusive pedagogy, especially if we are going to ask our students to be vulnerable and self-reflective as well.

Fundamentally, the myths about self-protection that Lorde articulates in her essay depict the ongoing resistance to self-reflection and vulnerability, making the implementation of compassion and kindness pedagogy more challenging. Standard practices within the classroom traditionally consist of maintaining this visage of self-protection, as instructors posit themselves as knowledgeable, authoritative leaders and students exist as "depositories" or receivers of information (Freire 45). Similarly, bell hooks describes these kinds of educational practices that create a deficiency in instructors by demonstrating inability to connect the personages, positionalities, and identities of their students: "The vast majority of our professors lacked basic communication skills, they were not self-actualized, and they often used the classroom to enact rituals of control that were about domination and the unjust exercise of power"

(5). Additionally, while the subject of her views focuses on K through 12 teacher education, Hilary Gehlbach Conklin uses a personal anecdote to depict the continued persistence of this power dynamic which continuously cultivates inequitable teaching practices, neglecting the needs and restricting learning opportunities of diverse populations (655). The increase of diverse populations entering into higher education calls for the exigence of inclusion and equity (Addy *et al.* 17-8). Despite the acknowledged demand for inclusion and equitable classroom practices, resistance to the application and usage of compassion, kindness, and engaged pedagogies and

praxes remains consistent. Recognizing this ongoing resistance and the urgency to unite inclusivity and equitable practices with compassionate and kindness-based praxes begins the process of enacting radically inclusive pedagogy.

The framework in this chapter's introduction signifies the continued work necessary to fully define radically inclusive pedagogy. Although this project consists of four chapters currently, I would be remiss if I did not inform my readers of my original intention to include an additional chapter that was to follow Chapter Three. As alluded to in the conclusion of Chapter Three, implicit within the scholarship of linguistic justice is the rhetoric of compassion, kindness, and inclusive pedagogies and praxis. As I envision it, this chapter would emphasize the roles and influences of these pedagogies in enacting radically inclusive pedagogy. Using the principles of these pedagogies, we can further encourage self-trust, self-empowerment, and agency in students while asking them to confront their pasts. This chapter would provide means to address the class and each individual with radical compassion and inclusion, applying holistic approaches to education and community building while navigating any resistance or hesitation in engaging this pedagogy.

Though I cannot expound upon the influences of these pedagogical approaches to radically inclusive pedagogy, I felt compelled to include some praxes and suggestions for its implementation.

Praxis for Radically Inclusive Pedagogy - Compassion, Engaged, and Kindness Pedagogy

- Include compassionate statements in syllabi.
 - Here is an example of a "Human to Human" Clause that originated from Dr. Ruth Osorio's syllabus. This clause was provided to the Graduate Teachers' Assistants (GTAs) as a way to help construct their syllabi with compassion and student

support in mind: “I know that life happens. Sickness, disability, mental health, family problems, food insecurities, poverty, worries about family separations—all of these things can impact your performance in school, and oftentimes, they can come suddenly and without notice. I understand. If you are dealing with issues in your personal life that will affect your performance in the class, please come talk to me. You do not need to disclose any more details than you wish. However, if I know that you are dealing with stuff in your personal life, you and I can work on a plan to make sure you succeed in the class while taking care of yourself.

Practically speaking, it’s easier for me to help you early on (in other words, let me know *before* you miss a deadline if possible if you can), but I know that may not always be possible. Keep me informed and I will be happy to help, support, and encourage you.”

- Offer grace with deadlines. Allowing students some space to submit an assignment a day or two after the articulated deadline without punishment will provide relief and grace to students who might be encountering difficulties.
- Offer gratitude and appreciation to students for their efforts in and out of class creates a welcoming environment and produces feelings of understanding between students and their instructors and community among one another.
- At the beginning of every class meeting, ask students how they are and how they are feeling before getting to work. This provides a foundation of compassion and empathy for their lives. While their answers may be broad or shallow, the students come to appreciate being welcomed in the class: they learn that they are more than students within

a first-year composition class, they are human beings developing a relationship with writing, language, and academia.

- Provide a means to let students tell you more about themselves without having to disclose their personal information to the whole class (Gelles). Knowing significant information about your students is an integral part of addressing their needs holistically.
- Have an open-door policy for communication with you. Let students know they will not be judged or punished for articulating their concerns regarding the course with you.
- Provide opportunities for self-reflection, self-analysis (assessment), and self-awareness to students by including assignments that ask them to consider and reflect on their processes as they navigate through this course.
- Infuse mindfulness practices throughout the course: meditation, journaling, breathing exercises, etc.
- Encourage students to be honest, open, and transparent with their thoughts and feelings regarding the course, assignments, deadlines, etc. I encourage instructors to do the same with their students, while maintaining and modeling professional boundaries and appropriateness.

In placing emphasis on modeling behaviors for our students, this chapter would explore the need for instructors to engage in practices of self-compassion and self-care. These central practices convey the direction of exploration of radically inclusive pedagogy.

