

# **Inhabiting Critical Spaces: Teaching and Learning From the Margins at Ryerson University**

## **Purpose**

The information contained in this document is intended to be a resource for a wide audience of instructors, students, and administrative staff in the Ryerson community, as well as the general public. Its contents should be treated as a resource from which readers can understand the meanings of and practices associated with teaching and learning from the margins. The comments, perspectives, and suggestions in this handbook are designed in order to share the knowledge and practices of critical pedagogies with those interested in successfully integrating these into progressive university-level education. It is our hope that the information within this document provides a rich foundation from which greater discussions of equity, inclusivity, and social justice will begin. These are integral to the realities of inhabiting space in the diverse city of Toronto and are part of the objectives of Ryerson University's 2008-2013 Academic Plan.

This handbook is intended for:

- Instructors who either teach from the margins and/or teach students positioned at the margins;
- Students who are interested in understanding how some instructors adopt critical pedagogies in the classroom, and how fellow students understand learning from the margins;
- Administrators who are interested in how integral parts of Ryerson University's 2008-2013 Academic Plan are practiced in the classroom; and
- Members of the broader public/community who wish to understand some of the ways teaching and learning from the margins unfolds, is experienced and nurtured at Ryerson University.

In addition to the resources provided by the Learning and Teaching Office (LTO) that guide faculty in creating inclusive classrooms, this handbook aims to offer experiences of teaching and learning from the margins as well as teaching and learning when viewed *as* marginal.

## Introduction

In the spring of 2011, our group of five professors met to discuss our pedagogy and teaching experiences in instructing undergraduate and graduate classes at Ryerson. We represented a diverse range of: academic ranks (tenured and tenured track professors); ages; and different subject positions (i.e., racialized women, queer identified women, immigrants, etc.). We shared stories about things such as: teaching courses that cover different subjects from those that students usually encounter; courses that students are either excited about or resist profoundly; and the strategies adopted when introducing students to non-mainstream knowledge and ideas about which they are largely unfamiliar. We realized that these conversations were built upon brief department corridor ‘chats’ and ‘check-ins’ and end of the day office discussions where colleagues usually vented frustrations with the daily minutia of teaching and sought advice and support. Through the sharing of stories, we became aware of how the material in many of our courses challenged students’ worldviews and stood in stark contrast to the knowledge acquired in many of their other classes. As discussions evolved, the project, *Teaching and Learning from the Margins*, started to take shape.

What follows is a brief description of the impetus of our project and how we organized discussions on teaching and learning from the margins in Spring 2012. We then present the voices and perspectives of those who participated in discussions on the topic and include their suggestions on how to effectively foster the integration of critical pedagogies in teaching and learning practices at Ryerson University.

## Teaching and Learning from the Margins: The Project

In collaboration with the LTO<sup>1</sup>, this project builds upon pedagogical resources and theories of equity in higher education (see Ahmed, 2010, 2012; Fumia, 2012; James, 2007; Dei & Calliste, 2000; hooks, 1994, 2010; Giroux, 2011; Smith, 2012; also see literature review in Appendices). While these works take up issues around how equity can be better practiced and incorporated into everyday educational experiences, they also discuss and theorize *critical pedagogy* and its place in the classrooms of higher learning. Our study, while related to existing literature, represents a departure in that we were interested in: a) understanding how fellow Ryerson instructors define the parameters of critical pedagogy; b) how they put

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<sup>1</sup> We wish to thank Ryerson’s Learning and Teaching Office for funding this research and the Department of Sociology for helping us to extend research assistant hours.

their own philosophies of such pedagogy into practice; and c) the nature of their classroom experiences in this pursuit. Further, as the title of our project indicates, we were also interested in how students make sense of critical pedagogies and the place of marginal or non-mainstream knowledge in learning and the acquisition of knowledge in the university setting.

Teaching and learning from the margins is, on the one hand, self-explanatory in a generation of teachers and learners familiar with the influences of civil rights, ‘waves’ of women’s movements, critical race theories, queer theory, theories of disability and equity rights and so on. On the other hand, an awareness of these contemporary social movements is only a beginning in understanding how these theories are reflected and engaged within our classroom spaces, either intentionally or unexpectedly.

At the core of this study is an understanding that teaching from the margins in higher education is an approach that is inclusive and is committed to challenging systems of oppression, questioning the mainstream, and promoting social justice. Further, teaching and learning from the margins emphasizes how marginalized social positions are never exclusive of one another but are rather interconnected. That is, an intersectional approach to understanding teaching and learning from the margins is one that examines how the marginalized subjectivities of people are inseparable (e.g. Black and female; gay, Muslim and male with a disability; LGBTTIQ2S<sup>2</sup> and Aboriginal). In short, many of us inhabit multiple positions of marginality simultaneously and this is but one feature that is front and centre in this research.

It is widely demonstrated throughout Ryerson that there are strongly stated commitments to diversity and inclusion. Along with the numerous resources provided by the LTO, there is a Diversity Institute, the first of its kind, and a new senior position, the Vice President/Vice Provost of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. According to the 2009 Annual Employment Equity Report, Ryerson’s student body is 53% visible minorities, 56% women, 1.3% Aboriginal and 5.7% persons with disabilities. According to the 2011 Annual Employment Equity Report the faculty complement is 53.3% women, .8% Aboriginal, 31.1% visible minorities and 3.6% persons with disabilities.

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<sup>2</sup> LGBTTIQ2S is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, intersexed, queer identified and two-spirited.

Ryerson has a number of statements that commit to diversity such as the following found in the 2011 Annual Employment Report:

Placing value on diversity is not just a policy or obligation; it's a core value that Ryerson upholds as a key to our innovation and in shaping the future of the university. Our goal is to develop and implement strategies to promote an open, diverse, and inclusive organization and to identify and eliminate systemic barriers.

