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AN ENDARKENED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO PEER CO-CURRICULAR DIALOGUE FACILITATION TRAINING

Amari L. Boyd
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AN ENDARKENED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO PEER CO-CURRICULAR DIALOGUE FACILITATION TRAINING

A Dissertation Presented

by

AMARI L. BOYD

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

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Social Justice Education
An Endarkened Autoethnographic Approach to Peer Co-curricular Dialogue Facilitation Training

A Dissertation Presented

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated the matriarchs of my family: Melba Grace Womack, Sarah Corinne Spears, Valeria Lee Rodriguez, Marilyn Womack, Lily Boyd, and Ronda Harding-Boyd.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not be possible without my community, family, and committee. I want to give a special shout out to my mom. She’s the one who gave me the tools and the advice to just keep going with this dissertation, even when I wanted to give up, as well as my grandparents and my dad, who have always been my permanent cheerleaders. I love you all. I want to give a special shout out to my Massachusetts community, especially Nina, Angie, Leigh, Darius, Ceci, Sungha, and Melise. Ya’ll know who you are, but ya’ll have helped make me a better practitioner, a better scholar, and a better friend. Thank you is an understatement. Thank you to my partner, Suba, who’s been a complete rockstar in supporting me dissertating through a whole global chicken panini. I want to also thank Professor Ximena Zúñiga for bringing me to UMass, and it’s been an honor to be able to facilitate, present, and research alongside a legend. Finally, I want to thank my dissertation committee: Dr. Jamila Lyiscott, Dr. Laura Valdiviezo, and Dr. Ezekiel Kimball for affirming and helping me push the scope of my work.
ABSTRACT

AN ENDAKENTED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO PEER CO-CURRICULAR DIALOGUE FACILITATION TRAINING

MAY 2022

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Directed by Assistant Professor Jamila Lyiscott

This dissertation is a qualitative study drawing on endarkened feminist epistemology (Dillard, 2000, autoethnography (Holman-Jones et al., 2013), and Blackgirl autoethnography (Boylorn, 2016), each of which challenges the traditional roles between researchers and the researched, educators and students, and in the case of this study, dialogue facilitators in-training, and their dialogue facilitation educator. The purpose of this study was to capture the ways in which six Peer Dialogue Facilitators (PDFs) and me, a Black woman and facilitation educator, perceive ourselves as facilitators of color and navigate facilitation obstacles amid our new global pandemic reality. This study utilized group interviews with the PDFs while using critical auto-interviewing (Boufoy-Bastick, 2004) for myself, approximately one year after the conclusion of the peer dialogue facilitation training program. The group interview protocol incorporated an assemblage (Rodriguez et al., 2017) of life notes or “narrative representations through letters, stories, journal entries, reflections, poetry, music, and other artful forms” (Dillard,
2000, p. 664) developed by me and the PDFs during the facilitation training program to capture and respond to the collective wisdom developed by the PDFs and me. This study invites readers to reimagine the possibilities of dialogue facilitation training as a complex interdependent process in developing the facilitation skills of both facilitators in training and facilitator educators.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2022, the world is still on fire. After enduring three years of a global pandemic that has both literally and metaphorically torn families apart, four years of a fascist presidential administration leaving a rapidly changing and volatile political landscape (Logan et al., 2017), a resurgence in attacks against teaching critical race theory (Ray & Gibbons, 2021), and the most amount of hate crimes in 12 years (Hernandez, 2021) there is still an urgent need to learn how to facilitate conversations across difference in the United States. Since colleges and universities are microcosms of national socio-political climates, the chaos happening at the domestic level inevitably permeates campuses across the nation. Programs, like Intergroup Dialogue (IGD), have been on college and university campuses since 1988 to address the manifestation of socio-political issues around justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education settings (Ford, 2017; Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001; Zúñiga et al., 2007; Zúñiga, Lopez et al., 2012). The learning objectives and outcomes for IGD are still relevant since it emphasizes increased competencies on the connections between social identities, power, privilege, and oppression at the micro, meso, and macro levels (Ford, 2017; Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001; Zúñiga et al., 2007; Zúñiga, Lopez et al., 2012). However, as the discourse of social justice education continues to evolve beyond diversity and inclusion and towards sustainable transformational change, it is also important that we continue to problematize the practice of IGD to evolve with those changes. Much of the literature on dialogue facilitation in higher education focuses on dialogue participant experiences (Zúñiga et al., 2007; Zúñiga, Lopez et al., 2012; Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001), curricular peer facilitation
models (Ford, 2017) and graduate facilitation models (Zúñiga, Kachwaha et al., 2012). However, there are more dialogue opportunities to explore outside of classrooms, such as co-curricular dialogue programs and their facilitator training, if we want to increase the accessibility of dialogue programs outside of formal classroom spaces and address the urgency of learning to facilitate issues related to the socio-political climate. Another vital perspective that is missing from IGD research is that of IGD facilitation educators, especially those of color. Kelly et al. (forthcoming, 2022) addressed this gap in their new article, “Braids and Bridges: A Critical Collaborative Autoethnography of Racially Minoritized Women Teaching Intergroup Dialogue”; however, there is still limited information about the experiences of dialogue facilitation educators of color, especially Black women. The subjugated knowledges that can come from this constituent of facilitation educators may “foster new angles of vision on oppression” (Collins, 2002, p. 11), and provide us with a possibility to reimagine dialogue facilitation work as a sustainable liberatory practice for everyone, especially Black women.

**A Life Note on Dialogue**

This section will provide an overview of my personal and academic journey in social justice education and IGD. The purpose of this section is to situate myself in this study by contextualizing my desire to problematize dialogue facilitation research and practice to explicitly include the voices of Black women.

From the first day of preschool until the last day of high school, my teachers, academic texts, and peers centered whiteness. As an act of intergenerational survival, I was conditioned to adhere to the respectability politics of my Black middle-class family,
at the cost of being ignorant of contemporary manifestations of racism. Ignorance was bliss until my White high school Latin teacher said, “Don’t say that you sound like a lower-class Black person” in response to a student saying, “My bad.” My colorblind world shattered and pushed me to realize I did not have the language or the support system to succeed in an institution that was never meant for me to be in. I didn’t find that language and support system until college when I participated in a program through the Sociology Department called Intergroup Dialogue (IGD). As a dialogue participant, I watched my peer co-facilitators in awe, as they masterfully facilitated challenging conversations on race and racism by infusing pop culture, critical social theory, and their own personal stories. In graduate school I learned, practiced, and researched dialogue facilitation to build on the foundational critical literacy practices I learned as an undergraduate dialogue participant to disrupt and heal from the manifestations of oppression that occurred in my everyday life.

During my doctoral program, I co-facilitated a weekend workshop on race and racism for graduate students, staff, and faculty with very seasoned dialogue facilitators, one of which was a trailblazing scholar in IGD. As excited as I was to co-facilitate with some of the greats, it was unsettling to be the youngest and only Black person in a workshop about race and racism that prided itself on incorporating the works of bell hooks, the Combahee River Collective, and Angela Davis. The space embodied aspects of what Collins (2002) calls *symbolic inclusion* in which “the texts of Black women writers are welcome in the multicultural classroom while actual Black women are not” (p. 6). Below is a glimpse of how I processed this experience:

I hesitated where to sit when I entered the classroom for the weekend workshop. I saw mostly white faces seated around seven long desks. I landed in a seat next to an
acquaintance from my doctoral program; an unshaven white man wearing his usual uniform of a flannel shirt, ripped jeans, and hiking boots. I found his presence as a potential foreshadow to how the weekend workshop could go: campy and well-meaning with surface level conversations about race and racism. The latter prediction made me cringe, not only because it would be the antithesis of my facilitation team’s workshop objectives but also illustrated the cumulative impact of these acts of symbolic inclusion in the name of social justice education. My great grandmother used to say, “You can’t take tea for the fever” to address the inadequacy of doing the bare minimum to tackle deeper issues. Centering the voices of Black women and other historically marginalized groups in social justice education curricula is not enough to address the absence of Black facilitators and participants in these spaces.

“I came to theory because I was hurting” (hooks, 1994, p. 59), and I was hurting because I didn’t feel seen. I was not seen when my Latin teacher made those racist remarks and so I turned to critical social theories that promote the emancipatory function of knowledge by providing a language of critique on institutional and conceptual dilemmas that lead to domination or oppression (Leonardo, 2004) and IGD where my experiences as a Black woman were validated. I was inspired to become a dialogue facilitator to support historically marginalized students like myself in feeling seen in higher education settings. After eight years of prioritizing students to feel seen through dialogue, I neglected the importance of understanding and problematizing my evolving roles and experiences as a Black woman dialogue facilitator and facilitation education and started back where I started: feeling unseen. Patricia Hill Collins (2002) asked us, “Why are African American women and our ideas not known and not believed in?” (p. 3), and I would specifically like to know why this is the case in dialogue facilitation? Why do I not see Black women in the literature on dialogue facilitators? Why do I not see literature on dialogue facilitation educators? Why do I not see us in the very dialogue spaces where I started my social justice education journey? So, I went back to theory, specifically endarkened feminist epistemology (Dillard, 2000) and Blackgirl autoethnography
(Boylorn, 2016) because I was hurting, not feeling seen, and wanted to reimagine what IGD research would look like if I centered my Black body, experiences, and knowledge.

**Purpose Statement**

I designed this study to center the experiences of facilitators of color and Black women facilitator educators by capturing the ways in which six Peer Dialogue Facilitators (PDFs) and me, a Black woman facilitation educator, perceive ourselves as facilitators of color, and navigate obstacles in our facilitation in our new global pandemic reality. This study utilizes group interviews with the PDFs approximately one year after the conclusion of the peer dialogue facilitation training program, in addition to reviewing *life notes* or “narrative representations through letters, stories, journal entries, reflections, poetry, music, and other artful forms” (Dillard, 2000, p. 664) developed by me and the PDFs during the facilitation training program. These *life notes* were used to capture the collective wisdom developed by the PDFs and me to identify the areas of growth and the possibilities of dialogue facilitation training by situating ourselves and our experiences at the center of dialogue facilitation training to emphasize the voices that are often marginalized in IGD research and praxis.

**Significance of Study**

This study illustrates the ways in which a co-curricular peer dialogue facilitator training program incorporates autoethnography and endarkened feminist epistemology as transformative critical pedagogies for both PDFs and facilitation educators. This study reimagines how we educate, facilitate, and liberate educational research by embracing
subjugated knowledges, risk, reciprocity, and vulnerability. More specifically, embracing subjugated knowledges, risk, reciprocity, and vulnerability are not only core values that develop connections among dialogue participants but also are helpful in cultivating an entry point in exploring the experiences of facilitator trainees of color and my own as a Black facilitator educator in humanizing ways.

**Research Question**

Based on my conceptual frameworks, review of the relevant literature, and my own lived experience, I have arrived at the following research questions to explore the roles of risk, reciprocity, and vulnerability in peer dialogue facilitation training:

1. How do PDFs and their facilitation educator perceive their experiences as facilitators of color one year after their inaugural peer dialogue facilitation training program?

2. How do PDFs and their facilitation educator inform, if at all, each other’s facilitation development after the inaugural peer dialogue facilitation training program?

**Context of Study**

During my role as the Dialogue Coordinator at Panorama College¹, a small selective private liberal arts college in New England, from October 2019 to March 2020, I helped develop a co-curricular peer dialogue facilitator training program. My role as the Dialogue Coordinator was in collaboration with the resource center’s team at Panorama

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¹ To comply with IRB requests, this is a pseudonym for the research site.
College. Up to this point, my colleagues affiliated with the resource centers, and I would coordinate programs through which we facilitated dialogic conversations across differences among students, staff, and faculty. In response to an organizational shift into the Office Student Affairs, we adopted a peer facilitation model not only because dialogue programming would be developed for and facilitated by undergraduate students, but also because I could personally attest to the profound impact peer facilitators can have on undergraduates’ understanding of power, privilege, and oppression, which was the mission of the resource center’s team. I was a participant in a peer-facilitated dialogue course at Skidmore College. Watching my peer facilitators navigate complex group dynamics and encourage critical dialogue became a possibility model of the type of social justice work I could do as a young adult. I dedicated my graduate career to learning these dialogue facilitation skills and created spaces in higher education settings in which historically marginalized students, especially students of color, can show up authentically to be challenged and supported through dialogue programming. Incorporating a peer facilitation model in our reconceptualization of the dialogue programming at Panorama College was also necessary because in the span of 18 years, the percentage of students of color went from 34% in 2003 to 45% in 2021 (Jaschik, 2021). Creating infrastructures of support to increase the retention of these students of color needed to take place at curricular and co-curricular levels and creating dialogue programs facilitated by and for students of color was one way for students of color to feel seen on that historically White campus.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview of Chapter

As I detailed in the Introduction Chapter, the purpose of this study was to capture the ways in which six undergraduate facilitators in-training and I, as their facilitation educator, perceived ourselves as facilitators of color, and navigated obstacles in our facilitation in our new global pandemic reality. The study is grounded in four bodies of literature, which will be reviewed in this chapter: (a) Black Radical Feminism, (b) Endarkened Feminist Epistemology, (c) Pedagogy of vulnerability, and (d) Dialogue theories and approaches. I turned to these bodies of literature because of the ways in which they embrace subjugated knowledges, risk, reciprocity, and vulnerability in praxis. The literature review captures the conceptual and pedagogical frameworks that informed my research on and the development of the co-curricular peer dialogue facilitator training program at Panorama College. The purpose of this section is to highlight the conceptual frameworks that guided the development, implementation, and evaluation of this study. These conceptual frameworks include Black Radical Feminism, endarkened feminist epistemology, and pedagogy of vulnerability. I synthesized each conceptual framework and provide the rationale for its implementation in the study.

Black Radical Feminism

Black Radical Feminism is a part of my conceptual framework as it provides language to describe experiences and complex dynamics, I already knew to be true because of my identity and socialization as a Black woman. I decided to incorporate
Black Radical Feminism as a core framework for this study because of its rudimentary utility in the formation of other contemporary alternative paradigms that also center the voices and subjugated knowledges of Black women, such as womanism (Walker, 1983). For example, Alice Walker’s first definition of womanist was “a black feminist or feminist of color” (p. xi). Walker’s use of Black feminism is foundational in her conceptualization of womanism and illustrates the scope of Black feminism’s influence in providing language to center and theorize on the subjugated knowledges of Black women.

Black radical feminism often situated as an example of standpoint theory in which, “all knowledge is constructed in a specific matrix of physical location, history, culture, and interests, and that these matrices change in configuration from one location to another” (Sprague, 2005, p. 41). I am using Black Radical Feminism as an umbrella term to describe a “delineating ideology' to expose the discursive practices of oppressive regimes” (Brown, 2001, p. 44) and “speak specifically to the oppression of black women and where they exist in relation to nationalism, imperialism, race, class, sexual orientation, and state violence (p. 44). Kimberle Crenshaw (2018) expanded on this delineating ideology in her intersectionality framework which serves as,

A metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage sometimes compound themselves and they create obstacles that often are not understood within conventional ways of thinking about anti-racism or feminism or whatever social justice advocacy structures we have (Crenshaw, 2018, pp. 18-30).

Brown and Crenshaw told us that the significance in centering Black women in discourses on systemic oppression in the United States is necessary because Black
women are an embodiment of what Bakhtin (1981) and Buber (1970) theorized as the complex interdependent relationships among all living things, including oppression. Therefore, as long as Black women are oppressed, everyone is oppressed. The knowledge that comes from the unique positionality of Black women to critically interrogate the ways discourses on oppression can metaphorize in invisible, complex, and harmful ways.

Patricia Hill Collins (2002) affirmed the unique position of Black women as a discursive apparatus for critical social thought through the *outsider-within* framework she defined as “a peculiar marginality that stimulated a distinctive Black women’s perspective on a variety of themes” (p. 11) and can “foster new angles of vision on oppression” (p. 11). The *outsider-within* framework has also “encouraged many U.S. Black women to question the contradictions between dominant ideologies of American womanhood and U.S. Black women’s devalued status” (p. 11). The emic outsider-within knowledge of Black women then creates “the stimulus for crafting and passing subjugated knowledge” (Collins, 2002, p. 8-9). This case continues the Black Radical Feminist tradition of centering the subjugated knowledge of Black women as a vessel to reimagine how we educate, facilitate, and liberate dialogic approaches to social justice education as a means for transformational change. This requires us to look to the subjugated knowledge of the past and present to reimagine the future. Black Radical Feminism not only highlights the significance of centering the bodies and knowledges of Black women but also shapes how I show up when interacting with the PDFs as well as my observations and analyses later in the study.

_Endarkened Feminist Epistemology_
I embrace Cynthia Dillard’s (2000) endarkened feminist epistemology because it reimagines how we educate, facilitate, and liberate educational research by exposing the discursive practices of oppressive regimes perpetuated in said research (Brown, 2001). Endarkened feminist epistemology also calls for epistemological shifts as a means to create transformational change. Pulling from Packwood and Sikes’ (1996) metaphor of research as recipe, Dillard (2000) illustrates the oppressive discursive practices embedded in the qualitative commitment to detachment and objectivity as a form of legitimacy seen in the relationships between researcher and the researched:

The metaphor is that the process of research is to follow a recipe, and the myth is that this is the truth. These are illusions that researchers perpetuate. We perpetuate them by the way we present our final research texts and by the way we carefully delete the voice of the researcher, our own voice, from the text. (p. 336)

Dillard disrupted this research as recipe metaphor by arguing for “research as a responsibility, answerable and obligated to the very persons and communities being engaged in the inquiry” (p. 663). Dillard’s endarkened feminist epistemology embodies the latter through its call for a new metaphor in educational research, one that moves us away from detachment with participants and contexts and their use as ingredients in our research recipes and toward an epistemological position more appropriate for work within such communities. By challenging the traditional detachment between researcher and the researched, an endarkened feminist epistemology provides an epistemological shift that reimagines researcher-participant relationships as complex interdependent relationships through their emphasis on reciprocity. The epistemology shift creates an opportunity for the subjugated knowledge from Black Radical Feminist traditions to construct what this new relationship between researchers and researched can look like,
“[Endarkened epistemology] articulates how reality is known when based in the historical roots of global Black feminist thought and when understood within the context of reciprocity and relationship” (Okpalaoka & Dillard, 2011, p. 65). Okpalaoka and Dillard also pulled from Johnson-Bailey and Alfred’s (2006) notion of reciprocity who see reciprocity through dialogue as transformational teaching and learning that illustrates the ways endarkened feminist epistemology can also be applied to educator-student relationships. I will not only incorporate this conceptual framework in the development of my methods and findings chapters but implement it in the design of the Peer Dialogue Facilitator training at Panorama College.

Okpalaoka and Dillard (2011) discussed specific ways to apply an endarkened feminist epistemological approach to transformative critical pedagogies in teacher education. I believe these approaches may also be relevant to dialogue facilitator training since the connective tissue is educating educators. The application of endarkened epistemological approach highlights (1) the use of centering subjugated knowledge, (2) reimagining narratives as gifts instead of just as data, and (3) embracing risk-taking (Dillard, 2000).

