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Fostering Transformative Points of Connection: An Examination of the Role of Personal Storytelling in Two Undergraduate Social Diversity Courses

A Dissertation Presented

by

MOLLY KEEHN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May 2014

College of Education

Social Justice Education

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Fostering Transformative Points of Connection: An Examination of the Role of Personal Storytelling in Two Undergraduate Social Diversity Courses

A Dissertation Presented

By

MOLLY KEEHN

Approved as to style and content by:

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DEDICATION

To my dear mentor, colleague, and friend, Yvonne Bogle–where it all started, and to my beloved god-daughter, Malia Francis Silver–where it is all going.

In memory of my uncle, Robert Giffen Miller–Huzzah!!!

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Some say it takes a village to raise a child, but in my case, it took a village (and more) to get this dissertation completed. I am overwhelmed with gratitude to have such an amazing community of support and am clear that it was all of the "transformative points of connection" in my own life that made completing this project a possibility for me. The last few years of writing this dissertation have given me a picture of how a process that can be so isolating does not really have to be.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my parents, Sally and David Keehn. You instilled in me a love of storytelling, nurtured my ability to feel empathy and care about justice, and have been so beautifully open to learning alongside me throughout this process. This project truly could not have been possible without all of the forms of support you have given me. Thank you, Mom and Dad! I love you to pieces. I also want to thank my beloved big sister, Alison Keehn. You have let me follow you through the years, taken me on sister adventures, written beside me, offered me refuge in your home whenever I needed it, and shown me how to quiet down, so the juicy ideas could bubble up. You are, and have always been, my #1 idol.

Next, I want to thank my incredible dissertation committee. I feel so lucky to have had four such brilliant scholars to work with. To my dissertation chair, Dr. Ximena Zúñiga—you stuck with me until the very end, laughed with me through the most stressful times, and pushed me harder than anyone has pushed me in my life but always seemed to know just when to let up. You are so brilliant, dynamic, and loving, and I am very grateful for your generosity with everything—from your mind, to your books, to your lunch. You have shown me what it really means to give your all to something, and I

am in awe of your devotion to your students, to dialogue, and to social justice. I feel honored to have been mentored by you. To Dr. Maurianne Adams—over the last 7 years, you have mentored me in so many ways, as I developed both as a teacher and as a researcher. Thank you for your calmness, clarity, encouragement, wisdom, and never-ending supply of cheese! To Dr. Martha Stassen—your assistance with my methodology proved invaluable, and I am so grateful that I had the chance to get to learn some of the nuances of data coding from you with our collaboration through the MIGR project. Thank you for your warmth, support, and clear thinking. And finally, to Dr. Leda Cooks—I really appreciate the perspective you were able to bring to my work, and I admire your commitment to dialogue and to anti-racism. Thank you for your support and your belief in my academic abilities.

To my Northampton family, the Mafi-Silver's (Nunia, Josh, Akesa, Malia, and Zadie) —I love you all to the moon and back (with sprinkles on top). Thank you for all of the family dinners, sleepovers, dance parties in the kitchen, Yo Gabba Gabba breaks, and for giving me a title that is way more important than Doctor (Auntie). Nuni, thanks for running beside me for the past 10 years (both in my mind and in reality) and always listening to me, loving me, and providing me with much-needed perspective. Thank you Kesa, for writing beside me when I needed it the most and for your endless supply of positivity and magic energy balls.

To my dear Mahi and the Jilly to my Bowl, Emily Pritchard. Thanks for the 18 years of friendship, for all of the belly laughs, interpretive dances, work distractions, and for always being so interested in and supportive of what I was working on. And to Lizzy Adames—words cannot express how much I value the ways you supported me

throughout this process. Your daily check-in phone calls saved me so many times. Thanks for knowing just what to say when I was in tears or started to talk REALLY fast for weeks at a time. I am just so grateful for your friendship.

To the #1 East coast family cover band, "DH and The Gentlemen." Thanks for taking a chance on an over-enthusiastic beginner accordion player and for providing a much-needed creative outlet. Thanks to Dennis Finn—you never fail to make me laugh really hard and stop taking myself so seriously. To Kyle Henricksen, for being my creative inspiration (both in life, and in my dreams) and to Craig Henricksen for offering steady, calm support, like only a big brother can (and the best writing retreat location a gal could ask for). To Cliff and Bonnie Henricksen—for always being so kind and encouraging and for making me feel like part of your magical family. And finally, to Karl Henricksen—you gave me a clear reason why I needed to complete my degree, and you never doubted, for a second, that I would actually do it. Your unwavering belief in me (along with intentions, rants, Pema and the blue guy) pulled me through the last 2 years of this process. Thank you, co-accountant. You inspire me, and I am so glad I found you in this life.

To my colleagues at Western New England University, particularly Yvonne Bogle and Lore Detenber. Yvonne, it was your story that was the impetus for my decision to make a career change and to study social justice. Thank you for igniting that spark in me, and for your guidance, patience, mentorship, and unwavering support along the way. And, Lore, our friendship through the years has provided calmness and clarity, and I appreciate you for letting me be exactly as I am, and for the wonderful, loving perspective you bring to everything.

To all of my teachers, colleagues, and friends in the Social Justice Education program, and at UMASS—you have pushed me, supported me, taught me a whole different way of being in the world, and have fostered my belief that liberation is, indeed, possible, and a new world is on her way. Thank you to my professors—Dr. Barbara Love, Dr. Ximena Zúñiga, Dr. Maurianne Adams, and Dr. Bailey Jackson. Thanks to my fellow doctoral students who finished before me and offered endless support, insight, advice, and encouragement, especially, Dr. Jennifer Daigle-Matos, Dr. Tanya Williams, Dr. Michael Funk, and Dr. Rani Varghese. Thanks to this year's doctoral cohort—we actually did it! Most especially to Dr. Keri DeJong for the endless love, generosity, and magic, Dr. Dre Domingue, for being my dialogue wife, and Dr. Maru Gonzalez, for showing me how to buckle down and just write. It was so fun to have you all alongside me on this wild ride. And, finally to all of the others who have supported me at UMASS through colleague-ship and friendships—Dr. Linda Marchesani, Margaret Arsenault, Dr. Rita Hardiman, Dr. Larissa Hopkins, Dr. Shelly Perdomo, Tyson Rose, Oscar Collins (my fellow lover of storytelling and beloved co-facilitator), Nini Hayes (my sweet nectar partner/possible future co-parent), Marjorie Valdivia, Krishna Soares, Beth Mattison, Anders VanMinter, Dave Neely, Tanya Kachwaha, Taj Smith, Elaine Brigham, Sid Ferreira, Gail Gray, and Ivette Palacin. And, a huge thank you to Elaine Whitlock, for all of your work editing the beast!

To all of my tomato / rhubarb / avocado / carrot / pumpkin / candy cane / and coconut partners who wrote beside me at my rotation of local coffee shops and provided critical support, love, and encouragement—Dre Domingue, Amanda Herman, Cinzia Pica-Smith, Aaron Kagan, Elise Manning, Keri DeJong, Jacob Carter, Theresa Carter,

Nini Hayes, Elaine Brigham, Diane Fedorchak, Nunia Mafi, Akesa Mafi, Catherine Howland, Hannah Ray, Alex Russell, Kiara Virgil, Bronwyn Shiffer, Wendy Sweetser, and my most consistent partner, Dottie Dolorous.

I would also like to thank all of the collaborators and participants in the Multi-University Intergroup Dialogue Research Project and especially the Principle Investigator, Dr. Patricia Gurin. The brilliant thinking about intergroup dialogue and hard work designing this ground-breaking research study provided me with incredibly rich data to work with. Thanks to all of the collaborators (and participants) from the nine participating colleges and universities—the University of Michigan, University of Washington, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Syracuse University, University of Maryland, University of California, San Diego, University of Texas at Austin, Occidental College, and Arizona State University. I would like to extend specific appreciation for the guidance and support of Dr. Gretchen Lopez, Dr. Ratnesh Nagda, Dr. Ximena Zúñiga, Dr. Martha Stassen, Dr. Craig Alimo, Dr. Mark Chesler, Dr. Anna Yeakley, Dr. Nicholas Sorenson, and Dr. Kelly Maxwell. I learned a tremendous amount through my involvement with this project and am so grateful for the chance to include these data as part of my dissertation.

To the extended Miller and Keehn family—for giving me roots to grow from and for always believing in me. To Zach Sherwin for getting me through the first year of this process. To Amanda Herman and Eliza Wilmerding—for the dinners, the support, and the Wonder Woman costuming that proved so critical at the end. To Wendy Sweetser and John Ferris for the years of friendship and the amazing writing retreat in Shelbourne Falls. To Dana Richards for all of the wild fun adventures and writing retreats in NYC.

To Kay Miller, my current co-accountant, beloved cousin, and friend. Thanks for all of the support and laughs—I cannot wait to see what the rest of this year holds for us! To Elaine Brigham, for being such an important mentor, role model, and fir providing swamp-dread support at the most critical times (day or night). To sweet little Freddy and Zanny for keeping me company while I wrote.

Finally—to all of the panelists, instructors, students, and dialogue participants whose brave and poignant stories were a part of this research process. Thank you for sharing your wisdom and experience. I will take the learnings I have gained from you with me for the rest of my life.

ABSTRACT

FOSTERING TRANSFORMATIVE POINTS OF CONNECTION:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF PERSONAL STORYTELLING IN TWO UNDERGRADUATE SOCIAL DIVERSITY COURSES

MAY 2014

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People in the United States are becoming increasingly isolated and separated, and this disconnection has been amplified by the use of new technologies in which face-to-face interactions and connection are becoming an anomaly (Putnam, 2000; Turkle, 2011). These changes are paralleled by marked racial and ethnic demographic shifts and increasing racial and economic re-segregation nationwide (Passel & Cohn, 2008). A critical challenge facing higher education is fostering educational opportunities for college students to interact, connect with, and learn from diverse peers about issues of social identity, difference, and inequality, while imagining possibilities for socially-just action (Gurin, 1999; Tatum, 2007).

This qualitative study explores the role of personal storytelling about social identity-based experiences in two undergraduate diversity courses informed by social justice education pedagogies with a focus on race/ethnicity and racism. Three bodies of literature inform this study: storytelling, social justice education, and personal storytelling in social justice education practice. Using grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006), the researcher analyzed secondary data sources from 32 participants in two undergraduate

diversity courses at two Northeast universities. Study A examined final papers from a racially diverse group of 16 students in a social diversity and oppression course. Study B examined interviews with a racially diverse group of participants in two race/ethnicity intergroup dialogue courses.

Findings suggest that listening to personal stories about social identity-related experiences is a powerful accelerator of learning about social justice issues and demonstrates that students across identities value storytelling, describing it as engaging, enjoyable, and integral to their learning. Storytelling fosters connection among students and encourages empathy within social groups and across social group differences. Listening to stories allows students to connect to the course material cognitively and affectively and helps information become "real" to participants. This connection facilitates critical thinking and a host of learning outcomes.

Findings build on existing knowledge illustrating the benefits of diversity and intergroup dialogue courses (Bowman, 2011; Gurin, 1999; Gurin, Nagda, & Zúñiga, 2013), underscoring the value and impact of face-to-face, synchronous learning as a valid, transformative, and critical educational method in diversity courses. Additional implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation explores the role of personal storytelling about social identity-based experiences in student learning about race/ethnicity in two different social diversity courses guided by social justice education pedagogy—a multi-issue, oppression-based, social diversity course and an intergroup dialogue course. Before delving into the purpose, significance, and research questions of the study, I first set a context for the importance of this study at the present time due to increased disconnection and reduction in empathy. I also discuss some of the challenges inherent to working with and learning about the topic of race/ethnicity on college campuses.

A cover story from the New Years' edition of *USA Today*, declared 2010 as "The Year we stopped Talking" (Jayson, 2010, p. 1A). The author of this article presents the idea that despite the unprecedented ability for people to be connected today through technology, talking face to face and making what the author calls an "authentic" connection has become an anomaly, with divided attention becoming increasingly commonplace. Jayson gives the vivid example of a family sitting together at the dinner table, while one person is text messaging and another is updating her Facebook status. MIT sociologist and psychologist, Shelly Turkle (2011), has been studying the impact of technology on our culture for the past 30 years. Her recent bestseller, *Alone Together* looks at the effect of recent technological changes such as social media and sociable robots (which she calls the "architect of our intimacies") (p. 1). Turkle explains that we are seduced by technologies, such as email, Facebook, and text messaging because we think they can meet our vulnerabilities as humans. She claims that we are simultaneously

lonely and fearful of intimacy, and explains, “Digital connections and the sociable robot may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship” (p. 1). She describes the paradox inherent to this illusion, explaining, “networked, we are together, but so lessened are our expectations of each other that we can feel utterly alone“ (p. 154). In a provocative cover story in the Atlantic magazine entitled, “Is Facebook Making us Lonely?” novelist Stephan Marche (2012) echoes Turkle’s concerns and declares, “within this world of instant and absolute communication, unbounded by limits of time or space, we suffer from unprecedented alienation. We have never been more detached from one another, or lonelier” (p. 2).

Turkle (2011) cautions that the increased numbers of superficial online connections makes it easier to treat others as “objects to be accessed—and only for the parts we find useful, comforting, or amusing” (p. 154). She further explains, “Online communication also offers an opportunity to ignore other people’s feelings. You can avoid eye contact. You can elect not to hear ‘how hurt or angry they sound in their voice.” (p. 184). Turkle’s descriptions of the process of objectification that takes place in online communication harken to the philosopher Martin Buber’s (1965) warnings nearly a century before in his influential work *I and Thou* in which he delineated two fundamentally different types of relationships, “I-You” and “I-It” According to Buber, “I-It” relationships are more one-dimensional, in which the other, “It,” is regarded as an object characterized by “experience and use” which we “observe, manage, or manipulate for our own purposes” (Czubaroff, 2000, p. 171). “I-You” relationships, which Buber declares “the essence of human existence” describe an ephemeral moment of deep

connection with the divine spark within another, and establish relationship as "relation, presence, the current of reciprocity" (Buber as cited in Czubaroff, 2000, p. 170).

Buber (1970) vividly warns of times when the scale tips too far toward "I-It" relationships saying, "In sick ages it happens that the It-world, no longer irrigated and fertilized by the living currents of the You-world, severed and stagnant, becomes a gigantic swamp phantom and overpowers man" (p. 102). Though dramatic, I believe that Buber's warning is consistent with Turkle's observations of current trends in which she concludes, "We are connected as we've never been connected before, and we seem to have damaged ourselves in the process" (Turkle, 2011, p. 293).

Though technological advances can foster connection across space and time, Turkle and Marche's observations appear consistent with some disheartening trends in recent surveys that portray people from the United States as "increasingly insecure, isolated, and lonely" (Turkle, 2011, p. 157). For instance, one large-scale national survey (the General Social Survey) collected data on the number of confidants that people from the United States report having in their lives (people with whom one can discuss important matters or turn to in an emergency), and estimates that between 1985 and 2004, the number of people who said they had no confidants nearly tripled (representing close to 25% of those sampled) and the average number of confidants reported by participants dropped from 2.94 in 1985 to 2.08 in 2004 (McPherson, Lovin, & Brashears, 2006).

Though the survey mentioned above refers to interpersonal relationships, parallel shifts have occurred at the institutional and societal levels. Some of these trends have been studied by Harvard Public Policy professor Robert Putnam's (2000) groundbreaking and frequently cited book, *Bowling Alone*. In this study Putnam talks about the collapse

of various social institutions in America, resulting in reductions in "social capital," defined as "connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (p. 19). Putnam's comprehensive study reported that U.S. residents in the last quarter of the 20th century had membership in fewer civic organizations, signed fewer petitions, volunteered less in the community, had relationships with fewer neighbors, saw family and friends less often, and, as his book title reveals, even though the total number of people from the United States who bowled increased, the number who bowled together, as part of a team in leagues, decreased. Putnam discusses the negative implications of these patterns for our democracy, which depends on an actively engaged citizenship. Though Putnam's work came out over a decade ago, more recent data indicate that this trend has continued. For example, in 2007, the U.S. ranked 139th in voter participation compared with 172 world democracies, and another survey revealed that in 2009-2010, only 10% of U.S. citizens contacted a public official (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012).

These national trends in disconnection are also impacting today's college students, many of whom have grown up in a digital age. A recent meta-analysis looked at 72 samples of U.S. college students who completed a measure of empathy and perspective taking (the Interpersonal Reactivity Index) between 1979 and 2009. Researchers discovered a disheartening 40% decline in empathic concern (ability to feel and respond to the emotions of others) and perspective taking (the ability to take another's point of view) for college students during this period, with the biggest drop after the year 2000 (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011), leading this generation of

Millenials to be labeled "Generation Me" (Education Insider, 2010). In addition to reductions in empathic concern, college students have demonstrated less civic engagement (Schoem, Hurtado, Sevig, Chesler, & Sumida, 2004). For example, in 2006-2007 the average score on a civic literacy exam among 14,000 college seniors was just over 50% (a failing grade), and only one-third of college students surveyed believed their college education increased their capacities for civic engagement (National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012).

Putnam (2000) states that these trends can be reversed, and he calls for increased civic engagement, claiming that evidence exists that "our schools and neighborhoods don't work so well when community bonds slacken, that our economy, our democracy, and even our health and happiness depend on adequate stocks of social capital" (p. 2). Putnam's (2000, 2007) work also indicates that this decline in trust and connection with neighbors is exacerbated in neighborhoods with racial and ethnic diversity. To reverse these trends, he differentiates between two different types of networks, "bonding" networks with people who are similar to us in some way (fostering "in-group" reciprocity) and "bridging" networks, which connect diverse individuals (fostering broader networks and solidarity). While both types of networks can have value, with increasing diversity in the United States, formation of "bridging" networks has become increasingly important (Putnam, 2000).

The world of higher education has taken Putnam's call seriously, and a recent report released by the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012), calls on institutions of higher education to return to their civic and democratic missions and prioritize civic learning. The report calls for investment in

cultivating a “knowledgeable, public-spirited, and engaged population” within the nation’s universities (p. 2) and expands the goals of civic education to include, “historic and modern understandings of democratic values, capacities to engage diverse perspectives and people, and commitment to collective civic problem solving” (p. vi). Though there are a number of civic learning outcomes mentioned in the report, some of note include the emphasis on collaboration with diverse people and groups and the call for college students to reflect on their own “social identity and social location, as well as the identities of others” (p. 43). In a country that is becoming increasingly diverse (Passel & Cohn, 2008; U.S. Census Bureau, 2008), learning to engage our social-identity differences (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, class, ability status, sexual orientation, religion) is vital to our democracy, and examination of social identity, within the broader framework of social inequality is critical (Schoem et al., 2004). As historian Diane Ravitch observes, “a society that is racially and ethnically diverse requires, more than other societies, a conscious effort to build shared values and ideals among its citizenry” (cited in National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012, p. 2).

The present study focuses on two diversity courses that seek to intentionally engage college students in learning about the history and experience of diverse social groups and systems of inequality by addressing race, class, gender, and other markers of difference. Informed by social justice education pedagogies and practice, these courses intentionally blend content knowledge about diverse social groups with experiential learning and critical reflection methods to encourage learning from and with diverse peers (Adams & Marchesani, 1997; Gurin, 1999; Zúñiga, Nagda, & Sevig, 2002).

In addition to exposing students to relevant diverse content, the design of these courses scaffolds learning activities from "low risk" to "high risk" and structures small group activities to encourage personalized interactions and "I-You" relations across difference to develop skills and dispositions that can foster the formation of "bridging networks" among students and collaborative action-taking (Gurin, 1999; Putnam, 2000; Zúñiga, Lopez, & Ford, 2012. Both of these courses set up a space for sharing personal stories about social identity-based experiences by establishing guidelines for discussion, norms of confidentiality, teaching active listening skills, and encouraging instructors and facilitators to role model sharing their own personal experiences, talking about things that are not usually expressed in the classroom, taking risks, and making themselves vulnerable (Adams & Marchesani, 1997; Zúñiga et al., 2007). Participants also read personal testimonials about social identity-related experiences through course assignments, which are contextualized by historical and sociological texts that review oppression at a more structural level. Although these courses typically focus on various dimensions of social diversity (i.e., race/ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and religion), the present study focuses primarily on race and ethnicity. The next section highlights how, along with the trends in disconnection and civic disengagement reviewed above, issues of race and racism in our schools also "represent an ongoing threat to the fabric of our democracy" (Tatum, 2007, p. x).

Race/Ethnicity on College Campuses: Challenges and Opportunities

In his 2001 call to renew the civic mission of the American Research University, Checkoway maintains that for democracy to continue to function, college students need

to “understand their own identities, communicate with people who are different from themselves, and build bridges across cultural differences in the transition to a more diverse society” (p. 127).

In the United States today, colleges and universities are indeed becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse as a result of more inclusive recruitment, admission, financial aid policies, and calls from employers for a more diverse work force to complete in a global market. Also contributing to these changes are current shifts in racial-ethnic demographics. In the year 2000, people of color made up 28% of the U.S. population, and this percentage is predicted to reach 50% by the year 2050 (Passel & Cohn, 2008; U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Despite that our college campuses are becoming more racially diverse, individual, institutional, and cultural racism, and the racial climate on campus is an ongoing issue, summed up by the title of a recent book, *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education* (W. Smith, Altback, & Lomotey, 2002). The President of Columbia University’s Teachers College named diversity as the largest cause of unrest on campus, estimating that race-related incidents account for 39% of all student protests (Parker, 2006).

Students of color, often a small fraction of students on predominantly white campuses, bear the brunt of these issues with race, which can make college campuses feel like hostile environments for them. Every semester, students of color are the victims of hate crimes and bias incidents, ranging from “ghetto parties” that stereotype African American culture, “Affirmative Action” bake sales organized by conservative student groups, to racial epithets written on sidewalks and student white-boards in residence halls (Desmond-Harris, 2011). Oberlin College recently cancelled an entire day of classes to

address a drastic rise in hate crimes on campus, including the discovery of the "N-word" written on Black History event posters, "whites only" written above a campus water fountain, and the robbery and assault of a student of color, while the perpetrator shouted ethnic epithets at him (Broderick, 2013). These incidents not only impact the students directly involved but also members of the underrepresented groups that they come from as well as their allies, leading affected students to feel unsafe on campus and distracted from their studies.

Blatant hate crimes and racist incidents are not the only issue facing students of color on campus. Equally insidious are what have been labeled "racial micro-aggressions," which are more covert and described as "subtle and stunning encounters that are a frequent occurrence in the lives of subordinated groups and that impact view of the self" (McCabe, 2009, p. 134-135; see also Solórzono, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue, Lin, Torino, Capodilupo, & Rivera, 2009). These microaggressions have a cumulative effect, and take a psychic toll on students of color. In addition, students of color on predominantly White campuses face the often unnamed "ghosts" of a time when people who looked like them were not admitted into the institution, such as statues of White men around campus and long-held traditions to which White students connect, not to mention a Euro-centric curriculum (D. Smith, 2005). Indeed, the combination of all these factor on top of institutional racism that impacts the prior experiences of many students of color regarding class background, quality of schools, and access to health care, prohibit campuses from becoming the idyllic multicultural educational bastion that one might hope (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Kozol, 2005; D. Smith, 2005).

Issues of race and racism on campus impacts White students as well, although differently. A large percentage of White students have had little experience with people of color because they often grow up in segregated neighborhoods and attend re-segregated schools, and for many of these students, coming to college is the first time they have had the chance to interact more extensively with people who are not White (Chesler, Peet & Sevig, 2003; Fox, 2006; Tatum, 2007). This lack of contact combined with socialization from the media, family, and schools lead many of these students to come to college with unconscious beliefs about the alleged inferiority and lack of competency of people of color, and seeing White, Christian, middle-class behavioral norms and values as "normal" and superior (Chesler et al., 2003). These students often adopt the belief that we are living in a "post-racial" society and endorse an ideology of colorblindness, making the topic of race seem superfluous (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Bonilla-Silva & Forman, 2000; Chesler et al., 2003). Many White students understand racism as individual acts rather than systems of oppression and reserve the term "racist" for extreme White supremacists, members of the KKK, or those who commit hate crimes against people of color (Feagin 2001; Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2006; Tatum, 1997). These students spend a great deal of energy trying to prove that they are not racist while rarely discussing the topic directly or gaining an awareness of the privileges they receive by virtue of their whiteness. Those who want to talk about race have had little experience in doing so, which can elicit feelings of incompetence and vulnerability. In addition, there is a tremendous amount of pressure from other Whites to preserve the silence around this topic (DiAngelo, 2012; Tatum, 1997, 2007).

It is apparent from this discussion that issues of race and racism on college campuses should be directly addressed, rather than avoided, both to improve intergroup relations between students, and the campus climate, and also as a first step to addressing the deep-rooted, historic, and present-day racial inequalities that exist. However, this is not an easy task. Race and racism are among the most emotionally and politically charged issues in society (DiAngelo, 2012 and has been described as the one topic that is probably even more taboo in polite company that sex (Williams, 2008). According to Tatum (2007), the dangerous combination of our re-segregated K-12 school system and the silence about race in our culture lead to tremendous amounts of fear and anxiety for everyone involved. Students of color, many of whom talk about race and racism with other students of color, are often reluctant to talk about this topic with White students because of the risk involved, and White students are often fearful of their own ignorance and are hesitant to reveal their lack of knowledge in front of participants of color (Tatum, 1997). Classroom instructors, both of color and White, often feel ill-equipped to broach the topic of race in their classrooms, and addressing this issue is a complex process that can bring up many feelings for everyone involved (Fox, 2006). However, racism is not a topic that can be ignored. The lack of meaningful opportunities to engage in substantive conversations across race, coupled with national trends of increased disconnection and lack of empathy, not only affects students and instructors across the racial divide but has serious implications for classroom performance and achievement, intergroup relations, campus climate, and our democracy as a whole.

Statement of the Problem

In her expert testimony for two recent Supreme Court Cases on affirmative action, Pat Gurin (1999) summarizes research literature on diversity in higher education creating a conceptual model of the impact of diversity on learning. She cites three factors that are important to creating a diverse learning environment: structural diversity (increased numerical representation of students of color on campus), classroom diversity (incorporation of content about diverse groups into the curriculum), and informal interactional diversity (the opportunity for students to engage with each other across difference in the broader campus environment). Gurin claims that the impact of structural diversity hinges on the other two, both classroom and interactional diversity, which can help students think in more complex ways and prepare themselves for meaningful participation in our pluralistic democracy. In a time of challenges to affirmative action policy and limited resources and competing priorities in higher education, it is critical that we demonstrate the educational benefits of diversity courses through empirical studies in order to expand the existing body of knowledge about the value of these courses and some of the pedagogical and group processes in which classroom diversity and interactional diversity can support student learning outcomes. This is important because it is indeed tempting to solve some of the resource allocations dilemmas through the delivery of large lecture courses and online courses to give more students access to higher education at a lower cost. However, it is important to underscore some of the potential consequences of this and research the value of three dimensional, face-to-face embodied synchronous (real-time) learning in a space with other humans, which some scholars argue needs to be framed (and researched) as a technology in itself that aids

learning (Hunter, 2012). Indeed, research on college students, including Astin's (1993) landmark study investigating college student outcomes, and how they are affected by college environments, found the quality of the college experience was strongly affected by interactions between faculty and students (talking with professors outside of class, visiting their homes, assisting with research projects) and frequency of student interactions with their peers, such as working on group projects, and tutoring. Astin's findings are supported by a recent statement by the Quantum Physicist and President of Williams College, Adam Falk (2012), who cited work at Williams that found that the factor that correlates most highly with skills, such as effective writing, persuasive arguments, and critical thinking, is the amount of personal contact with professors. He calls for those in higher education to examine their values and priorities and reminds educators, "What we do is expensive—and worth it—because these rich, human interactions can't be replaced by any magical application of technology" (para. 6)

This study hopes to lend support for the value of "rich, human [face-to-face] interaction" among students and instructors in two different diversity courses. Even though it takes intentional planning and skilled facilitation to structure interactions across race and other group differences in the classroom, teachers and students can practice the kind of speaking and listening that is needed to encourage meaningful storytelling in the diverse classroom. I chose to focus on the role of listening to personal stories within these courses as a pathway toward connection, increasing understanding across difference, and learning about race/ethnicity and other social identity-related issues. As an instructor for both of these undergraduate courses, I have repeatedly observed the impact of hearing personal stories from "real people" on the motivation and willingness of students to

grapple with difficult, complex, emotionally-charged topics connected to social identity, inequities, and ways to enact change. This in no way diminishes the importance of course content (readings, lectures, etc.) that highlights important historical and sociological facts about the pervasive realities of social inequalities; however, I argue that personal storytelling can be an important compliment to these other forms of knowledge and can accelerate student learning.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to examine the role of listening to personal stories about social identity-based experiences on student learning in two different diversity courses. The study sought to develop a more comprehensive understanding of social identity-based storytelling in general, with a specific focus on the topic of race and racism. This study will have important implications for curriculum design and delivery of social justice education courses that address manifestations of social oppression at the personal, community, and systemic levels, particularly for those who wish to use different pedagogical modalities. It will also clarify the value and impact of three dimensional, face-to-face synchronous learning as a valid and critical educational methodology in higher education.

Definition of Key Terms

Throughout the course of this dissertation, a number of terms will be used extensively. Because the meanings of these terms can vary based on different academic disciplines and/or fields of study I have provided a few key definitions for the purpose of clarity. I have focused on terms that appear through the Purpose Statement and Research Questions. Other terms will be defined throughout the literature review (Chapter 2).

- **Social identity group**: "A group of people who share a range of physical, cultural, or social characteristics within one of the social identity categories" for example, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, age, or physical/developmental/psychological ability (Hardiman, Jackson, & Griffin, 2007, p. 56-57). One's sense of oneself as belonging and identification with a particular social group (Harro, 2010a).

- **Listening:** Listening requires more than just hearing the words of others, but "…the more engaged and active process of taking in and trying to understand the meaning of what is being said" (Zúñiga, Mildred, Varghese, & Keehn, 2012, p. 81). This type of listening includes listening with ears (not only to words, but to tone), mind, (to understand and analyze), eyes (nonverbal expressions) and listening to the heart (empathy and compassion) (Huang-Nissen, 1999, p. 20). Deep listening requires that we hear words and also "embrace, accept, and gradually let go of our inner clamoring," listening " not only to others but also to ourselves and our own reactions" (Isaacs, 1999, p. 83).

- **Personal stories**: a specific type of story, narratives of personal experience, in which a speaker recounts details from her own life to others (Davis, 2002; hooks, 1994; Maguire, 1998; Polleta, 2006.

- **Social identity-based experiences**: personal stories that are connected to one's social identities (race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, age, or physical/developmental/psychological ability)

- **Race: "**A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation or history, ethnic classification, and/or the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Scientists agree that there is no biological or genetic basis for racial categories." (Bell, Love, & Roberts, 2007)

- **Racism:** A system of advantages based on race (more specifically, on racial categorizations) "not only a personal ideology based on racial prejudice, but a system involving cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals." (Tatum, 2010, p. 67).

- **Three dimensional, face-to-face synchronous learning:** Learning that occurs in the traditional classroom environment, in "real time" with an instructor and students in the same space, at the same time (as opposed to online courses).

Context of the Study

The present study employed qualitative analysis of secondary data drawn from two undergraduate semester-long diversity courses (Study A and Study B) at two different large universities in the Northeast. Below, I briefly describe the context for both studies. The context will be explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

Study A: Multi-Issue, Social Diversity Course

Study A investigates learning in a multi-issue social diversity undergraduate course that examines four different manifestations of oppression (e.g., racism, classism, sexism) and encourages students to consider ways of taking action. The course goals include supporting students to become aware of information and conceptual frameworks connected to various manifestations of oppression, recognizing oppression in their everyday lives, including in the classroom, and developing skills for taking action. Drawing from social justice education pedagogies (Adams & Marchesani, 1997; Bell & Griffin, 2007), instructors emphasize active learning methods, and incorporate a variety of experiential activities, short lectures, presentations, in-class discussion, audio-visual materials and readings to help support the course goals (Adams & Marchesani, 1997).

Course material focuses on issues of social identity, social and cultural diversity, and societal manifestations of power, privilege, and oppression. Each course section meets twice weekly, includes 30 students, and is taught by a doctoral student instructor. During the semester that the research for this dissertation project was collected (Fall 2012), the course topics offered included Racism, Classism, Religious Oppression, and Ableism and the broader frameworks of White privilege/supremacy, meritocracy, Christian privilege, and normality.

Study B: Race/Ethnicity Intergroup Dialogue

Study B investigates learning in a race/ethnicity intergroup dialogue (IGD) undergraduate course that seeks to explore differences and commonalities across and within racial/ethnic social group boundaries through the blending of sociological content about social groups and social inequality and experiential methods and written reflections.

> [IGD has been defined as a] face-to-face facilitated learning experience that brings together students from different social identity groups over a sustained period of time to understand their commonalities and differences, examine the nature and impact of societal inequalities, and explore ways of working together toward greater equality and justice. (Zúñiga, Nagda, Chesler, & Cytron-Walker, 2007, p. 2)

This social justice education practice is based on three over-arching educational goals: consciousness-raising, building relationships across differences and conflicts, and strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote social justice (Zúñiga et al., 2007).

The pedagogy of IGD includes participants from two different social identity groups (i.e., White people and people of color or men and women) who participate in a

co-facilitated, structured, 11-week dialogue experience supported by course readings and reflective writing assignments (Zúñiga et al., 2007). IGDs are comprised of approximately equal numbers of people from each of the identities being discussed, and dialogue facilitators are also representative of the identities highlighted. (See Chapter 2 for a more detailed review of the practice of IGD.) The two race/ethnicity dialogue sections included in this study were both semester-long, credit-bearing courses that were co-facilitated by a White facilitator and a facilitator of color.

Significance of Study

An examination of personal storytelling about social identity-based experiences in social diversity courses is significant for many conceptual and empirical reasons and is also important to me both personally and as an educator. The following section briefly reviews these areas of significance.

Conceptual and Empirical Significance

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, rapid shifts in technology have impacted the ways in which we communicate with each other, resulting in less opportunity for talking in person to others, particularly across difference (Tatum, 2007; Turkle, 2011). This study offers a nuanced and descriptive perspective on how face-to-face storytelling in the classroom can impact student learning and build the capacity to engage and reflect across differences when included as part of an intentionally designed and scaffolded social justice education curriculum. In a time of budget cuts and the rise of online classes, the study can lend credibility to the value of small, in-person diversity

classes and lend further support for, and understanding of how classroom and interactional diversity impact student learning outcomes (Gurin, 1999).

Though there are contrasting views about the role of personal storytelling in the college classroom, empirical research on the topic is sparse, and there are no studies that specifically focus on storytelling in race/ethnicity intergroup dialogues or in multi-issue social diversity courses. Research on intergroup dialogue indicates that hearing personal narratives of experience can not only support learning about racism at the individual level, but help with insights at the structural level (Keehn, Mildred, Zúñiga, & DeJong, 2010), which is often a difficult concept for most students to grasp living in a society steeped in individualistic and color-blind ideology (Kleugal & Bobo, 1993; Lopez, Gurin, & Nagda, 1998; Schmidt, 2005a; Schmidt, 2005b; Tatum, 1994). Yeakley (1998) identified intimacy of personal sharing of identity-related experiences as a crucial factor in building intergroup understanding in intergroup dialogues on race and ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Specifically, hearing stories of personal experience increased understanding and empathy and helped participants "see the diversity within groups and break down their stereotypes and generalizations" (p. 234). Yeakley's findings were further supported by a recent qualitative study on race/ethnicity and gender intergroup dialogues that found that personal storytelling played a powerful role in promoting empathy in the dialogue (Wong et al., 2013). (See Chapter 2 for more information about research on storytelling within IGD and other social diversity classes.)

Along with research supporting the value of personal storytelling, there are also some challenges connected to this practice. For example, if stories shared with others are not received with respect and love, the process of sharing their story may cause harm to

the storyteller, leaving them feeling powerless and vulnerable (Zingaro, 2009). Rather than challenging racism, personal storytelling may also play a role in reinforcing White supremacy. For example, Applebaum (2008) and DiAngelo and Allen (2006) have researched ways in which White students have used the "discourse of personal experience" (DiAngelo & Allen, 2006, p. 1) as a distancing strategy from the experiences of people of color, and to re-center attention back to themselves in interracial discussions of race and racism. Finally, Gorski (2013) has recently made a critique of storytelling in Social Justice Education, naming it as exploitative for the storytellers, particularly if they come from a historically marginalized social identity group. In a recent entry in a Commission for Social Justice Blog, he stated, "I never would exploit a group of LGBTQ students by parading them to class after class, asking them to make themselves vulnerable so that students who identify as heterosexual can accumulate cultural capital on their backs" (p. 1). Although I disagree with this critique because it ignores the potential of storytelling to empower, I feel all of these critiques are important to grapple with and explore. Because there are few empirical studies about the role of personal storytelling in the classroom, and the value and appropriateness of storytelling about social-identity related experiences is a point of contention, this research project can offer additional information to support or problematize this practice.

Personal Significance

Personal storytelling is also significant for me, both as an individual and through my role as an educator. Personally, as a White woman, growing up in an affluent and predominantly White area, I struggled to understand the topic of race and racism for most

of my educational experiences. Before I turned 26 years old, my whiteness was something I had never consciously thought about, and I just regarded myself as "normal" —just like all of the other White, upper-middle-class people I was surrounded by in my community. I was steeped in the ideology of color-blindness and absorbed the idea that even mentioning race was racist.

I experienced an "aha" moment and began to have a transformed understanding of race and racism when I was in my first professional position in Student Affairs, following my completion of a master's degree program in College Student Development and Counseling. In the aftermath of a racial incident on campus, I had the opportunity to participate in a six-week Community Conversation on race and ethnicity, sponsored by the National Conference for Community and Justice, using the Study Circles Model of Dialogue (McCoy & Scully, 2002). In that dialogue, I heard a number of personal stories that I will never forget. For example, through tears, a Black woman shared a story about her child experiencing racism when she was in first grade and how painful it was her, as a mother, to hear about it. I will never forget that story, as well as the feelings it evoked in me. The poignancy, the pain, and my utter shock from realizing the way that I experienced the world was not the same as other people, shook me to my core. Hearing the stories in the dialogue, from human beings sitting right in front of me, somehow began to melt the fear and numbness I had been socialized to feel about the topic of race and ignited a passion in me to learn all I could about the topic of how racism plays out in the United States. This experience connected with both my head and my heart and became a catalyst for me to acknowledge and examine the privileged lens through which

I experience the world and helped me to grasp race and racism in a way I was never able to from reading information in a textbook or learn from facts and statistics in a lecture.

Because a personal story was the catalyst for my own powerful and transformational experience, I became curious about the impact of personal stories on the students I worked with through my roles as an instructor of a multi-issue social diversity course (described above) and as a co-facilitator, coach, and teaching assistant of an intergroup dialogue undergraduate course. As a classroom instructor for the multi-issue social diversity course, I observed first-hand the profound effect that hearing the stories of panelists from a variety of social identities about their experiences with oppression and privilege seems to have on all students. For example, in her final paper, a White student wrote that she did not really believe what she had read about racism in the course, until she heard a Black male speak on the panel about personal experiences with racial profiling. She said hearing stories and experiences from "real live people" made everything believable to her and led her to go back and look more carefully into some of the facts and statistics from the course readings that had previously felt unbelievable to her. Almost all of the students' final papers mention the power of the stories they heard on the panels and discuss specific ways that these stories made them feel connected to others, and impacted their learning of the course material.

In addition to classroom experiences, through my roles co-facilitating dialogues on race and ethnicity and conducting research through the Multiversity Intergroup Dialogue Research Project (Gurin et al., 2013), I have witnessed the power of personal stories in the context of intergroup dialogue that seem to be a common impetus for student learning. Every semester I observe and read example after example from students about

how hearing stories "hook" them and make them feel connected to the course material, impacting their motivation to learn. Thus, through multiple social justice pedagogies, it appeared that personal storytelling is a powerful tool for students' learning that ought to be understood in more depth.

I believe that using data from two different social diversity courses can help uncover how personal storytelling contributes to student learning while generating a rich array of learning outcomes from hearing personal stories about experience. From looking at the convergence of findings about how personal stories support student learning across two different contexts, I hoped to be able to generalize the findings about the power of personal storytelling to other settings, with different kinds of storytelling. These convergent findings may then be generalized to other contexts in which learning about "the other" is a priority and will be of interest to anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, historians, political scientists, communications scholars, social justice workers, and community organizers.

Research Questions

From my personal experience as an instructor and researcher in these two courses and my review of the literature, I identified the following research questions for this study. In line with the tradition of qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Rossman & Rallis, 2003), as I began my exploration of the data, these questions were further developed. The overall concern of this study is to better understand the role of listening to personal storytelling about experience in student learning in two difference social diversity courses. I was interested to learn more about how this process may

unfold, some of the nuances and complexities connected to it, and some of the ways it may play out differently in different sites of practice.

The over-arching research question guiding this study is:

- What are the impacts on the listener of hearing personal stories about race/ethnicity and other social identity-related experiences or issues in a face-to-face classroom setting?

To comprehensively examine this question, I used a grounded theory methodology to examine the following sub-questions:

- What stories related to social-identity based experiences do students recall and recount listening to in a race/ethnicity dialogue course and in a multi-issue social diversity course?
    - What content and issues do these stories reference?
    - What types of emotions are expressed in both the story itself, as well as the recounting of the story by the participant?
- What learning and insights do students describe after hearing these stories?
    - How do these insights relate to power or privilege (i.e., do they reinforce, or challenge the status quo?)
- Do the stories recounted and learning described by students differ in their identities (race/ethnicity)?
- What are some ways that students, themselves, describe the role of personal storytelling in their learning?

Overview of Dissertation Chapters

This introduction has provided the background and significance for this research study, the purpose of the study, and has outlined the research questions. In the next chapter, I review three interdisciplinary bodies of literature that served as the conceptual and theoretical foundations for the research study: 1) personal storytelling, 2) social

justice education, and 3) personal storytelling in social justice education practices that focus on race/ethnicity and racism. Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology that I used to explore my research questions, including the rationale for the qualitative methods I have been chosen as well as details about the sites of study, data collection methods, sources, and my process of data analysis. This chapter also includes a discussion of ethical, trustworthiness, and reflexivity considerations as well as limitations of the study.

Chapters 4 and 5 both present the findings of my qualitative analysis. Chapter 4 focuses on my analysis of the final papers from 16 students in the multi-issue Social Diversity Course. Chapter 5 presents the findings from my analysis of interviews conducted with 16 participants who were enrolled in an Intergroup dialogue course. In chapter 6, I summarize and discuss the major themes that emerged in both practice sites. I conclude that chapter with implications for practice and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Overview of Chapter

As the Introduction Chapter detailed, this dissertation study seeks to examine the role of listening to personal stories about social identity based experiences on student learning in two different diversity undergraduate courses. The study is grounded in three different interdisciplinary bodies of literature, which are reviewed in this chapter. The literature reviewed helps situate the study within a constructivist tradition of inquiry and contextualize it among other empirical research to help build a logical framework for the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The three bodies of literature include 1) personal storytelling, 2) social justice education, and 3) personal storytelling in Social Justice Education practices that focus on race/ethnicity and racism.

I first discuss the concept of personal storytelling and review related literature, clarifying the distinction between storytelling broadly defined, and personal storytelling. To ground the study, I offer an overview of the philosophical, epistemological, and theoretical foundations that inform this practice in higher education settings. In this section, I identify and discuss some of the most important intellectual traditions or "currents of thought" that inform storytelling in the context of the present study (Schram, 2006, p. 62). To ground the pedagogical contexts of the study, the next section includes a review of the literature on social justice education theory and practice and introduces and discusses the two pedagogical approaches that inform the two diversity courses examined by this present study. In reviewing this literature, I highlight pedagogical and curriculum design principles and student learning outcomes. The third section reviews emerging

empirical, theoretical, and descriptive texts that specifically look at storytelling within social justice education practices that focus on the topic of race/ethnicity and racism to identify gaps in what is known and to demonstrate how the present study can extend existing theory. These three bodies of literature helped ground and frame my study, and informed the research methods, which will be reviewed in Chapter 3.

Personal Storytelling

> When the storyteller tells the truth, she reminds us that human beings are more alike than unalike…a story is what it's like to be a human being—to be knocked down and to miraculously arise – Maya Angelou (cited in De Vos, Harris, & Lottridge, 2003, p. 1)

As the above quote suggests, storytelling is a practice that connects human beings —we all have stories that we tell for different reasons. We tell stories to share our experiences and perspectives, to make others laugh and cry with us, to educate others, and to give people a window into our lives. Storytelling has been deemed a "rock-bottom, universal characteristic" among humans (McEwan & Egan, 1995, p. viii) and the vehicle through which humans can "become the friends of one another's minds' in ever-increasing circles of inclusion" (Green as cited in Witherell, 1995, p. 40). Stories can increase bonds, improve communication, and can be a useful way to transmit information to another person in a way that they are able to understand clearly (De Vos et al., 2003). Recent research in the field of neuroscience has discovered that telling and listening to stories activates additional parts of our brains than simply listening to information, helping to increase engagement and feelings of empathy (Gottschal, 2012; Pipher, 2006; Wildrich, 2012). Stories that we have heard, may be stored in our memory just as vividly

as things that we have actually experienced ourselves, leading to confusion, and mis-remembering life experiences, a phenomenon termed "crytpomnesia" (Sacks, 2013, p. 4).

Storytelling has a rich tradition throughout history and is among the oldest forms of communication that exist in every culture and was a primary method of passing along information before people could read or write. According to De Vos et al. (2003), storytelling has been traced as a tool for both entertainment and education for 5000 years. There is a particularly rich tradition of storytelling in indigenous communities, both historically and today, and the oral narrative is described as a "sacred process and the soul of Indigenous people" (Thunderbird, 2011, p.1.; see also King, 2008). Across cultures, storytelling is used to "educate, to inspire, to record historical events, to entertain [and] to transmit cultural mores" (Collins & Cooper, 1997, p. 1). Bedtime stories are a required component of many children's nighttime rituals; ghost stories, a staple of most camping trips; and stories are also used as a way to pass down information from one generation to the next. According to psychologist Mary Pipher (2006), "Stories are the most basic tool for connecting us to one another.... People attend, remember, and are transformed by stories, which are meaning-filled units of ideas, the verbal equivalent of mother's milk" (p. 11).

Defining Story and Narrative

In the context of my dissertation research, I will use the term "story" and "narrative" interchangeably, similar to to Ledwith (2005) and Gudmundsdottir (1995). As the educational scholar, Sigrun Gudmundsdottir (1995) explains,

> Story and narrative, in everyday language, are taken to refer to the same thing: accounts of action usually involving humans or humanized animals.

> A story has characters; a beginning, a middle, and an end; and is held together by a series of organized events, called plots. (p. 24)

Gudmundsdottir continues his definition by stating, "narrative, in this account, is a series of verbal, symbolic, or behavioral acts sequenced for the purpose of "telling someone else that something happened'" (p. 228).

Other elements of narrative emphasized by Gudmundsdottir (1995) include the social context in which the narrative is related, the narrator's reason for telling it, the narrator's narrative competence, and the nature of the audience. These elements are important to consider because stories are never just floating in a vacuum but rather are embodied by the storyteller. Some stories are given more weight than others in the context of social oppression. In addition, the storyteller's way of being, non-verbal communication patterns, accent, perceived enthusiasm, comfort speaking in front of others, and relationship with the listeners will all impact the way the story is received. These multiple factors are captured by structural literary theorists who conceptualize narrative as possessing two parts: the story (events, settings and characters) and discourse (the way the story is told by the storyteller, including expression, presentation, etc.) (Gudmundsdottir, 1995). Thus, this distinction broadens what should be considered when analyzing stories—considering both their content in addition to the way in which they are told and who is doing the telling.

Finally, in the context of this work, I focus on the impact of oral storytelling, as opposed to written stories. Oral stories have been compared to jazz, in that each re-telling is slightly different and not always predictable (Collins & Cooper, 1997). In addition, according to Livo and Reitz (1986), "Oral stories contain noise, vocal inflections, facial expressions, and body language that may not lend themselves well to written language"

(p. 4). Because of all these factors, oral stories must be considered in a slightly different manner than those that are written on the page.

Stories of Personal Experience

The present research study addresses a specific type of story, narratives of personal experience, in which a speaker recounts details from her own life to others (Davis, 2002; hooks, 1994; Maguire, 1998; Polleta, 2006). Recently, this type of storytelling has received increasing emphasis in a number of difference contexts, including therapeutic practices (for example, the recent field of Narrative Psychiatry), political campaigns, the field of journalism, as a tool for managers trying to motivate their workers, doctors listening to patients, and at organized storytelling events, such as the National Storytelling Festival (Hamkins, 2013; Polleta, 2006; Zingaro, 2009).

Stories of personal experience have also been instrumental in social change. For example, stories have been used in many different social movements to raise awareness of and gain sympathy for struggles. According to Stone-Mediatore (2003), "Many social struggles, from welfare rights campaigns to fair trade coalitions, from the students against sweatshops movement to environmental justice advocacy, continue to rely on stories of experience to bring public attention to their concerns" (p. 1). Solinger, Fox, and Irani (2008) name the beginning of the 21st century as "a historical moment in which narrative is more broadly recognized than ever as a significant simple, crucial vehicle for reawakening, disseminating, and sustaining social justice impulses" (p. 1). Ledwith (2005) examines the role that narratives of personal experience play in social change processes, claiming that people's everyday experiences and stories are at the root of

creating a more just society, and organizations, such as the "Center for Story-based Strategy," work with progressive organizations to "apply the power of narrative to organizing, movement building, and social transformation" (Reinsborough & Canning, 2010, p. 11).

In addition to exploring conceptual definitions and recent applications of story, narrative, and personal storytelling, it is also important to examine the work of the scholars whose ideas are foundational to establishing the value of storytelling in education. In the next sections, I present my review of some of the philosophical and theoretical foundations for this practice.

Philosophical and Epistemological Roots of Storytelling

There are a number of select philosophers whose work provides some of the philosophical and epistemological underpinnings to pedagogies that emphasize personal storytelling in the classroom context. In this section, I review the work of three Western philosophers who have influenced how this practice has been theorized in the human and social sciences and in education, particularly in the U.S. While this review is not exhaustive, it does provide a comprehensive foundation drawing from the humanist and interpretive philosophical tradition. Specifically, I address the work of the philosophers Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, and Mikhail Bakhtin, focusing on their major ideas most relevant to how writers theorize, envision and practice storytelling.

Buber's "I-It" and "I-Thou" Relationships

Martin Buber was a philosopher in the early 20th century whose major work was his articulation of the dialogic principle (Arnett, 2004). Buber published his influential work, *Ich und Du* (translated into English as "I and You"), in which he outlined his philosophy of dialogue in 1923. As discussed in the Introduction chapter, in this work, Buber (1970) delineated two fundamentally different types of relationships, "I-You" and "I-It." The word "I-It" connotes the "world as experience," and the word "I-You" establishes "the world of relation" (p. 56). In these word-pairs, it is not the "I," "You" or "It" that are meaningful, but rather the space between them. Buber claims, "Spirit is not in the I but between I and You" (p. 89).

Buber (1970) believes that people spend the majority of their time engaging in one-dimensional, "I-It" relationships, in which the other, "It," is regarded as an object characterized by "experience and use" that we "observe, manage, or manipulate for our own purposes" (Czubaroff, 2000, p. 171). Buber conjectures (and laments) that humans spend most of our time engaging in "I-It" relationships.

However, in contrast to the "I-It" relationship, Buber (1970) explicates the "I-You" relationship as "relation, presence, the current of reciprocity" (p. 119). This moment of deep connection with the divine spark within another, experiencing another as a "You" rather than an object has been described as "the essence of human existence - the eternal meeting of the One with the Other" (Czubaroff, 2000, p. 170). Buber further identifies "I-You" relationships as ineffable, occurring in moments, something that one cannot find by seeking, but "encounters by grace and that can be spoken only with one's whole being" (Buber, 1970, p. 63).

While he makes clear that "I-it" relations of "instrumental, observation and use" are essential parts of life for humans, Buber also indicates that "I-You" relationships are "essential to being fully human" (Czubaroff, 2000 p. 171). Despite the fact that he endorses the importance of both types of relationships, Buber expresses a belief that there is an imbalance, with Western culture overly obsessed with "impersonal, instrumental, technological goals and relations" at the expense of dialogical-ontological living (p. 184). Buber recognizes the ephemeral nature of all "I-You" relationships as the "sublime melancholy of our lot" (p. 68), however his real concern is with times when "It" relationships take over.

Connection to Storytelling

Buber's work is fundamental in foregrounding the relationship between humans as integral to life and to learning, believing "'man can become whole….only in virtue of a relation to another self" (Buber, cited in Arnett, 2004, p. 78). Buber establishes the primordial nature of the innate longing for relation between humans and emphasizes community as emergent between people, laying the groundwork for the import of relational learning through personal storytelling (Buber, 1970; Arnett, 2004).

Buber also emphasizes the importance of specific communication practices, such as the practice of listening, and being fully present, emphasizing the idea of "turning toward" another with full presence" (Czubaroff, 2000, p. 177). Three additional ideas related to communication highlighted by Buber in a 1957 dialogue he had with Carl Rogers included,

> (a) an awareness that others are unique and whole persons, encouraging a turning toward the other and imagining the reality of the other; (b) a genuineness or

> authenticity that does not mandate full disclosure, but suggests that dialogic partners are not pretending and are not holding back what needs to be said; and (c) a respect for the other that inclines one not to impose but to help the reality and possibility of the other unfold. (cited in Cissna & Anderson, 1998, p. 65).

All of these communication practices are critical as people share personal narratives of experience. For example, engaging in storytelling emphasizes both speaking authentically from a base of "lived truth" as well as (hopefully) listening to another with one's whole being and complete presence. Buber's work also supports mutuality of storytelling, in which he discusses the metaphor of the "between" and possibility of "emergent reciprocity" (Arnett, 2004, p. 79). Thus, Buber's work lends support to the power of personal storytelling in which all participants share their own story as well as listen to the stories of others.

Levinas' "Ethics as First Philosophy"

Emmanuel Levinas was a philosopher who was described as "'the greatest moral philosopher of the twentieth century'" (Eaglestone, as cited in Arnett, 2004, p. 81). In his body of work, described as "ethics as first philosophy," Levinas emphasizes the self as a relational being, focusing on the Other, and being-for-the-Other in contrast to Buber's emphasis on the "between" (Arnett, 2004; Perpich, 2008). Levinas stresses attending to the "face" of the other, embodying the sentiment, "I am my brother's keeper," a statement which is fundamental to Levinas' ethics (Arnett, 2004, p. 80).

According to Levinas, this focus on the other develops through a process in which people begin in a state of enjoyment but through facing suffering and death are able to notice and recognize "the presence of people in need of acknowledgement" and this experience "sounds a call of conscience" in which they realize that being-for-the other is

of utmost importance (Hyde, 2004, p. 64). Levinas establishes this concern for the "alterity" of the other, asserting,

> I am defined as a subjectivity, as a particular person, as an "I," precisely because I am exposed to the other. It is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the other that makes me an individual "I"…I can never escape the fact that the other has demanded a response from me before I affirm my freedom not to respond to his demand. (Levinas, as cited in Hyde, 2004, p. 65)

Thus, the "I" is only possible because of the "Other" and this establishes the ethical responsibility of answering the call of the other, and being accountable to those who are suffering (Arnett, 2004). Hyde describes this process as, "'the miracle of moving out of oneself' - out of one's preoccupations with his or her personal wants and priorities and toward what before anything else in this world really makes a difference" (p. 66).

Though Levinas describes the process through which people move through enjoyment, to a place in which their focus becomes on the "other," he also asserts that this stance is primordial, and coming to it involves more of a process of re-leaning, than discovering anew (Hyde, 2004). Levinas's sense of responsibility for the Other "registers a trace, a reminder of a primordial message or call that ethics as first philosophy, 'I am my brother's keeper,' trumps the weight of Being" (Arnett, 2004, p. 82).

Levinas' ethics also clearly indicate that this responsibility is irrespective of reciprocity, and in his work *Ethics and Infinity*, he asserts,

> I am responsible for the Other without waiting for his reciprocity, were I to die for it. Reciprocity is his affair. It is precisely insofar as the relationship between the Other and me is not reciprocal that I am subject to the Other; and I am "subject" essentially in this sense. (Levinas, as cited in Arnett, 2004, p. 83).

Thus, unlike Buber, whose "between" hinges on reciprocity, Levinas' ethics, which describe the self's "inescapable answerability to others" (Hyde, 2004, p. 66) are more unilateral in direction.

Connection to Storytelling

Though he does not talk directly about storytelling, much of what Levinas says can be related to the topic through his extensive discussion of human contact, and relation (Stewart, Zediker, & Black, 2004). Similar to Buber, Levinas' work establishes a context for relational learning. And like Buber, he offers "a paradigmatic alternative that enriches the conversation that questions the ongoing historical trends toward increasing focus upon the self" (Arnett, 2004, p. 76).

Levinas' idea of radical alterity, which "reminds us to live life beyond self-occupation," (Arnett, 2004, p. 84) informed the present study of sharing narratives of personal experience. In particular, his claim that "I can never escape the fact that the other has demanded a response from me before I affirm my freedom not to respond to his demand" (Levinas, as cited in Hyde, 2004, p. 65). I equate the personal stories shared by others, with the "demand of a response" to which Levinas refers. When people are given the gift of both sharing their own and hearing the stories of others, I believe they are transformed by the information, and from then on, rather than operating out of ignorance, they must make a conscious decision to turn away from the other (ignore their suffering) and the new information they have become aware of. According to Levinas, the act of Being for the other is the primordial state of humans, and I feel that offering the students the chance to share personal stories of experience with each other is a powerful method to help re-connect them to this element of being human.

Bakhtin's "Grand Dialogical Principle"

Mikhail Bakhtin was a philosopher, scholar, and literary critic whose ideas have been an instrumental building block for more recent theorizing about dialogue. Holquist (1990) was the person to label Bakhtin's work "dialogism" because of Bakhtin's belief that "'dialogue' is the concept that brings coherence to the whole" (Baxter, 2004, p. 108). Similar to Buber and Levinas, one of Bakhtin's underlying ideas is the foregrounding of human relationship and connection between all living creatures, known as the "Grand Dialogical Principle" (Todorov, as cited in Romney, 2004, p. 6). Bakhtin believes that everything is connected and that meaning is constructed in relationship with others (Baxter, 1996; Kelly, 1992; Romney, 2004). According to Bakhtin, this relationship is fostered by revealing oneself to another, and this act of revealing is important both for the other's learning and is also crucial to self-understanding, for another person has a different vantage point of us that can offer important insight for self-awareness. He states, "I achieve self-consciousness, I become myself only by revealing myself to another, through another and with another's help …cutting myself off, isolating oneself, closing oneself off, those are the basic reasons for loss of self"' (Bakhtin, as cited in Baxter, 2004, p. 109). Thus, Bakhtin asserts that consciousness evolves in the context of others, whether they are physically present, echoes of past conversations or experiences, or imagined others, (Baxter, 2004). Bakhtin believes that whatever form the "other" comes in, they are the medium through which self-consciousness can be expressed in language (Frank, 1986; Romney, 2004; Stewart et al., 2004).

Multivocality of Human Existence

Another significant idea offered by Bakhtin's theory of dialogism is his concept of multivocality or "polyphony." Bakhtin first presented this concept in his book on Dostoevsky in which he claimed that this author's work was coherent, but in a new way. Rather than being "monological" like many other 19th century novels told through the eyes of the "omniscient author," Dostoevsky's work used a new authorial point of view that encapsulated multiple voices and perspectives, which Bakhtin termed "polyphony" (Clark & Holquist, 1984; Kelly, 1982). Through his concept of polyphony, Bakhtin maintained, "No single voice is the bearer of a definitive truth" (Kelly, 1982, p. 2). Similar to Dostoevsky's novels, Bakhtin believed that social life was not monological, but rather, "an open dialogue characterized by multivocality and the indeterminacy inherent when those multiple voices interpenetrate" (Baxter, 2004, p. 108). Through this concept Bakhtin complicates a dualistic, "either-or" way of thinking, recognizing that there are many different perspectives and voices.

Heteroglossia

Bakhtin was only one of the three philosophers reviewed who engaged directly with the issue of power in his work, through the concept of "heteroglossia" introduced in his book, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Bakhtin, 1984. The word, "heteroglossia," which addresses power relations that are represented through language, was defined by professor of cinema studies Robert Stam (1998) as "competing languages and discourses: the dialogically-interrelated speech practices operative in a given society at a given moment, wherein the idioms of different classes, races, genders, generations, and locales

compete for ascendancy" (Stam, as cited in Romney, 2004, p. 5). For Bakhtin, dialogue is the space in which these differently oriented speech patterns can confront each other. As mentioned above, Bakhtin troubles monologue, in which only one voice, perspective, or ideology is offered, and he acknowledges that the voice that is heard is often the voice of those in power. In addition, he does acknowledge the difficulty of achieving multivocality across uneven power relations and offers his belief that novelistic genres are "the discursive forms best able to represent a culturally diversified public sphere" (Strine, 2004, p. 228). Thus, Bakhtin addresses systems of power and oppression by looking at how power is maintained and perpetuated through language.

Connection to Storytelling

Similar to Buber and Levinas, Bakhtin makes connection and human relationship central through his emphasis on meaning-making in concert with others, establishing human life as inherently dialogic. This asserts the importance of allowing students to come in contact with each other and share stories of experience, for meaning to be made. Bakthin, as quoted previously, stated, "I achieve self-consciousness, I become myself only by revealing myself to another, through another and with another's help….Cutting myself off, isolating oneself, closing oneself off, those are the basic reasons for loss of self"' (Bakhtin, as quoted in Baxter, 2004, p. 109). Storytelling about personal experience gives people a chance to reveal themselves to another in orer to prevent the loss of self of which Bakhtin speaks. The act of sharing one's story cannot only help others' understanding but can also offer helpful insight into one's own experiences, from someone else's vantage point (Holquist, 1990). Bakhtin does acknowledge the

significance of feeling received and heard and mentions the importance of the other assisting with the process of revealing oneself.