We found that even with such strong statements supporting diversity at Ryerson, students and faculty had much to say about the failure of this commitment in practice. Even recalling the impetus for establishing the Anti-Racism Task Force shows us that many day-to-day incidents occur to remind marginalized students and faculty that they do not have a secure place in the university setting.<sup>3</sup> Having strong commitments in policy and in written statements are important, but it may also be a way to celebrate diversity and avoid doing the hard work that diversity and inclusion demands in order for those located on the margins to have a secure place (Ahmed, 2006; 2012).

## **Rationale: A Selected Review of the Literature**

The concern of this study—that academics and administrators consider what it might mean to think of a diverse university from the position of those who inhabit and embody that diversity—resonates with many scholars concerned with contemporary pedagogical issues. Scholarship on the crucial interrelationship of diversity, equity, and social justice—which we call ‘critical pedagogy’ throughout this handbook—draws attention to how the subjectivities of instructors and students influence classroom dynamics. From within this space, feminist, anti-racist, anti-oppression scholars and instructors have raised a series of issues including but not limited to the nature of the classroom as a safer space. Embedded in this critical pedagogy approach is the link between: a) experiential learning and race; and b) class and gender. In addition, there are other factors to consider such as the need to decolonize and globalize knowledge, the inclusion of Indigenous

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<sup>3</sup> A few examples of some of the incidents leading up to the establishment of the Task Force were: Black female students left the basketball team after a barrage of racist slurs were shouted at them by the coach. When a basketball game was organized in 2007 by the Ryerson United Black Students group to support these women, it was heavily policed and the unusual step of installing metal detectors to check the people and bags of the participants unsettled the Black student body who felt sure they were racially profiled. In 2008, a poster for a Palestinian Ryerson Students' Union (RSU) election candidate was defaced. It read, “9/11 Terrorist.” There were also incidents targeting East Africans and LGBTTIQ2S students and faculty.

knowledges, the risks of disrupting the comfort students are accustomed to in higher education instruction, as well as the hazards of 'embodying diversity.'

### *Institutional Committees and Reports*

While committed to diversity-in-education as a philosophical response to the increasing multiculturalism of societies in North America, many universities, including Ryerson, continue to struggle with the pedagogical and institutional implications of 'diversity.' A review of related literature suggests that universities have yet to come to grips with the kinds of structural and attitudinal shifts that are required in teaching, scholarly research contributions, and service to successfully and equitably integrate faculty and students who are women, racialised groups, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disability, and LGBTTIQ2S.

From 2001-2012, Canadian universities produced 15 major reports related to race and racism, diversity, gender and sexism, Aboriginals, sexual minorities and homo/transphobia, disability and accessibility, employment and recruitment equity. Some of these reports were occasioned by increased racist, Islamophobic or homophobic events but the majority were led by the need to address persistent systemic discrimination towards women, Aboriginal, racialised, transgendered persons and persons with disabilities. While the findings and recommendations are varied according to the conditions of report initiatives and impetus, focus of the report, and the specific demographic and cultural context of each institution, almost all recommendations called for efforts at multiple levels: curricular (e.g. diversifying and globalizing), programmatic (decolonizing Eurocentric structures and knowledges), and institutional (identifying and addressing race, cultural and class privilege in hiring, promotion, tenure, and scholarly research contributions) in order to address systemic issues affecting students and faculty that are racialized, LGBTTIQ2S, persons with disabilities and non-traditional students. The need for programs for recruitment and retention of Aboriginal students and faculty and closer relationship with Aboriginal communities and elders was also identified as a pressing issue in reports related to Aboriginal issues.

### *Selected Literature Framework*

A review of recent scholarship on critical pedagogy is illustrative for two reasons. First, it is important in order to situate our participants' understanding of critical pedagogy. Second, it is important to provide a sense of the challenges associated with attempts to adopt critical pedagogy principles in the classroom and

recommendations for ‘best practices’ that embrace such pedagogy in the existing literature.

Scholars of critical pedagogy situate the university squarely within the dynamics of a multiethnic, multicultural and rapidly globalizing world, thus disrupting conventional ideas of the university as a self-contained and unfettered space of knowledge production and dissemination. They understand the diverse classroom as a dense intermingling of historical experiences and understandings that compels all educators to be reflective about their pedagogical strategies (Redmond 2012, Wagner, A. E. 2005; Leibowitz, B., Bozalek, V., Carolissen, R., Nicholls, L., Rohleder, P., & Swartz, L. 2010). Above all they ask us to understand reading and writing as important modes of agentive action and social transformation. They acknowledge that hierarchies and structural privilege can be a pedagogy of discomfort, especially because of its assertion that many valid perspectives may exist together. That is, a critical pedagogy replaces the dominant idea that “only one of us can be right” and is open to different epistemological perspectives (Boler 1999 cited in Redmond 2010). Thus the pedagogy of diversity or critical pedagogy has implications for the learning of all students since they are thrust into roles that, as Redmond (2010) argues, are not entirely of their own making. Finally, it may be argued that critical pedagogy is not a ‘choice’ that some individuals may adopt as a mode of teaching but an obligation that is often imposed upon those who cannot easily slip into the traditional profiles of ‘professor’ and ‘student’ due to the fact that they already inhabit positions of marginality.

We appreciate the challenges when negotiating classroom dynamics in moments of disruption, moments when either/both the students and instructors are taken off-guard by a student’s or instructor’s reaction. We nonetheless believe that there are constructive practices that can be incorporated to address these difficult moments. Such practices can be shaped by actively engaging with the literature, some of which is included in an annotated list of the some Canadian and U.S. literature on critical pedagogy published during the past ten years (see Appendix). The following are some insights from this literature that we consider to be especially worthy of consideration:

- Depending on their own historical and cultural experiences students bring very different expectations to the classroom. The representation of the classroom as a safer space does not guarantee protection against the discomfort that may ensue for many students. Some scholars argue that teachers should not attempt to erase or collapse differences in the interest of producing common understanding but name and identify

the obstacles that prevent individuals from developing such understanding in a pluralistic society (Redmond 2010; Boler 1999);

- Experiential learning and critical pedagogy are seen to be closely linked since both seek to link education to the goals of social justice. Some of the key benefits of experiential learning programs, however, (i.e., students as agents of social change) may be diluted since experiential learning programs often neglect the reflective component that is offered by critical pedagogical practices (Breunig, 2005);
- A sincere and solid effort to embrace diversity in the context of North American societies must include the integration of Aboriginal knowledge and decentering of Eurocentric assumptions by recruiting Aboriginal scholars and students and building closer relationships with Aboriginal communities and elders; and
- Finally, critical pedagogy is a multilevel strategy that needs to be supported at the departmental, program and institutional level if the true goal of university education—building a socially just society—is to be realized.