The incorporation of centering subjugated knowledge when applying an endarkened feminist approach to transformative critical pedagogies in teacher education is derived from Black women’s experiences and “when shared and passed on, become the collective wisdom of Black women's experiences” (p. 678). Wisdom in this context is, “the importance of naming; telling healing stories; listening and connecting” (Dillard, 2000, p. 68) and when placed in the context of dialogue, the purpose of dialogue expands to not only building relationships across difference but also building a collective wisdom.
that celebrates the subjugated knowledge of the marginalized. An endarkened feminist approach to the narratives and counterstorytelling produced in critical pedagogical spaces reimagines them as more than data, but as gifts between educators and students that encourages reciprocity to “understand that when anyone offers us a glimpse into their pain, dreams, hopes, whatever… we should receive it with open hands, gently and honorable, and treasure it for the privilege it is” (Okpalaoka & Dillard, 2011, p. 68).

Dillard (2000) uses Bell-Scott’s (1994) concept of life notes to capture, “narrative representations through letters, stories, journal entries, reflections, poetry, music, and other artful forms” (Dillard, 2000, p. 664) because, “in this way, these narratives may be viewed as at least part of the ‘evidence of things not seen,’ demystifying African-American feminist ways of knowing, in moments of reflection, relation, and resistance (p. 664). Life notes are a way for researchers, participants, educators, and students to process the collective wisdom developing in a space. I incorporated life notes into my group interview protocol to highlight the collective wisdom created and implemented between myself and the PDFs.

The use of risk-taking in critical pedagogical spaces in teacher education is necessary in adopting an endarkened feminist approach because of the process of “naming our many circumstances and focusing on ourselves for a change” (Okpalaoka & Dillard, 2011, p. 69). Risk-taking in these spaces is significant because “it is a move away from fear, from holding back and instead towards an embrace of the emotionality and vulnerability of our unknowns.” (Okpalaoka & Dillard, 2011, p. 73). The process of risk-taking between researcher and researched as well as educators and students is another way to apply the endarkened feminist approach of reciprocity. The emphasis on
vulnerability inspired the incorporation of a third conceptual framework for this case study: pedagogy of vulnerability.

**Pedagogy of Vulnerability**

An endarkened feminist epistemological approach is not possible without a pedagogy of vulnerability. One of the major contributions to the Black Radical Feminist tradition is the Combahee River Collective Statement (1983), which introduced an early conceptualization of intersectionality and the term “identity politics.” However, what resonated the most with me in this statement was the following, “Black feminists often talk about their feelings of craziness before becoming conscious of the concepts of sexual politics, patriarchal rule and most importantly, feminism, the political analysis and practice that we women use to struggle against our oppression” (p. 211). The collective wisdom and vulnerability within that statement inspired me to look into the ways in which vulnerability is incorporated into pedagogical approaches to build on the reciprocal foundations of endarkened feminist epistemological approaches.

Edward J. Brantmeier (2013) defined pedagogy of vulnerability as “an approach to education that invites vulnerability and deepened learning through a process of self and mutual disclosure on the part of co-learners in the classroom” (p. 97). Brantmeier went on to say that the pedagogy of vulnerability is based on the premise to “share, co-learn, and admit you don’t know” (p. 97).

Brantmeier’s incorporation of co-learning within the pedagogy of vulnerability not only aligns with the epistemic shift called forth by Dillard (2000) that challenges the traditional relationships between researchers and researched/educators and students but
also described the core of my own pedagogical approach when working with the PDFs during the facilitator training program at Panorama College. Brantmeier (2013) alluded to his participant experience in an IGD program at James Madison University as an example of pedagogy of vulnerability when “facilitators were sharing their stories and opening their frames vulnerable to the rest of the group” (pp. 99-100).

Brantmeier’s (2013) framing of pedagogy of vulnerability also reflects Dillard’s (2000) call for research as responsibility through his incorporation of critical self-reflection in “positioning oneself as a co-learning when teaching requires much unlearning of cultural conditioning related to the teacher as knower of all” (p. 97). Brantmeier’s pedagogy of vulnerability also encourages educators and/or researchers to be mindful of the purpose and intention when sharing personal stories. “Do the stories advance student introspection and reflection, build trust and community in the classroom? Or do they come from work that the educator should be doing on himself/herself outside the classroom walls?” (p. 101). Brantmeier’s questions speak to the significance of educators practicing discernment when choosing to embrace vulnerability to further the learning processes of their students and even themselves, without projecting unprocessed trauma onto their students. Brantmeier’s reflection leads me to ask, “Are there spaces in teacher education programs or in alternative classroom spaces for educators and students to problematize vulnerability as a learning process to foster socially justice classroom spaces?”

An example of those alternative classroom spaces could be dialogues. I believe dialogues can be those alternative classroom spaces for that type of engagement to take place. Dialogues can be a unique hybrid of engaged pedagogy and pedagogy of
vulnerability by addressing traditional power dynamics between educators and students by reimagining the roles of educators as facilitators who guide learning processes among student participants, instead of just presenting data and concepts (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Dialogues may also create spaces for facilitators to problematize discernment, other facilitation skills, and critical self-reflection through a training practicum, which can provide an opportunity for Black women facilitators like myself to embrace an endarkened autoethnographic approach to facilitation and pedagogy. The next section will review conceptualizations of dialogue, variations of dialogue programs in higher education settings, variations of co-facilitation models, and facilitator training models.

**Dialogue**

This section highlights the roles and significance of dialogue facilitators, dialogue facilitator training models, and co-facilitation pairing models. This detailed background of dialogue contextualizes the discourses on dialogue to understand the ways in which my study calls for programmatic and epistemological shifts for Black women in similar facilitator roles to be seen in this work to further theorize, problematize, and actualize dialogue in higher education settings.

**What is Dialogue?**

There are myriad definitions of dialogue, but for this study, I will define it as a conversation that focuses on intentional and embodied engagement of participants with the goal of increased understanding through problematizing thoughts and actions (Romney, 2005). The *Building Blocks of Dialogue* framework (Zúñiga, 2016) provides an
overview of the defining characteristics of dialogue that includes active listening, respect, suspension of judgment, identifying assumptions and biases, voicing, reflection, and inquiry.

**Building Blocks of Dialogue**

Active listening is the practice of being present, listening attentively, and not letting ourselves get lost in our own internal reactions and listen to understand, not to respond (Weiler, 1994; Zúñiga, 2016). Suspension of judgment is the process of being aware of our own judgments and developing the ability to observe without evaluating (Zúñiga, 2016). Identifying assumptions and biases is the process of naming and recognizing our assumptions and biases, such as being aware of what we don’t notice or say because of assumptions (Zúñiga, 2016). Voicing is the process of speaking your own voice with intention, which may invite us to consider the following reflections, “What needs to be expressed now? What is my intention and purpose here?” (Zúñiga, 2016). Voicing helps us to be mindful of who may be taking up too much space, and who may benefit from taking up more space. Reflection and inquiry are the processes of asking questions from a place of curiosity and generating new questions based on our reflections and social standpoints (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998; Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994; Isaacs; 1999; Weiler, 1994; Zúñiga, 2016).

Dialogue is different from discussion and debate because of its emphasis on cultivating relationships between participants instead of proving legitimacy or correctness of viewpoints (Romney, 2005). For example, debate typically advocates for one perspective and intentionally searches for flaws in logic, judging others’ viewpoints as
inferior, and presents a rigid binary of “right” and “wrong” with the goal of “winning” the argument (Bohm, 1990; Teurfs & Gerard, 1993). Discussion typically involves the presentation of an idea, to seek answers, share information, problem solving, giving answers, to sell, persuade, enlist, and present goals (Bohm, 1990; Teurfs & Gerard, 1993). Discussion and dialogue often get conflated because most conversations include a hybrid of both dialogic and discussion-based communication styles (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998). However, dialogues typically do not push for a conclusion or a solution and emphasize the process of collecting and unpacking meanings from many different perspectives or creating shared meaning among many perspectives, whereas discussion pushes conversations toward closure and agreement on one perspective (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998).

**Legacies of Problematizing Dialogue**

This section is not a linear theoretical historicization of dialogue but instead an exploration of how dialogue has been theorized and problematized across time and space. In the spirit of dialogue, this ahistorical approach allows the collection and unpacking of dialogue among many perspectives without the expectation of coming to a singular conclusion but instead to create space to generate new perspectives from the views of many (Ellinor & Gerard, 1998).

Dialogue is not a contemporary phenomenon and dates back as far as 5th century BCE Athens through the Socratic method (Romney, 2005), and we also see dialogic approaches in Native American tribal councils, and through the spiritual practice of Quakers (Bohm, 1990; Huang-Nissen, 1999). Martin Buber’s (1970) work encourages us
to shift our understandings of dialogue beyond its utility to convey different experiences and toward the cultivation of relationships. We see this in Buber’s “I-Thou” dialogic principle where “Every It [a world of experience] is bounded by others; It exists only through being bounded by others” (p. 3), which suggests the existence of complex interdependent relationships between people, places, and things. Mikhail Bakhtin’s (1981) theory of dialogism takes a more pluralist approaching by challenging us to center “responsive understanding” of multiple truths, and the ways in which this shows up in power struggles.

We see a focus on dialogic concepts that emphasize the participatory characteristics in the field of education during the progressive education movement (1930s - 1950s) in John Dewey’s work. Dewey explored the relationship between education and democracy by encouraging educators to incorporate democratic values in their classrooms (Romney, 2005). These values looked like providing students with opportunities to work together, build on their own experiences to address real-life situations, and reflect critically about their experiences (Zúñiga, Lopez et al., 2012). Gordon Allport (1954) built on Dewey’s democratic pedagogy and Bakhtin’s analysis of power dynamics through his intergroup contact hypothesis. Allport argued if classrooms had, “individuals from dominant (‘majority’) social identity groups [and] were able to interact with members of non-dominant (‘minority’) social identity groups in an environment able to equalize asymmetrical relations under the right conditions, prejudice would be reduced” (Zúñiga Lopez et al., 2012, p. 4).

Paulo Freire (1970) expanded on Bakhtin’s and Allport’s incorporation of power dynamics within dialogic classroom spaces when he asked, “How can I dialogue if I start
from the premise that naming the world is the task of an elite that the presence of the people in history is a sign of deterioration, thus to be avoided? (p. 9). Freire started to reimagine dialogue as a process “founding itself upon love, humility and faith,” and became “a horizontal relationship” between students and educators (p. 91). Bohm’s (1990) work built on the democratic values of dialogue we see in Freire, Bakhtin, and Allport by taking it a step further by abandoning classroom structures altogether by “studying the flow of meaning in dialogues that were usually leaderless and without a specific agenda” (p. 8). Bohm also argued for “change through dialogue, and that a dialogue should last until change occurred” (p. 8). Bohm’s vision for dialogue aligns with Freire’s in its participatory nature and suggests dialogue may be a necessary step in the process of bringing about sustainable transformational change as it is an ongoing process that is not designed for closure, but for change.

We continue to see the evolution of dialogue as a pedagogical tool through bell hooks’ (2010) engaged pedagogy that challenges traditional roles between students and teachers by encouraging an interactive approach towards student engagement. hooks argued gaging the “emotional intelligence” and “awareness” between students and educators through daily introductions and reading/writing exercises that validates student experiences, creates an optimal learning environment. The outcomes for the latter exercises “acknowledge… the power of each students’ voice and creates space for everyone to speak when they have meaningful comments to make” (p. 21), which not only continues the participatory vision of Dewey, Allport, and Freire but also fosters students’ “emotional intelligence” and “awareness” to create an optimal and equitable learning environment for everyone. Patricia Hill Collins (2002) built on hooks’ engaged pedagogy and Allport’s intergroup contact hypothesis through a Black Feminist
standpoint theoretical perspective. Similar to Allport, Collins found intergroup contact between dominant and marginalized identities constructive in challenging oppressive power dynamics, and like Bakhtin and Buber, to foster empathic relationships. Collins added to hooks’ engaged pedagogy by focusing on the inherent knowledge and contributions from the margins, specifically from Black women.

Sustainable transformational change through dialogue may be an opportunity to incorporate the rhetorical inquiry of the Socratic method, Bakhtin’s willingness to understand multiple truths, Buber’s conceptualization of complex interdependent relationships, democratic pedagogies of Dewey, and Allport’s, Freire’s, hooks’, Collins’, and Bohm’s call for participatory action through dialogic pedagogies disrupt traditional, and albeit, oppressive dynamics between students and educators. One dialogue program that embodies many of these conceptual and theoretical legacies of dialogue in its design is Intergroup Relations also known as Intergroup Dialogue.
Intergroup Relations/Intergroup Dialogue

Intergroup Relations (IGR) is a US-recognized, curricular social justice education program that was founded at the University of Michigan in 1988 as a response to addressing racial tensions (Ford, 2017). The learning objectives of IGR is to increase competencies around conflict and inter (between)group and intra (within) group relations as well as social justice across social identities such as but not limited to race, gender, sexuality, class, (dis)ability, and nationality (Ford, 2017). IGR has been adopted by a myriad of colleges and universities throughout the US, and one variation is Intergroup Dialogue (IGD), which is a “facilitated, face-to-face encounter that aims to cultivate meaningful engagement between members of two or more social identity groups that have a history of conflict” (Ford, 2017, p. 6). For example, an IGD program may have a race-focused intergroup dialogue that is comprised of people of color (POC) and White people. Other IGD programs may have a race–focused intragroup dialogue with only POC, only White people, or only multiracial people (Ford, 2017; Ford & Malaney, 2012). The other components of IGD that make it different from traditional courses include, “engaged pedagogies that balance content and process knowledge” and the development of a “co-learning environment led by two trained peer [or graduate] facilitators” (Ford, 2017, p. 6) who reflect the identities of the targeted social identities of the dialogue. For example, for an intergroup dialogue on race, there may be one POC co-facilitator and one White co-facilitator. When student participants complete the IGD program, they will be able to “(1) explore their social identities and critically examine structural inequities, (2) develop meaningful cross-identity relationships, and (3) apply content and process learning to promote alliance building and social action” (Ford, 2017, p. 8). IGD programs
are typically comprised of 12-16 participants that meet weekly for a period of 10-14 weeks. Due to the curricular limitations at my research site, the dialogue program I developed at Panorama College is not an IGD program; however, it does draw heavily from IGD program design and learning objectives and will be referred to as a dialogue program throughout the study.

**Dialogue Facilitation**

Dialogue facilitators are responsible for supporting the learning processes of dialogue participants. Dialogue facilitators also occupy a liminal space between educator and participant by guiding the group into the intellectual and emotional spheres of social justice work (Ford, 2017). Dialogue facilitation requires a different type of labor as it not only requires emotional and intellectual guidance for participants but also for themselves. Facilitators are literally and metaphorically embodying the social justice practice they bring into dialogue spaces while managing and guiding their own learning processes. This metacognitive practice requires a different type of rigor that involves their total being—mind, body, and soul (Huang-Nissan, 1999). Therefore, facilitation trainings are paramount in the success of the facilitators and inevitably the success of the dialogue experience. The following section reviews research on dialogue facilitators, specifically IGD facilitators, the cofacilitator experience, and the variation of cofacilitator models. This section also reviews dialogue facilitation program designs, learning objectives, and learning outcomes.

**What is IGD Facilitation?**
What is facilitation and how is different from traditional teaching and instruction? Facilitation is “active, responsive guidance, not formal instruction ... [to encourage ... group members to develop their own processes and ways of gaining knowledge” (Zúñiga et al., 2007, p. 39). Facilitation is a tool to connect the personal and political through reflection and dialogue with the intention of mobilizing relationships for collaborative action (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011).

Facilitation arguably embraces an endarkened feminist epistemological approach by explicitly challenging traditional roles between students and educators through some formalized teaching and instruction by emphasizing that dialogue participants are educators and experts of their own experiences and realities (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). Some of the key components of facilitation include (1) guiding, not just teaching, (2) empowering, not just being empowered, and (3) attending to processes, not just procedures (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). When we think of guiding, not just teaching, as previously mentioned, facilitation is not formalized teaching or instruction but a guide that encourages a collaborative relationship of learning through reflection and dialogue with participants (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). This is seen in the horizontal relationship between facilitators and participants because facilitators are really "co participants, not experts; they learn as much, if not more, than participants in their group" (Zúñiga et al., 2007, p. 39) while being mindful that “their learning agenda does not compromise participants' learning” (p. 58). Due to the curricular limitations of my research site, the Peer Dialogue Facilitators (PDFs) I worked with are not IGD facilitators, but their training and learning objectives heavily draw from IGD facilitation training models.

**Research on IGD Facilitators and IGD Instructors**
Research on IGD facilitators typically focuses on curricular training programs for IGD facilitators as well as identifying facilitation approaches and skills during the dialogue. For example, in a 2011 study, 49 trained intergroup dialogue peer facilitators were interviewed to determine if their personal awareness about their social identities might have affected their dialogue facilitation approaches and behaviors (Maxwell, Chesler et al., 2011). One of the findings from this study revealed connections between facilitator credibility, their social identities, and critical reflective practice to support the learning processes of the dialogue participants and the facilitators (Maxwell, Chesler et al., 2011). Another study on IGD facilitators looked at facilitator training in residential communities at Occidental College (Rodriguez et al., 2011). Although implications for this study demonstrated findings related to facilitator learning outcomes and skill development through specific activities, the training program itself was a credit bearing course. More recent studies on IGD facilitators have explored the longitudinal impact of facilitation training and the facilitation experience, such as Ford’s (2017) book, *Facilitating change through intergroup dialogue: Social justice advocacy in practice*, where she explored the transferable skills and variations of social justice advocacy of former IGD peer facilitators from my alma mater Skidmore College. The facilitation training program at Skidmore College was also a curricular experience. There is a missed opportunity within research on IGD facilitators on exploring co-curricular dialogue facilitation programs and the experience of dialogue facilitation educators or IGD instructors. A recent article, “Braids and Bridges: A Critical Collaborative Autoethnography of Racially Minoritized Women Teaching Intergroup Dialogue” (Kelly et al., 2022), is the closest I have seen not only addressing the experiences of IGD
instructors but also incorporating autoethnography to methodologically capture their experiences.

**Dialogue Facilitation Training**

As positive as these effects are for participants, an even stronger and more long-lasting impact of dialogue is found with the facilitators themselves (Maxwell, Fisher et al., 2011, p. 41)

**University of Michigan IGR Training Model: The Blueprint**

Just as the critical-dialogical education model created at the University of Michigan through the Intergroup Relations (IGR) program and was a blueprint for myriad colleges and universities, so is Michigan’s facilitator training model. The IGR training sequence at the University of Michigan requires an application and group interview process in addition to a two-semester (minimum) commitment (Maxwell, Fisher et al., 2011). Once admitted, the IGR training and practicum courses focus on understanding social identity; learning about social justice, privilege, and discrimination; developing facilitation skills; and increasing the ability to analyze and understand interpersonal and intergroup relationships (Maxwell, Fisher et al., 2011).

**Co-facilitation and Facilitator Variations**

One of the unique characteristics of IGD facilitation is its usage of a co-facilitation model. The co-facilitation model not only ensures as much representation as possible in the dialogue; it also creates opportunities to demonstrate what dialogic relationship-building can look like as well as providing an extra layer of support for
facilitators because, as I previously mentioned, it is rigorous on the mind, body, and soul (Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). The types of students, staff, and faculty who make up these co-facilitation pairs have several possibilities.