Bakhtin's (1999) ideas about multivocality and power emphasize the importance of multiple stories being allowed to enter a space to prevent one perspective or ideology from being the only story that is told. He claims that "in an environment of …monologism the genuine interaction of consciousness is impossible and thus genuine dialogue is impossible as well" (p. 91). Bakhtin's theory and ideas about multivocality also name interaction between different people who have different understandings and perspectives as crucial for dialogic exchange (Matusov, 2011; Strine, 2004). Thus, not only does Bakhtin establish the importance of revealing oneself to another through story, he acknowledges the importance of doing so across lines of difference.

Summary: Philosophical Roots of Storytelling

This review of the work of Buber, Levinas, and Bakhtin provides a useful foundation from the Humanist/Interpretive philosophical tradition through which to consider narratives of personal experience in the classroom. Buber distinguishes between two types of relationships, "I-It," and "I-You," and establishes that although "I-It" relationships within the world of experience are important, it is "I-You" experiences, within the world of relation that are essential to being fully human, foregrounding the longing for connection between humans as primordial (Buber, 1970). Levinas establishes the self as a "relational being" and highlights the ethical responsibility that humans have to answer the call of the other (regardless of reciprocity) (Arnett, 2004). Finally, Bakhtin

declares life as inherently dialogic, stresses the importance of multivocality, and begins to critique structures of power through his concepts of heteroglossia. The ideas of all three of these philosophers are synthesized in Table 1.

Table 1. Philosophical Foundations for Storytelling

Philosopher	Key Ideas	Connections to Storytelling
Martin Buber	• Two types of relationships – "I-You" and "I-It" • "I-It" = world of experience • "I-You" = world of relation • Emphasis on "the space between" rather than I, You or It • Establishes "I-You" moments as essential to being fully human	• Foregrounds longing for connection between humans as primordial and integral to life and learning • Emphasizes practice of deep listening with full presence, authentic self-expression and deep respect for the other • Metaphor of the "between" and possibility of "emergent reciprocity"
Emmanuel Levinas	• Establishes the self as a "relational being" • Ethical responsibility of answering the call of the other - "I am my brother's keeper" • Responsibility for the other is irrespective of reciprocity	• Establishes a context for relational learning • Idea of "radical alterity" - Hearing a story of another's pain, can be a call for openness and movement toward another
Mikhail Bakhtin	• Life as inherently dialogic and dialogue is the concept that brings coherence to the whole • Consciousness evolves in the context of others (real or imagined) • Multivocality/polyphony – encapsulates multiple perspectives • Heteroglossia – dialogue as the space where different speech patterns (based on identity) can meet and confront each other	• Emphasizes the centrality of connection and human relationships • Act of sharing one's story to another helps the understanding of the other, and also self-insight about one's own experience from another's vantage point • Through multivocality, establishes the importance of multiple stories being allowed into a space (and acknowledges power differentials in which stories are often told) • Establishes the importance of revealing oneself to another and acknowledges importance of doing so across difference

Even through Buber, Levinas, and Bahktin draw from slightly different intellectual traditions, the work of these philosophers builds upon and informs each other. One primary idea they all emphasize is the relational aspect of the nature of human beings, in contrast to the individualistic focus on the self so inherent to the work of earlier philosophers, such as Descartes, and so common in Western ideas (Arnett, 2004). This focus on human connection, whether in "I-You" moments (Buber), as a primordial way of being (Levinas), or as the "Grand Dialogical Principle" (Bakhtin), all establish the importance of relational learning, and the importance of sharing ourselves with others, particularly across difference.

Contemporary Approaches to Social Construction and Storytelling

In the United States, a number of social scientists from the fields of Sociology, Psychology, and Communication, who all loosely fall under the umbrella of "social constructionists," built upon the core ideas of the philosophers reviewed above, applying their ideas in a more concrete theoretical manner. Specifically, the next section will include a brief review of the work of the sociologists, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman's (1967) pioneering work on social construction, the social psychologist, Kenneth Gergen's theory of the self as relational (Gergen, 1985, 1999, 2009) and communication theorist Walter Fisher's narrative theory (1985, 1987). All three of these theories were central to advancing and applying ideas of inherent connection between humans, social constructionism, and the importance of narrative.

Berger and Luckman's Theory of Social Construction

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman were sociologists in the United States who developed a theory of social construction and introduced their ideas into the social sciences through their treatise, *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967). Berger and Luckman maintained a voluntaristic (as opposed to deterministic) approach, asserting that society is created and negotiated in the interactions of individuals, giving ultimate power to the individual. Their sociology of knowledge attempted to expose the way ideas are created and maintained by "ordinary" individuals by considering ideas, meaning, as well as language. They illustrated the way meaning making happens through individuals in interaction by stating, "as Man externalizes himself, he constructs the world" (Berger & Luckman, as cited in Seidman, 2008, p. 75).

In addition to their theory of social construction, Berger and Luckman (1967) also explicated a theory of the origin, reproduction, and process of change in institutions that involves the creation of norms that are then objectified and regarded as reality. These norms are then internalized by people through a process called "reification." Through this process, institutions can seem to have a life of their own and begin to control human behavior, without consideration for actual human need. Despite this danger of controlling behavior, Berger and Luckman maintain that institutions are also important to protect individuals' freedom and argue that human beings can reclaim these creations and be active and creative agents in fashioning their reality.

Connection to Storytelling

Bringing many of the ideas of Buber, Levinas, and Bakhtin to the United States, Berger and Luckman's theory supports the emphasis on the co-creation of meaning by individuals, highlighting the ways we create our world through interactions (Arnett, 2004; Baxter, 2004; Buber, 1970; Holquist, 1990; Perpich, 2008). Berger and Luckman warn against the process of reification, in which institutions, such as the educational system, can become objectified and seem to take on a life of their own, independent from human agency. However, they also assert that human beings can reclaim these institutions, and be active and creative agents in fashioning their reality. I believe that personal storytelling can be a vehicle to reverse the process of reification within the field of education, helping students to reclaim this institution, and realize it is not something that is beyond their control or out of their hands.

Gergen's Social Constructionism in Psychology

The social psychologist Kenneth Gergen applied the concept of social constructionism to the field of Psychology in the 1970s, a field that has traditionally emphasized the individual. Through their emphasis on social constructionism, Gergen and his colleagues establish the social nature of meaning-making, focusing on interpersonal encounters. Gergen (1973) asserted that theories of social behavior within the field of Psychology actually reflect contemporary history, meaning that they are constructed by the psychologists and the contexts in which they are embedded. Gergen claimed that the dissemination of these theories, then influenced people's thinking and behavior, creating a socially constructed self-fulfilling prophecy, thus establishing a

"prescriptive bias of psychological theory" (p. 311) in which psychologists not only describe what they believe is there, they also subtly, unconsciously inform what should be. Building on this idea, Gergen maintained that rather than being judged on their accuracy, theories should be considered for their potential to inspire action.

From this preliminary work, Gergen and colleagues have created a body of knowledge of social construction within the field of Psychology. Gergen, Schrader, and Gergen (2009) explain their perspective in the following way:

> We take the view that interpersonal communication is at the very center of all that we take to be real, rational, and valuable in life. As we propose, it is within the process of interpersonal communication that the world becomes significant to us. This view, called *social constructionist,* stresses the major significance of relationships in our lives. (p. xi)

Some other ideas of social constructionism emphasized by Gergen et al. include the importance of multiple perspectives and values, the exploration of taken-for-granted presumptions, and searching for new ways of talking to each other (i.e., dialogue). In addition, they argue against the idea of a set, coherent "self" that exists; rather, they claim that the self is constantly evolving, being created and re-created through relationships.

Gergen et al. (2009) introduces the concept of a "bounded being," which he defines as "separate individuals, each living in a private consciousness" (p. xiii). Gergen argues that the idea of the individualistic "bounded being," that originally stemmed from enlightenment ideas, supports the notion that human beings are fundamentally isolated and fosters competition, narcissism, defensiveness, incessant self-doubt, the use of others for one's own pleasure and gain, and an inability to be fully open, authentic, and loving with others. Thus, the bounded being "transforms the self into a marketable commodity" and promulgates the idea of human love as a matter of profit (p. 29). Gergen attempts to

replace this view with a "vision of relationship" in a world of co-constitution, asserting that this particular way of thinking and relating with each other can transform the world (p. xv).

Connection to Storytelling

Within their theory, Gergen and his colleagues explicitly identify narratives and life storytelling as fundamental to our understanding of ourselves and our relationships. Gergen and Gergen (2006) claim that narratives can help break the cycle of behaving as 'bounded beings," and cross the "boundaries of meaning and bring people into a state of mutuality" (p. 117). They explicate,

> The storytelling process is important in that it eliminates the tendency to argue against a point of view. It is socially difficult and even rude to directly challenge or undermine a personal life story. Last, the commingling of personal stories highlights the overlap among the participants in many ways. People may not agree on certain important endpoints, but they share many things along the way. (p. 116)

Some explanations that Gergen and Gergen offer for the effectiveness of storytelling include the familiarity of the narrative form, receptivity stemming from viewing stories as common forms of entertainment and connection in many cultures, the phenomenon of "witness trust" in which first person witnesses are often trusted forms of evidence, the role of empathy that is ignited when listening to a personal story, and the ability of stories to increase polyvocality (p. 118).

Gergen's relation-centered alternative to the traditional view of self creates a useful framework for the use of personal stories in meaning making in the field of education. First, his ideas support the belief that both the storyteller and the listener are intimately connected and can be transformed by such an experience. Gergen calls for a

shift of attention from the individual to the cultivation of relationship within the field of education, emphasizing the importance of students learning from each other, and the teacher learning from the students rather than the traditional classroom where the teacher educates the students in a one-way fashion. Gergen et al. (2009) agree with John Dewey's idea that "the cultivated mind was essentially a social mind" that is prepared to participate in democratic society (p. 242) and believe that, "the aim, then, is not that of producing independent, autonomous thinkers – mythological creatures at best – but of facilitating relational processes that can ultimately contribute to the continuing and expanding flow of relationships within the world more broadly" (p. 243). Through his emphasis on cultivating relationships in school, rather than depositing knowledge, Gergen's social constructionism offers a helpful basis for the utility of personal storytelling within the classroom.

Fisher's Narrative Paradigm

Walter Fisher is a communications scholar in the U.S. who explicated his narrative paradigm theory in the 1980s. Further building on the ideas of social constructionists, the core of Fisher's theory is that idea that humans are inherently storytellers (what he terms *Homo narrans*), and humans both experience and form an understanding of their lives as "a series of ongoing narratives, as conflicts, characters, beginnings, middles and ends" (Fisher, 1987, p. 24). Because of this, Fisher believes that it is most useful to interpret human communication from a "narrational perspective," (p. ix) regarding narrative as a "metacode" or "human universal" (p. 65). The narrative paradigm does not ignore the role and importance of rationality and reason that most

people in the United States are educated into, but rather it offers an expansion of the meaning of this role. Fisher's perspective has been considered "a dialectical synthesis of two traditional strands that recur in the history of rhetoric; the argumentative, persuasive theme and the literary aesthetic theme" (p. 58). Fisher claims that although we are educated into prioritizing rationality, the "narrative impulse" is part of our socialization as humans (p. 65).

One key aspect of narrative paradigm is a concept termed "narrative rationality" (or interpreted value) (Fisher, 1987, p. xi) that deals with assessing the "coherence" (p. 105) and "fidelity" (p. 105) of narratives. According to Fisher, coherence is how well the story holds together and makes sense to the listener, bringing into focus "the integrity of a story as a whole" (p. 105). Fidelity relates to whether the story matches our own values or the things we have experienced or, in Fisher's words, "represent accurate assertions about social reality" (p. 105). Thus, according to Fisher, if a story both makes sense to us based on our experiences and holds together well, we will believe the storyteller.

Connection to Storytelling

Fisher's theory centers narrative in human communication and offers a way of considering our process of making meaning from stories. Fisher believes our best reason is appealed to through stories and that humans are naturally storytellers, so sharing and listening to personal stories in the classroom would naturally have impact on us, in contrast to other forms of information (i.e., statistics, facts, etc.). Fisher's ideas about "narrative rationality" seem particularly relevant to storytelling in the classroom. Within this concept, the term "coherence" is important to consider, because how well students'

stories hold together can depend on their learning and communication styles, experiences with storytelling and comfort sharing orally in front of a group. The concept of fidelity is also interesting to contemplate when considering storytelling across identity, particular people from privileged groups listening to stories from those from targeted groups. Because people with privilege are often unaware of the lived reality of others, this may decrease the fidelity of the stories that people hear, because it is so incredibly different from how they have experienced the world.

Summary: Contemporary Theories of Social Construction.

The work of Berger and Luckman, Gergen, and Fisher highlighted in this review provide a helpful continuation of the core ideas of the humanist and interpretive philosophers reviewed in the previous section, whose ideas form the backdrop for the use of storytelling. Berger and Luckman's (1967) work is foundational in its assertion about the ways that our world is created through social interaction and has been expanded and revised by many other theorists since. Gergen's continuation of this through his nuanced work with "social constructionism" offers many useful ideas directly related to storytelling in education. Of particular interest is his concept of the "bounded being" who is isolated, alone, and in competition with others and the antidote he offers through his theory of relational being. The work of the communication scholar Walter Fisher builds upon the work of Berger and Luckman and assists with the idea of making narrative central to communication. Refer to Table 2 for a summary of the work of these theorists.

Table 2. Social Constructionist Foundations for Storytelling

Theorist	Key Ideas	Connection to Storytelling
Berger and Luckman (1967) (Sociology)	• Society is created and negotiated in the interactions of individuals • Studied how ideas are created and maintained by "ordinary" individuals by considering ideas, meaning, and language • Developed a theory of origin, reproduction, and change in institutions that involves creation of norms that are then objectified in institutions, and regarded as reality through "reification"	• Emphasis on the co-creation of meaning by individuals, highlighting the ways we create our world through interactions • Personal storytelling can be a vehicle to reverse the process of reification within the field of education
Gergen et al. (2009) (Psychology)	• Establish a social nature of meaning-making, focusing on interpersonal encounters (interpersonal communication as central to all we take to be real, rational, and valuable) • Critiqued the prescriptive bias of psychological theory • Stressed importance of multiple perspectives and values, exploration of taken-for-granted presumptions, and supported new ways of communicating (dialogue)	• Identify narratives and life storytelling as fundamental to understanding ourselves and our relationships (eliminates the tendency to argue against a point of view) • Personal stories highlight commonalities • Both the storyteller and the listener are intimately connected and can be transformed by such an experience • Increased receptivity of narratives from familiarity with this form of communication, "witness trust," empathy and the ability of stories to increase polyvocality
Fisher (1987) (Communication)	• Humans are inherently storytellers and understand life as a series of ongoing narratives • Most useful to interpret human communication from a "narrational perspective" • Despite emphasis on rationality in U.S. education, "narrative impulse" is part of our socialization as humans • Importance of assessing "coherence" and "fidelity" of narratives	• Theory directly relates to storytelling • Believes our best reason is appealed to through stories, thus, hearing personal stories in the classroom would naturally have impact on us

While the work of the theorists presented here further develops the ideas of social construction, it focuses primarily on relationships and does not explicitly address the issue of power in their work. Additionally, though the philosophers reviewed in the first section of this chapter touched on the issue of power minimally (i.e., Bakhtin's concepts of heteroglossia), this type of critique is not central to their ideas. In addition to the relational ontology of those I have already discussed, I am interested in examining personal storytelling in the context of social justice education. The theories in the following section engage with the idea that some people's stories are more readily heard. Certain dominant narratives are the ones presented as the Truth, are promulgated in the media and in textbooks, and become the stories that are believed by many in our society. In addition, the next section of this paper includes theories that actually apply and utilize the tool of personal storytelling as core aspects of their theory, while explicitly dealing with the issue of power, specifically emphasizing the importance of storytelling for people from marginalized groups.

Critical Approaches to Social Construction and Storytelling

The theories presented in the following section, Freire's dialogic theory, feminist theory, and critical race theory, explicitly incorporate personal storytelling of lived experiences as a fundamental tenet for theorizing about social relations in classrooms and other institutional contexts rather than simply offering arguments to support the value of this practice. These theorists also provide a critical stance to analyze and challenge systems of oppression and its manifestations in society, including classism, racism, and sexism. In this chapter section, I review the ways in which Freire's post-colonial dialogic

theory in addition to the cultural identity theories articulated by feminist and critical race theorists relate to and incorporate the act of personal storytelling of experience. Though coming from very different angles and perspectives, all of these theories are based on both political commitment as well as identification with groups that have been historically and are currently oppressed in society.

Paulo Freire's Dialogic Theory

The Brazilian post-colonial theorist and educator, Paulo Freire, has been called "the most influential theorist of critical or liberatory education" (Weiler, 1991, p. 450). His theory informed the development of critical pedagogy in the United States and forms a backdrop upon which some of the later identity-related theories that directly use personal storytelling are based (K. Weiler, 1991). Freire asserts, "Education is a political act," and critiqued the "banking" form of education, in which a teacher "deposits" knowledge into students, which they memorize, and uncritically parrot back to the teacher (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 70). Rather, Freire champions education in which the learning process is mutual (teachers learn from students as much as students learn from teachers) and students become "critical co-investigators" through the learning process (Freire, 1970, p. 81).

Freire's most commonly read work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, focuses on the concepts of oppression, dialogue, and "conscientization" and "places an emphasis on dialogue, mutual reflection, and a theoretical analysis grounded on everyday experience" (Torres, 1998, p. 103). Freire's whole approach is organized by the dichotomy of oppressed and oppressor (and humanization and dehumanization). He argues that both the

oppressor and the oppressed are dehumanized and establishes humanization as the goal of liberation (Freire, 1970; K. Weiler, 1991). Freire asserts the inherent worth and intelligence of all humans, and, he emphasizes seeing humans as subjects, rather than objects of history who have an ability to both know, understand and change the world.

Freire's Liberatory Education

In the educational context, Freire establishes the role of the teacher as instigating a dialogue between the teacher and students, based on the students' ability to know their own experiences and to perform as subjects in the world (K. Weiler, 1991). Thus, according to Freire (1970), "Authentic education is not carried on by "A" *for* "B" or by "A" *about* "B", but rather by "A" *with* "B", mediated by the world" (p. 93). The process of students coming to feel like "masters of their thinking" is the most important aspect of liberatory education and his work has "highlighted the importance of dialogue as epistemology, and individual commitment to social change" (Torres, 1998, p. 101). Through this liberatory educational process, students are asked to think for themselves and share their true thoughts, opinions, and personal experiences about contentious topics in a combination of reflection and action, which Freire terms "praxis." Within this praxis, Freire asserts the importance of profound love for the world, humility, faith in humankind, hope, and critical thinking. Relatedly, in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire introduces the term, "conscientization" which he characterizes as "coming to a consciousness of oppression and a commitment to end that oppression" (K. Weiler, 1991, p. 454). More specifically, according to Weiler:

> [This concept] is the belief in the ability of all people to be knowers and to read both the word and the world and it is through this interrogation of their own

> experiences that the oppressed will come to an understanding of their own power as knowers and creators of the world and this knowledge will contribute to the transformation of the world. (p. 454)

Thus, this concept emphasizes critical thought about one's own experiences as a key to social change.

Freire has further expanded and applied many of his ideas from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* directly to education through his writings with the scholar Ira Shore. These two scholars and educators contrast a dialogical classroom, characterized by the absence of authoritarianism, with the more traditional classroom consisting of a syllabus, a reading list, and a professor who delivers long lectures that the students are expected to absorb and then parrot back on exams and in papers. They describe the dialogical classroom, on the other hand, as one in which "the professor enters knowing a great deal but leaves the course 'relearned' because of the dialogue-inquiry, the rediscovery of the material *with* the students" (Shor & Freire, 1987a, p. 15). They also talk about the value of small class sizes as well as the importance of situating the class material in subjective problem-themes related to students' lives. This strategy, termed "codification," is "based in the possibility of starting from concreteness, from common sense, to reach a rigorous understanding of reality as well as the importance of then moving to a more global, critical lens" (Shor & Freire, 1987a, p. 20). Freire argues that the individual empowerment of students is not enough, or an end goal, but is an important first step in liberation, which he defines as "human beings operating in the world to overcome oppression" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 71).

Connection to Storytelling

Freire's emphasis on people as knowers of their own experience, his disruption of the teacher as expert, and his articulation of conscientization, praxis, and speaking the truth in an authentic way as helping to transform the world clearly help set the stage for the importance of sharing narratives of personal experience in the classroom. Freire's work has informed many more recent theories, for example, most of the feminists and critical race scholars discussed in this paper used Freire's liberatory ideas as a foundation for their theories. His work has also been critiqued by feminists and critical race theorists for his exclusive focus on social class as well as his failure to address "the possibility of simultaneous contradictory positions of oppression and dominance" (Weiler, 1991 p. 453).

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory, which developed out of the second wave of feminism in the late 1960s and 1970s, also provides a framework that helps situate the role of personal storytelling in the classroom. This movement encouraged women to examine and speak out about what was going on in their own lives, notice patterns among women, and take action to overturn the patriarchal structure of society. The catch-phase of the feminist movement, coined by feminist writer Carole Hanisch, "the personal is political" encapsulates the relevance of personal experience through this movement (Stanley & Wise, 1983). This catchphrase anchors the importance of personal experiences, ways of knowing, and patterns of these experiences and epistemology across gender, discovering that women's ways of connected knowing, emphasizing empathy and first hand knowing

as a valuable source of knowledge differ from the more disconnected, impersonal patriarchal theories that had dominated previously (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986).

Two fundamental beliefs accepted in early feminist theory were the essential validity of personal experience and a challenge to the traditional distinction between subjective and objective (Stanley & Wise, 1983). For example, one approach to feminism, gynocentric feminism (in particular the theory of Dorothy Smith), critiques the objective, abstract, general, and anonymous knowledge that is common to male-centered sociology and advocates an approach that examines social knowledge from the standpoint of women and centers "women's fundamental common identity and reality" (Seidman, 2008, p. 203). Other feminists assert the importance of personal experience, claiming they cannot be discounted because "if something was felt then it was felt, and if it was felt then it was absolutely real for the woman feeling and experiencing it" (Stanley & Wise, 1983, p. 53).

One practice that came out of feminism was consciousness-raising groups developed in the early period of feminism, such as the Redstockings out of New York (K. Weiler, 1991). These groups formed beginning in 1967 among White women who had been active in the Civil Rights Movement, and this practice has become "one of the prime educational, organizing programs of the women's liberation movement" (Sarachild, 1974, p. 147). The practice of consciousness-raising involves the gathering of women in small groups to dialogue about their own everyday experiences of family, home life, sexuality, and work in a male-dominated world (K. Weiler, 1991). One strategy, going around the room in a meeting to hear each woman's testimony, helps to guarantee everyone's voice

gets into the "common pool of knowledge" about a particular topic or point (Sarachild, 1974, p. 148). Also integral to this process is a practice of intentional listening in which "women *hear* what each other are saying" (Stanley & Wise, 1983, p. 53). Thus, women began to build theory based on experience, feeling, and patterns they began to notice playing out. Consciousness-raising groups were seen both as a process for information gathering and arriving at truth and action. These groups were critiqued by some for their failure to go beyond personal experience and take action and their exclusive focus on the experience of White, middle-class, heterosexual women (Seidman, 2008; Stanley & Wise, 1983).

Feminist Theory and Education

Feminist theory, building on the work of critical theorists, such as Paulo Freire, has informed thinking about liberatory pedagogies in the classroom. Similar to Freire's ideas, feminist pedagogy holds social change as an overall goal, and also "rests on truth claims of the primacy of experience and consciousness that are grounded in historically situated social change movements" (K. Weiler, 1991, p. 456). Feminist educators have applied the practices of consciousness-raising groups in the classroom, maintaining an equal emphasis on process and content, embracing learning as a collaborative process, allowing room for emotion in the classroom, and asserting the value and importance of voice grounded in the experience of each participant (Romney, Tatum, & Jones, 1992; Stanley & Wise, 1983). According to Romney et al., this attention to the everyday experiences of students in the classroom helps all students, no matter their identity "be more aware of the extraordinary in the ordinary" and to "humanize the 'Other'" (p. 97).

Room for and validity of emotions in the classroom is a particularly important aspect of feminist pedagogy, which is not emphasized by Freire or critical race theorists.

Connection to Storytelling

Feminist theory is an example of a direct application of sharing personal experience, both in consciousness-raising groups, as well as in the classroom. The basic value of the small group structure used in consciousness raising groups is not limited to feminism, but was adopted by other "new left movements" who shared an emphasis on "participatory democracy, equality, liberty and community" (Stanley & Wise, 1983, p. 57). Feminist theory expands Freire's ideas beyond social class, though the exclusive White, heterosexual focus of early feminist theorists was critiqued. Feminist women of color and critical race theorists, such as Patricia Hill Collins (Seidman, 2008), addressed many of these gaps. Hill Collins created an Afrocentric feminist social theory that fits both under the umbrella of feminist theory and critical race theory. Her work is "ultimately anchored in the unique experiences and struggles of ordinary African-American women" and emphasizes the role of "concrete personal experience and feelings as a standard by which to assess knowledge claims" (Seidman, 2008, p. 226). The next section examines the work of some other critical race theorists.

Critical Race Theory

Similar to feminist theory, critical race theory is also an identity-based theory in which personal storytelling of experience plays a role. Critical race theory originated in the 1970s and was developed in the late 1980s within the field of legal studies when legal theorists, such as Derrick Bell, Mari Matsuda, Richard Delgado, and Kimberley

Crenshaw, began focusing on the ways in which the law helped to uphold White supremacy (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Taylor, 1998). This form of "oppositional scholarship" was created because of the perceived failure of traditional civil rights litigation to produce racial reform that would make real change in the lives of people of color (Love, 2004, p. 52). The ideas of these scholars soon began to spread from Legal Studies to other disciplines including women's studies, political science, education, and sociology.

Although critical race theorists differ in some of their ideas, the key principles shared by most theorists include 1) the assumption that racism in the United states is not occasional, isolated acts but is "endemic in American life, [and] deeply ingrained legally, culturally, and even psychologically" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 52); 2) the need for reinterpretation of civil rights laws; 3) examination and critique of supposedly "neutral" ideologies connected to liberalism such as color-blindness, meritocracy, and legal neutrality, which protect the self-interest of White Americans; 4) focus on the social construction of race and the "reformulation of legal doctrine to reflect the perspectives of those who have experienced and been victimized by racism firsthand,"(Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 52); 5) the idea of "interest convergence" or "material determinism," which claims that most white people have little incentive to eradicate racism and shifts have been made in the experience of Blacks, only when they converge with the interests of powerful Whites; and 6) an emphasis on first-person accounts and stories (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Love, 2004; Taylor, 1998).

Connection to Storytelling

Although many of the tenants of critical race theory may indirectly relate to the use of personal storytelling in the classroom (i.e. the emphasis on subjectivity), it is the direct application of storytelling inherent in this scholarship that is of particular note. Critical race theorists draw on the rich history of storytelling in African American, Chicano, and Native American communities, claiming that members of these marginalized racial groups "have known instinctively that stories are an essential tool to their own survival and liberation" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 32). Critical race theorists view experiential knowledge and the lived experiences of People of Color as a valid form of data and endorse research methods such as "storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos testimonies, chronicles, and narratives" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26).

Critical race theorists typically categorize stories as either "majoritarian" (also referred to as monovocals, master narratives, standard stories) or "counter-stories" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Because of the reality of racism in the United States, the stories that are most often told in the public arena are those of White people. These "majoritarian stories" become standards of "normality" and a measuring stick against which everything else is compared. They make White privilege seem natural, deserved, and inevitable and also erase any complexity within cultural groups of color, and perpetuate stereotypes (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Taylor, 1998). Much of the power of these stories comes from their invisibility, and their ability to justify actions taken by dominant groups to maintain their status (Love, 2004). Thus, majoritarian stories privilege "whites, men, the middle and/or upper class, and heterosexuals by naming these

social locations as natural or normative points of reference" (Solóranzo & Yosso, 2002, p. 28).

The concept and practice of counter-storytelling developed within critical race theory both to tell the stories of those people in society whose stories have been ignored, and also as a tool to analyze and challenge majoritarian narratives (Love, 2004). Counter-stories have taken the form of revisionist histories (showing a different perspective on historical events), parables, autobiographies, personal stories of experience, and poems (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Additionally, counter-stories can be told as personal stories or narratives of individuals, other people's stories or narratives, and composite stories or narratives drawn from multiple forms of data (Solóranzo & Yosso, 2002).

In the context of legal discourse, Delgado identified three reasons for telling counter-stories: 1) reality is socially constructed, 2) stories allow people of color a "vehicle for psychic self-preservation," and 3) stories can challenge ethnocentrism, and emphasize multi-vocality (Delgado, as cited in Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 57). Thus, these theorists assert the benefits of telling stories for people of color who have been hurt by racism, including realizing they are not isolated in their feelings, and are not to blame for their experiences of racism. Stories foster empowerment, and new ways to defend themselves through finding their voice and naming discrimination (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). According to Delgado and Stefancic, "historically, storytelling has been a kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression" (p. 57). Thus, counter-storytelling draws on the strengths of communities of color and is a methodology that can "give voice and turn the margins into places of transformative resistance" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 37).

In addition to the benefits for people of color, hearing or reading counter-stories can give White people, who are less likely to truly understand the lived reality of people of color, access to this information in a medium in which they may be able to hear, and understand. Hearing these stories also interrupts the power of White people to name the reality of others, and "helps to transform the structures that produce and reproduce relationships of domination and subordination" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 53).

Critical race theorists emphasize subjectivity, the social construction of reality, and the way in which stories can deconstruct power and attack "embedded preconceptions that marginalize others or conceal their humanity" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 41). The original critical race theorists were criticized for their Black-White focus, and in more recent years, this scholarship has been expanded to include analysis of the experience of other racial groups, such as Latino/a critical race theory, critical Asian Studies, and Whiteness Studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Fernandez, 2002; Perez Huber, 2009; Seidman, 2008). Critical race theory serves as a useful context for situating my work with personal narratives in the classroom, in how it helps establish the importance and power of stories and how it distinguishes between "majoritarian" and "counter-stories."

Summary: Critical Theoretical Applications of Storytelling

The three theories reviewed above directly incorporate personal storytelling, and the point of them is to challenge structures of power in society. Refer to Table 3 for a summary of the key ideas of each of the theories reviewed in this section. One limitation of the three theories I reviewed is that they all emphasize the importance of personal

storytelling for people from oppressed or marginalized groups (i.e., women and people of color) without discussion of the stories of people from privileged groups (i.e., men or White people). Within the context of education, there has been critique of education that puts the burden "on the backs" of those from targeted groups to educate those from privileged social identity groups (Gorski, 2008). The type of personal storytelling in the classroom included in the present study includes both stories told by people from both marginalized and privileged groups (i.e., both people of color and White people in a race dialogue).

Table 3. Critical Approaches to Social Construction and Storytelling

Theory	Key Ideas	Connection to Storytelling
Freire's Dialogic Theory (Freire, 1970; Shor & Freire, 1987b; Torres, 1998 K. Weiler, 1991)	• Education is a political act and critiqued the "banking" form of education, championing a mutual learning process • Approach is organized by the dichotomy of the oppressed and oppressor, both of whom are dehumanized • Most important part of liberatory education is process of students becoming "masters of their thinking" • Critical thought about one's own experiences is a key to social change	• Emphasizes people as knowers of their experience and disrupts teacher as expert • His articulation of "conscientization and praxis" and speaking the truth in an authentic way to transform the world all set the state for sharing personal narratives in the classroom. • Has informed many recent story-telling based theories, such as feminist and critical race theory
Feminist Theory (Romney et al., 1992; Sarachild, 1974; Stanley & Wise, 1983;K. Weiler, 1991)	• "The personal is political" • Emphasizes women's connected ways of knowing, emphasis on empathy and first-hand knowing as a valuable source of knowledge • Asserted the validity of personal experience and challenged traditional distinction between subjective and objective	• Consciousness-raising groups in both the community and in the classroom are a direct application of storytelling • Feminist education asserts the value and importance of voice grounded in the experience of each participant
Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Love, 2004; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Taylor, 1998)	• Form of "oppositional scholarship" created to shed light on ways in which the law helped upholds White supremacy • Assumes racism is endemic and deeply ingrained in American life and the need for examination and critique of supposedly "neutral" ideologies, such as color-blindness and meritocracy	• Theory includes an emphasis on first-person accounts and stories • View experiential knowledge and the lived experiences of people of color as a valid form of data • Categorize stories as either "majoritarian" or "counter-stories" • "Historically, storytelling has been a kind of medicine to heal the wounds of pain caused by racial oppression" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 57)

Summary of Personal Storytelling

The purpose of this chapter section was to examine the concept of personal storytelling and to discuss specific ways in which this practice has been used in various contexts. I then presented some of the philosophical roots of this practice through the work of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, and Mikhail Bakhtin and the ways the ideas of these philosophers have been adapted by social constructionist theorists within the social sciences through the work of Berger and Luckman, Gergen, and Fisher. Finally, I presented the work of theorists who foreground a socio-political focus of social relations and underscore the role of difference, power and inequality including, Freire's Dialogic Theory, Feminist Theory, and Critical Race Theory.

Several of the themes that emerged from this review have challenged, nuanced, and extended my understanding of the practice of personal storytelling in the classroom while providing a solid conceptual grounding and rationale for arguing for the importance of face-to-face embodied synchronous learning as a valuable educational "technology." These include 1) the centrality of relating in the human experience, 2) meaning-making as a social (and dialogical) process, and 3) challenges and possibilities for integrating a relational ontology to explore issues of difference, power, and privilege. The contradictions and questions raised by these themes will be helpful to hold as I explore the role of personal storytelling in different pedagogical modalities that inform the two diversity courses that are the focus of my research study. These modalities will be reviewed in detail in the next section of this literature review.

Social Justice Education

This section shifts the focus from the epistemological and theoretical foundations for storytelling in education to reviewing literature that can help ground the study in the field of social justice education. Social justice education not only provides the theoretical and practical context for the pedagogical modalities that inform the two social diversity undergraduate courses that serve as sites of my study but also informs my practice as a scholar and educator. Specifically, this chapter section reviews theoretical and practical literature in social justice education (SJE) by briefly discussing the concept of social justice within social justice education and reviewing key concepts essential to SJE, pedagogical features of this educational approach, and primary foundations for social justice education from both activist and /or academic traditions. I conclude by highlighting pedagogical and curriculum design principles and student learning outcomes for the two SJE practice modalities highlighted in the present study, intergroup dialogue and a multi-issue social diversity course.

Stemming from the work of the philosophers and social theorists reviewed in the first section of this chapter, the area of scholarship, research, and practice called "social justice education," has complex interdisciplinary roots yet has been said to have been under- or un-theorized, while exploding exponentially in recent years in education out of a range of humanist and critical traditions in the human and social sciences, making it increasingly difficult to create a uniform definition for this term (Adams, 2014). However, at its core, Social Justice Education is a field of practice that seeks to promote social justice through education both in non-formal and formal settings (Bell, 1997).

Before I discuss the definition of social justice education, I first briefly illuminate the meaning of "social justice" in the context of my work.

The concept of "social justice" has complex roots and contradictory definitions from a variety of areas, such as the human rights tradition as defined by the Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (focusing on economic security, legal protection, and education for all) as well as Civil Rights Movements of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s in the United States (such as the Women's Movement, the Civil Rights Movements, the LGBTQ Rights and Disability Rights Movements) (Adams, 2014; Grant & Gibson, 2013; United Nations, 1948). While both the human rights movement and social movements focus on the rights of individuals as well as social groups who are traditionally marginalized, the civil rights movements, largely influenced by anti-racist, anti-capitalist, and post-colonial writers, directly challenged existing institutional structures and drew attention to "systemic privileges or disadvantages based on social group memberships" and the importance of acknowledging and attending to these social group differences in order to deal with oppression (Adams, 2014, p. 7). From these roots developed different strands of theorizing about social justice, some that underscore distribution of resources and others that emphasize recognition of marginalized groups (Fraser, 1997; North, 2008; Young, 1990).

For the purpose of this review, I conceptualize the ultimate goal of social justice as both distribution and recognition theories (Fraser, 1997; Young, 1990) at the macro, mezzo, and micro level simultaneously. Drawing on Bell's (2007) definition, I conceptualized social justice as working toward "full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs" and holding a "vision of society

in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (p. 1).

In the next section, I introduce a working definition of the term "social justice education," review some of its goals, and discuss some central concepts and foundations most relevant to the topic of this proposed study within the context of higher education. I then highlight some of its key pedagogical characteristics and a few of its pedagogical foundations stemming from both academic and/ or activist traditions.

Definition, Goals, and Foundational Concepts

Similar to the term, "social justice," there exist multiple definitions of social justice education (Adams, 2012). However, for the present study, I rely on Carlisle, Jackson, and George's (2006) definition of SJE as "the conscious and reflexive blend of content and process, intended to enhance equity across multiple social identity groups (e.g., race, class, gender, social orientation, ability), foster critical perspectives, and promote social action" (p. 57). As this definition indicates, SJE places attention on both the content material (e.g., institutional manifestations of oppression) that is being presented to students (the "what") in addition to the intrapersonal and interpersonal pedagogical processes by which participants are invited to grapple with the content or subject matter (the "how") (Bell, 2007; Freire, 1970; Mayhew & Fernández, 2007). Zúñiga and her colleagues (2007) delineate "content" as "concepts, conceptual frameworks, literature, theory, empirical data, and personal stories that challenge assumptions or misinformation or stimulate questions, reflections, observations, or new behaviors" (p. 21). In contrast, "process" can be defined as, "the intrapersonal and

interpersonal reactions, interactions, and reflections stimulated by experiential learning or exploration of controversial issues" and deals with both the development of relationships in the group, as well as the quality of the learning process for participants (p. 21). Social justice education differs from "diversity education" initiatives, which typically focus on appreciating various social group differences (e.g., traditions, cultural orientations and practices, food, communication styles, values, etc.) without considering differential access to resources by virtue of membership in social groups (Hardiman et al., 2007). Though appreciating and understanding social and cultural differences is a component of SJE, the exclusive focus on "difference" tends to ignore the ways in which "difference" can be used to rationalize inequality, and ignores taking action both individually and collectively to create more just social arrangements between social groups without erasing social and cultural differences among them (Adams, Jones, & Tatum., 1997; Bell, 2007; Hardiman et al., 2007; Zúñiga et al., 2007).

Some of the major goals of SJE include providing students with the tools to think critically about their own social identities and social locations and how they were socialized into these identities within systems of privilege and oppression (e.g., sexism and racism). Other goals include developing an understanding of various manifestations of privilege and oppression, understanding the historical roots of structural inequality, and developing the capacity to take action, individually or in collaboration with others, against injustice and toward liberation (Adams, 2014; Bell, 2007; Burrell-Storms, 2012; Zúñiga, Lopez, & Ford, 2012). Hackman (2005) distills these goals to include "student empowerment [and] the equitable distribution of resources and social responsibility" (p. 104). Other theorists of social justice education emphasize the importance of helping

students recognize the terrible costs of maintaining oppressive systems, to both members of privileged and targeted groups (Bell, 2007; Freire, 1970; Hardiman & Jackson, 1997; Kivel, 2002). Drawing on Freire (1970), Love (2010) underscores that a goal of SJE is to help students develop a liberatory consciousness, which "enables humans to live their lives in oppressive systems and institutions with awareness and intentionality…. without giving in to despair …[and] practice intentionality about changing the systems of oppression" (p. 399). Thus, SJE encompasses both working against oppression and also toward liberation.

Key Foundational Concepts

While defining SJE, it is important to explicate some key foundational concepts that are central to this form of education for freedom of or liberation from injustice. These include the concept of social identity groups and social location in historically situated systems of privilege and oppression, a theory of social oppression and colonization of individuals and groups, privilege, hegemony, and liberation (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997; Hardiman et al., 2007). As mentioned, SJE foregrounds group level over individual struggles, in which "social groups" can be defined as "a group of people who share a range of physical, cultural, or social characteristics within one of the social identity categories" (Hardiman et al., 2007, p. 56-57), for example, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, class, age, or physical/developmental/psychological ability (Harro, 2010a). As a result of oppression, some social groups have privilege or unfair access to resources or opportunities by virtue of the groups they belong to (referred to as "privileged," "dominant" or "advantaged"), while other social identity groups (referred to

"targeted," "subordinated," or "oppressed") are denied access to these same opportunities (Hardiman et al., 2007, p. 39).

The term "oppression" is central to SJE and refers to networks of policies, practices, and systems that maintain domination and subordination (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997; Hardiman et al., 2007). This concept is defined by different theorists in a variety of ways. One definition frames oppression as an

> interlocking system that involves ideological control as well as domination and control of the social institutions and resources of the society, resulting in a condition of privilege for the agent group relative to the disenfranchisement and exploitation of the target group. (Hardiman & Jackson, 1997, p. 17)

The "levels and types" model of oppression offered by Hardiman et al. (2007) conceptualize oppression as operating both "intentionally and unintentionally on individual, institutional, and cultural levels" (p. 58). The concept of a "social system" is of central importance to this definition, because it captures the multiple and complex ways it operates, and distinguishes oppression from "looking down" on others or being prejudiced or unkind on a more individual, one-on-one, basis.

Drawing on the use of the term "oppression" by the new social movements in the U.S. since the 1960s, Young (1990) conceptualizes oppression as having five "faces" in categorizing the ways that oppression affects different groups. These faces include 1) exploitation (the labor of one social group benefits others), 2) marginalization (the denial of useful or productive participation in economic and social life), 3) powerlessness (prevention from making decisions that affect one's life), 4) cultural imperialism (the dominant meanings, symbols, and activities of a society that reinforce the dominant group's perspective, while making invisible, or stereotyping the perspectives of targeted

group members), and 5) violence (random or unprovoked attacks on members of targeted groups, or the threat of such violence).

These five faces capture the multiplicity of ways in which people are affected by oppression, taking into consideration matters of distributive as well as recognition justice, and highlighting oppression as a complex system. Oppression can be maintained by individual members of privileged groups, by hegemonic social institutions, and also be internalized by members of groups that are targeted by the oppression (Fletcher, 1999; Hardiman et al., 2007). There are a number of different forms of oppression (i.e., racism, classism, religious oppression, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, and transgender oppression). Although all of these different forms of oppression have unique histories and specific characteristics, there are also shared patterns of how they operate that are common to multiple forms, which are captured by the two models presented above (levels and types of oppression and the five faces of oppression) (Bell, 2007; Hardiman et al., 2007).

The internal dynamics of oppression are maintained by societal relationships of privilege in relation to disadvantage. In this analysis, "privilege" is "unearned access to resources (social power) only readily available to some people as a result of their advantaged social group membership" (Hardiman et al., 2007, p. 59). Some central components of privilege are that it is usually invisible to those who receive it, and is perceived merely as "normal" (McIntosh, 1998). This can make privilege a particularly difficult concept to recognize, teach about, and can bring up a number of feelings for students, such as shame, embarrassment, or defensiveness (Goodman, 2001; Johnson, 2006; McIntosh, 1998). Naming and recognizing privilege connected to social group

identities, as well as noticing and interrupting specific manifestations of oppression is essential to educating about social justice (Bell, 2007).

The other side of privilege within the system of oppression is disadvantage, which is commonly understood to be the ways that different social groups are denied access to resources, access, and self-definition and are treated unfairly, or subjected to violence because of their targeted social identities (Hardiman et al., 2007). As illuminated by Young's Five Faces of Oppression, this disadvantage manifests in different ways depending on social identity (i.e., racism operates differently than disability oppression), however there are consistent, and overlapping mechanisms for the ways that groups are disadvantaged (Young 1990). According to Goldenberg (1978), the disadvantage plays out through "containment, restricted movement, and limited choices" and group members are treated as "expendable, without an individual identity apart from the group, and are compartmentalized into narrowly defined roles" (as cited in Hardiman et al., 2007, p. 38).

Another foundational concept that is needed for an analysis of the systemic dynamics of privilege and disadvantage in a system of oppression is the concept of hegemony (and counter-hegemony). Hegemony, an analytic concept described by the philosopher, Gramsci, means the process by which the interests of a few are represented as the interests of all, taken to be "business as usual," and because it is associated with "normality," involves assumptions that influence and shape people's minds, whether they benefit or lose through unequal social relations (G. Smith & Troare, 1971). The term "hegemony" calls attention to dominant and pervasive beliefs and assumptions that shape everyday policy, practice, and behavior ("the way things are" "the correct or normal way"). Hegemony also "describes the way that people learn to accept as natural and in

their own best interest an unjust social order" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 43). This continuation of "business as usual," perpetuated by institutions and the media, prevents members of dominant groups from acknowledging oppression and seeing their privilege and also helps explain how members of targeted groups, sometimes unknowingly, give voluntary consent to the power of others (Bell, 2007). In contrast to hegemony, "counter-hegemony" refers to critiques of hegemony, and active attempts to shift and question the status quo (Brookfield, 2005).

"Liberation" is another significant term in Social Justice Education that has been discussed by a number of theorists (Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994; Pharr, 1996). One definition of liberation, closely related to the goals of SJE is

> the creation of relationships, societies, communities, organizations, and collective spaces characterized by equity, fairness, and the implementation of systems for the allocation of goods, services, benefits and rewards that support full participation of each human and the promotion of their full humanities. (Love, Holladay, DeJong, & Pacheco, 2007)

The post-colonial theorist, Paulo Freire, defines the end goal of liberation as "human beings operating in the world to overcome oppression" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 71). Building on Freire's definition, Harro (2010b) defines liberation simply as "critical transformation," and claims it is unfair and unethical to teach students about oppression without also giving them tools and skills needed to change oppressive systems (p. 52).

Although this list is by no means exhaustive, the concepts outlined above are foundational to SJE and are of central importance to both pedagogical approaches included in the present study. The next section reviews the pedagogy of social justice education and discusses both some key characteristics of this pedagogy and a few of the foundations.

Social Justice Education Pedagogy

In an effort to teach about oppression and liberation from a liberatory perspective, social justice education practices often emphasize interactive, experiential, student-centered pedagogies that incorporate methodologies that encourage collaborative and inclusive goals drawing from a variety of foundations (Adams, 2007, 2012; Goodman, 2001). Many approaches to SJE make an effort to decenter assimilationist approaches to classroom teaching in which a teacher lectures in front of a class, presenting information for students to memorize and later parrot back verbatim through exams and papers (what Freire [1970] termed the "banking" approach to education). Rather, most social justice teaching practices build on Freire's participatory learning methodologies, which are interactive, experiential, and dialogic, and view students as both learners and teachers (Adams, 2007; Zúñiga et al., 2007). Drawing from cognitive, experiential, and identity development theory and research (Dewey, 1938; Hardiman & Jackson, 1997; Kitchener & King, 1990; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999), some of the salient pedagogical frameworks that inform SJE include 1) balancing both cognitive and emotional aspects of the learning process, 2) supporting learning about "the personal and individual dimensions of experience, while making connections to and illuminating the systemic dimensions of social group interactions" 3) drawing attention to classroom dynamics connected to how students from different social identity groups relate within the classroom 4) utilizing experiential learning and reflection, and 5) rewarding shifts in "awareness, personal growth, and efforts to work toward change" as outcomes of the learning process (Adams, 2007, p. 14). Based on these five key frameworks, Hackman (2005) identified five principles that she feels are fundamental to effective implementation of a social justice

education approach. These include 1) content mastery (factual information, 2) tools for critical analysis of systems of oppression, 3) tools for personal reflection, 4) tools for action and social change, and 5) understanding of multicultural group dynamics. Finally, a recent empirical study examining the pedagogical practices of courses that emphasize social justice, conceptualized key SJE pedagogical practices as "opportunities for reflection, perspective-taking, the application of knowledge, interactions with diverse peers, collaborative work with peers, and discussions about diversity" (Mayhew & Fernández, 2007, p. 60).

These pedagogical practices can play out various ways in the classroom, one of which is the pedagogical practice of personal storytelling about experience, which is the focus of this dissertation project. Personal storytelling about experience has been incorporated in many social justice education approaches to teaching and learning that aim to support student voicing, listening, and perspective taking, particularly, when these personal experiences are then linked with issues of structural inequality. In the next section, I briefly review a few of the foundations for SJE pedagogy, in general, highlighting those that are most connected with the practice of personal storytelling within social justice education.

Key Foundations for Social Justice Education Pedagogy

As mentioned above, social justice education has a dual focus both on curricular content knowledge and student-centered and critical pedagogies (Adams, 2012; Zúñiga et al., 2007). The participatory and democratic focus in SJE calls for attention to process as well as content, and this process-orientation has been informed by a convergence of

foundations from a variety of disciplines that "have nourished and influenced each other in complex and beneficial ways" (Adams, 2012, p. 6). Some of these roots include (but are not limited to) experiential and democratic education (Dewey, 1938; Horton, Kohl & Kohl, 1998), the Prejudice Reduction/Intergroup Education/Anti-bias education movements (Allport, 1954; Banks, 2005; Dovidio et al., 2004), anti-oppression education and social identity development (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992; Katz, 2003; Tatum, 1997; 2007; Wijeyesinghe & Jackson, 2012), critical-liberatory pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988; hooks, 1994), feminist pedagogy (hooks, 1994; Romney et al., 1992), critical race theory (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Love, 2004), and more recently, queer theory (Butler, 1993; Kumashiro, 2001, 2002).

It is clearly beyond the scope of this paper to thoroughly review all of the contributing bodies of literature to SJE pedagogies, but I will highlight the few that I consider most central to the pedagogical practice of interest in the present study, personal storytelling. I will also consider those most central to the two SJE courses that provided sites for this study, namely, intergroup dialogue and a multi-issue "ism"-based social diversity course. I review these foundations in chronological order, as much as possible, briefly referring back to the theorists that were already reviewed in detail in the first section of this chapter.

Experiential and Democratic Education: Dewey and Horton

Two early SJE foundations in the early-to mid-1900s came from the experiential and democratic education movements. The experiential education movement stemmed from the work of the philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey, whose books

Democracy and Education (1916) and *Experience and Education* (1938), advanced "progressive education" and were foundations for emerging fields such as outdoor education, adult education and experiential education (Dewey, 1938; Hall-Quest, 1963; Horton et al., 1998; Neill, 2005). Dewey emphasized the importance of "real life" classroom tasks to help students become contributing members of a democratic society. As such, he rejected traditional authoritarian teaching methods, given their exclusive focus on the delivery of knowledge to students with no concern about "real life" contexts or the needs of individual students (Dewey, 1938; Horton et al., 1998). Through his "theory of experience," Dewey articulated his belief that the curricular content of schooling should relate directly to students' past experiences, so that it makes sense to them in terms of their lived realities. In this view, students thrive in environments if they can play a key role in their own learning, rather than being passive recipients (Dewey 1916, 1938; Neill, 2005).

In addition to the foundational work of John Dewey in theorizing experiential education, Myles Horton's Democratic Education Movement offered an early source for an emergent SJE practice. Horton founded the Highlander School in 1932 as a place for unemployed adults to share their life experiences, develop a sense of unity, and harness their desire to bring about change (Glen, 1996; Horton, 1989; Horton et al., 1998; Phenix, 1985). According to Horton, the Highlander's goal was to "use education as one of the instruments for bringing about a new social order" (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. xxiii). This site for adults engaged in a range of social movements—union organizers, the Civil Rights Movement, environmental justice—presented an educational setting in which people could meet, share their life experiences, and come to realize the tremendous

power within themselves to work with others with similar concerns and goals and create a force for change and societal transformation.

The educational theory that Horton developed at the Highlander School emphasized circle learning, and was structured around the belief that the workshop attendees came in with powerful life experiences, and should teach each other as well as the workshop leader or facilitator (Glen, 1996; Horton & Freire, 1990; Phenix, 1985). Horton explicated that the role of the teachers at Highlander was to understand people's "organic knowledge" including their experiences and the way they speak, and then "invent with the people the ways for them to go *beyond* their state of thinking " (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 98). He believed that teachers' role was to be an expert in how, not what, participants learn and the art of asking questions rather than providing answers (Glen, 1996; Horton & Freire, 1990).

Another emphasis in the Highlander school was the central focus of allowing (and encouraging) people to talk about their personal experiences in the workshops. However, Horton did not believe that sharing experiences was enough; rather, it was merely the starting place. He believed that the collective sharing of experience, with the support of the facilitator, allowed the group to go beyond their personal experience and to begin to see patterns playing out and to understand the reason for their particular circumstances. This allows participants to start to generate ways to change their existing circumstances.

Prejudice Reduction, Intergroup Education, and Anti-Bias Education

Historically parallel to the work of Dewey and Horton—but working in formal schooling rather than non-formal community settings—the intergroup education and

prejudice reduction movements and the subsequent work of the social psychologist emerged as a force in schools, influenced by the work of Gordon Allport in the 1950s. The intercultural and intergroup education movements are two closely-related pedagogical interventions that were developed in the 1930s–1950s, as "public" schools made efforts to respond to the racial and ethnic unrest and inequality of the Great Depression and the post-World War II climate. The intercultural education movement was developed in the 1930s as an effort to draw upon the resources of public schooling to meet the educational needs of Jewish, Irish, and Eastern European immigrants who faced nativism and religious/ethnic prejudice upon their arrival in the U.S. (Banks, 2005; Bradley, 2007). Challenging the existing emphasis on assimilation and "Americanization" in public schools, this movement attempted to appreciate the histories, contributions, and cultural characteristics of different racial, ethnic, and religious groups, as a "prejudice reduction" effort (Banks, 2005). Following World War II, when many of the previously marginalized White ethnic groups were integrated into mainstream White society through unionization and suburbanization, this mainstream schools-based movement evolved into the intergroup education (as distinct from an intercultural education) movement (Banks, 2005)

The intergroup education movement emerged in the post- World War II environment of the 1940s and 1950s as a result of social unrest from the "great migration" of African Americans from the South into industrialized cities in the North and Midwest. The movement called attention to "democratic and American Creed values and highlighted similarities among all Americans" emphasizing concepts, such as "tolerance and brotherhood" (Banks, 2005, p. 4). The intergroup education movement

focused on prejudice reduction in the 1950s, during the desegregation of schools following *Brown v. Board of Education* and infused school curricula with perspectives from different cultures to reduce mainly race- and religion-based prejudice and bias and to improve intergroup relations. Although the movement faded out during the emergence of the Civil Rights and Black Nationalism struggles, its core principles became a basis for Multicultural education in K-12 schooling in subsequent years (Banks, 2005).

The work of the psychologist Gordon Allport, published in 1954, made important contributions to intergroup education as it became tested by public school desegregation in the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education* (also in 1954). Allport argued that it was not sufficient to bring groups with a history of conflict together through integration, and in fact, such efforts would only increase feelings of suspicion, fear, anxiety, and anger that lay behind such conflicts (Allport, 1954). Rather, through his "contact hypothesis" Allport laid out a set of conditions needed to create positive intergroup contact, conditions which included "(1) equal status between the groups in the situation, (2) common goals, (3) no competition between groups, and (4) authority sanction for the contact" (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2000, p. 94). These criteria led to an important body of research, and to further criteria. Pettigrew and Tropp (2000) added friendship potential to this list of conditions. Yeakley (1998) added intimacy and personal sharing of identity-related experiences.

The criteria for effective intergroup contact have been explored through decades of empirical studies, and most research on intergroup contact has found support for the importance of these criteria in efforts to reduce intergroup bias and prejudice (see Pettigrew [1998] and Pettigrew and Tropp, [2000, 2006] for a detailed description of

these studies). More recently, curricular approaches known as intergroup dialogue have drawn upon Allport's "contact hypothesis" to create key design elements to structure intergroup encounters in classrooms or communities, particularly between estranged groups or between privileged and targeted social groups (see the "SJE Applications" section later in this chapter).

Critical-Liberatory Pedagogy, Feminist Pedagogy, and Critical Race Theory

In the first section of this chapter, through the entry point of personal storytelling as an SJE pedagogy, I reviewed three critical approaches for which storytelling is central; Freire's post-colonial Dialogic Theory, Feminist Theory, and Critical Race Theory. These three critical approaches inform the pedagogy of social justice education, and in each case, the personal storytelling of experience is incorporated as a fundamental aspect of theory. As mentioned, through his focus on social class, the post-colonial theorist Paulo Freire (1970) advocated for a mutual learning process and emphasized dialogue and a combination of reflection and analysis that is based in everyday experiences and action (termed "praxis") (K. Weiler, 1991). Freire claimed that both the oppressed and the oppressor are dehumanized by oppression, and he established humanization as the goal of liberation, which became central to many approaches to SJE (Freire, 1970; K. Weiler, 1991). Freire's dialogic education heavily informs a number of SJE pedagogies, including the practice of Intergroup Dialogue.

Freire's work was also the basis for other critical theorists in education who champion critical-liberatory and anti-oppression pedagogies, such as bell hooks and Henry Giroux. Through their critical pedagogical practices, these theorists regard

classrooms as spaces for transformation that emphasize critical thinking and questioning existing realities rather than as spaces where students learn from an expert in charge and how to obediently conform to and promulgate the status quo (Kincheloe, 2008). These educators place their attention on members of groups that are historically (and currently) oppressed in society, giving them tools to question the system that creates their reality and teaching knowledge that actually relates to and enriches their lives. For example, similar to the ideas of Horton and Freire, reviewed above, Giroux (1988) emphasizes the importance of educators understanding the context of students' lives, and he sheds light on the ways schools privilege some groups over others through both the overt and hidden curriculum. Giroux calls for teachers to be viewed as "transformative intellectuals" who should educate students to be "active, critical citizens" (p. 127; see also Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993).

Similar to Freire, bell hooks also regards personal experience as "central and significant" (when also placed into a historical and structural context). In *Teaching to Transgress,* she declared, "when one speaks from the perspective of one's immediate experiences, something's created in the classroom for students, sometimes for the very first time. Focusing on experience allows students to claim a knowledge base from which they can speak" (hooks, 1994, p. 148). hooks also talks about the value of having both the students and the teachers self-disclose in a process of mutual vulnerability, so that students are not asked to share anything that teachers do not (p. 37). hooks, Freire, and Giroux all discuss the importance of holding an ethic of care, hope, and love for all students at the center of their critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988). This

approach to learning, with a focus on love, room for personal experience, and mutual vulnerability of both the instructor and students are all central aspects of SJE.

As noted in the first section of this chapter, feminist theory and pedagogy centers personal storytelling, draws attention to an intentional practice of deep listening, validates the appropriate place of emotions in the classroom and establishes the importance of a simultaneous focus on process and content in social justice education (Adams, 2007; Stanley & Wise, 1983; K. Weiler, 1991). Critical race theory, the identity-based theories that emerged from the field of legal studies, also values experiential knowledge and lived experience of people of color (and other oppressed groups) as valid forms of data, distinguishes stories as either "majoritarian" or "counter-stories," emphasize subjectivity, the social construction of reality, offers educators an "innovative approach to 'voice'" and explores the ways stories can deconstruct power (Adams, 2012, p. 25; see also Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). All of these intellectual traditions (reviewed in depth in Section 1 of this chapter) have also influenced current approaches to SJE pedagogy, particularly intergroup dialogue (Adams, 2014; Zúñiga, et al., 2002; Zúñiga, et al., 2007).

Although there are other foundations that also inform SJE pedagogy, the traditions summarized above inform key components of SJE as an interdisciplinary practice and personal story-telling about experience as one dimension of that practice. Now that I have defined and situated social justice education and reviewed key concepts, goals, and pedagogical practices and foundations, the next section examines, in more detail, the two classroom applications of SJE that will provide the research sites for the present study.

Select Social Justice Education Classroom Applications

The present study draws upon two different social justice education applications within higher education, namely an "ism"-based, multi-issue, social diversity course and intergroup dialogue (IGD). Social psychologist Jack Dovidio and his colleagues, developed one helpful way of distinguishing and classifying different approaches to SJE, identifying them as emphasizing two different approaches, either "enlightenment" or "contact," as well as various combinations of the two (Dovidio et al., 2004). Dovidio conceptualizes "enlightenment" as increased awareness of SJE content material, as in "increasing understanding of, and sensitivity to the plight of others or to one's own role and responsibilities in creating social change" (p. 244). The second approach identified as "contact," is based on intergroup contact theory and focuses on structured interactions across diverse groups (Allport, 1954; Petttigrew & Tropp, 2000). Although the two social diversity courses in the present study would both fall under the broad umbrella of "social justice education," they vary to the extent that they center either "enlightenment" or "contact" in their pedagogy. I begin by reviewing the "ism"-based, multi-issue, social diversity course and will then continue with a discussion of the intergroup dialogue course.

Multi-Issue, Social Diversity Course

Definition and General Overview

The first SJE classroom application emphasized in this study, the "ism"-based, multi-issue, social diversity course, is an approach to social justice education that, according to the "contact-enlightenment" organizer reviewed previously, incorporates

more aspects of the “enlightenment” approach to learning about social diversity and social justice than are incorporated in the Intergroup Dialogue classroom application (reviewed in the next section). In its course goals and curricular designs, it seeks to maintain a balance between the “enlightenment” and the “contact” approach to SJE (Dovidio et al., 2004). The pedagogy of this course, like IGD, is interactive, group- and student-centered, and encourages students to learn from each other and from their experiences. Unlike IGD, it is not an explicit goal of the class to address the first of Allport’s four conditions for positive intergroup contact (i.e., equal numbers of different identities represented in the group). Although some “ism”-based, multi-issue, social diversity courses may be co-facilitated, this course is typically taught by a solo instructor. In the classroom application I used, the course is taught by solo instructors who are advanced doctoral students in SJE and who work with oversight from a faculty advisor and support from instructors of other course sections. The course meets two times a week over a semester, and the class size is intentionally kept small (capped at 30 students) to allow for an emphasis on active learning methods, including a variety of experiential activities and in-class discussion in addition to more didactic methods of information delivery, such as audio- visual materials, and short lectures (Adams & Marchesani, 1997; Bell & Griffin, 2007).