Our project augments the findings and knowledge brought forward by the above studies in that its purpose is to ascertain how instructors and students at Ryerson already and actively participate in implementing critical pedagogy in their classroom experiences. In short, it is our hope that the findings, and more significantly, the perspectives of this project's participants, offer an opportunity for those interested in nurturing and cultivating inclusive pedagogical spaces to learn of the successes and challenges experienced by those already engaged in this work.

## **Methodology: What We Did**

Our research teases out some of the specific ways in which critical pedagogies erupt in practice inside and outside of our classrooms. We organized seven focus group sessions with students, CUPE sessional faculty, and tenure-track and tenured faculty at Ryerson in the spring of 2012 with the intention of discussing critical pedagogy practices and experiences in teaching and learning. The focus group approach was selected in order to provide the opportunity for instructors and students to not only provide the research team with feedback on relevant topics but to also share experiences, resources, and perspectives on teaching and learning

from the margins with those who already engaged or were interested in critical pedagogies.

Each of the seven focus groups convened for an average of 1.5 hours. Two student groups were co-facilitated by the project's graduate and undergraduate research assistants (n = 6 participants). Two CUPE sessional groups were facilitated by one tenured member of the research team (n = 6 participants). Two tenure-track groups were facilitated by a tenure-track research team member (n = 6 participants). Finally, one tenured faculty group was organized and facilitated by a tenured member of the research team (n = 5 participants). All focus groups, with the exception of those involving students, responded to the same set of questions during their respective sessions. Logically, questions posed to student participants were slightly different from those posed in sessional and faculty groups.

### *The Participants*

In addition to the varied career levels and positions listed above, the focus groups were a heterogeneous sample of faculty and students representing embodiments and subjectivities across race, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, age, and persons with disabilities. It was interesting to note that when we submitted the call for participation, the range of respondents was broader than expected. While this a pilot project, an even broader representation could be tapped if greater resources and time were available.

### *Some examples of questions posed to sessional and faculty instructor groups*

- What does it mean to teach from the margins and can you provide an example that exemplifies it (either your own or one told to you)?
- What have been your experiences of teaching 'difficult' knowledges, that is, knowledge that some students resist, or may make them feel awkward, etc.?
- Can you think of any instances where you felt that you successfully engaged students with difficult knowledges? Why do you think your attempt was successful?

### *Some examples of questions posed to student groups*



- Why is it important to acknowledge race, gender, sexuality and other differences in the classroom? How does this affect your learning?
- Please think back to an experience when race, gender, sexuality were discussed in a classroom. What kind of classroom dynamics did you notice? How was the discussion received by students? How would you describe the feedback?
- Do you think it was a successful discussion? If so what made it work? What were some of the problems?

What follows is an account of how instructors and students responded to questions posed and discussed issues related to teaching and learning from the margins with one another and group facilitators. In the proceeding sections, we provide basic synopses of topics discussed, terms and concepts used, and the verbatim passages gleaned from the seven focus group transcripts to highlight the voices of study participants.

## **The Pedagogy of Difficult Knowledges<sup>4</sup>: Instructor Perspectives on Critical Curricula**

While we, as members of the research team, had our own ideas about how critical curricula, ‘teaching from the margins,’ and critical pedagogies are defined, the purpose of focus group sessions was to learn how instructors understand and explain these terms in their own work and classroom practices.

### **Question**

*What does it mean to ‘teach from the margins’ and can you provide some examples?*

When asked to explain and provide examples of ‘teaching from the margins,’ instructors explained that doing so meant (among other things): a) maintaining a critical perspective throughout the duration of the entire term of a course; b) ‘troubling’ or unsettling students’ understandings of what course material is about; c) using non-mainstream knowledge as a primary reference point, as opposed to that of the mainstream; and d) recognizing how personal subjectivities (i.e., an

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<sup>4</sup> The term ‘difficult knowledges’ is borrowed from Britzman, D. (1998). *Lost Subjects, Contested Objects: Toward a Psychoanalytic Inquiry of Learning*. New York: State University of New York Press.

instructor's actual and perceived subjectivities) affect instructor-student interactions.

## Responses

[O]n one hand it's who we are and on another hand it's the subject matter. The subject matter [...] is marginal, like it's not the mainstream kind of thing, you wouldn't get Caribbean Studies for example in say an institution that is predominantly white, you wouldn't get that, right? But also teaching from the margins is to teach a subject like Canadian history and to read against the grain. So push a question, to be critical and to retain that level of critical engagement throughout the course which often means troubling students' understandings of what the course is supposed to be (CUPE instructor, female);

So [there are] three elements or so: the question of teaching in less conventional kinds of areas and about areas that are outside the mainstream of the discipline; teaching from a more critical perspective about those; and also [having] yourself implicated (Tenured instructor, female);

The text books or the kind of materials that these students have experienced so far are very a) white bread...b) looking at [discipline name] from a certain perspective that isn't particularly critical and that's really all they know. To me really even just asking them to think critically about the ideas they have about the role of [topics specific to discipline] and what that means in our society, that's for me what I call teaching at the margins, because they are [mainly] taught about just one perspective (Untenured instructor, female); and