There are several variations of facilitator models based on the dialogue program of that particular college or university. First is the sustained, curricular, peer facilitation model that we see at institutions, like University of Michigan and Skidmore College (Ford, 2017; Nagda & Maxwell, 2011). Peer co-facilitation models are those at which undergraduate students are facilitators and go through a curricular facilitator training program before facilitating a curricular dialogue. Next, is a sustained, curricular graduate dialogue cofacilitation model, through which graduate students facilitate dialogues with undergraduate participants and enroll in a curricular training program that may happen prior or concurrently to the dialogue seen in institutions, like UMass Amherst (Zúñiga et al., 2007). Another facilitation model is a co-curricular peer facilitator model, which is comprised of undergraduate students as facilitators, but their training may take place in a co-curricular setting, such as a resource center or another student affairs office. Finally, there are some facilitator variations that include faculty and staff facilitators (Lau et al., 2011). One of the core learning frameworks for facilitation training regardless of the facilitator variation is the PASK conceptual model. The PASK model (Maxwell, Fisher et al., 2011) will also guide the next section to ground the learning processes and designs for facilitator training programs.

**Utilizing PASK to Develop and Identify Facilitator Trainee Learning Processes.** The PASK conceptual model is an effective tool for facilitators in training to learn how to manage and lead group processes with a content focus on social inequality.
The Passion, Awareness, Skills, and Knowledge or PASK model was originally designed by Dr. Bailey Jackson, retired Social Justice Education professor and former Dean of the College of Education at UMass Amherst, to build competencies in multicultural education. Mark Chesler, Professor Emeritus from the University of Michigan, modified it into a facilitator training instrument that further evolved into a series of variations by Ximena Zuniga, Todd Sevig, Ratnesh Nagda, and Monita Thompson (Beale et al., 2001). The PASK model emphasizes personal awareness, knowledge, passion, and skill as paramount in facilitator learning processes to develop effective dialogue facilitation skills (Beale et al., 2001). Each element of the PASK model captures specific skills, activities, and processes that have been incorporated in dialogue facilitation trainings that not only prepare facilitators for their dialogues but also have a long-lasting impact on the facilitators themselves.

**Passion.** When we think about why people want to become dialogue facilitators, it is usually connected to their passions for doing social justice work. Passion in the context of the PASK model “refers to the deep personal reasons and commitments facilitators (or any of us) may have for caring about and doing this sort of work” (Beale et al., 2001, p. 230). The ability to articulate these passions in effective ways is critical to dialogue participant engagement, in addition to raising the level of authenticity, urgency, and commitment in the face of “personally risky and vulnerable dialogue encounters” (Beale et al., 2001, p. 230). However, if personal awareness is not coupled with articulating their passion for this work, then it can easily shut down the dialogue processes (Beale et al., 2001).
Personal Awareness. Dialogues can mirror current socio-political dynamics happening nationwide. It is paramount for dialogue facilitators to have personal awareness of the ways in which macro socio-political issues arise in more micro settings, such as a dialogue, to support the learning processes of the dialogue participants and even themselves as facilitators. Personal awareness is “the awareness of self as a member of a community, of a particular social group identity, and of self in a social system marked by different levels of privilege and oppression” (Beale et al., 2001, p. 228). Personal awareness during facilitation may enable facilitators to be mindful of the ways in which their social identities impact themselves and others in the group. Derezotes (2013) spoke to personal awareness of facilitators when discerning to make connections with dialogue participants individual, institutional, and ideological levels to guide their learning processes. "The effective dialogue facilitator is able to consciously shift her own awareness back and forth between her individual self (the "me") and the entire dialogue group she is interconnected with (the "we") (p. 68).

Despite the ways in which facilitator roles disrupts traditional power dynamics between educators and students, the remnants of those power dynamics appear in facilitators’ instructional leadership and authority on content and process in a dialogue that often results in a sense of credibility from the dialogue participants (Maxwell, Fisher et al., 2011). Some facilitators will use their personal awareness on these dynamics to leverage the credibility of their facilitation position to establish relationships with and/or educate members of their own identity groups to model critical reflective practice in the dialogue (Brookfield, 1995; Maxwell, Fisher et al., 2011). Critical reflective practice not only supports the learning processes of dialogue participants to gain personal awareness
of their identities on the macro, meso, and micro levels but also is a particularly helpful framework in encouraging facilitator trainees to learn from their experiences facilitating (Zúñiga, Kachwaha et al., 2012). Critical reflective practice can also help facilitators, “gain insight into self and others’ intentions during a difficult or confusing moment” (Zúñiga, Kachwaha et al., 2012, p. 74) by inviting facilitators to notice their personal motives, reactions, and experiences in the moment and after the dialogue (Zúñiga, Kachwaha et al., 2012).

**Skill.** Learning the skills to effectively facilitate dialogues is an ongoing process of combining all of the other elements of the PASK conceptual model in strategic ways to foster the learning processes of dialogue participants (Beale et al., 2001). In the context of dialogue facilitation, we’re defining skills as, “the ability to facilitate opportunities for change in individuals and groups, managing critical incidents and developing the capacity for strategic analysis and action” (Beale et al., 2001, p. 231). Some of these facilitation skills include but are not limited to, providing direct and thoughtful feedback to participants and being able to receive feedback from dialogue participants, taking risks to intervene in challenging situations, asking probing questions, and being able to make adjustments to their curriculum design to meet their participants' needs (Beale et al., 2001). Dialogue facilitators can practice the previously mentioned skills through the following facilitation strategies: seek understanding before responding, get distance and gain perspective, share observations non-judgmentally, discerning timing, tone, and word choice (Bell et al., 2016). For facilitators to seek understanding before responding is an act of personal awareness to control for the facilitator’s triggers and can occur through reflection, asking clarifying questions, and adding on to what’s been said, which may include additional clarification, connections to conceptual frameworks, and personal reflection (Bell et al., 2016). Facilitators may incorporate distance and perspective to help them navigate challenging moments in the dialogue by taking a break to name dynamics, taking a few moments
to breathe and refocus participants’ attention, and connect with a co-facilitator to process feelings and observations in the moment before reengaging (Bell et al., 2016). For facilitators to master the sequencing of tone and word choice can determine effective implementation of the skills previously mentioned such as providing and receiving feedback and navigating challenging situations (Bell et al., 2016).

**Knowledge.** As mentioned earlier, dialogue facilitators’ credibility among dialogue participants not only derives from their ability to navigate group dynamics and processes but also because of their authority on social justice education content. More specifically this includes demonstrating competencies on power, privilege, and oppression, the ways in which they intersect with our social identities, and how they show up in our everyday lives at the ideological, institutional, individual, and internalized levels. These competencies may include, but are not limited to, knowing the differences between diversity and social justice approaches, understanding oppression is socially constructed by historical legacies embedded in institutions and belief systems, the role of socialization and hegemony in sustaining systems of oppression, cycles of socialization, liberatory consciousness, and action planning for change (Adams & Zúñiga, 2016; Harro, 2000; Love, 2000).

Dialogue facilitator trainees must also demonstrate knowledge of group dynamics and processes of group development, such as the “forming,” “norming,” “storming,” and “performing” stages of a dialogue (Beale et al., 2001; Weber, 1982). Finally, facilitator trainees must know the differences between a dialogue, a discussion, a debate, and a fight, which can help dialogue participants develop their own personal awareness during the dialogue (Beale et al., 2001). All these content goals are typically reviewed during the facilitation training practicum, which may take place before or concurrently to the dialogue they are facilitating.
Critiques and Limitations to IGD

Zúñiga, Lopez et al., 2012) highlight an interesting critique of IGD from culture studies scholars who argue the differences between participants are so great that genuine dialogue and understanding across differences are limited or impossible because we live in a world in which each voice does not carry equal weight (p. 5). This critique speaks to the ways in which oppression can permeate social justice spaces. This critique also names a possibility to reimagine and push the dialogue work to control for these inequities to permeate these spaces or provide structured support for participants and facilitators from historically marginalized groups.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways in which six undergraduate Peer Dialogue Facilitators (PDFs) and their facilitation educator perceive themselves and each other as facilitators of color in a co-curricular peer dialogue facilitation training program at a small private elite liberal arts college by asking:

- How do PDFs and their facilitation educator perceive their experiences as facilitators of color one peer dialogue facilitation training program?

- How do PDFs and their facilitation educator inform, if at all, each other’s facilitation development after the inaugural peer dialogue facilitation training program?

Since I am approaching this study using an endarkened feminist epistemology that celebrates risk, reciprocity, reflexivity, and subjugated knowledges between researchers and the researched, it is important that I select a research methodology that aligns with those epistemic values for methodological congruency. In the spirit of endarkened feminist epistemology that challenges traditional relationships between and researchers and the researched, autoethnography does exactly that by pushing against the notion of objectivity in research by situating the researcher as the researched (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). By situating myself as researcher, researched, and educator in a transparent dialogue with the PDF research participants, I am also able to adhere to another pillar of endarkened feminist epistemology that invites us to reimagine research as responsibility and “answerable and obligated to the very persons and communities being engaged in the
inquiry” (Dillard, 2000, p. 663). My research is answerable to Black women, femmes, and nonbinary social justice educators. As a cishet Black woman, it is important that I name the ways in which I benefit from heterosexism and transphobia and name the communities that are marginalized within the margins, such as Black femmes, transwomen, and nonbinary folks. Yes, I am a Black woman whose research is answerable to Black women, and it is important to acknowledge the diversity of intersecting experiences among Black women to disrupt the ways that research often homogenizes us into a singular experience. Intersectionality is also about naming the different ways people experience oppression; therefore, it is important as a Black woman social justice educator that I situate myself within the communities I am answerable to as well as acknowledge the gender and sexuality privileges I have that will shape how I experience and analyze this study.

**Blackgirl Autoethnography as Methodology**

Blackgirl autoethnography (Boylorn, 2016) “considers how structural forces influence the lived experiences of black women and gives Black women agency to tell their own stories and to do so within a context of situated knowledge” (Boylorn, 2016, p. 55). Blackgirl autoethnography pulls from Black radical feminism (Brown, 2001; Crenshaw, 1990; Collins, 2002) and endarkened feminist epistemologies (Dillard, 2000) to center the wisdom and meaning-making processes of Black women. Since I am situating my whole self and the emic knowledges that come with my positionalities as a Black woman in this study, it was important to incorporate an autoethnographic methodology that explicitly centers Black women to push the bounds of research as responsibility and the possibilities of who research is answerable to (Lyiscott & Boyd, in
Blackgirl autoethnography is a reminder that my research is answerable to Black women, femmes, and nonbinary folks, and therefore, I am answerable to myself. I demonstrated this answerability in my life note in Chapter 1, where I practiced vulnerability with the purpose to highlight not feeling seen as a practitioner in the realm of dialogue within social justice education. Like hooks (1994) I turned to theory and eventually research because I was hurting. Blackgirl autoethnography not only allows me to be vulnerable and visible with purpose but also recenters Black women as worthy of recognition and critique (Boylorn, 2016). Blackgirl autoethnography coupled with an endarkened feminist epistemology invites us to reimagine vulnerability among researchers, Black women in particular, and the researched as gifts instead of just data, for example, Okpalaoka and Dillard (2011) told us, “When anyone offers us a glimpse into their pain, dreams, hopes, whatever …. we should receive it with open hands, gently and honorable, and treasure it for the privilege it is” (p. 68).

**Situating Autoethnography as Methodology**

Blackgirl autoethnography is an extension of autoethnography, and autoethnography is both a method and a methodology. For this study, I used autoethnography and Blackgirl autoethnography as my methodology, meaning it shaped my approach to and the foundation of my research study (Hughes & Pennington, 2017). As mentioned earlier, I selected autoethnography as the methodology because of its congruence with endarkened feminist epistemology in the way that it challenges traditional relationships between and researchers and the researched, by situating the researcher as the researched (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). By situating the researcher at the center of the study, autoethnography is a direct response to my problem statement in
which I reflected on the ways in which my identities as a Black facilitator and facilitator educator were not reflected in IGD research. Therefore, autoethnography is more than a research methodology; it is a possibility model to humanize research by embracing subjectivity among researchers as sources of insider knowledge. Due to its hyper subjectivity, it can be challenging to find a universal definition of autoethnography; however, it can be broadly described as an “autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the culture” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). Holman-Jones et al. (2013) described the specific characteristics that distinguish autoethnography from other types of biographical works to include “purposefully commenting on/critiquing of culture and cultural practices, making contributions to existing research, embracing vulnerability with purpose and creating a reciprocal relationship with audiences in order to compel a response” (p. 22). When autoethnography captures the previously mentioned characteristics it disrupts norms of research practice and representation, it is working form insider knowledge, it humanizes research by creating a process for us to maneuver through uncertainty, and it breaks silences embedded in traditional research (Holman-Jones et al., 2013).

**Critiques of Autoethnography**

There is still a lot of skepticism about the legitimacy and validity of autoethnography in qualitative research. Even within the realm of autoethnography, there are heated disagreements about the purpose and scope of autoethnography. For example, some qualitative scholars argue for the removal (i.e., Anderson, 2006) of evocative autoethnography that heavily leans into narrative inquiry and research by emphasizing
the role storytelling with the intention to evoke readers and audience members to feel the experience described as lifelike (Ellis, 1997). Other scholars prefer autoethnography to be more empiricist (Walford, 2009) as an attempt to increase its legitimacy and validity within in the standards of more tradition qualitative research. Delamont (2007) argued that autoethnography cannot fight familiarity, that it is impossible to write and publish autoethnography ethically, that it lacks in the analytic outcome and focuses on the powerful and not the powerless “to whom we should be directing our sociological gaze” (p. 2).

These critiques seem to prioritize the very standards that endarkened feminist epistemology seeks to challenge by evaluating the validity and rigor of autoethnography as methodology and method based on what Dillard describes “the metaphor of research as recipe,” which emphasizes one “right way” to engage in research (Dillard, 2000). I would push Anderson, Walford, and Delamont to reflect on what they are willing and able to embrace and let go of, to reimagine the possibilities of research as a humanizing and liberatory process for both researchers and the researched.

**Peer Dialogue Facilitation Training Site**

The PDF training program took place at Panorama College, a selective small liberal arts college in New England. Panorama College has approximately 1800 matriculated students, 45% of students self-identify as students of color, 9% are international students, and 11% are first-generation. What drew me to work at Panorama College was a hybrid of a desire to return to my liberal arts roots after working at large public and private universities for the last five years and a curiosity about the ways in which Panorama College retains their 46% student of color population through student
affairs programming. Panorama College is part of a consortium of other colleges and universities that incorporate a variety of curricular IGD programs on their campuses. Since higher education staff, faculty, and students tend to migrate within the consortium, there are student affairs staff at Panorama College who have a variety of experiences doing IGD at its peer institutions. Since Panorama College did not have the institutional capacity to incorporate a curricular program, it became an opportunity to reimagine the possibilities of IGD in a co-curricular space by incorporating the hybrid of IGD experiences from staff members who practiced it within its peer institutions.

The peer dialogue facilitation training program is housed within the Panorama College Office of Student Affairs. My role as a part-time Dialogue Coordinator allowed me to collaborate with a dean to develop dialogue programming for students, staff, and faculty and the inaugural Peer Dialogue Facilitator training program.

**What I Did and How I Did It (D.C. Hill, 2014)**

**Benchmarking Dialogue Models**

The purpose of this section is to identify the dialogue models that informed the development of the co-curricular peer dialogue facilitation training program at Panorama College. Despite Panorama College’s peer dialogue facilitation training program pulling heavily from the critical-dialogical education model, it also draws from three other approaches to dialogue in education: collective inquiry models, community-building and social action models, and conflict resolution and peace-building models (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001).
Collective Inquiry Models

Collective inquiry models are heavily informed by Bohm’s (1990) work, which emphasizes dialogue as a tool to mobilization and sustainable change and Dewey’s democratic education values. The collective inquiry model emphasizes the significance of suspending judgment and identifying biases and assumptions from dialogue participants. As a result, the collective inquiry model focuses on “nurturing participants’ abilities to engage in collective thinking and inquiry for the development of synergistic and meaningful relationships” (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001, p. 307) creating a strong foundation for collective mobilization. Since the Peer Dialogue Facilitator training program started in October, I only had 7 weeks left in the semester and needed to consolidate the process and content goals for the PDFs. The collective inquiry model mirrored aspects of the Building Blocks of Dialogue (Zúñiga, 2016), which was foundational in my dialogue experiences as a participant and a facilitator. The Building Blocks of Dialogue consists of a suspension of judgment, identifying assumptions/biases, reflection and inquiry, voicing, deep listening, and respect. The Building Blocks of Dialogue became the connective tissue in the complex interdependent relationship between me as the facilitation educator and the PDFs because we all were constantly developing a praxis based on these concepts that allowed for reciprocity, risk, and uncertainty from everyone.

Community-building and Social Action Models

Community-building and social action models emphasize the incorporation of citizens to address community issues (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001). This model is informed by Bohm (1990) and the use of dialogue as a tool to create mobilization and sustainable
change. Community-building and social action models can be particularly useful on college and university campuses to address bias incidents and socio-political movements happening in the local, national, and global contexts. The mobilization aspect of the community-building, and social action dialogue model requires us to envision what Freire called a “horizontal relationship” in spaces where power dynamics are not typically addressed. Therefore, community-building and social action models challenge top-down policies and embrace reciprocity, risk, and uncertainty as a part of the process towards sustainable change. This model was adopted in developing the Community Luncheon for Panorama students, staff, and faculty in which the PDFs facilitated conversations about community.

**Conflict Resolution and Peace-building Models**

Conflict resolution and peace-building models pull heavily from Allport (1954) *intergroup contact hypothesis* because the purpose is to “bring together members of conflicting parties to identify issues of conflict, generate action plans, and if possible, achieve a workable agreement to conflicts or disputes” (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001, p. 309). The PDFs initial understanding and learning goals of a dialogue facilitator were heavily informed by the conflict resolution model as a result of the polarizing discourses on racism, sexism, and other manifestations of oppression during the 2020 presidential election campaigns. It was important for me to incorporate a framework, such as the Building Blocks of Dialogue (Zúñiga, 2016), which I previously mentioned, into the facilitator training design that would encourage dialogue instead of debate.

**Critical-dialogical Education Models**
Critical-dialogical education models pull from the pedagogical works of Freire (1970), Allport (1954), Bakhtin (1981), and Collins (2002), through its emphasis on cultivating relationships across difference while acknowledging the manifestations of power, privilege, and oppression when incorporating dialogue in education. The critical-dialogical education model was developed by Zúñiga, Nagda, and Sevig at the University of Michigan’s Intergroup Relations program (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001). This model was also adopted and modified on myriad college and university campuses, such as UMass Amherst, Skidmore College, Cornell University, Villanova University, New York University, and University of California Los Angeles. Critical dialogic education models laid the foundation for my understanding of dialogue and social justice education. I was an undergraduate participant in the Intergroup Relations (IGR) program at Skidmore College, I facilitated IGD during my master’s program at NYU and during my doctoral studies at UMass Amherst. My experiences with the critical-dialogical education model happened in either curricular or a hybrid of curricular and co-curricular spaces at colleges and universities. The structure of the peer dialogue facilitation training program at Panorama College was heavily influenced by those experiences. However, I was unable to fully implement the curricular critical dialogue education model at Panorama College due to policies around non-faculty teaching courses. I looked to other dialogue models for inspiration, such as the collective inquiry model, to reimagine facilitator training experiences from critical-dialogical education models in co-curricular spaces. These dialogue models were incredibly helpful in conceptualizing the purpose and scope of the Peer Dialogue Facilitator training program at Panorama College.