This course also differs from the “single” topic focus of an intergroup dialogue (i.e., race and ethnic identity and racism) by building between three to four specific social justice “isms” (racism, classism, religious oppression, ableism, for example) that are linked by conceptual frameworks described earlier. In this way, the specific manifestations of oppression (e.g., racism, sexism, classism, and ableism) are explored

within a conceptual framework for understanding oppression and liberation taught as conceptual organizers, for example, the cycle of socialization (Harro, 2010a), the individual, institutional, and societal/cultural levels of oppression (Hardiman et al., 2007), the five faces of oppression (Young, 1990), definitions of allyship, and ways to work toward liberation (Love, 2010) (see "Key foundational concepts of SJE" section of this chapter section). The course content then focuses on in-depth explorations of specific manifestations of oppression, such as racism, classism, religious oppression, and ableism, as noted above. These "enlightenment" dimensions of the course (conceptual frameworks, specific manifestations of oppression or "isms" as informed by the conceptual frameworks) are balanced by "contact" dimensions that focus on the shared personal experiences, safe spaces for discussion, and developing skills for effective intervention and action against social injustice (Adams & Marchesani, 1997; Bell & Griffin, 2007; Burrell-Storms, 2012).

Although the course examines one manifestation of oppression at a time, an effort is made to address how different manifestations of oppression intersect and play out simultaneously (Bell & Griffin, 2007). Thus, the multi-issue focus of this semester-long course allows participants to apply the conceptual foundations to multiple forms of oppression, noting similarities and differences among and between them, involving "a backward and forward recycling of key concepts across the designated subject area" (p. 85).

Because students get to learn about a number of manifestations of oppression, they typically have a chance to explore several of their social identities, whether targeted or privileged by social identity status, thus providing a complex, nuanced, ever-changing

learning opportunity (Adams & Marchesani, 1997). For example, a man of color enrolled in the course may have the chance to examine both how he is targeted by racism and how he may be privileged as a Christian or as a temporarily able-bodied person. This opportunity allows the student to understand the mechanisms of oppression and privilege from multiple vantage-points and may allow increased empathy and understanding of why students from privileged backgrounds may be unaware of their privilege (Adams & Marchesani, 1997; Bell & Griffin, 2007).

Anti-Oppression Pedagogy

The type of pedagogy central to the multi-issue, social justice education course could be classified as "critical anti-oppression," and this educational approach integrates cognitive development with experiential aspects of social learning and builds upon on all of the foundations identified in the "foundations of SJE" section of this paper, including experiential education, critical pedagogy, and feminist theory and practice (Adams, 2007). Many aspects of the curricular design and experiential activities in the multi-issue, social diversity course were drawn directly from these foundations.

Some central facets of this anti-oppression pedagogy include an experiential approach that emphasizes self-reflection, personal exploration, and expression of feelings, which can be new for many students depending on the academic discipline they are coming from (Bell & Griffin, 2007). This pedagogy also emphasizes sequencing the information, as well as learning activities, in an appropriate progression, such as from lower to higher risk, concrete to abstract, and personal to institutional (Adams & Marchesani, 1997). Anti-oppression pedagogy also underscores the importance of being

conscious and intentional about accommodating a variety of student learning styles in the course using models, such as Kolb's (1984) experiential learning model, to plan a range of activities, and considering universal instructional design to work with students with and without disabilities (Ouellet, 2005; Pliner, 2004).

Another central foundation for critical anti-oppression pedagogy includes the work of theorists who focus on social identity development (Hardiman & Keehn, 2012; Hardiman & Jackson, 1992; Jackson, 2012). Social identity development models

> describe a person's awareness and understanding of oppression in the social environment (and also "within" every person) as part of the developmental process … [and] describe differences in the ways that learners may incorporate, resist, or redefine specific manifestations of social oppression. (Adams et al., 2007, p. 17)

These models can provide a helpful map for facilitators to anticipate and understand participants' process of learning about social identity-related issues and oppression and places where they may feel confused, defensive, or overwhelmed. These models may also be incorporated into the actual content of the course to assist students in understanding and reflecting on their own process (Adams, Bell, & Griffin, 2007; Adams et al., 1997). Identity development models may also provide curriculum designers and facilitators with conceptual organizers for understanding students' development to help them create the most effective way to support students through the stages to learn and engage with each other and course materials effectively.

Educational Goals

Similar to the goals of social justice education reviewed previously, the multi-issue, social diversity course includes three broad goals, which are simply to 1) increase

personal awareness, 2) expand knowledge, and 3) encourage action (Bell & Griffin, 2007; Adams & Marchesani. 1997). These broad goals can be unpacked to explore further goals—awareness (of self and others), knowledge (of conceptual frameworks and historical, political, economic dynamics of specific Isms), action (recognition of opportunities for action as well as skills to take action) (Adams & Marchesani, 1997).

The initial goal of awareness involves helping participants "learn more about their own socialization and social identities, and their conscious and unconscious assumptions and prejudices" (Bell & Griffin, 2007, p. 70). Students may develop a more sophisticated understanding about the ways they are treated in society based on social group membership (either receiving unearned privilege, or unfair disadvantage) and may realize the need to re-examine previously held beliefs, assumptions, or behaviors as a result of the new information learned. The second goal, "expanding knowledge," includes helping students learn new information, for example, the history of marginalized groups, statistics about institutional oppression, and information about people who, throughout history, have worked against injustice (Adams, 2014; Bell & Griffin, 2007). Through this goal, students have the chance to expand their knowledge base and grapple with insights about previously learned knowledge or experiences. Another important aspect of this goal is for students to begin to make linkages between what they are learning in the classroom to new contexts, or specific incidents outside the classroom (recognizing critical incidents in everyday life) (Adams & Marchesani, 1997). A final course goal relates to recognizing everyday opportunities of inequality and injustice, readiness to take action against social injustice, and practicing the development of effective action plans. This last includes students' thinking about the "spheres of influence" in their life and learning skills for

intervening when confronted with oppressive situations, ultimately allowing participants to "see themselves as agents of change, capable of acting on their convictions and in concert with others against the injustices they see" (Bell & Griffin, 2007, p. 72).

Although the empirical research on multi-issue, social diversity courses is very sparse, the four studies conducted on this particular course suggest that it can be successful in achieving some of its educational goals (Adams & Zhou, 1990; Burrell, 2008, 2012; Nelson Laird, Engberg, & Hurtado, 2005). Adams and Zhou applied measures derived from several cognitive development theories to a multi-issue social diversity course to explore what social cognitive domains and skills most directly relate to the course content. Using Baxter Magolda's Measure of Epistemological Reflection they examined how students at different developmental positions grappled with the course content. The findings indicated a positive change on the cognitive developmental measures after participation in the social diversity course. Subsequent studies explored student readiness to take action (Burrell, 2008, 2012) and the quality of interactions with diverse peers (Nelson Laird et al., 2005).

Pedagogical Features

The pedagogy of the multi-issue, social diversity course features a variety of student-centered, personalized course activities and assignments, such as free-writing, pair shares, small group discussion, experiential activities, and video clips, to help students critically reflect about course material and make connections between their personal experiences, and the issues they are learning about (Adams, 2007; Burrell-Storms, 2012). Although students engage with one another in small and full-class

discussions, dialogue as an intentional communication practice is typically not part of the course in the same way as it is in intergroup dialogues.

As mentioned, the multi-issue, social diversity course is structured moving from lower risk to higher risk activities (Adams, 2007). Thus, the first few classes include activities, such as low-risk group building activities, development of group guidelines, and sharing hopes and concerns about engaging with the course material. At this point, instructors also present students with a clear rationale for the interactive approach (which can be very different from other classroom experiences that students have had) and also warn them about some of the feelings that may arise as they engage in the learning process (Adams, 2010; Tatum, 1994). The conceptual frameworks for the course are then presented to the students, typically over 5 to 6 class periods, as important organizers from a variety of academic disciplines that they will have a chance to apply throughout the course. All course material is supplemented with assigned readings (stemming from psychology, sociology, history, and literature) and reflective writing assignments.

After students have been exposed to the major conceptual frameworks for the course, four class sessions are devoted to each of four different manifestations of oppression (isms). As students learn about these forms of oppression, they are able to apply the conceptual organizers to each (for example, how racism plays out at the institutional, as compared to the individual level, or the particular ways that Jews have been stereotyped throughout history). Instructors may emphasize different frameworks in each ism, such that by the end of the semester, students will have been exposed to multiple manifestations of oppression and have had the chance to critically apply the conceptual foundations to multiple topics.

Personal storytelling has emerged as a core pedagogical practice that course instructors use to support student learning about each of the four manifestations of oppression. Four times during a given semester all the students come together for an all-section class meeting in which a diverse group of panelists share personal stories about their experiences with different social identities and oppression relevant to the specific isms being addressed that semester. These all-section panels, comprised of course instructors, members of the larger community, and students, are understood to be a powerful form of storytelling that allow students to hear concrete examples of how oppression and privilege plays out and offer a springboard for students to share their own personal experiences with each other in class.

The last two weeks of the course typically involve group projects, in which students work together in small teams and present information about one area of oppression to their peers, with an emphasis on taking action. In addition, action-taking is highlighted in the last few class sessions when students are invited to develop action plans, through considering the different spheres of influence in their life (Hackman, 2005). Now that I have offered a detailed picture of what the multi-issue, social diversity course is, described the educational goals, and major pedagogical features, I will review major features inherent to the second classroom application featured in this study, an intergroup dialogue course.

Intergroup Dialogue

Definitions and General Overview

The second SJE classroom application emphasized in this study, the critical-dialogic form of "Intergroup dialogue" (IGD), is a particular model of dialogue that was developed in the late 1980s at the University of Michigan, specifically for use on college campuses. Referring to the organizers mentioned previously, IGD would be considered to have more of an emphasis on "contact" (structured interaction across diverse groups) than "enlightenment" (although it contains elements of both) (Dovidio et al., 2004).

Before defining "intergroup dialogue," it is important to define "dialogue" and distinguish this communication process from others, such as debate and discussion. Dialogue, comes from the Greek word "dialogos" meaning, "through the word" (Bohm, 1996), and this word derivation suggests a "stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us" (p. 7). In dialogue, the goal is opening up and listening intently to others in order to understand their perspective, and perhaps, together, to generate an entirely new idea or understanding (Berman, 1993; Bohm, 1996; Huang-Nissen, 1999; Weiler, 2003). Participants are encouraged to bring their whole selves to dialogue, speak from the head and the heart, ask questions of each other, and focus on a goal of building relationships (Berman, 1993; Huang-Nissen, 1999; Romney, 2004). Rather than competition or determining the "rightness" of one position (as evidenced in debate) or breaking apart and analyzing ideas to come to a conclusion (as evidenced in discussion), the emphasis in dialogue is on collaboration and building mutual understanding (Huang-Nissen, 1999; Tannen, 1998; J. Weiler, 2003). Dialogue has a long, rich history beginning in ancient Greece and Native American cultures in addition

to the work of more recent theorists, such as David Bohm, and William Isaacs and the MIT Dialogue Project as well as Jungian and Gestalt psychology, Western philosophy, the spiritual and business practice of the Quakers, self-help groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Cross-Cultural Encounter Groups (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998; Huang-Nissen, 1999).

From these various foundations, there have been a number of models of dialogue that have evolved, which vary in their purpose, theoretical foundations and context (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001). The type of dialogue in this study, intergroup dialogue, is considered "critical-dialogic" because unlike some dialogue practice models that have an exclusively relational focus, IGD courses also emphasize developing a critical analysis of inequality and taking action toward social change (Nagda, 2006; Zúñiga et al., 2007; Zúñiga et al., 2002).

The critical-dialogic model of IGD is a form of democratic practice and education that was created as a way to "leverage" the diversity on college campuses and help students intermingle and connect across difference in an intentional, facilitated mutual learning process to explore contentious issues in a collaborative way (Gurin et al., 2013; Schoem, 2003; Zúñiga et al., 2007; Zúñiga et al., 2002).

> [This practice has been defined as a]face-to-face facilitated learning experience that brings together students from different social identity groups over a sustained period of time to understand their commonalities and differences, examine the nature and impact of societal inequalities, and explore ways of working together toward greater equality and justice. (Zúñiga et al., 2007, p. 2)

Intergroup dialogues are a student-centered pedagogy, in which meaning is co-created by students and facilitators, promoting "active, generative, and transformative connections and explorations" (Zúñiga et al., 2007, p. ix). IGDs bring together students from two or

more social identity groups that often have had contentious relationships or who have not had the chance to talk about their differences in non-superficial ways (Sorenson, Nagda, Gurin, & Maxwell, 2009; Zúñiga et al., 2002).

On college campuses IGDs may be credit-bearing courses that require assigned readings, reflection papers, and a group action project or non-credit-bearing co-curricular activities. In either case, they are guided by two extensively trained facilitators who follow a specific curriculum that is constantly adapted to meet the needs of the group (Maxwell, Nagda, & Thompson, 2011; Zúñiga et al., 2007). IGDs are typically 7 to 12 weeks in length and involve 12 to 16 participants and two facilitators. Each dialogue centers around a specific social identity, such as race/ethnicity, gender, class, or sexuality (Zúñiga et al, 2007), and the social identity groups highlighted often have a history of conflict or potential conflict (Zúñiga et al., 2007; Zúñiga et al., 2002). The groups are comprised of approximately equal numbers of people from each of the identities being discussed, and dialogue facilitators are also representative of the identities highlighted.

Critical-Dialogic Pedagogy

The pedagogy of IGD is rooted in all the foundations of SJE discussed in the previous section of this chapter. The very structure of IGD, which is sustained, has university sanction, holds a goal of relationship-building, and strives for an equal number of students from at least two different social identity groups, and mirrors the conditions of Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis. In addition to this structure, both the pedagogy and design of IGD courses are informed by the dialogic, critical-liberatory, and feminist orientations reviewed above, and many aspects of the curricular design and experiential

activities were drawn directly from these foundations. IGDs are labeled as a "critical-dialogic" because they emphasize both communication and relations between groups (the "dialogic" dimension) in addition to developing a critical analysis of inequality and taking action toward social change (the "critical" dimension) (Nagda, 2006; Zúñiga et al., 2007; Zúñiga et al., 2002).

Dialogic dimension. The "dialogic" dimension of IGD focuses on the dialogic processes that occur within the group, such as the way in which participants interact with each other and build relationships within and across difference. This aspect of intergroup dialogue has been theorized in the fields of Communications and Education. Communication theorists trace dialogic practices to the work of philosophers, such as Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin, who, as reviewed, focus on ways in which humans connect with each other in an authentic and meaningful way (Baxter, 2004; Gurin et al., 2013; Romney, 2004). In education, theorists and practitioners trace dialogic practices to Dewey, Allport, Buber, Rogers, Friere, Habermas, Burbules and other scholars who interrogate the limits of dialogue as critical pedagogy (Boler, 2006; Burbules, 1993; Ellsworth, 1989; Zúñiga et al., 2007).

Focus on the dialogic dimension of IGD is critical because in some cases, participants in an intergroup dialogue may not have had experience interacting across social identity groups, particularly connected to the dialogue topic (i.e., White people and people of color talking together about race and racism) and (or) their past communication about the topic may not have felt productive (Gurin et al., 2013). Intergroup dialogue offers participants a way to engage with these difficult issues using an intentional practice

that places a strong emphasis on dialogic skills, such as listening, suspending assumptions and judgments, and inquiry to find shared meaning.

Critical dimension. The "critical" dimension of IGD stems from Freire's (1970) idea of "conscientization" and involves participants critically analyzing their individual lived experiences and situating them within a contemporary and historical socio-political context to unveil the rationale for specific policies, practices, and patterns (Adams et al., 1997; Collins, 1990; hooks, 1994; Romney et al., 1992). With the support of assigned readings, film clips, personal storytelling, and experiential activities, IGD participants examine how they are socialized by those close to them to play certain roles in society based on different identities and the ways in which these roles are reinforced by institutions and our culture (Harro, 2010a; Zúñiga et al., 2002). Participants from both privileged and targeted groups investigate the origins of stereotypes and how oppression and privilege play out at the individual, institutional, and cultural level both currently and historically (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Although multiple social identities are recognized and examined to an extent, IGDs typically highlight one specific identity (connected to the dialogue topic), allowing participants to fully explore their status in terms of that identity.

Educational Goals

The carefully designed curriculum of intergroup dialogue is based on three over-arching educational goals: consciousness-raising, building relationships across differences and conflicts, and strengthening individual and collective capacities to promote social justice (Gurin et al., 2013; Zúñiga et al., 2007). *Consciousness-raising*

involves both the development of personal and social identity awareness and knowledge of systems of advantage based on race and other socially constructed categories of difference as well as the causes and effects of group inequality. *Building relationships across difference* includes fostering intergroup empathy and increasing participants' motivation to bridge their differences with others. Finally, *intergroup action* entails strengthening individuals' ability and motivation to take action toward social justice, both as individuals and collectively (Gurin et al., 2013; Sorenson et al., 2009; Zúñiga et al., 2002; Zúñiga et al., 2007). The curriculum of IGD is intentionally and sequentially designed with a focus on fulfilling these three goals.

Empirical research on the impact of IGD has increased substantially in the past 10 years (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Ford & Maloney, 2012; Zúñiga et al., 2007), even though it is still fairly sparse in higher education contexts. However, several quantitative and qualitative studies suggest that IGD courses can have a positive impact on student outcomes connected to all three of the IGD learning goals of consciousness-raising, building relationships across difference, and action engagement (Alimo, 2012; Ford & Maloney, 2012; Lopez et al/, 1998; Nagda et al., 2004; Sorenson et al., 2009). Additionally, according to Zùñiga et al. (2007), "national, institutional, and classroom studies using various research methods show clearly that college students' engagement in intergroup dialogue has a significant and positive effect on their preparation for democratic participation" (p. 59).

Results of a large field experiment involving nine institutions of higher education that examined the effects of participation in 26 race-ethnicity dialogues indicate that dialogue participants, as compared with control group participants, "experience greater

increases in their understanding of race, gender, and income inequality, their intergroup empathy and motivation to bridge differences, and their commitment to post-college social and political action" (Gurin, Nagda, & Sorenson, 2011, p. 46). Dialogue participants experienced larger increases in their cognitive openness, positivity in intergroup situations, as well as in the "efficacy and frequency of their intergroup action during college" (p. 46). Thus, current research and early studies clearly suggest that IGD courses can indeed have a positive impact on the identified learning goals.

Pedagogical Features

In trying to bridge the "critical" and "dialogic" dimensions, IGD pedagogy features a number of scaffolded activities to help promote the educational goals outlined above. These activities may be used to introduce concepts, cater to different learning styles, and move the group forward in a particular way (Zúñiga et al., 2002; Zúñiga et al., 2007). Activities are supported by assigned readings and different conceptual organizers, such as Bohm's (1996) "Building Blocks of Dialogue" (Weiler, 1994) and Harro's (2010a) "Cycle of Socialization" (See Maxwell et al. [2011] and Zúñiga et al. [2007] for a more comprehensive review of these dialogue starters and other activities).

Some of the pedagogical features of intergroup dialogue include "active and engaged learning" (i.e., experiential activities, readings and reflective writing assignments), "structured interaction," (meeting all of Allport's conditions for positive intergroup contact), and a "facilitated learning environment" (Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, & Zúñiga, 2009, p. 4). Also, attention to content and process, emphasis on dialogic

methods, and sequencing the dialogue in four stages are important elements of IGD's pedagogy (Zúñiga et al., 2007, p. 20).

The four-stage model that IGD courses follow draws from dialogue and SJE theory and practice to guide and structure the practice of group formation, exploration of group differences, examination of contentious topics as well as exploring possibilities for action taking (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001; Zúñiga et al., 2002). The first stage of the four-stage design emphasizes group formation and relationship building and includes lower risk activities, such as ice-breakers, development of guidelines for group communication, talking about hopes and fears for the dialogue, differentiating dialogue from other forms of communication, and practicing the skill of deep listening with one another. Stage two focuses on exploring differences and commonalities of social-identity group related experiences, through participant sharing and listening to racial and/or gender experiences growing up, and currently on campus, for example, a "testimonial" activity. Other activities in this stage allow participants to place the stories they heard into a larger institutional frame, considering prejudice, discrimination, and oppression. In the third stage of the dialogue, participants grapple with "hot topics," potentially contentious topics about which multiple perspectives exist, such as interracial relationships, immigration, or affirmative action (Zúñiga et al., 2007). In these sessions, participants are encouraged to reflect on assigned readings, openly share their perspective, ask questions, and identify commonalities, differences, and overall themes. Conflict is welcomed as part of the process, and participants are not expected to come to an agreement at the end but rather to have a more complex understanding of each other's perspective. Through a "dialogue about the dialogue" at the conclusion of each of these sessions, participants

have a chance to reflect on group process (Zúñiga et al., 2007). The fourth and final stage of IGD shifts the focus, moving from dialogue to action planning, both individually and with others. In this stage, participants share their experiences carrying out the Intergroup Collaboration Project ("ICP") in which they work in small, diverse teams to create and implement some type of action in their sphere of influence (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Through the ICP experience and resulting presentation, participants have the opportunity to do some reflection about the process and identify skills they will need to continue to hone to take action against injustice in the future. Participants also develop action plans and assess risk level, support, and resources needed to carry these out.

Storytelling about personal experiences (the topic of this dissertation project) is a pedagogical practice that is intentionally infused into the IGD curriculum. As mentioned, during the second stage of the dialogue, students and dialogue facilitators are all required to participate in an intentional storytelling activity, "testimonials." Through the "testimonial" activity, participants each share a pre-written personal narrative, focusing on their socialization into two different social identities. Through sharing these testimonials aloud with their peers, participants begin to know each other on a more intimate level, often making themselves vulnerable and revealing aspects of themselves rarely brought into an academic context. Following the testimonial activity, participants engage in affinity groups in which they have a chance to speak with others from a similar social identity group about their personal experiences and then share some of what they talked about in a "fishbowl" in which students form the other social identity group have an opportunity to listen in an intentional way to some of their experiences. All of these activities bring personal storytelling to the center of the learning process for students,

assist with group building, and give students a concrete base before moving to learning about larger systems of oppression and privilege (Maxwell et al., 2011; Zúñiga et al., 2007).

All of these pedagogical features of IGDs, including the simultaneous content-process focus, in combination with the intentionally created four-stage design help foster the educational goals of consciousness-raising, building relationships across difference, and intergroup action.

Summary of the Two Classroom Applications

This chapter section has provided a comprehensive overview of key information that informs the contexts for the present study, two different classroom applications that both fall under the umbrella of "social justice education." I began the chapter by discussing the terms social justice and social justice education and offering working definitions for the present study. I then reviewed key conceptual frameworks, and pedagogical practices common to this educational approach. Next, I presented a few of the core foundations of SJE from a number of different traditions. The final section gave an overview of the two SJE classroom applications included in the present study, a multi-issue, social diversity course and an intergroup dialogue course. The two approaches reviewed have many similarities in course content and as well as many overlapping pedagogical features. One major difference between these pedagogies is the emphasis on "contact" that is built in the structure of IGD in contrast to the "enlightenment" focus of the multi-issue, social diversity course (Dovidio et al., 2004). Another major difference lies in the fact that the IGD course has one major topic focus, allowing for an in-depth

examination of one social identity and the related form of oppression in contrast to the multi-issue focus of the social diversity course. The next section of this chapter will include a review of the literature connected to the particular pedagogical practice I will be examining in this study, the role of personal storytelling in SJE contexts.

Personal Storytelling in Social Justice Education Contexts

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, personal storytelling has been used in a range of social justice education contexts and movements toward social change (Ledwith, 2005; Reinsborough & Canning, 2010). This chapter section reviews emerging scholarly and practice literature to highlight the value of and practice of personal storytelling in the context of educational initiatives that hold social change as a goal and incorporate personal storytelling as a practice. Because of the race/ethnicity focus of the present study, the criteria for inclusion consist of educational initiatives within a higher education or adult learning context, specifically focused on the issue of race/ethnicity and racism. As presented in the previous section of this chapter, intergroup dialogue is a social justice education initiative with its own body of research, so the empirical studies lending support to and problematizing personal storytelling within IGD will be presented in its own separate section. I begin by reviewing the work of authors who focus on personal storytelling in social justice education applications more broadly (that do not fall under the umbrella of intergroup dialogue) and then review select descriptive pieces before summarizing empirical studies specifically related to IGD.

Storytelling in Social Justice Education Practice

The next section summarizes one theoretical text, four descriptive texts, and one empirical study that provide information about personal storytelling in social justice education efforts that do not fall under the umbrella of IGD. These summaries offer insight into both advantages of and challenges connected to this practice. First, I review a theoretical model of storytelling that is of particular relevance to the present study.

The Storytelling Project

Lee Ann Bell and her colleagues at Barnard College created an extensive collaborative work, "The Storytelling Project" (Bell, 2010; Bell & Roberts, 2010) that provides a framework for storytelling about racism and focuses particularly on the nuances of having members of both privileged and targeted groups talking together about race and racism. The authors present a collaboratively developed theoretical model to inform teaching about race and racism in multiple contexts. Investigating the role that storytelling plays in either disrupting or supporting the status quo, Bell and Roberts (2010) "sought to determine the potential to expose and confront colorblind racism and to suggest creative approaches for consciously and proactively tackling racial issues in diverse communities" (p. 2296). Of particular interest to these scholars were the ways stories from people of color can both offer critique of and ways to challenge the status quo and ways in which stories from White people that name what is often unnamed, when analyzed, can challenge their hegemony and help white students to examine and get in touch with their "racial blank spots" (places of unawareness) (p. 2306).

Bell and Roberts (2010) cite a number of potential benefits of storytelling for social justice including the ways that stories can increase accessibility of information about racism, stating, "too often, when we dare to talk about racism, name White privilege, and challenge color privilege, we tend to use abstract language that creates distance between ourselves and the emotionality that can accompany such talk" (p. 2302). The authors claim that storytelling can help students encounter the topic on an "embodied level" and really engage with it fully. In addition, they state that the aesthetic experience of stories can help students think more "creatively, intimately, and deeply about racism," and stories can help serve as a bridge between understanding of race and racism at the individual and structural level and also as a way to connect across difference" (p. 2303). They also talk about how the collective process of storytelling about race and racism can help students recall memories about the pains of racism that may have been "submerged or forgotten" (p. 2307). Finally, in addition to touting the many benefits of this practice, they offer a critique of personal storytelling, for example, the ways in which stories told by members from privileged groups may be used as a means to reinforce "individualistic relativism" (p. 2305) and not take into account differences in power. They emphasize the importance of "recognizing that some stories are supported and reinforced by the power structure, whereas others must fight tenaciously to be heard" (p. 2305). They warn that context, relationship between the storyteller and the listener, and the nature of power in society all impact both the reception and understanding of stories.

Bell and Robert's Storytelling Project Model (See Figure 1 below) is of particular interest to the proposed current research project. The model is centered around the "deliberate creation of a community of diverse members in which stories about race and

racism can be openly shared, respectfully heard and critically discussed / analyzed" (Bell, 2010, p. 20). The model focuses on four types of stories that participants share about race and racism which they identify as *stock stories, concealed stories, resistance stories, and emerging/transforming stories*.

Stock stories include the hegemonic stories that are most often told about race and racism in society by mainstream institutions, including schools, the government, the media, and businesses. These stories serve to perpetuate racism and are the stories that are "told by the dominant group that rationalize the status quo and are passed on through historical and literary documents and celebrated through public rituals, law, the arts, education, and media representations" (Bell & Roberts, 2010, p. 2310). *Concealed stories* on the other hand, are the personal stories that share the perspectives and experience of people of color, and the facts and statistics in social science data about the differential impact of race on white people and people of color (Bell, 2010). The telling of concealed stories allows people targeted by racism to refute or critique the messages that are so often promulgated by white supremacy. The authors define *Resistance Stories* as the rarely told historical and current stories of White people and people of color who have actively resisted racism and have worked toward social justice. Finally, *Emerging/Transforming Stories* are the new stories created within storytelling communities in order to "challenge the stock stories, build on and amplify concealed and resistance stories, and offer ways to interrupt the status quo to work for change" (p. 2312). Bell and Roberts assert the importance and value of each of these four types of stories for social justice, claiming that even stock stories, if analyzed, have value in shedding light on many taken-for-granted assumptions.

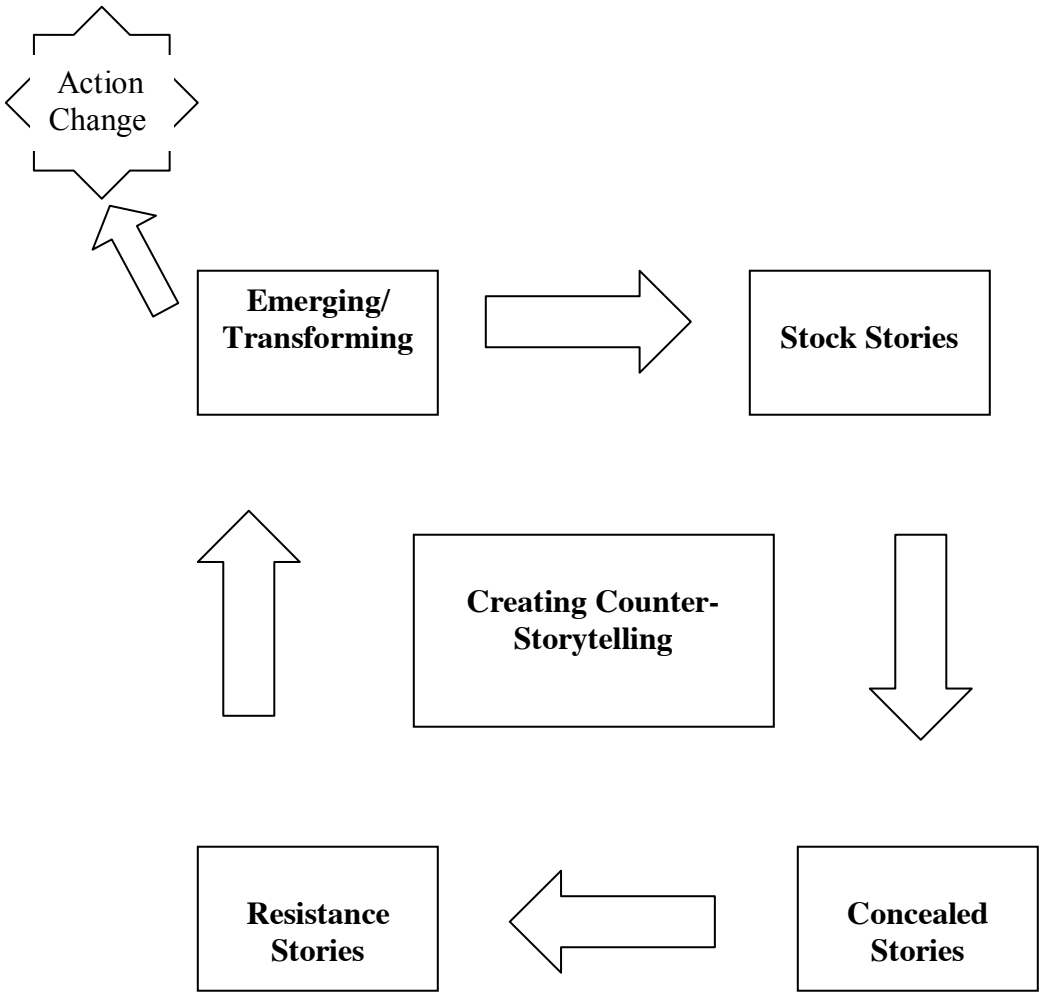

Figure 1. The Storytelling Project Model. (Bell, 2010, p. 20)

Empirical and Conceptual Work on Storytelling in Social Justice Education

Now that I have introduced Bell and Roberts' (2010) theoretical model, I will review five select empirical and conceptual articles about social justice education within higher education or adult learning environments. Operating within the context of higher education, Jehangir (2010) offers a longitudinal analysis of the impact of a multi-cultural learning community on first-generation, low-income, college students and establishes the

importance of personal storytelling to the students' experiences in college. This study highlighted the role of storytelling in combating isolation and normalizing some of the struggles that students of color often face on predominantly White campuses. This work also describes the role of storytelling in authenticating the presence of first-generation students in the academy, acknowledging their lived knowledge and "cultural wealth," which is a different form of cultural capital that is often overlooked in higher education settings (p. 545). The authors found that the process of sharing and reflecting on personal narratives also helped students with a process of "self-authoring" and meaning making of their experiences in "cognitive, interpersonal and intrapersonal frames" (p. 545). Finally, the study reported on the power of personal stories to forge "transformative points of connection" between students, and names the importance of risk taking in order to forge this connection (p. 545). Although this study does not speak to storytelling across difference, it supports the importance of allowing students from historically marginalized backgrounds to share their stories with each other.

Coming out of a different educational context, Wiessner's (2005) work examines how storytelling is used to engage adult learners in creating social change within the arena of "emancipatory adult education." This descriptive article identifies characteristics of storytelling that have the potential to facilitate learning and change, including the role of stories in individual and group meaning-making, the bridging role of stories in creating community through generating empathy, and creating care for others. In addition, Wiessner states, "Community results not from *sameness* made clear through narrative, but rather the appreciation of *difference* that leads to discovery of deeper levels of acceptance and connection (p. 104). Wiessner also warns of some of the potentially

coercive or manipulative dangers of storytelling, including the misuse of the power of stories, cautioning, "Through content of stories and the images they portray, educators can plant harmful racist and sexist images in learner's minds. Stories can free people but they can also keep them in place if they reinforce hegemonic values" (p. 105). She concludes by encouraging educators to be clear and transparent with their students about the purpose of storytelling, and also to blend storytelling with more analytic activities. This piece reinforces some of the benefits and potential dangers of personal storytelling highlighted by other scholars.

In another descriptive article, Chin and Rudelius-Palmer (2010) examine storytelling as a tool to address racial justice issues within the context of Human Rights Education. They report a descriptive study that shares how storytelling has been used in a variety of contexts connected to Human Rights and differentiate between two uses of these stories—relational (creating spaces to share experiences and build connections and raise consciousness) and instrumental (using stories to create systemic change and addressing racial injustice such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa). They report on the power of stories to connect people in profound ways, asserting, "The simplicity of storytelling carries with it the potential to transform people and how they understand one another" (p. 267). They acknowledge stories alone are not sufficient to create change; however, they argue that because of their prominent role in social life and the ways they can influence perception and interpretation, stories can have tremendous power. Chin and Rudelius-Palmer also cite the importance of stories to foster hope stating, "[Stories] can be seen as the oxygen and blood that nourish the inspiration, hope and energy to keep people working collectively for justice, equality, and dignity

without discrimination" (p. 268). This study lends additional support regarding the transformational power of stories, and offers a useful distinction between the relational and instrumental uses of stories.

While the three pieces I reviewed above focus primarily on the transformative power and benefits of storytelling, others critique this practice and speak to some of the challenges of this process, especially for White students. Applebaum (2008) offers a compelling critique of the use of personal experience in the college classroom, particularly the ways White students use the "authority of experience" in cross-race discussions to negate the experiences of students of color and to reinforce White supremacy. The author claims that in her experience as a classroom instructor leading conversations about race, White students often used personal experiences to re-center attention away from students of color and back to themselves and used their difficulty of understanding the experience of students of color as a distancing strategy. She argues that it is important to always place personal experience within a framework of systemic oppression and also reminds readers that it is "crucial to explicitly introduce students to the idea that experience is not unmediated and is always an interpretation that requires deconstruction" (p. 407). This article raises interesting questions regarding the appeal of experience, whether it is "beyond critique" because of its personal nature, and the ways that experience should be theorized in social justice education (p. 407).

The work of Fishman and McCarthy (2005) shed additional light on Applebaum's questions and demonstrate the limits of storytelling about race, reporting a case study of what happened when a White teacher of a Philosophy Course (in which there were 20 White students and 5 students of color) attempted to encourage a group of students to

share their personal experiences connected to the topics of race and racism. The discussion went awry, and the result was that sharing personal experience with one another caused more separation, individualism, and colorblindness and "students hardened their positions seeing their own and their classmates' conflicting perspectives as merely personal preference" (p. 348). The authors then offer a reflection of what could have been in place to enable a more productive dialogue to occur and conclude that there should have been more personal self-reflection and risk-taking on the part of the White instructor and also more focus on helping students place their stories of race within a historical framework of racism. These two pieces help address some of the difficulties that can arise in cross-race communication in which storytelling is used. Refer to Table 4, below, for a summary of the theoretical and descriptive texts and the empirical study reviewed in this section.

Table 4. Summary of Empirical, Conceptual, and Theoretical Work on Storytelling in Social Justice Education

Authors (s)	Context/Model	Methodology	Findings re. Personal Storytelling
Bell & Roberts (2010)	Higher Education	Theoretical article	*Presents a model for storytelling about racism in Social Justice classrooms that looks at the role of personal storytelling in disrupting or maintaining the status quo *Benefits of storytelling include accessibility, ability to fully engage with the topic of racism, and storytelling as a bridge from understanding racism at the individual to the structural level *Dangers of storytelling include reinforcing "individual relativism" * Describes four types of personal stories about race and racism: stock stories, concealed stories, resistance stories, and emerging/transforming stories
Jehangir (2010)	Higher Education – Multi-cultural learning community for First-Generation College Students	Qualitative Study	*Highlights the benefits of storytelling for first generation students including combating isolation, fostering connection, helping students assert their place in academia and engaging in a process of "self-authorship"
Wiessner (2005)	Adult Education	Conceptual article	*Reviews the benefits of storytelling in "emancipatory adult education," including the role of stories in individual and group meaning-making, the bridging role of stories through generating empathy and care for others and the ways narrative highlights difference *Warns that the power of stories can be misused to coerce and manipulate
Chin & Rudelius-Palmer (2010)	Community Setting – Human Rights Education	Descriptive article	*Examines storytelling as both a relational and instrumental tool to address racial justice issues within the context of Human Rights Education *Reports power of stories to connect people, foster hope, and lead to social transformation
Applebaum (2008)	Higher Education – Traditional classroom	Descriptive article	*Discusses the ways White students use the "authority of experience" in cross-race discussions in order to negate the experiences of students of color and reinforce white supremacy *Emphasizes the importance of placing personal experience within a framework of systemic oppression
Fishman & McCarthy (2005)	Higher Education – Traditional Classroom (philosophy)	Descriptive article	*Describes a classroom discussion about race in which sharing personal experience caused more separation, individualism, colorblindness, and led students to harden their positions *Suggested the (White) instructor be more self-reflexive in the class about his identities and that he help the students position their stories within a historical framework

In addition to the initiatives reviewed above, which fall under the more general umbrella of Social Justice Education, in the field of dialogue studies storytelling has also been cited as an important process (Bar-On & Kassem, 2004; Black, 2008; Walsh, 2007). This section reviews seven empirical studies that specifically focus on IGD on race and ethnicity in the context of higher education and the community. I first review two studies that focus on race/ethnicity dialogues broadly defined and then present five studies that focus specifically on the critical-dialogic model of IGD (see earlier in this chapter for an overview of the critical-dialogic model of IGD).

One study that offers insight into the role of storytelling in race/ethnicity dialogues is political scientist Katherine Walsh's (2007) extensive ethnography of 5-week community interracial dialogues in 18 cities across the U.S. Analysis of participant interviews revealed that paying attention to difference was an important factor in the dialogues rather than simply looking at unity and common ground (which was the initial tendency of participants). Walsh asserted that listening to and telling stories was a factor that inserted this attention to difference into the conversations. She claimed that participants "arrive at these groups with their feet firmly grounded in a unity-centered political culture," but through listening to stories in the dialogue, they shift to seeing and embracing the value of difference rather than forcing commonality (p. 114). Walsh indicated that an additional finding was that it was "partly the act of localizing the issue of racism through stories that opens participants' eyes to the extent of racism" (p. 163). This was true particularly for White participants, who had the chance to become aware of (and were often surprised by) the extent of racism through the stories shared by people of color. From listening to the White participants, the participants of color had the chance to

get a sense of how naïve and uninformed White people actually are, and the realization of this lack of awareness helped foster willingness to collaborate on projects with white community members.

Another interesting theme that emerged from this study was Walsh's (2007) discovery that participants frequently mention the value of hearing a story from someone with whom they have a personal relationship. She explains,

> The information conveyed in a story could be conveyed in different forms – in a more factual manner, as second-hand information, etc. But the fact that a human being says, "Look, this experience happened to me, someone whom you have established a bond with by engaging in face-to-face interaction in this room" means that the information likely takes on a different weight. Even though people interpret narratives through their own particular lenses, the information may carry a different impact than if it had been received in a less personal form. (p. 162)

In the discussion of her findings, Walsh cautions that there can be a tendency for some people (usually white people) to use personal stories as evidence in areas in which they lacked specific expertise, or information on a topic. She also raises a concern that the stories that people choose to share often represent the most striking examples, and may be given too much weight.

Another study of note is the work of DiAngelo and Allen (2006), who examined an IGD on race and ethnicity among future elementary and secondary school teachers. Although it was rooted in similar principles as the critical-dialogic method of IGD, the dialogue only met four times. In this study, the authors observed the dialogue sessions and conducted a discourse analysis in order to examine how White students used storytelling about experience as "confession" to deny and remain separate from racism and White privilege. The authors warn that when experiences are shared and claimed as personal, they then become uncontestable.

> These statements [such as "That's just my personal experience"] can reduce racial privilege to a feeling-state, something that she either feels or does not feel. If she does not feel it, then it is not important and does not count. (p. 10)

The authors assert that when experiences are shared in the feeling realm, rather than the "thinking" realm, they are less susceptible to challenge, and white students can reject the idea that racism exists because they have not witnessed it first-hand. DiAngelo and Allen (2006) also claim that the discourse of personal experience can function to absolve white students from having to take any responsibility for racism. The subtext the authors identify is, "We each have the right to our experience; you cannot question my experience, and I cannot question yours. In this way, we are each responsible for our own experiences and are absolved from any communal responsibility" (p. 15). In the discussion of their findings, DiAngelo and Allen emphasize the importance of "positioning" student stories within a larger historical and social context in order to buffer the phenomenon of denying privilege. This study is important because it is one of the first in the dialogue literature to explore some of the negative aspects of personal storytelling, particularly among students from privileged groups echoing the findings of others reviewed above (Applebaum, 2008; Fishman & McCarthy, 2005).

Storytelling in the Critical-Dialogic Model of IGD

In addition to the studies reviewed above, there have been both quantitative and qualitative research studies conducted on the critical-dialogic model of intergroup dialogue. One qualitative case study of student participants in a race/ethnicity intergroup dialogue conducted by Alimo, Kelly, and Clark (2002) affirmed the role of personal storytelling in outcomes, such as increased intergroup understanding and intergroup

relationships. These researchers claim that the combination of hearing personal stories and effective guidance from facilitators helped participants develop more complex and critical skills, and student stories "became the vehicle for learning about a subject" (p. 51).

Another empirical research that directly speaks to the process of storytelling in IGD is Anna Yeakley's (1998) qualitative dissertation study on how intergroup contact produces change for college student participants. The findings of her study indicate that personal storytelling about identity-related experiences had a central role in change processes for students in IGDs, increasing empathy and understanding and helping participants "piece together the many pieces of information (e.g., personal experiences of individuals, readings, and their own interactions outside of the group), and allowed them to see the diversity within groups and break down their stereotypes and generalizations" (p. 234). The participants in Yeakley's study repeatedly cited the opportunity to hear the personal experiences of others as the reason they were able to learn, or not learn, about other identity groups. Participants also referenced the value of hearing about these experiences from peers, rather than from adults, and reported feeling that personal stories had more credibility than the material they read in books.

Yeakley (1998) discovered that the level of intimacy in the sharing of personal experience was an essential factor promoting connection and encouraging participants to go beyond simply getting to know each other but to have an intimate level of self-disclosure about identity-related experiences. She also reported that the presence of factors, such as trust, honesty, comfort, and investment that help facilitate a "safe" context enabled this type of deep sharing to occur. If these factors were not present, the

process of sharing could actually be harmful and lead to negative outcomes, such as disconnection or increased stereotyping. This study indicates that the creation of a container for dialogue in which participants feel safe to self-disclose personal experiences promoted personal storytelling, which was a key process for connecting with those from different identity groups, which then provided information that fostered increased understanding and empathy.

The findings of a recent large-scale, multi-university research study (MIGR) also offer insight on storytelling. This study included a variety of qualitative and quantitative assessments and involved nine different colleges and universities with IGD programs across the country (for comprehensive results of the MIGR study see Gurin et al., 2013). Although the study focused more broadly on both race/ethnicity and gender dialogues, the findings can shed some insight about personal storytelling. In a quantitative study coming out of this project, Nagda, Gurin, Sorenson, Gurin-Sands, and Osuna (2009) report a finding that students in IGD courses demonstrated higher frequency of four communication processes (engaging self, appreciating differences, critical reflection, and alliance building) than students in social science comparison courses and found that higher levels of the communication processes produced significantly greater change in the students' critique of inequality and commitment to post-college action. The authors explicitly reference storytelling as contributing to the higher frequency of communication processes stating, "We found that engagement of self and appreciating difference were common processes in students' writings about learning from their peers….personal stories told by those who shared their social identities *and* those who differed were crucially important in the dialogues" (p. 8).

Using the same data set, another quantitative study by Sorenson, Nagda, Gurin, Stephan, and Gonzalez (2010) also references personal storytelling as a key factor influencing their finding that dialogue participants showed increased intergroup empathy in cross-race interactions as compared to a randomized control group both at the end of the dialogue and one year later. They highlight the mediating role that the four critical-dialogical communication processes played in influencing this change in empathy. The authors state:

> In interracial dialogue, both white participants and participants of color can empathize with each other as they share stories about their personal experiences as members of different racial/ethnic groups or about the injustices and privileges they have encountered because of the racial/ethnic identity. (p. 71)

This study was important because it went further than only looking at how White students might empathize with the difficult experiences of students of color (empathy as a "non-reciprocal process") and examined empathy in both privileged and targeted identities and the ways telling stories through the communication process "engaging self" and hearing stories from peers ("appreciating differences") impacted all students.

Some of the qualitative studies that came out of the MIGR project also have results pointing toward the integral role of storytelling. For example, a recent study looking at student engagement in intergroup dialogues through student interviews conducted upon completion of the dialogue course indicated that both sharing and listening to personal stories were commonly reported engagement processes in the dialogue (Zúñiga, DeJong, Keehn, Varghese, & Mildred, 2009). Another recent paper examined the link between listening to the stories, experiences, and opinions of diverse peers in an IGD and students' insights about difference, power, and privilege and found that 38% of the participants in race and gender dialogues had insights about power and

privilege that they explicitly connected to listening to stories told by other participants in the intergroup dialogue (Keehn et al., 2010). Thus, not only do students in IGDs report listening to the personal stories told by their peers, but these stories can help them begin to understand structural inequality. Another qualitative study on engaged listening in IGD found that the most often reported curricular activity associated with engaged listening was the testimonial activity (Zúñiga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, & Keehn, 2011). This is of note because the testimonial activity is entirely structured around listening to and sharing personal stories, demonstrating that students report being particularly drawn in by this process.

Overall, all of the empirical studies reviewed help reveal some of the benefits and complexities of the storytelling process in intergroup dialogues on race and ethnicity. They indicate that personal storytelling can be a source of student engagement and a central part of dialogic communication processes, such as engaging self and appreciating others, which can lead to outcomes, such as increased empathy, critique of inequality, and commitment to take action (Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, Gurin-Sands et al., 2009; Sorenson, Nagda, Gurin, Stephen, & Gonzalez, 2010; Zúñiga et al., 2011). They also point to the importance of creating a space in which students feel comfortable sharing intimate and meaningful stories (Yeakley, 1998) and raise some notes of caution as to ways personal stories may be shared when participants lack information or to discount the experiences of students of color with racism (DiAngelo & Allen, 2006; Walsh, 2007). The key findings of all of these studies are synthesized and presented below in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of Empirical, Conceptual, and Theoretical Work on Storytelling in Race Dialogues

Authors (s)	Context/Model	Methodology	Findings re. Personal Storytelling
Walsh (2007)	Community Setting: Civic Engagement / Deliberation / Social Action Model of dialogue	Qualitative Study (Interview data)	* Listening to personal stories interrupted the tendency of participants to focus only on similarities, and allowed them to notice cross-race differences * White participants became aware of the extent of racism and its impact on people of color *Participants of color became aware of the level of ignorance of white people with regard to racism. This increased their willingness to later work with white people to take action against racism *Having a personal relationship with someone increased the "weight" of their story
DiAngelo & Allen (2006)	Higher Education Setting (Graduate level) – IGD	Qualitative Study (session observation)	*Observed how White participants (women) used storytelling about experience in order to deny and remain separate from racism and White privilege
Alimo, Kelly, & Clark (2002)	Higher Education Setting. Critical-Dialogic Model of IGD	Qualitative Study (case study)	* Stories were an important vehicle for learning and played a role in outcomes, such as intergroup understanding and intergroup relationships
Yeakley (1998)	Higher Education Setting. Critical-Dialogic Model of IGD	Qualitative Study (Interview data)	* Personal storytelling was a key factor in connection, facilitating learning about other groups * The level of intimacy in sharing of personal experience was important to promote connection, and was essential for participants to have authentic self-disclosure about identity-related experiences * Presence of factors, such as trust, honesty, comfort and investment, that help facilitate a "safe" context enabled this type of intimate sharing to occur
Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, Gurin-Sands, et al. (2009)	Higher Education Setting. Critical-Dialogic Model of IGD	Quantitative study	*Storytelling contributed to the higher frequency of the communication processes "appreciating differences" and "engaging self" in IGDs compared with control and comparison group that then lead to higher frequency of the outcomes critique of inequality and action
Sorenson et al. (2010)	Higher Education Setting. Critical-Dialogic Model of IGD	Quantitative study	*Storytelling was a key factor influencing IGD participants' increased intergroup empathy compared to a control group both at the end of the dialogue and one year later. The four critical-dialogical communication processes played a role in influencing this change in empathy.
Zúñiga et al. (2009)	Higher Education Setting. Critical-Dialogic Model of IGD	Qualitative Study (Interview data)	* Sharing and listening to personal stories were commonly reported engagement processes in the dialogue
Keehn et al. (2010)	Higher Education Setting. Critical-Dialogic Model of IGD	Qualitative Study (Interview data)	* 38% of participants in race and gender dialogues had insights about power and privilege that they explicitly connected to listening to stories from other participants
Zúñiga et al. (2011)	Higher Education Setting / Critical Dialogic Model of IGD	Qualitative Study (Interview data)	* The most often reported curricular activity associated with engaged listening was the testimonial activity (centered around personal storytelling)

Summary and Discussion

Although there is a dearth of empirical research on storytelling as a process in intergroup dialogues on race and ethnicity and in other Social Justice Education pedagogies, the literature I have reviewed offers a rich picture of some of the strengths and limitations of this process. In this section, I briefly synthesize and discuss some of the overall themes from what I have reviewed and ways in which these empirical and theoretical texts have impacted my thinking and raised additional questions connected to personal storytelling in SJE initiatives. These themes include the potential benefits of storytelling, the ways social identity may impact the process of storytelling, and factors that must be in place to maximize benefits and limit the potential for harm of this practice.

Potential Benefits of Storytelling

Overall, the empirical studies presented indicate that when used as part of an intentional, multi-faceted, scaffolded curriculum, personal storytelling can help lead to positive outcomes for all students and is certainly an important and engaging process in social justice education initiatives. Specifically, the IGD literature indicates that sharing and listening to personal stories from peers engages students (Zúñiga et al., 2009; Zúñiga et al., 2011) and also leads to positive learning outcomes such as development of critical thinking skills and understanding and critique of structural inequality (Alimo et al., 2002; Keehn et al., 2010; Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, Gurin-Sands, et al. 2009), increased empathy (Sorenson et al., 2010, and commitment to taking action toward social justice (Nadga, Gurin, Sorensen, et al., 2009). The process of storytelling can help students form

meaningful connections with one another (Chin & Rudelius-Palmer, 2010; Walsh, 2007), and hearing personal stories about racism directly from someone with whom they have a personal relationship can increase the "weight" of the story (Walsh, 2007). Personal storytelling can also make abstract concepts, such as structural racism, easier to grasp and feel real and relevant to students' (especially White students') lived experiences (Bell, 2010; Bell & Roberts, 2010). Another benefit alluded to by some of the studies above is the way in which personal storytelling can insert attention to difference in conversations, breaking tendencies of colorblindness and focusing only on similarity when the issue of race comes to the table (Walsh 2007; Wiessner, 2005). Finally, hearing what Bell (2010) refers to as "resistance stories," the often untold stories about people of color and White people demonstrating courage and compassion, overcoming obstacles, and fighting against injustice can foster hope in students, and offer them an important model of something to work toward (rather than only working against something) (Chin & Rudelius-Palmer, 2010).

Impacts of Social Identity

Although the literature cited numerous benefits of personal storytelling, there were ways in which the process impacts students of color and White students differently. Some of the studies reviewed echo the ideas explicated by critical race theorists and feminist theorists that the process of storytelling can hold a great deal of power for participants in marginalized groups whose stories are not often not told for a variety of reasons (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; hooks, 1994). Specifically, the process of storytelling both among other people of color and also in mixed-race settings helped to empower

students, increase self-esteem, reduce feelings of isolation, allow them the chance to analyze their individual experiences within the context of structural racism, and help these students value their knowledge and assert their place within institutions of higher education (Bell, 2010; Bell & Roberts, 2010; Jehangir, 2010; Ledwith, 2005). In addition to benefits from sharing their own stories, Sorenson et al.'s (2010) and Walsh's (2007) findings indicate that hearing stories from White students many also benefit participants of color. Specifically, these studies reveal that hearing stories from White students can increase empathy and help participants of color really understand how naïve and uneducated many White people are about the realities of racism. This awareness can help frame racial micro-aggressions as ignorance rather than stemming from malicious intent. Although this does not change (or excuse) the impact of these actions, this understanding may be able to help participants of color navigate cross race interactions, and in the case of Walsh's (2007) study, motivate them to be willing to work with white people to eradicate racism. Hearing about White students who face challenges from another targeted identity (i.e., sexual orientation or class) may lead students of color to feel more comfortable connecting with them and sharing their experiences with racism. These examples challenge some scholars who critique IGD for being a non-reciprocal process in which the task of educating White students is placed solely on the backs of students of color (Dessel et al., 2006; Gorski, 2008), demonstrating that students of color can learn something from listening to White students.

The benefits and challenges of personal storytelling are different for White students. Hearing the stories of participants of color can help White students become aware, often for the first time, in an embodied way, the realities of racism in our society

(Bell, 2010; Walsh, 2007; Yeakley, 1998). Hearing these stories can make racism feel believable, and resulting feelings of empathy can help students become motivated to make change (Alimo, 2012; Sorenson et al., 2010). This can be very profound, particularly when students are listening to stories told by peers with whom they have a close personal connection (Walsh, 2007; Yeakley, 1998). Another benefit highlighted by Bell and Roberts (2010) is the fact that the process of having to tell their stories about race and racism, with room for analysis afterward, can help White students realize their "racial blank spots" and actually see how their experience is regarded as normal and is often invisible.

In addition to the benefits listed above, a number of the articles discussed demonstrate some of the complexity of personal storytelling for members of privileged groups. Specifically, the work of Applebaum (2008), Fishman and McCarthy (2005), and DiAngelo and Allen (2006) show how personal storytelling can serve to affirm hegemonic narratives about race and racism that reinforce white supremacy. Not only does this prevent White students from learning the true reality of structural racism, having their experience discounted can also cause harm to students of color (Zingaro, 2009).

Factors that can Inhibit or Encourage Personal Storytelling

Both the studies that tout the benefits of personal storytelling and the ones that critique this practice report some of the factors that are helpful to have in place for this practice to be successful, particularly in a critical context. Echoing the thinking of many of the critical theorists reviewed in this chapter (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988; hooks,

1994), almost all of the studies reviewed above emphasize the importance of contextualizing personal stories by linking the personal to the political and allowing students to examine how their individual narratives fit into larger historic and socio-political context. Understanding how structural racism works is not easy for college students (Schmidt, 2005a; 2005b). According to cognitive development theorists, manipulating information in this way is a higher order cognitive skill that often is not possible until the very end of college or once students enter graduate school (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998; King & Shuford, 1996; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). However, exposing students to this information through assigned readings and experiential activities, such as storytelling, can help them begin the process of situating themselves in a historical and structural context. Personal stories can "hook" students in some way that may increase their motivation to grapple with something that can feel very difficult.

Another factor that can impact the role of personal storytelling in education is the intimacy or level of risk-taking that students are willing to engage in when sharing their stories (Jehangir, 2010; Yeakley, 1998), which raises the important question of how to promote such intimate sharing. Yeakley's study indicates that the presence of factors, such as trust, honesty, comfort and investment, help facilitate a "safe" context that enables deep sharing. In her book about dialogue, Huang-Nissen (1999) states that facilitators should "model the desirable behaviors of openness, risk-taking, and vulnerability [because] when group participants see the degree of risk-taking their leaders demonstrate, they are more likely to be encouraged to follow the example" (p. 62). In IGD, having facilitators or participants who role-model higher-risk, self-disclosure seems

to be important to help facilitate "transformative points of connecting" (Jehangir, 2010, p. 545) and to students' willingness to grapple with structural inequality (Fishman & McCarthy, 2005).

It is important to consider how these factors play out in the two contexts in which I explore the role of personal storytelling in the present research study. Though coming from similar foundations, the multi-issue, social diversity course and the race/ethnicity dialogue course differ in their pedagogical emphases, and each has different strengths and limitations of maximizing the benefits and reducing the potential harm of personal storytelling.

Summary and Conclusion

The literature review presented above began with defining storytelling and continued with a summary of some of the philosophical, epistemological, and theoretical foundations of this practice. I next defined Social Justice Education and described the two specific diversity courses rooted in social justice education theory, research, and practice that are included in this study (a multi-issue, social diversity course and a race/ethnicity dialogue course). I concluded with a detailed examination of literature on the process of storytelling within race/ethnicity IGDs and related education practices. All of the literature reviewed helps locate the study within traditions of inquiry, provides information about both the contexts with which I worked as well as the social constructionist frame I held as I analyzed the data. My review of other empirical studies on similar topics helped me to identify gaps in what is known and demonstrates that the

present study can build on existing theory. The next chapter offers details on the specific research methodology I utilized as I engaged in this research project.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of listening to personal stories about social identity-based experiences on student learning in two different undergraduate diversity courses rooted social justice education theory, research, and practice. This chapter describes, in detail, the research methodology for the study I conducted. Specifically, I present the overall research design I utilized to qualitatively analyze and represent secondary data and the guiding research questions for the study. I then describe the practice sites and data collection methods and sources for Study A (multi-issue social diversity course) and Study B (race/ethnicity intergroup dialogue course) as well as the grounded theory data analysis techniques employed. I next address issues related to trustworthiness, and ethical considerations, as well as the impact of my role as a researcher-practitioner given my experiences with both sites of practices. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of some of the main limitations of the present study.

Overall Design and Rationale

To better understand the role of personal storytelling in two undergraduate courses focusing on issues of diversity and social justice, I employed a qualitative approach to address the questions guiding this study and a grounded theory methodology for managing data and analyzing secondary data sources (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A qualitative approach was appropriate for the study because, like other

qualitative researchers, I am "intrigued by the complexity of social interactions expressed in daily life and by the meanings that participants themselves attribute to these actions" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 2). The process of listening to social identity-based personal stories, the focus of this study, is complex, nuanced, and involves "subjective understandings and interpretations," (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 91), and I feel strongly that the qualitative genre was the best medium to capture the intricacies of this process (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2003). Rather than employing a positivistic quantitative approach to inquiry in which an hypothesis is tested in a laboratory environment or a field experiment and then confirmed or disconfirmed (Locke, Silverman, & Spirduso, 2004), I focused on the real-life natural setting of the classroom, using participants' own words to discover the nuances and complexities of personal storytelling in the classroom (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Piantanida & Garman, 1999; Rossman & Rallis, 2003), aiming to capture "context, personal interpretation and experience" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 92). In qualitative studies, "the researcher is the instrument" (p. 112), and so, throughout this process, I strove to be continuously aware of and transparent about my own subjectivity and location, both as a White woman and as a practitioner involved in the delivery of these two courses, through reflection on how my identities, life experiences, educational background, assumptions, and ways of viewing the world all interacted to inform my interpretation of the data.

The present study involved secondary data analysis (data that was collected as part of two distinct research studies which had specific guiding research questions) (Heaton, 2004, 2008; Hinds, Vogel, & Clarke-Steffen, 1997; Parry & Mauthner, 2005). However, although the data was originally collected with other research questions in

mind, I believe my research questions overlap with the intent of both of these studies. Thus, I feel the data reflect my own view of the world enough to alleviate the dilemma regarding the process of data construction by the primary researcher being in conflict with my own epistemology (Hinds et al., 1997). Though secondary analysis of quantitative data is a common and respected practice, secondary analysis of qualitative data is fairly new and complex. However, a number of recent scholarly books and articles suggest best practices for engaging in this unique form of qualitative research and offer additional strategies to bolster trustworthiness, which I used to guide my process, (Heaton, 2004, 2008; Hinds et al., 1997) (See Data Analysis and Trustworthiness Section of this chapter for more details).