So teaching at the margins is just always feeling like there is a whole other world, and a whole other perspective [and] that somehow it's upon my shoulders to try and communicate, within the spaces that I have, to the students (Untenured instructor, female)

### **A definition of what it means to teach from the margins**

From the above responses, what it means to teach from the margins depends on where one is situated in terms of gender, race, age, sexuality, ethnicity/religion and institutional status such as part-time, tenured, non-tenured faculty and so on. From the responses of faculty crossing these intersectionalities, we propose a tentative definition of what it means to teach from the margins:

It is related to the kind of courses that we are deemed capable of teaching, students' cultural assessments of our competency to teach canonical knowledge, the legitimacy of our knowledge and information and informal modes of authority construction among our peers and students. It is about troubling students' understanding of what it means to know the world and feeling the pressure to lighten, through laughter and play, issues and histories that are serious and painful for ourselves. It is also a persistent process of feeling responsible for the kinds of knowledge one validates in the classroom, accountability towards the contexts of struggles in which our learning is rooted and moments of self-doubt about whether one can fulfill these multiple placed responsibilities.

The following commentary by an Untenured instructor reinforces our tentative definition:

There is an exercise I do in the first class, which is around sex and gender, I will ask students how many sexes are there ...I ask them to give me a number and explain to me how you got to the number and then from there spin out [to] how do you make the classification, who is making the classifications and then try to get them, and this is the hard part, to see the connections to the patriarchy and hetero-normativity and you know ideology...how that fits together. That's harder to get them to do but they do do it. So I do an exercise like that where I really try to get them to the [discipline] sense of challenging what is taken for granted stuff (Untenured instructor, male).

## **Student Perspectives on Critical Curricula**

Recruiting student participants for the project was crucial for us in that understanding critical pedagogy from the student-learner (as opposed to the instructor-learner) perspective provides rich information about how teaching practices are experienced and critiqued. The inclusion of student participants also was important because as instructors we are not always able to assess or observe their reflections on our teaching, classroom management, and overall philosophy of knowledge-sharing beyond limited course evaluation processes. Student knowledge and engagement in this project was also critical because the demographics and subject positions of the Ryerson student body play an equal role in how instructors cultivate and respond to diverse populations regardless of academic discipline.

Our approach to soliciting the perspectives of Ryerson students was to task our research assistants with the responsibility of formulating the questions for these groups. This was a preferred strategy because we wanted to be as inclusive as possible in the research process and provide the opportunity for student assistants to play a role in setting the parameters with regards to how students understand critical pedagogy. Also, as a research team, it was important to communicate to potential student participants that our study was as much about the university's instructors, as it was about its largest and influential group—students.

## **Question**

*Are issues of sexism, classism, racism, homophobia and ableism discussed in the classes that you have taken at Ryerson? How do these discussions arise and how often?*

Student participants were well-aware of and cognizant of the extent to which the importance of integrating critical pedagogy was taken up by course instructors and in their respective disciplines of study. For the most part, when asked about their awareness of issues related to marginality being integrated and addressed as a part of course curriculum, students reported that: a) few courses include and make critical pedagogy and marginal knowledge a feature of educational experience; b) many instructors seem unprepared or ill-equipped to negotiate issues related to marginality and difference in the classroom; c) social, gender, sexual, and class privilege, to name a few, are not recognized by a majority of instructors as playing a dominant role in shaping the classroom environment; and d) when taken up in courses, issues related to, and classroom discussion and debate about, marginality are not as in-depth as they should be.

## **Responses**

The few times [these issues were] discussed in my experience it was in a [name of discipline] (class) and it really only touched on racism and sexism and I don't think we've ever spoken about homophobia and transphobia and other forms of oppression. Yeah that's about the extent of it. It is very brief it was maybe a third of [one] class. (Undergraduate student, male);

(...) while we did talk about those things, I didn't feel as if they were challenged enough, it was more just pointing out the biases in [discipline] rather than critically analyzing them and realizing what

structures are put in place ... I would say that it lacks discussion in my program. Any discussions around the 'isms' have come up in upper liberal courses, have come up in Sociology courses, and upper year liberal courses but not really within the context of [program x] (Undergraduate student, female);

[I had a professor]...she commanded the classroom, she would never allow oppressive thought or ideas to go unchecked and discussed them further if someone brought something forward that was absolutely ridiculous like someone bringing forward in a class one day that there's no such thing as racialized poverty...or feminization of poverty and that was checked and discussed. Whereas I have been in other classes with [professor's name] ...who has no acknowledgement of their privilege as a white woman standing in front of a room. And second of all their duty to accept and understand that there are cultures different from Western culture within this country and within this university especially. And that to me extends to not acknowledging her privilege, not realizing that [...] saying that 'why is it [that] Canadians would not feel comfortable by Muslim women wearing veils?' conveys that Muslim women wearing veils are not Canadian, people wearing veils or head covering are not Canadian. [Some professors] [d]on't realize the way that things come across because they've never had to encounter that oppression themselves (Undergraduate student, female); and

Something that I hear a lot from students and I know I've experienced, [it's] as if you are discussing ideas that are just concepts from a perspective that's academic, from a perspective of 'I've learned racism and I can define racism for you,' but doesn't actually acknowledge that the very institution we're in and the spaces we occupy it's not some abstract thought or some past thought, it is current so I find that no one actually deconstructs the classroom. So people are like, we are all equal here learning about racism but don't actually acknowledge the power even about the learning (of) the racism, and who is teaching racism and who is teaching those histories and what not (Undergraduate student, male).

## **Difficult Knowledges and Multiple Subjects in the Classroom: Instructor Perspectives**

After instructors discussed how they define what it means to teach from the margins, we were interested in what types of experiences they have amassed as a result of engaging in such pedagogy. Participants consistently made references to subjectivity (or subjectivities) when describing the successes and challenges in adopting and cultivating a critical pedagogy in the classroom. In other words, instructors spoke of how their personal subjectivities are read or interpreted by students and how these readings positively and negatively influence the ability to engage critical thinking around non-mainstream ideas, or be open to what Britzman (1998, p. 117) calls ‘difficult knowledges:’

*social violence requires educators to think carefully about their own theories of learning and how the stuff of such difficult knowledges become pedagogical.*

Instructors explained how markers of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, and sexuality, for instance, implicated them in course curricula in beneficial and detrimental ways.