**Facilitation Training Inspirations**
In preparation to launch the inaugural Peer Dialogue Facilitator training program at Panorama College, the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion and I decided it would make the most sense to benchmark dialogue programs at other small private liberal arts institutions with similar demographics to Panorama College for inspiration and innovation on our end. Due to minimal success at finding a sufficient amount of student dialogue programs at small liberal arts colleges, I expanded the scope of the benchmarking process to include public, private, and Research 1 institutions. After reviewing approximately 30 different dialogue programs, I found myself returning to where my dialogue and facilitation journey began and where they are currently taking me. This section provides an overview of the student dialogue facilitator training programs at UMass Amherst, Skidmore College, and Northwestern University to illustrate the ways in which they converge and diverge from the development of the Peer Dialogue Facilitator training program at Panorama College.

**UMass Amherst - Large, Public, Research 1 University**

**Background on IGD at UMass Amherst**

The IGD program at UMass Amherst is a direct descendant of the Intergroup Relations (IGR) program at the University of Michigan founded in 1988 (Zúñiga, Lopez et al., 2012) in response to growing racial tensions. Dr. Ximena Zúñiga co-developed IGR as a doctoral student and reimagined it as faculty at UMass Amherst to involve graduate student facilitators. IGD at UMass Amherst uses critical dialogic education models by which participants and facilitators engage in “critical co-inquiry, consciousness-raising
about the causes and effects of social group inequalities, conflict transformation and civic engagement in activities that foster learning and social change” (Zúñiga, Lopez et al., 2012, p. 2). These dialogues typically involve small groups of 12 to 18 undergraduate participants who represent dominant and marginalized social identities of a particular topic with two graduate student co-facilitators who also represent the latter identities and sustained between 8-14 weeks for 1.5-2 hours (Zúñiga, Lopez et al., 2012).

**Sustained, Curricular, Graduate Dialogue Facilitation Training Model**

Zúñiga, Kachwaha et al. (2012) described the training model for graduate IGD facilitators at UMass Amherst to consist of the following components: creating a learning community through elucidating the goals and expectations of IGD, providing an overview of the theoretical foundations of IGD and analysis on group processes and development; feeling, thinking, and doing IGD throughout weekend retreats with facilitators as a way to interrogate social identity development and facilitator positionality, facilitator team building; practicing IGD facilitation through analyzing different facilitating educational designs, implementing activities and providing feedback to fellow facilitators. To address the latter components, graduate IGD facilitators typically take 2 elective practicum sequence options: one provides the historical, theoretical pedagogical, and empirical foundations for IGD sequence and learn to apply the latter while developing self-awareness skills through their reflective writing and a theory practice research paper (Zúñiga, Kachwaha et al., 2012, p. 72). The second course is the actual dialogue in which graduate facilitators co-lead sections of undergraduate IGD course (Zúñiga, Kachwaha et al., p. 72). Graduate IGD facilitators also meet weekly for 3.5 hours where they debrief with their co-facilitator and coach, lesson plan, and
review facilitation development. The rigorous goals and expectations for graduate IGD facilitators is embodied in IGD implementation.

Zúñiga, Kachwaha et al. (2012) also broke down the two approaches to facilitator preparation: multicultural competency training model or PASK model that guides content and process in four competency areas—knowledge, awareness, skills, and passion. The second framework is the critical reflective practice, which allows graduate facilitators to examine their assumptions and actions to challenge or support personal and professional goals. Critical reflective practice also supports graduate facilitators in their meaning-making processes in "democratic" and diverse classrooms.

**Skidmore College—Small, Private, Liberal Arts College**

**Sustained, Curricular, Peer Facilitation Model**

The Intergroup Relations (IGR) program at Skidmore College was also implemented by a University of Michigan alumna, Dr. Kristie Ford. Like the UMass facilitation model, Skidmore uses a curricular model for both peer facilitators and IGR participants. However, Skidmore intentionally focuses on peer facilitation. The peer facilitators’ training and preparation process takes at least a year and a half with the expectation of taking a series of race-focused IGR/Sociology courses prior (Ford, 2017). The official peer facilitation process starts with an introductory course that allows students to experience dialogue, a 200-level course on theories of race and racism and a 300-level training course in which facilitators develop and practice their facilitation styles (Ford, 2017). Similar to my experience, the peer facilitators are also required to enroll in a practicum course that provides them with support and supervision (Ford, 2017). The
support and supervision of the peer facilitators is a collaborative effort between academic and student affairs at Skidmore College. Peer facilitators meet with faculty/staff instructors during practicum in weekly three-hour meetings (Ford, 2017).

The focus of this practicum may include “debriefing the dialogues, brainstorming appropriate pedagogical strategies to address group dynamics, refining facilitation skills, increasing content knowledge, and engaging social identities at a deeper level” (Ford, 2017, p. 20). Like the UMass facilitation model, Skidmore has a coach to provide additional mentorship and support, such as addressing class-specific challenges and providing constructive feedback to the co-facilitation team (Ford, 2017).

**Northwestern University—Large, Private, Research 1 University**

**Co-curricular, Peer Facilitation Model**

Northwestern University and its Sustained Dialogue (SD) program provided the most inspiration during my benchmarking process. Northwestern’s SD program is housed in the Social Justice Education center within Student Affairs and one of the few programs that used an entirely co-curricular model to train undergraduate dialogue facilitators and implement dialogue programming. I had the opportunity to speak with a former Assistant Director of the Northwestern SD program about the development of their current co-curricular student moderator training model. The program originally used the national Sustained Dialogue model, which is a 5-step process that incorporates a conflict resolution dialogue approach by “transforming relationships that cause problems, create conflict, and block change” as well as “emphasizes the importance of effective change over time” (Sustained Dialogue Institute, 2021, para. 2). According to the Assistant Director, an SD educator from the national organization did all the moderating and
moderator training during its initial implementation. The Assistant Director noticed the national SD model lacked focus in dialogue topics and learning outcomes, which made it more challenging to develop action plans. After the initial implementation of the national SD model at Northwestern University, the Assistant Director decided to shift the moderators away from being neutral and toward a multi-partial approach we see in critical-dialogical education models (Zúñiga & Nagda, 2001), such as UMass IGD and Skidmore College IGR. The Assistant Director of the SD program at Northwestern also developed the Sustained Dialogue Leadership Team (SDLT) structure by which SD peer moderators had more autonomy and programmatic responsibility through various roles in marketing, community and alumni engagement, current engagement, and co-coordinators that meet biweekly with moderators to provide emotional and pedagogical support. In addition to the latter tasks, the SDLT had a moderator training retreat that took place from 9AM - 5PM on a Saturday and Sunday. The Assistant Director also provided sustained support by meeting with the SDLT weekly and bi-weekly with individual students and their specific responsibilities. When the SDLT was first developed, all student staff positions were voluntary; however, in Spring 2019, student staff were officially paid $400 per academic quarter.

The current dialogue structure for Northwestern’s SD program involves 90-minute dialogues about the intersections of the following social identities: race, mental health, ethnicity, socioeconomic status/class, age, sexual orientation, political affiliation, sex and gender, religion, ability, and citizenship (Sustained Dialogue Institute, 2021). These dialogues meet quarterly and typically consist of 10 undergraduate students per dialogue and two trained peer moderators (Sustained Dialogue Institute, 2021). Most
importantly, Northwestern’s SD program is sustained in the following ways: (1) each SD group maintains the same participants and moderators, (2) each meeting is designed to continue where the last ended, and (3) dialogues meet weekly at the same time for 90 minutes (Sustained Dialogue Institute, 2021).

Inspiration Application

The purpose of this section is to illustrate the ways in which the design of the dialogue facilitator training programs at UMass Amherst, Skidmore College, and Northwestern University informed the development of the peer facilitator training program at Panorama College. I will specifically incorporate my experiential knowledge as a dialogue facilitator at UMass Amherst and a dialogue participant at Skidmore College.

I participated in the UMass Amherst graduate facilitator training process as a second-year doctoral student and co-facilitated a dialogue about race and microaggressions for students of color. Due to institutional variables, we were unable to dedicate an entire semester to facilitation training and completed our facilitation training during the same semester we had to facilitate the dialogues. Although this restructuring provided an opportunity to have a more experiential experience for the graduate facilitators, there was not enough time to learn and process the PASK model that impacted our effectiveness as dialogue facilitators. Navigating this was a surprisingly challenging experience for me and was paramount in my development as a dialogue facilitator because it illustrated the significance of taking the time to cultivate
relationships among co-facilitators and with ourselves to have a better understanding of our triggers and the ways in which they show up in our facilitation.

Inspired by the original UMass facilitator training model (Zúñiga, Kachwaha et al., 2012), it was important for the PDFs to have enough time to review foundational content and facilitation knowledge, cultivate meaningful co-facilitator relationships among all the PDFs and practice critical self-reflection to identify their strengths and areas of growth around content and facilitation. The Associate Dean and I decided to dedicate the first 7 weeks of the training program to understanding foundational social justice education and facilitation content instead of the experiential approach I experienced as a graduate facilitator.

A significant deviation from the UMass facilitator training model (Zúñiga, Kachwaha et al., 2012) was training undergraduates as facilitators, not graduate students. Panorama College does not offer graduate programs, and it was important that the new peer dialogue facilitation model reflected the mission of supporting Panorama student development within the Office of Student Affairs by centering and cultivating students’ development. Another deviation we made from the UMass dialogue facilitation training model was the curricular component. For example, at Panorama College, only tenured faculty are eligible to teach courses, not staff, and no faculty were willing or able to teach the training course. However, we made the most out of adopting a co-curricular facilitation training model compensating the PDFs through academic credits. We provided financial compensation by paying PDFs $12/hr. The financial compensation not only created an opportunity for a more diverse applicant pool but also created a culture of
students of color getting financially compensated for the emotional labor that comes with doing critical social justice work.

The peer-facilitation model at Skidmore College illustrated the effectiveness of using peer facilitators to intentionally mirror many of the identities of the participants, which included being an undergraduate student. I was a participant in a cross-race IGR dialogue in 2012 during my sophomore year at Skidmore College. My experience as a participant laid the foundation for me to pursue a career in social justice education, and watching my facilitators who were only the same year in college as myself facilitate our dialogue with such intention and grace was incredibly powerful and created a possibility model for the type of dialogue facilitator I wanted to be. The other aspect of Skidmore’s peer facilitator model that informed the development of Panorama College’s program was the training and coaching from faculty to support peer facilitators’ development. For example, when developing the scope of my role as a facilitator trainer, it was important that I not only teach the facilitation content but also offer holistic support that connects the material we review during the facilitation training program with dialogic interactions PDFs experience in their everyday lives.

**The Peer Dialogue Facilitators (PDFs)**

A convenience sample procedure (Gall et al., 1996) was used to select this study’s sample because as I entered the second year of my role as the Dialogue Coordinator at Panorama College. It was my responsibility along with the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion to not only develop the structure of the co-curricular peer dialogue program but also coordinate the hiring of Peer Dialogue Facilitators (PDFs). In October 2019 PDFs were selected based on an application process co-created and approved by the
Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion by which students submitted a cover letter and resumé. PDFs had a 30-minute interview on 10/5/2019 and 10/6/2019 in which they were notified after they accepted the position of the possible option of participating in a doctoral study that included collecting their verbal and written reflections during the Fall 2019 semester facilitation trainings and eventually the 2020 dialogue program. All PDFs consented to participate in the study after the interview and completed a consent form within the first 2 weeks of the Fall 2019 training program. PDFs were also notified that they can agree to opt-out of the study at any point, which would not impact their facilitation training experience. The PDFs were selected based on their interest in learning how to facilitate across difference, preexisting knowledge on diversity and equity content and weekly availability. PDFs were paid $12/hr. and expected to commit 5 hours per week to the dialogue program. Funding to compensate PDFs came from the Panorama College Office of Student Affairs and a well-known private philanthropic foundation. The IRB approval process from UMass Amherst and Panorama College required the anonymity of the information collected from the research participants. Pseudonyms were used for the research site and the PDFs. A total of six PDFs were hired, all of whom attended Panorama College during the time of the peer dialogue facilitation program.

During the facilitation training program, three PDFs were sophomores, one was a junior, and two were seniors. Due to the convenience sampling of hiring the PDFs, I was unable to specifically recruit Black women facilitators for this study, which would have

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2 The name of this organization was requested to be kept anonymous.
aligned with the conceptual frameworks that informs how I understand myself in IGD research and practice. However, all PDFs identified as people of color by chance. I did not recruit students of color to apply for this position. There were two Latinx women, one multiracial woman, one Black woman, one Asian woman, and one multiracial Black man.

**Jane** (she/her) was a first semester senior at the start of the Peer Dialogue Facilitator training program. Jane is a cishet Asian American woman, student athlete, Math, and pre-med student. Jane indicated the following reasons in her cover letter for her interest in the PDF position:

I believe part of my responsibility as a doctor in the future is to provide equal and inclusive care for my patients and to remain compassionate towards humanity. As part of a team of doctors, I want to foster a community where mindful discussions can lessen the impact of existing biases. A role as a PDF would nurture a sense of confidence in myself to skillfully speak on the representation of minority figures in the workplace or patient setting.

At the time of our group interview, one year after the conclusion of the peer dialogue facilitation training, she is working full-time in a research lab and hopes to apply for the next cycle of medical school admissions.

**Monica** (she/her) was also a first semester senior at the start of the peer dialogue facilitation training program. Monica is a cishet Black and ethnically African American woman who studied English and Geology at Panorama College. Monica indicated the following reasons in her cover letter for applying to the PDF position:

Throughout my time at Panorama College, I’ve largely been drawn to jobs and activities that allow me to engage with people I might not otherwise meet. Being a Peer Dialogue Facilitator would give me the opportunity do this, while also continuing the development of my skills in organizing and implementing programming and allowing me the freedom to engage creatively with my ideas.
At the time of the group interview, Monica was in the process of preparing for a teaching position at a boarding school in New England.

**Lucy (she/her)** was a first semester junior at the start of the peer dialogue facilitation training program. Lucy is a cishet Chicana, studying History and Sociology at Panorama College. Lucy indicated the following reasons in her cover letter as to her interest in applying for the PDF position:

My interest in the position of Peer Dialogue Facilitator stems from a general academic interest in social justice, specifically regarding the Latinx community and Latinx experiences in the United States. Following my time at <Panorama College> I hope to build on this interest either through academia or non-profit work. Working as a PDF would prepare me for such future by allowing me to engage with my own immediate community and utilize my skills in a way that benefits more than myself. Beyond academic and long-term benefits, working as a PDF would help my personal growth by providing me with a community that is just as invested in social justice and engaged with social issues as I aspire to be.

Lucy graduated from Panorama College and was amid applying to full-time jobs.

**Mirabel (she/her)** was a sophomore at the start of the peer dialogue facilitation training program. Mirabel is a cishet Chicana, studying Political Science. Mirabel indicated the following reasons in her cover letter for her interest in the PDF position:

Given the opportunity available through this position, I know it would allow me an outlet for both personal and professional growth through facilitating an environment for discussion surrounding issues that affect me as a student and an individual. It would make me grow as a person by evaluating my own personal beliefs in order to be able to effectively connect and communicate with others. It would make me critically evaluate my role at an elite institution and how my actions can affect the framework and culture towards reform.

Professionally, it would sharpen my discussion facilitation skills, and ability to promote, recruit, and collaborate with the resource team in order to meet deadlines and curate events. I also think it is so important to bring these trainings to a peer to peer level
because it will grant me the opportunity to be able to connect with people one person at a time, following a typical grassroot model.

At the time of the group interview, Mirabel was a rising senior at Panorama College and involved in the student paper.

Isaac (he/him) was a sophomore during the peer dialogue facilitation training program. Isaac is a biracial cishet Black man, former student athlete, and Psychology major. Isaac expressed the following reasons in his cover letter for applying to the PDF position:

I believe that toxic, unjust social norms are woven into daily life and take different forms, both conspicuous and subtle. While I used to think this view was overly cynical and pessimistic, I think accepting that this is reality has made me constantly aware of how crucial conversation is amongst different groups of people. It has made me realize how simple, and yet meaningful a space like the MRC is in pushing for a more equitable social dynamic. Whenever I’m there, whether I’m studying or exchanging music recommendations with a friend, I feel welcome and accepted. Everyone’s differences (ethnic, gender, and intellectual) are celebrated and I feel that sense of collective commitment to striving toward understanding is shared among people in this space. As a PDF, I hope to encourage exchanges of experience among students from different groups and throughout our general community.

At the time of the group interview, Isaac was a rising senior at Panorama College and was working at the Multicultural Student Center at Panorama College.

Kora (she/her) was a sophomore at the start of the peer dialogue facilitation training program. Kora is a cishet multiracial Native American woman, student athlete, and Anthropology major. Kora expressed the following reasons in her cover letter for applying for the PDF position:

The <Panorama College> campus is much more open to the conversation around social justice issues than my hometown but there is definitely a need to expand these
conversations among my peers. These conversations are very common among my close friends and I but I want to extend them to the rest of the student body.

Learning to facilitate crucial discussions with my peers is a quality that would help me throughout the rest of my professional career. Being able to foster an inclusive community is the most impactful skill I could acquire as I enter many different environments with people from different backgrounds and experiences.

At the time of the group interview, Kora was a rising senior at Panorama College and actively involved in the Mixed Student Union.

Amari (she/her). I am a Black, ethnically African American cishet woman working as a part-time Dialogue Coordinator at Panorama College. I was starting my second year as a Dialogue Coordinator at the time of the peer dialogue training facilitation program where my role shifted from providing co-curricular dialogue programming for students, staff, and faculty and toward developing the first peer-led facilitation program at Panorama College. I was excited and intimidated by the amount of autonomy I had to develop this program.

To apply endarkened feminist epistemologies in a space in which only two Black women, including me, occupied the space was an interesting dynamic to navigate because I was concerned it may affect the validity and efficacy of centering the subjugated knowledges that are specific to my social identities as a cishet Black woman. However, this concern is an example of “the research recipe” I was socialized to believe as more valid that values detachment and objectivity. Incorporating an endarkened autoethnographic approach to my facilitator education pedagogy would require me to literally center myself and my ways of knowing as a Black woman to embrace what Okpalaoka and Dillard (2011) described as “risk-taking, naming our many circumstances
and focusing on ourselves for change” (p. 69). By centering myself in my work and pedagogy, I still have a responsibility to heal and teach someone else once I’ve learned or healed from something (Okpalaoka & Dillard, 2011), which will hopefully address my concerns around efficacy.

**Overview of Research Design**

The following list summarizes the steps used to carry out this research:

1. Obtained IRB approval from Panorama College and UMass Amherst in October 2019 (in appendices)

2. Conducted phase 1 of the co-curricular peer dialogue facilitation training program:
   a. 5-week training focused on justice and equity content as well as facilitation skills with the Dialogue Coordinator (me) that met on Tuesdays and Thursdays for two hours from October 2019 to December 2019

3. PDFs submitted feedback after each meeting answering the following prompts:
   a. What is one thing you learned today?
   b. One thing you still have a question about?
   c. What worked for your participation today?
   d. What didn’t work for your participation today?