As suggested by Marshall and Rossman (2011), I considered a number of alternative designs for my qualitative study to see which might hold the most power in assessing my research questions and the type of study that would elicit the type of information that I most sought. After careful consideration, I utilized a grounded theory approach, building a theory of storytelling from the "ground up" as I coded the data (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Specifically, I employed Charmaz's "constructivist grounded theory" approach. I further articulate my reasoning as to why this was my preferred approach in the "Data Analysis" section of this chapter.

In conclusion, I believe the design I chose for my study meets the three practical considerations of qualitative research articulated by Rossman and Rallis (2003), "Do-ability, Should-do-ability, and Want-to-do-ability" (p. 115). This study felt quite feasible in the time period in which I hoped to complete it, would add a great deal to the literature

on intergroup dialogue and social justice education, and I have a personal, sustained interest in and passion for exploring these topics in these settings.

Research Questions

The overall concern of this research project was to better understand the role of listening to personal stories about experience in student learning in two difference social diversity courses. The over-arching research question that directed this study was, "What are the impacts on the listener of hearing personal stories about race/ethnicity and other social identity-related experiences or issues in a face-to-face classroom setting?" To comprehensively examine this question using grounded theory methodology, I explored the following sub-questions in both social justice education pedagogical modalities included in the study.

- What stories related to social-identity based experiences do students recall and recount listening to in a multi-issue social diversity course and race/ethnicity intergroup dialogue course?
    - What content and issues do these stories reference?
    - What types of emotions are expressed in both the story itself, as well as the recounting of the story by the participant?
- What learning and insights do students describe after hearing these stories?
    - How do these insights relate to power or privilege (i.e., do they reinforce, or challenge the status quo?)
- Do the stories recounted, and learning described by students differ in their identities (race/ethnicity)?
- What are some ways that students, themselves, describe the role of personal storytelling in their learning?

Data Sources

The data source for this dissertation was secondary data collected in two undergraduate courses as part of larger research studies and was drawn from two different universities in the Northeast of the United States (Referred to "Crenel University" and "Bixton University"). Crenel University enrolls approximately 20,000 undergraduate students. The university is a predominantly White institution with approximately equal numbers of male and female students. Based on the most recent demographic information available on the university website (Fall 2012), the undergraduate student population consists of approximately 79% White students and 21% students of color. "Bixton University" is also a predominantly White institution and enrolls approximately 12,000 undergraduate students. Bixton University is also comprised of predominantly White students, enrolling 45% male students and 55% female students. Over 20% of the student body identifies as students of color.

Study A: Multi-Issue, Social Diversity Course

Study A draws from final reflection papers written by students enrolled in two sections of an undergraduate multi-issue social diversity course at Crenel University in the Fall of 2012. The course addresses four specific manifestations of oppression each semester, (i.e., racism, classism, sexism) as well as developing skills for effective intervention and action against social injustice. This multi-issue social diversity course is offered by the university's College of Education as a 200-level course that fulfills multiple General Education requirements, so the course sections include students from a variety of majors offered on campus and is typically taken by predominantly first or

second-year students. As outlined in the Chapter 2, the course focuses on issues of social identity, social and cultural diversity, and societal manifestations of power, privilege, and oppression. Active learning methods are emphasized, and a variety of experiential activities, short lectures presentations, in-class discussion, audio visual materials and readings are used to help support the course goals (Adams & Marchesani, 1997).

The course meets two times a week, for an hour and 15 minutes. Each section is taught by an advanced doctoral student from the College of Education and enrolls approximately 30 students. Graduate student instructors meet weekly as a group with a faculty supervisor to address course curriculum and delivery issues and to talk about pedagogy, best practices, and issues that arise in the course. During the semester that the research for this dissertation project was collected (Fall 2012), the course topics offered included racism, classism, religious oppression, and ableism and the broader frameworks of White privilege/supremacy, meritocracy, Christian privilege, and normality. The present study included data from two of the six different sections of the course, one taught by the author (a White woman) and another section taught by a woman of color.

Storytelling, the topic of interest in the present study, is an integral part of the curriculum in all sections of the multi-issue social diversity course. While storytelling practices may be used by individual course instructors to teach specific concepts or illustrate dynamics of oppression from the perspective of certain social groups or locations, this practice is regularly enacted through panel presentations four times during a given semester. In these multi-section class meetings, students come together to listen to a diverse group of panelists share personal stories about their social identity-related experiences within specific systems of privilege and oppression relevant to the specific

isms being addressed that semester. So, in the fall of 2012, all students attended panels related to the topics of racism, classism, religious oppression, and ableism. These all-section panels are a powerful form of storytelling that all students enrolled in the multi-issue social diversity course are exposed to.

Study B: Race/Ethnicity Intergroup Dialogue

Study B draws from interviews conducted with students who participated in two race/ethnicity intergroup dialogue semester-long undergraduate courses offered at Crenel University and Bixton University as part of a large national study in the spring of 2007. In these credit-bearing courses, students explore the impact of socially constructed identity-based differences and group membership and status in systems of power and privilege. The courses also support and encourage students to envision and practice ways to take individual and intergroup collaborative actions to address social injustice. This undergraduate course was offered at Crenel University by the College of Education and enrolled students from a wide variety of majors and year in college from across the campus. The dialogues were co-facilitated by graduate student instructors who were themselves enrolled in a practicum course that met weekly and working under close supervision by a faculty sponsor and process consultant. At Bixton University, dialogues were offered through collaboration among the Sociology, Education, and Women and Gender Studies departments and were co-facilitated by faculty, staff, and/or graduate students. At both Crenel and Bixton University, any student could enroll in the dialogue course; however, to facilitate placement into a topic section, each student had to fill out a "placement form" that included questions about their social identities, their motivation

for taking the course as well as other information about their past experience with similar courses.

The two race-ethnicity dialogue sections were both part of a national study, the "Multi-University Intergroup Dialogue Research Project" involving nine institutions examining the educational benefits of race/ethnicity and gender dialogues (Gurin et al., 2013) (the MIGR study will be described in more detail in the "Data Collection" section of this chapter). The curriculum and delivery of this undergraduate course was standardized across the nine institutions to support the national study (Gurin et al., 2013; MIGR, 2008). The curriculum was informed by the "critical-dialogic" model of intergroup dialogue which relies heavily on student centered, active learning and critical dialogic educational methods and practices (Zúñiga, Nagda & Sevig, 2002) discussed in the literature review.

Storytelling was also an integral part of the intergroup dialogue curriculum, most notably through an intentional storytelling activity, "testimonials." Through the "testimonial" activity, participants each share a pre-written personal narrative, focusing on their socialization into two different social identities (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Through sharing these testimonials aloud with their peers, participants begin to know one another on a more intimate level, finding out details about one another's lives that may not be typically shared in an academic context.

Data Collection Methods and Sources

As reviewed, this study involved secondary analysis of two different data sources, from two courses that have distinct, yet overlapping, educational goals. In this section, I

outline data collection procedures and information about data sources for both Study A (Multi-Issue Social Diversity course) and Study B (Intergroup Dialogue course).

Study A: Multi-Issue, Social Diversity Course

Students' Written Final Reflection Papers

Study A focused on data collected from the two sections of the multi-issue social diversity course at Crenel University. Over the past six years, the course faculty coordinator and doctoral student course instructors have been engaged in a collaborative process of collecting students' written work to document student learning processes to improve the course and to defend the idea of a small, interactive course format for student General Education "diversity" courses (as distinct from large lectures with weekly discussion sections). Although each instructor may assign different group projects and written assignments each semester, two assignments were standard across all six sections for research purposes. One of these assignments was a 6-8-page final reflection paper that students in all sections write as their final assignment in the course. The papers are worth 20% of students' grades, and the assignment requires them to respond to a variety of prompts to reflect on their learning throughout the semester. Specifically, students are asked to respond to questions about 1) hopes, challenges, and general course impact, 2) key conceptual frameworks and definitions, 3) specific topics of the course (i.e., racism, classism, religious oppression, and ableism), 4) learning from the experiences of peers, panelists, and instructors, 5) social group identity, 6) everyday examples of oppression, and action-taking, and 7) feedback for future course design and instruction. (See Appendix A for complete final paper instructions and prompts.)

As an instructor of this course for 10 semesters, I have read and graded a large number of these student final papers. Over this time, I have been continuously struck by how commonly students refer to personal stories told by instructors, panelists, and peers as an impetus for their learning about privilege and oppression. I hoped that including these final papers as part of this research project would give me further insight into the learning that students glean from hearing stories. In addition, there is a question in the final paper prompt that invites students to explain, in their own words, how they believe hearing personal stories from panelists or classmates impacts their learning. This is a lens on this topic that is not offered by the interviews from the IGD course.

Because I was the instructor of one of the course sections of the multi-issue social diversity courses that was included in the study, I was present for all of the class experiences and panels that the students described in their papers. Because of this, I could picture students' faces as I read the data and filled in gaps about what they were saying because I had also witnessed the experiences that they were describing. This helped me in some respects, since understanding context can help with making meaning of data (Hinds et al., 1997; Heaton, 2008). However, this can be problematic as well. I was concerned about attributing more meaning to what my own students were saying, filling in gaps, and making incorrect assumptions. In addition, as an instructor, I personally value the role of personal storytelling, and my standpoint on this may have influenced students. Because of this, to strengthen this study, I decided to include data from both my own and another instructors' course section. In my analysis, I included 8 students from each of the two course sections. I created a purposeful sample of participants, attempting to include

approximately equal numbers of white students and students of color. However, because there was only one man of color in one of the course sections, White men were over-sampled, resulting in an end sample of 16 students (4 women of color, 4 White women, 3 men of color, and 5 White men).

Study B: Race/Ethnicity Intergroup Dialogue

Student Interviews

This research project was based on one-hour interviews conducted with participants a week after the race-ethnicity dialogue courses had ended. The interviews were conducted as part of a larger multi-year, national research project, the "Multi-University Intergroup Dialogue Research Project" (Gurin et al., 2013; MIGR, 2008). In this section, I give a brief overview of the design and structure of the MIGR project and then speak, in particular, about the subsets of interview data included in the study.

MIGR National Study

The Multiversity Intergroup Dialogue Research Project (MIGR) was a large-scale collaborative, multiple-method, longitudinal research study that was funded by the W.T. Grant Foundation and Ford Foundation that sought to address some of the limitations of previous studies on IGD (Gurin et al., 2013; Lopez & Zùñiga, 2010; MIGR Guidebook, 2008). This large-scale study, initiated in 2006 and completed in 2009, involved nine different colleges and universities with IGD programs across the country. The multi-disciplinary research team collaborated for four years, created a uniform curriculum and mixed-methods research design to examine the educational benefits of intergroup

dialogues. The research design included 52 field experiments, with a total of 26 race/ethnicity dialogues (with 26 control groups), and 26 gender dialogues (with 26 control groups) conducted across the nine institutions over a three-year period. Students applied to be in either a race/ethnicity or gender dialogue and were placed in either a dialogue (the experiment group) or in a wait-list control group. In addition to control groups, the research design also included comparison groups of social sciences classes on related topics (such as women's studies and African American Studies classes), which allowed assessment of whether the actual pedagogy of IGD impacted outcomes beyond simply learning content about race and gender in a more traditional classroom format. A total of 1,463 students participated in the study, and each dialogue (and control) included approximately equal numbers men and women, and White students and students of color (African American, Latino/a, Native American, Asian American, and Arab American).

Assessment measures included surveys administered at three intervals: prior to the IGDs began, immediately afterward, and one year later. Qualitative assessments in the study included final papers written by all students after the dialogue experience. In addition, 20 of the dialogues (10 race/ethnicity and 10 gender) had three of their sessions videotaped, and in-depth interviews were conducted with students in 20 of the dialogues (Gurin et al., 2013; Lopez & Zùñiga, 2010; MIGR, 2008). This study was groundbreaking because it allowed assessment of effects across institutions, had a quasi-experimental design, and was one of the first studies to look at whether positive effects of dialogue hold over time.

MIGR Interview Data

The present study focused on analyzing a sub-set of the 248 student interviews that were part of the MIGR research project (Gurin et al., 2013; MIGR, 2008) from two different institutions. IGD participants were interviewed shortly after they participated in the undergraduate intergroup dialogue course (after the last dialogue meeting and final paper submission). Interviewers were not involved in the dialogue course and were intentionally matched to the interviewee by race and gender to increase student openness and comfort and to reassure participants that what they shared for research purposes would not been seen by their instructors nor impact their course grade. Students were paid a nominal amount in exchange for participation in the interview. Before the interview, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, reassured that their names would not be connected with their interviews, and that they would be assigned a unique identification number. Students also agreed to have passages from their interview anonymously quoted for research purposes (Gurin et al., 2013).

Trained interviewers conducted interviews one-on-one using a semi-structured interview protocol in which they followed a pre-determined set of questions but had a variety of follow-up prompts to choose from (MIGR, 2008; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The main topics covered in the interviews included 1) course impact, 2) social identities (thoughts and feelings about salient social identities in the dialogue), 3) engagement in the dialogue, 4) empathy, 5) communication in the dialogue, 6) insights and learning about power, privilege, and stereotypes, 7) disagreement, differences, and conflicts, and 8) working across difference (MIGR, 2008) (see Appendix B for complete race/ethnicity

interview protocol). Interviews were approximately an hour in length and were audio-recorded and then transcribed by trained project assistants.

The present study includes interview data from 8 students who were interviewed at Crenel University and 8 students interviewed at Bixton University who represented approximately equal numbers of women of color, men of color, White women, and White men. Thus, there were 16 participants total (4 women of color, 4 White women, 4 men of color, and 4 White men).

As mentioned above, a range of quantitative (survey 1, 2, and 3) and qualitative data sources (i.e., student final reflection papers, videotaped dialogue sessions, one minute papers) were generated by this study. However, after reviewing student final papers for these particular sections, I discovered that the focus of final paper guidelines did not lend themselves to the questions I was interested in researching regarding storytelling because the questions asked did not elicit responses in which students referenced stories they heard. I also decided that although it could be quite interesting to review and analyze video-taped materials, examining these data sources seems to fall outside my skills and interest as a researcher and beyond the scope of the present study. I believe that the questions asked by the primary researchers in the interviews, most closely mirror my own research questions, making this the most appropriate data source for secondary analysis (Heaton, 2004; Hind et al., 1997). The rationale for choosing the race-ethnicity dialogue at Bixton University as the second site (as opposed to one of the other seven colleges and universities included as part of the MIGR study) was because of its geographic proximity to Crenel University and also because it had lengthier interviews than many of the other sites, which increased the amount of potential data to work with.

It is important to acknowledge that going into this dissertation project, I was already familiar with the MIGR interview data from my years of involvement with that research project, specifically, assisting with all phases of interview data analysis and writing focusing on student engagement in intergroup dialogues (Keehn et al., 2010; Stassen, Zúñiga, Keehn, Mildred, DeJong, & Varghese, 2013; Zúñiga, Mildred, Varghese, DeJong, & Keehn, 2012). Indeed, my role and involvement in this research project led me to identify and articulate the research question guiding this study. From my experience analyzing the data for engagement, I noticed and tracked the impact of storytelling on student learning in intergroup dialogues, and these observations informed development of my present research questions. The present research project allowed me to have the chance to look at this process in dialogues in a more focused and comprehensive way.

I believe that examining the role of listening to stories within these four different settings (two race-ethnicity IGD sections and two multi-issue social diversity class sections) strengthened my study, allowing me to generalize findings beyond one particular context. By using data that were collected from different courses, I was also able to engage in triangulation, looking for congruence across settings and across data sources in the data analysis phase (Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data Analysis

Rationale for Grounded Theory Methodology

As mentioned in the "Research Design and Rationale" section of this chapter, I utilized a qualitative approach to investigate the questions guiding the study and

grounded theory methodology for coding and analyzing data. Grounded theory studies are by definition inductive and have a purpose of allowing a theory to emerge from the data to better understand a phenomenon (thus, ending with a theory instead of starting with one) (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke et al., 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This methodology is aligned with my personal assumptions about the world as well as the social constructionist theoretical framework guiding this study (reviewed in Chapter 2).

As I reviewed the history of the development of grounded theory over the last 50 years, I examined some of the different tenets or principles guiding traditional, emergent, and what has been labeled constructivist grounded theory (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006). I decided that because the constructivist research method underscores a constructivist approach to inquiry and espouses the assertion that the "world consists of multiple individual realities influenced by context," it was most in line with my beliefs about the nature of reality and the best fit for the theoretical frameworks and research questions guiding my dissertation project (Mills et al., 2006, p. 1). I appreciate how a constructivist grounded theory methodology brings the authorship of the researcher to the foreground, placing subjectivity at the center of the analytical process (Charmaz, 2006). I was especially drawn to Charmaz's call for emphasizing "thick description" by frequently including participants' own words in memo-writing and throughout the process of theory-building and report writing (Charmaz, 2006; Geertz, 1973). I was also drawn to the more literary, creative writing style that is an inherent characteristic of constructivist grounded theory, in contrast to more impersonal, scientific writing (Charmaz, 2006).

> Stated simply, grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories "grounded" in the data themselves. The guidelines offer a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules. (p. 2)

Because of the flexibility in this approach, I centered my analysis using Charmaz's approach, but drew from a variety of techniques from other grounded theorists to code and categorize data, and manage subjectivity in my process of analysis (i.e., Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Though more traditional grounded theorists (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) encourage researchers not to review the literature for fear of contaminating the research process, I reviewed the literature included in Chapter 2 prior to beginning analysis, regarding it as another voice, informing my analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Mills et al., 2006).

Data Analysis Procedures

In this section, I outline the steps I followed to organize, code, and interpret patterns of findings, which included conducting open coding, identifying segments of data relevant to the topic of storytelling, and engaging in axial and selective coding. The first step in this process involved organizing the paper and electronic copies of all final papers and interview transcripts into binders. Once I had compiled all the data, I began the process of analyzing the data, using an identical process for Study A (the multi-issue social diversity course final papers) and Study B (the intergroup dialogue interviews). Although I went through similar stages of analysis, I analyzed the data sources one at a time (beginning with the final paper data). Thus, I did not begin the process of analyzing the IGD interviews in Study B until I had completed my analysis of the final paper data from Study A. When I moved from my coding of the social diversity course final papers

to the IGD interview data, I attempted to approach the data with fresh eyes, being careful to avoid simply applying the schema I had developed with the other data set. I made an effort to take a fresh look and though there were a few differences, I discovered that a number of parallel patterns emerged across the two data sets. This is most likely due to a combination of similarities between the papers and interview transcripts and my own particular bias when interpreting the data. Below, I detail the steps I took to analyze both data sets, using excerpts from the final paper data as illustrative examples throughout.

Once the data sets were organized, beginning with the multi-issue social diversity course final papers, I engaged in open coding to break apart the data into meaningful segments and to generate concepts and categories, writing descriptive memos to record my thinking as I went along. After conducting open coding on the final papers in their entirety, I then engaged in microscopic, line-by-line coding on final paper and interview sections in which participants talked about personal storytelling in some way, either by identifying specific stories that impacted them or by referring to storytelling as a practice in a more general way. To capture this information I developed the code, "Individual Stories" to identify the passages in which participants recounted a specific story told by an individual panelist, classmate, or instructor. In these passages, the participant did not need to recount specific details of the story; however, it needed to be clear that they were referring to a story of personal experience (rather than a person's thoughts or opinions on a topic). Any reactions or consequences resulting from listening to the story recounted by the participant were also included. For example, the following section taken from the multi-issue social diversity course illustrates an individual story episode because it refers

to one particular story told on a panel about classism as well as the impact the story had on the participant.

> The one story that stays with me and still seems especially memorable was from the classism panel. Karina talked about how she grew up going to private schools in South America. Her and her family had a comfortable style of living, and they traveled often as well. Then, her class position changed from upper-middle-class in South America to working-class when she emigrated to the U.S. There were financial issues and it became more and more of a struggle to make ends meet. The reason why this story is so memorable to me is because it reminds me of my parents since they emigrated to the U.S. from Haiti. (woman of color)

In addition to individual stories, I also coded final paper segments in which participants recount and react to multiple stories that they heard throughout the multi-issue social diversity class or intergroup dialogue simultaneously. These stories could be all about one topic (i.e., all of the stories told by participants on the racism panel) or across topics. An example of a section that illustrates the ways participants referred to multiple stories simultaneously is included below:

> I found it really cool and interesting to hear and learn about the experiences and perspectives from my peers and the instructors of this course who have many different backgrounds. For example during the classism panel when everyone was talking about the class in which they were born and raised, it gave me an understanding of where other people came from. This is something I have never experienced before and it gave me a very emotional and powerful feeling. (man of color)

The excerpt above is referring to the amalgamation of stories on the panel about classism, and the students' learning that came from hearing the combination of all of the personal experiences (as opposed to just one particular story).

In addition to referring to specific stories, in their final papers and interviews, participants also wrote more general reflections about the practice of personal storytelling. Much of this information was in response to a final paper question that

directly asked students about how they see stories contributing to their learning. An example of a reflection about storytelling shared by a white man is excerpted below,

> The panels as a whole really helped me connect with each subject, because there were real people in front of me telling me about their personal struggles in life due to the different types of oppression. It really helped me put faces to what we were learning which helped me truly understand what goes on in the world around me. (White man)

Although the interviews from the IGD interview data set did include a few passages in which participants spoke about the role of stories in their learning, general reflections about storytelling was not as common in that data set because the interview protocol did not include a question about this, as did the final paper prompts.

Through my data analysis, I focused on both these general reflections on storytelling and the impact of specific stories that participants recounted to most effectively address my research questions. It was upon these sections of data that I engaged in open and axial coding to identify categories and themes and developed my final coding paradigm (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). After analyzing the sections of data relevant to storytelling, I compared my final list of codes with the list generated from conducting open coding on the papers and interviews in their entirety to see if there was anything I was missing. Throughout the entire process I wrote analytic memos to explore findings, to clarify emerging themes, and to think through areas of struggle (including a daily free-write to keep track of my emerging ideas) (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also engaged in diagramming and constant comparison to identify patterns and variations in the data (Charmaz, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Finally, utilizing selective coding techniques, I discovered the central category of the study and finalized the ways in which the categories all fit

together under this category to create my model of storytelling (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Because data analysis is a highly creative process, I treated it as such, taking the time necessary to allow the data to "incubate" (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 288) and doing daily free-writes to most effectively capture my ideas (Charmaz, 2006). I also utilized peer feedback throughout the process to clarify and hone my analysis.

My study differs slightly from traditional grounded theory analyses in that I analyzed secondary data. One key aspect of grounded theory involves analyzing data throughout the data collection process and tweaking and adjusting methods of data collection as the research process unfolds (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Because the data I analyzed had already been collected, I was unable to engage in this step (I talk about this further in the "Trustworthiness and Limitations" section of this chapter). Although I analyzed data that had already been collected with final paper and interview questions that already had been designed and administered, I followed the protocol for constructivist grounded theory for my analytic and writing process.

Once I analyzed the data on paper, I utilized qualitative data analysis software (NVivo 8) for purposes of organization and further analysis of the data. I uploaded all of the data into the NVivo qualitative analysis software program to help me manage the data, to easily retrieve coded passages, and also to keep track of social identity attributes connected to different coded passages and other contextual information. Specifically, NVivo allowed me to keep track of information about the storytellers (specifically their role as either a panelist, classmate, or instructor as well as their social identities), the story receiver (social identities), and the "ism" (the topic to which the story was about).

This enabled me to look at similarities and differences in the impact of listening to stories across social identities and topics. It also gave me information about whether participants were more likely to recall and recount stories told by classmates, panelists, or instructors/facilitators. Throughout my process of working in NVIVO, it was important for me to remember that though the program could assist with organization and management, qualitative software could not analyze the data for me (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Throughout the process, I had to continually remind myself that I, the researcher, was the instrument, and the qualitative software was simply a tool to facilitate my process (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Trustworthiness, Reflexivity, and Ethical Considerations

When designing qualitative research projects, it is essential to think intentionally about ways to maximize the trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis processes, and insure that the research adheres to criteria for ethical research practice (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). It is also important for the researcher to be reflexive about how their identities and experience shape their interpretation of the data. Marshall and Rossman define trustworthiness as the "goodness of qualitative research," (p. 39) and describe it as a parallel concept to the ideas of reliability, validity, objectivity, and generalizability, which are criteria for assessing quantitative research. They argue that trustworthiness cannot be separated from ethical concerns, so I discuss both of them together in this chapter section.

Trustworthiness

The qualitative methodologists Lincoln and Guba (1985) write about ways to increase trustworthiness of qualitative studies, specifically to ensure "credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 40). Because I utilized secondary data analysis, I was not be able to enact all of the methods suggested by Lincoln and Guba, such as doing validity checks with original participants or immersing myself in the research setting for a prolonged amount of time. However, I engaged in a number of alternative approaches to increase trustworthiness suggested by both Lincoln and Guba (1986) as well as by methodologists writing about secondary data analysis (Heaton 2004, 2008; Thorne, 1998).

According to Thorne (1998) an important step in increasing trustworthiness in secondary data analysis is to simply be sure to explicitly name the research as such in all written accounts because "the researcher as instrument may bias data construction … [and] secondary analysis undoubtedly, creates the potential to intensify or exaggerate the effect of such researcher biases, in either a positive or negative direction" (Thorne, 1998, p. 548). Another technique is to become sensitive to the context of the primary study and to take actions that can "help the researchers to feel close to a condition of 'having been there' and to imagine the emotions and cognitions experienced by the participants and the researchers during data collection and analysis" (Hinds et al., p. 414). I have been a facilitator and an observer for multiple intergroup dialogues on race/ethnicity, and so I have an intimate knowledge of this context. I also had access to the faculty advisor at Crenel University who oversaw one of the dialogues I included in this study, so I was able to ask her questions about the context of that particular dialogue as well as details

about the larger MIGR research study as they arose. I had more limited access to the faculty advisor at Bixton University; however, I was able to ask her a few questions about the context of the dialogue at that institution. Another way I was able to gain a better sense of the context was through listening to taped interviews with the eight IGD participants at Crenel University, which helped me to check the transcripts for accuracy, fix any parts that were inaudible, and allowed me to get a better sense of the subtleties of emotion that the participants were expressing in their interviews. I was unable to gain access to the audio files for the eight interviews at Bixton University, but these transcripts seemed to have fewer sections that were inaudible than the transcripts from Crenel University. All of these techniques helped me increase the trustworthiness of Study A. I was the course instructor for one of the sections included in Study B, so I had an intimate knowledge of that context. And, for the additional course section included in the study, I was able to speak with the course instructor multiple times as questions arose or when I needed additional information about students (e.g., clarifying demographic information). All of these techniques helped me to increase my understanding of the dynamics going on because "the immediacy of involvement in data construction often yields tacit understandings and nuances that may be impossible to reconstruct at a later time" (Thorne, 1998, p. 549).

Another technique recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1986) to increase trustworthiness is peer debriefing in which a researcher can "discuss their emergent codes, patterns or themes with critical friends to ensure that analyses are grounded in the data" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 40). I engaged in this technique by checking in with peers who have been involved with both of the courses I am studying (who also differ

from me based on social identity) about my process throughout data analysis. This helped me deal with the "problem of verification" in secondary data analysis, in which it is impossible to check transcriptions and emerging codes and categories with the actual participants in the study (Heaton, 2008, p. 41). I also spoke about emerging patterns and themes with other colleagues, friends, and family members, both within and outside of the academic environment to get additional perspectives on my ideas, codes, and to check my assumptions and biases. In addition, I talked about my emerging findings with both my dissertation chair and the faculty advisor for the multi-issue social diversity course, both of whom had an intimate knowledge of the sites from which the data were collected. During the course of my coding process, I met with my dissertation chair twice a month, to get feedback on my process overall. She reviewed my codes, read my developing memos, and answered questions I had about where data fit, and let me know if I was missing something or distorting my findings.

One specific area that was very important to get peer feedback on was related to the fact that I was one of the panelists on the multi-issue social diversity course panels whose stories participants referred to in their papers. One of the stories that I shared was one of the most frequently referenced stories and elicited a number of emotions from students, including anger. It is always uncomfortable to hear participants' unfiltered reactions to my own story, particularly when I am making myself vulnerable and talking about things not typically spoken about, such as race or social class. For these reasons, I made sure to check with peers about the ways I was interpreting participant responses to my own stories, to make sure that my slight unease was not biasing my ability to think about what they were saying.

Another challenge that arose was because I was present for all of the panels, I was sometimes tempted to filter what students said about the stories through my own memory. I was struck by how often participants' accounts of the stories they listened to differed significantly from one another, along with my memory of them. While working with the stories, I had to continuously remind myself that they were all mediated by each individual's interpretation of what was heard, and I should only work with the interpretation that was written in the final papers, rather than add in details, or fill in gaps based on my own understanding or memory of what happened.

A final method for increasing trustworthiness in qualitative data analysis advised by Lincoln and Guba is simply to "triangulate by gathering data from multiple sources through multiple methods, and using multiple theoretical lenses" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 40). The very design of this study accomplishes this because I examined storytelling through two different courses across two different universities with two different types of data (interviews and final papers). This offers a breadth of understanding on the topic of the role of personal storytelling in student learning, increasing the trustworthiness of the findings beyond what it would be if I had simply looked at one practice application, or used one type of data.

Ethical Considerations

In addition to the techniques to increase trustworthiness, there are also some ethical considerations that I had to consider when putting together and implementing this research project. One included ensuring that the research adhered to the ethical standards for conducting research with human participants at Crenel University because informed

consent is a crucial aspect of qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). As part of the primary research study in Study A and Study B (from which I drew the sub-sample of data I analyzed), participants were given informed consent letters, in which they were told of the purpose of the original research, and they gave written permission to the researchers to use their interviews and papers for research purposes (See Appendix C and Appendix D for informed consent letters for Study A and Study B). Participants were assured that their names would not be attached to anything they shared, that all participants in the study would be given a unique identification number, and that transcripts of interviews and final papers will all be kept in a locked file. The proposal for the research project was reviewed by the College of Education Human Subjects Review Committee to insure that it meets the school's requirements for ethical research.

One ethical dilemma that arose related to Study A (the multi-issue social diversity course) was in regard to the stories that were shared by panelists throughout the course to which participants referred in their final papers. Although the panels are quasi-public and the panelists are speaking in front of close to 200 students at a time, the course director does request that everything that is shared by the panelists be held in confidentiality by the students. Panelists often share details about their social identities that are personal and share stories that they most likely not want to be public information. In addition, panelists often reference social identities that may be invisible to others and require disclosure (such as ability status, religion, or sexual orientation) that may have real life ramifications for them depending on where the panelists study, work, or live. Because of this, I kept the stories as anonymous as possible by creating pseudonyms and avoiding specific

identifiers. I also received permission from each panelist who had a specific story described by a student in my findings chapter.

Role and Identity of the Researcher

As I mentioned previously, in qualitative studies "the researcher is the instrument" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 112). Because of this, it was essential that I was transparent about and reflect on how my various identities, experiences, points of view and assumptions impact the meaning I make from the data (Creswell, 1994). According to Milner (2007), dangers "seen, unseen, and unforeseen" may emerge when conducting research without paying close attention to "one's own and others' racialized and cultural systems of knowing" (p. 388). And, in grounded theory analysis, the subjectivity of the author is placed in the foreground (Charmaz, 2006). For these reasons, I had to "systematically seek out my subjectivity" as I proceeded through data analysis (Peshkin, 1988, p. 17).

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the questions guiding this study are particularly relevant for me as a White women who values storytelling and is committed to addressing issues race and racism in society in professional and personal roles. My social location as White woman grants me access to many social privileges, privileges I was not aware of until I participated in a community dialogue on race/ethnicity and racism. In addition to identifying as White woman, I was raised upper-middle-class, Christian, and identify as cisgender and heterosexual and am a temporarily able-bodied adult woman. Except for my identity as a woman, all of my identities grant me unearned social privilege in society (Hardiman et al., 2007; Johnson, 2006). It is important to recognize

these privileges and consider how these identities may impact my data analysis. I also must acknowledge that I am a person who has been personally transformed through the power of a personal story and will be interpreting the information that I present through that lens. Because I first became aware of the meaning of my privileged identities through hearing a personal story told by a woman of color in an intergroup dialogue, I may hold this practice in too high regard and put my own experience onto others as I interpret their experience. Additionally, I am the child of two authors and a sister of a book-editor turned author and was raised my entire life with an emphasis on the power of story. I am also extroverted and thrive on authentic connection with others. This way of being was also important to consider as I move through my analysis of the data.

Finally, I brought to this research endeavor nine years of experience teaching undergraduate courses addressing a range of social justice education content and pedagogies. I care tremendously about making things more equal in our society and allowing all people to express their full selves, wherever they go, without threat of violence. I have witnessed, over and over-again, how hearing stories from peers impacts students' motivation and willingness to learn about emotionally-charged and cognitively complex social justice-related topics. I frequently use this tool as an educator and am familiar with the power of story that is implicit throughout the data I analyzed for this study. Despite my prior experiences with these data, I strove to undergo my analysis with a clean slate and attempted to suspend my prior views of it as much as possible.

Limitations

In addition to the rich information that this study provides about the potential of listening to personal stories in intergroup dialogue and a multi-issue, social diversity course, a number of limitations must also be noted. First, as mentioned previously, I worked with a relatively small sample size (approximately 32 participants) who all chose to enroll in an intergroup dialogue or social diversity course, so any findings cannot be generalized to the larger population of college students. In addition to the small sample size, the number of participants within each racial/ethnic and gender category is even smaller, so I must be cautious with any claims I make about the impact of listening to stories across both gender and racial-ethnic identities.

There are some key differences between the two data sources. First, the data from the race/ethnicity intergroup dialogue were collected five years before those of the multi-issue social diversity course. This time span may impact findings. In addition, in Study A, the final reflection papers for the multi-issue social diversity course are graded, which may have impacted students' honesty in talking about their course experiences. This is in contrast with the interviews conducted with the race/ethnicity dialogue participants in Study B, which happened after the semester was over and had no connection with students' course grade.

Another limitation is that I conducted secondary data analysis, and the data were collected by other researchers who did not have the same exact research questions in mind. Because of this, I was not able to engage in all of the stages of constructivist grounded theory, including analyzing data throughout the data collection process and tweaking the interview questions as I underwent the process of analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

I was also unable to enact some recommended methods to ensure trustworthiness of data, including validity checks with original participants or immersing myself in the research setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

A final limitation is related to my identity and role as the researcher. As mentioned previously, I am a current instructor for the multi-issue social diversity course and have a great deal of energy and enthusiasm for the course because I am currently right in the middle of it. Because of this and the fact that I taught one of the course sections included in this study, my connection to and enthusiasm for this sub-set of my data may be different from the data collected from the race/ethnicity dialogue and may impact my analysis process.

CHAPTER 4

STORYTELLING AND STUDENT LEARNING IN A MULTI-ISSUE, SOCIAL DIVERSITY COURSE

Introduction

> I have already brought up a few stories that have stuck with me from the panels, but I think the one that stuck with me the most was Cassandra's on the racism panel. Everyone else had spoken on the negative effects of racism in their life and Cassandra was there to speak on White privilege. Even after hearing everyone's accounts of racism in their life, I didn't appreciate White privilege until I heard her speech. One thing that really stood out to me was how she explained the idea of "good kids doing bad things." I had heard this a hundred times growing up whenever we would cause trouble, "They're good kids. They're just having fun." I never thought of this as being race related. After hearing different stories, I saw that this is a White privilege. I think that hearing people's personal experiences helped me connect what we were talking about in class to real life. I[t] made the things in the book more than just notes; it made them real and showed how they affected the lives of real people. (White man)

As the above quote illustrates, personal stories can play an important role in student learning about diversity and social justice. This White man attributes his ability to understand White privilege, a concept that can be difficult for White students to grasp both emotionally and cognitively (Goodman, 2001; Kendall, 2006) to a story he heard from a woman on one of the panels in his multi-issue, social diversity course. Her story of privilege, in contrast with some of the other stories shared by participants of color about experiences with racism, helped the topic come to life for him, enhancing his understanding, and making racism become more "real" to him.

The following chapter explores the way that listening to stories plays out for this student and 15 others by presenting the patterns that emerged in my grounded theory analysis of the final reflection papers written by each of the 16 multi-issue, social diversity class participants in this study. (See Appendix B for the reflection paper assignment description) As reviewed in Chapter 2, personal storytelling is a core

component of the multi-issue, social diversity course, both in class among peers and as part of the panels that are scheduled every semester in this multi-section course. In these panels, a diverse group of presenters narrate personal stories about their experiences and reflections associated with particular social identities and locations in systems of oppression that are relevant to the manifestation of oppression being addressed in the course (e.g., racism, classism, religious oppression, and ableism). My thematic analysis focused on the stories recounted by participants that were shared on these panels, as well as stories communicated in class by students or course instructors.

In this chapter, I start by providing some examples of the ways students described their thoughts and feelings about engaging with the topic of race/ethnicity and racism when they first entered the course. I then present the main themes that emerged from my analysis, related to my research questions, beginning with describing what stories related to social identity-based experiences students recount listening to in the multi-issue, social diversity course. I next illustrate participants' individual evaluations, and interpretations of both the stories they heard and the people telling the stories. I then explore participants' affective reactions and the cognitive and behavioral impacts of listening to personal stories on students ranging from new insights and learning and taking action. Refer to Figure 2 for a summary of all of the major themes that emerged in the study.

As I present my findings, I include information about the frequency of select thematic clusters that were recounted by participants to give the reader a sense of the prevalence of different clusters and sub-themes in the data set. I use the term "references" or "examples" to describe the number of times a particular thematic cluster or sub-theme emerged in the data. I also identify how many of the 16 participants made at least one

reference to particular clusters or sub-themes. Finally, when identifiable, I name the particular course topics to which the stories refer (i.e., racism, classism, religious oppression, and ableism). Because this is a qualitative analysis, and for some clusters and sub-themes "counting" does not yield meaningful information or address the questions I am seeking to answer, I chose to include frequencies only for select thematic clusters that were most closely related to my research questions. For example, because I am interested in the different types of story content that participants recall and described and whether any stories emerged more frequently than others, I included the number of incidents of the different types of story content in these chapter sections.

When I began this research project, I was curious about whether the stories recounted and the learning described by students differed by their racial-ethnic identities. However, this analysis was only possible in the IGD data set (See Chapter 5). Because of the multi-ism focus, the landscape was continually changing in relation to privileged and targeted identities in the multi-issue, social diversity course. This meant that participants had continuously shifting identity statuses throughout the course, so only looking at racial/ethnic differences in stories recalled, and the learning described was not as meaningful as it was in the IGD course, that focused solely on racial identity. In addition, because there was only one man of color in one of the multi-issue, social diversity course sections, I was unable to include equal numbers of White students and students of color in this data set. Because of this, I was unable to make meaningful identity comparisons for my findings.

Participant's prior experiences with the Topic of Race/ethnicity and Racism

- Prior experiences with cross-race interaction
- Perceptions of Composition of the class
- Prior Knowledge about topic
- Feelings / Expectations

Content of Stories Recalled and Described

- Stories about Targeted Social Identities
- Stories about Experiencing or Witnessing Oppression
- Stories about Living with Privilege
- Stories about Challenging Oppression

Making Meaning of Stories and Storytellers

- Evaluating Stories & Storytellers (valuable, unfair, courageous)
- Articulating oneself in Relation to Stories (similar / different)
- Grappling with Personal and Conceptual Meaning of Stories

Learning From Stories

- Insights about Difference
- Insights about Stereotypes / Assumptions
- Insights about Oppression
- Insights about Privilege
- Insights about own Ignorance
- Insights about Challenging Oppression

Emotional Reactions to Stories

- Feeling Emotions
- Feeling Empathy
- Feeling Connected to Others
- Feeling Connected to Course Content

Taking Action

- Naming an Intention to Take Action
- Taking Action

Figure 2. Summary of Major Themes in the Multi-Issue, Social Diversity Course

What are Some of the Prior Experiences the Participants Bring to Conversations About Race and Racism?

For many students, this social diversity course constitutes one of the first opportunities to talk and learn about race and racism in a systematic manner in an academic context. Developing an understanding of students' initial thoughts, feelings, and prior experiences with the subject can help contextualize their learning. This thematic cluster captures any references participants made about their thinking and feeling about race and ethnicity at the beginning of the course. (This does not include students' thoughts or feelings connected to the course in general or to other specific course topics.) It is important to note that students described these thoughts and feelings in their final papers at the conclusion of the course, so they provide retrospective reflections of their experiences upon entering the course. Notably, all 16 participants in this study reference thoughts, feelings, and experiences in their papers related to the topic of race and racism when they entered the course. In my analysis of this thematic cluster, I uncovered four sub-themes that emerged from final papers: 1) prior experiences interacting across race/ethnicity, 2) perceptions of the racial-ethnic composition of the class, 3) prior knowledge about race-ethnicity and racism, and 4) feelings and expectations about the subject of race and racism.

Participants' Prior Experiences Interacting Across Race/Ethnicity

Consistent with patterns of *de jure* segregation today, both White students and students of color mentioned growing up in homogenous environments without much cross-race contact before coming to college (Kozol, 2005; Tatum, 2007). For example, a

man of color stated, "Growing up, everyone that I was exposed to came from a similar background to mine." One woman of color echoed his experience, explaining,

> I have always lived and been schooled in predominately Black and Hispanic public schools. All my life, I was surrounded by people like me, who had very similar experiences… Even when I had an opportunity to make friends with people that were not like me, like in the Boys' and Girls' Club, I still chose to make friends with people who had material and cultural things in common with me.

A couple of the White participants mentioned a similar lack of experience with cross-race contact. For example, one White man stated,

> I suppose it [race] has always been sort of a taboo subject to me, since I was raised in a predominantly White, upper-class town; I had been living in a sheltered little bubble all of my life where these issues did not regularly come up.

Only one student mentioned growing up in a racially diverse environment (which was his impetus for taking the class). He shared,

> Though I am a White male, I've grown up with a diverse group of friends, so I wanted to take this class to learn what they may go through and how I could be, what I later learned was, an ally.

Participants' Perceptions of the Racial Composition of the Class

Student final papers revealed that the White students and the students of color did not perceive the racial demographics of the class in a similar way. In each of the two course sections, students of color represented less than a third of the students present (approximately 9 out of 30 students), and most were the only one of a particular racial/ethnic group represented. In their papers, students of color tended to mention a lack of racial diversity in the class and expressed fear or hesitation about not having more students of color present, since the topic of race and racism was a course topic. For example, a man of color stated, "I was a little concerned with the class itself. Our class

didn't seem that diverse, and I kind of felt out of place. I didn't think it would work having 3/4 of the class White." A woman of color talked about being "the only" Black woman in the class and her fear of being stereotyped and judged because of this. She explained,

> I was very fearful of taking this course due to identifying as the only African American female and racism being a topic of discussion. It made me feel very inferior, weak, and ultimately uncomfortable. People tend to judge, discriminate, and insult Black people before they are even given the opportunity to speak. I didn't want to be analyzed as a "mad" Black woman because I expressed my anger while describing a racist experience. I also did not want to be victimized and perceived as someone else's tragic case.

The only White student who mentioned the make-up of the class had a different perception. She stated,

> As I looked around the room at our first class meeting, we had a significant amount of Black people, and I was worried talking about racism would be very unsettling for the class as a whole. I thought this would be a great challenge, and I was honestly not looking forward to it at all.

This pattern of different perceptions of the make-up of the class (or the climate of campuses in general) depending on one's racial identity is not unique to this study and commonly plays out in higher education settings (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Tatum 2007).

Participants' Prior Knowledge About Race and Racism

Final papers revealed that participants entered the course with varying amounts of knowledge connected to race and racism. Almost all of the White participants discussed entering the class feeling like racism was a topic that they knew a great deal about, exhibiting a "been there, done that" attitude about the topic. However, most of these students revealed that after delving into the topic, they realized how much they actually did not know or that they really did not have to think about the topic very often. For

example, a White woman said, “This topic was the most familiar to me because it was the one that is most talked about in institutions and the media,” and a White man said, “Racism is something that we are all taught about in school.” One White man said he was aware racism existed, but then acknowledged that it is “not necessarily [a] factor that affects me directly. I tend to overlook [its] existence in society.” Another White man stated, “Coming into this class, I never really thought racism was a big problem in our nation anymore. I thought there were only isolated incidents that occurred in the southern parts of the country.”

Only one student of color mentioned that she had previous knowledge about the topic of racism from her academic courses, but a number of students of color mentioned feeling knowledgeable about the topic from personal experiences. For example, a woman of color stated, “I was fired up for talking about racism because I have experienced racism in small scale from other people and in a large scale by institutions.” Her personal experience with the topic placed a burden on this particular student, making her feel as if it were her responsibility to share her stories to educate the other students in the course. She explained,

> I felt challenged to make sure that my class understood that even though I was the only Latina, and I can't speak for all Latinos, I could serve as a diversifying subject in the class. I felt like seeing myself in that position I was in many ways forced to tell my stories. If I didn't tell my stories, the class would miss out on the very small diversity in the class.

This sentiment of feeling “forced” to tell her stories is in line with many critiques of diversity courses by scholars who claim that they put the onus of educating White students on the backs of the few students of color in the course (Dessel, Rogge, & Garlington, 2006; Gorski, 2008).

Participants' Feelings and Expectations About the Subject of Race and Racism

The topic of race and racism evoked anxiety, discomfort, and/or fear for both students of color and White students; however, they described the reason behind this distress in different ways. One White woman anticipated that learning about race would be "awkward," while one White man entered the course dreading the topic of race, stating, "I was expecting to hear about racism all day long and all this backwards stuff about how everything White people did was wrong and Black people could do no wrong." Some students of color also expressed discomfort about the topic. One woman of color stated, "As a student of an oppressed racial group, I had my reserves about discussing this topic. I was afraid of all the ignorance and negativity usually associated with racism." Another woman of color expressed fear that a White classmate would

> make a statement or assumption about one of the categories that I identify with [pertaining to race and class,], which would have upset me and caused me to make an even worse comment back at them, thereby causing this awkward tension in the classroom.

One concern that was shared by both students of color and White students was fear that they would say something to unintentionally offend their classmates. A White man expressed, "What I was most worried about was that I would try to describe a scenario where oppression was taking place, and I would by accident use a word that was politically incorrect, and end up offending someone in class." The Latina woman quoted above (who had felt it was her responsibility to educate her peers) also shared,

> I was only concerned for offending or making anyone in class feel bad because of the stories I told. No one that is in our class was to blame of any negative experiences I had in the past. I am someone who falls under several of the categories of oppressed group we talked about in class, and I felt like I might say some negative things about the privileged groups.

Consistent with other researcher's findings (Ancis, Selacek, & Mohr, 2000; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2006; Tatum, 1997; 2007; Zúñiga et al., 1996) participants of color and White students alike expressed some hesitancy or anxiety about engaging in discussions about the topic of race-ethnicity and racism, though often for different reasons, and they also differed on their knowledge about the topic of race and racism when entering the course as well as their impressions of the make-up of the course. However, they shared fear and anxiety about what the topic could bring up and the potential for offending their classmates (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Tatum, 2007). This background context is important to acknowledge prior to examining the impact that hearing personal stories about race and racism from their instructors, peers, and panelists had on students because it impacts the learning environment.

What Stories are Recalled and Described by Participants?

As evidenced by the quote in the introduction to this chapter, certain stories "grab" participants' attention and are the stories they are able to recall and describe at the end of the semester in their final paper. Participants listened to many different personal stories throughout the semester, expressed by panelists, as well as by instructors and peers in class. In analyzing the role of personal storytelling in student learning, it is important to examine which of these stories students remember, who told the stories, and what these stories were about. To explore these questions, I coded the material in which participants referenced a specific story or multiple stories to determine the "story content," which I defined as any pieces of information that a storyteller shared about a personal experience that was described by a participant (story receiver) in their final

papers. My thematic analysis revealed a total of 80 examples of story content, with at least one mentioned by each of the 16 participants. These stories were narrated by panelists, classmates, and/or the course instructors, all who talked about experiences related to singular or intersecting privileged and targeted social identity groups. The stories panelists and students conveyed were sometimes recounted by multiple students in their papers. To track this, I have labeled any story that was recalled and described by at least 4 participants a "signature story" (Wong et al., 2013, p. 184). There were five stories that fit my criteria of a signature story, one related to each course topic, and two about racism.

From my thematic analysis of all 80 final paper excerpts coded as "story content," four over-arching thematic clusters emerged from the data. These included 1) stories about the teller's targeted social identity (11 examples recounted by 9 participants), 2) stories about witnessing or experiencing oppression (46 examples recounted by all 16 participants), 3) stories about living with a privileged social identity (10 examples recounted by 7 participants), and 4) stories about challenging oppression (13 examples recounted by 10 participants). The stories in each of these clusters were related to all four of the course topics in the social diversity course (Racism, Classism, Religious Oppression, and Ableism), however, because this study examines the impact of stories related to race and racism, I will highlight that topic. I also include a few examples of stories connected to other manifestations of privilege and oppression within each sub-theme to illustrate the themes across topics.

Stories About the Teller's Targeted Social Identities

This thematic cluster captures stories about the teller's targeted social identities that were not explicitly connected to dynamics of oppression or privilege. The content of these stories dealt with invisible targeted social identities, which are often more difficult to recognize by simply looking or interacting casually with an individual (such as mental disability, sexuality, or social class). There were a total of 11 stories about targeted social identities, recounted by 9 different participants, all of which were about the topics of social class and ability. For example, one student reflected on a story told by a classmate, Paloma. He stated,

> One student who really stood out to me was Paloma. She always had opinions about the things we talked about it class, which is a positive thing. I remember one day we were talking about classism, and she was brave enough to share her story. Before she informed the class of her economic class, I would have assumed she was middle-class. I was wrong because she revealed that her family was a member of the working-class. (White man)

Along with social class, there were a total of 8 stories that dealt with the topic of hidden disabilities, for example, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder. All of these passages referred to stories that were narrated on the panel on ableism in which the panelists shared information about living with their disability, without specifically referring to oppression they face from society by virtue of these identities. For example, the following quote illustrates a final paper passage that refers to story content related to depression.

> There was one story …that stayed with me and seemed especially memorable. It was during the ableism panel when Kiara talked about her struggle with depression. She pointed out that the depression happens every so often and out of the blue, and it is not a constant thing. There were days where she would have no energy to get out of bed. (White man)

Because one of the course goals of the multi-issue, social diversity course is awareness about social identities (Adams & Marchesani, 1997; Bell & Griffin, 2007), hearing stories about invisible targeted identities is a rich opportunity for students who may not have had the opportunity to meet anyone who has come out and shared about these identities and how they impact their life.

Stories About Experiencing or Witnessing Oppression

One type of story that was particularly gripping for participants was listening to descriptions of times when a storyteller was mistreated, discriminated against, or denied access to resources because of one of their social identities. These stories were typically told by the person experiencing the oppression themselves; however, a few were described by people witnessing the experiences of others. This was, by far, the most robust sub-theme that emerged, with more than four times as many examples than any of the other 3. To distinguish between experiencing oppression and witnessing oppression, I have separated this sub-theme into "Stories about Experiencing Oppression from the Targeted Social Identity Perspective" and "Stories about Witnessing Oppression from the Privileged Social Identity Perspective."

Stories About Experiencing Oppression from the Targeted Social Identity Perspective

Participants wrote about a variety of experiences they heard relating to the way that panelists and classmates experienced oppression, and over a third of these examples (10) were stories describing mistreatment in childhood (and the other stories were about

experiencing oppression as an adult) (20). To differentiate the two, I defined "childhood" as anything that happened what the storyteller was 18 or under.

Stories About Experiencing Oppression in Childhood

Of the 10 stories recalled and described about oppression from the target perspective that happened in childhood, all were related the topics of racism and classism. The stories about classism were generally about experiences with growing up poor and not having access to basic things that were needed. The stories about racism were about ways in which the storytellers were treated poorly because of their racial/ethnic background by either other young people or adults. For example, a White woman recounted the following story conveyed by a woman of color, Vanessa, on the racism panel.

> One of the most impacting stories to me was Vanessa's during the racism panel. She talked about a personal story that happened to her when she was very young. She said that she was told she couldn't hold a baby because the mother couldn't tell if her hands were dirty or clean. It's appalling that as a child she had to try and understand what this woman meant. (White woman)

This story shows how this adult's racism impacted a young girl of color. Although that particular story was told by one of the panelists, 2 of the 5 stories about the topic of racism referred to a story told by a peer classmate. The following story was shared by a woman of color, Hailey, in one of the course sections about experiencing racism in her elementary school. It was recounted by both a White woman and by a White man, who described the story in the following way,

> One girl in class said that when her mother went to the office to drop off her lunch money, the clerk at the desk said that the school could "help" the family out with lunch money. The girl's father is a doctor, and mother is a professional as well.

> They certainly do not need it but because of her skin color, she was oppressed and the clerk assumed that she had little money. (White man)

This example also demonstrates the intersection of identities in stories. (It deals with both racism and classism simultaneously)

In addition to experiencing oppression from external sources as children, 4 participants also described a story told by a woman of color, Isabel, on the racism panel, about the ways she grappled with internalized oppression as a child (making this story meet the criteria for a "signature story"). Internalized oppression, or "the enemy from within," results from people from oppressed groups being immersed in all of the negative messages about their group and accepting these negative messages as true, either on a conscious or unconscious level (Fletcher, 1999). All of the references to internalized oppression in the final papers related to stories that were told by Isabel on the racism panel about her struggles with the dominant White standards of beauty in this country. A woman of color who listened to this story explained in her paper, "Isabel spoke of wanting to really be like the prettiest girls in her school who happened to be White. She wanted to be accepted the way they were because of the color of their skin, and eyes, the texture of their hair and several other characteristics." One White male participant said, "Isabel's story from the panel showed how real internal racism is and the effects it can have on someone's life." All of the examples about experiencing oppression in childhood indicate that there seems to be something particularly powerful for participants hearing about a young person being treated unfairly, who may be easier to picture as blameless than an adult.

Stories About Experiencing Oppression in Adulthood

The remaining 20 stories about experiencing oppression took place when the storyteller was an adult, and the majority of these stories related to the topic of religious oppression (9 references). There were also 4 examples related to racism, 3 related to classism, 3 related to ableism, and 2 stories related to multiple areas of oppression simultaneously.

Almost all of the examples of stories recalled and recounted by students about the topic of Religious Oppression were in reaction to stories shared by a Muslim couple, Noreen and Omar, on the religious oppression panel about experiences they had with Islamophobia after September 11th. For example, one woman of color wrote,

> The Islamic married couples on the panel Noreen and Omar… are always faced with discrimination throughout society due to their Islamic faith. The extremists from the World Trade Center attack did not have any relation with this married couple from the panel. Yet, several years later they are still being oppressed and judged by people because of this incident. Omar discussed the struggle of taking a flight to another state. They are always singled out separately from everyone else taking the flight. Each time they are proven to be innocent, Arabic individuals who has a right to be in this country. However, their religious equality has still not been met. (woman of color)

Many of the other examples connected to religious oppression were also about stories told by Noreen and Omar and the discrimination they have experienced due to their religious background, making their story one of the "signature stories" in the course (referred to by 5 different participants) (Wong et al., 2013, p. 184). None of the students who recounted stories about religious oppression, specifically Islamophobia, identified as Muslim themselves. Thus, coming from a place of privilege, hearing experiences of oppression against this particular religious group was new to most of them.

Of the stories that were about experiencing racism in adulthood, topics included a storyteller's struggle with her biracial identity, as well as stories told by classmates and panelists related to experiencing racism in a more general way. For example, a White man shared,

> Coming into this class, I never really thought racism was a big problem in our nation anymore. I thought there were only isolated incidents that occurred in the southern parts of the country. I could not be farther from the truth on that statement. Every single source that was brought into the classroom showed me this. Starting with the panel, I got to see first-hand experience of how the panelists had all endured some form of racism and oppression because of it in their lives.

Thus, hearing participants' experiences allowed this White man to begin to understand the reality of people of color regarding the racism that they face.

Stories About Witnessing Oppression from the Privileged Social Identity Perspective

Stories told from the perspective of people who hold a privileged social identity status who witnessed mistreatment of others was another sub-theme that emerged from the data. This sub-theme also included examples of stories about times in which a member of a privileged social identity group was directly impacted by oppression by virtue of their relationship to a member of a targeted social identity group. The final papers included 8 references to this type of story, recounted by 7 participants. Of the 8 stories, 3 related to the topic of racism, and 5 related to the topic of ableism. The stories about racism included a White participants' story about witnessing a KKK rally in her hometown, a White panelist noticing as a child that employees of color were treated differently from White employees, and also a students' story of witnessing racism as a

young person in his hometown. This particular story communicated in class by a White male student was recounted by a classmate who stated,

> Hunter lives down in Tennessee, and I asked him if racism down there is as prevalent as people claim it to be. He said it is worse. If you are Black, people are always talking about you behind your back. Hunter also claimed that the old folk are the worst racists there are, calling Black men n****-s out in the open, barely even muttering it under their breath. (White man)

These quotes demonstrate that students not only remembered stories of oppression shared by those who experience the oppression themselves but also by those witnessing the oppression.

Stories About Living with a Privileged Social Identity

Although the majority of stories recounted by participants were related to oppression, another topic that received some attention in student final papers were stories about privilege (receiving unearned advantages as a result of a social identity) (Johnson, 2006; McIntosh, 1998). These stories included examples of how race or class privilege operate and also some of the challenges connected to holding a privileged status. Nearly half of the participants recounted a total of 10 stories connected to privilege (6 about classism, and 4 about racism). All of the stories recounted were told by White panelists, and panelists who identity as having class privilege and were about receiving privilege. An example of this type of story was the quote used to introduce this chapter, referring to stories shared by a White panelist, Cassandra, about examples of White privilege, including the ways she is automatically perceived as “good” because she is White (in contrast to people of color who often experience racial profiling). The story that

Cassandra shared about examples of White privilege was one of the "signature" stories that emerged (referenced by 4 participants).

Participants also recounted stories that panelists conveyed about ways in which they struggle with their privileged identities. These stories were about some of the challenges associated with having privilege. For example one panelist, Laura, who spoke on a panel about having class privilege, also expressed how she struggles with the unfairness and the contradictions inherent to having more opportunities and resources than others. This "signature story" was mentioned by 4 participants as something that impacted them (Wong et al, 2013, p. 184). One man of color described this story in the following way:

> An experience that I still think about a lot was one that I heard during the classism panel. While many of the speakers spoke about their struggles with classism because of the money issues they had growing up, one woman spoke about the wealth that she inherited from her parents and how she did not need to worry about money. However, she was ashamed of this, so ashamed that she began to cry. She told how she volunteers because it eases the guilt she has of being wealthy.

As this student described, Laura expressed emotion when sharing her story (through crying). This caught the attention of a number of students and may help explain why her story was a "signature story."

Stories About Challenging Oppression

As Freire defines, liberation is "human beings operating in the world to overcome oppression" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 71). This thematic cluster captures narratives recounted by students in the final papers that reference stories told by tellers from privileged and targeted social identity groups that illustrate taking action against oppression. These

stories describe behaviors or events in which the tellers either challenged specific manifestations of oppression or found ways to overcome the impact of oppression in their lives. Three-fourths of the participants recounted a total of 13 stories that illustrate this sub-theme.

Of the 5 stories that described someone from a privileged social identity group acting as an ally, 4 were about challenging ableism, and one story was about challenging classism. Two of the stories about challenging ableism were shared on a panel by a man, Chris, who identified as Temporarily Able-bodied, whose partner developed a severe medical disability, resulting in paralysis right before their wedding. Chris spoke about how he and his partner stayed together and persevered as a couple despite the odds against them. The other two stories mentioned by students were about an incident in which their instructor interrupted ableist language and shared the experience in class as an illustration of taking action against oppression. A White man who recounted this story described it in the following way:

> During the ableism section, my course instructor, Cassandra, shared with us a story about how she heard someone use the term "retard" and after the fact Cassandra went back and confronted her with a Facebook Message, saying that it was offensive. I thought that took real bravery too because you never know how someone is going to react when you call them out on something they did. Luckily, the woman was intelligent and open to criticism, and it was a powerful experience for the both of them. (White man)

Stories of allyship, such as those mentioned above, can be helpful concrete examples for students from privileged identities who may feel motivated to take action against oppression by virtue of what they learned in the course.

In contrast to stories told by privileged group members about acting as an ally, stories told by targeted group members dealt with challenging oppression by overcoming

adversity, breaking stereotypes, living a full life in the face of oppression, and speaking out about oppression. There were 8 examples of this sub-theme, half which were about ableism, and the others about racism (2), classism (1), and religious oppression (1). The stories about challenging racism dealt with the panelist Isabel's ability to eventually overcome her struggles with internalized racism and also a story told by a Latino man who "spoke about being able to break stereotypes about people like him" (woman of color).

The four examples connected to the topic of ableism all related to stories shared by panelists with disabilities and how they grew to see their disability as a gift rather than as something inherently negative. Three of these quotes mention individual panelists, but one talked about the combined stories of all of the panelists with disability. This White woman stated,

> I loved hearing stories and how their oppression affected their lives and how they overcame them. It helped show me that everyone is different and you can make your own life the way you want it to be not how someone else tells you it has to be. I think all of the ableism panelists proved that life goes on, and you can be happy even with a disability.

These quotes indicate that hearing from others about how they challenge oppression is memorable for students in a number of ways. It is important and empowering for students to learn that people from all identities can and do take action to interrupt oppression to build a more equitable and connected world.

Summary

As is clear from all of the different sub-themes of story content that emerged from this analysis, participants recalled and recounted content from a variety of stories told by

people from different social identities. The stories recounted by students in the final papers were overwhelmingly narrated by panelists, rather than by their peers or the instructors in their classes. Specifically, approximately 52 of the stories recounted were told by panelists, 6 told by classmate peers, and only 2 were shared by the instructor in class (though a number were told by an instructor speaking on the panel). These numbers indicate the critical role of the all-section panels in the multi-issue, social diversity course.