### **Question**

*What have been your experiences of teaching ‘difficult’ knowledges, that is, knowledge that some students resist, or that may make them feel awkward, etc.?*

### **Responses**

I think some of the students feel more comfortable, certainly many of the women feel more comfortable to speak, a lot of racialised students feel more comfortable to speak by having an instructor who represents some of those things. So I think those are all good things... I feel that there’s other students on the other hand who may feel a little, you know...you have to be a little bit wary about what you want this to become... some sort of little club where some students feel really comfortable and others feel really alienated because it’s just reversing what happens in other classrooms (Untenured instructor, female);

We talk about different prejudices and norms at the level of ideologies and practices and at [the] structural kind of institutional levels too. And it seems to me hard for students to contemplate the ubiquity of racism and homophobia and so on. In fact a student said to me this semester, a student of Asian descent, he said, he wanted to write his paper about race and he said ‘I don’t know if, you know, I’m just thinking this is real and it’s not and I’m kind of complaining ...’ ... I take part of what he was saying as a kind of resistance to understanding the magnitude of racism in his life and that he is aware of the social resistance to deny prejudice (CUPE instructor, female); and

[It’s] always this decision about, well today do I really want to make this effort to try, or with this material does it matter, or what is more important for them to ‘get’ at the end of this class, I’m not going to be able to change everyone’s minds, and what are the things that I think are most important to convey. So [teaching difficult knowledges is] this constant kind of way of thinking about how much you can really accomplish with what you want to do and which courses and which topics you can do it with (Untenured instructor, female).

## **Question**

*Do you think that your subject position/identity affects the response you receive in the classroom? If so, do you believe that this has more to do with the resistance than the critical approach you take?*

## **Responses**

[...] whether or not they see you as being legitimate or authoritative enough and if you are marginal in the sense that you embody your marginality that’s often read against your qualifications to teach them even if you have a Ph.D. in something like Canadian Studies or Sociology or English, right? So that’s my perspective of teaching from the margins (CUPE instructor, female);

Often in my classes there’s a degree of comfort that the more marginalized students have so they feel more comfortable with me as a person—with what I am—my views. And so, often it’s the other students, the more mainstream students, who feel—maybe not because of anything I’ve said—who maybe feel more marginalized either by my

readings or by the way the discussion goes or the way I lecture. And so part of my challenge is that I may not agree with them but I don't want to lose [them]. You know, they have a right to be heard and speak and learn—and so, how does one include students who I don't, maybe, agree with or who don't feel the same natural comfort with me as some of the other students do? So, you know sometimes I worry that I've overcompensated. So that's one of the dilemmas, right? How do you even allow students who have privilege [to participate in class discussion] or who feel—you know, some students will dominate but know I don't want to shut them off so that's always one kind of issue that you have (Untenured instructor, female); and

I have realized that when you are in a classroom it's really about being open and fair to all students—who I am is not going to make anybody happy, identities are so complicated—and to work off of what I feel is important, which is the treating of everybody with respect and creating that sense of trust (Tenured instructor, female).

## **Student Perspectives on Difficult Knowledges and Multiple Subjects in the Classroom**

Student response to issues of difficult knowledges and multiple subjects in the classroom focused on an awareness of instructor ability to entertain discussions of social inequality and issues related to broader marginality as well as an evaluation of how well instructors facilitated critical debate and feedback in the classroom environment. Specifically, student responses clearly identified: a) a desire to take on difficult knowledges and, in doing so, willingly participate in the reflexive work of placing themselves and their identities into the project of critical thinking; b) an awareness of how some courses neglect to address issues of difficult knowledges, thereby creating a void in acquiring potential new knowledge skills; and c) an awareness of how well instructors are able to negotiate and lead classroom discussion on difficult and non-mainstream knowledges.

*“Every voice speaks to particular ways of knowing as it positions the speaker within an epistemological community” (Britzman, Practice Makes Practice, 1991, p. 23)*

## **Question**



*Do you think that race, gender, sexuality (any of those subject matters) do you think those issues matter in your learning at Ryerson? Why is it important to acknowledge race, gender, sexuality and other differences in the classroom?*

## **Responses**

...those always matter because we walk in with our identities everywhere we go and there's no subject matter that you can look at that isn't gendered in some way or looked at in a different way from a different culture in a different community. [...] and so I think that everything could have that [race, gender, sexuality, etc.] spin on it. Everything could be addressed that way. Even with my [discipline name] courses, when I took [course name] for [discipline name], they did try to stay as far from, like, anti-oppressive framework or talking about those issues in an open manner as possible to the point where people did become offended because if we try to say, 'well you know actually, I have lived in Saudi Arabia and I know,' it's, like, [instructors say] 'no no that's not what the text book says. And that's not what we are teaching you.' So I think students try to bring those pieces of themselves and those pieces of their knowledge and background into spaces, but if [professors aren't] open to it, then it doesn't occur, it's made to seem like, 'no you can't talk about these issues.' But I don't see how you could not address them it's a part of our daily lived lives (Undergraduate student, female);

I think it definitely does[matter]because one of the purposes of, like, having classes is to engage with people who come from different backgrounds, who have different experiences and if you don't, I mean we could just all take online course[s], but we really wouldn't learn and be able to think critically as well as we would if we hadn't been sitting in a classroom space which is supposed to be democratic and supposed to be, like, conducive to discussions and, like, engaging with people who you may not necessarily have the opportunity to talk to or share experiences with one another. So I feel like the classroom is one of the most critical meeting places of having a real true democratic discussion and hearing about other people's experiences, and when you listen to somebody else's perspective and you listen to somebody else's and somebody else's, you are also learning about other people's viewpoints on a subject-matter that may be different from yours but that helps you think about, that helps you frame your own view. [...] I think it's incredibly important to, like, just learning and being a critical thinker...(Undergraduate student, female); and