4. PDFs co-created with the Dialogue Coordinator curriculum in preparation for the Spring 2020 peer facilitated dialogue series PDFs worked collaboratively to provide feedback on curriculum through group process
a. PDFs planned the Student, Staff, and Faculty Community Luncheon in December 2019 and facilitated breakout sessions about cultivating community with participants.

b. PDFs also announced the Spring 2020 peer facilitated dialogue series

c. PDFs were responsible for advertising to and recruitment of undergraduate participants for the Spring 2020 Peer to Peer Edition dialogue series

5. Conducted phase 2 of the co-curricular peer dialogue facilitation training program

a. From February 2020 to March 2020, the PDFs and I met on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for one hour in preparation for the peer dialogue facilitation program set to launch from March 27, 2020-April 23, 2020

b. Tuesdays were dedicated to learning more social justice education concepts, theories, and vocabulary

c. PDFs developed topics for the dialogue series through an activity in which they wrote all the social identities we learned during the training on an index card and a “hot topic” on a separate index card. We randomly selected one of each to create the topics below:

i. Beauty standards and Ableism

ii. Party Culture and Gender

iii. Mental Health and Religion

iv. Cultural Appropriation and Globalism

v. Family and Class

vi. Race and Higher Education
Guest speakers from Resource Centers Team and UMass Social Justice Education attended meetings to review content on specific manifestation of oppression and provide facilitation tips.

- Tuesdays were dedicated to providing group feedback on PDFs’ curriculum design drafts.

- Thursdays were dedicated to practicing facilitation skills through micro facilitations of one activity that met the content and process goals for that design.
  
  - PDFs would conduct these micro facilitations in pairs.
  
  - PDF co-facilitators would rotate each week.
  
  - PDFs and Dialogue Coordinator would provide feedback.

**Data Collection Methods**

This section reviews different autoethnographic methods used to gather the stories and wisdom of the PDFs and me during our group interview one year after the conclusion of our Peer Dialogue Facilitator training program. More specifically, this section provides a working definition of autoethnographic methods and detail the specific autoethnographic methods used in the study, which include critical auto-interviewing (Boufoy-Bastick, 2004) and life notes (Bell-Scott, 1994; Dillard, 2000).

**Autoethnographic Methods**
Autoethnographic research methods are the techniques, tools, and/or means for self-examination or critical self-reflection for data collection and analysis (Hughes & Pennington, 2017). Some of the ways that autoethnographic data “gifts” (Okpalaoka & Dillard, 2011) are gathered may include “recalling, collecting artifacts and documents, interviewing others, analyzing self, observing self, and reflecting on issues pertaining to the research topic” (Chang, 2013, p. 113). The autoethnographic methods are built into the semi-structured protocol, such as the individual cover letters they submitted when applying for the PDF position, the group guidelines we developed during the Peer Facilitator Training program, and my own personal reflections of a critical teaching moment during the program.

**Semi-structured Group Interview and Critical Auto-interviewing**

Group interviews allow qualitative researchers to observe collective human interactions (Madriz, 2000). I chose to conduct a group interview for this study because, similar to dialogues, group interviews focus on “the multivocality of participants’ attitudes, experiences, and beliefs” (p. 836). The “multivocality” of a group interview allowed me to gather large amounts of contextual, perceptual, demographic, and theoretical information needed to answer my research questions (Madriz, 2000). Group interviews also align with endarkened feminist epistemology by creating spaces in which participants can share “lessons” from lived experiences “when shared and passed on, become the collective wisdom” (Dillard, 2000, p. 67). I developed an interview protocol that received IRB from UMass Amherst and Panorama College. The protocol consisted of 12 open-ended questions, which included the PDFs’ cover letters for the position and the group guidelines we created during the Peer Facilitator Training program. For the
cover letters, the PDFs only saw the ones they submitted; they did not view their peers’ cover letters.

Critical auto-interviewing is a way to collect my internal data for the purposes of seeking gaps in my self-awareness (Boufoy-Bastick, 2004). Critical auto-interviewing involves researchers asking ourselves questions that demonstrate how we understand ourselves, our society, and the value systems have been socialized into (Rodriguez et al., 2017), such as noting what caught our attention, stirred an emotion, or choose to express (Boufoy-Bastick, 2004). Using critical auto-interviewing can help me problematize my subjugated knowledge and wisdom as a Black woman using an endarkened feminist epistemological approach to anchor my research as responsibility and being answerable to Black women, femmes, and nonbinary social justice educators. My critical auto-interview happened alongside the group interview with the PDFs. The PDFs will witness the critical auto-interviewing happening in real time through my engagement in the group interview. To abide by COVID-19 restrictions, the 90-minute group interview with the PDFs took place on the video platform Zoom. The PDFs were emailed a consent form to review and sign digitally prior to the group interview. The audio and video recordings were kept in a locked file on Microsoft OneDrive.

Life Notes as Assemblage

I incorporate assemblage to further problematize this endarkened autoethnographic study. The purpose of assemblage is to juxtapose multiple accounts about a particular phenomenon of interest (Rodriguez et al., 2017). Rodriguez et al. adapted Denshire, and Lee’s (2013) six elements of assemblage in autoethnography into 8 tasks: (1) selecting relevant journal articles, (2) producing twice-told narratives, (3) straddling multiple
temporalities, (4) producing personal-professional history, (5) crafting [non]fictions, (6) [auto]ethnographic writing about practice, (7) critical/analytical commenting back to the profession, and (8) reinscribing aspects of practice. For the purposes of this study, I focused on straddling multiple temporalities, producing professional history, and commenting back to the profession.

Since the group interview protocol elicited artifacts, the PDFs and I created during the facilitator training program. These artifacts can also be considered what Dillard (2000) calls *life notes* because they capture “narrative representations through letters, stories, journal entries, reflections, poetry, music, and other artful forms” (Dillard, 2000, p. 664). These life notes capture elements of assemblage by straddling multiple temporalities and producing professional history, allowing the PDFs and me to remember moments from the past to gain clarity in our present when thinking about ourselves as facilitators of color (Rodriguez et al., 2017). The life notes incorporated in the group interview protocol consist of “community guidelines,” PDF cover letters from their application process, and critical learning moments developed between October 2019 and March 2020 (Rodriguez et al., 2017).

When discussing straddling multiple temporalities, I am referencing what Rodriguez et al. (2017) describe as “writing across multiple time periods when reconstructing what once had been everyday mundane moments” (p. 63). Straddling multiple temporalities appears in the PDFs and my revisiting of their cover letters from 2019 to reflect on the ways they understood dialogue then versus now as well as on the ways in which they perceive themselves as facilitators of color. This study couples straddling multiple temporalities with producing personal-professional history. Producing
personal-professional history focuses on collecting historical materials, such as texts, course records, and memories, to recraft a history that was remembered from the past and retold in the present with the intention to critically/analytically commenting back to the profession of dialogue facilitation practice (Denshire & Lee, 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2017). I applied these elements of assemblage through the following question in the group interview protocol: The concept of “Sankofa” literally translates to “understand our present and ensure our future, we must know our past” (University of Illinois Springfield, 2022).

Attached you will find your application essay for the PDF position as well as your responses to the PDF follow-up interview. After reviewing this document, please respond to the following prompts:

• Has your understanding of dialogue and dialogue facilitation shifted, from when you first applied to the PDF position?

• Can you recall a critical moment for you while in the program? What about this moment affected how you see yourself as a facilitator of color?

Below you will find my critical moment to prompt any reflections you may have:

I incorporated the Sankofa framework to not invoke emotional recall and straddle multiple temporalities among the PDFs but to offer and encapsulate an endarkened feminist epistemological approach that shares “how reality is known when based in the historical roots of global Black feminist thought and when understood within the context of reciprocity and relationship” (Okpalaoka & Dillard, 2011, p. 65). Sankofa is an Akan philosophical tradition from communities through the African diaspora (Small et al.,
2020; Temple, 2010), and its incorporation in developing my group interview protocol acknowledges the respect I have for the history and values of Black women within the African diaspora. The Sankofa framework coupled with the PDFs review of their cover letters and thinking back to critical moments during the facilitation training program illustrates straddling temporalities and of assemblage by analyzing writing and thinking across multiple time periods to reconstruct how the PDFs and I perceive ourselves as facilitators of color (Hughes & Pennington, 2017). The PDFs and I also straddled multiple temporalities and produced personal-professional history in the following question: Take a look at these community guidelines we developed together during the Peer Dialogue Facilitator Training Program:

- Use “I” Statements, to make sure that you are voicing your own experience without assuming that others share it
- Make Space, Take Space
- Confidentiality - Whatever is said in this space stays here
- Active listening
- Identifying biases and assumptions
- Suspension of judgment
- Voicing
- Reflection and inquiry
Respect

Are these community guidelines still relevant to you in any way? If not, how come? If yes, in what ways?

Would you do anything differently with these guidelines looking at them a year later? Is there anything you would add? Anything you would take off? Why?

The purpose of developing community guidelines is to collaboratively create accountability among the PDFs and me to create a space in which we can all show up as our authentic selves with the intention to disrupt the possibilities of recreating the dynamics of power and dominance among ourselves. This is particularly helpful in preparing to navigate potential dynamics that may arrive from divergent perspectives and clarify the group's understanding of different terms, such as “respect” (Bell et al., 2016). The community guidelines are also a facilitation tool to guide meaningful and effective dialogic conversations. Therefore, by reviewing the community guidelines we developed during the training facilitation program, one year after the conclusion of the program in a group interview setting, we are straddling temporalities and using the community guideline life note we created to develop a personal and professional history to further explore the ways in which we see ourselves as facilitators of color.

Data Analysis

The audio from the group interview was transcribed using the transcription feature on Zoom, and I cleaned that version of the transcription by correcting any spelling, grammatical, and conceptual errors by triangulating with the original audio of the interview. I did line by line open coding using Taguette, a free open-source qualitative
research tool, which allowed me to import my group interview transcription and highlight words, sentences, and paragraphs and tag them with my preliminary codes. Open coding was helpful in identifying potential themes by pulling together examples from the text (Agar, 1996; Bernard, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) with hopes for them to become more refined as the research goes along. I eventually connected those emerging coding categories with my reflective analysis of the PDFs contributions as well as my own contributions during the group interview.

I incorporated reflective analysis to further examine the coding categories of the group interview data. Reflective analysis is “a process which the researcher relies primarily on intuition and judgment in order to portray or evaluate the phenomena being studied” (Gall et al., 1996, p. 459). I chose to use reflective analysis when reviewing the focus group data because it creates a space to continue the Radical Black Feminist tradition of “crafting and passing subjugated knowledge” (Collins, 2002, p. 8-9) from my positionality as a cishet Black woman. I draw from Cynthia Dillard’s endarkened feminism to incorporate an endarkened autoethnographic approach (Lyiscott & Boyd, in press) to further elucidate the ways in which I as the facilitation educator perceive the roles of reciprocity, uncertainty, and risk when facilitating dialogic conversations across differences during and after the inaugural peer dialogue facilitation training program.

**Limitations and COVID-19**

On March 12, 2022, one week before the first peer led co-curricular dialogue series at Panorama College was set to begin, the world stopped. COVID-19 caused mass college and university closings throughout the United States. Students at Panorama
College were to leave campus before the end of the following week. Everything the PDFs and I were planning for came to an abrupt stop. We met the day after Panorama College announced its closure for the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester. We processed our feelings about the pandemic, our disappointments, and our achievements. The PDFs voiced their concerns about the halt in my dissertation data collection. I did not show it in that moment, but I was devastated. It took me a year to revisit this research, and I had to make do with what I had in addition to scheduling a follow-up group interview to not only extract more data to answer my research questions but also to check-in and see how everyone was doing a year after the abrupt conclusion of our peer dialogue facilitation training program and Panorama College. Another limitation of this study is conducting the group interview through Zoom to adhere to COVID-19 protocols. Virtual interview spaces may not allow for the full range of behavioral information (Madriz, 2000). Another potential limitation of using group interviews is the participant observation role of the qualitative researcher because that may alter the behavior of the focus group participants (Madriz, 2000).
CHAPTER 4

EMERGING THEMES

Introduction

This chapter identifies key themes in a group interview with the PDFs and me, one year after the conclusion of the dialogue facilitation training program at Panorama College. These themes are designed to address the following research questions: 1) How do PDFs and their facilitation educator perceive their experiences as facilitators of color one year after their inaugural peer dialogue facilitation training program? 2) How do PDFs and their facilitation educator inform, if at all, each other’s facilitation development after the inaugural peer dialogue facilitation training program? 3) How do PDFs and their facilitation educator experience and navigate obstacles in facilitation? The group interview protocol invited PDFs and me to analyze our life notes created during the facilitation training program. These life notes consist of co-creating “community guidelines,” PDF microfacilitations, cover letters from their application process, and curriculum designs developed between October 2019 and March 2020. Four themes emerged from my reflective analysis of the group interview:

1. PDFs do not perceive themselves as facilitators but use their learned facilitation skills in their everyday lives.

2. I perceive myself as a facilitator, and my understanding of what a facilitator looks like is evolving.

3 A microfacilitation is an exercise in which a co-facilitation pair practices facilitating an activity or a lecturette and receives feedback from their peers and facilitator educator.
3. Practicing risk and vulnerability about strengths and areas of growth deeply informed the facilitation development for PDFs and me.

4. PDFs and I use community guidelines as a tool to navigate obstacles in facilitation

This chapter unpacks each of these themes with quotes extracted from the group interview transcript through an autoethnographic lens. More specifically, in the spirit of Blackgirl autoethnography, I had agency to tell my experience through my situated knowledge as researcher, participant, facilitator, and Black woman social justice educator by demystifying how I’m processing the PDFs’ contributions as well as how I respond to the group interview prompts.

**Themes 1 and 2**

**Theme 1:** PDFs do not perceive themselves as facilitators but identify how they use the facilitation skills learned in their everyday lives.

**Theme 2** I perceive myself as a facilitator, and my understanding of what a facilitator looks like is evolving.

I address the first research question on how PDFs and I perceive each other as facilitators of color by incorporating the following question in the group interview protocol, “Would you describe yourself as a facilitator a year after our PDF training program?” Despite learning various facilitation frameworks and tools, due to COVID-19, the PDFs were not able to formally facilitate a structured dialogue, and I was curious to know if either of those things informed how the PDFs saw themselves as facilitators. Without hesitation, Jane shared:
My first instinct when you said that was do I consider myself a facilitator at all? Maybe because we never actually got to do it. Yeah, actually, I'm sure we do it on the daily settings in little microcosms of dialogues that we're just having in life. I consider myself a mindful participant. I don't know if I consider myself a facilitator yet.

In this excerpt I hear Jane defining her process of becoming a facilitator. When Jane says “Maybe because we never actually got to do it,” I hear her developing her own marker of validity to be a facilitator as formally facilitating a structured dialogue at Panorama College. Since Jane did not have the opportunity to do this, is this the defining characteristic between a mindful participator and a facilitator? However, I heard optimism in Jane’s “yet” because it suggests becoming a facilitator is something she still hopes to achieve and wants the opportunity to facilitate in a structured dialogic space.

Kora did not explicitly call herself a facilitator but identifies the specific areas of her life she applies the facilitation skills acquired from our program. “I think I seek out dialogue in my classes, work, and relationships, and I can bring what I learned as a PDF to all of these areas” and mentioned wanting to continue learning and participating in future dialogue facilitation related work. “I am more confident having a leadership role in facilitation and more comfortable bringing my experiences and thoughts to any dialogue.” Similar to Jane, I gather she wants more formal facilitation experience outside of applying her dialogue facilitation skills within immediate spheres of influence.

Mirabel also did not see herself as a facilitator for similar reasons to Jane and Kora:

Personally, I wouldn’t describe myself as a PDF because I never really got my skills tested outside of my group of family and friends, who I already have a
certain level of comfort around. I feel like it would be a different story if my skills were put to the test with on campus discussions.

I hear a desire from Mirabel to lean into discomfort as a way to develop her facilitation skills. Leaning into discomfort for Mirabel sounds like facilitating conversations with strangers or with people she has less rapport with. I find this particularly interesting because I shared a similar attitude on the value of leaning into discomfort; however, discomfort looked very different for me. For example, I was very comfortable facilitating conversations about power, privilege, and oppression with strangers, but I was uncomfortable potentially challenging my elders or losing my friends if our social justice values were not in alignment. I regret not unpacking what discomfort looks like to the PDFs outside of the container we cultivated as part of the facilitation training program because it would have created more opportunities to inform each other’s facilitation.

Monica also did not see herself as a facilitator. “I would say probably not really, I think, also, because we never really got to do it I kind of like pretended.” The latter part of Monica’s reflection stood out to me the most because it suggests that since she did not facilitate in a formal dialogue space, her skills weren’t real or legitimate.

Lucy mentioned noticing that her facilitator skills came through when she spoke with her friends; however, she also said, “I’m also like not actively thinking of myself as facilitating.” I’m curious to know if Lucy needs to feel as though she is actively facilitating to perceive herself as a facilitator. She did not explicitly say she sees herself as a facilitator.
To be candid, I was slightly disappointed to hear the PDFs did not see themselves as facilitators yet because I thought it was a demonstration of my effectiveness as a facilitation educator. However, after suspending my judgment toward myself, I realized my own journey of perceiving myself as a facilitator was similar. I shared the following during the group interview:

Honestly, I didn't see myself as a facilitator for a long time until I just was constantly doing it like I constantly had gigs where I had to facilitate, and even then, I did that for, you know, 5...6...7 years, and I would say only until recently I started identifying as like a facilitator.

So, you know the skills are there [for you all]. The seed has been planted.

I do not know how many structured dialogues it took for me to perceive myself as a facilitator, but when I believed my conversations with my family and friends were in alignment with how I showed up as a facilitator in structured dialogues was when I began to perceive myself as a facilitator. By naming the importance of my personal relationships in my development as a facilitator, I began to get more curious about what makes a facilitator:

Personally, I don't think something has to be a formal dialogue in order for you to facilitate the conversation, but I will say that because I facilitated very particular spaces, and that are around dialogue, for some reason that affected how I saw myself as a facilitator so I'm still unpacking what that means.

Jane follows my reflections by how she’s unpacking the role of a facilitator:

I think in my head, I struggle with how to be a facilitator and a participant in a conversation at the same time. For some reason in my head when I think facilitator, it's like, oh, I have to be the neutral position guiding a conversation, then logically I'm like, oh, you can still participate like you can still obviously share your thoughts in this as a facilitator, but, yeah, for some reason in my head there's a break in between those two positions that I hope I can bridge that one day but yeah right now for some reason they're separate.
What I find particularly interesting about Jane’s and my reflections was our willingness to be transparent about our evolving understandings of what facilitation means and what it can look like.

Despite identifying the ways in which the PDFs applied their facilitation skills in their everyday lives, they do not perceive themselves as facilitators because they did not have the opportunity to facilitate a structured dialogue at Panorama College with participants outside of their immediate spheres of influence. Although I can resonate with why the PDFs do not see themselves as facilitators because of their lack experience facilitating in a more formal capacity, I see them as facilitators as a result of my own evolving understanding of facilitation.

**Theme 3**

Practicing risk and vulnerability about strengths and areas of growth deeply informed the facilitation development for PDFs and me.

I address the second research question about the ways in which PDFs and I inform each other’s facilitation development by asking the following question in the group interview protocol, “Can you recall a critical moment for you while in the program?” The group was quieter than usual after I asked the question. After a few minutes, I decided to share my critical moment with the PDFs to not only catalyze some emotional recall but to share the impact they as a group have had on my development as a facilitator:

One moment that did stand out for me was when ... I totally forgot how to facilitate the activity. I did not remember the logistics. I did not remember the directions. I think I had to call my facilitator friend to be like “how does this activity go again?” like I forgot. You know, in the moment I hope I think I made
it seem as if it didn't bother me and you know stuff happens, people make mistakes, but I was actually pretty surprised by how much I was ruminating about it and just kind of beating myself [up] like, “I could have done this differently and dadadada,” and then I think the next time we met, I sort of read out this kind of reflection about that experience for me.