Of the four sub-categories of Story Content, the most frequently recounted by participants were stories about experiencing or witnessing oppression, though stories about social identity, privilege, and challenging oppression were also mentioned by a number of students in their final papers. These stories impacted students in a variety of ways, which will be reviewed in subsequent sections of this chapter. The four thematic clusters that emerged are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Stories Described and Recalled by Participants

Story Content Categories	Definition / Sub-category	Story Examples
Stories about the Teller's Targeted Social Identities	Stories that highlight information about one's social identity, but were not related to oppression or privilege	"One student who really stood out to me was Paloma….I remember one day we were talking about classism, and she was brave enough to share her story. Before she informed the class of her economic class, I would have assumed she was middle class. I was wrong because she revealed that her family was a member of the working class" (White man)
Stories about Experiencing or Witnessing	Stories the describe someone being mistreated or discriminated against, by virtue of a social group to which they belong	
	Stories about Experiencing Oppression in Childhood	"One of the most impacting stories to me was Vanessa's during the racism panel. She talked about a personal story that happened to her when she was very young. She said that she was told she couldn't hold a baby because the mother couldn't tell if her hands were dirty or clean" (White woman)
	Stories about Experiencing Oppression in Adulthood	"The Islamic married couples on the panel Noreen and Omar… are always faced with discrimination throughout society due to their Islamic faith….Omar discussed the struggle of taking a flight to another state. They are always singled out separately from everyone else taking the flight…. their religious equality has still not been met." (woman of color)
	Stories about Witnessing Oppression from the Privileged Social Identity	"Hunter lives down in Tennessee and I asked him if racism down there is as prevalent as people claim it to be. He said it is worse. If you are black, people are always talking about you behind your back. Hunter also claimed that the old folk are the worst racists there are, calling black men n-****s out in the open, barely even muttering it under their breath." (White man)
Stories About Living with a Privileged Identity	Stories in which someone receives unearned privilege as a result of their social identity, or talks about the challenges associated with having a privileged identity	"Every one else had spoken on the negative effects of racism in their life and Cassandra was there to speak on white privilege. Even after hearing everyone's accounts of racism in their life I didn't appreciate white privilege until I heard her speech. One thing that really stood out to me was how she explained the idea of "good kids doing bad things." I had heard this a hundred times growing up when ever we would cause trouble, "They're good kids, they're just having fun." (White man)
Stories about Challenging Oppression	Stories shared by members of both privileged and targeted groups about taking action against oppression in some way	"During the ableism section, my course instructor shared with us a story about how she heard someone use the term retard and after the fact she went back and confronted her with a Facebook Message saying that it was offensive. I thought that took real bravery too because you never know how someone is going to react when you call them out on something they did. Luckily, the woman was intelligent and open to criticism, and it was a powerful experience for the both of them". (White man)

How do Participants Make Meaning of the Stories They Hear?

In recounting the content of the stories, participants also described their interpretations and evaluations of the stories they heard from panelists, peers, and instructors as they tried to understand what they heard and make meaning of some of the nuances and complexities in the stories. In recounting the stories in their final papers, participants also described some of the ways in which they perceived and evaluated the person telling the story. I conceptualized participants' interpretations and evaluations as distinct from the insights gained from listening to the story as well as from participants' emotional reaction to the story (although many of the evaluations were informed by emotions, and it was difficult to cleanly separate the two). Participants evaluated stories primarily by their impression of the value of the story (i.e., enjoyable), and their evaluation of its fairness. They also evaluated the person telling the story (labeling them as courageous, or likeable, etc.). Participants articulated themselves in relation to their own experiences (i.e., a similar or different story) and also described their process of trying to make meaning of and grapple with information in stories. The next section reviews each of these ways of evaluating stories in detail, including some illustrative examples.

Participant Evaluations of Stories and Storytellers

As they listened to stories, participants make judgments about what they heard, its value, and whether or not it was fair. So, rather than simply recounting details of what they heard in their papers, they also include their own thoughts and opinions about both the content and the storyteller.

Stories are Valuable to Learning

It is clear from their final papers that participants all place a great deal of value on the personal stories shared on the panels, and all but one participant expressed this sentiment in some way. Participants indicated that not only was there value in the process of hearing stories across social identity difference in general but that there was also value in hearing specific stories. Participants labeled stories as helpful to their learning, engaging, appreciated, and enjoyable. For example, they said they found stories "really cool and interesting to hear" (man of color) and the most "important along with exciting" part of the course (White woman). Others described hearing the stories of others as "really cool" (White man) and "miraculous" (White woman).

A number of participants named hearing stories as contributing to their learning in the class in a profound way—often more than any other part of the course. For example, a White woman explained, "I think one of the best ways to learn and become educated on certain topics is purely listening to others' stories and how they experienced something first-hand." A man of color named the value of stories in making information clear, explaining, "If I was ever uncertain about one of the major course topics, it was all cleared up by the end of the panel. They gave us real life examples and situations that helped us relate." And a White male student named learning information through listening to stories as preferable to other pedagogical approaches, saying, "I think that learning from someone's experience can teach you so much more than just reading a book."

Participants also expressed that listening to stories was engaging for them. One White woman said, "My favorite methods of learning included the panels" and a man of

color indicated he felt that listening to stories, “kept the class interesting.” Multiple participants expressed gratitude or appreciation for the opportunity to hear the stories shared on the panels. A woman of color stated, “I am very appreciative of the stories I was told to teach me about several forms of oppression in our society.”

A number of students articulated that listening to stories had a positive impact on them in more of a general way. For example, a man of color expressed, “I felt that all of the panels have had a positive effect on my life.” Similarly, a White man said that stories were a “really powerful and positive facet of the course for me.” A man of color named the impact of stories both on himself and others in the class pronouncing, “Without a doubt, the panels we were shown throughout the year made the biggest mark on me and I believe every single person in this class.”

Finally, a commonly occurring positive descriptor when evaluating a story was evaluating it as enjoyable to listen to. There were 7 different examples in which participants used the exact word, “enjoy.” A woman of color shared, “I really enjoyed the panelists. I looked forward to hear[ing] people’s opinion and life experiences on the four topics we talked about. I really enjoyed the racism and classism panels.” A White woman declared, “I enjoyed listening to personal experiences,” and a White male said, “I think the panels are a big part of why everyone I talk to enjoys this course.” This finding is meaningful because students are more likely to listen and respond positively to experiences that they experience as enjoyable, pleasant, or entertaining in some way.

Of the myriad evaluations of stories shared in student final papers, the only participant who shared an impression that was not completely favorable was from a

woman of color who said she had wanted to hear more than stories from the panelists. She stated:

> The challenges about the panel were that most of them spoke about personal experiences but not about their opinions on the subject itself. I also wish they could have interacted with each other and fed off of one another. It could have been a dialogue among the panelist.

It appears that rather than being displeased with the role of stories in the class, this participant was looking for something beyond that.

Though they valued all of the panelists as a resource for learning, a number of participants specifically mentioned the additional value of hearing from their individual course instructor on the panel (in contrast to outside community members). One White man said, "I think it's really special how all of the instructors shared their stories at some point" and a woman of color said, "Most of the panelists were instructors, so for them to explain how they got to where they are … was really inspirational." Finally, a White male student said, "I really liked the use of instructors on the panels because by using people that we knew, the stories seemed even more real, and we were able to connect with them." The increased power of stories from someone that participants have some sort of personal relationship with is not unique to this study (Walsh, 2007).

Overall, as evidenced by students' reflections upon entering the course, learning about oppression can be painful and anxiety producing for students from all identities. So, experiencing some aspect of this learning as valuable and even "enjoyable" is an important finding and may help open students more to grapple with the important issues addressed in the course.

Some Stories are Unfair

After listening to some stories, particularly ones in which the storyteller was mistreated, some participants expressed feelings of indignation about the oppression faced by others. Over a third of the participants named at least one perception of a story as unfair, and most examples were in relation to the topic of racism and religious oppression. For example, in response to hearing stories about Islamophobia told by Noreen and Omar on the Religious Oppression panel, one White woman expressed,

> I couldn't believe that people treat other humans how these people treated these Muslims…. It really is embarrassing for our country to have people act like this….It isn't fair for people of certain religions to be treated like this and basically dehumanized.

A woman of color also expressed frustration with the treatment that Noreen and Omar faced, labeling this same story as "ridiculous."

Reacting to her classmate Hailey's story about experiencing racism as a child from an administrator at school, a White woman said, "It's appalling," and in response to a story about racism described by one of his classmates, a White male participant stated, "This is ridiculous and not just an isolated event. Our nation has to do a lot to move away from this oppression if we want to call ourselves a Land of Free and Equal Opportunity." All of these examples demonstrate the way in which participants expressed their disagreement with the treatment that panelists received, and it is striking that two of these were referring to classmates. It makes sense that it may be easier to get upset about the mistreatment of a peer classmate than of a panelist. There were no participants who expressed support for the poor treatment faced by panelists or peers.

Perceiving experiences as unfair may be an important step toward taking actions for students. The tone of many of these quotes indicates that students may feel angry

about what they heard, and this anger is an important step away from unawareness, numbness, or apathy, and if channeled in the right way, could fuel students to commit to making change in the world.

Storytellers are Courageous and Skilled

Another way in which participants infused their own opinions when talking about stories in their final papers was through evaluations of the person who was telling the story. All but 3 participants shared impressions and evaluations of at least one of the individuals who narrated personal stories in panels or in the classroom. All of the impressions that were shared were qualities that the participant attributed to the storyteller based on the stories she told or the way she presented herself rather than anything that the storyteller directly named about herself as part of the story that she shared. There was a variety of different words used to describe the storyteller, including courageous, brave, humble, grateful, ashamed, clear, knowledgeable, or comfortable.

Of all of the ways in which participants evaluated storytellers, the most common dealt with the topic of bravery or courage. Participants mentioned this courage either in relation to something that happened in the content of the story itself or the bravery it took for the panelists to share their story at all. For example, a White male participant shared, "I appreciate all of the courage each panelist showed when describing their stories, because it's obvious these topics are not always the easiest to talk about." A woman of color described another panelist as "not afraid to say what he truly felt." Finally, a White man described a woman with a disability as "fearless," based on the content of the story that she had shared.

The other evaluations participants expressed about the people who were telling the stories were all positive in some way. For example, a woman of color said that panelists "had very insightful things to say." Participants also commented on the perceived clarity of the stories they heard. A White male participant stated, "Each panelist was really prepared and conveyed their messages flawlessly," and a White woman participant echoed this sentiment, declaring, "I think everyone who participated and was a panelist did a great job explaining their situation and getting a message across to the audience." Finally, another participant said she liked listening to the panelists because "they spoke from the heart and shared personal information, which made them more relatable" (woman of color). The ways in which the panelists' speaking ability and level of preparation seemed to impact participants' positive reactions to them is something important to note.

Stories are Similar to and Different from My Own Experience

As participants listened to stories throughout the course, they then interpreted what they heard through the lens of their own social identities and life experiences. One major way they did this was to articulate themselves in relation to the stories, indicating whether the stories were similar to or different from their own lived experiences (or the experiences of people close to them).

The Tellers' Stories are Similar to My Own Experience

Through listening to stories in class and on the panels, participants heard experiences that mirrored their own. A total of 11 participants described 14 examples of

ways in which they perceived stories as similar to their own past experiences or experiences of others who they are close to. The majority of these stories were about oppression faced by the storyteller to which they could relate. These were connected to a variety of course topics, most commonly classism and ableism. After hearing stories that were similar to their own, participants spoke about feeling affirmed, validated, and not as alone by virtue of what they heard, and/or feeling like the storyteller could really understand them.

One man of color communicated,

> I myself suffer from a diagnosed extreme version of ADD, and I've never thought of myself as anything other than unlucky. The ableism panel made me realize that many people struggle with similar issues, and they are not easy things to deal with at all.

Thus, this student's own struggle with his disability was affirmed in some way by hearing the stories of other people with disabilities.

Other participants perceived stories they heard to be similar to those of people they are close with (family or friends). For example, a White male recounted a story that was told on the ableism panel that reminded him of his sister's struggles. He shared,

> Victoria's story during the ableism panel was especially memorable to me. I know I have said this in class, but my older sister, Nancy, had severe OCD just like Victoria did. As Victoria described the effects it had on her life, I couldn't help but get a little emotional and think back to the times when she was struggling so badly with it. I was also very happy to hear that Victoria thinks she is a stronger person now as a result of overcoming her OCD…When she said that, I just thought of how well my sister is doing now and how much I love and miss her and how proud of her I am for all she has accomplished.

Another White male student also connected to a story shared by a veteran who spoke on the ableism panel. He said, "The veteran with PTSD struck me very much because his

symptoms reminded me of my cousin that had returned from the Iraq War with the same symptoms."

A few students also spoke about the power of an activity that was done in one of the course sections included in this study. This activity invited each student in the class to share how ableism has affected their lives. Through the activity, students discovered that every person in the room had at least one close friend or family member who has a disability. A White woman reflected on the power of breaking the isolation connected to this type of oppression and said, "It hit me when we were doing the group discussion that I wasn't alone. Everyone had their own story and their own struggles." The storytelling in this activity was particularly memorable because students were noticing that they had similar experiences to their peer classmates.

A number of different students mentioned having similar experiences with storytellers in regard to their class identity, many of whom expressed relating to the stories from panelists who were raised poor or working-class. For example, one woman of color shared,

> I am a poor, working-class Latina, and through the panels I was able to learn to embrace my identity. Although I am a minority, I still make it really far in life. In the panel on classism, race was a large factor in what type of class people belong. When Daniel [a Latino man] spoke in the panel about being able to break stereotypes about people like him, I felt like because I had so many things in common with him, I could do the same.

Not only did this student relate to the story that was told, hearing it made her feel hopeful about her future and what she could accomplish as a member of a targeted group in terms of race and class.

Two of the stories that participants interpreted as similar to their own stories were about privilege. For example, a man of color indicated that he realized some of his own

class privilege from listening to a story told by a woman on the classism panel, Laura. He said,

> After hearing the story of the woman's guilt over her fortunate circumstances, it really opened my eyes to the fact that I have fortunate circumstances. That insight makes it easier for me not to get angry about little things, and it makes it easier for me to compromise with others. I can't say the guilt I feel over my fortunate circumstances is as strong as the woman's, but it is there, and I tend to feel bad for those with unfortunate circumstances. That includes victims of classism, but also any individual that was not given some things that I have grown up with a right to have in some ways.

Both of the participants who perceived stories about privilege as similar to their own also named that they had been unaware of this privilege prior to hearing these stories.

The Tellers' Stories are Different from My Own Experience

Listening to stories from panelists and peer classmates also gave participants a window into a different experience. This is one of the benefits of hearing from panelists and classmates from a number of different social identities because it allows participants to be exposed to personal experiences of others that they may never have had an opportunity to hear about. Eight participants described a total of 15 examples of stories they perceived as different. Some participants spoke of hearing stories of difference from all of the panels in a general way. For example, one man of color referenced having a "single story" before the course and indicates that hearing stories from a diverse group of people helped to disrupt this, broadening his perspective. Similarly, a White man conveyed,

> Hearing other people's perspectives and experiences that differed from my own thinking and experiences was the most eye-opening part of it all. The panels really showed you what is going on in the world that I am still just a young person in.

Other participants identified specific stories that were different from their own experiences and named the value of having the chance to hear these stories. For example, a man of color shared the value of hearing experiences with social class that differed from his own. He explained,

> Growing up, everyone that I was exposed to came from a similar background to mine…. I found it really cool and interesting to hear and learn about the experiences and perspectives from my peers and the instructors of this course who have many different backgrounds. For example, during the classism panel when everyone was talking about the class in which they were born and raised, it gave me an understanding of where other people came from. This is something I have never experienced before, and it gave me a very emotional and powerful feeling.

Clearly, learning about difference seemed to be a powerful part of the course for students. This finding connects with Walsh's (2007) findings from her ethnography of interracial dialogues in which she found that paying attention to difference was an important factor in the dialogues rather than simply looking at unity and common ground, and personal storytelling was the factor that helped participants shift to "seeing, and embracing the value of difference rather than forcing commonality" (p. 114). Although the multi-issue, diversity class is a different educational practice application from the type of dialogue in Walsh's study, it appears that listening to personal stories may have disrupted a tendency to focus only on similarity and inserted attention to difference in the course.

Grappling with the Personal and Conceptual Meaning of Stories

Along with articulating themselves in relation to the stories they heard, participants also talked ways in which they were grappling with information they heard in a story. In these examples, participants have not yet "landed" on an insight but rather are attempting to make meaning of the information in the story and are actively sorting out

their feelings or understandings of information. These examples demonstrate participants' process of working with information, raising questions, and critically thinking about what they heard without necessarily "landing" somewhere. Four participants described 6 examples of grappling with information.

Most of the examples of grappling with information included participants' processes of trying to apply the information they heard in stories to their own life experiences and feeling confused. For example, referring to the panel on classism, one White man stated, "Hearing the stories of the people on the panel actually made me rethink my own life and situation." A woman of color also grappled with applying information she learned on the classism panel to her own life, and shared, the classism panel "made me question a lot of things. I found that after it was difficult for me to determine my class status." The same participant shared that listening to Isabel's story about struggling with body image connected to internalized racism and sexism made her grapple with the ways this plays out in her own life too, stating, "This made me think hard and long about the times I wanted to change who I was to fit into society and not stick out."

Other participants raised questions as they struggled to make meaning of the stories they heard. One man of color expressed gaining insights about the intersections between heterosexism and religious oppression, and stated,

> The insight that I gained from this new understanding raised another question in my head. Why does it seem like homosexuals are more segregated by religion than those that violate other rules like those that engage in sex before marriage and those that engage in affairs with married women? I am not strongly religious or very knowledgeable about any religions so I can't answer that question myself.

The attempt of all of these students to make meaning of "information" or feelings in response to something they heard from a story, even when it is messy, demonstrates an important part of critical thinking in which students are attempting to manipulate the concepts/principles "actively" to make meaning of the story they heard (Donaldson, 2002, p. 294). Thus, even though they have not yet landed anywhere, the very act of grappling with the information and demonstrating self-reflection is a significant impact of storytelling (Donaldson, 2002; Fink, 2001).

Summary

This section has described some of the ways in which participants make meaning of the numerous stories that they heard told by panelists, peer classmates, and their course instructor, specifically through evaluating stories and storytellers, articulating themselves in relation to the stories they hear, and grappling with the content in the stories. There were a large number of references to stories as valuable in some way, including descriptors, such as interesting, engaging, and enjoyable to listen to. Participants also evaluated stories as unfair in some way, expressing some form of indignation about what they heard, and evaluated the storytellers as courageous or skilled at articulating their experiences. When describing their interpretation of stories, many participants indicated whether it was a similar story reflecting some of their own experiences or a window into a different experience that they had not heard before. The next section explores the variety of affective reactions participants described after listening to stories.

What Kinds of Emotional Reactions do Stories Elicit?

Being confronted with first person stories of oppression and liberation not only sparks a range of emotions for participants but also helps them to feel empathy for others and makes the course material feel "real." In their final papers, participants named the experiences of feeling something either by directly naming a specific emotion (i.e., "I felt sad") or with words or phrases that indicated that an emotion was most likely felt ("I was moved") and also by naming or describing feeling empathy or inspiration. These affective reactions were what participants remembered and reflected when they were writing their final paper rather than what they may have actually felt in the moment. In addition, the final paper questions did not directly ask students about emotions or empathy, so it is likely that students felt a number of other emotions when listening to stories that they did not identify in their paper.

Feeling Emotions

Listening to personal stories elicited a range of emotions from participants, and all 16 participants mentioned at least one emotion that they felt as a result of listening to a story. There were a total of 33 emotional responses mentioned throughout the 16 final papers.

Approximately one-third of the emotions expressed in connection to stories were non-specific, meaning that participants indicated that they had an emotional or affective response but did not name what the specific reaction was. For example, when reflecting on a story told by a working-class woman whose experience he related to, one man of color stated, "Her story touched me, … [and] gave me a very emotional and powerful

feeling." A number of participants labeled topics or specific stories as "touching or "moving." Another example was a White man who shared, "I couldn't help but get a little emotional" after recounting a story about ableism.

Of all of the emotions expressed throughout the final papers, the most commonly mentioned by participants was feeling shock or surprise regarding a story they heard. Participants used phrases like, "I was so shocked," "I couldn't believe," "It was surprising," and [what I heard] "threw my head into a whirlwind." It makes sense that students would be most likely to remember and recount stories that were novel or in some way surprising to them.

Sadness was another emotion that was expressed by multiple participants (4). Two participants used the term "heart breaking" in reaction to something they heard. After listening to Isabel's story about experiencing internalized racism, a White man said, "It was sad to hear what she went through, what she did trying to change her, for the better." And, a woman of color reported feeling "compassion and sadness" when she heard some of the stories on the panel.

Other emotions mentioned by at least 2 participants included feeling discomfort or unease in reaction to listening to a story and feeling hope. One White male wrote that his initial response to hearing some of the stories about people who were raised poor or working-class was pity, declaring, "My overall response for many of the panelists at first was pity. I would not set some of the things that these people went through on my worst enemy." The feeling of pity for someone, though related to compassion and empathy, can connote a "one-up" relationship or a feeling of superiority to another person.

Participants also described feeling inspired by stories they listened to. The verb inspire, defined as to "exert an animating, enlivening, or exalting influence on" (Merriam-Webster, 2014) straddles the line between an affective response, and motivation. This is akin to "waking up" in a way and becoming moved to do something. Some students directly used the word "inspired" after hearing a story, and others indicated it more indirectly. In my analysis, I focused on examples in which participants used the word "inspire."

Students felt inspired by seeing another targeted group member overcome obstacles, by someone else's courage when taking action against oppression, and by the vulnerability of panelists. For example, a White woman, referring to her instructor, wrote "You inspired me to become an ally," a White male stated about a panelist, "She was definitely inspirational to me," and a White woman described a panelist on the ableism panel as having "a great outlook on life and that was truly inspiring." Re-iterating the impact that instructors had as members on the panels (as described in the previous section), a woman of color stated, "Most of the panelists were instructors, so for them to explain how they got to where they are now was really inspirational. It gave me faith and hope that people can overcome trials." Inspiration is a powerful affective response because it is closely connected to taking action, one of the goals of educating for social justice.

Feeling Empathy for the Storyteller

Closely related to both compassion and pity is empathy, defined as "the ability to experience the same feelings as someone else….identifying with that person, paying

attention to that person's feelings and attending to how our own feelings resonate with theirs" (McCormick, 1999, p. 57). In my analysis, I conceptualized empathy as both cognitive empathy (the ability to take someone else's perspective) and emotional empathy (feeling parallel or reactive emotions to the person one is listening to) (McCormick, 1999; Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Parallel empathy includes feeling similar emotions to the person telling the story (i.e., anger, sadness, etc.) and reactive empathy is reacting in some way to the experiences of others, through feeling sympathy or compassion (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Throughout their papers, participants directly named feeling empathy as a result of listening to a personal story and also described behaviors that were indicative of either cognitive empathy ("I could see her perspective"), parallel ("I felt sad"), or reactive empathy ("I felt badly for him.") Ten participants described a total of 15 examples that demonstrated empathy in some way.

Having an empathic response was directly named by 2 participants. One White woman spoke about feeling empathy as a result of hearing the struggles with oppression told by people of color. She said, "It made me feel so much empathy for them, seeing everything they've gone through and their struggles." In addition to this, a woman of color described cognitive empathy.

> When we are told both sides of a story, we learn what is actually happening. If we were to simply read about oppression in class, it would be hard to picture the presence of oppression in our society. It makes it a much better learning experience when we listen to real stories that people have to say. Personal stories help us put ourselves in the shoes of the people that lived the stories of oppression, so that we can somehow help discontinue oppressive acts and behaviors.

Putting oneself into another's shoes, as this student described, is a phrase that indicates cognitive empathy.

Other students described "reactive' empathy (Stephan & Finlay 1999). A White man exhibited this type of empathy in response to listening to Isabel's stories about struggling with internalized racism as a child. He explained,

> The story about Isabel, talking of her childhood encounters with racism has really stuck with me. The fact that silly kids could convince her that she was different in a bad way was horrifying. People have so much power over others when it's 2 against one, and it was sad to hear that she went through what she did trying to change her, "for the better."

This man did not describe feeling the same exact emotions as Isabel; however, he reacted to what he heard emotionally, naming her experience as "horrifying" and saying that is was "sad to hear." A White woman demonstrated another example of "reactive" empathy after listening to Vanessa's story about experiencing racism when she was a very young child (when an adult in her neighborhood told her she couldn't hold a baby because she couldn't tell whether her "hands were dirty"). After describing her story, this woman stated,

> It's appalling that as a child she had to try and understand what this woman meant. Hearing this story broke my heart, and I don't think I'll ever forget it. I don't think I'll forget many stories told during the panel for that matter. These personal stories gave me new insight that even though people go through oppression all the time, they don't let it define them. It also gave me new insights to want to become an ally.

This participant listened to suffering expressed by someone and expressed reactive empathy for her ("broke my heart") and then also expressed drive to take action (be an ally).

Another example that exhibited a similar sequence (feeling empathy and then expressing motivation to take action) was described by a middle-class, White woman about Laura's story on the panel about class privilege. She said,

> Laura came along and started talking about all the privileges she had growing up. …Suddenly, her speech took a 360 when she talked about how bad she felt that she had everything handed to her. The entire mood of the room shifted when she started to get emotional (it wasn't a bad thing). To be honest, I started to get emotional and uncomfortable. Definitely not in a bad way though. Even though it wasn't something I was saying or doing, just listening to her made me feel on my learning edge. Her speech was so powerful especially because I also didn't realize how much I reap the benefits of privilege. She inspired me to become an ally and even though I felt uncomfortable listening to the cold hard truth, in the end, it was a positive experience.

This example demonstrates parallel empathy, in which the emotional content in Laura's story sparked a similar reaction in the listener. It also illustrates inspiration and motivation to become an ally to others. This example illustrates within-group empathy, because it involves someone from a privileged group feeling empathy for another member of a privileged group. With the reported 40% decline in empathy and perspective taking among college students in recent decades (reviewed in the introduction), increases in this affective response are important and significant (Konrath, O'Brien, & Hsing, 2011).

Feeling Connected to Others

Related to feeling empathy was the way in which listening to personal stories helped participants feel connected to their peers through knowing them on a more intimate level. A couple of participants wrote about the power of stories in helping them make this connection. For example, one male student who was in the multi-diversity course section with some other men who were on a sports team with him stated,

> One thing that was interesting to me about this class is that it gave me an opportunity to learn more about the other kids on my football team who were in it. All the freshman have been here since early July, and we are all close at this point in the semester, but nobody really ever discussed personal things like class or

> religious affiliation, but in class everyone was sharing, so it was nice to bond with my teammates like that (White man).

Another White male student reflected on the class session when all students had a chance to share how their lives had been impacted by disability. He stated, "This was one of the more powerful days we had in class in my opinion. I definitely felt more connected with everyone in class after hearing of everyone's struggles with disabilities."

It is interesting to note that none of the examples related to feeling connection with another person were referring to panelists. Rather, storytelling in the classroom lead students to feel more connection to each other. Because there was no required storytelling component in the multi-issue, diversity course (in contrast to the required "Testimonial" Assignment in intergroup dialogues discussed in Chapter 5), this theme did not emerge frequently in the final paper data. However, the examples noted are important because they show that sharing stories about social identities with peers may, in fact, increase connection.

Feeling More Connected to Course Content

Along with feeling emotions and empathy, participants spoke about how hearing stories made them feel more connected to the information in the course, making it become "real" to them. Ten participants expressed a total of 17 examples of "becoming real," most of which referred to the amalgamation of all of the stories heard in the social diversity course, as opposed a specific story. Becoming "real" included relating to the information, making it feel concrete or "easier to imagine," "bringing it to life," making it more memorable, or making it matter to students. Participants were also able to see the

relevancy of the information in the course to their own life as well as to the lives of people close to them.

One White male participant described his connection to personal stories from the panels in the following way:

The panels as a whole really helped me connect with each subject because there were real people in front of me telling me about their personal struggles in life due to the different types of oppression. It really helped me put faces to what we were learning.

A woman of color named that her connection to stories impacted her ability to learn and remember the material. She expressed,

> I think it is easier for the students to learn when they hear stories, and they can connect on a personal basis. I think when you connect on a personal basis, you are more prone to remember what you learned.

A number of participants talked about how the "real life" personal stories augmented other more fact-based forms of knowledge in the class, such as course readings. For example, a White woman said, "The panelists have made me realize how real oppression is. It is one thing reading about them in books or stories, but hearing them in person truly shows you how real it is." A White male expressed,

> The panels were very interesting and a good technique to use as it linked personal experiences to oppression and made students relate a lot more because it took, for me, the somewhat boring information and put it to human experience.

Another White male said,

> I think that hearing people's personal experiences helped me connect what we were talking about in class to real life. It made the things in the book more than just notes; it made them real and showed how they affected the lives of real people.

In addition to naming listening to stories as more impactful than more fact-based approaches, one women of color went on to explain why she believes this is the case. She explained,

> If we were to simply read about oppression class, it would be hard to picture the presence of oppression in our society. It makes it a much better learning experience when we listen to real stories that people have to say. Personal stories help us put ourselves in the shoes of the people that lived the stories of oppression, so that we can somehow help discontinue oppressive acts and behaviors.

It is striking that this student labels a desire to "help discontinue oppressive acts," as a result of listening to stories (as opposed to simply learning new information), demonstrating the power of story to inspire action. Another participant similarly explained a number of reasons why he felt stories told by panelists were so powerful.

> Isabel's stories concerning racism and internal oppression brought the subject **much closer to home.** They showed those of us who never had to deal with racism directed at us how **people we actually knew have been affected by it**. We were able to see how it can **really a**ffect a person even changing the way they view themselves. Also Victoria's story about her fights with OCD **really brought the subject to life**. She was able to take something that I had only really seen on TV or heard jokes about and **make it real**. Through her experience, I was able to learn more than any book or lecture on the subject could ever teach. (White male)

Not only does this student mention learning from stories as superior to learning from a book or lecture, he also names the added weight of stories that come from people he knows.

Other excerpts from participant papers suggest that listening to stories were "proof" in some way, and they validated that oppression does indeed occur. One man of color expressed that stories on panels "gave us real life examples and situations that helped us relate." A White woman expressed that stories "really brought the topics of racism, classism, religious oppression and ableism to life," and referring to Omar's story about experiencing Islamophobia, another White woman named that "Even though some of the things he talked about I had heard before, for some reason, it just seemed more real when it was coming from him."

Although most of the examples of "becoming real," were described by participants from privileged social identity groups realizing the reality of oppression experienced by members of targeted group members, a couple of participants described how hearing the stories of someone who shared a targeted social identity status also connected them to information in some way. For example, one White male participant wrote about how hearing someone speak on the panel about disability made his own disability become real to him. He stated,

> During the ableism panel when Kiara talked about her struggle with depression. She pointed out that the depression happens every so often and out of the blue, and it is not a constant thing. There were days where she would have no energy to get out of bed. When she said that, it hit me that I had been through the same thing. ….. When I heard what she had to say though, it made me realize that this was real and helped me understand a little of just how important certain things are. Therefore, her personal story and experience really helped me figure out my own.

Thus, hearing Kiara's story helped this participant have a better understanding of how his own depression manifests, which is a rare opportunity since "hidden" psychological disabilities are not commonly talked openly about. Making it real is an important first step to helping students be willing to grapple with complex and often painful, information, and eventually, hopefully, lead to motivation to take liberatory action. In fact, 2 participants named a desire for action as a result of feeling connected to the information in personal stories. In addition to the quote already mentioned by a woman of color, a White woman expressed, "Hearing other people's stories definitely allowed me to connect to their situations and make me think about how I can help stop these oppressions." This link between hearing stories and then wanting to take action to change the circumstances is powerful and noteworthy.

Summary

Overall, my analysis indicates that emotions and empathy are a very present, complex, and integral part of this type of multi-issue, social diversity courses. Expression of emotions are not typically part of the college classroom; however the centrality of emotions is in line with other work on intergroup contact (Khuri, 2004), and the emotion elicited by listening to personal stories is most likely an important part of what makes this education practice so powerful. The link between feeling empathy after listening to a story and immediately naming a motivation to take action is an interesting pattern that I explore further in the discussion chapter.

What do Participants Learn from Listening to Stories?

In the final papers, participants described a diverse range of impacts of listening to participants' stories, such as developing new insights or new understandings and some of the ways the stories motivated them to take responsibility for executing an action. In the section that follows I describe a range of impacts along with illustrative quotes to demonstrate the ways participants describe the learning using their own words.

The diverse range of stories told in class and on panels sparked a variety of insights for students, defined as any time a participant reported discovering new information that they had not known before or learning additional information about a topic as a result of listening to a story. Participants prefaced these statements with phrase such as "I learned," "I realized" or "It opened my eyes." All 16 of the participants in the study recounted at least one insight from listening to a story, and there were a total of 83 insights described across the data set. Participants described insights about a diverse

range of topics, and 6 major themes emerged from my thematic analysis: 1) insights about the existence of difference (5 examples described by 5 participants, 2) insights about stereotypes and assumptions (12 examples described by 8 participants), 3) insights about oppression (30 examples from all 16 participants), 4) insights about privilege (18 examples from 10 participants) , 5) self-awareness of one's own ignorance (6 examples from 5 participants), and 6) insights about taking liberatory action (9 examples from 5 participants). In the following section, I explicate these different themes and provide examples to demonstrate the myriad types of insights that different students gain from listening to stories.

Insights About Difference

One type of insight expressed by 5 participants was simply discovering the fact that difference exists, one situation can be understood through a number of different perspectives and not everyone experiences the world in the same way. For example, a man of color indicated that listening to the panels gave him an "understanding of where other people came from," and a White woman shared that "hearing from the panels especially made me realize that people had very different experiences than I have." A woman of color said that listening to stories helped her learn "how there are many different angles from which a situation can be analyzed."

The realization that multiple perspectives exist is an important step in the cognitive development of college students. As mentioned in Chapter 2, theories of cognitive development describe sequential and hierarchical movement through various "stages" from simple to highly complex ways of perceiving and evaluating knowledge or

making meaning of experience (Guthrie, 1996; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Changes in cognitive development are not related to the content of students' views, but rather to the complexity of the thought processes used to come to their conclusions (Evans et al., 1998). Undergraduate students often enter college in a place of "either-or" thinking in which they hold a dichotomous view of the world (good-bad, right-wrong, Black-White) (Evans et al., 1998; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Making a shift to understanding that multiple perspectives exist is an important step for college students. Listening to stories and realizing that different perspectives exist can be an important piece of that process.

Insights About Stereotypes

Participants also described new insights about how stories challenged their own assumptions or stereotypes about different social identity groups. There were a total of 12 insights about stereotypes, recounted by 8 participants, and all of the insights about stereotypes were related to the topic of classism and ableism. Over half of these were related to the topic of ableism, including participants' stereotypes about people with disabilities, particularly their belief that disabilities are limited to the physical sphere, and they can be seen by looking at someone. After listening to personal stories told by people with a range of disabilities, participants then realized that there is actually a broad spectrum of disabilities, including psychological, medical, and learning disabilities. Three different participants mentioned having this assumption challenged, but one man of color communicated it most clearly by stating,

> When I used to hear that someone was disabled, I used to immediately imagine someone in a wheelchair or on crutches or a physical aid along those lines. After hearing the experiences of the members of the ableism panel, including my instructor, I gained the new insight that the word disabled can go far beyond

> physical incapacities and still provide the same devastating effects. The term disabled includes mental and physical disabilities, and while many may not realize it, people suffering from issues, like OCD and ADHD struggle with their disability and feel the debilitating effects that can come with physical disabilities on their psyche.

Participants also discovered that disability is not necessary regarded as inherently negative, which was an assumption that many held when they entered the course. For example, a White woman shared, "The most important thing I learned is that disabilities should not always be seen negatively. The panelists helped me learn that having a disability just makes you a stronger person." Another insight expressed by a White woman was that people with disabilities are human and get to be in romantic relationships. In response to hearing Chris's story about how his partner developed a severe physical disability (paralysis), she shared,

> His story proved that disabilities shouldn't stop anyone from having relationships. His story has definitely helped me see others in a different way, and hopefully other people can look past disabilities and see people as people not as a disabled person.

Through having the opportunity to listen to the stories and experiences of people with disabilities, they became three-dimensional and were humanized to students, many of whom came from a privileged identity in relation to this topic.

Other insights about stereotypes were connected to the topic of social class. The theme of most of these quotes was the discovery that one cannot tell someone's class background just by looking at them. For example, one White man, who came from an upper-middle-class background, expressed that he had his assumptions challenged by a classmate of color, Paloma, who shared in class that she had been raised poor. He said, "I felt bad after I found that out because I assumed that because she was well-dressed, well-spoken, and intelligent she would have to be at least in the middle-class, but that was a

learning experience for me." Making as similar assumption, a White woman shared that the experience of hearing the class backgrounds of her classmates challenged her stereotypes and assumptions, and said,

> [It] opened my eyes to how you can't always tell certain things about people just by looking at them. It's important to get to know people and to try to understand them and listen to them before you make assumptions.

Finally, one woman of color shared an insight about a stereotype that was related to both race and class. In response to hearing a White panelist, Melissa, talk about being raised poor/working-class, she expressed,

> The stereotype that is usually associated with being White is to be middle-, upper-middle-, or owning-class. When Melissa was telling her story, I thought about the neighborhood I grew up in, and how she must understand how difficult it is to come from an inner-city, lower-middle-class, urban neighborhood. This panelist's story affirmed my knowledge that assumptions cannot be made about people, because everyone has a different story. People like to assume that White people have a lot of money and resources, but after hearing this particular story, I know that is not true. She made me rethink the way I look at people I don't know, because I no longer judge people based on appearance.

This example powerfully demonstrates this woman's realization of her stereotypes connected to both race and class and allowed her to discover that she had something in common with a White woman that she would not have assumed. Because of the lack of contact across racial differences pre-college (Tatum, 2007) and the silence surrounding topics, like race, class, and disabilities, having some of their stereotypes challenged by "real" people, right in front of them, can be a significant learning for students.

Insights About Oppression

By far, the most examples of insights from personal stories throughout student final papers were about oppression or ways in which members of targeted groups are mistreated or denied access to resources because of their social identity(ies). There was a total of 30 references to this type of insight expressed by all 16 participants. Eight of these examples of insights referred to learning about oppression in general (rather than specific "isms"), 9 examples were related to the topic of racism, 8 were about ableism, and 4 were connected to Religious Oppression. (There were no insights about oppression connected to the topic of Classism) Because there were so many examples of this kind of insight and because oppression plays out slightly differently in connection to different course topics ("isms"), I chose to group insights about oppression under sub-headings connected to the isms, followed by insights about oppression in general.

Insights About Racism

Participants described 9 examples of new learnings about racism, including realizations about the pervasiveness of racism and nuances of how this form of oppression plays out. For example, a White male student realized the prevalence of racism after listening to stories shared by a White peer, explaining,

> Talking with Hunter about the South really changed my view[s] on racism in this country. I do not see it as prevalent where I am from, but he told me stories about how the old generation would treat people of African American descent.

Two participants described learning about internalized oppression from listening to Isabel's story. For example, a White male participant expressed that internalized oppression is a new concept to him that was important to his learning about the topic of

racism, and a woman of color expressed surprise after hearing Isabel's story, and said it "provided new information on how so many people who you think could be happy with themselves deal with difficulty, and no one is perfect." A White male described insights he gained about the complexities of holding a bi-racial identity after hearing some of Vanessa's struggles with her biracial identity. He disclosed, "It had never occurred to me that sometimes biracial people are not accepted into either group."

Finally, a White woman described learning about some of the origins of racial prejudice from listening to the experiences of another White woman in her course section. She explained,

> One of my classmates told me they lived in an all-White neighborhood and had never even spoken to a Black person until they arrived at <the university.> I was so shocked hearing this because I grew up around people of every race under the sun. This made me realize why people can be so racist or stereotypical; if you are not in contact with many different races, all you know about them is what you've heard in the past. People do not get to make their own judgments if they are in this situation. I know that I see people of all races equally because I've met people from many different races, realizing that each person is an individual. Many people have not had this opportunity because they've lived in isolation in these towns, which is very different from my experience.

Although this student appears to be exhibiting a color-blind and individualist perspective on racism evidenced by her statement that she sees "people of all races equally," hearing about her classmate's prior lack of contact across race was a helpful way for her to understand a different experience from her own. She also had the opportunity to learn some possible reasons why her White peers may have different beliefs about people of color and feelings about engaging with the topic of racism than she does.

Insights About Ableism

Participants described nearly as many insights about the topic of ableism as racism (9). These included learning about how prevalent disabilities are and how much people are impacted by ableism (a learning mentioned by 3 participants). A number of the insights about ableism were in connection to Victoria's stories (on the ableism panel) about her experiences living with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). This story was a "signature story," mentioned by 8 different participants in the study. In response to Victoria's story, one man of color expressed, "I never knew how severe OCD was. I used to joke around with kids and tell them they had OCD, not knowing how much if affects on people's lives." Referring to the same story, a White male student communicated, "Someone the other day said they had OCD about re-arranging clothes in their closet, and it stung me to think that they were comparing their small perfectionism to what Victoria has dealt with her whole life." This insight illustrates this students' ability to recognize how others may unintentionally belittle the daily experiences of people with disabilities through the language they use (which was something Victoria had mentioned on the panel as very painful for her). This student's ability to notice this behavior outside of the course context illustrates that not only did he become aware of one way that ableism operates, he was able to recognize it outside of the course.

One man of color said listening to the ableism panel, "gave me insight on my oppressive behaviors toward people with disabilities." This was the only insight in students' final papers that demonstrated realizing their own past experiences perpetuating oppression after listening to a story. However, admitting such a thing, especially to their

course instructor on a graded paper takes bravery, which may help explain why this was not very common.

Insights About Religious Oppression

Finally, 4 participants described examples of coming to an awareness of religious oppression, both connected to Islamophobia as well as Antisemitism. A woman of color expressed her surprise at learning about the oppression that Muslim people face by virtue of their religious identity. A White woman shared a similar reflection, indicating that a major insight for her was in regards to "how Muslims are treated in our country." This woman also articulated that hearing stories helped her learn more about oppression faced by her own religious group. She said that from the stories she heard on the panel, she

> definitely got new insights on what it means to be Jewish….some new insights I got this semester were that most people don't know what it means to be Jewish ….It definitely is hard sometimes being Jewish in a Christian country.

This student realized both the unawareness of many of her Christian-identified peers as well as the realities of Anti-Semitism.

Insights About the Existence of Oppression in General

Finally, along with the insights connected to specific manifestations of oppression reviewed previously, a few participants described insights about oppression that were not in relation to a specific "ism." Of the 8 examples that fit into this sub-theme, 5 were expressed by the same White woman and were about her realization of how serious oppression actually is. She said that listening to personal stories helped her realize "how evident oppression is in our world." She explained, "I knew it existed, but I was never

really aware of how bad it truly was" and said that the fact that people can suffer from oppression is "something I never consciously thought about before."

Finally, 2 participants described 3 examples of learning about how different forms of oppression intersect and build upon each other. Referring to hearing her instructor's experiences with race and also disability, a woman of color shared, "I think her experiences fit each other like puzzle pieces and that serves as a great example to show that many forms of oppression affect another." The other participant who described an insight related to this topic, a White woman, shared,

> Overall, my response to the panel included comments about learning about the connections between the forms of oppression. Oppression is not just one level or one aspect in our society; it is multidimensional and interlaced with several factors. Oppression is intentional and unintentional. The panels brought these issues to light for me.

These insights about intersections of manifestations of oppression are an integral piece of learning about social justice issues. It feels important for instructors to assist students in seeing the connections and all of the complex ways that oppression can play out.

Insights About Privilege

Along with disadvantage, 10 participants described 18 instances of learning about privilege or the ways privileged social identity group members receive unearned advantages or opportunities because of a social identity. These insights included both examples of how privilege plays out connected to different identities (i.e., race and class) as well as some of the challenges connected to holding a privileged status in society.

Insights about White privilege were the most commonly described (7 references); though there were almost as many references to class privilege (6 references). Three references to privilege were about religious oppression.

White student described the majority of the insights about White privilege, and most of these were about how they began to understand their own White privilege for the first time after listening to the stories of White panelists. For example, a White woman explained

> Listening to the person on the panel who discussed being privileged for being White is probably when it really hit me what it meant to be privileged for being a White person and how just looking a certain way, regardless of all other factors, completely affects how I fit into society and the benefits and resources I have access to.

As exemplified in the introduction to this chapter, a White man echoed this sentiment, after hearing a White panelist, Cassandra, talk about the privileges she receives connected to the criminal justice system and how she is automatically perceived as "good" based on what she looks like. These insights by White students about White privilege are striking because it can be particularly challenging for students from these identities to come to an awareness of how they have advantages based on their race as opposed to only looking at how students of color are harmed (Goodman, 2001; Johnson, 2006; McIntosh, 1998).

In addition to learning about the existence of White privilege, some participants learned about some of the costs or difficulties of being White. For example, one woman of color recounted a story about a time when a White panelist was scolded for asking her parents a question about racism when she was a child. Hearing this story offered this student a window into the strength of the socialization that White people receive to avoid talking about race.

While many of the insights connected to the topic of race were made by White participants coming into an awareness of their own White privilege, all but 1 of the 5 references related to the topic of class privilege were made by participants who were from the target group in relation to class identity (i.e.. raised poor or working-class). A number of these participants had insights connected to Laura's "signature story" about the way she struggles with her class privilege. One woman of color reflected on the challenges shared by Laura and explained,

> As I listened to the panelist more, I realized that her type of struggle may not be the same type of struggle as mine, but it's still something that she has to deal with. Having a lot of money and resources does not make a person happy, because then they must deal with the negative aspects of it.

Another woman of color reflected on the experiences of this same panelist, stating,

> I must admit it was hard to hear someone whose life has gone by so easily for them, but it was a learning experience, and I learned that she is more than just her class but a women who is really passionate about social justice and about many concern of people.

In contrast to the two examples above, one man of color identified with Laura's class privilege, and communicated

> After hearing the story of the woman's guilt over her fortunate circumstances, it really opened my eyes to the fact that I have fortunate circumstances. That insight makes it easier for me not to get angry about little things, and it makes it easier for me to compromise with others."

This example demonstrates how participants who hold different statuses in relation to class can have very different learnings from the same story.

All of the new insights in relation to the topic of Christian Privilege were described by two students of color who came to realize their privilege after listening to the stories about Antisemitism and Islamophobia on the Religious Oppression panel. One man of color expressed, "When I was listening to the panel on religious oppression, I

noticed how lucky I was to live in a Christian society because people of other religions do not get the same treatment or benefits that I receive. Now that I understand that I am a part of a privileged group, I try even harder to not offend people of other religions and treat them equal to me. The other participant described learning how she is privileged in relation to holidays.

> My family has had Catholic beliefs, and I have never been in school for any of our major holidays. I have always had New Years, Christmas, Good Friday off even though I have always attended public schools. In the panel, I was able to see that some people don't get the same privileges I get to have a day off of work or class to observe religious or cultural practices.

Because of the structure of the multi-issue, social diversity course that allowed participants to experience learning about four different areas of oppression, all of the 16 participants in this study had the experience of holding a privileged identity status in relation to at least one of the course topics. These insights about their own privilege are helpful for students because it may increase their empathy for their peers from different identities in the areas in which they come from targeted identities.

Insights About Own Ignorance

An insight that seemed to have a different sort of flavor from the other types of insights involved students realizing their own lack of knowledge, education, or awareness about a topic that they previously had thought they knew a lot about. Five participants described 6 examples of this type of insight. Students talked about realizing their unawareness in relation to the course in general and also in response to specific stories that they heard. For example, a White woman shared, “I found it very eye opening hearing from my fellow classmates. So many people had different stories than I did, and

hearing from different people made me realize how much I did not know about the world." A White male shared this sentiment, particular connected to the topics of race and class. He said,

> I am a privileged White male, so even writing this paper is sort of difficult for me because I know that people are struggling to support their families, and they have such a harder life than I, and I really do know nothing of true struggle the way many people of color do.

Although most of the references to realizing one's own ignorance were recounted by White people about their unawareness about race and racism, one participant mentioned realizing her lack of knowledge about ableism, saying that hearing a panelist's story about her disability impacted her life and "provided new information for [her] on how serious it can be and how little [she] know[s] about certain disabilities."

Though it may seem counter-productive to learn about what you do not know rather than increasing one's own knowledge about a topic, noticing one's own places of unawareness is an important piece of learning and also an example of "meta-cognition" or thinking about one's own thinking, which is a higher-order critical thinking skill (Svinicki, 1999). In addition, since many White student entered the course with a type of "been there –done that" attitude about race and racism, realizing their unawareness about the realities of this issue is actually an extremely consequential learning.

Insights About Challenging Oppression

Nine participants recounted new learnings about challenging oppression, which was distinct from the cluster of "Taking Action for Social Justice" (reviewed later in this chapter) in which participants talk about having a motivation to take an action or actually taking an action in some way in their life. In contrast, insights about challenging

oppression refer to the learnings or insights that students share about taking action against oppression, including realizing people can, and do, take action from different positions of advantage and disadvantage connected to a variety of different topics.

Most of the insights (8 of the 9) were about the fact that people from targeted groups do not let oppression define them and can work to overcome their circumstances and fight against oppression. For example, one White woman described that the personal stories she heard in the course "gave [her] new insight that even though people go through oppression all the time, they don't let it define them." Another participant described a new learning in response to hearing about the Islamophobia experienced by Noreen and Omar. The woman of color described, "It was just important to hear them speak and reassure people that they still live their lives, and they are not going to pay the price for being who they are." Finally, one man of color (who was raised working-class) described an insight about overcoming classism. He shared, "after taking <this course> and having the panel on classism, I have found that no matter how fortunate or unfortunate you are raised, it is hard work that puts you in a social class." He goes on to add that this realization has given him hope and has increased his motivation to work hard as a student. This quote is complicated, and his learning may not be fully in line with social justice-oriented teachings about the realities about classism because his statement denies the existence of structural oppression and reinforces the "myth of meritocracy" (or the implicit assumptions that if individuals work hard, they will be rewarded, and, if they fail, it must therefore mean that they did not work hard or were not worthy enough to be rewarded) (McNamee & Miller, 2004). However, this insight also

seems to be an important factor in this working-class students' feeling of empowerment about his own ability to succeed as a working-class college student.

Along with realizations that people from targeted groups can take action against the oppression that they face, one participant described the value of hearing her course instructor's example of taking action against ableism. This student said that hearing her instructor's experience "taught [her] that taking action is so important and can change people's lives forever." Because one of the goals of the multi-issue, social diversity class relates to taking action against social injustice and includes learning skills for intervening when confronted with oppressive situations, learning about how others, both from privileged and targeted identities, interrupt oppression, and take action toward liberation can be an important learning that may increase participants' ability to see themselves as agents of change (Bell & Griffin, 2007; Hackman, 2005).

Summary

This section has offered a description and examples of the different types of insights that participants describe after listening to stories in a multi-issue, social diversity course. Participants learned about all of the different areas of oppression emphasized in the course (racism, classism, religious oppression, and ableism) in a variety of ways. Insights included learning that difference exists and not everyone's experience is the same and about stereotypes and assumptions. Participants also learned about the existence and operating mechanisms of both oppression and privilege connected to a number of different social identities. Finally, participants learned about their own areas of ignorance or unawareness and also information about taking action to

overcome oppression. The types of insights expressed varied by the identity of the participants in the course. The various sub-themes of student learning that emerged are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Participant Insights from Listening to Stories

Insight Categories	Definition	Examples
Insights about the Existence of Difference	Discovery that one situation can be understood through a number of different perspectives	"Hearing from the panels especially made me realize that people had very different experiences than I have." (White woman)
Insights about Stereotypes and Assumptions	Learning information about others that challenges one's stereotypes about another social identity group	"This panelist's story affirmed my knowledge that assumptions cannot be made about people, because everyone has a different story. People like to assume that white people have a lot of money and resources, but after hearing this particular story, I know that is not true. She made me rethink the way I look at people I don't know, because I no longer judge people based on appearance." (woman of color)
Insights about Oppression	Learning about how members of targeted groups are mistreated, or denied access to resources because of their social identities	"It had never occurred to me that sometimes biracial people are not accepted into either group." (White man)
Insights about Privilege	New realizations connected to the way the self or others receive unearned opportunities because of a social identity	"After hearing the story of the woman's guilt over her fortunate circumstances, it really opened my eyes to the fact that I have fortunate circumstances. That insight makes it easier for me not to get angry about little things and it makes it easier for me to compromise with others." (man of color)
Self-Awareness of One's Own Ignorance	Realizing one's own lack of knowledge, education, or awareness about a topic one had thought she knew a lot about	"I found it very eye opening hearing from my fellow classmates. So many people had different stories than I did, and hearing from different people made me realize how much I did not know about the world." (White woman)
Insights about Taking Action	Insights about the fact that people can, and do take action, from different places of advantage and disadvantage	[I learned that] "taking action is so important and can change people's lives forever." (White woman)

How do Stories Impact Participants' Motivation to Take Action?

One of the major goals of educating students about injustice is to help them to develop the motivation, skills, and capacities to take action, individually or in collaboration with others, against injustice and toward liberation (Adams, 2014; Bell, 2007; Carlisle et al., 2006). Similarly, a primary goal of the multi-issue, social diversity course is to help students both recognize opportunities and develop skills to take action for social justice (Adams & Marchesani, 1997). Participants' final paper assignment asked them to reflect on concrete situations in which they have applied what they learned in the course and have taken action. In response to this question, participants described taking myriad actions, ranging from furthering their own education about injustice to educating others, and/or interrupting oppressive circumstances. This section only focuses on times that participants describe becoming motivated to take action or actually following through with an action as a direct result of a personal story they heard during the course. Thus, there were many more actions described in the final papers than are included below.

Naming an Intention to Act

In their final papers, participants referenced having a changed attitude in line with social justice as well as feeling motivated to take action, either by acting as an ally to a member of a targeted social identity group or as a targeted person enacting empowerment. Both of these were important precursors to actually taking action against injustice in the world.

There were a total of 2 references indicating a chance of attitude, both shared by the same White male student. In both of the examples, he indicated a new, pro-social justice attitude as a result of listening to stories of personal experience. For example, in response to hearing stories from participants of color about the reality of racism in their life, he expressed, "I really have established a conscience of how race currently plays a huge role in a person's economic and social standing, and I am a big supporter of affirmative action because I think it's very fair." Although identifying as a supporter of affirmative action policies is not taking action, it does indicate developing a particular stance and possibility for future action.

In addition to the participant who discussed changes in attitude, a number of participants mentioned feeling motivated to take action toward social justice as a result of stories they heard in the multi-issue, social diversity class. (Some of these were mentioned in the "feeling inspiration" section of this chapter.) There were a total of 13 references to feeling motivated to take action from a total of 8 students.

A number of these references were made by members of privileged social identity groups, who indicated a desire to take action as a result of feeling inspired by the actions of someone else. These participants expressed their desire to take action in a general way (i.e., wanting to be an ally) rather than naming specific actions they planned to take. For example, after listening to a story told by her instructor about her experience taking action against ableist language, a White woman participant stated,

> I realized how hard this was for Cassandra to do, and I really admire her for doing so. It taught me that taking action is so important, and can change people's lives forever. It makes me want to take action myself in my own life.

Another White woman participant expressed that listening to a member of a privileged group "inspired her to be an ally."

Other participants expressed motivation to take action against oppression after learning about how privileged they are, in contrast to members of oppressed social identities. For example, a raised-Christian woman of color talked about her process of learning about how privileged she is to get her holidays off from school, in contrast to Jewish or Muslim students. She said, "Before this course, I never even thought about other faiths, and now I want to fight for their rights." A White male student said that his instructor "shared numerous examples of how she tries to fight against oppression, and just listening to all the stories makes me want to do the same thing, so she was definitely inspirational to me and a big reason why I enjoyed this course so much!" Thus, instructors or panelists from privileged identities, who have taken action against oppression were powerful role models to inspire students to follow suit and take action as well.

One participant specifically named Victoria's "signature story" about her experiences with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder as a call to action. This White male student said, "I feel Victoria has challenged me. I feel that now whenever I go out and hear someone claiming they have OCD, it is my right to remind them kindly that OCD is a major mental disorder, and they should be lucky that they do not truly suffer from it." Thus, this man's connection to the panelist (who also happened to be his course instructor) inspired this desire to act. Particularly intriguing is his use of the word "right," which frames speaking out against oppression as a positive thing (as opposed to words like "duty" or "obligation").

Students from privileged backgrounds were not the only participants who expressed a desire to take action; a number of participants from targeted social identity groups expressed a desire to fight to overcome the circumstances into which they were born and to work to make things more equal in the world. For example, after hearing about a working-class woman pursuing her doctorate, a man of color, who was also raised working-class, shared, "Her story touched me and motivated me to go get whatever it is that I want." In response to hearing the panel on ableism, a woman of color, who was raised working-class expressed,

> from Bob and several of the panelist I learned that seeking an education and doing what you love is a better way of living no matter what you experience. By learning from them I feel like whatever comes at me while I am alive, I have the arms to fight and the skills to win.

Thus, hearing from other panelists who are marginalized, helped participants from targeted groups feel inspired to persevere.

Taking Actions that Promote Social Justice

While over half of the participants described feeling motivated to take action against oppression as a result of stories they heard in the course, 4 participants recounted actually taking action between the time they heard a story and the time they wrote their final reflection paper at the end of the semester. One example was an action taken by a man of color in response to hearing Laura speak about class privilege on a panel. He stated,

> Her narrative really had me thinking about it for a next couple of weeks. While so many people would cry over hard times because of a lack of money, this woman was upset because she had the financial security that many would die for. It really changed my perspective about my life, and I suddenly was inclined to contact my old community service group and see if there was anything that was available in

> my time frame. I ended up doing 8 hours… and I look back on the experience very fondly.

Another White man described taking action by interrupting ableist language as a result of Victoria's story on the ableism panel. He said,

> I never really thought OCD was an actual disorder due to our society "dumbing it down" by using it in phrases that speak more about perfectionism than OCD. Whenever someone now claims it is their OCD that makes them do a certain action, I remind them that they do not suffer from OCD and that it is just their perfectionis[t] manner.

Along with the examples above that illustrate taking action against oppression that is external to oneself, one woman of color shared that she has taken action against internalized oppression as a result of hearing the panels. She said, "I am a poor, working-class Latina and through the panels, I was able to learn to embrace my identity. Although I am a minority, I still make it really far in life." All of these examples are powerful, considering that participants were moved to take action by hearing a story. This is on top of the myriad other actions that students took at the end of the course in general, which were most likely informed by listening to stories, even if students did not identify them in that way.

Although not as robust as the affective and cognitive impacts of stories, the behavioral outcomes reviewed above are noteworthy. They demonstrate that listening to personal stories can help facilitate the action-oriented goals of social justice courses (Bell & Griffin, 2007; Hackman, 2005).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has described the major themes that emerged from my grounded theory analysis of personal storytelling in two sections of an "ism"-based, social diversity

course. The thematic analysis focused on final paper excerpts in which participants recalled and described personal stories shared by peers, panelists, and/or course instructors and any impacts or reactions to the stories. Also included were passages in which participants wrote more general reflections about the role of storytelling in the course. First, I summarized some of the prior experiences that participants bring to conversations about race and racism. I then described the four clusters that emerged in my thematic analysis of what stories related to social identity-based experiences students recount listening to in the multi-issue, social diversity course, identifying any "signature stories" that were recalled and recounted by more than 4 participants. Next, I reviewed the different ways that participants evaluated and interpreted the stories to which they listened as well as their impressions of the storytellers. I then described participants' emotional and empathic reactions to the stories they heard as well as new insights they learned as a result of listening to a story. In the final section, I presented examples of liberatory action taken by participants after listening to a story. These findings will be summarized more thoroughly and discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5

STORYTELLING AND STUDENT LEARNING IN RACE/ETHNICITY INTERGROUP DIALOGUES COURSES

Introduction

> One person of color was talking about how he had been walking with some of his friends through a neighborhood and a police car drove up …and the police officer came out and searched him and [was] just being extremely rude and didn't really have any reasons. He didn't think that there was any reason to talk to them other than the fact that they were Black. So, and the police officer was like grabbing him inappropriately and just not doing his job right. So that was not something I've experienced before and a first account of blatant racism….I was angry just thinking about the reality of police brutality and things like that. It comes up in news every once in a while, but it's never a huge deal. I feel like people can just change the channel and move on. So I was just upset that it happens and that there's not, there's also not really knowledge about that. Like a lot of people still think that racism ended with the Civil Rights Movement or that it's just not a big deal, so. And I felt empathy for him that he had to go through that. I just felt like I understood him better. (White Male)

This excerpt encapsulates some of the affective and cognitive processes and impacts connected to personal storytelling in race ethnicity dialogues. As this White male student describes, the act of listening to a story shared by another participant in the dialogue helps him see how institutional racism operates in our society, allowing him to feel empathy and anger and also notice and question the unawareness and invisibility of this issue for many White people.