I think definitely it does for living in Toronto and working in Toronto. So it's very important for Ryerson to respect that and to actually discuss it because you don't want to talk about experiences that people actually aren't having. You don't want to be like 'well oh yes, everyone has a nuclear family' and you know 'everyone's in this class bracket, everyone makes this amount of money' cause it's not realistic like some people are really poor, some people have huge loans, some people, their parents paid for them to go to school and everyone's coming from a different place [...] Whether all courses do that I am not sure. But I know like in my Caribbean Studies class definitely. [...] I do think those disadvantages need to be brought up in the classroom (Undergraduate student, female).

## **Question**

*Please think back to an experience when race, gender, sexuality were discussed in a classroom. What kind of classroom dynamics did you notice? How was the discussion received by students? How would you describe the feedback?*

## **Responses**

I was in a [type of class] class [...] and we were talking about migrant workers [and] intersectionality. [In this class] we have the class and race dynamic...and we were talking about how it is not right for a democratic nation like Canada to have migrant workers work below minimum wage and have terrible working conditions and have no health benefits even though they are paying taxes and even though their pay cheques are being cut for those services they are not receiving them. And some of us were expressing our like anger towards that but then we had a student raise his hand and say, 'well, if they are not happy with it then no one is forcing them to come here and work.' Umm...and a lot of us just reacted so emotionally. And then somebody else put up their hand and was, like, 'oh well I guess that's kind of true... like, they don't have to come here, no one's forcing them to come here, it's not like its slavery' or something along those lines. And it was just like, we got, some of us got (up) and rebutted back but in that moment, the professor kind of just tried to move the subject matter along, and didn't help us create a learning, teaching moment. And so, a few of us got really upset with the professor because we expected this professor to actually...cause we know that this a professor who actually cares about those issues... and we were really sort of just upset that he didn't at least, like, give us the chance

to correct the student or even just, like, say something to the student [...] We sort of just, like, moved on a few minutes afterwards... . (Undergraduate student, female)

I think it depends on who is in the classroom and what level of awareness they have will determine the reaction the people in the class have. There was one time where I had [name of course] we were in a class and we were talking about cultures and there was a student who said she was never able to fully celebrate Diwali - because she always has an exam or test at that time and she was just talking about it. She wasn't complaining. It wasn't like 'Oh, I am complaining or the hell with Canada or anything like that.' It sucked, right? Then a student who was in the class stood up and said, 'If you don't like it you should go back to your own country and celebrate it there.' And that is verbatim, I am not kidding. And our professor is an immigrant from [country name] mind you, so we were all just sort of shocked... But the whole class was just like 'what the f..., are you kidding me?' We were ready to get him. Like I literally thought we were going to pick up torches and start going after him and he just got up because he saw that no one was backing him and he left the classroom... [...] (Student goes on to explain an different class experience) So I think that the reaction depends on people's experiences in the room and how the professor actually mediates it. Because if you know you are not supported in feeling your oppression by the person who is the leader in the space, then you won't say nothing. So most of us... what we ended up doing was sacrificing our grades by boycotting her class. Because you also couldn't approach her with anything you didn't like. Umm, so it depends (Undergraduate student, female).

## **Where Do We Go From Here? Support and Resources: Instructor Responses**

In reflecting on their experiences in the classroom and effective strategies for engaging students via a critical pedagogy, instructors were rich repositories of knowledge and critique on how to nurture a teaching and learning environment at Ryerson centred on critical pedagogy. Instructors expressed that access to resources at the university targeted to teaching from the margins or engaging critical pedagogies were lacking beyond informal peer-peer networks. The LTO was acknowledged as a site for teaching resources but not as yet an adequately endowed source of support for teaching and learning from the margins.

At the closing of each instructor focus group session, participants were asked to reflect on how their on-going pursuit in practicing critical pedagogies could be nurtured and further cultivated. Responses focused on a range of strategies and requests. For instance, instructors expressed a desire to see more formalized workshops offered by the LTO at the university specifically structured on difficult knowledges and the practice of critical pedagogy in the classroom in order to not only liaise with the LTO as a formal part of the university's teaching 'home base,' but to regularly meet with like-minded instructors to share knowledge and attain professional, collegial support. Further, home disciplines/departments were also cited as potentially rich sites of fostering meaningful and long-lasting connections to critical pedagogies.

### **Question**

*What experiences have you had seeking out and or accessing resources and support in order to pursue teaching at the margins or engaging students in difficult knowledges? And where have you accessed such support?*

Because Ryerson is very strong in anti-oppression in certain schools, in certain programs, [it is] a very interesting moment. But in term[s] of the strategies...I felt that as [a] CUPE [instructor], [the] LTO is inaccessible almost. Inaccessible in terms of the information...reaching out. [T]he possibility to engage in such things...as CUPE we are evaluated four or five times in a term but there's no time allowed as part of the paid time or any other context to engage in anything that can help us with this (teaching from the margins) so that's a huge limitation (CUPE instructor, female);

...my experience with the LTO is they simply don't exist. Like for all intents and purposes they are the black hole at Ryerson. So like they had this, the instructor kind of work shop thing where you could develop pedagogy and they had it [at] exactly the time that I was teaching so I contacted them to ask them if they had other times scheduled. [I heard] nothing back. Routinely, nothing back. They put out messages, 'participate in X, Y, Z,' consistently against my schedule and I would consistently email and say, this is against [my schedule], I can't attend this because I am teaching; surely there are other people who are in this boat do you have another time? And I think that it's about being CUPE and I think that's the reason for it. Right, so as far as I am concerned it's not in the basket for me. And my basket is all the connections that I've made in different institutions and we've been able to maintain contact virtually or face to face and we've developed strategies, we've shared resources, sometimes those resources are

like, I have this assignment or I have this strategy for approaching this particular lecture...and sometimes it will be an article or website something tangible or almost tangible, right? (CUPE instructor, female);