After sharing my critical moment during the group interview, I was transported back to that very moment in February 2020, when I stood before the PDFs and read out said reflection, hoping that choosing to take this risk could give insight, normalize, and humanize disappointment as a facilitator:

Why get in your feelings when you can get inspired? What can I learn from that moment? So, I botched the co-facilitation team building activity. I didn’t think as intentionally about the process piece of that activity because I was simultaneously doing other tasks when I was prepping for our meeting tonight. This is not an excuse, but a realization that when it comes to MY area of growth around providing directions [for an activity] I need to eliminate my distractions as much as I can and SLOW DOWN and be more present.

There needs to be more reciprocity: if I'm asking PDFs to slow down and process what they are doing then I need to do the same when I design our meetings.

I don’t want to seem like I'm beating myself up or anything but if I’m not real with myself then who else will be? Some of my mentors’ biggest pedagogical breakthroughs happen through “failure.” In the failure we have a choice: we can ruminate and let the voices of imposter syndrome inform our actions out of fear, shame, and oppression or we embrace the fact that I fell short and reflect on how I can make the most of the situation in a meaningful and authentic way If you were co-facilitating with me at that moment what are some things you could have done to support me?

When I grounded myself back in the present moment of the group interview, I decided to take another risk and share what that moment meant to me. “I think that was the first time that I actually felt comfortable enough to be that vulnerable with you all, and I actually think that changed my practice honestly moving forward.” That moment deeply informed my facilitation practice not only because it humbled and reminded me of my areas of growth, but also because for demonstrating how my vulnerability as an educator could be
used as a pedagogical tool to demystify how to cope and process when we make mistakes. All the PDFs were able to recollect my critical moment and reflected on how that moment informed their own understanding of vulnerability and facilitation.

For example, Jane shared:

Speaking on that moment that you shared I distinctly remember ... of being reminded that vulnerability or sharing vulnerable aspects of whatever you do or how you are, or exist, takes so much strength. I mean most people or even I sometimes think that showing these aspects of yourself it's gonna knock you down a few pegs so people are going to think negatively of you but if anything it just strengthened our team as PDFs. It was a relatable moment of like, “it's okay to drop the ball,” and just come up to, just like not fess up but just share that and just be like “okay, like here's what we're going to do now.” I think it just made everything more smooth. it was more authentic and it didn't knock anyone’s ego ... If anything, it was like, “Oh, why did we hide these things?”

What I find interesting about Jane’s reflection is her last question about why are educators and facilitators not encouraged to normalize moments of error and vulnerability? Jane’s question also sparked my own curiosity about how we teach facilitators and educators, especially from historically marginalized groups on how to discern when to embrace such pedagogical risks.

Other PDFs reflected on their own critical moments during the program, which mostly occurred during the microfacilitations. For example, Kora shared learning about her facilitation strengths when receiving feedback during a microfacilitation:

One of the first facilitation exercises where I was a co-facilitator and Jane gave me feedback that I was an active listener who made her feel comfortable talking and sharing her own experiences with. This showed me that I had the power to actively make someone feel more comfortable in a vulnerable space. I hadn’t given myself that kind of credit in interpersonal relationships before.
What I find most interesting about Kora’s reflection is her acknowledgement of not giving herself enough credit for her active listening skills. Kora suggested that she already knew she was a good listener, but through open and honest feedback from Jane, she was able to see the positive impact her active listening can have on cultivating a community of care and provide her with language on how to translate that preexisting skill into one of her core facilitation values.

Similarly, Mirabel shared when an area of growth in her facilitation was brought to her attention during a microfacilitation activity:

I think one moment was when I helped Lucy out without her explicitly asking me to do so. This was then brought to my attention by Amari in our reflection. I thought that was super powerful because I was trying to aid in our facilitation but was undermining Lucy without realizing it. This event made me realize to rely on my partners more and to trust in our dynamic.

The co-facilitation dynamic Mirabel alluded to in the reflection above speaks to a moment when Lucy stumbled in providing directions for a group activity. What I found particularly powerful about Mirabel’s reflection was how my feedback to her was feedback I received when working with a former co-facilitator in a sustained dialogue. I was transported back to that moment in March of 2018 when I observed that critical moment through a video recorded observation filmed by our IGD coach and realized that I embodied and manifested many of the problematic qualities I spent semesters critiquing in my coursework:

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4 An IGD coach is an advisor to support co-facilitation pairs when they are facilitating a dialogue. IGD coaches and co-facilitators typically meet before and after a dialogue session to debrief and plan for the next session.
The topic for this dialogue was racism on college campuses, and the engagement was surprisingly low. My co-facilitator and I decided I would take the lead on the large group dialogue about an activity where student participants expressed if a statement around racism and gender oppression on campus were true for them. The long silences, drooping posture and eyelids during the large group dialogue told me that I was either asking the wrong questions or the topic was not salient for this group of student participants. However, I was so focused on the participants to practice voicing in response to the low levels of engagement throughout the semester, I failed to hear the lack of voicing from my co-facilitator. The latter was noticeable through my exhaustive expository affirmations to encourage more voicing of the participants, which in result, silenced my co-facilitator. The few moments of student participant voicing focused on similarities within the group and not on the differences that were typically connected to privilege, especially around gender. When my co-facilitator finally made space for herself to steer the dialogue toward that necessary conversation about privilege and difference, I shut her down because I felt she did not affirm the moments of vulnerable storytelling from two participants. In response, she remained silent for the remainder of the large group dialogue, and I struggled, to get the group to meet my perception of this session’s content goals alone and failed.

That feedback taught me that the intentions behind my actions, despite how positive they may be, may have a negative impact on someone else, in this case my co-facilitator. It was powerful to see Mirabel take away that lesson as well. Practicing open and honest communication about strengths and areas of growth deeply informed the facilitation development for PDFs and myself by encouraging us to embrace vulnerability as a model of pedagogical possibility.

**Theme 4**

PDFs use community guidelines as a tool to navigate obstacles in facilitation.

I addressed the third research question about navigating obstacles in facilitation by asking the following question in the group interview protocol: “Do y'all still incorporate any of these guidelines today?” and “Can you provide any examples of experiencing
challenges with facilitating those conversations?” To help jog the PDFs’ memories, we revisited the community guidelines we had developed during the dialogue facilitation training program that were designed with the intention to create a space where all of us can show up as our full selves during the program:

- Use “I” Statements, to make sure that you are voicing your own experience without assuming that others share it
- Make Space, Take Space
- Confidentiality - Whatever is said in this space stays here
- Active listening
- Identifying biases and assumptions
- Suspension of judgment
- Voicing
- Reflection and inquiry
- Respect

When answering the question, “Do y'all still incorporate any of these guidelines today?” Most PDFs coupled their responses with moments they struggled with or encountered obstacles in facilitating dialogic conversations across differences. For example, Lucy
reflected on navigating obstacles in her sociology class after the conclusion of the facilitation training program:

I was taking a class about a few heavy topics, like you know, Latinx immigration, protest, that kind of stuff, and sometimes there were people in the class that didn't read the room concerning the other people who are taking the class and who had lived experiences. But there were points where I had to do lead class discussion, and I definitely try to apply the community guidelines. At some point, for my class, my friend and I talked to the professor about making community guidelines because we did for people taking up too much space. So yeah, I didn't really realize it until now, I was like, “Oh, this is what I was doing.”

I hear Lucy applying the community guidelines as a tool of engagement when she facilitated a class discussion. I specifically hear Lucy advocating for her professor to implement the community guidelines to create a space where her classmates can participate equitably.

The PDFs also identified the following community guidelines when navigating obstacles in facilitation: active listening, reflection and inquiry, suspension of judgment, and identifying assumptions and biases. For example, Jane described one of her biggest challenges is discerning when to facilitate conversations as an entry level employee at her full-time job when she notices her colleagues are not practicing active listening:

I’m always on the receiving end and always be on the listening side of a situation, and sometimes like with the power dynamics or just even within coworkers its deciding, “Is that a boundary that I can cross? Is that a boundary I should cross?”

[…] It's like, how do you tell your boss [to] take a step back or maybe you want to sit down and think about that again before you say it out loud.

An obstacle I hear Jane navigating is discerning when to practice voicing as a facilitator, given the power dynamics of her being an entry level employee wanting to facilitate a
conversation with her senior colleagues and even her direct supervisor. It seems unclear if Jane is willing or able to take the risk that comes with voicing and therefore facilitating a conversation about social issues with her boss. However, Jane does apply the community guidelines to regulate her own emotions when observing challenging conversations across difference.

If I were to be working on something more, it [would] be suspension of judgment, especially in the workplace. It's not like every conversation is like a community guidelines situation, but I think especially when your desk is literally five feet from your boss who can be problematic sometimes. I think a lot of moments I'm in my head using the community guidelines, but it's not something that's been shared with the whole team. So, I guess it's hard to navigate that sometimes. I guess when you like it feels like you're the only one that's trying to create a solid conversation out of something.

It appears Jane is not ready at this moment to engage as a facilitator with her colleagues. Perhaps this is an example of her practicing what she previously mentioned as a mindful participant? I am also hearing Jane expressing frustration that her efforts to engage, potentially as a mindful participant, are not reciprocated by her colleagues. I deeply resonated with Jane’s reflection as a new full-time professional myself and shared how I’ve approached similar challenges by practicing reflection and inquiry to determine my boundaries on when to engage as a facilitator:

Yeah, I just feel like I've been kind of forced to not only slow down but by slowing down it's been encouraging me at least to think about, you know, I don't have to do all of these things every day with every conversation like let me figure out, you know, context to context, what makes the most sense and what I'm willing and able to engage in.

Mirabel shared how she used the community guidelines to have more effective conversations with her mother:
I believe these community guidelines are still relevant because I use them in conversation specifically with my family. Especially with my mother, where communication has always been particularly difficult, it is always valuable to circle back to these guidelines. Some I use are the active listening and the use of “I” statements in order to situate my own perspective and make sure I am hearing her points right.

I hear Mirabel naming her specific obstacles in facilitation that take place when communicating with her mother, and she not only uses “I” statements to control for any biases and assumptions but also active listening to control for any biases or assumptions she may have. Mirabel also applied these community guidelines and established boundaries when navigating obstacles facilitating conversations with her father.

I would also add: take a break when things get too heated. During conversations over the vaccination during the summer, my father was extremely opposed to receiving one. It was only after multiple dispersed conversations over time that we were finally able to get him to agree. I feel like this would not have been possible with only one conversation.

Isaac talked about incorporating the community guidelines when navigating challenging conversations with his parents:

Sometimes people really do need to be judged like honestly this year, my parents needed to ... I mean they were going to be like they're going to be, but you know sometimes like dysfunction, or general just misunderstanding can kind of percolate if it isn't checked. So that's why that's hard, at least in facilitation with somebody who's problematic to not judge, but at the same time, I think that guideline and others has helped me because I feel like it kind of helped me stay in that lane of, not neutrality, but just like having good intentions, and I feel like it helped me stay on the high road that I wanted to be, even when people were trippin.

I hear Isaac demonstrating respect and suspension of judgment in his reflection. For example, Isaac is respecting why some people choose to judge others in moments of
dysfunction and chaos, especially due to the cumulative impact of ineffective communication. However, I also hear Isaac naming the value of incorporating suspension of judgment when facilitating challenging conversations with his parents not only as a grounding technique to process his triggers but also to show respect as a model of possibility for his parents.

Lucy applied the community guidelines to challenge and support her peers during a small group activity in a sociology class:

My group was a first year, sophomore, junior, and me, and the first year was completely lost ... and then the sophomore’s a biochem major ... but when we were preparing, we had to basically facilitate about a novel that touched on sociological topics, and he [the biochem major] kept trying to bring up like theorists, and we're like, no, no, this is applying the theory not explaining it ... “How does this relate to you and how do you think it relates to people?” and he was having such a hard time grasping onto that, that I was like, “Wow, his worldview is so different.”

I hear Lucy modeling reflection and inquiry and identifying biases and assumptions at this moment. For example, by asking her peer, “How does this relate to you and how do you think it relates to people?” she’s encouraging them to practice reflexivity through inquiry. I think Lucy is practicing reflection when she makes the connection that their difference in worldview may be connected to the different lived experiences.

The PDFs experienced obstacles in facilitation when having challenging conversations with family, friends, and colleagues. The PDFs were also able to incorporate active listening, reflection and inquiry, suspension of judgment, and identifying assumptions and biases community guidelines to navigate obstacles in facilitating conversations with family, friends, colleagues, and even themselves.
Chapter Summary

This chapter presented three themes that emerged from a group interview with the PDFs and me, one year after the conclusion of the dialogue facilitation training program at Panorama College. The group interview protocol invited PDFs and me to analyze our life notes created during the facilitation training program. These life notes consisted of co-creating “community guidelines,” PDF microfacilitations, cover letters from their application process, and curriculum designs developed between October 2019 and March 2020.

The first theme that emerged is PDFs do not perceive themselves as facilitators yet but use their learned facilitation skills in their everyday lives. Despite identifying the ways in which the PDFs apply their facilitation skills in their everyday lives, the PDFs do not perceive themselves as facilitators because they did not have the opportunity to facilitate a structured dialogue at Panorama College with participants outside of their immediate spheres of influence. Although I can resonate with why the PDFs do not see themselves as facilitators because of their lack experience facilitating in a more formal capacity, I see them as facilitators as a result of my own evolving understanding of facilitation.

The second theme that emerged is practicing open and honest communication about strengths and areas of growth deeply informed the facilitation development for PDFs and me. This theme emerged from a Blackgirl autoethnographic life note I shared with the PDFs during the peer facilitation training program that informed my facilitation development. The PDFs also shared critical moments during microfacilitations in which interactions with me and the other PDFs informed their facilitation development.
The third theme that emerged is PDFs use community guidelines as a tool to navigate obstacles in facilitation. The PDFs experienced obstacles in facilitation when having challenging conversations with family, friends, and colleagues. The PDFs were able to incorporate active listening, reflection and inquiry, suspension of judgment, and identifying assumptions and biases community guidelines to navigate obstacles in facilitating conversations with family, friends, colleagues, and even themselves.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to capture the ways in which six Peer Dialogue Facilitators (PDFs) and I, a Black woman and facilitation educator, perceive ourselves as facilitators of color and navigate facilitation obstacles amidst our new global pandemic reality. Four major themes that emerged from the data:

1. PDFs do not perceive themselves as facilitators but use their learned facilitation skills in their everyday lives.

2. I perceive myself as a facilitator and my understanding of what a facilitator looks like is evolving.

3. Practicing risk and vulnerability about strengths and areas of growth deeply informed the facilitation development for PDFs and me.

4. PDFs and I use community guidelines as a tool to navigate obstacles in facilitation.

These findings reveal the importance of embracing risk and vulnerability among educators and students of dialogue facilitation seen in challenging traditional roles between the latter, cultivating our identities as facilitators outside of the academy, and applying facilitation frameworks in our everyday lives.

Finding #1 illustrates the role of the academy in the PDFs and my perception of ourselves as facilitators through the disjuncture between PDFs not seeing themselves as
facilitators and applying facilitation skills in their everyday lives. Finding #2
demonstrates the ways in which the PDFs experience and perceive themselves as
facilitators informs my evolving conceptualization about the scope of dialogue facilitation
inside and outside of the academy. Finding #3 demonstrates the ways in which risk and
vulnerability are reciprocated between educators and students informs their facilitation
development. Finding #4 demonstrates the efficacy of some facilitation frameworks when
facilitating in our everyday lives.

This chapter serves as a discussion of the findings from Chapter 4. The first
section applies an endarkened feminist epistemology to critically examine our tethers to
the academy when assessing our credibility as facilitators. The following section covers
the significance of vulnerability and risk in dialogue facilitation training by incorporating
Hill’s (2017) *embodied vulnerability* in unpacking my Blackgirl autoethnography
(Boylorn, 2016) with the PDFs and the PDFs unpacking their critical learning moments
during the facilitation training program. The subsequent section expands the conversation
to risk and vulnerability when navigating obstacles in facilitation, such as navigating
power and familial dynamics. The closing sections of the chapter invites readers to a
conversation about the application of endarkened feminist epistemological approaches,
embodied vulnerability, and autoethnography in dialogue facilitation training programs.
The last section provides suggestions on future research and graduate program designs
for teacher education programs of the like to implement endarkened feminist
epistemological approaches to support and retain Black women graduate students in
education.

**Our Tethers to Academic Credibility**
The first research question sought to determine how PDFs and I perceive our experiences as facilitators of color one year after our participation in the inaugural co-curricular peer dialogue facilitation program at Panorama College. One theme emerging from the data is PDFs do not perceive themselves as facilitators despite identifying the application of their facilitation skills in their everyday lives. For example, in the previous chapter, Jane said, “Do I consider myself a facilitator at all? Maybe because we never actually got to do it,” which was quickly followed with, “I'm sure we do it on the daily settings in little microcosms of dialogues that we're just having in life.” The other PDFs showed a similar pattern of not perceiving themselves as facilitators coupled with examples of applying facilitation skills in their everyday lives. For example, Mirabel, said, “Personally, I wouldn’t describe myself as a PDF because I never really got my skills tested outside of my group of family and friends” and also shared, “Community guidelines are still relevant because I use them in conversation specifically with my family. Especially with my mother, where communication has always been particularly difficult.”

Monica also shared,

I would say probably not really, I think, also, because we never really got to do it I kind of like pretended” but also named, “I do think that it did definitely change or definitely made me more conscious of some of the things I do in conversations.

The PDFs’ cultivation of themselves as facilitators appears to be tethered to Panorama College, a historically and predominantly white institution. Dillard (2000) invited us to reimagine our work outside the standards imposed by historically White
institutions, like the academy, in her call for an epistemic shift away from researchers’
tethers to the academy as a marker of validity for our work and for ourselves in her
framing of endarkened feminist epistemological approaches:

The metaphor is that the process of research is to follow a recipe, and the myth is
that this is the truth. These are illusions that researchers perpetuate. We perpetuate
them by the way we present our final research texts and by the way we carefully
delete the voice of the researcher, our own voice, from the text. (p. 336)

I echo Dillard’s (2000) call for an epistemic shift, but in the context of the PDFs and their
perception of themselves as facilitators and for facilitation in general. In response to this
call for an epistemic shift, I shared my autoethnographic life note with the PDFs that
“considers how structural forces influence the lived experiences of black women and
gives black women agency to tell their own stories and to do so within a context of
situated knowledge” (Boylorn, 2016, p. 55). My life note captures aspects of Dillard’s
(2000) definition of wisdom which emphasizes, “the importance of naming; telling
healing stories; listening and connecting” (p. 68) and shared my own process of
understanding myself as a facilitator of color by naming the importance of my personal
relationships in my facilitation development in addition to my evolving understanding of
a facilitator:

Personally, I don't think something has to be a formal dialogue in order for you to
facilitate the conversation but I will say that because I facilitated very particular
spaces, and that are around dialogue, for some reason that affected how I saw
myself as a facilitator so I'm still unpacking what that means.

Here, I am “naming” and “connecting” my own tethers to the academy and the ways in
which that informed my own epistemic shift on how I perceive myself as a facilitator. My
“naming” and “connecting” also illustrates an epistemic shift to disrupt traditional roles between educators and students as well as researchers and the researched by intentionally placing myself and my experiences in the conversation to, “seek understanding and meaning-making from various members of the social and/or cultural community under study” (Dillard, 2000, p. 673).