This chapter examines findings from my grounded theory analysis of the role of personal storytelling in two race/ethnicity intergroup dialogue courses, the second social justice education practice site in this research project. I present themes that emerged in my analysis of interviews conducted with the 16 participants in the study who participated in two different semester-long race-ethnicity intergroup dialogue undergraduate course at two universities in the Northeast, Crenel University and Bixton

University (see Appendix B for interview protocol). In these courses, students are encouraged to voice, describe, share, and question their own experiences and understanding about race and racism through writing, personal sharing, and group dialogues. Stories, such as the ones described in the quote above, can have a tremendous impact on the individual consciousness of students as well as the collective consciousness of the dialogue group. One of the ways personal storytelling is encouraged is through a "testimonial" activity that takes place in the third dialogue session in which everyone, including the facilitators, writes and then shares stories related to how they learn about race, ethnicity, and racism, and other salient social identities, growing up (see Chapter 2 for a description of this activity). The analysis presented in this chapter highlights stories that students heard from other dialogue participants described during the testimonial activity or other dialogic activities (e.g., affinity groups, fishbowls, open dialogues). Participants then recalled and described these stories during interviews that took place a week after the dialogue course had ended.

This chapter is structured similarly to Chapter 4, and begins with a discussion of some of the prior experiences IGD participants brought to the conversation about race-ethnicity to set the context for their learning. I then describe the major clusters of stories about race-ethnicity and racism that participants recalled and described in their interviews. I continue my exploration by talking about the ways participants make meaning of the stories that they heard through their interpretations and evaluations of the stories and the storytellers. Finally, I present the different affective reactions and the new insights participants described after listening to stories, as well as any actions they

engaged in. Refer to Figure 3 for a summary of all of the major themes that emerged from the race/ethnicity IGD interview data.

Unlike the findings from multi-issue social diversity course presented in Chapter 4, in which it was not possible to make meaningful identity comparisons of the different themes across race/ethnicity, there were equal numbers of students of color and White students included in my analysis in the IGD course. This enabled me to explore my research question about whether the stories recounted, and learning described by students differed in their racial-ethnic identities in this data set. To shed light on this question, throughout this chapter, I highlight major patterns of differences by racial/ethnic identity that emerged. However, due to the small number of participants in this data set (n=16), I must be cautious of drawing conclusions from these differences. They can, however, point to patterns that might be worth delving into in further research studies.

Prior experiences with the Topic of Race/ethnicity and Racism

- Prior experiences with cross-race interaction
- Prior Knowledge about topic
- Feelings / Expectations

Content of Stories Recalled and Described

- Stories about Racism from the Perspective of People of Color
- Stories about Racism from the Perspective of White People
- Stories about Navigating the System of Racism with Awareness

Making Meaning of Stories and Storytellers

- Evaluating Stories & Storytellers (valuable, unfair, divulge private information, courageous)
- Articulating Oneself in Relation to stories (similar / different)
- Grappling with Personal and Conceptual Meaning of Stories

Learning From Stories

- Insights about the Nature and Extent of Racism
- Insights about the Impact of Racism on White People
- Insights about Taking Action

Taking Action

- Expressing Motivation to Take Action

Emotional Reactions to Stories

- Feeling Emotions
- Feeling Empathy
- Feeling Connected to Others and Course Content

Figure 3: Summary of Major Themes in the Race/Ethnicity Intergroup Dialogues

What are Some of the Prior Experiences the Participants Bring to Conversations About Race and Racism?

To explore how and why personal storytelling impacted student learning about race and ethnicity in intergroup dialogues, it is important to first consider students' starting place, or their thoughts, feelings, and previous experiences with this topic when they entered the IGD course. These prior experiences can impact participants' willingness and ability to engage fully in the course and to feel safe enough to self-disclosure about identity-related experiences. Specifically, I explore participants' prior experiences with interacting across race-ethnicity, their prior knowledge about the topic of race and ethnicity and also their feelings and expectations about participating in a race dialogue. This information was not connected to a particular interview question but rather was gleaned from different statements made by participants throughout their interviews, and 14 out of the 16 students mentioned some contextual information in their interview. It is important to remember that these data are retroactive, that is, they capture reflections made by participants at the conclusion of the course about how they felt when they first entered the course.

Participants' Prior Experiences Interacting Across Race/Ethnicity

Consistent with the literature, participants of color, and White participants described either a lack of prior experiences interacting across race/ethnicity or negative experiences with this type of interaction (Kozol, 2005; Tatum, 2007). In their interviews, 5 participants chose to speak about their previous experience with contact across difference, and 4 of the 5 were students of color. A man of color expressed feelings of discomfort on his predominantly White campus, indicating that he leaves campus at times

to visit friends at HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) to have a break from the discomfort. In his interview he expressed,

> I always catch myself, you know, walking across campus and, you know, feeling uncomfortable when, like, I realize that I am, like, the absolute, you know, only person of color who's walking on the quad at a particular moment in time. …. I don't know what it is, but it just seems like when I'm around, you know, my White counterparts then it's always something to explain…. It's always a situation that makes me feel uncomfortable or a situation that has to be, you know, like you have to enlighten people. But when I'm around other people of color or even people who are like myself, then it's like just understood, just everything seems so, I wouldn't say peaceful but like just comfortable.

This student expressed a comfort and familiarity when he is around other people of color that is not there for him when he is around White people. He also expresses past experiences with feeling as if he has an obligation to educate the White students around him about race and racism, being the one to "enlighten" them.

Similarly, a woman of color also spoke in her interview about growing up having her life shaped by her mistrust of White people, sharing a specific example of a challenging experience in the past with a White roommate who would not accept her because of her race. She also expressed a familiarity with being the only Black woman in academic spaces, expressing,

> I don't think it was really shocking because I'm used to being like 1 to 20 out of like classes because it's really rare that you'll see a lot of classes with a lot like you, with a lot of Black females in the class. So I wasn't really like flustered by it, but at times I felt that I was put on the spot to answer for every Black female because I was the only one there and it was a lot of White females there that could speak together, and I was the only one.

Thus, this woman identifies that her experience being 'the only" of her particular identity in the dialogue, though far from ideal, mirrors her previous experiences.

One man of color in the dialogue articulated a difference in perception of diversity that he noticed among students in the dialogue course. Referring to a conversation that had taken place in the dialogue, he expressed,

> We talked about that like with the other students from small towns because they would say, "Wow, we came to Bixton, and we see all these minorities" and then we were thinking like, "Wow, we came to Bixton, and there are so little minorities" so it's kind of like we just realized how different perception[s] we had and a different perspective by where we came from.

The quote above captures a common phenomenon that occurs in the perceived diversity of a space based on one's identity and prior environment and how this perception often differs between students of color and White students (Rankin & Reason, 2005).

In contrast to the examples above, which were about things that happened while in college, two dialogue participants spoke about their previous contact across difference, prior to coming to college. A woman of color indicated that she comes from a "city that's a melting pot of different people" and her "high school was one of the biggest high schools in the area … There was people from all different backgrounds you could think of, mixed and a little bit of this and a little bit of that." In contrast, a White woman shared a very different experience growing up. She explained in her interview, "I was raised in a pretty much segregated community, upper-class, you know, personal responsibility, blah, blah, blah, that type of thing, I didn't really know that all of this [racism] was going on until I got much older." These experiences are indicative of larger patterns, where many students grow up in homogenous environments and attend segregated schools (Kozol, 2005; Rankin & Reason, 2005; Tatum, 2007).

Participants' Prior Knowledge About Race and Racism

Most of the participants who chose to enroll in the intergroup dialogues had some knowledge about the topic of race/ethnicity and racism, though this knowledge differed by whether it was from academic classes or personal lived experiences. Specifically, 4 students expressed a total of 5 examples that referred to their prior knowledge of the topic of race and racism (or the perceived knowledge base of others in the class). For example, a White woman in one of the dialogues conveyed her impression of her own knowledge on the topic in comparison to the varying knowledge levels of others in the class. She explained,

> Coming into the class we all had different levels of understanding of this, like some people were kind of just like, "Oh, racism is mean." Other people, you know, like one of the girls is a senior sociology major so she had obviously studied at length. I think I was kind of in the middle…. When I was entering this class, I had taken a sociology class, women's studies classes, I've been learning about all this stuff.

Another White woman revealed that she felt like all of the other members of her dialogue already had an awareness of "ideas of systems of oppression and White privilege" when they entered. The more advanced level of understanding of many of the dialogue participants differs from the multi-issue, diversity course reviewed in Chapter 4 in which many of the students were first-year students who were learning about these topics, in detail, for the first time.

In addition to knowledge of the topic of race from academic courses, some students also talked about their knowledge from past personal experiences (or lack of experiences). A man of color in the group described previous and intimate knowledge of racism explaining,

> I felt I had a lot to share and contribute to the class that people might not hear about or get to discuss, you know, anywhere else or I just felt that this was my chance to, you know, let people know, you know, let them get a glimpse of what I have to live with every day.

Not only did he feel as if he had a lot of information based on his personal experiences, he entered the dialogue with a desire to share this information with his peers.

Finally, in contrast to the man quoted above, a White woman in the dialogue mentioned her lack of personal experience with the topic of race/ethnicity and racism. She stated, "At first I thought that I wasn't going to have much to say in the dialogue, I guess, because I don't have many experiences facing racism personally. So, that was a concern of mine in the class." Another White woman also expressed that the topic of race and ethnicity was new to her because "no one had taken the time to talk to me about it."

Participants' Feelings and Expectations About the Subject of Race/Ethnicity and Racism

In their interviews, students expressed many different expectations and feelings about talking about the topic of race and ethnicity in a mixed group, and though these patterns differed slightly by racial background, there was a common underlying theme of anxiety, hesitation, or fear. Specifically, 9 different participants recounted a total of 14 different examples referring to their thoughts and feelings about engaging with this topic. One common feeling mentioned by a number of students, both White and of color, was hesitancy with the group initially, for a variety of reasons. A few students of color mentioned feeling nervous about discussing this topic with White students, particularly when they were the only one of a particular identity (a concern mentioned by a Black woman, a Black man, and an Asian-identified man, who anticipated that he "thought that

it was going to be a bit awkward"). In addition to being the only one representing a particular racial or ethnic group, a Black man in the group said, "Initially I came in a little defensive, just worried about, you know, what would be said and if I would be offended in any way and how people would take to that." A Black woman echoed similar concerns, saying her whole life has been shaped by her mistrust of White people, and expressed, "I'm used to White people not understanding where we're coming from….I know they want to understand but don't ever really quite understand what you're saying." She also admitted that she is tired of "preaching, preaching, preaching."

In contrast to students of color feeling fearful of White students' unawareness and the potential for them to feel offended by them, most of the White students expressed a fear of being judged by students of color. For example, one White woman expressing discomfort about being automatically perceived as ignorant because she is White, and said, "I don't want to be the dumb White person who doesn't know anything about being oppressed." Another White woman expressed a similar sentiment saying,

> I was a little worried that people would see me, see a White girl, and kind of assume that I felt a certain way or thought certain things about people of color, and I'm actually in the process of educating myself on all the areas of Social Justice.

Though both of these women were nervous about being judged by others, a White man expressed even more anxiety and said that upon entering the course, he "figured it would be a lot of minority students and just hating on some White males, which is a little bit of what I've experienced with other classes like this." He also said, "I was scared that it was going to come back to me and just have everything put on me when I do my best in life not to judge people." Because of this fear, he said, "At first I was reserved and didn't really want to speak my mind about certain things."

The fear and anxiety expressed by students makes sense based on how contentious the topic of race can be in the United States and the very different ways that students of color and White students experience the world (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Tatum, 2007). It is also noteworthy that that students of color entered feeling fear of being offended by White students, while White students entered feeling fearful of being judged by students of color.

In addition to the fears and anxieties discussed above, a more positive feeling about the course expressed by dialogue participants was that they were all there for the same reason. Seven participants shared a total of 10 references expressing some variation of this sentiment. These passages were referring to the fact that students all selected to be in the course and had to actually go through an application process to be placed in a section. Although this process of placement was not very vigorous, it did require extra steps beyond the usual process of simply registering for a course online.

In her interview, one woman of color explained how the IGD course differs from the registration process of a General Education course, stating,

> We just all went in there because we knew that we wanted a different experience, and that's exactly what we got. But we also went in there with respect. We went in there with open mind….And if it would have been a class, if it would have been like a kind of just gen. ed. class that students just take to take and you have different students that really probably don't want to take the class, but they take it because they need the credits or they need to fulfill the gen. ed., then you definitely would have had a big controversy on things, especially with some people that come from maybe business majors and couldn't give a crap about people's rights and equality.

This woman indicated a belief that the respectful way in which dialogue participants treated one another was related to the fact that they all had taken some initiative to apply to be in the course. Another woman of color expressed that the application process made

her believe that the students were "all on the same boat, which was really relieving." She goes on to say, "The fact that anyone would get up and say 'I want to join this class,' even is a first step to saying, 'I'm opening myself up to something new or something that I have dealt with for my entire life.'" Similarly, a White male student said,

> I think the fact that we had to apply for the class and go have like a phone interview kind of, and then it just really showed them we all wanted to be there for a certain reason, whether it be to make a difference in the world or learn from other people, which is different than just enrolling in a class and taking it.

This clear motivation on the part of others to be in the course may have helped with group dynamics, allowing participants to be able to work with each other's learning process in a compassionate way.

Summary

All of these different pieces of contextual information are important because they set the stage for what was to come in the dialogue. Consistent with prior research and the context described in Chapter 4 of this dissertation, many students described either a lack of contact across difference in their past experiences (mostly White students) or negative experiences with cross-race contact (Kozol, 2005; Tatum, 1997; 2007). For this reason, among others, most students described some hesitancy entering the course; however, White students and students of color had different reasons for or flavors of their hesitancy. This makes sense considering the fact that these students are differentially situated in our racist society (Tatum, 2007). It is also important to consider that in the IGD, a number of students reported entering the dialogue with some knowledge base about the topic or race and racism, either from their lived experience as people of color living in the United States or from academic courses. This past knowledge base as well as

the application process for the course helped ensure that students had some investment in their learning, and perhaps helped them believe in the positive intentions of others. All of this context set the stage for the process of storytelling about personal experiences that will be reviewed in the next sections of the chapter.

What Stories are Recalled and Described by Participants?

In the course of the intergroup dialogues, participants and facilitators disclosed a variety of personal stories that shared intimate details about their lives, many of which were about things that are not commonly talked about in an academic setting. To explore the role of personal storytelling in student learning in intergroup dialogues, my first step was to examine which stories students recall and react to in their interviews and to identify what these stories were about. To explore this theme, I first identified any sections of interview transcripts in which participants recounted a specific story or multiple stories told by another student or the facilitator in their intergroup dialogue section. Although participants referred to stories throughout the interviews, they most commonly brought them up in response to interview questions focusing on the topics of engagement and empathy (see Interview questions in Appendix B). Throughout the 16 IGD interviews included in the study, there were a total of 49 examples of stories recounted, and all of the participants described at least one story. Different participants in the same dialogue frequently referred to the same stories in their interview, and thus, the total number of distinct stories described was much less than the 49 references to stories. I have identified stories that were referred to by more than 4 dialogue participants as "signature stories" (Wong et al., 2013, p. 184). Although "signature stories" emerged,

because these stories were re-constructed by the listener, participants remembered different details, and at times, conflicting information, in their recounting of the same story. In my presentation of the stories in this chapter, I try to capture the central information in the stories that was corroborated by multiple participants.

Three over-arching clusters of stories emerged in my thematic analysis of the stories described in the IGD interviews. These include 1) stories about racism from the perspective of people of color (18 stories recounted by 12 participants, 2) stories about racism from the perspective of White people (19 stories recounted by 10 participants), and 3) stories about navigating the system of racism with awareness (14 stories recounted by 7 participants). These stories were shared by facilitators and peer classmates who were members of both privileged and targeted social identity groups, and all dealt with the topic of racism, except for one story that was about heterosexism. I will offer more information about each of these three clusters in the following sections.

Stories About Racism from the Perspective of People of Color

In their interviews, participants described myriad stories that illustrate ways in which people of color are harmed by the system of racism, both through hurtful interpersonal exchanges as well as experiencing institutional racism. 12 participants described a total of 18 examples of this type of story, which I separated into experiences with racism in either childhood or adulthood. Within each of the two dialogue groups from which data were drawn, there were a few "signature stories" connected to experiencing oppression, which will be highlighted in the following section.

Stories About Experiencing Racism in Childhood

A number of the stories that were recounted by participants dealt with content in which a participant of color shared a hurtful experience of experiencing racism as a child. Although there were a total of 9 different references by 8 different dialogue participants referring to this type of story content, many of these references were about the same story. This signature story was mentioned by 5 of the 8 dialogue participants included in this study (1 from each type of identity included in the dialogue, and 2 White women). An Asian-identified woman, Grace, told a story about being bullied in school after her family immigrated to the United States.

One participant described the story in the following way:

> Grace and her parents moved here when she was really young. She was in kindergarten, and she couldn't speak English very well, and kids would take her stuff, like her book bag or her coat, and they would hide it somewhere, and they wouldn't give it to her because they knew she couldn't tell on them because she didn't know how to speak English. And her teacher knew this was going on. She found out, and he wouldn't help her out at all. (White woman)

Another participant added the following information to her description of Grace's story,

> Grace couldn't communicate with anyone and so she told … an aunt or something like that who could speak English, and the aunt came back with her to school and spoke to the teacher, and the teacher said that she was lying, like everything was fine. There was nothing missing. And she … was just like crying because, like, she didn't have her stuff, and she knew the students were doing this, and the teacher didn't even, like, think to look or attempt to help her find her things. And she, like, she started crying, and she was just saying, like, how you're really young and you can't communicate and then like no one was there to help you and that was really hard for her. And she remembers coming back and seeing the same teacher, like, a year later when she actually could speak and she says, like, even being that young she remembers the guilt in the person's face, like they knew there was something wrong but refused to help her. They were just like, "Whatever!" because she couldn't speak English. (woman of color)

This story content is about a young person being treated unfairly by someone in authority who is supposed to help her. According to the students who recalled the story, Grace

describes that she had cried about her circumstances when she was young, and then also began to cry when recounting the story in the dialogue when reflecting on the experience aloud. Although it is a story of unfairness, it is also a story of resilience and triumph, in which Grace goes back and faces the teacher who was so cruel to her the following year after she learns to speak English.

This story demonstrates a phenomenon that occurred throughout the IGD data in which storytellers described past experiences and also their present day reflections on what happened to them in the past, often while expressing emotion. It seems to be the combination of both the story and the emotional content in the storytellers' present day reflections on the story that make them so memorable (see Chapter 6 for further discussion).

A Black male in one of the dialogues, Nathan, told another story about experiencing racism as a young boy that was mentioned by two White women participants. One of these women described Nathan's story in the following way,

> He told us about when he was little, and he was playing out in the yard with his cousin, and one of their neighbors who was White who was also a chil, went out and started playing with them and that child's mother came out and told … the White child that he couldn't play with my classmate and his cousin. And didn't explicitly say, "You can't play with them because they're Black," but the student who was reading his testimonial, he said that he could definitely, that was clearly what it was because he'd seen the White child playing with other White kids in the neighborhood before.

The other participant who recounted Nathan's story described it in a similar way and added, "It was a big ordeal, and it was just a very powerful, memorable experience for him." Similar to Grace's story described above, Nathan's story also exhibits a young child being mistreated by an adult in the situation.

Stories About Experiencing Racism as an Adult

Participants also articulated stories told by students of color about experiencing both individual and institutional racism as adults. Six participants described a total of 9 examples of stories that fit into this sub-theme. For the purposes of this study, I designated "adults" as anyone over the age of 18 (or who had begun college).

Two participants (a man of color and a White woman) described a story told by a Latina woman, Natalia, about experiencing racism when she was with a group of other students of color on campus. A man of color described Natalia's story in the following way:

> Natalia went to a party and was walking back home to her dorm when she was a freshman by one of the frats, and she was with a couple of Spanish and Black friends and how one of the fraternity brothers called, told them, "Get off my property you fucking n*****s." And, like, she was telling the story, and she got really emotional about it. She got really mad. She was like, "Like I came to this school, I thought it was going to be this whole new experience, and I was going to meet all these great people, and I would be accepted, and instead after being here for two weeks, I was like verbally abused" And like she got really upset about it. Like she was talking about how she always wanted to come to college, and it was her dream to come to college and get out of her neighborhood, and she couldn't and as soon as she got here she was racially abused.

Similar to the example of Grace's story who shared her experience with her teacher after immigrating, this example includes both what happened to Natalia (her experience walking by a fraternity), in addition to her present-day reflections on what happened (her anger about being treated this way).

A number of the other stories that were recounted about oppression in adulthood were told by one particular Black male, Tony and were referred to by multiple students. Two of these stories (described by a White woman and a White man) were connected to

Tony's experiences with racial profiling. A White woman remembered one of the stories and said,

> Tony talked about how he had been working at a newspaper as an intern and was leaving or was trying to go, he was trying to go either in or out of the building, he forgot something, whatever, it was late at , and he basically got harassed by the security people and wouldn't let him in the building even after he showed them an ID and like all this stuff and was being so polite to them. And he walked in and out of the building all the time. (White woman)

Tony also shared experiences with his peers about how he was racially profiled by the police. A White male recounted the story and explained, that Tony…

> had been walking with some of his friends through a neighborhood and a police car drove up and was kind of driving by them a couple times and eventually pulled up behind them and the police officer came out and searched him and just being extremely rude and didn't really have any reasons. He didn't think that there was any reason to talk to them other than the fact that they were Black. So, and the police officer was like grabbing him inappropriately and just not doing his job right.

As is very familiar to many men of color (and Black men in particular) in the United States (Miller & Garron, 2007), Tony described experiencing racial profiling by both a security guard and police when he had done nothing wrong.

It is interesting that although one of the stories about experiencing oppression in adulthood was shared by a Latina woman, the content of all of the stories centered around racism experienced by Black men. This may be because there were two men who identified that way in this particular dialogue section, so there may have been more attention on their experiences than on other people of color.

All of the stories above were told by people of color in the dialogue about the ways in which they have been affected by racism, both in the past and currently. A few of these stories, such as Grace's story, were mentioned by many of the dialogue participants, and were "signature stories."

Stories About Racism from the Perspective of White People

Stories that White people shared in the dialogue about how they are impacted by the system of racism also drew attention from the participants and were recounted in interviews. This sub-theme included stories about perpetuating or colluding with racism and also ways that White people describe being harmed or impacted in a negative way by the system of racism.

Stories About White People Perpetuating Racism

A few White participants articulated stories about times in which they unintentionally or intentionally perpetuated or colluded with racism. There were 7 different examples of this type of story, described by 5 participants. Most of these excerpts were about a story shared by a White female dialogue facilitator, Jenna, about an instance in which she unintentionally behaved in a racist way when interacting with a boy of color when she was in elementary school. Jenna's story was described by two different White women and one woman of color and was described by one of the White women in the following way:

> A White female in the class shared a story about when she was in elementary school, and she was in gym class, and they were doing, like, the thing with the parachute where you go up and down, and you were in a circle, and they had to hold hands with the people next to them, and the person next to her was a Black boy, and she didn't want to hold his hand. And she said that she wasn't quite sure, but she knew that it was dirty somehow, and she got all teared up …

In addition to remembering what happened in the past, this woman's description indicates that Jenna expressed emotion when she was sharing the story to the dialogue group (she "teared up"). It also clearly speaks to the ways in which White people are socialized into beliefs about people of color at a very young age.

Another personal narrative about enacting racism was admitted by a White man, Luke, and took place when he was in college. According to the woman of color who recounted it, "He had just requested a roommate that, just a guy that he knew of through a friend actually, he knew through a friend, and it was because he was trying to prevent getting a roommate of another race, of a different race than his, as a roommate. He said he felt uncomfortable with that option." Thus, Luke went out of his way to prevent himself from having to share a room with a student of color, and then shared this story with his dialogue group.

Both of these stories took courage to share and are not commonly heard due to the stigma surrounding this particular topic and White people's fear of being perceived as racist.

Stories About How White People are Negatively Impacted by Racism

Some White students in the dialogue shared personal experiences that illustrated ways in which they are harmed or impacted negatively in some way by the system of racism. Some were targeted because of their connection to a person of color, and others experienced harm at a broader, more systemic level, either by their lack of contact with people of color or lack of awareness of the topic of race and racism.

There was one story shared in one of the dialogues that particularly resonated with the other participants. The story, told by a White woman, Stacey, was about the reaction of White people in her hometown when she brought her boyfriend, a Black man, home with her. This was a "signature story" referred to by 5 of the 8 students from this

particular dialogue group (2 White women, 2 White men, and 1 man of color). The man of color described Stacey's story by saying,

> I remember a young lady talking about that she had … a Black boyfriend, and he would come to her town, and basically she would just be like excommunicated by the people in her town, except for, like, her mom. And, like, she would just be treated differently just because of her Black boyfriend, which is really a shame.

A White woman corroborated this description and added more details about how Stacey was treated, explaining, "All these people that she knew started treating her differently, and a lot of people were not being very nice about [it] to her about it. She would be called names and stuff."

In addition to the story about being targeted by their association to a person of color, White participants articulated stories about being harmed in other ways by the existence of the system of racism in which they receive privilege. Three different participants (2 men of color, and 1 woman of color) expressed a total of 6 references to stories that related to this sub-theme. For example, a woman of color recounted a personal narrative shared by a White woman, Nicki, in the dialogue. She said,

> There was this girl in our class, Nicki, and she grew … in the suburbs, her dad's, like, a surgeon or something like that, and she mentioned that throughout her entire life pretty much the schools and everything in her area is completely, like, only White students. And, like, in school sometimes, like, the history you get it's, like, very brief on, you know, slavery and things like that, so she's pretty much only around her own identity group until college because even in high school she went to prep school and things like that. And so she just said that she feels, I guess, in a way cheated because there's all this stuff that she just didn't know about, and then coming here, she started to meet different people, and, I guess, she took Women's Studies and things like that, like those different classes, and she personally said that she felt her term was she, "felt like shit," like, because she feels that ok this is her race that did all these things to other people who are oppressed…

In her articulation of this story, Nicki referred to feeling cheated by her homogenous background and the skewed history she was taught in school. A White male in the

dialogue, Garrett, shared a similar story of a lack of contact across difference when he was growing up. This story was referred to by 3 students (2 men of color and 1 women of color), one of whom described it in the following way:

> This White male student he said he was from a really small town, and everyone was pretty much White there, so it was very different for him to meet other people. So I think it just makes you more aware that it's not always a conscious act or not always something that where people just don't want to communicate with others. Sometimes it's really they just don't know how to or have never been around anyone different from them. He said I think in his high school there were, like, two Black students or he has one Black friend, like he's and that person's accepted because he's pretty much like everyone else.

Thus, this story of unawareness and the costs of being from such a homogenous background was striking to these students of color who recounted it. These examples reflect the literature that discusses the different costs of racism to White people, such as lack of opportunities to connect across difference and being exposed to misinformation about race (Kivel, 2002, Thandeka, 2000).

Stories About Navigating the System of Racism with Awareness

Both students of color and White students similarly articulated narratives about the ways they tried to live with awareness and intentionality in their life after coming to an awareness of racism. Some of these stories were about ways in which dialogue participants were grappling with how best to work with difficult situations and/or were trying to experiment with new behaviors. Other stories exemplified ways that both White participants and participants of color took action to challenge racism in some way, either acting as an ally or as an empowered member of a targeted social identity group.

Stories About Grappling with Racism

As mentioned above, some participants in the dialogue articulated personal narratives about ways in which they were attempting to figure things out and experiment with new behaviors in relation to the topic of racism. Many of these stories emerged during the hot topics, a curricular activity that happened later in the course in which students apply the dialogue skills they learned to talk about controversial topics (e.g., affirmative action, immigration, or interracial relationships). During these sessions, participants were more apt to express tentative or half-formed ideas than in earlier curricular activities, such as the testimonial activity. These stories of grappling with racism generated a variety of insights and opinions from others in the dialogue and sometimes sparked conflict in the group.

The majority of the stories that were classified as "grappling with racism" were told by White students in the dialogue. One of these stories was told by a White woman, Tracey, who shared a personal narrative about her struggles being a White woman who is a big fan of hip-hop music. A man and a woman of color both recounted Tracey's "internal struggle" about a recent experience attending a hip hop concert, and one of them offered,

> Tracey mentioned how over the weekend she had gone to a hip hop concert and the whole time she was there she had an awesome time, and she's very much into hip hop, and she loves that culture, and but she was one of very few White students in the concert or at the concert, and she said that it made her feel like she didn't belong there. It made her feel like, "Ok what is the White girl doing?" ….And she also started crying because that was something I think that she struggled with a lot because she wanted to go to these events. She wanted to do these things, but she always felt like society was always pressing her down and White society is telling her that's not your place, and that's not somewhere that you should be going. (woman of color)

A man of color, who also described this story, added additional information, sharing when Tracey was trying to find friends to go to the concert with,

> She couldn't find anybody out of all her White friends to go with her and how like she kind of got made fun of and stuff like that. So finally one of her friends went with her to the concert, and, like, she said she was dancing and stuff and then, like, she started to cry because she said that she saw some kids like making fun of her and her friend and, like, making fun of the fact that, like, they were White girls that couldn't dance…. and she started crying because she said she feels like she's held back because she's White and how people don't want her to be there, so she feels like unwanted.

Both of these students mentioned that Tracey cried when recounting her story. Thus, the emotional content of the story gave them the sense that this is an issue she is really struggling with and means a great deal to her. It also highlights the difficulties she feels when she tries to break out of the box that she is put into by White society, both in this specific instance, and in general.

Another story that received a great deal of attention in the dialogue group was told by Amy, a White woman who admitted to ways in which she "overcompensates" for the existence of racism in her interactions with people of color. This "signature story" was recounted by 4 participants (2 White men, 1 man of color and 1 woman of color). A man of color described Amy's story in the following way,

> Amy was a cashier and whenever she was giving change back she'd make a conscious effort to touch the person's hand instead of not touching the person's hand and having the other person think, "Oh she didn't touch my hand because I'm Black." She made a conscious effort to touch a person of color's hand.

A White male participant added that Amy shared that she did this particularly with African American men and women's hands but not usually Latinos or Asian-identified people.

Amy's story inspired other White students in this dialogue to admit to some of their own experiences with overcompensating offering examples such as holding the door open for Black people more often than for White people. One woman of color encapsulated the gist of all of these stories by expressed that these students "feel like they need to prove to Black people in the things that they do and say that they're not racist."

Although the majority of the stories included in this sub-theme were told by White dialogue participants, a couple were offered by students of color about their own process of living with awareness and intentionality in a racist society. One of these stories, described in the interview by a White male, was told by a Black male student, Kevin, and was about arriving at a meeting for a group project 45 minutes early. When asked why, he said it was "because I didn't want them thinking I was the lazy Black guy that wasn't going to do anything." This story illustrates that this man of color was aware of the stereotype that exists about Black men as lazy, and so he was intentionally trying to alter his behavior to avoid confirming this stereotype.

Another story about navigating the system of racism was shared by Ray (a man of color) and was remembered and described by a man of color who was in the same dialogue as him. This individual described Ray's story by saying,

> One person, he gave a testimonial and he was talking … about how whenever he saw like any White person, like he grew up in a mostly Black neighborhood …[and] whenever he'd deal with White folk there was always problems, so now he avoids White people or he tries to avoid White people. And I understand it's like he sees a White person walking like he'll cross the street or whatever, he only deals with them when he has to.

In reaction to his past negative experiences with White people, this man of color enacted a strategy of avoiding interaction with White people as much as possible.

Stories About Challenging Racism

Finally, in addition to articulating personal narratives that described their process of grappling with living in a racist society, participants recounted stories told by both privileged and targeted social identity group members about challenging or overcoming oppression and/or acting as an ally.

There was one story that was shared by a White woman, Suzie, about challenging racism that was recounted by a woman of color in the group. She conveyed,

> Like one of the other girls…[Suzie] had mentioned how she gets very worked up when it comes to people saying these stereotypical things and when people say derogatory things… And I think it was really interesting to see that she was actually taking an active approach as far as, you know, teaching people like that's not ok to do or say …. I think it was really interesting for her to mention how she actually really, really, really takes into consideration what people have to say about different races, and most of the time it's kind of just like, "Oh , you know, Asians this and that. OK, whatever," and laugh about it and move on, but for her it was like, "No, but that's not OK. That's creating a stereotype that is not true."

Suzie's story demonstrates how she has tried to take an active approach and speak up to interrupt racism rather than colluding with it by remaining silent.

There was also a narrative shared in the dialogue by a woman of color, Eva, that illustrates challenging racism from the targeted identity group position. In this example, Eva overcame the automatic assumptions of whiteness placed on her by outsiders and talked about proudly embracing her ethnicity. One Asian-identified man identified that this story strongly impacted him, and offered,

> One [story] that really sticks out is this one girl, she was Latina and she had like, and like she, her thing was that she looks White, and people, she lives in a White area, so unless she pulls out like a Puerto Rican flag and hangs it on the door. People just assumes she's White. And she had like his huge like, her thing was like she loved her culture and everything about it.

Although this woman is not challenging racism directly targeted at her by another person, by hanging a Puerto Rican flag on her door and unabashedly showing pride in her culture, she is challenging and interrupting the automatic assumption of whiteness as a default, and also some of the negative messages that exist about Puerto Ricans.

Summary and Patterns of Difference by Identity

Participants in intergroup dialogues recounted a diverse range of stories that were articulated by peers in their intergroup dialogue courses. In my thematic analysis, the three major clusters that emerged were 1) stories about racism from the perspective of people of color, 2) stories about racism from the perspective of White people, and 3) stories about navigating the system of racism with awareness (from the perspective of both White participants and participants of color). Participants in the intergroup dialogues recounted approximately equal numbers of stories told by storytellers who were White and storytellers of color. The majority of stories told by people of color that were recounted in interviews were examples of how they were impacted by racism, both as young people and as adults. The stories narrated by White people, in contrast, were about ways in which they have perpetuated racism and also ways they have been negatively impacted by the system of racism. The final category highlights some of the struggles that both White participants and participants of color had when trying to work with their awareness of racism in their lives.

Table 8 summarizes the three major clusters and sub-themes of stories and includes examples of the most commonly recounted stories from each of the categories. The stories that seem to draw the most attention from dialogue participants included

stories about experiences with either experiencing or enacting oppression as young people. The stories told by both students exhibited cruel behavior by adults who were supposed to be looking out for them. Other stories of cruel behavior got attention from students, including the story about being in an interracial relationship and being treated poorly by others in her town because of it. This story also illustrates some of the ways White people may be punished for being connected to people of color.

One of my research questions was whether there were differences based on racial/ethnicity identity in the types of stories recalled and described in participant interviews. Of the three major clusters of stories that emerged from my thematic analysis, White participants recounted about twice as many stories about experiencing oppression as an adult or child (13 stories, recounted by 7 participants) than participants of color did (6 stories, recounted by 6 participants). One possible explanation for this could be that this information is more likely to be new to White participants, and would be something that would impact their learning. White students and students of color recounted approximately the same number of stories about racism from the perspective of White people. These stories were about both the negative impact of racism on White people, and about White people perpetuating racism. Finally, participants of color recounted over twice as many stories of the cluster, "Navigating the System of Racism with Awareness" than White students (5 participants of color described 10 stories, and 2 White participants described 4 stories). Within this category, the difference between White students and students of color was greatest for the sub-category, "Grappling with Racism." This could be that participants of color most likely have a more sophisticated understanding of race and racism as a result of lived experience. They may be more drawn to more complex

stories in which both White students and students of color struggle to live with awareness and intentionality in a racist society, as well as stories about taking action.

Table 8: Stories Recalled and Described by Intergroup Dialogue Participants

Story Content Categories	**Story Content Sub-Categories**	**Story Examples (number of participants who recounted the story)**
Racism from the Perspective of Participants of Color	Experiencing Racism as a Child	• Grace (an Asian-identified woman) was bullied by other students when she immigrated to the U.S., and her teacher refused to help (5) • Nathan (a Black male) was forbidden from playing with a White child in his neighborhood by the child's mother (3)
	Experiencing Racism as an Adult	• Tony (a Black male) was racially profiled by a security guard and the police (2) • Natalia (a Latina woman) had racial epithets shouted at her when walking past a fraternity party with other friends of color (2)
Racism from the Perspective of White Participants	White People perpetuating Racism	• Jenna (a White woman) does not want to hold hands with a young Black boy when she is in elementary school, because she thinks his hands are dirty (3) • Luke (a White man) goes out of his way to make sure he does not have to live with a roommate of color (1)
	White people being negatively impacted by racism	• Stacey (a White woman) is treated poorly by white people in her hometown when she brings her boyfriend, a Black male, home with her (5) • Garrett (a White male) grew up in a small town without contact with any people of color (3)
Navigating the System of Racism with Awareness	Grappling with Racism	• Amy (a White woman) works as a cashier and "overcompensates" for racism by touching the hand of black customers when giving them back change (4) • Kevin (a Black man) arrives at a meeting 45 minutes early to disrupt negative stereotypes about Black men (1)
	Challenging Racism	• Suzie (a White woman) speaks up to interrupt racist stereotypes when she hears them (1) • Eva (a Latina woman) overcomes pressure to conform to whiteness, and proudly embraces her ethnicity (1)

It is also interesting to note that a number of stories that were remembered and recounted by multiple participants were stories in which the storyteller had some sort of noticeable emotional reaction while they were sharing (i.e., crying or getting visibly angry). For example, 3 different participants mentioned the fact that Grace cried while recounting her testimonial about being treated poorly as a child after immigrating. In addition, at least 1 participant mentioned how Jenna, a White dialogue facilitator, "teared up" when expressing her narrative about perpetuating racism as a young child and that Tracey cried when sharing her struggles as a White woman who is a fan of hip hop music. Because emotional content is atypical in a classroom environment, it makes sense that these particular stories would be particularly memorable for participants.

This chapter section has shed light on my research question that asked, "What stories do participants remember and recount following an intergroup dialogue?" From these data, it appears that participants recall stories told by students across identity groups about a variety of topics. The stories that were most commonly recounted seemed to be stories of pain, particularly those with young children, and stories in which participants emote in some way while sharing the story.

How do Participants Make Meaning of the Stories They Hear?

As they recounted stories told by their peers and facilitators in the dialogue, participants articulated the various evaluations and interpretations they had of the personal narratives they heard. This information, which I conceptualized as distinct from participants' emotional reactions to or new insights about what they heard illustrated the ways that were thinking about, making meaning of, and/or understood the stories.

Participants made meaning through expressing their evaluations of the stories they heard as well as their impressions of the people telling the stories. Another way of making meaning was by articulating themselves and their own experiences in relation to the stories they heard, identifying narratives as either similar to or different from their own experiences. Finally participants described ways they grappled with the personal and conceptual meaning of stories, working through confusion, and attempting to apply new information to their own lives. The next section reviews each of these different ways in which participants made meaning of stories, including some illustrative examples.

Participant Evaluations of Stories and Storytellers

One way participants made meaning of stories they heard was by identifying their evaluation of the stories they heard as well as the people telling the stories in different ways. In the interviews, participants often highlighted their appreciation for the personal stories they heard in the dialogue and named storytelling as an engaging component of the course. They also expressed indignation and labeled certain stories unfair or hard to hear. Finally, participants talked about the uniqueness of having the opportunity to hear intimate details of one another's lives. Participants also spoke about their evaluations and impressions of their peers in the dialogue who told the stories, evaluating them as courageous or likeable.

Stories are Valuable and Engaging

The most common evaluation of stories concerned the value of stories for students' learning. Participants described the value of stories in different ways, including

naming a story or storytelling as engaging, expressing appreciation for having heard a story, labeling the testimonial (storytelling) activity as the most valuable part of the class, and finally through other positive descriptors of stories, such as "eye-opening," or "powerful."

Some participants expressed their appreciation for having the opportunity to hear stories. For example, a White woman expressed gratitude multiple times in her interview. When she was talking about the testimonials, she said, "People definitely shared personal stories, and we were all strangers at that point, and I really appreciated everybody doing that." Another positive evaluation named by multiple participants was labeling stories as interesting or powerful. A woman of color evaluated a story told by Suzie, a White woman who was working to interrupting racism as "really interesting," and another story she heard as an "eye-opening experience." One White woman, referring to Jenna's story about hesitating to touch a boy of color's hand when she was young, said, "That was very powerful. I was affected a lot by that and her ability to share that with the group." This same participant referred to Nathan's story when he was forbidden to play with a White child in his neighborhood and said, "Seeing how racism had affected him was really powerful." Finally, a White man labeled Amy's story of overcompensating for racism in her work as a cashier as "pretty powerful."

Along with expressing appreciation for stories and labeling their power, over half of the dialogue participants described that they found the experience of listening to stories (especially the Testimonial activity) to be engaging. For example, one woman of color said that the testimonial was "the biggest, the best time for us to really let loose ….I felt very present in that conversation." Another woman of color said that she was "very

active in that class," and a White woman named testimonials as "really engaging because I was just listening."

A man of color said that the testimonial activity was "when [he] really started getting into the class … [He] just wanted to get involved." He went on to say,

> Hearing everyone's testimonials, that was like, I think was the most important class for me because it just let me see how much race and ethnicity, it affected every single person, and no one just wrote, like, you know, a little sing along story. Everyone had like a real personal story to share.

Finally, a White male student in the dialogue expressed,

> I was really engaged when we all gave our personal stories … I loved, maybe not so speaking and telling where I was from as opposed to listening to other people and where they were from and just getting a background of what they've been going through. …. I felt like that, I had the greatest connection there because I was seeing what everyone else was going through and how their lives were up to this point of going into this class.

He went on to explain some of the reasons why he perceived the storytelling portion of the course as so engaging. He said

> When you tell a personal story I kind of perk up a little bit more. Whenever you're stating a fact, it's interesting but it's not. It doesn't have any connection to you or to me in the class. And I think that's one thing with the testimonials….It gives me a background to what you mean and that's what made me get engaged from the start because I knew it wasn't just them citing facts; it was actually where they're coming from and really the emotions that they're feeling and things that they're going through.

All of these examples demonstrate the ways that listening to stories make students "perk up a little bit more," and evaluate storytelling as a part of the course that they perceived as useful, and enjoyable. The only evaluation of an individual story that I would not classify as positive in some way was shared by a woman of color reacting to Luke's story about going out of his way to avoid having a roommate of color and also Amy's story about overcompensating for racism. This woman said that she perceived

both of these stories as "really weird." Because this term can be ambiguous, the interviewer tried to probe for more information, but the participant was unable to further explain what she meant by it.

Some Stories are Unfair or Hard to Hear

Participants also evaluated stories by judging the fairness of what happened in the narrative and also identifying stories as "hard to hear." About a third of the participants included examples in which they expressed that they felt that the storyteller was treated unfairly in some way. For example, after recounting the story of how Grace was treated as a child by her teacher after immigrating, one White man expressed,

> I think that's wrong. It made me feel like, and when we also did the web oppression, I felt like how can America, how can America, the lead country of the world, do these things, do this stuff, do active racism? It shocked me.

Similarly, after hearing stories about the mistreatment experienced by Tony (a man of color), one White man said that hearing those stories was "the most hurtful and impactful for me" and continued by saying, "It's just, it's not right, you know. It's not right." Other phrases that indicated participants' indignation about something they heard in a story were; "It would have to suck to live that way," (man of color) or, "It shouldn't be that way. It doesn't need to be that way" (White man) or describing an incident as "a real shame" (man of color).

Closely related to evaluating stories as unfair, a few participants named that stories were "hard to hear." I perceived the underlying meaning behind this phrase as the stories were distressing or uncomfortable for the participant to listen to in some way. Two of the stories that participants evaluated as hard to hear dealt with experiences that

the storytellers had in childhood. For example, in response to hearing Nathans's story about being forbidden to play with a White boy in his neighborhood when he was young, a White female participant said, "Seeing how racism had affected him was really powerful and for such a young kid to have to go through that, it was tough to hear." Another White woman reacted to Jenna's story about unintentionally perpetuating racism as a young girl when she did not want to hold the hand of a young Black boy, sharing, "It was really, really hard to listen to that, but I really appreciated her sharing it." Finally, referring to an experience with racial profiling shared by Tony, a White male participant said "It was kind of hard to hear the experience with the police officer."

Stories Divulge Private Information

To many of the participants, the stories they heard in the dialogue revealed experiences with race and racism that are not usually talked about or discussed in public or in mixed racial groups. About a third of the participants named that they were struck by how their peers divulged private details about their life, which they felt was uncommon in an academic setting and which helped them become closer. For example, in reaction to the stories shared by Grace and Patricia (2 women of color in the dialogue) about their experiences as children immigrating to the United States, a White woman expressed,

> Those are the kinds of things too that in a normal conversation would never come out because people don't like to talk about, I mean, like, bad things… And people are hesitant to share their real experiences because we always feel, at least I do, I feel like I'm always forced to, like, put a positive play on things, and it's really hard to just like open up like that I guess. So I was really moved, I was really thankful that they would trusted all of us enough to be that open and to not worry about what they're supposed to do and just be real with everyone.

This woman evaluated the experience of hearing stories about racism as rare because of people's usual need to put a positive spin on everything. A woman of color spoke about Jenna's story about perpetuating racism by not wanting to hold hands with a boy of color when she was young. This participant explained, "You hear about that stuff, like, in your classrooms and stuff, but you never really hear it, like, on first-hand, and it wasn't shocking, but it was just like, 'Wow.'" In both of these examples, participants name the chance to hear first-hand accounts of people either experiencing or perpetuating racism as rare.

In addition to the specific stories referred to above, a couple of participants evaluated the type of storytelling practiced in the class as rare, in a more general way. One White participant named this in relation to having the unique opportunity to get to hear the stories and experiences of people of color in the dialogue. In her interview, she admitted,

> I don't really have many close friendships with people of color and so that kind of eliminates the chance to have any deep conversations with them. And it was really nice to be able to hear what they have to say and to have them be so honest.

Finally, a couple of participants named that engaging in the testimonial activity was a unique experience for them. For example, a woman of color named that the testimonial was "a way to show everyone our personal sides and really tell our story. And that's really rare." And, referring to storytelling a man of color shared, "You can tell, like, people were touched in the class, and, like, it's just basically something that goes untold, like, something that you wouldn't ever hear about unless you attended, like, one of these classes." These excerpts indicate that the unique level of disclosure about personal experiences is evaluated as an uncommon and rare opportunity.

Storytellers are Courageous and Likeable

Not only did participants express their impressions of the stories they heard, they also made statements during their interviews about their evaluation of the person who had told the story they had listened to (the storyteller). Rather than qualities that the storytellers directly named about themselves, these evaluations were all attributed to the storyteller by the listener based on the stories they had shared in the dialogue. Some examples of perceptions of the storyteller included likeable and courageous

One types of evaluation of the storyteller that was unique to the IGD course (in contrast to the multi-issue, social diversity course presented in Chapter 4) was connected to participants' relationship with the person telling the story. This was unique to the structure of this course in which participants get to know their peers, who are telling their stories, over the course of the semester. For example, after sharing a story told by a Black male in his group about his experiences with racism, a White male participant offered, "I love the kid. He's a great guy." And, after listening to Amy's s story about overcompensating for racism in her interactions with people of color, especially when she is working as a cashier, a man of color said that the story "really affected me because, like, I've worked with her a few times in class. She's like a really sweet girl, very nice girl." Participants' personal relationships with the storytellers seemed to make their stories have even more power as they were listening to them.

Another evaluation of storytellers that was offered by more than one participant was recognizing that the content of their narrative took courage to express. For example, a woman of color acknowledged Tony's courage in sharing some of his personal experiences with racism with the dialogue group. She said she "took to what [Tony] was

saying…because he had the courage to say it." When reacting to stories told by another man of color about his experiences with racism, a White male participant described him as "a very courageous and ambitious guy." Interrupting the *status quo* and talking about things that are not usual topics of conversation in a classroom setting makes someone vulnerable and requires a substantial amount of courage.

Finally, participants named the courage of other dialogue members, even when they disagreed with what the storyteller was expressing. For example, after expressing how upset she was after Luke shared his story about going to lengths to ensure that he did not have to have a roommate of color, one woman of color acknowledged the courage it must have taken for him to share this with the dialogue group. She expressed,

> He looked ashamed of what he said, and he looked uncomfortable, so I felt like it took a lot for him to say that. And I felt in some way that maybe from being in the class he had learned something and that was his way of addressing it and then trying to change from it. So that was, like, his confessional and then hopefully, you know, he would show people you're not alone if you're feeling this, I said it out loud. I said it out loud. You don't have to agree with me, but I said it, and then kind of work from there.

It was striking that this participant was able to see Luke's bravery, even when she found the content of his story problematic.

Though the findings for evaluations of storyteller were not as robust as participants' evaluations of the stories they heard, they do give a glimpse into what participants thought about those who were telling the stories. Having a chance to have a personal connection or friendship with those whose stories you are hearing is a finding that seems to be unique to dialogue. In addition, related to the evaluation of stories as rare or things not usually talked about, participants acknowledged the courage that it takes for participants to make themselves vulnerable enough to share these stories.

Articulating Ones' Position in Relation to Stories

In their interviews, another way in which participants made meaning of the stories they heard was articulating their own position in relation to the stories. This involved interpreting a narrative through comparing one's own experiences to that of the narrator and naming it as either similar to or different from one's own experiences. Some participants also named if they interpreted stories as similar to or different from things that they heard about (as opposed to things they had actually experienced first-hand).

The Teller's Stories are Similar to My Own Experience

Although not as prevalent in the data as interpreting stories as different from their own experience, 4 participants described stories that they perceived to be similar to their own experience or the experience of someone close to them. For example, one White female participant described that her experience with feeling concerned about bringing her roommate, a Black woman, to her home town with her was similar to Stacey's experiences bringing her boyfriend of color home and having him be negatively received by others in the town. Another White woman shared a perceived similarity with a story told by a White man, Stephen, about his lack of experience with the topic of race and racism. She shared that hearing his story,

> made me feel good because someone else was in the same boat as me and made me feel like, sometimes I felt kind of dumb that I didn't even realize that other people were being oppressed. I think it helped. It made me feel better to know that other people don't realize.

Finally, a White man expressed that hearing Amy's story about overcompensating for racism by touching the hands of people of color in her job as a cashier was similar to some of his own experiences. He said,

> I could definitely identify … like overcompensating so that you're not seen as racist, and that was pretty powerful…. It's always nice to feel that you have something in common with somebody, you know, that you're not alone in certain actions or certain thoughts.

All three of these examples were described by White participants and demonstrated the power for them of hearing from other White students who are struggling with some of the same issues that they are in relation to racism. This can reduce feelings of shame and alienation surrounding the topic and help participants see how others handle similar issues.

One participant of color also revealed her understanding of a story as similar to the experience to people close to her. She said,

> This one African American male was, like, just saying stuff that I've heard before like the whole being followed in stores for his skin color and just when you were younger the White kids didn't want to play with you and all that stuff. It was nothing new. It was stuff that I'd all heard before… Everything that he was saying didn't directly affect me, like I didn't have the same experiences, but I definitely heard it before, so it wasn't like, "Whoa, that happened to you?" because that happens to a lot of African Americans that I can think of that are close to me.

Although this woman did not have the exact same experiences as this man, she reacted to the story as "nothing new" and similar to the experiences of people in her life. All of these examples suggest that when participants perceive commonalities of experience, they appear to feel a sense of comfort and affirmation, and as a consequence they seem to feel less alone in their experience.

<u>The Teller's Stories are Different from My Own Experience</u>

Participants also articulated their experience as different from those that they heard from others in the dialogue or different from anything they have ever heard or thought about before. This sub-theme was more robust than interpreting stories as similar,

specifically, 9 participants described 11 examples of this type. For example, when referring to Tony's story of being racially profiled by the police, a White male participant said, "That was not something I've experienced before and a first account of blatant racism." Similarly, a White woman named a story that Natalia shared about racism in the campuses fraternities as different from her own experience, and this White woman indicated that she had previously been unaware that that could even be an issue, admitting, "I never even would have thought that that could be…. I don't know why that was so over my head."

In addition to the examples above, all which exemplified White students articulating the experiences of students of color as different from their own experience, a few students of color described stories told by White students in this way. For example, a woman of color recounted a story told by Nicki, about her lack of experience with people of color and past unawareness of racism. She described Nicki's experience as "unimaginable," expressing that she feels badly for this woman and acknowledged how Nicki's experience differs from her own. Another woman of color reacted to the narrative about overcompensating for racism expressed by Amy in the dialogue and said, "That was something that I had never noticed before." Finally, a woman of color shared how her personal experience is different from Luke's (the White man who had shared a story about his hesitancy to have a roommate of color). She explained,

> It was very different from my opinion because that's one of the things I looked forward to when I was coming to college was who I was going to meet, and I was determined on meeting somebody from every type of background …Sometimes I feel like I would go out of my way to make different friendships.

It is interesting that stories of difference were identified more frequently than stories of similarity. It makes sense that participants may pay more attention or choose to

recount stories that they perceive as novel rather than stories they themselves have experienced.

Grappling with the Personal and Conceptual Meaning of Stories

Along with evaluating stories and storytellers and articulating themselves in relation to the narratives of their classmates, participants also described their process of grappling with the information in stories. In these interview excerpts, participants did not necessarily have a new insight or clearer understanding of information. Rather, they describe their process of trying to make meaning of the complex issues they heard through the stories told by their peer classmates by working aloud through areas of confusion or attempting to apply the information they heard to their own life. Participants described grappling with both the content of the stories and with characteristics of the people who shared the stories. These passages were indicated by terms such as "was trying to figure out," "I don't know," "I'm working with that," or "It was kind of confusing." In their interviews, participants of color described twice as many examples of "grappling" with material as a result of listening to stories in the dialogue than White students did (6 participants of color described 9 examples, and 3 White participants described 5 examples).

In a few examples of "grappling" with stories, participants attempted to make meaning of the actual content of a story. For example, in response to hearing Stacey's story about the negative reactions of people in her town when she brought her Black boyfriend home with her, one man of color shared his struggle with understanding how they both had the strength that they did. He said if he was in the same situation he would

have a really hard time, expressing that he "couldn't even imagine," and then went on to say,

> I was just trying to figure out where this guy got his strength from… and her too as well. You know she could have easily just, you know, buckled under the pressure of society and just dropped him, but instead she stuck it through, and, you know, she didn't compromise somebody that she liked because, you know, outside things pressuring her, you know, to basically conform and assimilate to whatever the social norm was.

In another example, a woman of color wrestled with understanding a story told by her peer that illustrated inter-ethnic prejudice from a Jamaican woman toward people who are Haitian. In the story, the woman had expressed that she would rather her son date a woman who is White than who is Haitian. In her interview, the participant attempted to make meaning of this (feeling a great deal of surprise), and said, "I guess I thought it was, I don't know, like weird is the only word to kind of describe that because it kind of contradicts itself, tremendously it does…It was kind of confusing, for a better word."

In addition to grappling with the content of the stories they heard, some participants recounted ways in which they wrestled with their reactions to the people telling the stories they listened to. For example, after noticing the absence of race in a few of the testimonials shared by White students in the dialogue, one White woman shared her struggle with other White participants (which she also acknowledged was also her struggle with herself). She expressed,

> It's so bad because it's really hard because I feel like I'm so hard on others, on other White people. I feel like I'm so hard on them, honestly like any, a girl or a person of color, gay person, anyone who has a target identity could really do anything to me, and I would probably just be like, "Oh, it's ok," but if it's a White person, male whatever, anything they do I just want to get in their face and it's so bad because it's not attacking dominance, I'm attacking a dominant person and then that sometimes I am attacking myself sometimes, and that's what makes me angry, so I'm trying not to do it. I'm like working with that right now myself.

Finally, a woman of color talked about her process of working with her feelings about Luke's story about how he went out of his way to make sure he did not get a roommate of color. In her interview, she identified her conflicting views of the story, which both included her anger and frustration at what he said but simultaneously acknowledging her appreciation for the fact that Luke had the courage to share what he did. She said,

> I felt like he just wanted to stay stuck in his little world, … It was one of those things where he said , and he looked ashamed of what he said, and he looked uncomfortable, so I felt like it took a lot for him to say that. And I felt in some way that maybe from being in the class, he had learned something, and that was his way of addressing it and then trying to change from it. So that was like his confessional, and then hopefully, you know, he would show people that "You're not alone if you're feeling this, I said it out loud. You don't have to agree with me, but I said it, and then kind of work from there." But I remember at that moment that's how I felt, I felt like he was just willing, like so many other people, to just live in their little world and not try to change anything and just not trying to reach the limits of your comfort zone….I was kind of mad at him… I thought it was really stupid that somebody would feel like that. But then after your first initial emotion and you sit back and you think about it was when I was, like, you know, he probably said that because he knows that what he did was really did just kind of ignorant.

This example, which also demonstrates feeling multiple conflicting emotions at once, shows the ways in which this woman worked through her initial emotional reaction of anger toward Luke, then began to empathize with him and see that he might have an awareness of how problematic his behavior was. It is clear that this woman is still processing her feelings about this and has not quite "landed" anywhere but is thinking critically about the narrative as well as her reactions to it.

All of these examples show how participants work with their thoughts and feelings about what they heard in the dialogue in complex ways. This process of navigating contradictions, paradoxes, messy feelings, and confusing information is an important stage in critical thinking (Donaldson, 2002; Svinicki, 1999). This type of

process is not prevalent in educational settings that prioritize the "banking" form of education in which participants memorize the "right" answer to parrot back to their instructor. Thus, having the chance to practice critical thinking skills and articulate one's process of working through information and feelings in an interview is important.

Applying Stories to One's Own Life

Another way that participants grappled with information was by attempting to apply what they heard to their own life. This process, which also closely overlapped with "empathy," included instances in which participants described learning something new from a personal narrative and then attempt to apply what they heard to their own past or present life experiences in some way. Nearly half (6) participants shared an example of a story and then made an attempt to relate what they heard to their own life. This process of applying information suggests a higher-order thinking skill and indicates that participants are integrating the information they heard into their own frame of reference.

Two of these examples of "applying information to one's own life" were times when participants heard a story from someone different from them that lead them to feel badly about past behavior. For example, after hearing Tracy's story about feeling like she was being made fun of when she was one of few White people at a hip hop concert, a man of color shared,

> I know, like, if I ever go out with my Columbian family, like, I'll hear them make jokes about White people , like, about Americans and stuff like that, so I was just thinking back that could be, like, one of my uncles who would be making fun of her, so I kind of felt bad.

Similarly, after hearing a Black male share about being feared by White people when he is walking down the street, a White woman applied this to her own life and explored the impact of her behavior. She expressed

> I knew that he is, like, the nicest person ever. He's so smart. All this stuff, yet still to someone who doesn't know him, they're scared of him walking down the street. And when I think about it in my head, if I was walking down the street at night by myself and I was passing him, I'd probably be more freaked out too than if I was to say pass you [a White woman interviewer] walking by. And I don't know, that impacted me, I think, a lot just because I could, I could feel the feelings from the other side of it, and I still felt really bad about it, but I still knew that I wouldn't be able [to] choose how I was acting because it's just like protecting myself. And I don't know if it's even a race thing as much as it's just, you know, passing a guy at night on the street or whatever, but, I don't know, it just made me think about that … You don't really think about how you make that other person feel when you start, like, walking faster, all that kind of stuff. So I think that I just thought that really affected me because I was able to see if from a different perspective.

This example demonstrates how participants process the information they hear and try to make meaning of it in their own lives, grappling in some ways. It also demonstrates cognitive empathy (seeing the situation from a different perspective).

In addition to the examples above in which participants re-evaluated past behavior and felt badly about it, two students of color attempted to apply Amy's story about overcompensating for racism by touching the hands of people of color when she gives them change to their lives. One man of color said he began think about this in his interactions with White people and tried to notice whether they were "overcompensating" in some way. He said, "After that class, I started to notice it … I kind, like, started to … try to differentiate what was just acts of courtesy and what was overcompensating." A woman of color applied this story to her life in a different way. Rather than checking to see whether White students were treating her in a particular way, she was curious as to whether she was altering her behavior about people who are White. She said,

> When the girl told me about overcompensating, I kind of wondered if I had done some of that too, maybe toward White people and not necessarily overcompensating, but kind of show them that … I'm not inferior to them in the way you act, I guess. I don't know. But that's what I thought when she said that, if I've done the opposite of what she did.

It is evident, in all of these examples that students are attempting to apply the information to their own lives to try to make meaning of them. These are not clean applications but rather illustrations of the ways that participants struggle to make meaning of the different stories they hear in the dialogue. According to Bloom's taxonomy of learning (Bloom, 1956), learning to apply and evaluate information in relation to one's own life exhibits higher order thinking skills than simply learning new information.

Summary

Overall, there were myriad ways in which participants made meaning of the stories they heard. They evaluated both the stories' content and the person telling the story, and they articulated their own position (similar to or different from the narrative they heard). They also illustrated ways in which they grappled with information in stories, sorting out areas of confusion and attempting to apply the information to their own life.

What Kinds of Emotional Reactions do Stories Elicit?

Listening to stories in IGDs brought up a number of different emotional responses for the listeners. All 16 of the dialogue participants mentioned at least 1 emotional reaction to a story in their interview, and nearly all of the participants described at least 1 empathic response. Patterns of the number of expressions of emotional reactions, and

empathy were almost identity across race/ethnicity (i.e. participants of color and White students described a similar number of emotions or feelings of empathy). It is important to note that these emotions were what participants remembered and reflected in the interview after the course was over rather than what they may have actually experienced in the moment.

Unlike the prompts used in the final papers in Study A as a data source, the IGD interview protocol explicitly invited participants to talk about their emotional responses. In fact, several of the interview questions included a follow up probe that asked, "What were your emotional feelings about this" (see Appendix B). This may explain why there were more descriptions of emotional responses in this data source than in the final papers from Study A.

Feeling Emotions

In their interviews, about half of the participants included a description of having an emotional response to a story without naming any specific emotion. Some illustrations of this include statements, such as "I've been having all these confused, like, feelings and emotions about racism since, like, halfway through first semester they started" (White woman); "It was, like, emotional to hear other people talk" (White woman); and "I was really, really moved" (White woman); "I had a big emotional response to her," (White man) and "That kind of made me feel emotional" (man of color).