Sister Outsider and Her Influences

In the face of her sickness, Audre Lorde comes to terms with the necessity of care and the ways in which it opposes traditional education. In the epilogue of *A Burst of Light: And Other Essays*, she oscillates between the realities of her illness and the work necessary for her to

continue. Lorde claims “Overextending myself is not stretching myself,” and comes to terms with this reeducation essential for her survival. The truth is we are not taught to take care of ourselves wholly and completely—mind, body, and spirit. And traditionally, the confines of education and academia neglect advocating for the practice of self-care. Much of my educational career consists of enforcing meeting deadlines at cost of my wellbeing, suspicion and mistrust, isolation, and disconnection, and maintaining toxic competitions. However, reading Lorde’s work, under the guidance of my undergraduate mentor Dr. Mychel Namphy, evokes a sense of belonging despite the difficulties I encountered during my academic career. And although Lorde is not known for her direct disciplinary connection to writing studies, rhetoric, and composition, her work has unknowingly initiated my understanding of radical inclusion pedagogy. Lorde’s work consists of a sense of acceptance, community, and self-care, and these same concepts comprise the foundation of radically inclusive pedagogy.

Writing For Freedom

I came to writing at a time of need. Much of the writing I have done throughout my life has been personal narratives, and from there I have been able to see the healing ways in which writing saves lives, as it did mine. The ideas, concepts, and feelings I grapple with day to day emerge from my fingers to a keyboard, through my pen and on the page and emancipate me from the oppression of thought. Suddenly everything makes sense, and I am free. The best gift I could ever give another person is an endearment of writing, a love of words and expression and space to engage writing freely.

I discovered writing with my sister. She taught me my alphabet, names, and words and I fell in love from there. For students without that special influence that created time for writing, manifested a sanctuary for this peaceful practice, I want to create a community within the

classroom where they can be safe and free to grapple with their thoughts, feelings, and positionalities in the world around them. I foresee the praxis and pedagogy of radical inclusion as a means to ease the difficulty in doing so. This is my intention and my hope.

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APPENDIX

FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION ASSIGNMENT SHEET

Introduction:

Very few students write in their own voice. Most put on a persona in academic writing. We perceive the act of writing as a highfalutin sport where we strut our wears with fancy SAT or GRE words, hoping to impress whoever is reading. We place an extraordinary amount of pressure on ourselves to mimic what we think scholars sound like. Majority of the time, our imitations of this supposed sophisticated, high academics create convoluted and complex sentences. Our meanings become muddled, losing the purpose of our prose. No one is to blame for this continuously happening. In the near past, academic writing in your personal voice was discouraged. Thus, producing a population of students who put on a linguistic persona like an ill-fitting outfit. So before stepping into this persona, ask yourself why. Why should you place your ideas into an ill-fitting outfit to strut awkwardly? Are you trying to impress or trying to communicate? If your goal is to express yourself and communicate your ideas and thoughts, why not shed that uncomfortable linguistic persona by honoring your own intuitive voice? Consider your relationship with language and writing. The two are inextricably linked, and remain an intricate part of your identity, which is not dissimilar to how mindfully chosen outfit that depicts your personal style. Think of a time where you went to a party and decided to wear your most formal and fancy outfit. When you arrive, you are completely overdressed. For this assignment, there is no need for a fancy and formal outfit. We want you to show up in your most comfortable and unique outfit: we want to hear your voice depicting your experiences with literacy.

And while there are some members of faculty that believe in the most formal wear for every writing occasion, we want for you to speak about your experiences the way you would as if you are dressing for a casual dinner with friends. What would you wear? What word choices and connections would you make that depict and honor your unique voice and experiences? Your literacy narrative should reflect your most cozy and natural outfit. It should be your unique voice, much like your own style. You should be at ease, comfortable and writing as if discussing your connection to literacy with friends. The beauty of this kind of writing is you decide whatever that looks like, much like your favorite, most comfortable outfit.

And while there are some members of faculty that believe in the most formal wear for every writing occasion, we want for you to speak about your experiences the way you would as if you are dressing for a casual dinner with friends. You should be at ease, comfortable. Your literacy narrative should reflect your most cozy and natural outfit. It should be unique, much like your own style. Write as though discussing your connection to literacy with friends.

What word choices and connections would you make that depict and honor your unique voice and experiences? Give examples of word/story examples here. The beauty of this kind of writing is you decide whatever that looks like, much like your favorite, most comfortable outfit.

Literacy Memoir

“Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself.”

--Gloria Anzaldua

Who are you as a writer? But more importantly, why? What factors have shaped you as a writer? How have your habits, perceptions, values, and language used to be shaped by your experiences, education, culture, family, community, access, and other factors? What agency do

*you have in shaping and re-shaping these values, habits, perceptions, and language use? In this first season of discovery, which we will call the fall season (also known as Unit 1) I will provide you with the opportunity to consider these questions (and more) as you write an essay responding to this season's culminating guiding question: **How have I become the writer (or reader or student whichever identity you prefer to write about) I am today?***

Your essay can be arranged in a variety of ways. You may begin with an event and tease out the means or aspects that affected you. You may start your essay with defining who you are as a writer (or reader or student) nowadays and then bridge who you are right now to a past event.

The best narrative essays do three things:

1. Tell a story.
2. Speak from a specific point of view
3. Observe details closely.
4. Make a point.

Your final draft should be:

- No fewer than 700 words and no more than 1000 words (3-4 pages)
- Formatted according to MLA style.
- Outside sources are NOT REQUIRED.
- Include the final word count in your heading next to the assignment title

Assignment Highlights:

- Address the question: How have I become the writer (or reader or student) I am today?
- Organization, style, and tone is up to the writer. Feel free to code mesh and/or speak in your mother tongue. Your story should reflect your ways of speech.

- Default audience: your peers and instructor within this community (our classroom).

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