By sharing my autoethnographic life note with the PDFs, I am also part of the “community under study” since autoethnographies intentionally reposition researchers as the researched. My intention was not to impose my new understanding of facilitation onto the PDFs but to demystify my own critical reflexive process in my evolving understanding of what facilitation can look like and reimagining the scope of facilitation practice outside the boundaries of the academy.

**Embodied Vulnerability Needs to be Reciprocal**

The second research question sought to determine how PDFs and I inform, if at all, each other’s facilitation development one year after the inaugural peer dialogue facilitation training program. A theme that emerged from the data in response to the second research question is the role of open and honest communication in the PDFs and my facilitation development. During the group interview, I shared a critical moment I experienced during the peer dialogue facilitation training program when I forgot how to facilitate an activity designed for the PDFs to understand their leadership styles. I wrote a *life note* later that evening to process the disappointment I felt in my facilitation of that activity. At the next meeting, I took a pedagogical risk and shared that *life note* with the PDFs because as Okpalaoka and Dillard (2011) said, “We have the responsibility, once we have learned something or have healed something, to go and teach, to heal someone
else” (p. 69). The peer facilitators not only expressed gratitude for my critical vulnerability but also expressed how they have never seen an educator do anything like that before. Okpalaoka and Dillard also spoke to these vulnerable pedagogical moments, “What we are sharing is more than data, that we are giving our stories as gifts to one another” (p. 69). My intent for sharing my reflection with the peer facilitators was a gift or a model of possibility in demystifying how educators process challenging situations. The decision to share my life note with the PDFs aligns with what Hill (2017) called embodied vulnerability,

Embodied vulnerability is the intentional practice of offering the body up as a tool in a dialogic process intended to incite critical, personal, and collective reflection. It is a practice where the practitioner knowingly places their, hir, her, or his body on the line and where there is something to be learned by everyone—including the person placing their body on the line. (p. 438).

Sharing my life note was an act of embodied vulnerability because I offered my autoethnographic reflection to incite a dialogic conversation about navigating disappointment as a facilitator while also using it as a pedagogical tool for myself and for the PDFs about processing disappointment in facilitation performance and process tangible changes in my preparation and curriculum design to prevent my oversight from happening again. Hill (2017) also spoke on the impact embodied vulnerability can have on educators because “it forges a space for practitioners to work through, and critically reflect upon, their relationships with their bodies and students” (p. 439). We can look to the work being done in teacher education around embodiment as a pedagogical tool to further understand the possibilities of embodied vulnerability in the context of facilitation training and Blackgirl autoethnography. Embodied vulnerability is a way to illustrate the complex interdependent relationship between educators and students or, in the context of
my study, PDFs and I, through open and honest communication about the ways in which we inform each other's facilitation development. For example, when revisiting my *life note* in the group interview, Jane shared,

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It was a relatable moment of, it's okay to drop the ball, ... and just be, “Okay, like here's what we're going to do now.” I think it just made everything more smooth, it was more authentic and it didn't knock anyone's ego.
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Here, Jane is demonstrating and reciprocating “critical, personal, and collective reflection” of my *embodied vulnerability* by sharing how that moment informed her perception of facilitation as an authentically human experience, where mistakes and reflections among educators and students are not only acknowledged but also normalized. Okpalaoka and Dillard (2011) captured the potential outcomes of educators, especially Black women educators, when we decide to take a risk and practice *embodied vulnerability*, “when anyone offers us a glimpse into their pain, dreams, hopes, whatever…. we should receive it with open hands, gently and honorable, and treasure it for the privilege it is” (p. 68). Okpalaoka and Dillard called for another epistemic shift in the power dynamics between researchers and the researched, educators and students, and in the case of this study, facilitator trainees and facilitator educators. This epistemic shift encourages us to see the possibilities when we untether ourselves from “the notion of objectivity in research within positivist and post-positivist epistemologies and methods of the academy that is historically answerable to white coloniality” (Lyiscott & Boyd, forthcoming) and what we can learn from each other when we embrace and reciprocate embodied vulnerability. Jane saw a possibility of model of humanizing facilitation practice, and I learned from Jane that my embodied vulnerability was both purposeful and helpful to her evolving understanding of dialogue facilitation.
Other PDFs reflected on their own critical moments during the program. For example, Mirabel shares when an area of growth in her facilitation was brought to her attention during a collective debrief on her micro facilitation:

I think one moment was when I helped Lucy out without her explicitly asking me to do so. This was then brought to my attention by Amari in our reflection. I thought that was super powerful because I was trying to aid in our facilitation but was undermining Lucy without realizing it. This event made me realize to rely on my partners more and to trust in our dynamic.

Microfacilitations require a co-facilitation pair to facilitate a particular activity, topic, or conceptual framework in front of the other PDFs and me. After the microfacilitation is complete, the other PDFs and I identify strengths and collectively workshop areas of growth. Mirabel’s reflection suggests microfacilitations may create possibilities for PDFs to practice *embodied vulnerability*. As I mentioned earlier, *embodied vulnerability* is the practice of “offering the body up as a tool in a dialogic process intended to incite critical, personal, and collective reflection” (Hill, 2017, p. 438). In the context of microfacilitations, PDFs are using their bodies as vessels of knowledge to not only demonstrate the facilitation content and processes we covered during the training but also practice vulnerability. Mirabel was able to corporally experience how to facilitate an activity with a co-facilitator instead of just reading about it. The microfacilitation process also requires a level of vulnerability which may look like “risks of not knowing, risks of failing” (Brantmeir, 2013, p. 2) when debriefing her areas of growth in navigating her co-facilitation dynamic. The microfacilitation may have allowed Mirabel to mediate how her body is understood in a formal dialogue space and in the teaching/learning processes of dialogue facilitation (Hill, 2017). Therefore, creating opportunities for PDFs to experience *embodied vulnerability* is not only an individual and collective pedagogical
tool but also another opportunity for the PDFs to reciprocate vulnerability among each other and with me. In this instance with Mirabel, I provided her with feedback on her facilitation dynamic by sharing a moment or, what Dillard (2000) described as, wisdom from my previous experience navigating a similar co-facilitation dynamic several years ago, encapsulating what Dillard (2000) highlighted “when shared and passed on, become the collective wisdom” (p. 67). In that moment, I am sharing the wisdom my dialogue coach gave me, and passing it down to Mirabel, to continue the cycle of collective wisdom on this subject. My wisdom on the subject pulls from Killermann and Bolger’s (2016) acronym, W.H.A.L.E. (Wait, Hesitate, Ask [again], Listen, then Explain), which I learned during my own facilitation training. This acronym provides an effective template to support Mirabel's process of not over-facilitating because the first two elements of the acronym require her to not do anything. For Mirabel, there’s a risk in not doing anything because it can feel intimidating, uncomfortable, and vulnerable (Killermann & Bolger, 2016) to sit in silence if the group did not respond immediately to Lucy’s activity directions. The last two elements of the acronym gave Mirabel additional tools to not necessarily intervene and take over the microfacilitation activity but to support her cofacilitator by inviting her to explain or clarify the directions again.

Kora also shared a critical moment during the facilitation training program that occurred during her microfacilitation:

One of the first facilitation exercises where I was a co-facilitator and Jane gave me feedback that I was an active listener who made her feel comfortable talking and sharing her own experiences with. This showed me that I had the power to actively make someone feel more comfortable in a vulnerable space. I hadn’t given myself that kind of credit in interpersonal relationships before.
Similar to Mirabel, Kora got the corporal experience of facilitating an activity with her co-facilitator Jane and was willing to be vulnerable to receive collective feedback from the other PDFs and me. In Kora’s microfacilitation, she shared the impact of her *embodied vulnerability* during her microfacilitation demonstrates what collective feedback looks like to identify strengths and not just critical reflexive practice. Kora is practicing embodied vulnerability by doing a microfacilitation in front of her peers. Doing a microfacilitation does require the PDFs to also put their bodies on the line for potential critique and an entry point for dialogue for the entire group (Hill, 2017).

Although intimidating, what I find most interesting about Kora’s reflection is her acknowledgment of not giving herself enough credit for her active listening skills. Kora suggested that she already knew she was a good listener, but through open and honest feedback from Jane, she was able to see the positive impact her active listening can have on cultivating a community of care and provide her with language on how to translate that preexisting skill into one of her core facilitation values.

### Embodied Vulnerability Facilitation is Risky

The third research question sought to determine how PDFs and I experienced and navigated obstacles in our facilitation. A theme that emerged from the data that addressed the latter is identifying community guidelines as a tool to navigate obstacles in facilitation. The PDFs specifically incorporated voicing “I” statements, active listening, reflection and inquiry, suspension of judgment, and identifying assumptions and biases when navigating those facilitating obstacles. Jane described one of her biggest obstacles
in facilitation is navigating power dynamics as an entry level full-time employee when she notices her colleagues are not practicing active listening:

I find my frustrations building sometimes it's like I’m always on the receiving end and always be on the listening side of a situation, and sometimes like with the power dynamics or just even within coworkers its deciding, “Is that a boundary that I can cross? Is that a boundary I should cross?”

I hear Jane struggling to incorporate our “voicing” community guideline that was influenced by Zuniga's (2016) “Building Blocks of Dialogue” framework. The “Building Blocks of Dialogue” describes voicing as “speaking your own voice; engaging in courageous speech; learning to discover what we think and feel; learning to trust ourselves.” Jane’s struggle in discerning whether she should practice voicing as a facilitator with her senior colleagues, suggests there is a risk if she were to cross what she describes as a “boundary.” It seems unclear if Jane is willing or able to take the risk that comes with facilitating a conversation about social issues with her boss.

Jane’s struggle to discern if she is willing and able to take the risk of voicing her facilitation skills is comparable to the risk scholar-practitioners experience when choosing to untether ourselves from the standards of the academy that is historically answerable to white coloniality. For example, adopting experimental research practices like autoethnography (Shoemaker, 2013), embracing the epistemic shifts of Dillard’s endarkened feminist approaches, or practicing Hill’s embodied vulnerability are all examples of risks that “involves embracing uncertainties, making amends with potential associated costs, and assuming responsibility for conscious decisions to be vulnerable” (Hill, 2014). Jane may be risking her credibility as a new employee, jeopardizing a potential letter of recommendation from her boss or may experience retaliation for
“voicing” her facilitation skills that acknowledge the ways in which her colleagues disrupt, perpetuate, and remain complicit in manifestations of oppression.

I responded to Jane’s critical learning moment by inviting her to incorporate another community guideline, reflection, and inquiry, which encourages, “holding the door open enough for new perceptions, thoughts, and feelings to emerge” and “asking questions and holding an attitude of curiosity” (Zuniga, 2016) to determine her boundaries on when to engage as a facilitator. I provide an example of how I navigated similar situations in the past,

Yeah, I just feel I've been kind of forced to not only slow down but by slowing down it's been encouraging me at least to think about, [how] I don't have to do all of these things [facilitate] every day with every conversation like let me figure out, you know, context to context, what makes the most sense and what I'm willing and able to engage in.

Here, I pull from my own wisdom (Dillard, 2000) as a Black woman facilitator, specifically when I began to feel burnt out facilitating conversations with white acquaintances who knowingly and unknowingly perpetuate racist ideologies through microaggressive behaviors and comments. I applied reflection and inquiry towards myself, to remind myself that I will always have autonomy in determining when I facilitate. Choosing to protect our energy and our peace as people of color, especially as a Black woman, is arguably a different type of risk, “This is risk-taking, naming our many circumstances and focusing on ourselves for a change” (Okpalaoka & Dillard, 2011, p. 69)

Lucy also had to navigate power dynamics when she approached her professor about incorporating the community guidelines in her sociology class. “At some point, for
my class, my friend and I talked to the professor about making community guidelines because we did for people taking up too much space.” Lucy decided to approach her professor after noticing “people in the class that didn't read the room concerning the other people who are taking the class and who had lived experiences.” It appears that Lucy advocated for the guidelines to disrupt the possibility of oppressive power dynamics to be recreated in the classroom. For Lucy to advocate for the community guidelines directly to her professor is risky. Not only does Lucy not know how her professor can respond but their response could negatively impact Lucy’s grade in the class or lead to other forms of retaliation. However, she persisted.

Mirabel shares how she used the community guidelines to have more effective conversations with her parents. “Some of the community guidelines I use are the active listening and the use of ‘I’ statements in order to situate my own perspective and make sure I am hearing her [mother’s] points right.”

I would also add: take a break when things get too heated. During conversations over the vaccination during the summer, my father was extremely opposed to receiving a one. It was only after multiple dispersed conversations over time that we were finally able to get him to agree. I feel like this would not have been possible with only one conversation. Mirabel’s obstacles in facilitating conversations with her parents are rooted in varying communication styles among Mirabel and her parents which may lead to ineffective conversations on controversial topics such as the COVID-19 vaccine. Mirabel specifically mentions applying the active listening community guideline informed by Zuniga’s (2016) “Building Blocks of Dialogue” framework, which described it as, “Listening attentively; Being present, focusing on the moment; Not letting ourselves get
lost in our own internal reactions (Weiler, 1994).” Mirabel also mentions using “I” statements community guideline which the PDFs and I defined as speaking from your own experience to avoid making generalizable claims that can essentialize social groups’ experiences. I also hear Mirabel setting boundaries in her willingness to facilitate conversations with her father about the COVID-19 vaccine. Going back to Hill’s framing of risks as “embracing uncertainties, making amends with potential associated costs, and assuming responsibility for conscious decisions to be vulnerable” (Hill, 2017, p. 438), for Mirabel, the associated costs of challenging power dynamics between her and a parent is riddled with uncertainty, especially in this current socio-political moment after the Trump administration. There are myriad articles from The New York Times, The Cut, The Atlantic, with titles, such as My Parents Wouldn’t Get Vaxxed to Attend My Wedding (Chapin, 2021), The Vaccine Tore Her Family Apart. Could A Death Bring Them Back Together?” (Jamison, 2021), and Vaccine Wars: How the Decision Not to Get the Shot is Tearing Loved Ones Apart (Abramson, 2021) that highlight the associated costs of deciding to facilitate a conversation about the vaccine with her father. The physiological risks for Mirabel is literally the uncertainty of how COVID-19 can affect the health of herself and her family, especially if her father chose to stay unvaccinated.

Isaac talked about incorporating the community guidelines when navigating challenging conversations with his parents:

So that's why that's hard, at least in facilitation with somebody who's problematic to not judge, but at the same time, I think that guideline and others has helped me because I feel like it kind of helped me stay in that lane of, not neutrality, but just like having good intentions and I feel like it helped me stay on the high road that I wanted to be, even when people were trippin.
I hear Isaac demonstrating the respect and suspension of judgment community guidelines in his critical learning moment. Zuniga’s (2016) “Building Blocks of Dialogue” framework describes respect as, “To look again…to see what we may have missed; To honor boundaries” and described suspension of judgment as “being aware of our own judgments; Developing the ability to notice and to witness without evaluating; Developing an openness to ‘difference.’” Isaac’s particular thoughts on validating the choice to not suspend judgment and “stay on the high road” suggests to me an underlying commentary about navigating triggers. Isaac used the previously mentioned building blocks of dialogue to, “stay on the high road...even when people be trippin.” For Isaac to step into a facilitator role with his parents is also him leaning into the risk of the “potential associated costs, and assuming responsibility for conscious decisions to be vulnerable” (Hill, 2017, p. 438) by potentially being triggered or having lasting consequences with his family.

My risky facilitation moment was when I shared my personal autoethnographic life note with the PDFs to process my disappointment in how I facilitated an activity during the training program. We learned from Okpalaoka and Dillard (2011) for Black women in particular, “This is risk-taking, naming our many circumstances and focusing on ourselves for a change” (p. 69) however, I also found myself reflecting on Brantmeier (2013) problematization of educator vulnerability in class or dialogue spaces, “Do the stories advance student introspection and reflection, build trust and community in the classroom? Or do they come from work that the educator should be doing on himself/herself outside the classroom walls?” (p. 101). Perhaps this is also the risk that comes with incorporating embodied vulnerability in facilitation practice especially for
Black women because we not only risk unintentionally projecting our unprocessed trauma onto our students but also as Okpalaoka and Dillard (2011) tell us, “We are making ourselves susceptible to harm from that experience [...] risk falling back into silence for the sake of self-preservation” (p. 68). When incorporating embodied vulnerability into our facilitation practice, there's risks involved for both facilitation educators and facilitator trainees, which is why such a practice as Hill (2017) said “is to teach dangerously and with reckless abandon” (p. 440). However, with risks come space for great possibility and in the case of embodied vulnerability, it can

[It can] boost … the likelihood that discomfort is seen as a norm and expectation in the classroom. Second, it demonstrates the visceral and cerebral potential of education. Third, and finally, it orchestrates a different and more intimate relationship between professor and student.

Overall, embodied vulnerability centers the body and makes it an explicit component to the educational experience” (Hill, 2017, p. 440).

I do think it is worth circling back to Brantmeier’s problematization of vulnerability in that despite all the pedagogical possibilities of incorporating embodied vulnerability in dialogue facilitator training, it is also important to acknowledge the active discernment that must take place, especially for Black women, when deciding to practice embodied vulnerability in the classroom or for us to process our vulnerability in our more personal spheres. Demystifying that process of discernment would also be a helpful process for me as a Black woman facilitator not only to humanize Black women facilitator experiences but also recognize, “the cultural assumptions and lived realities of Black women while acknowledging the specificities often ignored in scholarship that presents Black women as a homogenous group” (Boylorn, 2016, p. 55-56).
**Implications**

So, what does incorporating an endarkened autoethnographic approach to dialogue facilitator training mean for social justice education in higher education settings? For me, it feels like a lifetime worth of historical events were condensed into the last five years with a zealous resurgence of hate crimes and overt manifestations of oppression towards historically marginalized groups at interpersonal, institutional, and ideological levels. IGD programs and its variations across colleges and universities is a way students, staff, and faculty are processing this socio-political moment. I am a witness to the transformative impact IGD can do for both students and practitioners and the ways in which it can fall short and perpetuate the very manifestations of oppression we problematize in those spaces. More specifically, to the latter point, in the last five years of participating, facilitating, and educating about dialogues, I experienced more symbolic inclusion (Collins, 2002) of Black women than embodied inclusion across. A reminder of symbolic inclusion in education “in which the texts of Black women writers are welcome in the multicultural classroom while actual Black women are not” (Collins, 2002, p. 6). From the latter example, I believe *symbolic inclusion* shifts the discourse toward a larger conversation about integrity in social justice education. *Symbolic inclusion* invites us to interrogate if we are embodying the social justice rhetoric, we align ourselves with by seeing if our surroundings are a reflection of the communities we are answerable to. For dialogue work, social justice education, and teaching education to reach the potential of creating liberatory and sustainable transformational change, we may need a different epistemological approach. This study looked at an endarkened feminist epistemological approach to not only further examine the complex interdependent relationships between
facilitator educators and facilitation trainees but to literally make myself be seen in the research and praxis I needed to feel seen in. To see the change I wanted in dialogue facilitation, I chose to be the change through this study to offer an outsider-within (Collins, 2002) epistemic, pedagogical, and programmatic prospective to “foster new angles of vision on oppression” (p. 11).