In addition to these non-specific affective responses, a few other participants described a behavioral reaction to listening to a story that was indicative of emotion. Examples of this included phrases like, "I started tearing up" (White woman), "I think I

probably almost started crying when she was reading it" (White woman), and "I kind of laughed. I mean we all thought it was kind of funny" (White man).

Of the specific emotions that were named by participants, the most commonly described emotion was shock or surprise, which was expressed at least once by over half of the dialogue participants. Of these, 5 of the references included the term "surprise," such as that "took me by surprise (man of color), or "I was surprised" (woman of color). Three of the examples included the word "shock." For example, a man of color expressed "that just shocked me," and a White man shared, "I was just shocked." Other students named both of these feelings simultaneously, with statements such as, "I thought that was kind of shocking that the teacher would say it to second graders, so that kind of took me by surprise" (man of color).

Another emotion that emerged frequently in the interviews was sadness. There were 11 different references to this emotion, and 7 of these simply stated, "I was sad" or "I guess I was kind of sad that she felt that way" (White woman). One White woman said that a story "personally affected me because I was thinking how sad it was," and a woman of color shared that she was "not so much angry then just sad" (woman of color).

There were 7 references to anger in the IGD interview data (an emotion that had been largely missing from the social diversity course data). Examples of anger expressed included both anger at the situation faced by another person in the dialogue group and anger directed toward another member of the dialogue group for something that they have said or done. For example, a number of White participants expressed anger after hearing about experiences faced by participants of color in the dialogue group. After hearing the experiences of a Black man in her dialogue, one White woman said, "I think

it was just pain, and also it made me kind of mad. It's like I, I don't know, like, I try not to get angry, but it just, it kind of made me mad because no one deserves to be treated like that" (White woman). In reaction to hearing about how Nathan, a classmate of his gets stereotyped in different ways for being Black, a White male participant said,

> It just really made me mad that people do that. They just see only the layer of your skin and that's it because if they spent even five minutes with Nathan, they would automatically know that he's probably smarter than them and another person put together.

Although surprise, sadness, and anger were the most common emotions that emerged throughout the interviews, other emotions that were mentioned by at least 2 participants in the study included feeling guilt ("I had a bit of White guilt," [White woman]), embarrassment ("I was embarrassed for my school,"[man of color]), happiness ("I probably felt happy. I don't know, not like happy for me, but happy for him," [woman of color]), inspiration ("It was really inspiring to hear that" [White man]), and pride ("It made me proud because then look what she's become with how far she's gotten and nothing like that held her back here" [White woman]).

Feeling Multiple, Contradictory Emotions

Along with the emotions mentioned above, such as surprise and sadness, there were a number of examples in the data in which participants recounted a story that they listened to and then described a number of different, juxtaposing emotions that they felt as a result of the story, many of which may seem conflicting or do not typically go together. Rather than naming an emotional response along with other cognitive impacts of stories (see "Insights" section of this chapter), these examples were affective reactions, in which participants seemed to be working through their feelings in some way. For

example, after hearing Grace's story about being treated poorly in school after her family immigrated, a White woman said, "I just remember it personally affected me because I was thinking how sad it was because she was so young, and there was, like, nothing she could do about it." After prompting by the interviewer, she went on to say,

> It was sad. It was sad to know that there's people like that in the world, and it was also, like, it made me proud because then look what she's become with how far she's gotten and nothing like that held her back here.

Thus, hearing the story both made this woman feel sad about what happened and simultaneously proud of her classmate because of what she was able to persevere through.

Similarly, another White man shared juxtaposing emotions after hearing a story from Nathan, a man of color in his dialogue about his experiences with racism. He explained,

> I was angry at first, hurtful that my friend was going through this, and there's really nothing, nothing I can do about it because first of all it happened in his past, and I was kind of feeling, I had a lot of pride for him, I mean, in that he'd gotten there, he'd beat the, he's here today sitting in class and going to school because of what he did. Nothing really stopped him. People couldn't bring him down. So I felt anger and pride at the same time for him, and, you know, he's very courageous and ambitious guy.

Both of these examples show ways in which White students felt sad or angry about the pain faced by a person of color because of racism but also pride and admiration for them and the fact that they had the strength to persevere.

In another interview passage, a woman of color participant shared her lack of feelings to a story because she is accustomed to the pain experienced by people of color when experiencing racism. After hearing Nathan's personal experiences with experiencing racism, she said, "It was nothing new. It was stuff that I'd all heard before

…. that happens to a lot of African Americans that I can think of that are close to me." She said that when she heard similar stories in the past, she felt it was "pitiful and it's sad… but like now when I hear it I guess you could kind of say, like, it doesn't phase me so I didn't really have an emotion." However, she went on to say that although she did not have an emotional reaction to the content of the story, she "still took to what he was saying, like I guess for what he was saying because he had the courage to say it, I probably felt happy. I don't know, not like happy for me but happy for him." This woman's process was similar to the White students' in that she expressed multiple, seemingly contradictory feelings; however, she felt a bit more numb when hearing about painful experiences because she was more accustomed to hearing them.

Working through multiple, seemingly conflicting emotions is complex and something that is rare for college students to have the chance to engage with in a college classroom. Both the acceptance of emotions as an important and welcome part of dialogue and the probing done in the interviews may have been what allowed participants to explore these rich examples of complex and contradictory feelings.

Feeling Empathy

Closely related to (and overlapping with) the emotions expressed by participants, was the empathy that they felt for others in their dialogues. One of the three major goals of IGD is building relationships across differences and conflicts, which includes building intergroup empathy (Gurin et al., 2013; Zúñiga et al., 2007). Similar to what I presented in Chapter 4, in the course of my analysis, I conceptualized empathy as both cognitive empathy (being able to take someone else's perspective) and emotional empathy

(McCormick, 1999). Mirroring the work of Stephan and Finlay (1999), I broke emotional empathy down into both "parallel" empathy in which the participant experiences similar emotions to the other person (anger, sadness, etc.), and "reactive" empathy in which the participant reacts to the experiences of others (by feeling sympathy, compassion, etc.). Thus, I coded sections as "empathy" both if participants directly named feeling empathy as a result of listening to a personal story and also when they exhibited behaviors that were indicative of either cognitive ("I could see her perspective"), parallel ("I felt sad"), or reactive empathy ("I felt badly for him").

Throughout the IGD interviews, at least ¾ of both participants of color and White participants named feeling some form of empathy at least once as a result of hearing a personal story, Similar to the findings of Sorenson et al., (2010), empathy was bi-directional, and participants from privileged groups (White students) expressed empathy toward participants from targeted groups (students of color) and vice versa. There were also a couple of examples in which students exhibited empathy for members of their own racial group.

Rather than talking about specific stories with which they empathized, a couple of participants referred to feeling empathy in more of a general way. For example, one White woman simply named that she was "able to empathize" with the testimonials shared by others in the group. Another White woman named perspective taking as an important skill she gained from the dialogue, specifically saying she became more skilled at "taking the personal experiences [of others] and using that to understand what they've gone through."

Students of Color Expressed Empathy for White Students

Over half of the examples of empathy that referred to specific stories were students of color expressing empathy for White students in the dialogue, after hearing stories shared about either perpetuating racism when they were a child or the ways these students navigate living in a racist society with some awareness. For example, a couple of students of color spoke about feeling empathy for White students who articulated their experiences coming from a predominantly White town and had a lack of experience with people who differ from them racially and now struggle with something they labeled as "White guilt." A woman of color expressed reactive empathy for Nicky, one woman who spoke about "White guilt" and shared,

> And I did feel bad for her because I mean to hold all that, and we do speak, like, we did speak a lot about that whole guilt thing has to go because it wasn't specifically you but as long as you realize what happened and you can now try to change people's minds about that's the better way to go. But I did feel bad for her then because just to feel like you're responsible for all that, I can't imagine being on the other end of it too.

Later in her interview, this same woman named this ability to feel empathy as an important skill that she gained in the dialogue. She offered,

> I think really just feeling that I, like, really understood where someone was coming from [who] might have been completely different from me. Like, to be able to even feel anything for a person who, you know, comes from a town where everyone's the same and has never met anyone different from them and actually feel, "Wow, that's hard" or feel how, I guess, sad that might be in a way and how difficult that might be for a person coming from a place like that when I've lived in Queens, and it's like the most diverse place ever, and I think that shows something, and so I was really able to apply the whole trying to be empathetic and seeing where other people are coming from and being understanding of why they feel the way they feel because of their background and things like that.

In the excerpt above, this woman names both cognitive empathy ("feeling like I understood where someone was coming from") and also emotional empathy.

Two different students of color expressed feeling empathy for Amy, a White woman who shared a story about "overcompensating" in her interactions with people of color by doing things like touching their hand when she gives change back to them. One man of color named his personal connection to Amy and went on to express reactive empathy. He said,

> It really, it really affected me because, like, I've worked with her a few times in class. She's, like, a really sweet girl, very nice girl and …I felt really bad for her, like, and I even mentioned it in class, but, like, the more I think about it, like, I really did feel bad for her, and she's talking about how, like, she does all these other things just to make sure that, I guess, to make sure that everyone else feels, like, comfortable around her, even though in doing all doing that she's just totally drained and not feeling that good, I just felt really bad for her.

A woman of color in the dialogue reacted to this same story similarly,saying, "I felt really bad that they had to feel that way …It would have to suck to live like that."

White Students Expressed Empathy for Students of Color

Empathy was also expressed in the other direction from White students toward students of color. All examples of empathy in this direction were in response to stories that students of color shared about their personal experiences with racism. For example, a White woman responded to Grace's story about being mistreated by a teacher when she was young by saying, "I just remember it personally affected me because I was thinking how sad it was because she was so young and there was, like, nothing she could do about it." Thus, the feeling of sadness was an example of parallel empathy, or feeling similar emotions to what was expressed in the story. A White man shared feeling empathy for a man of color in his dialogue, Nathan, who shared more recent experiences with racism that he had experienced, naming his connection with this person as being integral to this.

He shared, “I think the most hurtful for me as being his friend…. It just really made me mad that people do that ….I was angry at first, hurtful that my friend was going through all this, and there’s really nothing, nothing I can do about it.”

Expressing Empathy for Members of One’s Own Racial Group

Although the majority of the examples of empathy that participants described were feeling empathy toward the other racial group, there were a couple of examples that demonstrated participants feeling empathy for members of their own racial group. In response to hearing a White woman, Jenna, share an experience in which she perpetuated racism as a young girl, a White female said,

> I was really, really moved. I think I probably almost started crying when she was reading it….. I think I didn’t necessarily relate to what she was saying, but I could understand where she was coming from, so I guess I was kind of sad she felt that way and kind of felt guilty because there are people who think that way.

Finally, a Black man in the dialogue expressed empathy after hearing the personal experiences with racism that was expressed by another Black male in the dialogue. He said that hearing these experiences

> made me feel emotional…. And I kind of felt where he was coming from with the whole how whenever he’s seen White kids in the neighborhood, they would bother him, and they would always lead to trouble and whatnot. I thought that was interesting. I could relate to that.

These examples of students of color expressing empathy for White students and for both students of color and White students expressing empathy toward their own social identity group are particularly rich because, according to Sorenson (2012), “Prior research on intergroup empathy has mostly focused on one directional path of empathy—experienced by members of advantaged groups for members of disadvantaged groups—

yet there is no reason to assume that empathic communication is non-reciprocal" (p. 67). The bi-directionality of the empathy in these examples is in line with other more recent findings looking at empathy in a larger data set of intergroup dialogues (Sorenson et al., 2010). It is also striking how many participants named their personal relationships with the storytellers as they were describing feeling empathy for them. It seems like having the opportunity to get to know those telling the stories may have impacted the level of empathy that participants were able to feel.

Feeling Connected to Others and to Course Content

Within IGDs, one affective reaction to listening to stories was experiencing connection to others in the dialogue group. There were a total of 7 examples from 5 participants to this type of connection. Most participants spoke about connection in relation to the testimonial activity, in which all participants are required to share narratives of personal experience with their peers in the course. For example, one woman of color in the dialogue named sharing testimonials on the third day of the dialogue as a way to create connection among dialogue members. In her interview, she shared,

> I mean, you can sit there and talk about society in general and talk about race and talk about, "Oh yeah, there's a problem or this is a solution kind of," but I think it was really important for us to really, really get to know each other by telling our life story.

Also referring to the Testimonial day, another woman of color said, 'That was just why we started to feel like we all had, like, a bond and could talk to each other." A White woman echoed a similar sentiment and named telling personal stories as a way to open up with each other, which she named as a "huge part of creating that sort of trust and understanding of each other." She later mentioned that the testimonial activity led to this

bonding, and "We just kind of bonded and saw each other on a more real level after that day." Another White woman also spoke about the process of sharing stories as group building, saying

> [I] think that just hearing other people share and show that they trust everyone else, I think that made me feel comfortable enough to trust them because they trusted me. So I think that's, I think that's kind of why I felt so safe.

This speaks to the importance of setting up a structure in which students feel safe enough to be willing to risk the kind of vulnerability that personal storytelling can invite.

In addition to the examples above, which spoke to participants' connection to others in the group through stories, a couple of participants talked about the way that stories helped them to connect to the material in the course (as opposed to other people). For example, a White male participant shared,

> Whenever you're stating a fact, it's interesting, but it's not. It doesn't have any connection to you or to me in the class. And I think that's one thing with the testimonials… it wasn't just them citing facts. It was actually where they're coming from and really the emotions that they're feeling and things that they're going through.

Finally, another White male student named,

> Even though …they were just telling their stories, I felt like that, I had the greatest connection there because I was seeing what everyone else was going through and how their lives were up to this point of going into this class.

Thus, these findings indicate that listening to stories made participants feel safer with one another, helped build connection in the group, and made the information relatable and accessible to participants. Because they were based in people's real, lived experience, stories helped make the abstract more concrete. It is interesting that a certain level of safety and trust needed to be in place for students to be willing to make themselves vulnerable enough to share their story, but they also named that the sharing of

stories created this safety. This speaks to the importance of the group building activities in the beginning of the dialogue course, including discussion guidelines and scaffolding from lower- to higher-risk activities.

What do Participants Learn from Listening to Stories?

Along with the various affective responses to listening to stories, and the ways in which participants wrestled with the different stories, participants also recounted a variety of insights from listening to the personal stories of others in the dialogue. There were a total of 36 new insights, with at least 1 described by each of the 16 participants. It is important to note, however, that the number of insights reflects those that were directly connected to personal stories described in students' interviews. Thus, there were a number of other insights and learnings that participants mentioned throughout their interviews that may have been informed by stories participants heard but were not captured in this analysis. However, the insights that were captured offer a sample of the wide variety of learnings that participants describe as a direct result of the stories told by their peers in the dialogue.

There were three broad, overarching clusters of insights that emerged from the data 1) insights about the nature and extent of racism, 2) insights about the effect of racism on White people, and 3) insights about action. I describe each of these categories in more detail in the following section of the chapter.

Insights About the Nature and Extent of Racism

The first cluster of insights that emerged from the data was insights related to the nature and extent of racism. These insights were about the fact that racism exists and/or an increased awareness of how it plays out in general ways and on a structural level (which I labeled, "Insights about the Prevalence of Racism"). This cluster also includes participants' insights about the negative effects of racism on people of color, including the negative stereotypes they have to contend with in their day-to-day life, as well as times when they have experienced racist behavior. Finally, this cluster includes insights about one's own lack of awareness about the topic of racism. There were a total of 15 references to this cluster from 12 participants

Insights About the Prevalence of Racism

Five participants described learning that racism did indeed exist after hearing the personal stories of others in the group. One White woman expressed that the existence of racism was confirmed for her after hearing Stacey's story about how people in her town had issues with her being in an interracial relationship. This participant claims that unlike Stacey, she had never seen, first-hand, how racism plays out because she had never met anyone from her hometown who was not White. Another White woman said that hearing all of the stories of people of color about experiencing racism, in combination with the course readings, "made me see a lot more of the oppression that's taking place that [she] kind of thought was something else." Another participant described how hearing Natalia's story in the dialogue about experiencing racism at a fraternity party made her now understand that this takes place and gave her an explanation for why her roommate

of color had been hesitant to attend fraternity parties with her in the past. In her interview, she shared her response to hearing this story, and said,

> I never even would have thought that that could be. I don't know why that was so over my head, and then I felt so stupid for always trying to make her go to these [fraternity parties] when she wasn't comfortable. So it's just a learning experience.

Also referring to Natalia's story, a White man expressed, "Before, I didn't realize how segregated it was here, and, like, I'm kind of embarrassed of my school." Hearing Natalia's story helped him have a new knowledge about the fact that racism does, in fact, operate at his school.

Finally, a woman of color described Jenna's story about refusing to hold hands with the young boy of color in her elementary school class. As a result of hearing this story, this woman indicated that although she had some awareness that racism still occurred she added,

> You never really hear it, like on first-hand and … that wasn't really that long ago, she was really young and stuff so like you can really see racism still holds … it was kind of like I wouldn't really want to say a wake up call but it just made me more aware.

All of these examples are important realizations about the fact that racism does, indeed, exist. However, they all involve insights at more of a general level rather than more complex understandings of racism or insights about racism at the structural level. The next section describes insights that move beyond simply the fact that racism exists.

Insights About the Nuances of How Racism Plays Out

Six participants conveyed new learnings about the complexities of how racism plays out. One White man acknowledged that after hearing a woman of color's personal

stories about her hesitancy around White people, he realized how much "awkwardness" there is between the races. He went on to speculate, "Because of that awkwardness, we can't communicate, and that's why it's still, racism still exists today." Another White man talked about learning more about the subtleties of racism from listening to personal stories. He shared,

> Before this class I had thought,, like if someone's racist, you're going to know they're racist or if someone does something derogatory, you're going to automatically know. But after this class, I realized that someone that may not consider themselves racist may be in other ways that isn't so visible, just like giving the change and not realizing it or not holding the door for someone.

Although the two excerpts above demonstrate an understanding of racism that is more at the individual level, other participants had insights that demonstrated their growing awareness and understanding of racism at a systemic level. For example, one woman of color had a new insights about the way in which oppression plays out with immigrants. After hearing Grace's story about being treated poorly by her elementary school teacher after she immigrated, she shared,

> When I heard her story, I was like, "Oh, I had, like, the same thing happen to me." And so I guess it shows that, like, I think instead of making it just a personal thing, it showed that, like, this is something that others, who knows maybe a whole group comes here as immigrants or not like might have to go through just because they can't communicate as well with others.

Hearing Grace's story helps her contextualize her own experience and begin to think about the experience of immigrants collectively.

After listening to Tony's story about his experiences with racial profiling, a White man described learning about how institutional racism plays out, as well as the lack of awareness that most White people have about this issue. After recounting Tony's story, he named he had learned about

> [The] reality of police brutality and things like that, it comes up in news every once in a while, but it's never a huge deal. I feel like people can just change the channel and move on. So I was just upset that it happens, and that there's not, there's also not really knowledge about that. Like a lot of people still think that racism ended with the Civil Rights Movement or that it's just not a big deal.

The image of White people "changing the channel" and ignoring the realities of racism is a powerful image. According to this man, hearing a story from a peer who had been directly impacted made it something that he was no longer able or willing to ignore and offered him a better understanding of how different institutions (i.e., the police force) can perpetuate racism.

Insights About Impact of Racism on People of Color

This sub-category, described by 3 participants, refers to insights about the specific impact of racism on individuals of color. For example, after hearing a story told by Kevin about how he showed up to the library to work on a group project 45 minutes early to try to counter the stereotype that exists about Black men being lazy, a White male participant in the dialogue named,

> I'd heard the stereotype before, …. But so hearing that and then having him purposely be more than ample time early so they wouldn't think he was perpetuating the stereotype really kind of stuck out to me and made me think, like, he must really think about that, you know, kind of changed my thoughts on stereotypes and how they are real, and people work to not perpetuate them.

In response to hearing personal stories shared by both Grace and Patricia about negative experiences they had when their families immigrated to the U.S., a Black man in the dialogue shared his new awareness that racism affects other groups of color too. He explained,

> So that really had an impact on me and gave me, like, a different respect for immigrants because I always thought, like, they had it easier, even easier than,

> you know, African Americans born within the U.S., and I realize that that's not the case at all with, you know, with the stories that they gave.

The negative impact of racism on these women was also described as a new learning by a White woman in the dialogue for whom this information was new.

Insights About Impact of Racism on White People

Another major cluster of insights that emerged from the data was insights about the ways in which the system of racism impacts White people in the privileges they receive, the negative impact of racism on White people, White people's ignorance about the topic of race and racism, and finally, insights about White people's desire to be allies and take action against oppression.

Insights About White Privilege

Three White students articulated insights related to White privilege, all of which described their process of coming to an understanding of their own privileges as a result of listening to stories of others in the group. For example, after hearing stories of the racism faced by women of color in her dialogue, one White woman realizes the privilege inherent to not having to deal with such issues growing up. After hearing the stories, she wonders, "I'm like what the hell did I do? I like was drawing pictures with crayons and, like, complaining to my mom about the crust on my peanut butter and jelly sandwich." A White man in the dialogue spoke about how hearing stories, in particular Tony's story about racial profiling, helped him to learn more about his own privileged identity as a White man. He said,

> I'm always open to understanding my White privilege more. It's so hard to see most of the time, …. The police officer incident this is not a good thing, but now I have a better understanding of how I'm privileged, and I can watch for that in the future.

It is striking that this student expresses that learning about his privilege made him want to keep an eye out for it in the future, ideally to shift the balance of power and make things more equal.

Another White woman talked about both the pain of realizing her privilege and reflected on the ways she can use her privilege to affect change. In her interview she expressed,

> It was kind of, like, painful for me to realize that I can work half as hard and get twice as far I feel, like, in a lot of situations just because of my group membership. But I was never encouraged to think of that and to think of another advantage of that is the advantage of being able to speak and actually be heard about this kind of stuff…I feel like it put the positive spin on that is that I can effectively create change because I, like, I can talk about these things, and I will seem more credible, which is a big problem, but at least I can.

All the examples of learning about White privilege were described by White students. I would conjecture that this is because the majority of the students of color in the dialogue were already aware of White privilege from their life experiences, so this was not a new learning for them.

Insights About the Negative Impact of Racism on White People

The flip side of the different privileges that White people receive because of their group membership are the ways in which White people are negatively impacted or harmed in some way by the system of racism. There were 2 examples of insights related to this, both shared by people of color in the dialogue in response to Amy's story about how she "overcompensates" for racism by doing things like being sure to touch the hands

of people of color when she gives them change. Both of the students of color quoted below had an insight about how navigating the system of racism can be hard for White people, but in a different way than for people of color. For example, one woman of color shared,

> It would have to suck to live like that, to have to feel like because of what people did years, hundreds of years before you, even though it's still happening very much today if you really think about it, so just because of people of your race, what they have done to the name of your people, it just sucks that you are the ones that have to live with the consequences of that, and you have to make up for things that you didn't even do.

A man of color in the same dialogue also reacted to Amy's story, saying,

> She had this huge chip on her shoulder, and she had all this pressure on her, like, to try to, try to make things right…. I guess to make sure that everyone else feels, like, comfortable around her, even though in doing all doing that she's just totally drained and not feeling that good, I just felt really bad for her.

Both of these excerpts demonstrate that these students of color had a new awareness about what it is like for these particular White students to try to navigate living with an awareness of racism and also exhibited an empathic response (see "empathy" section of this chapter).

Insights About White People's Ignorance

Several participants described gaining insight through stories about White students' limited knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of race and racism and all of these insights were in response to stories shared by White students. For example, one man of color revealed his surprise about learning that people come from towns that are all White and the unawareness that goes along with that. Relatedly, a woman of color shared an insight about this ignorance and went on to articulate a growing understanding

of where prejudice comes from as a result of what she heard. In her interview she described,

> Sometimes, people just really don't know any better, like they're not exposed to different things, and I know this White male student he said he was from a really small town, and everyone was pretty much White there, so it was very different for him to meet other people. So I think it just makes you more aware that it's not always a conscious act or not always something that where people just don't want to communicate with others. Sometimes, it's really they just don't know how to or have never been around anyone different from them.

Along with the insights above, which were both expressed by people of color, a White man in the group shared realizing the extent of the ignorance of other White people after hearing Stacey's story of the backlash she experienced when bringing home her boyfriend, who is Black. In response to that story, he said,

> And I just think that shows how ignorant my race is sometimes, just for them to not see past boundaries and see that you can have those kind of relationships and it's fine, you know it's, we're human beings, we're not, I don't know, they can't get past the fact that race is not, it shouldn't be such a big issue, but it is today, you know.

Related to the topic of ignorance, one White woman identified the invisibility of race in some of her White peers' testimonials, in which they talked about other personal characteristics, such as weight and height, rather than race (which was what the assignment had been). She observed,

> Some of us aren't even talking about our racial identity whereas all of the students of color have these very clear, very easy to understand, very emotional experiences …. Some of us aren't talking about race …. And that's a problem because we don't understand, you know, it's harder to see it.

The invisibility of whiteness, as described by this student, is another manifestation of ignorance.

Insights About Challenging Oppression

The last sub-theme in this cluster concerned insights about White people's desire to be allies to people of color and the desire of people of color to take action against racism and be empowered and proud of their identities. These insights were distinct from participants' descriptions of feeling motivated to actually take action themselves. Rather, they were about learnings students had about the process of taking action and were about the desire of others to make change. One woman of color shared that after listening to Tracey's challenges as a White woman who is into hip hop music, she had a realization that some White people do have an authentic desire to learn about and respectfully connect with different cultures. She explained,

> I think it made me see that wait but there are people who really are willing or wanting to go out and learn about different cultures and find that interesting and that was a great learning experience for me because that's something that I just didn't really put two and two together. I just said, "Oh, they have nothing to worry about," but to know that there are people out there who do worry, and there are people out there who take race and ethnicity and those issues very, very seriously was, you know, had a huge impact on me because that's something that I didn't know before.

Similarly, a man of color in the dialogue was deeply impacted by the respect a White man had for the dialogue, which caused him to re-think some of his own stereotypes about White people as apathetic and uncaring. He shared,

> He really showed, like, a respect for the class, and, like, he really wanted to know about things outside of himself, whether it be just anything. And, you know, his respect for that, you know, really made me think, well rethink about what I felt when I get around Whites.

Realizing that there are some White people out there who care, are willing to wrestle with these issues, and have a desire to make change had a big impact on both of these students.

Finally, one White man described the impact that a story shared by another White man in the group about his advocacy work with the LGBT population had on him. This was the only story mentioned in the dialogue interviews that was about a topic other than racism. This man labels the work that his classmate had done as inspiring, and it helped him realized that there are people out there who are working to make change. He said hearing this student talk about the work he had done gave him a "feeling of empowerment, like, you can do anything you want to. You can go out and change the world, even if it's one person at a time."

Summary and Patterns of Difference by Identity

All of the examples above illustrate the variety of insights that students have as a result of listening to personal stories. Although they all come away with different understandings, it is clear that hearing their peers tell personal stories impacts students in some powerful ways. Considering the amount of anxiety and defensiveness that participants expressed when they first entered the dialogue, the number of insights they were able to learn is quite striking. The three major clusters of insights, as well as the sub-themes are summarized in Table 9.

One of my research questions was whether there were any differences based on racial/ethnic identity in the learnings described by students. White participants and participants of color described about the same number of insights as a result of hearing stories.

Of the three major clusters of Insights that emerged in my analysis, participants of color and White participants described approximately equal numbers of insights about the

“Nature and Extent of Racism” (6 White participants described 9 insights, and 6 participants of color described 6 insights). In the second major cluster of insights that emerged, “Impact of Racism on White people,” participants of color described slightly more insights than White participants (5 participants of color described 7 insights as compared to 3 White participants who described 5 insights). The differences between these two identity groups was the greatest in the sub-theme of Insights about the negative impact of racism on White people (an insight mentioned by several students of color). Finally, in the third major cluster, “Insights about Challening Oppression,” there were slightly more participants of color who described insights about this than White students (3 students of color described 3 insights about this, while 1 White student described 1 example).

Again, due to the small sample size, I must be cautious about the meaning I make from these differences. However, the findings indicate that both students of color and White students describe thinking critically and learning new things from the stories they hear. This finding is important because it shows that all students (not only White students) exhibit learning outcomes from participation in cross-race dialogue.

Table 9: IGD Participant Insights from Listening to Stories

Insight Categories	Story Content Sub-Categories	Category Definitions / Sub-category Examples
The Nature and Extent of Racism		Insights about racism: the fact that it exists, increased awareness of how it plays out, and the negative effects of racism on people of color
	Insights about the Prevalence of racism	"Before I didn't realize how segregated it was here, and like I'm kind of embarrassed of my school." (White male) "You never really hear it, like on first-hand and … that wasn't really that long ago. She was really young and stuff so like you can really see racism still holds … It was kind of like I wouldn't really want to say a wake-up call but it just made me more aware." (woman of color)
	Insights about the Nuances of how racism plays out	"Before this class, I had thought like if someone's racist you're going to know they're racist, or if someone does something derogatory you're going to automatically know. But after this class, I realized that someone that may not consider themselves racist may be in other ways that isn't so visible, just like giving the change and not realizing it or not holding the door for someone." (White man)
	Insights about the Negative Impact of Racism on People of Color	"So that really had an impact on me and gave me like a different respect for immigrants because I always thought like they had it easier, even easier than, you know, African Americans born within the U.S., and I realize that that's not the case at all with, you know, with the stories that they gave at least." (man of color)
The Impacts of Racism on White People		Insights about the way that the system of racism effects White people, by giving them unearned privilege, or harming them in some way, the ignorance many white people have connected to the topic, and insights about white people's desire to be allies to people of color

	Insights about White Privilege	"It was kind of like painful for me to realize that I can work half as hard and get twice as far I feel like in a lot of situations just because of my group membership. But I was never encouraged to think of that and to think of another advantage of that is the advantage of being able to speak and actually be heard about this kind of stuff, …. I can talk about these things and I will seem more credible, which is a big problem, but at least I can." (White woman)
	Insights about the Negative impact of Racism on White People	"She had this huge chip on her shoulder, and she had all this pressure on her like to try to, try to make things right…. I guess to make sure that everyone else feels like comfortable around her, even though in doing all doing that she's just totally drained and not feeling that good, I just felt really bad for her." (man of color)
	Insights about White People's Ignorance about the Topic of Race	"Sometimes people just really don't know any better, like they're not exposed to different things …. I think it just makes you more aware that it's not always a conscious act or not always something that where people just don't want to communicate with others, sometimes it's really they just don't know how to or have never been around anyone different from them." (woman of color)
Insights about Challenging Oppression		"I think it made me see that wait but there are people who really are willing or wanting to go out and learn about different cultures …. I just said oh they have nothing to worry about, but to know that there are people out there who do worry and there are people out there who take race and ethnicity and those issues very, very seriously was, you know had a huge impact on me because that's something that I didn't know before. (woman of color)

How do Stories Impact Participants' Motivation to Take Action?

Along with the myriad affective reactions and cognitive impacts of listening to stories, a few participants also named feeling motivated to change their behavior and take action in some way as a result of listening to a story. Again, a number of participants mentioned in their interviews instances of taking action as a result of their dialogue participation; however, the examples included below were only from participants who named that their action was a direct result of listening to a story. This may be why participants did not describe any actions they had already taken, but rather they only described actions they intended to take. Also, unlike the final papers in the Study A, the IGD interviews did not have any questions that explicitly asked about taking action.

In response to listening to stories, 3 White students talked in similar ways about having a new motivation to work toward change in more of a general way. One White woman expressed that listening to stories "kind of made me realize why I was there… why I wanted to change how things are today and how things have been. So it kind of enforced my beliefs, I guess, and what I, it encouraged me to fight more and harder." Another White woman also spoke in a more general way about her desire to speak out against oppression and realizing that because of her White privilege, her voice may have more power when speaking out than a person of color's voice (which helps her feel more empowered).. She said, "I feel like it put the positive spin on that is that I can effectively create change because I, like I can talk about these things, and I will seem more credible, which is a big problem, but at least I can. "

Similar to these two women, one White man spoke about feeling motivated to take action against racism as a result of listening to Tony's story about racial profiling by

the police. He said, “Yeah, it was powerful that he had that strength and made me want to keep going and fight more.”

One White male student offered a specific example of an action he planned to take after the dialogue. Partially motivated by hearing a woman of color talk about feeling uncomfortable at parties at predominantly White fraternity houses, this student, who had been recently elected into a leadership position in his fraternity, spoke about a desire to create “mixers” so that members of historically White and of color fraternities and sororities could have a chance meet each other and form connections. He said,

> They say that there’s just a lot of divide, and I hear it all the time. I’m just like, “It shouldn’t be that way.” We should just, we can hold events where it’s a mixture of everyone, you know, and I think that’s one way how I see it. I’m not really sure all of what the position entails right now because I haven’t been there, but I’m going to have somebody training me so that they can, so I see that as a big area where I can help.

This example shows the power of having students with leadership positions on campus in the dialogues because they can take action to affect real change on campus.

Although the majority of examples of feeling motivated to take action came from White participants, one man of color spoke of wanting to take action as a result of listening to another woman of color, Eva, talk about the pride she has in her culture. After listening to Eva’s story, this man realized that he, too, wanted to feel a connection to his ethnic identity. He said, that in the past he had opted out of opportunities to explore his ethnic identity, explaining,

> I was always worried about as far as like reaching out to my culture was I didn’t want to be pigeon holed as “that Asian kid,” you know, you know the stereotypes about Asian people. They’re always good at math, they like goofy cartoons and whatever,” but, I guess that that always kept me my whole life from really embracing my culture because I hate, I hate the stereotyping in general.

However, hearing Eva's story made him question his past behavior and want to engage differently moving forward.

> Like hearing [Eva] I really admired her. It really made me feel, like, regretful that, like, this whole time, like, when I was living with my parents [they would] be, like, "You want to go to Tae Kwon Do lessons?" I'm like, "No, I want Jujitsu lessons instead." Or like, "Hey, do you want to go to like Korean restaurant?" I'm like, "No, I want to go to, like, Italian restaurant," like stuff like that. It really made me feel like I should have just done whatever I wanted to do because it's not like I hate my heritage or hate my culture, which isn't true, but just, like, I wish I had, like, like, hearing her [Eva] talk, I realized, like, that's what I want to try to do is, like, I want to try to gain more of, like, knowledge of my culture, more, like, an understanding and connection to my culture. That's, like, the one thing that I've never really had.

This poignant example illustrates how listening to stories from one's own (or a similarly targeted) identity can create awareness for students of color and allow them to feel motivated to reclaim their ethnic pride.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reported my findings from my grounded theory analysis of the role of personal storytelling for 16 undergraduate students in two race/ethnicity intergroup dialogue courses. To establish the context for student learning, I began with a discussion of some of the prior experiences IGD participants brought to the conversation about race-ethnicity. I then reviewed the three major clusters of stories about race-ethnicity and racism that participants recalled and described in their interviews. I continued my exploration by talking about the many ways participants make meaning of the stories that they heard, through their evaluations of stories and the storytellers, their articulation of themselves in relation to the stories, and their process of grappling with the personal and conceptual meaning of stories. I then presented the different emotions and empathic

reactions elicited by stories, and reviewed the major clusters of insights learned. I also reviewed examples of participants' motivation to take action to promote social justice as a result of listening to stories.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

> Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity. (Adichie, 2009)

This quote by Nigerian author, Chimamanda Adichie in her TED Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story," illustrates what I set out to explore when I embarked on this dissertation project. My original goal was to explore the role of personal storytelling in student learning in social diversity courses to discover more about why stories "matter" and under what conditions might stories "empower and to humanize" (rather than "dispossess and malign"). I was curious about what it is about stories that seems to make them such a powerful accelerator of learning about topics, such as race/ethnicity and racism, that can be difficult to talk about and about which students, of all identities, often feel a great deal of trepidation.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I reported my findings from my grounded theory analysis on the impact of storytelling on learning for 32 participants from two sections of an undergraduate multi-issue, social diversity course (Chapter 4) and two sections of a race-ethnicity IGD (Chapter 5). Through my grounded theory analysis of 16 student final papers and 16 interviews, I first presented themes connected to the prior experiences the participants brought to conversations about race and racism. I then presented the major clusters of stories told by panelists, peers, and instructors in the course that students recalled and recounted in their papers and interviews. I next summarized some of the ways participants attempted to make meaning of the stories they listened to and the

affective reactions they described. I concluded each chapter by reporting some of the cognitive and behavioral impacts of listening to stories.

To begin this discussion chapter, I briefly summarize and discuss what I determined to be the key findings connected to my major research questions and which I reported in Chapters 4 and 5 across both contexts, highlighting similarities and differences across my two sites of study. I explore how these findings relate to my research questions and confirm, disconfirm, or complicate what is in the literature and theoretical frameworks reviewed in Chapter 2. I then bring all of the findings together and summarize the findings across settings in the context of the central category that emerged, "transformative points of connection" (Jehangir, 2010, p. 545) to help me articulate a conceptual model, building on the analysis and patterns that emerged from this study. Throughout this section, I connect findings to the interdisciplinary body of literature reviewed in Chapter 2, bringing in an additional body of literature that helps me to situate and examine these findings. After presenting and discussing my model, I then explore how my findings support and complicate the findings of other studies looking at personal storytelling about social identity-based experiences in social diversity courses informed by social justice education pedagogy. I conclude with a discussion of implications of my study for social justice education, research, and practice, and review limitations of the study.

Summary and Discussion: Participants' Prior Experiences with Conversations about Race and Racism

Although it was not one of my original research questions, in order to get a sense of where students were coming from when they entered the two social diversity courses included in the study, I felt it was important to glean any information I could from their final papers and interviews about their awareness, experiences, and feelings upon entering the courses, specifically in relation to the topic of race/ethnicity and racism. The findings across both of my sites of practice were consistent with each other, as well as with the literature in many ways. For example, consistent with patterns of *de jure* segregation in K-12 schools, participants in this study talked about a lack of cross-race contact prior to coming to college (Kozol, 2005; Tatum, 2007). In addition, as the literature I reviewed in Chapter 2 indicates, race and racism is a challenging and highly contentious topic on college campuses, and working with this topic can result in confusion, misunderstanding, anxiety, and painful experiences (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Tatum, 2007). In both the multi-issue, social diversity course and IGD, participants expressed feelings of anxiety, fear, or discomfort when entering the course, and both White participants and participants of color expressed fear of offending and alienating their peers. Though this anxiety seemed to be present with all participants, there were different nuances across race. For example, White participants reported a fear of having their ignorance about the topic discovered or being judged prematurely by students of color, while participants of color were scared of being hurt or offended by things stated by their White peers. These findings highlight the fact that White students and students of color are differentially situated in systems of power and privilege and thus have different

fears. It is striking, however, that all students ultimately seemed to want to connect with each other and were wary of unintentionally hurting one another.

Even though White students reported similar levels of anxiety about talking about race and racism in both classroom sites, their knowledge about the topic of race and ethnicity was not the same upon entering the courses. White participants seemed to enter the multi-issue, social diversity course thinking they knew a great deal about the topic of race and then quickly discovered that there was a great deal they had not known. In the IGD courses, it seemed like the White students had more of a background on the topic or race and ethnicity through taking Women's Studies or Sociology courses that dealt with the topic. This may be explained by the fact that the multi-issue, diversity course fulfills a General Education requirement and attracts many first- and second-year students who sign up to fulfill that requirement. In contrast, the IGD courses were elective courses for which students had to complete a placement form, and the courses often attracted participants who already had an interest in studying the topic of race and racism. While the White students seemed to vary in their amount of knowledge across sites, participants of color, in both practice sites, talked about having knowledge about race and racism through personal experience and spoke about the complication of feeling as if it were their responsibility to educate their White peers. In addition, participants of color talked about their struggles being the "only" of a particular identity. This was true both in the multi-issue, diversity course section, in which the majority (over 2/3) of the students were White and the two IGD sections, which were intentionally designed to have equal numbers of White students and students of color.

Summary and Discussion: Stories Recalled and Described by Participants

One of my research questions was: "What stories connected to race-ethnicity and other social identity-related experiences were recalled and recounted by students?" This question allows me to explore the content of the stories that were remembered by participants at the conclusion of the multi-issue, social diversity course and the IGD course and described in a final reflection paper or an interview. All 32 participants across both types of courses in the study described the content of at least one personal story, and most recalled and recounted multiple stories. Participants in the multi-issue, social diversity course recounted more stories than did participants in the intergroup dialogue course. There are a number of plausible explanations for this, including differences in the data collection instruments (final paper guidelines and interview questions), and the number of distinct stories from different people that participants had the chance to listen to throughout the course

In the context of the multi-issue, social diversity course, the majority of the stories recalled and recounted were shared by panelists who spoke at the four all-section meetings that focused on social identity-related experiences associated with racism, classism, religious oppression, and ableism. There were also a few stories recounted that were conveyed by classmates or their course instructor in class. In the IGD course, the majority of the stories were shared by peers in the dialogue section (and a couple of participants recounted stories shared by the instructor). Participants across both settings recalled and recounted stories told by members of both privileged and targeted social identity groups. Although there were a few stories told by members of privileged social identity groups that received some attention in the multi-issue, social diversity course, the

majority of the stories recalled and recounted were originally told by individuals who belong to targeted social groups due to their location in systems of oppression (i.e., people of color, people with disabilities, etc.). This pattern mirrors the composition of the all-section panels that were largely comprised of members of targeted groups. However, in the IGD course, participants recalled and recounted an equal number of stories told by privileged (White) and targeted (students of color) social identity group members. This finding is noteworthy because it demonstrates that dialogue participants recall the stories from all students about the topic of race.

In the multi-issue, social diversity course, participants recounted stories that dealt with the topics of living with targeted social identities (related to class and ability), witnessing or experiencing oppression, receiving unearned privilege, and stories about taking action that interrupted or challenged specific manifestations of oppression. Stories about witnessing or experiencing oppression were, by far, the most commonly recounted. (There were over four times as many examples of stories about experiencing or witnessing oppression as the other three categories.) The stories of oppression told by targeted group members about experiences they had in childhood seemed to particularly hook students, eliciting emotions and empathy, and leading them to frequently remember and recount these particular stories The stories related to privilege that were recounted in final papers were primarily connected to the topics of class and race. Because privilege is so invisible to those who receive it (Goodman, 2001; McIntosh, 1998), hearing stories from people who have race or class privilege can be an important learning for all students but particularly for those who also come from a privileged background.

Finally, participants recounted "Stories about Challenging Oppression" which were told by both members of targeted groups about resisting internalized oppression and taking action and by members of privileged groups acting as an ally. Because these "resistance stories" are rarely told in either mainstream media or educational contexts (Bell & Roberts, 2010, p. 2312), listening to stories about taking actions for social justice can be powerful role modeling for students of all identities and can provide hope that social change is possible and can inspire participants to want to take action in their own lives.

In the interviews with IGD participants, the over-arching clusters of story content included stories about racism from the perspective of people of color, stories about racism from the perspective of White people, and finally, stories about navigating the system of racism with awareness. The first category, racism from the perspective of people of color, included stories about experiencing racism both as a child and as an adult, and many participants referenced one particular "signature story" about a young girl being treated poorly by someone in authority when she was a child. The stories about racism from the perspective of White people recounted in the IGD focused on stories of perpetuating racism and stories about how White people are negatively impacted by the system of racism (mainly through lack of connection and awareness of racism or through being targeted due to their association with a person of color). It is noteworthy that there were slightly more stories about racism from the perspective of White people recounted in the dialogue than stories from the perspective of people of color. This feels striking because it shows that both White students and students of color can play a role in educating their peers about race. The intentionality behind the racial/ethnic composition

of IGDs that includes approximately equal numbers of White students and students of color as well as curriculum design that requires a testimonial assignment requiring all students to share their personal experiences connected to race may contribute to this finding.

The final cluster, "Navigating the System of Racism with Awareness" was unique to the IGD interviews. This thematic cluster highlighted the process through which both White students and students of color attempted to live with their developing awareness of racism. This category included stories about half-formed ideas and places where the storytellers were cognitively and emotionally grappling with the issue of race and racism. Because of all students' fear and anxiety about the topic of race/ethnicity and racism when entering the course, it is striking that dialogue participants felt comfortable sharing these types of stories and being transparent about their process of critical thinking with others in the group. Participants' willingness to disclose these stories may speak to the learning environment created by implementation of the intentionally designed IGD curriculum in conjunction with guidance by extensively trained co-facilitators.

In addition to the differences noted above (i.e., the uniqueness of the "Navigating System of Racism with Awareness" cluster), across both courses there were some similarities in the content of the stories recounted. Stories of oppression were a common type of story recounted, particularly stories of oppression in childhood. These were often simple examples of exclusion perpetuated by an adult (a neighbor, an administrator, or a teacher). To apply Bell and Robert's "Storytelling Model," these stories would be described as "concealed stories" (the personal stories that share the perspectives and experiences of people of color and give people of color the opportunity to refute or

critique dominant white supremacist messages) (Bell, 2010; Bell & Roberts, 2010). Another similarity across contexts was the finding that emotional content in the stories seemed to draw a great deal of attention from participants (stories in which the storyteller began to cry or expressed anger) as well as stories that were about personal issues that are not usually revealed in a public forum (stories about a hidden disability or about class status). In both of the courses, the expression of emotions is encouraged, normalized, and a welcome part of the learning process, which most likely contributed to this finding.

One difference between the two data sets was that the multi-issue, diversity course included more examples of "stories about challenging oppression" with examples of both privileged and targeted group members taking action, most of which were shared on the panels. These stories, characterized as "resistance stories" by Bell and Roberts (2010, p. 2312), are essential because they help participants learn to work toward something rather than only against something and offer role models of how social change can be possible (Love, 2010; Tatum, 1994). The multi-issue, social diversity course also included more stories about privilege and how it plays out; however, the IGD course included more examples of some of the costs or challenges associated with privileged identities for members of privileged social identity groups. These differences may be attributed to the differing structure of storytelling between the two settings. In line with the multi-issue, social diversity course's anti-oppression pedagogical focus and emphasis on societal manifestations of power, privilege, and oppression, panelists from privileged backgrounds were specifically invited to include examples of receiving privilege along with examples of some of the costs or challenges associated with this identity.

Summary and Discussion: Participant Learnings Through Stories

Another research questions that guided this study was: "What learning and insights do students describe from listening to stories?" Findings from both sites of practice indicate that listening to personal stories do, in fact, facilitate learning about a number of different topics and promote critical thinking about course material in complex ways.

In the multi-issue, social diversity course, all 16 participants described a total of over 80 examples of insights that they directly linked to hearing a personal story from a panel presenter, from a peer classmate, or from their instructor. From these, six different clusters of new insights emerged; learning about the existence of difference, learning about stereotypes and assumptions, insights about oppression, insights about privilege, self-awareness of one's own ignorance, and insights about taking action to promote social justice.

Learning about the fact that difference exists and there can be multiple perspectives and experiences connected to different topics is a noteworthy learning for participants, many of whom were in their first year of college. Insights about stereotypes that students described were all about targeted social identities that are usually invisible (cannot be determined by looking at someone) and identities that are not usually disclosed to others (i.e., social class and ability status). The opportunity to learn about these identities from the experience of "real" people seemed to have particular impact on students, humanizing others and accelerating learning about these topics.

Learning about oppression and its various manifestations (i.e., racism, ableism, and religious oppression) was the most commonly recounted type of insight, and all 16

participants described at least one example. Participants who come from privileged identities discovered that oppression actually exists and learned more about some of nuances of how it plays out. The examples described included insights about oppression that operates at the individual level (i.e., someone being treated unfairly by someone else). However, a few examples highlighted learning about oppression at the structural level and how it is embedded in institutions and norms of society, a concept that can be difficult for participants to grasp (Kleugal & Bobo, 1993; Lopez et al., 1998; Schmidt, 2005b). The assigned course readings, concepts and materials discussed in class, and the intentionally-designed curriculum guiding the course in combination with the opportunity to hear personal experiences with oppression seemed to foster understanding of some of the complex social dynamics and contribute to students' learning. This finding underscores the importance of contextualizing personal stories by placing them within a historical framework and illustrating how they link to a larger socio-political context (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1988; hooks, 1994).

Insights about privilege were also prevalent in the multi-issue, diversity course. It is important to name that although students included in the study were racially diverse; the majority of participants came from a privileged social location in relation to many of the topics that were covered in the course (i.e., most participants identified as middle-class, raised-Christian, and/or temporarily able-bodied). However, both members of targeted and privileged identity groups described learning from stories shared by members of privileged social identity groups, demonstrating the power of having these voices as part of course content on panels. Insights about one's own ignorance about these topics and insights about challenging oppression also emerged from this data set.

In the race/ethnicity IGDs, three major clusters of impacts emerged, which included insights about the nature and extent of racism, insights about the impact of racism on White people, and insights about challenging oppression. Similar to the insights expressed in the multi-issue, social diversity course, participants described learning that racism exists and some of the nuances of how it plays out, including the existence of institutional racism and the understanding that racism can be unintentional. Again, although a number of insights about racism came from White students, students of color also had the opportunity to learn more about how racism plays out, at times receiving affirmation or validation in relation to some of their own experiences with racism.

All participants in the IGD described learning more about the impact of racism on White people, particularly the privileges they receive, the negative impact of racism on White people, White people's ignorance about the topic of race and racism, and insights about White people's desire to be allies and take action against oppression. From listening to other people in the dialogue, a few White students realized their own privileges, and a number of students of color learned about how the system of racism also hurts White people and also developed an understanding of White people's lack of experience with and ignorance about the topic of race/ethnicity and racism. Finally, participants described learning about others' desire to be an ally and experiences taking action against oppression. Learning that some White people do want things to be different provided hope for some participants of color.

Although the two courses varied in their content (particularly with regard to having a singular versus multi "ism" focus), there were some consistent patterns of

insights across sites. First, across both sites, participants described a noteworthy number of insights that they directly linked to hearing a personal story related to one or more manifestations of social oppression. In both these contexts, hearing stories (in conjunction with the SJE pedagogy and course facilitation) amplified student learning, leading participants to think critically about the course content, internalizing the concepts and core theoretical frameworks addressed by each course.

Across both sites, a number of insights that participants described learning were about the topics of oppression and privilege, two concepts that are foundational to social diversity courses (Adams, 2014; Bell, 2007; Zúñiga et al., 2007). Learning about oppression and some of the nuances of how it operates was the most commonly recounted type of insight from listening to a story across both sites. Learning about oppression from "first hand sources" seemed to help participants from privileged groups have a more complex understanding of this concept or grasp the other course material (readings, etc.) at a more comprehensive level. Participants from targeted groups learned about how oppression impacts others and how oppression plays out differently based on identities (i.e., the example of a Black man in an IGD who learned about how an Asian-identified immigrant experienced racism). This is important because although they are grouped together for analysis purposes in this study, different groups of color experience race and racism in varying ways, and understanding the nuances of how racism operates for different groups is an important learning. Although all participants described learning about oppression through stories, these seemed to be particularly impactful for participants from privileged social identity groups.

Participants from both targeted and privileged social groups learned about how systems of oppression affect people with privileged social identity statuses, most notably, through specific examples of privilege and also through the ways the system of oppression also harms members of privileged social identity groups. Learning examples of privilege is important because it can be difficult for students from privileged identities to see the advantages they have because privilege is usually invisible and just regarded as normal (Goodman, 2001; Johnson, 2006; McIntosh, 1998). Learning about the ways people from privileged identities can be harmed by oppression is also important because it helps students see how oppression dehumanizes everyone, underscoring how everyone has a stake in dismantling it (Freire, 1970; Kivel, 2002). In the IGDs, a particularly poignant insight about the privileged group was students of color having the chance to learn that many White students are really ignorant when it comes to race, and also there are White people who care about making things different.

Finally, across both sites, hearing from others about challenging oppression was an important source of learning for participants, gave them hope, and inspired them to want to take action in their own life. Realizing that people can and do take action against oppression from different positions of advantage and disadvantage is a powerful learning for students, particularly because this relates to one of the goals of social justice education in general and of both courses included in this study (Adams, 2014; Bell, 2007; Burrell-Storms, 2012; Carlisle et al., 2006; Gurin et al., 2013; Zúñiga et al., 2002). Hearing stories about taking action can give participants from targeted social identity groups hope and more motivation to keep going in the face of oppression and offer role

modeling of behaviors for all participants for how to intervene in oppressive situations (Bell & Griffin, 2007; Love, 2010; Tatum, 1994).

"Transformative Points of Connection"—A Conceptual Model

The information summarized in the previous sections helps to answer a number of my research questions, including what types of stories students most commonly recall and recount in two different Social Diversity courses. It also highlights myriad learning outcomes of listening to stories in these particularly contexts. In the following section, I share the results of my selective coding of all of the data across both settings and present the central category of this study, "connection," illustrating how all of the categories fit with this central category to propose a conceptual model of *the role* of personal storytelling about social identity-related experiences in learning about social justice issues (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Rather than focusing on learning outcomes, this category captures the process of how and why personal storytelling impacts students' learning. This model represents a method of putting the data presented in Chapters 4 and 5 back together in a coherent way around a central code (Charmaz, 2006).

Based on my findings, I would argue that listening to personal stories told by peers or panelists in a social diversity course can break through a context of fear, disconnection, stereotypes, and misinformation and fosters "transformative points of connection" (Jehangir, 2010, p. 545), decreasing the distance between participants and the topic of race/ethnicity, accelerating student learning, and eliciting a host of cognitive and behavioral impacts. These points of connection occur in a number of different ways.

First, students connect to the approach of information delivery through personal stories, which they describe as engaging and enjoyable and valuable to their learning. The medium of storytelling also allows students to connect with other humans within and across difference, creating bonds, increasing trust, and fostering empathy in powerful ways. Finally, listening to stories allows students to connect to the information shared in each story both cognitively, through the head and affectively, through the heart. "Information" in this context includes not only content knowledge about course topics or experiential knowledge but also the struggles and emotions conveyed by the teller. Both the connection with others who are telling the stories and the connection to the information in the stories made the information discussed in class and in the readings become "real" to participants. This does not occur in a linear fashion but, rather, is a cyclical, iterative process (See Figure 4 for the model of how these categories (in bold) all fit together.)

In the following sections, I review each of these areas of connection in more detail, drawing upon the literature. Because one of the hallmarks of grounded theory is building a theory "ground up" from the data (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008), I did not anticipate the way my findings would play out when I did my literature review prior to beginning my research study. Because of this, I bring in an additional body of literature into this section that is not included in Chapter 2, recent findings from the field of neuroscience about the impact of stories on the brain. This new body of research offers an additional explanation for some of my findings.

Connecting to the Approach of Information Delivery (Storytelling)

In an interview following completion of the IGD course, one study participant stated, **"**When you tell a personal story, I kind of perk up a little bit more." This description captures a sentiment expressed by many participants regarding their connection to the mode of storytelling itself. In both of my sites of study, the majority of participants mentioned, in some way, that they valued the pedagogical practice of storytelling and indicated specific ways in which they connect with this way of learning, labeling it as "exciting," "important," "enjoyable," "engaging," or something they "looked forward to." This was consistent across both settings, which was striking because the IGD interviews did not ask students to share their thoughts about how personal storytelling contributes to their learning the way that the multi-issue, social diversity course final papers did. Thus, even when unprompted, participants expressed that they valued storytelling.

This finding is consistent with the literature. Many authors contend that what makes storytelling so enjoyable is simply that stories are how humans have made meaning and communicated for thousands of years; storytelling is a trait that is universal across cultures, and the majority of our conversations are structured in the narrative form (Gergen & Gergen, 2006; Gottschal, 2012; Hsu, 2008). Studies indicate that personal stories and gossip make up about 65% of our conversations (Dunbar, 1998; Hsu, 2008). Fisher (1987) claims that the "narrative impulse" is part of our socialization as humans; storytelling is a human universal; and humans are inherently *"Homo narrans"* (p. 24) (storytellers) who understand our lives as a series of ongoing narratives.

In a recent piece about the power of storytelling in the popular magazine, *Psychology Today,* film producer Peter Guber (2011) declares that "telling stories is not just the oldest form of entertainment, it's the highest form of consciousness. The need for narrative is embedded deep in our brains" (p. 79). Building on claims regarding the import of storytelling, in his recent book, *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make us Human,* Gottschall (2012) synthesize the art of storytelling with recent brain science to present a theory of storytelling that offers information about how and why we are so moved by stories. Gottschal claims that the universal penchant for stories is tied in with human evolution and states that "human minds yield helplessly to the suction of a story. No matter how hard we concentrate, no matter how deep we dig in our heels, we just can't resist the gravity of alternate worlds" (p. 3). He argues that a skilled storyteller "simply invades us and takes us over. There is little we can do to resist" (p. 4). Aaker (2013a, 2013b) argues that we are even more susceptible to the power of a story because we are living in a world with too much information in which we are constantly inundated with facts and statistics. She claims that the simplicity of a story can cut through the noise and profoundly impact us.

Another reason that participants appear to connect with the pedagogical practice of storytelling is that it is a novel practice in the context of the college classroom, which often focuses on other ways of delivering information, such as more fact-based approaches. In the specific context of college diversity courses, in-person storytelling about social identity-related experiences can powerfully supplement other ways that personal stories are brought into the course, from assigned readings of individual testimonials to digital stories. Across both courses in the study, participants mentioned

that hearing social identity-related stories was something they had not experienced in the classroom, and this was engaging for them.

The connection to the medium of storytelling feels particularly important in the context of learning about anxiety-producing and potentially contentious topics, such as racism. The enjoyment expressed by nearly all participants when listening to stories told by panelists or peers is in stark contrast to the fear and anxiety expressed by both White participants and participants of color when they first entered the course. I contend that the connection and familiarity with the pedagogical practice of storytelling in the classroom may help reduce fear about the topic and assist with students' ability and motivation to learn. This relates with recent research in the field of neuroscience that has linked the amygdala (or the "fear center" of the brain) with the cerebral cortex, the part of the brain that helps with analysis or meaning-making of experiences (Zull, 2002, p. 72). According to Zull, when one is feeling afraid, it can inhibit the frontal cortex functioning so that it is harder to pay attention and learn. Thus, interrupting this fear through a pedagogical approach that participants enjoy may help facilitate their ability to work with and remember the material.

Connecting to Others

Another way that personal storytelling facilitated "transformative points of connection," (Jehangir, 2010, p. 545) is in relation to connecting with other human beings. In both settings included in this study, participants spoke about getting to know their classmates through listening to stories or bonding with others in a way that felt unusual for a classroom setting. This finding was particularly rich in the IGD sections in

which multiple participants named that sharing and listening to testimonials was a way to "really get to know each other," and one participant described, "We just kind of bonded and saw each other on a more real level after that day." The connection that was formed through telling stories (and other learning activities, including early group-building activities used to support the development of a learning community) seemed to help participants be willing to continue to share more intimate details about their lives with one another and be honest and vulnerable as the dialogue got into more contentious or complicated topics. This demonstrates the importance of the required testimonial assignment to the group process as well as to participants' learning.

Although a required storytelling assignment was not part of the multi-issue, social diversity course (and most of the stories recalled and recounted in final papers were told by outside panelists), a few participants did refer to feeling more connected to their classmates after they shared personal experiences in class. For example, multiple participants in one of the course sections mentioned an in-class activity in which participants all disclosed personal experiences about their connection to the topic of ableism. One White male participant reflected, "This was one of the more powerful days we had in class in my opinion. I definitely felt more connected with everyone in class after hearing of everyone's struggles with disabilities." Another male student talked about the power of hearing stories from some of his teammates on the football team who were in the course with him. He said,

> All the freshman have been here since early July, and we are all close at this point in the semester, but nobody really ever discussed personal things like class or religious affiliation, but in class everyone was sharing, so it was nice to bond with my teammates like that.

This suggests how the type of personal storytelling in the course fosters a type of connection that is unique, even for participants who have a previous relationship.

One particular way in which this "connection with others" emerged from the data was through examples of empathy expressed by participants. As reviewed in the Chapters 4 and 5, I defined empathy broadly as both cognitive (being able to take the same perspective as someone else or putting oneself in their shoes) and emotional empathy (McCormick, 1999). I conceptualized emotional empathy as both parallel empathy (in which participants express similar emotions to the person they are listening to) and reactive empathy (in which participants react emotionally to the experiences of others such as by feeling compassion or sympathy) (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Having the ability to feel for another's plight is significant and desperately needed, particularly considering the recent decreases in empathy of college students. As reviewed in Chapter 1, researchers reported a 40% decline in both empathic concern and perspective taking among college students between 1979 and 2010, with the biggest drop after the year 2000 (Konrath et al., 2011). In light of this trend, it is noteworthy that over three-fourths of the participants in this study expressed at least one (often multiple) examples of empathy. This pattern mirrors Sorenson et al.'s (2010) study on race and gender IGDs in which empathy was bi-directional (participants from privileged identities felt empathy from those in targeted groups and vice-versa). These researchers identified the quality of the container (the carefully designed IGD curriculum) as a key ingredient of this outcome.

One interesting pattern that particularly emerged in the findings from the multi-issue, social diversity course speaks to the connection between feeling empathy, remembering what was heard, and then feeling motivation to take action. For example, in

the social diversity course, in response to listening to Vanessa's story experiencing racism when she was a very young child (when an adult in her neighborhood told her she could not hold a baby because she could not tell whether her "hands were dirty"), a White female participant said,

> It's appalling that as a child she had to try and understand what this woman meant. Hearing this story broke my heart, and I don't think I'll ever forget it. I don't think I'll forget many stories told during the panel for that matter. These personal stories gave me new insight that even though people go through oppression all the time, they don't let it define them. It also gave me new insights to want to become an ally.

This participant listened to a painful experience described by someone, expressed reactive empathy for them ("broke my heart") remembering what was heard enough to include it in her final paper, and then expressed a drive to take action (be an ally).