I have found that the most important thing that I have done since I came to Ryerson was to involve Toronto's [name of marginalized community] in our program. [I]t's just called the [name of group] and it's just made up of some [names and identities of group members and stake holders]. And that happened partly (...) to advise around curriculum and resources and how to do things and so on and so forth and so I have found that to be an amazing resource for me but again not just for me personally because again it's like I can bring what they say to the department meetings...So again it's not just me, it's, you know, it's representatives from the community who are saying this, and you know the directive has come from that committee [for] a number of things... I just find that that is my biggest support and resource so that for me it's all about not being alone. Cause that was what I was most afraid of when I came here and there were incidents where I wasn't too sure about whether I wanted to be here but because of that particular body of people ... I always felt like they had my back (Tenured instructor, female );

I don't think I've had a very long lasting and completely effective kind of support system established. I'm lucky to have a few colleagues in the department who are indeed very supportive. Several years ago, was it 2010? [the] Anti-Racism Committee organized a one day workshop on challenges in the classroom, the issue of authority in the classroom and so on and we gathered faculty of colour...to discuss some issues. Unfortunately, we haven't had a sustained long term discussion around that, that was only one meeting... I have raised it with the head of the union once and he said it would be good for RFA to start planning some workshops or bring in speakers, or creating spaces and avenues where we could have an ongoing discussion but it hasn't happened. So I don't think anything has really worked so far in the long term and (I was) very excited when you applied for this project and decided to start this again, because I think this [is] maybe a way for us to restart (Tenured instructor, female);

...I think (my) department is considerably diverse in various ways...So that's something that we had a discussion about; teaching content, what do we want students to learn about, so there's been a tremendous encouragement for taking things in a critical kind of way...certainly from colleagues. I've borrowed outlines from previous people who have taught

the course before and I've noticed lots of really good critical resources so I've taken from here and from there (Untenured instructor, male);

I don't think that the LTO actually has enough resources around teaching from the margins, whether your identity is in some way (marginal)...because of your own gender or sexual identity or whatever or whether the perspectives you want to introduce are from the margins. I don't think that there is much thinking within the LTO [to] address that specific question. There's all kinds of resources on how to teach better, how to engage and how to mark better... so there's a lot of thinking around various issues around pedagogy but not specifically around content and...teaching difficult subjects and about how you, as someone who may not be perceived as authoritative to teach certain things, can teach them better or can assert authority in such situations. So I think this would be really great if the LTO had this kind of resource (Untenured instructor, female);

I haven't had any problems actually. Maybe it's the course I teach or maybe it's because I teach my own course. [...] so I get to decide (content). And actually I have found that the LTO was supportive, I particularly like the workshop that they have on inclusivity, even just at the faculty conference how they have a teleprompter and when you go to meetings. You don't often see that so I feel like they make an effort to at least address some of the diversity issues so it's been ok (Untenured instructor, female); and

I am just trying to build in some of these ideas of inequity from different perspectives into this course that really doesn't talk about it as a concept or deal [with] it in a different way. So that is a real problem because these students don't have the resources within their existing knowledge to kind of think about these things sometimes...and in my department, or my faculty at least, we don't really have much in terms of resources on this stuff. Maybe if I went to the Teaching Office and stuff, but I've never tried. So, it's whatever that I come up with or exercises I found for myself. So I think that's a big problem. It would be great if I had a week talking about the issues, you know, how do we actually come up with [for example] social class? where did that concept come from? how is it determined? And then you start talking about it. No we don't have that. We are talking about totally different concepts but built into [them] are concepts of capitalism and so trying to peripherally bring these things into the discussion from my perspective so that these students graduating with a [name of discipline]

degree are not students [prepared just] for [name of industry] - that they actually get a bit more rounded [education] (Untenured instructor, female).

## Question

*What kind of support do you feel would be useful to you?*

It would be interesting to sit in, [...] on other people's classes where it's not necessarily about evaluating them for whatever... I found even in those cases (when evaluating an instructor) I've ended up learning more from the person. So I think finding out [...] about other people's strategies in the classroom [would be useful] (Tenured instructor, female);

I don't think you [facilitators] necessarily will have the resources but if we collectively went to the union again, they would have the resources to perhaps bring some speakers who could maybe make a short presentation followed by some workshops. A series of these perhaps where we discuss this in more detail; both lay out the issues very clearly, bring an analysis to what the issues are, where [we] are coming from, why and so on. And then formulate strategies, more strategies and share strategies. So I think if the union can fund something like that, the equity committee maybe in the union funds something like that, I mean we may all be able to offer, or volunteer some time to help organize some of these. We may come up with a list of perhaps colleagues from other institutions who have thought about issues of pedagogy, of critical pedagogy and so on, we can bring them over (Tenured instructor, female);

In terms of what Ryerson might be able to provide, I have a hard time identifying specific things because the need is so big. And one of the things is community which you make or you don't make. But I think that there needs to be a space like this where people can actually talk about teaching from the margins. Because the way that it works, generally speaking, [...] is that people find each other because they are *trying to find* each other, right? But if there could be some sort of magical space where people could talk about pedagogy and marginalization and oppression and power in the same space...that would be phenomenal. But I tend to be very wary of spaces like the LTO regardless of what institution it is because my experience in the past is that they have limited experience with university teaching and their approach is prescriptive and that's not helpful for me (CUPE instructor, female); and

...we are not critiquing (the) LTO but it has come down to that, they are more [about] technology and, you know, those kind of things - which [get] repeated, interestingly. There are two or three sessions of how to use the clicker or something, but very little. But even the sessions that run throughout the year for training, those sessions repeat every term or twice every term but there's no discussion, no space to discuss experiences in such a diverse community. And speaking of CUPE...if we analyzed marginalization in CUPE that's very layered and you know there are patterns identifiable... if we go across Chang School to certain disciplines it's so stark we better do something about it rather than people struggling on their own (CUPE instructor, female).