**Recommendations and Possibilities**

Circling back to one element of autoethnographic assemblage I mentioned in Chapter 3, “commenting back to the profession” reminds us that, “epiphany and transformative self-discovery can come from investigating mundane, everyday professional practices with a given cultural context” (Rodriguez et al., 2017, p. 64). The purpose of this section is to comment back to the profession of dialogue in higher education settings about the ways in which we can use those “mundane” or everyday decisions from facilitator educators like myself to department chairs of programs doing dialogue work, to college deans. These mundane everyday decisions are opportunities to move away from symbolic inclusion and towards embodied inclusion.

For Black women dialogue facilitator educators, I recommend leaning into problematizing discernment of risk when incorporating embodied vulnerability, if at all, in facilitation practice. Black women are often homogenized in research and literature; therefore, what works for me when choosing to practice embodied vulnerability may not be transferable to other Black women as a result of myriad variables, such as different intersecting social identities and privileges, leading to different experiences and knowledges.
For higher education administrators of programs incorporating dialogue work and specifically dialogue facilitator training in their course of study, I suggest curricular affinity spaces for Black and non-Black women, femmes, and nonbinary folks of color to speak candidly about their unique experiences with facilitating and/or teaching and workshop pedagogical approaches or facilitation curriculum designs collectively. I recommend a curricular model because co-curricular affinity spaces typically already exist in higher education settings, and we see this in research on Sister Circles (Niskode-Dossett et al., 2012), and Black placemaking (Tichavakunda, 2020). Although these co-curricular spaces are designed to instill a sense of belonging for students on historically White campuses, creating these spaces in a curricular environment may help bring a sense of belonging for historically marginalized groups, especially Black women, femmes, and nonbinary folks into their facilitation, teaching practices, and research.

For IGD research I recommend more studies and literature on the experiences of IGD facilitation educators and IGD coaches. This constituent of educators has such a wealth of knowledge that is often confined in practicum classes and post-dialogue debriefs that need to be shared and studied. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there is still an urgent need to participate and facilitate conversations about power, privilege, and oppression. Some of my most impactful experiences that have changed my facilitation practice and who I am as an educator often came from those “mundane” conversations with facilitation educators and IGD coaches. We also need more intragroup and affinity-based dialogue research on historically marginalized groups. There is so much diversity within historically marginalized groups, and intragroup dialogues are opportunities to not only learn more nuanced experiences and perspectives but also to actively disaggregate the experiences of historically marginalized groups in education research.
Finally, I recommend more research on co-curricular dialogue programs. Co-curricular dialogues increase accessibility and autonomy for members of the campus community to engage in conversations across difference without enrolling in a class and it will be helpful to learn more about the ways in which different campuses are operationalizing these programs and the impact it may have on campus climate. Co-curricular dialogue programs also provide more opportunities to financially compensate facilitators, especially facilitators of color for the emotional labor that goes into facilitating these conversations.
APPENDIX A

PEER DIALOGUE FACILITATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Job description

Peer Dialogue Facilitator (PDF)

Do you want to facilitate challenging conversations across difference but don’t know where to start? Interested in being actively engaged in building community on campus? The Resource Centers Team presents the #AmherstChatBack Daring to Dialogue Peer to Peer Edition, where you can train to be a Peer Dialogue Facilitator (PDF). The Resource Centers Team will hire 6 PDFs to develop curriculum and facilitate dialogues with students on various topics utilizing an intersectional social justice framework. Through these dialogues PDFs will foster a community of awareness, compassion, and critical engagement among students from various social identities.

Responsibilities

- PDFs will participate in comprehensive training(s) focused on justice and equity content with the Dialogue Coordinator.
- PDFs will co-create with the Dialogue Coordinator curriculum for the #AmherstChatBack Peer to Peer Edition dialogue series.
- PDFs will work collaboratively to provide feedback on curriculum through group process.
- PDFs will attend weekly meetings with the Dialogue Coordinator.
- PDFs will be responsible for advertising to and recruitment of participants.
- PDFs will support the overall logistics of the #AmherstChatBack Peer to Peer Edition dialogue series including but not limited to (ordering food, setting up space, debriefs and assessment).
- PDFs will perform other tasks and duties as assigned related to the #AmherstChatBack Peer to Peer Edition dialogue series.

Requirements

- Must be interested in learning about inclusion, equity, and social justice topics.
- Must be enrolled at Amherst College
- PDFs are required to attend all #AmherstChatBack Peer to Peer Edition
Must be able to work 5-7 hours per week and will be compensated $12.00/hr. Submit your resume and a 1-page response (on a word document, including your name on the top right-hand corner) of the following prompts to aboyd@umass.edu:

- What qualities and skills would you offer as a PDF?
- Describe how the PDF position will benefit your personal and professional growth.
- Share any ideas for dialogue topics and why.
- Applications are due Monday, 10/7/2019
APPENDIX B

PEER DIALOGUE FACILITATOR HIRING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions:

1. What experiences do you have in engaging in difficult conversations?

2. Tell me about your knowledge on the following concepts so to help develop curriculum for PDFs around content:
   
   i. Racism-
   ii. Antiblackness
   iii. Classism –
   iv. Ableism -
   v. Settler colonialism –
   vi. Feminism –
   vii. Queer & Trans identities –
   viii. Intersectionality -
   
   a. What are three things you need to be successful in this role?
   
   b. What do you foresee as your main challenges in this role?
   
   c. Are you available Wednesdays from 3–4 PM during the Fall 2019 semester?
   
   d. Would you be willing to facilitate in the Spring 2020 semester?

   e. Would you be able to come to campus during j-term for a retreat/finalize programming logistics for the #AmherstChatChat: Daring to Dialogue Peer to Peer Edition?
      
      a. How many hours can you commit to this position?
3. Would you be willing to participate in my dissertation research? It is completely voluntary.

4. What kind of supervisor best suits your personality and professional practice? *What do you need from a supervisor in order to be effective?*

5. Do you have any questions for us?
Title of Research
Project: AN ENDARKENED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO PEER CO-CURRICULAR DIALOGUE FACILITATION TRAINING

Investigator(s): Amari Boyd email: aboyd@amherst.edu phone: 910-527-9603 AC#: 001854377 0

Printed Name and Signature of Faculty Supervisor: [Signature]
11/15/2019

Answer questions in spaces below and/or provide numbered answers on separate sheets. Please include copies of all measures used in your experiment, as well as the informed consent document, debriefing forms, and parent permission letter (if applicable).

1. Briefly describe the purpose of this study:

The purpose of this project is to capture the ways six undergraduate peer dialogue facilitators (PDFs) and myself as a part-time dialogue coordinator for inform, if at all, each other's pedagogy while training and developing the inaugural peer dialogue facilitator program for the 2019-2020 academic year.
2. Participants: Describe the number and type of participants, the source from which they will be recruited, the method of recruitment. [Those under age 18, except college students, require written parent permission.]

- There are 6 peer dialogue facilitators (PDFs)
- All PDFs are over the age of 18
- All PDFs are currently matriculated at [amherst college]
- 5 PDFs identify as women; 1 PDF identifies as a man
- All PDFs identify as people of color
  - PDFs were selected based on an application process co-created and approved by the Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion where students submitted a cover letter and resume
  - PDFs were selected based on their interest in learning how to facilitate across difference, preexisting knowledge on diversity and equity content, and weekly availability
  - PDFs are paid $12/hr. and expected to commit 5hrs/week to the dialogue program
  - Funding to compensate PDFs comes from [amherst college] Office of Student Affairs, the Resource Centers Team and the Mellon Foundation

**Amount of time needed per participant:**
- Fall 2019 semester - 7 weeks, 10/22/2019 -12/10/2019
- Spring 2020 semester TBD

ID: cebfb20c5ffab1f922b8cf3d4f33c3942f055e71

3. Describe the procedure (what participants will be asked to do) in detail:
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PDFs will co-create with the Dialogue Coordinator curriculum in preparation for the Spring 2020 [dialogue series]: Peer to Peer Edition dialogue series.

PDFs will work collaboratively to provide feedback on curriculum through group process:

- PDFs will be responsible for planning the Fall 2019 #AmherstChatBack, Staff, and Faculty Community Luncheon and facilitate breakout sessions with participants. PDFs will also announce the Spring 2020 [dialogue series]: Peer to Peer Edition dialogue series.

- PDFs will be responsible for advertising to and recruitment of undergraduate participants for the Spring 2020 [dialogue series]: Peer to Peer Edition dialogue series.

- PDFs will support the overall logistics of the #AmherstChatBack Peer to Peer Edition dialogue series including but not limited to (ordering food, setting up space, debriefs and assessment).

4. If the research requires any deception, provide explicit justification:

N/A

5. Risk to participants: Given the fact that in any study it is possible for participants to experience some degree of discomfort, anxiety, concern about failure, etc., what will you do to minimize the possibility that this will occur, and how will you deal with it if it does occur?

Since this study is also a facilitation training program, it incorporates a dialogic curriculum which requires participants to debrief about their experiences after participating in activities facilitated by a dialogue expert (myself). The foundations of my pedagogy are built on the following building blocks of dialogue (Zuniga, 2016) that often alleviates discomfort, anxiety, and concerns about failure:

- Active listening
  - Listening attentively
  - Being present, focusing on the moment
  - Not letting ourselves get lost in our own internal reactions (Weiler, 1994)

- Reflection and inquiry
  - Reflection is about:
  - Holding the door open enough for new perceptions, thoughts, and feelings to emerge
Gaining clarity about what “it” means to you  ■ Taking in what has been said, thinking things through ○ Inquiry is about:

■ Asking questions and holding an attitude of curiosity, opening the door for new insights •

Generating new questions based on your reflections and social location (Ellinor & Girard, 1998; Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994; Isaac; 1999; Weiler, 1994)

● Suspension of judgement
  ○ Being aware of our own judgments
  ○ Holding them softly so you can hear the other person
  ○ Developing the ability to notice and to witness without evaluating
  ○ Developing an openness to “difference” (Weiler, 1994; Ellinor & Girard, 1998)

● Respect
  ○ To look again... to see what we may have missed
    ○ To honor boundaries – you don’t intrude and at the same time you don’t withhold or distance yourself (Isaacs, 1999)

● Identifying assumptions/biases
  ○ Recognizing and making assumptions/biases explicit
  ○ Being aware of what we don’t notice or say because of our assumptions
  ○ “Peeling the onion” to get to different levels of understanding (Weiler, 1994)

● Voicing
  ○ Speak your own voice
  ○ Engaging in courageous speech
  ○ What needs to be expressed now?
  ○ What is my intention and purpose here?
  ○ Learning to discover what we think and feel
  ○ Learning to trust ourselves (e.g., thoughts, emotional reactions, impulses (hooks, 1994; Isaacs, 1999)}
6. How will you obtain informed consent?

[Describe procedure, and attach copies of forms or letters]

- PDFs had a 30-minute interview on Thursday 10/5/2019 and 10/6/2019 where they were notified after their acceptance of the position of the possible option of participating in a doctoral study which includes collecting their verbal and written reflections during the Fall 2019 semester facilitation trainings and eventually the 2020 dialogue program. All PDFs consented to participate in the study after the interview, and also notified they will receive a consent form within the first 2 weeks of the Fall 2019 training program. PDFs were also notified that they can agree to opt out of the study at any point, which will not impact their facilitation training experience.

7. How will you debrief participants?

[Describe procedure, and attach copies of debriefing letter; if the research involves any deception, specifically explain appropriate debriefing procedures]

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○ What is one thing you learned today?
○ One thing you still have a question about?
○ What worked for your participation today?
○ What didn’t work for your participation today?
○ (required response) Would you like to continue participating in the doctoral study
  ■ Yes ■ No
  ○ (required response) Would you like your contributions from today’s session included in the doctoral study?
  ■ Yes ■
  No
● PDFs will then share whatever aspects of their written reflection they feel comfortable with in the large group

8. Participants' rights:

A: How will privacy be guaranteed? [Please include a description of how the data will be handled and stored to insure privacy]

● PDFs and I will collaboratively develop a list of community guidelines in the first session to hold each other accountable in creating an environment where they can fully participate. This usually includes a guideline on confidentiality which emphasizes if someone is vulnerable in the space the details of that person’s contribution stays within the space, but the lessons individuals may draw from that contribution can leave.

● Some of the written reflections generated by the PDFs, with their ongoing consent, will be saved as data. It will be digitally scanned and uploaded into a private virtual hard-drive (Box). The folder will require a password to view the materials. All written reflections will be anonymous.

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9. Ethics Training

[Please list all study personnel and the dates that each researcher completed the required ethics training program]
Title of Study: Investigator(s):

Exploring Pedagogical Possibilities Among Undergraduate Peer Dialogue Facilitators and A Graduate Social Justice Educator

The following informed consent is required for any person involved in research study. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at

I understand that:

1. My participation is voluntary.

2. I may withdraw my consent and discontinue participation in this study (or any portion thereof) at any time without bearing any negative consequences. I will receive full credit for participation regardless of how much of the experiment I complete.
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_________________________________________Signature

_________________________________________Print Name

_________________________________________Date

Please send me a report on the group results of this research project upon its completion:

YES NO

Address to which the report should be sent:
Title of Research Project: AN ENDARKENED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO PEER CO-CURRICULAR DIALOGUE FACILITATION TRAINING

Investigator(s): Amari Boyd
email: aboyd@panorama.edu
phone: 910-527-9603

AC#: 001854377 0

Printed Name and Signature of Faculty Supervisor: Angie Tissi-Gassoway

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Email completed Ethics Review Form, Consent Form, and all supporting documents to Emily Jacobson in the Dean of the Faculty Office at ejacobson@panorama.edu.
PANORAMA COLLEGE
Protection of Human Subjects

CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: Investigator(s):

AN ENDARKENED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO PEER CO-CURRICULAR DIALOGUE FACILITATION TRAINING

The following informed consent is required for any person involved in research study. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects at Panorama College.

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________________________________________ Signature

________________________________________ Print Name

________________________________________ Date

Please send me a report on the group results of this research project upon its completion:

YES   NO

*Address to which the report should be sent: __________________________*
APPENDIX F

CURRICULUM DESIGNS

What is community? How do your identities impact your sense of community?

This is an opportunity to dialogue about the ways we are connected and the ways in which we struggle to connect as a community of students, staff and faculty.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date/Time</td>
<td>Tuesday, 12/10/19; 3PM - 4PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intended Audience &amp; Population</td>
<td>College Students, Faculty &amp; Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator(s)</td>
<td>PDFs &amp; Amari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Learning Goals &amp; Outcomes</td>
<td>Content Goal (What)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Identify building blocks of dialogue through community guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Discuss the ways building blocks of dialogue can shape the way we make/engage in community/build connections across difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Identifying biases and assumptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suspension of judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voicing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Resources & Materials | ● Tablecloth and posters to make space aesthetic welcoming & allow participants to see themselves in the space.  
Food and eating supplies  
生姜花园  
○ get extra plates and utensils from WGC | Print out of building blocks of dialogue  
Laptop to connect to video and/or images  
Paper, markers, and pens  
Index cards/post-its for assessment  
● Speakers for music to play throughout | Borrow from WGC  
Room setup  
○ Have projector screen display poster & play music |  
3/4 big round tables and out them in a giant circle.  
check RSVP to estimate # of chairs |  
Anticipated Budget | $200 for food |
Welcome & Lunch (10 minutes)

Welcome Participants-- Ask folks to get lunch

- Amari & PDFs share their pronouns (why we do this) in addition to their roles

Jane invites large group for introductions

- name
- pronoun (why we do this)
- favorite holiday dessert
- what brought you here

- Amari - Talk about the purpose of the space--critical conversations across difference, gain dialogue skills, community building--

We’ve had 4 semesters of

- Initiative originally created in the Office of Diversity & Inclusion and currently housed in the Office of Student Affairs led by the Resource Center Team
- #AmherstChatBack: Unpacking Misconceptions

Fall 2018 semester

1 hour session || 7 weeks

- Mostly POC student participants, co-facilitators reflected social identities

- #AmherstChatBack: Students, Staff & Faculty Dialogue Luncheon Series

Spring 2019 semester

1 hour sessions || 5 weeks

- Mostly professional staff, co-facilitators reflected professional roles
- Innovative dialogue model
- 2 facilitators
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non sustained, non fixed cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informed by a critical intergroup dialogic mode</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant incentives

logistics:

there are all gender restrooms on this floor and in the basement
mens and womens restrooms are on this floor

- we understand if you can’t stay the entire time, we ask that you please sign in and any feedback is great feedback so please complete the exit ticket in the back, there are directions on the table :)

Community Guidelines (5 minutes) - Lucy (scribe) & Mirabel

Define community guidelines

- Before we start our discussion, it is important to set some ground rules
- Community guidelines are mutually agreed among rules that we all collectively make for the space so that everyone feels comfortable and respected while they share their beliefs, truths, and perspectives.
- We are making a commitment to follow these ideals so that we can have a productive dialogue.

Mirabel - Provide 1-2 examples

- Use “I” Statements, to make sure that you are voicing your own experience without assuming that others share it
- Make Space, Take Space, this is just to make sure that we make space for everyone to speak freely but also make sure we contribute to the conversation

Confidentiality - Whatever is said in this space stays here

- Ask participants for examples of community guidelines
- Active listening
<table>
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</tbody>
</table>

- This is a living document and we can come back to this at any time

**Isaac** transitions

- These community guidelines are the building blocks for dialogue which allows us to build bridges across differences, and they create spaces like this to help us rethink what a campus community could and should look like. _We’re here to facilitate these engagements and cultivate connections and understanding together._

**Dialogue starter (8 min) -**

- **Isaac** will invite participants to break off into 3 groups
  - Group 1: Kora & Isaac
  - Group 2: Monica & Lucy
  - Group 3: Mirabel & Jane
- **Isaac leads**
  - **Individual reflection**
- **Prompt: what is your definition of community? (5 min)**
Dialogue IN SMALL GROUPS (20min)

- ● General Feedback on Reflection ●

What came up for folx?

- ● What are shared values that you find necessary to cultivate community?

Personal History/Experience

- ● What were your earliest messages, whether positive, negative or neutral about community?

○ If you hold different values from others in your community, how do you reconcile those tensions?

○ How has your outlook on community changed over time? If not, why?

○ Did connection show up in anyone’s definition of community? If so, in what ways? If not, why?

○ How have your definitions of community changed since coming to Amherst?

○ In what ways do these messages impact the ways we embrace & reject community today?

Ideal Community/Institutional Connection ●

Who is included in your vision of community?

- ● Who do we intentionally and unintentionally leave out of our community?

- ● What are the ways we connect as a community at [blank]? What are the ways we struggle with that?

Privilege

○ How do your marginalized identities affect your ideas or realities of community?
○ How do your privileged identities affect your ideas of community?

**Come back as large group**

PDFs share highlights from their small group

**transition into closing**

**Close out (5 min)**

What is ONE thing you need to cultivate community at Amherst?

○ What is ONE thing that can you bring to cultivate community at Amherst?

**Exit Ticket (5 min Assessment)** -

● If you were to attend future #AmherstChatBack dialogues what is something you would like to talk about that was brought up in this conversation?

What is one thing you learned today

One thing you still have a question about

what worked for your participation today

what didn’t work for your participation today
REFERENCES


Hernandez, J. (2021, September 1). Hate crimes reach the highest level in more than a decade. NPR. https://www.npr.org/2021/08/31/1032932257/hate-crimes-reach-the-highest-level-in-more-than-a-decade


Temple, C. N. (2010). The emergence of Sankofa practice in the United States: A


Facilitating intergroup dialogues: Bridging differences, catalyzing change.
Stylus.