At a recent talk at the "Future of Storytelling" conference, economist and neuroscientist Paul Zak presented results of some cutting edge research in the field of neuroscience that shows a fascinating neurological explanation for the pattern highlighted above. In a laboratory experiment, he and his colleagues discovered that listening to a sad story elicits two primary emotions—distress and empathy. By testing participants' blood before and after listening to the story, they discovered that the brain produced two chemicals in response to the story—cortisol and oxytocin. Increases in the amount of cortisol (in line with the amount of distress that the participant felt) intensified the amount of attention paid to the story. In addition to cortisol, the brain also released oxytocin (a hormone associated with care, connection, and empathy), which was correlated with empathy. The more oxytocin that was released, the more empathy the participant felt. The increases of these chemicals then predicted behavior. Those participants who produced both oxytocin and cortisol were more likely to donate money

to a stranger or a charitable organization at the end of the experiment, and the amount of oxytocin released actually predicted how much money the participants would share (Zak, 2013) (For additional information about Zak's research on oxytocin and empathy, refer to Barraza, McCullough, Ahmadi & Zak, 2011; Zak & Barraza, 2009; Zak, 2011). Although it is important to be wary about how much meaning we can extrapolate from Zak's findings, they do suggest a fascinating and plausible scientific explanation for one way in which personal narratives impact human beings and contribute to transforming one's behavior by actually shifting the brain chemistry. This recent research mirrors some of the explanations provided by the students in this study when describing the effects of listening to stories of personal experiences, including their feelings of empathy and desire or motivation to take action.

Indeed, these recent discoveries from the field of neuroscience lend additional support to many of the ideas offered by several of the philosophers from the humanist and interpretative tradition reviewed in Chapter 2 (many of whom were writing over 100 years ago) who foreground the longing for connection between people as integral to life and to learning (Bakhtin, 1981; Buber, 1965; Levinas, 1984). I would argue that the type of "bonds" and empathy that participants described feeling with one another after listening to each other's stories mirrors Buber's (1970) conception of an "I-You" relationship. And as Levinas' idea of radical alterity describes, seeing the full humanity of others, particularly through hearing stories of suffering, calls a "sound of conscious" (Hyde, 2004, p. 64) reminding students that "I am my brothers' keeper" (Arnett, 2004, p. 80), and igniting their primordial urge to "live a life beyond self-occupation" (Arnett, 2004, p. 84) and take action to make things more fair and equal. Buber, Levinas, and

Bahktin also underscore the power of knowing in relation with one other and learning with and from others.

The opportunity to intimately connect with others and to feel empathy seems critical, particularly in this technologically driven age often characterized by being "alone together," inundated with information and communication devices that may help us stay in touch with many individuals but through rather superficial relationships (Turkle, 2011, 2012a). In the current period of increased economic and racial re-segregation and colorblindness, forging opportunities to connect and bridge across social and racial divides seems even more necessary and crucial as college campuses and neighborhood communities search for alternative ways to coalesce to foster equity and inclusive communities. As reviewed in the "Prior Experiences with Conversations about Race and Racism" findings section, many participants entered the course without having many positive cross-race relationships. For example, in an IGD section, a White woman poignantly expressed, **"**I don't really have many close friendships with people of color and so that kind of eliminates the chance to have any deep conversations with them." And a woman of color in the multi-issue, social diversity course reflected, "All my life I was surrounded by people like me…. I always made friends with lower class, people of color. Even when I had an opportunity to make friends with people that were not like me … I still chose to make friends with people who had material and cultural things in common with me." In light of this, the opportunity to build cross-race connections and to talk about and explore difficult topics across race seems particularly vital.

These opportunities to make cross-race connections are important both to help begin a process of forming cross-race "bridging networks" (Putnam, 2000) and to

promote taking action toward social justice. Many White people who self-define as "anti-racist" attribute their motivation to take action against racism to their development of personal relationships with people of color in which they hear about racism and begin to care about the topic (Kendall, 2006; McKinney, 2005; Romney et al., 1992). The opportunity for White students to build relationships across race and to get to know people of color in an authentic way may help ignite this passion for social change that is so desperately needed. In addition, previous studies on IGD have shown that connecting with White people and learning that they are quite ignorant when it comes to the topic of race may have influenced participants of color's willingness to join with them in social change work (Walsh, 2007). Thus, the opportunity to connect across difference can be important for members of both privileged and targeted social groups.

Connecting to Information

Another way in which "transformative points of connection" (Jehangir, 2010, p. 545) emerged from the data was in regard to participants' connection to the information in a story. This connection occurred through both the "head" (cognitively in participants' ability and willingness to understand and grasp ideas) and through the "heart" (affectively in participants' emotional connection to what they heard). Another way participants connected to information through both the head and the heart was through the information "becoming real" to participants.

Connecting Through the Head (Cognitive Connection to Information)

Listening to the personal experiences of others about the topics they were learning about in class helped participants make sense of the course material in a number of ways. First, it helped them to relate to the information and "put a face on" what they were learning, making it more accessible for them. For example, one White male participant in the multi-issue, social diversity course stated, "The panels were interesting and a good technique to use as it linked personal experiences to oppression and made students relate a lot more because it took, for me, the somewhat boring information and put it to human experience." A woman of color in the course echoed this, and said,

> If we were to simply read about oppression in class, it would be hard to picture the presence of oppression in our society. It makes it a much better learning experience when we listen to real stories that people have to say.

Students also said that hearing information through a story made it more likely that they would remember it. For example, a woman of color in the IGD course shared,

> I think it is easier for the students to learn when they hear stories and they can connect on a personal basis. I think when you connect on a personal basis you are more prone to remember what you learned.

These reflections of the study participants align with the literature. As reviewed in Chapter 2, a number of educational theorists have talked about the importance of critically engaging with personal experience and highlighted the value of these stories in learning. For example, Dewey's "Theory of Experience" asserted that the curricular content of schooling should relate directly to students' past experiences, so that it makes sense to them in their lived realities (Dewey, 1916, 1938). Relatedly, Horton's educational theory emphasized relational learning and was structured around the fact that the workshop attendees came in with powerful life experiences, which was an accessible

form of knowledge they each could teach others (Glen, 1996; Horton & Freire, 1990). Sharing personal experiences was also at the heart of Freire's (1970) dialogic educational theory, which placed students as "critical-co-investigators" in the classroom (p. 81) and reinforces the importance of starting with the students' concrete, lived experiences. He believed that giving students the opportunity to critically reflect about their own experiences and hearing the others' experiences can facilitate the development of "conscientization" and can lead to social change (p. 81; see also Gergen, 2009; Torres, 1998). The role of personal stories in making new or controversial information more accessible is also emphasized by feminist theorists and educators (hooks, 1994; Romney et al., 1992; Stanley & Wise, 1983) as well as critical race theorists (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002)

Recent research in the field of neuroscience can also offer insights as to why information in the form of personal stories may be accessible to students. In the past few years, brain-imaging technology has allowed researchers to actually take a look inside at what happens in the brain when humans listen to stories versus more fact-based information. When people listen to fact-based information (such as statistics), the language-processing parts of the brain, called the "Wernick's area" and "Broca's area" get activated so that they can understand what they are hearing. However, when they are being told a story, not only are the language-processing parts activated but also any other part of the brain that would be used if they were actually experiencing the events of the story themselves. This discovery showed that when humans listen to a story, the brain does not look like a spectator, but rather as a participant, and stories light up the whole brain (Aaker, 2013a; Gottschal, 2013; Wildrich, 2012; Zull, 2002). This exciting new

body of research indicates that perhaps stories' ability to hook our attention can be explained by the fact that whatever is happening to the person telling the story feels like it is also happening to us.

This full-brain activation is also part of why our brains can recall stories so much more readily than facts or statistics. Studies show that we remember details of things more effectively when they are embedded within a story and that a story can be up to 22 times more memorable than facts alone (Aaker, 2013b; Guber, 2011). The fact that the brain does not distinguish between a lived image and an imagined one can aid in memory (Guber, 2011). However, this can also lead to false memories, such as the phenomenon of "cryptonesia" introduced in Chapter 2 (in which stories are stored in memory just as vividly as things that we have actually experienced ourselves, leading to confusion, and mis-remembering life experiences) (Sacks, 2013, p. 4; see also Wildrich, 2012).

The field of brain science can also support the added power of listening to stories in person rather than reading them or watching them on a screen. According to Zull's (2002) research on the impact of learning on the brain, brain imagery suggests that *hearing* words lights up more of the brain than just *seeing* words. Recent research on brain-to-brain coupling by neuroscientist Uri Hasson has shown how the active parts of the brain in a person telling the story and the person listening can actually synchronize with the same brain regions lighting up simultaneously, a phenomenon others have labeled "mind meld" (Keim, 2010, para. 1). Though this research is in its infancy, it suggests that there is something particularly powerful that can happen in the brain of the story receiver when listening to a story in the physical presence of the storyteller (Hasson, Ghazanfar, Galantucci, Garrod & Keyes, 2012; Stephens, Silbert, & Hasson, 2010).

Although this does not negate the power and importance of the written word or of other ways of learning, it does offer a possible explanation for how and why stories told in-person are so impactful for students.

Connecting Through the Heart (Affective Connection to Information)

Listening to the experiences of others also seemed to connect students to the information at the heart level, making them care, and bringing up a range of emotions (see empathy section above for one way this plays out). Across both contexts every single participant described at least one emotion while recalling and recounting stories that they had heard in the class. A number of participants spoke of emotional reactions in general, for example, "Her story touched me," or it "gave me a very emotional and powerful feeling." Beyond these more general references to emotions, across both contexts, the two most common emotions were surprise and shock and feeling sadness. The shock and surprise, exemplified with phrases such as, "It threw my head into a whirlwind," happened when participants heard a story that was quite different from their own past experiences, which moved them into a place of dissonance (and most likely increased attention). Feeling sadness at something that happened to someone else also seemed to help participants connect to the information and elicit feelings of compassion and empathy. Finally, listening to stories about others challenging oppression helped participants feel inspired and motivated to action in their own life.

Participants' affective connection to stories relates with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. For example, specifically referring to stories about race/ethnicity and racism in their "Storytelling Project," Bell and Roberts (2010) claim "too often, when we dare to

talk about racism, name White privilege, and challenge color privilege, we tend to use abstract language that creates distance between ourselves and the emotionality that can accompany such talk" (p. 2302). They say that the emotional connection participants feel when listening to stories can help all participants encounter the topic on an "embodied level" and more fully engage with the topic than when listening to facts alone.

Neuroscience research can also offer insight into the link between feelings and the creation of explicit memories (Zull, 2002), which may help explain participants' ability to remember stories in addition to the reasons explained above. Zull claims, "There are extensive connections between the emotion centers (amygdala and basal structures) and the neocortex. The existence of these connections implies that all parts of the learning cycle are influenced by emotion" (p. 223). In addition, different emotions can serve as an inhibitor or as an accelerator of learning. As mentioned previously in this section, feeling fear can inhibit the functioning of the cerebral cortex, making it more difficult for the brain to process information. Zull (2002) explains, "We may have trouble paying attention to an abstract problem when our amygdala is sending danger signals to our logical brain." (p. 75). However, he adds that when we feel other emotions (besides fear), we "can recall amazing amounts of detail in the short term and sometimes long term too." (p. 78).

Process of Information "Becoming Real"

One interesting phenomenon in the data that involved connection through both the head and the heart was the way in which participants talked about how hearing from a live person helped them connect to the course material by making the information

become “real” for them and thus, something they were able and willing to comprehend and make meaning from. For example, a White man said that the “real life examples and situations” helped him to relate, and a number of students talked about how hearing from “real” people was much more impactful for them than simply reading the information from a book or being exposed to fact-based information in the course. They talked about the value of “first-hand accounts” and how hearing from people, in person, brought the topic to life. Speaking about a panelist, a White woman in the multi-issue, social diversity course expressed, “Even though some of the things he talked about I had heard before, for some reason it just seemed more real when it was coming from him.” Thus, hearing from an actual person gave the information increased weight.

The majority of the examples of “becoming real” from both data sets were expressed by members of privileged identity groups. This makes sense because participants from disadvantaged backgrounds are often aware of how oppression plays out, and they do not need to hear some of the information provided in some of the stories to help things become “real” to them in quite the same way. For example, one White male participant articulated that hearing panelists’ stories about racism

> brought the subject much closer to home. They showed those of us who never had to deal with racism directed at us how people we actually knew have been affected by it. We were able to see how it can really affect a person, even changing the way they view themselves.

Thus, he values getting a sense of what others go through on a more embodied level. As this student expressed, by talking about the power of hearing stories from “people we actually know,” the level of “realness” and connection that participants have with the information in the story seemed to increase in instances when they had some sort of relationship with the storyteller, either as their instructor in the multi-issue, social

diversity course or as a peer. Listening to counterstories gives White students (who are less likely to have been exposed to the lived experiences of students of color growing up or even in college) access to this information through a face-to-face modality that they may be more able to hear, take in, ask clarifying questions, and hopefully offer them a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding. It is easier to be less defensive when listening to a story about someone else rather than being directly accused of racism oneself, especially in light of the current context in which there is a dichotomy in which "bad = racist, and good=not racist" (DiAngelo, 2012 p. 54)

Although it was mostly participants from privileged backgrounds for whom information became "real," members of identity groups who traditionally experience oppression described this phenomenon as well. For example, one man of color in the social diversity course talked about the power of hearing a White woman share her story of protesting at a Ku Klux Klan rally when she was a teenager. He said,

> I never will forget how she mentioned the Klan. This stuck out the most to me because I always forced myself to believe that the KKK was not real. I also have never heard anyone in person mention that they came in contact with the members of this extremist group.

This story made him grasp the reality of this extremist group in an embodied way.

Other students from targeted identity groups described feeling affirmed in their own experiences by hearing the experiences of others. I would argue that this affirmation or validation is another variation of information "becoming real." For example, one White male participant who struggled with depression spoke about the power of hearing a panelist, Kiara, speak about her own struggles with this disability. He said that when Kiara described her experiences,

> It hit me that I had been through the same thing. …..When I heard what she had to say, it made me realize that this was real and helped me understand a little of just how important certain things are. Therefore, her personal story and experience really helped me figure out my own.

In this example, this participant is using the word "real" to mean important or significant and poignantly describes his realization that he is not alone. In addition to affirming the importance of struggles with identity, listening to others' similar experiences with targeted identities may reduce shame and give hope (Brown, 2012; Jenangir, 2010). This is exemplified by the following quote by a woman of color in the multi-issue, social diversity course. She shared,

> I am a poor, working-class Latina and through the panels I was able to learn to embrace my identity….When Daniel spoke in the panel about being able to break stereotypes about people like him, I felt like because I had so many things in common with him, I could do the same.

Hearing from a "real person" who faced some of the similar oppression that she did helped this woman to feel hope and motivation to keep persevering.

The fact that listening to stories helped the information become "real" to participants is a noteworthy finding. I would argue that many students enter the courses with a sense of numbness or apathy about many of the topics they will be engaging with. Sociologists Jones, Haenfler, and Johnson (2007) encapsulate this idea through their assertion that "we are living in a nation of sleepwalkers" (p. 1). They go on to lament:

> We have been lulled into a sense of complacency about the world's problems, as if they are less-than-real occurrences. We react similarly to how we might normalize the strange events that occur while we're in the middle of a dream. People starve, communities fall apart, violence thrives, families fade, and nature disappears, and we continue living as if nothing is wrong. We are stuck in our daily patterns, living on auto-pilot when it comes to the rest of the world. (p. 1)

This numbness or apathy is discussed by authors writing from an anti-racist lens, particularly in relation to the numbness of White people (Kendall, 2006; Wise, 2005). Kendall discusses this in the way that White people (for centuries) have "anesthetized ourselves" (p. 34) and disassociated in order to collude with racist atrocities. She labels this numbness as a "pathology" and explains that this "soul-destroying anesthesia is necessary to the maintenance of power" (p. 34).

I believe that in contrast to the numbness and disassociated state described by Kendall, listening to the stories of the struggle of others in addition to the ways they overcome their struggles wakes students up and makes them feel more connected to what is happening and helping them to care, a phenomenon that I labeled "un-anesthetizing." In these instances, I can picture the story students listen to as a snake that captures their attention, slithers past their defenses, their numbness or apathy, and strikes them in the heart, making them come more alive and feel caring and compassionate. In this context of numbness and apathy, having oppression (particularly racism) "become real" is quite noteworthy. And according to Harro (2010a), "Once you know something, you can't not know it anymore," (p. 45), so the hope is that once these issues become "real" to participants throughout the course, they will continue to learn more and hopefully be inspired to take action toward social change.

Curricular and Pedagogical Factors Supporting Connection and Learning

As the above discussion suggests, participants are particularly drawn to listening to personal stories about social identity in these two diversity courses because it connects them to both the social justice education content of the course and to each other and

makes information about issues of race and racism and other forms oppression "become real." However, this connection does not occur in a vacuum. As the model presented in Figure 4 suggests, the process of listening to personal stories fosters multiple cognitive and behavioral outcomes with the support of a pedagogy (container for learning) that uses an intentional curricular design and weaves process and content learning with learning activities and instructor/facilitator guidance. In this section, I argue that there are specific pedagogical and curricular practices that should be in place in social justice education courses that incorporate personal storytelling about social identity-related topics. First, storytelling needs to be included in courses as part of an intentional, multi-faceted, scaffolded course curriculum that attends to both process and content learning. This curriculum uses group building activities, group-generated participation guidelines, agreements of confidentiality, and role modeling of instructor vulnerability to facilitate the development of a learning community. All of these techniques help promote intimacy of personal sharing about experiences and other course outcomes (Hardiman et al., 2007; Yeakley, 1998; Zúñiga et al., 2007; Zúñiga et al., 2002). There are certain communication practices that should be supported, such as active listening, that can help prepare participants to really be able to "hear" one another's stories (Bidol, 1986). Also (as was the case in both courses in this study), storytelling activities, such as listening to panels and in dialogue, should not involve technology. Participants should be invited to put their cell phones and computers away and give their full attention to the speakers.

In addition to the curricular elements related to the process of learning, both courses also emphasized a specific type of content learning based in social justice education pedagogical theory and conceptual frameworks. For example, content in both

of the courses included in this study included conceptual organizers, such as the cycle of socialization (Harro, 2010a), the macro and micro levels and types of oppression (Hardiman et al., 2007), and information, such as the history of marginalized groups, statistics about institutional manifestations of oppression, and information about people who, throughout history, have worked against injustice (Adams, 2014; Bell & Griffin, 2007). Along with hearing personal stories, this content was presented through a variety of student-centered learning activities and reflective and analytical assignments, such as assigned readings, pair shares, small group discussion, experiential activities, and video clips, allowing students to critically reflect about course material in a number of different ways. This may explain why storytelling accelerates understanding of the dynamics of privilege and oppression.

Incorporating personal stories about social identity-related experiences along with other content information is important because, as mentioned in the literature in Chapter 2, there is a danger of personal stories reinforcing White supremacy and individual relativism because personal experiences are hard to contest, and students from privileged groups may use stories to discount the experiences of students of color (Bell & Roberts, 2010; DiAngelo & Allen, 2006; Fishman & McCarthy, 2005). All of the personal stories in the two courses in this study were told in a context in which participants were also learning about the historical background and current socio-political realities of the forms of oppression. This information is essential to situate the stories and add to student comprehension about how oppression plays out structurally, not only personally (Giroux, 1988; hooks, 1994). I believe that personal stories may accelerate

participants' motivation and ability to navigate this more complex information; however, personal stories should not replace historical or other fact-based information sources.

Along with the specific elements of process and content learning, in both courses the instructors/co-facilitators may have played an integral role in supporting the role of personal storytelling about social identity-related experiences in student learning. In both contexts, the course instructors/co-facilitators were trained in social justice education theory and practice and were supported through weekly meetings throughout the semester. This training and support enabled them to help students make connections between individual stories and social dynamics and systems of oppression. This is important because working with the complexity of social identity in the classroom calls for trained individuals who can play an important role in guiding the blending and integration of content and process learning.

Finally, I believe that one factor necessary to connection and learning through storytelling is vulnerability of both students and instructors. Brown (2012), a social worker who has devoted her career to studying the power of vulnerability in fostering connection and overcoming shame, defines vulnerability as "uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure" and claims that "vulnerability is the core, the heart, the center, of meaningful experiences" (p. 12). She adds, however, that "vulnerability is based on mutuality and requires boundaries and trust….vulnerability is about sharing our feelings and our experiences with people who have earned the right to hear them" (p. 45). The power of expressing vulnerability in stories was demonstrated by Yeakley's (1998) findings about the positive impact of intimacy in personal sharing of experiences as a factor promoting connection and learning in intergroup dialogues.

My findings, particularly in the IGD course, support Yeakley's (1998) findings as well as the power of vulnerability, particularly through the way in which participants seemed to recall and recount stories in which the storyteller made herself vulnerable (as evidenced by talking about something that participants described was courageous or through expressing emotion), exhibiting Brown's (2012) criteria of "uncertainly, risk, and emotional exposure" (p. 12). Also, when a participant made herself vulnerable, it seems to be an impetus for other participants to do the same, a phenomenon I labeled, "vulnerability contagion." This phenomenon was explained clearly by one IGD participant, Grace. Grace's story, told during the Testimonial activity, was a "signature story" referred to by five different participants in the group. When describing her experience of telling her testimonial in her interview, Grace shared,

> I actually ended up breaking down in class, which I was like, "Oh my God, I feel so vulnerable right now," but I think through that a lot of people, once I did that, a lot of people after me was able to let their guard down a little bit. I think that the fact that I was able to be so vulnerable around them made them feel like they had nothing to lose. And so I know at the end we talked about all the positive things that happened and a lot of the students mentioned that like the way that I came out and said everything that I had to say and the honesty that I had put out I think helped a lot of the students really put their guard down and really feel a certain level of comfort.

Although the present study is not focused on the impact on the speaker who is telling stories, the following excerpt from Grace's interview feels useful as an illustration of the phenomenon of "vulnerability contagion." When setting up a context for storytelling, it seems important to have one person there who "lets her guard down," makes herself vulnerable, and expresses things that may be difficult for her to share that may encourage others to do this same. In IGDs, this could be incorporated as part of the training of facilitators, so they could role model this when sharing their Testimonial. In the multi-

issue, social diversity courses, the vulnerability of the panelist may role model this type of sharing for participants when they go back to their individual course sections.

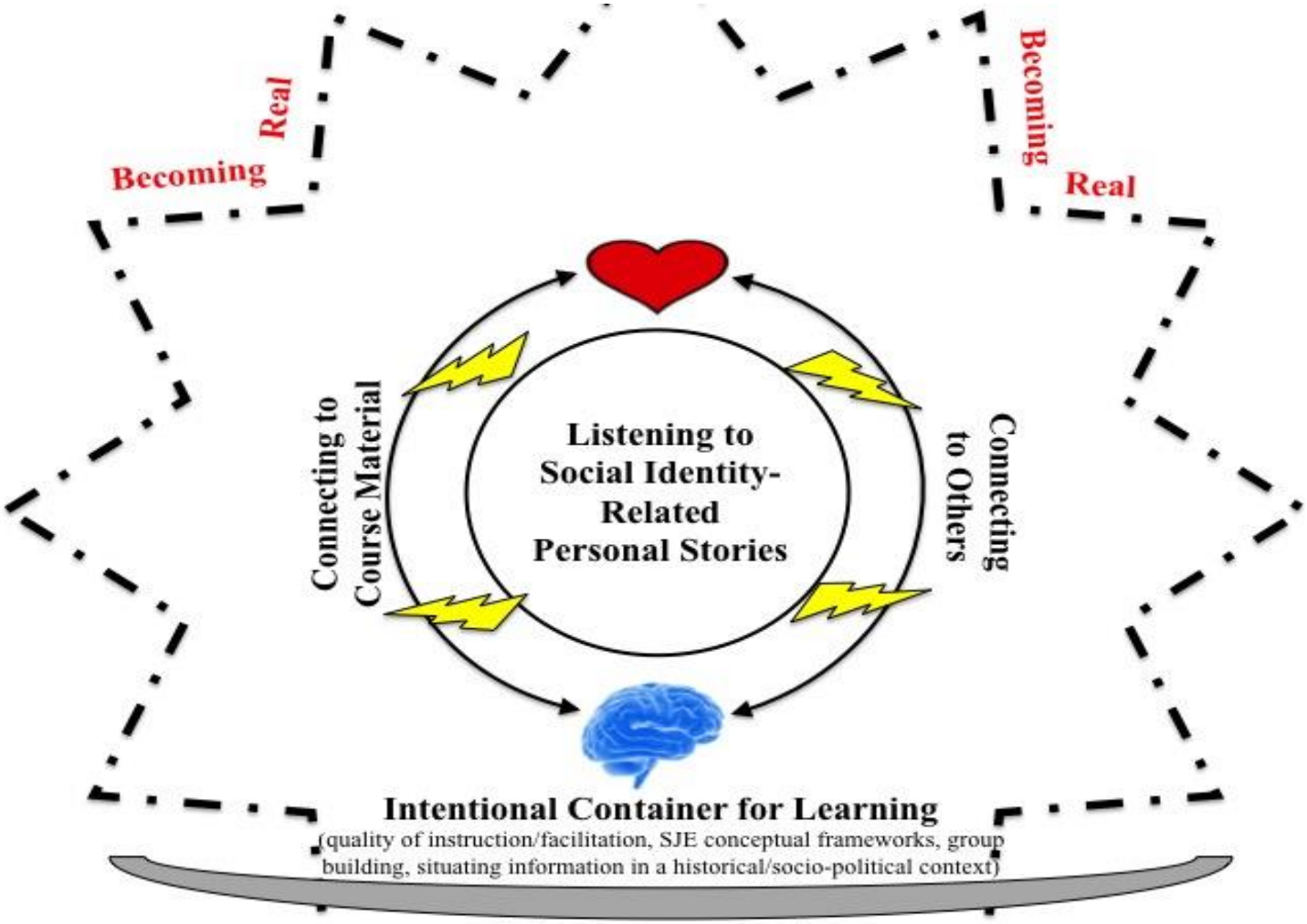

Figure 4: Facilitating Transformative Points of Connection: A Conceptual Model

Summary

This chapter section has reviewed a framework for conceptualizing the process and impact of storytelling on student learning in social diversity courses that emerged from my selective coding of all of the data. Specifically, I illustrated how listening to personal stories told by peers or panelists in a social diversity course can break through a context of fear, disconnection, and misinformation and facilitate "transformative points of connection" (Jehangir, 2010, p. 545), decreasing the distance between participants and the topic of race/ethnicity, accelerating student learning, and facilitating a host of cognitive and behavioral impacts. I reviewed each of these points of connection, drawing upon an interdisciplinary body of literature. Specifically, I discussed how participants connect to the mode of information delivered through storytelling, connect to each other, and connect to the information in stories cognitively and affectively, and how all of this supports a process of information becoming "real" to participants. Finally, I reviewed some conditions that should be in place for this connection and learning to occur.

Situating Findings within the Literature on Personal Storytelling in SJE Practice Settings

Along with the model presented, the findings of the present study offer support for, extend, and complicate some of the claims discussed in the review of scholarly and practice literature concerning personal storytelling about social identity-based experiences in social diversity courses informed by social justice education pedagogy, particularly those that focus on the topic of race/ethnicity. In the next section, I briefly discuss my findings within the context of the literature reviewed in the section of Chapter 2 entitled "Personal Storytelling in Social Justice Education Contexts."

Strength of Storytelling as a Practice

The findings of this study lend further support for other research studies investigating social justice education courses and intergroup dialogues that are particularly focused on the topic of race/ethnicity and racism. Both the current study and some of the studies I reviewed suggest that when the practice of personal story telling is used as part of an intentional, multi-faceted, scaffolded curriculum, it can contribute to positive outcomes. For example, the large number of new insights that students described as a result of listening to personal stories in the present study mirror other studies within the context of IGD that assert the importance of personal storytelling about identity-related experiences as factors in student learning (Alimo, Kelly, & Clark, 2002; Nagda, Gurin, Sorenson, Gurin-Sands, & Osuna, 2009; Yeakley, 1998. The present study's findings also supports other studies suggesting that listening to personal stories about identity-related experiences engages students (Zúñiga et al., 2009; Zúñiga et al. 2011) and aids in the development of critical thinking skills and understanding difference, power, and privilege (Alimo et al., 2002; Jehangir, 2010; Keehn et al., 2010; Nagda, Gurin, Sorensen, Gurin-Sands, et al. 2009; Stassen et al, 2013). In race/ethnicity dialogues, listening to personal stories can help White participants become aware of the existence of racism, often for the first time (Walsh, 2007), help participants of color feel less alone and isolated in the experiences they have (Jehangir, 2010), and possibly increase their willingness to work with White students to eliminate racism (Walsh, 2007).

The findings of the present study also support other studies that indicate that listening to personal stories about social identity-based experience can help participants pay attention to difference (within and across racial/ethnic groups), rather than focusing

exclusively on similarities, which is important in shifting and interrupting tendencies toward colorblindness (Walsh, 2007; Wiessner, 2005; Yeakley, 1999, Zúñiga et al., 2011). The fact that over ¾ of participants across studies described at least one instance of feeling cognitive or emotional empathy for someone else is noteworthy and mirrors the findings of other studies focusing on empathy on diversity courses, particularly in race/ethnicity IGDs (Sorenson et al., 2010; Weissner, 2005; Wong et al., 2013. Similar to these studies, the empathy expressed by students was bi-directional (White participants expressed feeling empathy for students of color, and students of color expressed empathy for White students). This is important because other studies have focused on members of privileged groups (i.e., White students) feeling empathy for members of targeted groups (i.e., participants of color); however, this study shows that empathy can be fostered among all students.

Finally, the present study's core category of "connection," particularly the ways in which students connect with others through storytelling supports assertions from a number of others scholars writing about the power of telling and listening to stories to connect participants to others (Bell & Roberts, 2010; Chin & Rudelius-Palmer, 2010; Jehangir, 2010). The current study's findings about how listening to personal stories about social identity related experiences can help connect participants to information both cognitively and affectively relates to studies that discuss the importance of allowing students to experience emotions connected to the topic, rather than learning about the topic in a disconnected way. For example, the findings of Bell and Roberts' (2010) study indicates that storytelling can help participants experience the topic of racism at a more

embodied level, rather than using abstract language that can create distance from the emotionality connected to discussions about race and racism.

Overall, the findings of the current study, in conjunction with other research studies investigating social justice education courses and intergroup dialogues, offer a compelling argument in support of the potential power of including the practice of storytelling within social diversity courses. However, to be effective, personal storytelling about social identity-related experiences need to be integrated into an intentional, multi-faceted, scaffolded curriculum for such positive outcomes to occur. The next section reviews some of the challenges and cautions connected to this practice that emerged in other studies.

Challenges and Cautions Connected to Storytelling as a Practice

While story telling can have a significant impact on the teller and the listener, particularly in well designed and well facilitated diversity courses, it is important to recognize that this kind of storytelling does not always have positive results, and it is crucial that the practice is incorporated into intentionally designed courses and is implemented by trained and supported facilitators and instructors. Along with the positive impact on learning about diversity and social justice issues, it is essential to underscore some of the cautions and challenges discussed in my literature review connected to the practice of personal storytelling. For example, participants may turn to telling stories in areas where they lack knowledge (Walsh, 2007), and stories shared by participants may be received with disrespect, causing further injury to the teller (Zingaro, 2009). Some stories may be given too much weigh (Walsh, 2007), and personal experiences, especially

those expressed in the feeling realm, may be regarded as uncontestable and thus serve as a block to learning about racism at the structural level (DiAngelo & Allen, 2006). This underscores the importance of having well-trained facilitators and instructors who are able to work with the different stories shared in class and help ensure a positive experience for both the tellers and the listeners.

One major critique of storytelling that was emphasized in my literature review is the way that listening to stories of personal experience may reinforce "individual relativism" (Bell & Roberts, 2010, p. 2305). For example, hearing stories of individual experiences with racism may exacerbate participants' perception of racism as individual acts of cruelty, or "looking down" on others, rather than as part of a system that operates on the individual, institutional, and societal/cultural level. The current discourse about racism is already very individualistic (DiAngelo, 2012) and understanding racism at the structural level is difficult for students to grasp (Schmidt, 2005b). This danger is important to address because individual relativism can inadvertently reinforce hegemonic values and ignoring power differentials among those telling the stories (Applebaum, 2008; Bell, 2010; Wiessner, 2005). Applebaum explains, "Taking experience as unmediated and as an authoritative source of knowledge can sometimes obscure the acknowledgement of structural injustice" (p. 406). For example, White students might share "stock stories" (the hegemonic stories that are most often told about race and racism in society by mainstream institutions that perpetuate racism) (Bell & Roberts, 2010, p. 2310), and unless challenged, or contextualized within a historical or sociological framework, they can serve to reinforce White supremacy and the majoritarian stories that social justice education courses seek to challenge. Because of

this, scholars in social justice education and critical pedagogy emphasize the importance of grounding the practice of personal storytelling in a historical and current social-political reality in order to situate and contextualize the stories (Bell &Roberts, 2010; DiAngelo & Allen, 2006; Giroux, 1998; hooks, 1994; Zúñiga et al., 2002; Zúñiga et al. 2007). Furthermore, it is important to emphasize the role of instructor preparation, support, and well-crafted curriculum to facilitate the bridging between personal experience and historical and institutional dynamics of privilege and oppression.

For the most part, learnings described by students included in the data sources for this study did not appear to reinforce individualism or the status quo the ways that other researchers described (DiAngelo & Allen;, 2006; Fishman & McCarthy, 2005). Most of the learnings described were about the existence of oppression and privilege, rather than the denial of them. There are numerous plausible explanations for this, and it is difficult to conjecture reasons. However, possible explanations include the pedagogy used, the course curriculum, and the extensive training of the course instructors and IGD facilitators. The stories in the course were all incorporated as part of a semester-long course complimented by readings (as opposed to a one-time discussion about race/ethnicity and racism (Fishman & McCarthy, 2005) or a 4-session intergroup dialogue (DiAngelo & Allen, 2006).

As discussed previously, the specific container for learning created in both courses in this study most likely played a major role in the limited findings of challenges connected to personal storytelling in the present study. In addition, my own subjectivity, and tendency to see the benefits of stories, more than the challenges, most likely impacted these findings.

Implications for Practice

In analyzing the data sources across these two different classroom contexts, there are several implications for the field of social justice education. Although there are implications specific to each of the pedagogies guiding each of the diversity courses included in the study, below I have highlighted a few that I believe pertain to both the multi issue, social diversity course and intergroup dialogue.

- The overall findings of this study, specifically the rich variety of student learning described and examples of critical thinking demonstrated illustrate that listening to personal stories can indeed accelerate student learning when included as a part of a social diversity course. These findings provide empirical support for the practice of personal storytelling as a valuable pedagogical method within intentionally designed and facilitated social justice education courses. The findings also lend support for the value of face-to-face, embodied synchronous (real-time) learning. Institutions of higher education, should continue to support small, in person diversity courses, because, as the President of Williams College, William Falk (2012), expressed, "[These] rich, human interactions can't be replaced by any magical application of technology" (p. 6)
- Across both practice contexts in this study, participants recounted and learned from social identity-based stories from both members of privileged and targeted social identity groups. In courses that incorporate storytelling through panels, this underscores the importance of having members of both privileged and targeted groups share their narratives, and in IGD, it underscores the power of the testimonials students are asked to write and share early in the course about their social identity-

based experiences as well as the stories they share as they grapple with topics, such as interracial relationships, racial profiling, and race and racism on campus. In the context of the topic of race and racism, learning about the experiences of White people along with experiences of people of color interrupts the idea that only people of color have a race or are the only people who can contribute to conversations about the topic.

- Across both contexts, stories seemed to have even more impact when participants had a relationship with the storyteller (i.e., hearing their instructor on the panels or learning from peers). This suggests that time spent allowing students to share their experiences with one another in class is valuable and meaningful for learning. It also supports the inclusion of students' instructors on panels and having facilitators share stories in IGDs
- Across both contexts, hearing narratives from individuals from privileged and targeted social groups about times when they have taken action for social justice (what Bell and Roberts [2010] term "resistance stories" [p. 2310]) seems to hold particular power for students, offers them hope, and gives them a model of what action toward social change can look like. Social justice educators should intentionally bring these types of stories and experiences in into social diversity courses through panels on taking action or intentional storytelling by instructors as powerful supplements to course readings and conceptual organizers.
- The findings of this study support other studies that have suggested that the intimacy or level of risk-taking that students (or panelists) are willing to engage in when sharing stories seems to be a factor in whether students remember and learn from

their stories (Jehangir, 2010; Yeakley, 1998). The present study found that participants recall and describe stories in which the storyteller expresses emotions (e.g., through crying or exhibiting anger) or are about "taboo" topics or things that are not typically shared in a classroom environment. This raises the question of how to create an atmosphere that might facilitate a "safe" context that enables this type of intimate sharing (Yeakley, 1998). Courses that require storytelling should be scaffolded, beginning with basic group-building activities and low-risk activities, so students can gradually get to know each other which may foster more intimate sharing later on. In addition, courses should offer instruction on skills, such as "active listening" so participants can be in a place to really hear what one another is saying (Bidol, 1986, p. 207). Dialogue facilitators should role model openness, risk-taking, and vulnerability because this type of higher-risk self-disclosure can facilitate students' willingness to be vulnerable and disclose information about themselves that they may be hesitant to share (Huang-Nissen, 1999). In the context of a multi-issue, social diversity course, panelists should be supported as they self-disclose identity-related stories.

Suggestions for Future Research

As a result of this study, some suggestions for future research have emerged and are highlighted below.

- Instead of using secondary data sources, future research projects could investigate similar research questions using data gathering methods (e.g., interview, focus groups, surveys) closely aligned with the questions guiding the study. Because

this study analyzed students' final papers and interview questions from other studies that were not intended to focus exclusively on the role of social identity-based personal storytelling in student learning, more intentional data gathering instruments could offer more rich information about the role of storytelling on student learning.

- Future studies could track more closely what aspects of the pedagogy and the curriculum as well as the qualities of instruction/facilitation (the container for learning) contribute to helping students make meaning of the social identity-based stories and accelerating student learning about social justice issues in diversity courses.
- Although some of the variations in findings across practice sites may be due to differences between the two courses, many of these differences might be explained by the differing types of information that can be gathered from a spoken interview as compared with a graded final paper. The very act of talking about one's experience with an interviewer who was not part of the course provided an additional opportunity for reflection, and the interview itself provides another opportunity for the participants to reflect upon and make additional meaning of their learning experience. Future research could look at both final papers and conduct interviews with the same group of participants following the course.
- This study suggests that it would be helpful to examine the use of various media, including personal storytelling through video clips or other forms of digital storytelling compared with the type of in-person storytelling on panels in the

multi-issue, social diversity course to see if differences exist between hearing something in person or hearing a story mediated by technology.

- Although the present study focused on the role of listening to personal stories about social identity-related experiences, future studies could look at the role of storytelling on both the teller of the story and on the listening.

Limitations of the Study

There were a few limitations of the present study that are important to acknowledge.

- I worked with a relatively small sample size (32 participants), all who chose to enroll in an IGD or social diversity course, so findings cannot be generalized to the larger population of college students. In addition to the small sample size, the number of participants within each racial/ethnic and gender category is even smaller (16 White students and 16 students of color), and students of color were analyzed as one group despite differences that exist among the experiences of Black, Latino, and Asian-identified students. Two of the students of color in the sample identified as biracial (one identified as White and Black, and the other identified as White and Colombian), and although they both self-identified as students of color, their experience may have been different from students whose identity fit more easily into the White/Student of color binary. Finally, the voices and perspectives of Native American and Arab American students were absent from the sample.

- Because I conducted secondary data analysis, analyzing data collected by other researchers (with other research questions in mind), I was not able to engage in all of the stages of constructivist grounded theory, including analyzing data throughout the data collection process and adjusting the interview questions as I underwent the process of analysis (Charmaz, 2006). I was also unable to conduct validity checks with the study participants or immerse myself in the research setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
- The two types of data collected offered different types of information, and only the final papers directly asked students what they thought the role of personal storytelling was in their learning. Because the data sources across sites were not aligned in either the questions asked or the format (i.e., graded final papers compared with interviews), it was difficult to make any meaningful comparisons across sites. Finally, the fact that the final paper in the multi-issue, social diversity course was worth 20% of students' grades and was evaluated by their course instructor may have influenced participants' honesty throughout the paper.
- A potential limitation related to both data sources included in this study is social desirability. Study A was based on graded final reflection papers, and although students in the multi-issue, social diversity course were reassured that their grade was not connected to agreeing with the instructors or the perspectives offered in the course, it could be possible that participants still tailored the responses to please the instructors. Study B was based on interviews with participants who had completed their IGD but had not yet received a grade for the course. Although the interviewers were not conducted by their facilitators and the participants were

reassured that the content of the interview would not influence participants' grades, it is possible that anxiety about grades or other social desirability factors, could have impacted students' responses.

- Another limitation is the potential bias of the researcher, particularly in regard to the multi-issue, social diversity course. Stories themselves are constructed by the storyteller, the listener, and the researcher's interpretations of the stories. I was one of the storytellers on the panels whose narrative participants referenced, and many of the other panelists were dear friends and colleagues whose stories I have heard throughout my 10 semesters while teaching the course. My familiarity with the stories (both my own and others) may have impacted the lens through which I interpreted participants' descriptions of the stories.

Concluding Remarks

When I embarked on this dissertation project, my goal was to better understand how my own and others' process of learning about race and racism through the entryway of a story would be similar and/or different for the students in these two diversity courses that I have been very activity involved in teaching, developing, and researching. At the end of (this part of) my journey, I am thoroughly convinced that, indeed, stories do seem to be a powerful accelerator of learning about topics, such as race/ethnicity and racism, that can be difficult to talk about and to learn about for students of all identities.

As discussed in the Introduction, I am concerned about the increasing level of disconnection, numbness, and isolation I have witnessed in all contexts of my life, and that is corroborated by current research (Marche, 2012; Turkle, 2011). We all seem to be

increasingly busy, burying our faces into our iPhones and behind our laptops rather than looking each other in the eye and noticing each other and what is going on in the world. The art of face-to-face conversation, with undivided attention and time to share and reflect on our stories seems to be disappearing. As a result, many college students (as well as adults) say they would rather text than talk, and many have not even had the chance to learn conversational skills, particularly about complex and challenging issues. As one young person, quoted in Sherry Turkle's (2012b) research poignantly stated, "Someday, someday, but certainly not now, I would like to learn how to have a conversation" (para.7).

And as we are at the cross-roads of increasing racial and economic re-segregation and discourses of colorblindness, learning to have these conversations becomes even more crucial across racial divides. Rather than solving these problems with the newest state-of-the art technology, I believe harnessing the power of storytelling, a "state-of-the heart technology," may be a vital pathway to move people to wake up, by connecting us to one another and to critical issues in profound ways (Guber, 2011, p. 80) in the context of social justice education courses.

To re-introduce the quote by Maya Angelou cited at the beginning of this dissertation, "When the storyteller tells the truth, she reminds us that human beings are more alike than unalike…a story is what it's like to be a human being—to be knocked down and to miraculously arise." (cited in De Vos et al., 2003, p. 1). When stories are shared in the classroom, the "other" is transformed into part of ourselves, "I-It" relationships become '"I-You" relations, and as humans share our stories and experiences of being knocked down, we can "miraculously arise" as a group (Buber, 1970). Although

participants in this study described hearing a number of stories of pain, they also described stories of triumph, and the combination of all of these stories provided hope, inspiration, and motivation to take action toward social change. At the conclusion of this dissertation project, I, too, am filled with hope as well as optimism in regard to the transformative power of personal stories about social identity-related experiences to make a real difference in creating a more loving, connected, and just world. I conclude with a quote by one of White male participants that filled me with hope and possibility. He said that through listening to stories in the context of his IGD course, he learned, "You can do anything you want to. You can go out and change the world, even if it is one person at a time."

APPENDIX A

MULTI-ISSUE, SOCIAL DIVERSITY COURSE FINAL REFLECTION PAPER GUIDELINES

The paper asks you to reflect on what you have learned in this class, what aspects of the course were most helpful for your learning, and what struck you as your major insights during the semester. Please organize your reflective paper using the topics numbered below, so that you can describe your major learnings for each of course topics and also describe the source for that learning – such as panelists at the all-section meetings, readings, class discussions, small groups, classroom activities, reflective papers or journals, films, or any other course component that was especially memorable for you. In this final reflective paper, you will also be asked to reflect on and integrate your learning(s) from various aspects of the course.

Please take care to answer each question, knowing that your answers will help the instructors better understand what works in this course and what facilitates your learning. This will help us in the future to keep what works and change what doesn't work for you, our students.

Papers will be graded on the following basis:

i. Coherent and well-organized writing

ii. Answer each question thoughtfully.

iii. APA Format - 12 point font, Times New Roman, Doubled Space, margins 1 inch

iv. 6-8 pages (plus an additional cover page).

v. Organize your responses around the 7 questions below. Number your responses #1 through #7. Do not repeat the questions on your paper, but number your responses so that your answers correspond to the original question.

#1. Hopes, Challenges and General Personal Impact of this Course:

(a) What were the hopes, concerns, or challenges you had when you first entered this course? Were your hopes met and your concerns or challenges addressed?

(b) What was it like for you to hear perspectives and experiences that differed from your own thinking and experiences? Please give examples.

#2. Key Conceptual Frameworks and Definitions (for example, Cycle of Socialization, Five Faces of Oppression, Social Identity):
(a) Which of the conceptual frameworks or definitions provided new insights to your learning about the topics in this course? (Explain why or how it provided insight.)

(b) Are there conceptual frameworks or definitions that you still find challenging or unclear? (If so, please explain the challenge or confusion.)

#3. This Semester's Course Topics: Racism, Classism, Religious Oppression, Ableism

(a) Your learnings about Racism: Describe at least one major new insight or area of understanding that you experienced this semester about Racism. Specify the sources of this new insight or area of understanding, such as panelists, films, readings, lectures, classroom discussions or activities, small groups, peer or instructor comments? Some other source?

(b) Your learnings about Classism: Describe at least one major new insight or area of understanding that you experienced this semester about Classism. Specify the source of this new insight or area of understanding, such as panelists, films, readings, lectures, classroom discussions or activities, small groups, peer or instructor comments? Some other source?

(c) Your learnings about Religious Oppression: Describe at least one major new insight or area of understanding that you experienced this semester about Religious Oppression. Specify the source of this new insight or area of understanding, such as panelists, films, readings, lectures, classroom discussions or activities, small groups, peer or instructor comments? Some other source?

(d) Your learnings about Ableism: Describe at least one major new insight or area of understanding that you experienced this semester about Ableism. Specify the source of this new insight or area of understanding, such as panelists, films, readings, classroom discussions or activities, small groups, peer or instructor comments? Some other source?

#4. Your Learning from the Experiences of Peers, Panelists, and Instructors:

(a) Describe any experiences or anecdotes or personal examples that came from one of your classmates, the instructor, or the panelists that pushed your learning edges and/or provided new insight or information.

(b) What were your overall responses to the panels and panelists on the major course topics, Racism, Classism, Religious Oppression, and Ableism. Please be as specific as possible.

(c) Was there any one story that stays with you still and seems especially memorable? Say a bit about the story and the panel to help identify it.

(d) In what specific ways do you think that the personal stories and experiences told by the panelists provided new learnings or insights for you about the topics? Or challenged and raised questions for you about the topics? Please be specific in either case or both cases.

#5. Your Social Group Identity:

(a) Select one of your social identities and discuss what new insights you had about that identity this semester. In your response, be sure to clarify the status of this social identity – is it a dominant or subordinate identity, agent or target?

(b) What aspects of this course (for example, readings, panelists, etc.) provided the best information or insight for you about your social identity?

(c) Based on your understanding of this identity, what connections do you now make between the overall systems of privilege and disadvantage and your own identity and experiences?

#6. Everyday examples and action:

(a) What examples of the issues covered this semester have you seen outside of the classroom (i.e., on campus, in your interactions with friends, in the settings)? Please give one example and explain how this situation related to what you learned in this class.
(b) Have you noticed any opportunities this semester to take action? If so, explain what you did, thought, and/or felt. If not, explain why you didn't take action? Please give a specific example of a situation in which you could have taken action – or did take action.
(c) Please give at least one specific example of how any of the course topics you studied this semester will affect the choices you make in the future, after you graduate, in future family, workplace, career, or some other aspect of your future life. Please be as specific as you can.
(d) What do you think you would need to be able to apply what you've learned to your everyday life (e.g., more knowledge, better interpersonal skills, support, empathy)? Please be as specific as you can.

#7. Recommendations to the Instructors for this Future Classes:

What changes would you make in this course to enhance the learning of future students in <title of course>? What would you keep the same? Please be as specific as you can.

APPENDIX B

RACE/ETHNICITY DIALOGUE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (MIGR, 2008)

MIGR RACE/ETH. Individual Interview Protocol 21-Nov-06

Background information for the Interviewer

The main purpose of our interview protocol is to explore thoughts and feelings related to specific participants' experiences in the dialogue group. Individual interviews will take approximately one hour.

We are particularly interested in identifying some of the emotional processes (e.g., empathy, anxiety) associated with sharing and listening to personal experiences and exploring disagreements and/or conflict in the dialogue group.

The main topics covered by our interview protocol are:

A. COURSE IMPACT: Amount and reasons for impact, negative and positive experiences in the dialogue

B. SOCIAL IDENTITIES: Social identities made salient in the IGD experience and feelings about having a particular identity in the dialogue

C. ENGAGEMENT: The extent to which students are engaged – verbally, listening, thinking, feeling – in the dialogue process

D. EMPATHY: Developing the capacity for empathy for the experiences shared by members of the other social identity group and by members of the student's own social identity group

E. COMMUNICATION: Interacting and being comfortable/uncomfortable with members of the other social identity group and the student's own identity group

F. POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND STEREOTYPES: Developing awareness of inequalities and explanations for it.

G. DISAGREEMENT, DIFFERENCES, AND CONFLICTS: Perceiving conflicts in the dialogue group and emotions associated with the expression of conflict in the group

H. WORKING ACROSS DIFFERENCES: Developing the capacity for working across differences

Part I: Introduction
Greet student by first name and introduce yourself.

Interviewer Opening Statement (in your own words)

Thank you for coming today and agreeing to be interviewed for the dialogue research study. You may know that this interview is part of a larger research study on intergroup dialogues on several campuses around the country. Because our campus is part of this national study of intergroup dialogues, you and the other students in your class will be interviewed, along with other students around the country who participated in a dialogue this year, using the same set of questions that you will be answering today. Your interview will be part of the data that will be used for the study, which will ultimately help us to better understand what the dialogue experience is like for different students, what the students take away from their dialogue experience, and how we can potentially improve or expand the offering of dialogue classes across different campuses.

This interview will take 50 minutes to an hour to complete.

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers to the questions in this interview, because the questions ask about your personal experience in the dialogue class. Please also know that we are not just looking for the "good" answers and don't want you to feel like you should say only positive things. We are interested in learning about the whole range of experiences that people have in intergroup dialogue, including the good and the not so good. It is most important that we understand your dialogue experience as completely and accurately as we can. Therefore, it is essential that you feel free to be completely honest in this interview.

Your honesty and willingness to be specific and detailed in your answers would be most appreciated.

I want to reassure you that your grade in the class or how you will be evaluated will not be impacted in any way by how you answer the questions in this interview. No one who was connected to your dialogue class as a facilitator, instructor, or program administrator will have access to your answers before your grade is submitted. Your confidentiality will be maintained, and your identity will be protected by having your name and other identifying information removed from any documents produced from this research. No names will ever be attached to any of the interview transcripts or to any quotes from the interviews that may be used by the research to illustrate the different types of dialogue experiences people have. Therefore, your responses to this interview will remain completely anonymous throughout the research process.

To help ensure that your responses remain confidential and anonymous, your facilitators and instructor are staying out of the interview process. I will make sure that your final paper is given to your instructor, but I will not discuss your interview with anyone, because I have also committed to keep all the interviews I do completely confidential.

(Insert review of consent form issues – need to tape record, freedom to stop interview, not answer questions, etc., here)
Ready to begin?

A. OVERALL IMPACT

Part II: Interview

Q1.You just finished taking the dialogue course. Please take a moment to think about how much impact it had on you.

a. Here is a scale of how much of an impact the class had on you, with 1 being no impact and 7 being a great impact. Where would you place your self on the scale (scale printed on an index card)?

123456 7

Little or No impact

b.

Great impact

Tell us more about what the [number participant indicated] means to you?

B. SOCIAL IDENTITIES

Q2. A good portion of this course focused on social identities. a. So in terms of race and gender how did you identify yourself in this class?

BE SURE TO FOCUS RESPONSES TOWARD THE IDENTITY OF THE CLASS THE PARTICIPANT TOOK. (While they can identify by both gender and race, we are most interested in their experience as and relating to gender in the gender dialogue.)

b. As an/a _____ [race or gender identity given in response to 3a.], can you tell me what being in the [GENDER] dialogue was like for you? Please give me an example.

PROBE (if not answered in b.) How did you feel emotionally about being a _____ in this dialogue?

PROBE (if not answered above) Tell me more about why you felt this way?

MIGR RACE/ETH. Individual Interview Protocol 21-Nov-06

C. ENGAGEMENT

Q3.Now we are going to talk about how engaged you felt in your dialogues.

a. Please describe a time when you felt you were really into the dialogue (very engaged, fully present)?

PROBES: If necessary, ask for more details about the moment. • What happened? • What was going on?

i. What were your emotional feelings about this?

ii. What was going on in the group that made it possible for you to be "engaged" at that time?

b. Were there times in the dialogues when you were not as engaged or into the dialogue?

If yes,

- What happened?

- What was going on?

i. How did you feel about this?

ii. What was going on in the group that made it that way?

D. EMPATHY

Q4.During the dialogue you had a chance to hear other people share personal experiences, stories, and testimonials.

a. Please give an example of a time when someone from the other social identity group shared an experience that had an impact on you. What was their story?

i. What kinds of feelings came up for you when you heard the story or experiences?

b. Please give an example of a time when someone from your own social identity group shared an experience that had an impact on you. What was their story?

i. What kinds of feelings came up for you when you heard the story or experiences?

E. COMMUNICATION

Q5.Now, let's turn to *communication and interaction with others in the dialogue group:*

a. As you look back on your dialogue group, how easy or difficult was it for you to talk about your reactions or feelings in the group?

If mostly easy, ask: What was it about your dialogue group that helped you be able to share?

* If mostly difficult, ask: What was it about your dialogue group that made it difficult to share?
b. Did your dialogue experience have an impact on how you felt about people from the other identity group? (e.g., more or less comfortable, etc.)

c.

i. Please describe a particular incident that caused you to feel this way. PROBES

* What happened? * What was going on?

d. How about with your own group? Did your dialogue experience have an impact on how you felt about people from your own identity group? (e.g., more or less comfortable, etc.)

i. Please describe a particular incident that caused you to feel this way. PROBES

* What happened? * What was going on?

F. POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND STEREOTYPES

Q6.Part of the dialogue focused on how power, privilege, and oppression affect our lives.

a. Did your dialogue experience affect your thinking and feelings about power, privilege, and oppression?

* If yes, in what ways?

i. Any specific instances or examples?

ii. How did you feel about that?

PROBE: Why did you feel that way?

* If no, can you tell me more about why that is?

__ __ _____
Q7.Many people learn in the dialogue about attitudes and stereotypes that they have about the other identity group.

a. Please describe something that happened in your dialogue that caused you to rethink your attitudes and stereotypes about _____ [the other group]?

* If they described an example, in what ways were your attitudes and stereotypes affected?

* If they could not describe an example, can you tell me more about why that is?

G. DISAGREEMENT, DIFFERENCES, OR CONFLICT IN THE DIALOGUE

IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE STUDENTS MAY ALREADY HAVE TALKED ABOUT THIS IN RESPONSE TO EARLIER QUESTIONS. SO YOU CAN ASK FOR ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OR PROBE MORE INTO WHAT THEY HAVE SHARED.

Q8.Many dialogues bring up differences and conflicts among the participants.

a. As you look back at your interactions in the dialogue group, describe an example of a difference that led to a disagreement or conflict.

i. How did you participate? Respond? React? i. How did you feel when this happened? (GET TO EMOTION) iii. Were you able to share your feelings with the group?

* If yes, what helped you * If not, what made it difficult to do do that?

ii. How did your identity as a _____ (in the gender dialogue) play a role in how you responded to the disagreement in the dialogue?

iii. As you reflect back on this conflict, how do you think it affected the dynamics of the group?

PROBE: If the participant can think of NO disagreement or conflict in the group, ask: - Why do you think that no differences or conflict surfaced in the group?

- If there had been a disagreement and conflict, what would that have looked like for you?

- What could have been different in your group to allow for more disagreements and conflicts?

H. SKILLS IN WORKING ACROSS DIFFERENCES

Q9. Many participants talk about learning specific skills in intergroup dialogue to work with people different from themselves.

a. What did you learn in the dialogue or your ICP about working with people from different identity groups?

PROBE (if not answered in a): What are TWO specific skills that you have learned or sharpened about working across differences? What in the dialogue process helped you gain those skills?

PROBE (if not answered in a): How have you applied those skills in the dialogue?

b. How do you see yourself applying these skills outside the dialogue group?

Part III: Closure and Closing Comments

It is now time to wrap up this interview. Before we close, was there anything else about your dialogue experience that you wanted to discuss that we didn't get to talk about? Thank you.

Thank you again for your participation is this interview and for sharing your dialogue experience with me today. I want to reassure you again that your responses will be kept completely confidential and anonymous and that your name will never be attached to any of your responses. If you have questions about the research study, you can call or email [insert name], the Director of the Intergroup Dialogue Program on this campus to find out more. Thank you again for your time.

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR RACE/ETHNICITY DIALOGUE INTERVIEWS

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

(MIGR, 2008, p. 60-61)

A Study of Campus Multicultural Attitudes and Experiences

I am being asked to participate in a study of campus multicultural attitudes and experiences. The purpose of the project is to assess *if* multicultural classes and campus experiences affect students (both positively and negatively) and *how* these effects are produced. This project is being conducted by the University of Michigan, and eight other participating institutions (University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts, University of Washington, Arizona State University, University of Texas at Austin, University of California at San Diego, Occidental College, and Syracuse University).

I am being asked to:

1) Participate in an audio-taped individual interview conducted by a member of the research staff for one hour outside of class, for which I will be paid $15.00.

I understand that:

2) My participation in this research is completely voluntary, and I can withdraw my consent at any time. If there is a question in the interview that I don't want to answer, I may skip that question.

3) I certify that I am 18 years old.

4) Potential individual benefits, beyond those of participating in the course, are that I will be able to reflect about the course and campus experiences in a comprehensive way after taking the course. In terms of societal benefits, I will also contribute to advancing our knowledge of the best ways to address diversity on college campuses. The study might benefit undergraduate students as a whole by determining the positive ways in which the potential of diversity can be tapped for its educational value and to prepare students for a multicultural society.

5) My answers to the interview questions will be kept strictly confidential. This means that my name will not appear on the interview tape or transcript. The information I give will not be connected with my name in research reports. The reports will present information in summary form that will not identify any individual. No one other than the research staff will have access (for coding purposes) to my interview.

6) The individual interview will be audio-taped. The audio-tape will be transcribed and

the tape destroyed after transcription. The information I give will not be connected with my name in data analysis or follow-up research reports. The transcriptions will be coded for content and process themes, and my name will not be used.

7) There are no known risks associated with participation in the research project.

8) I may ask questions about this study at any time and can expect truthful answers. I can ask the University of Michigan staff member who gives me the survey or call the project office to speak to Dr. Kelly Maxwell @ 936-1975.

9) Should I have questions regarding my rights as a participant in research, I can contact: Institutional Review Board Kate Keever 540 East Liberty Street, Suite _0_ Ann Arbor, MI 48104-__10 734-936-0933 email:irbhsbs@umich.edu

10) I will be given a copy of this form after I have signed it. This consent form and contact sheet will be kept in a file separate from the questionnaires. Only the research staff will have access to the consent form and the contact sheet.

PLEASE SIGN HERE PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME

_____

_____ DATE:

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR MULTI-ISSUE, SOCIAL DIVERSITY COURSE

Student Release to use Course-Based Writing for [Gen. Ed.] Study
(Fall semester, 2012)

To Students in [Gen. Ed.], Fall 2012:

The [Gen. Ed.] instructors and I are in the process of gathering written information from you, our students, to help us improve [Gen. Ed.] for students in the future. This information from you will tell us what aspects of the course are especially useful to you as students. It will also help us understand your learning process in this course so that we can make it even more effective for you and for others. This information will also help us to defend the idea of a small, interactive course format (no more than 30 students) for General Education "diversity" courses (if you think that's a good idea) as distinct from large lectures with weekly discussions. So there are many ways in which information from you will help us to support and to improve this course. And we believe that you, as our students, are the best source for this kind of information and reflection.

We are asking your permission to use writing assignments that you have given us during this semester – either Reflective Essays or other assignments in which you write about your learning in the course. We will give you assignments that ask things, such as What were the most positive experiences you had in this course or What worked for you (or didn't work for you) in the course content or course activities?

We can assure you that we will maintain your confidentiality and anonymity if we use your writing for our study. Nothing that we use will have personal identifiers that link back to you or any specific students in our classes. We can also assure you that your willingness to permit us to use your written work for our study will have absolutely no influence on your final grade for the course.

If you are willing to let us use your writing, your name and any identifiers will be removed from that writing so that it will be remain anonymous and your role will not be known.
Please contact me directly if you have any questions [instructor's email address]

Course Director, [name, title]

If you agree to let us use your writing for our study of [Gen. Ed.] please sign below:

I, _____ (name) permit the [Gen. Ed.] Course Director, [name] and my course instructor to use my reflective writing about [Gen. Ed.] in their study of the effectiveness of [Gen. Ed.] content and pedagogy. _____ (date)

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