## **Where Do We Go From Here?: Student Responses**

When asked to reflect upon how a culture of critical pedagogy and learning could be fostered, student participants were equally aware of the limitations of current course offerings and curricular structures as instructors were. Mainly, the critiques and remedies put forth by students targeted and addressed the preparatory labour practices and training of instructors and the resources made available to them by the university administration. The following responses underscore students' keen awareness of how the lived experiences of instructors and students cannot be ignored in the larger project of engaging and practicing critical pedagogies in teaching and learning.

### **Question**

*What are some concrete strategies, like if you were to write a manual and give professors a best practices booklet on how to navigate difficult conversations in the context of the classroom, what would be some of your suggestions for instructors and for students?*

### **Responses**

I think that faculty should be required to have comprehensive and continual anti-oppressive training and that's not just one session where you sit for an hour and be like "this is how you can be politically correct". But rather, an in-depth (course) from a perspective of someone who has been working in such a field for quite a while and who comes from a marginalized background. Yeah, so I think that's the first step that I foresee because if they are not coming from a healthy space then they're not going to have healthy discussions in the classroom (Undergraduate student, female);



So for students, I would love [that] in first year there's a mandatory course that everyone has to take that's like 'How to Be a Human Being.' How to think critically from an anti-oppressive lens because anti-oppression... it isn't about learning big words and learning all the tools... it's actually just to gain an understanding of how to shape discussion[s] ... .. So that way, for the next four years of your life, if you took it for that first year, you'll know how to actually talk...and how to think about things from a different lens. I think [for] faculty it's also the same thing and it definitely is for administration. I think I would love to see in some faculties—I am cognizant that this is a dream and cognizant that this is a hard undertaking and people would have to be compensated fairly for this—but doing a comprehensive curriculum audit and, just literally inter-faculty curriculum audit and, bringing in people that aren't particularly from that faculty and doing things like focus groups, doing things like bringing in students who just graduated and asking them what the hell... Instead of, like often times, I think people just like do surveys and ask: how's your satisfaction with that? Like, 'did you get anything out of these four years?' Because I think curriculum often times gets fixed in pieces but then what happens is pieces don't inform each other and you get sometimes non-streamlined information and it's very scattered.

I would also love to see...(from [tenured] faculty who really have job security) demand[ing] these things. Like [not just] rights of researchers but anti-oppressive learning in their curriculums and to demand it of their Deans and of their Chairs - to take more militant action because they have job security right? So...doing more faculty and student conversations around this topic about how it's actually a holistic change, you can't just change the curriculum if you are not changing campus culture and you can't just change campus culture and classroom culture without changing what we actually learn (Undergraduate student, male); and

...talking about it (difficult knowledges and issues of marginality) from the outset would definitely help but also maybe having a course that is compulsory; not just within your program but across all the programs. That way you have students from different backgrounds, Arts, Business and everyone just coming together and dealing with these issues (Undergraduate student, male).

## Reflections: A Conclusion

We offer here a composite of our reflections about the project. We have written them individually as presented below but we have all signed on to them. They represent, as a collective, our understanding of what we did and where the findings of this project will take us in the future.

### *Reflections from the Research Team...*

- Given that I was a student at the time of the research, I was quite familiar with the student side of the topic of learning and teaching from the margins. Even before I engaged with the literature in my role as a research assistant I knew that a students' race, gender, sexuality and religion could have an integral impact on experiences of higher education at Ryerson. The project, however, opened my eyes to the experiences of faculty members who inhabit marginal social positions, particularly those who are women of colour. The literature helped me make sense of my many observations of racialized women instructors' ordeal in establishing themselves as knowledgeable subjects in classrooms that persistently associate knowledge with masculinity and Whiteness. The student focus groups also revealed a need for far more training and discussion on issues of inclusion and equity, both for faculty members and students.
- It was clear even in the discussions we had prior to proposing this research that the five of us struggled with a disembodied notion of teaching and learning since our very bodies signaled a pedagogy of resistance that we could not control. When we met and exchanged stories about our teaching, we realized that what we were doing was identifying the subjective nature of knowledge production and reproduction. And when we formulated this project and then analyzed the transcripts, it was more than apparent that our interest in the subjective nature and social factors of teaching and learning was immensely important to those teaching and learning from the margins. Knowledge production, as many education theorists from Locke and Rousseau to Freire and Dei have noted, is an intensely experiential process.
- Two themes arose from the interviews that especially stood out for me: instructor's responsibilities and burdens.

Responsibility: I was particularly struck by the different ways in which the people we interviewed articulated their experiences of teaching and learning from the margins. Some were familiar to me, and others, not so much. These experiences were deeply personal. I was surprised that students had strong expectations that we, as instructors, be responsible not simply for keeping arguments from erupting in the space of the classroom, but that we are responsible for actively engaging with the class when racism and discrimination takes place. It is shocking that students were able to refer to only a small handful of instructors who did this in their classes at Ryerson. These savvy students noted that simply “keeping the peace” is not a method for creating a safe space and instead is often another way of perpetuating harm. Students demand that instructors be educated in social relations of power in ways that allow us to understand when harm is taking place. This matters to them and shapes their relationship to learning. For instance, when one student denies another’s experience of racism and insists that the claim to racism is simply someone being ‘too sensitive’ - that is harm. Instructors are called upon by students to know this and engage in what we all have come to term, ‘a teachable moment.’

Burden: The other strong theme that arose and made me think differently was how marginalized instructors are conscious of the ways in which they carry their marginal identities on and through their bodies. The pain of these words in the transcripts is palpable. Given that these experiences transcend traditional forms of teaching and learning, they are difficult to make visible and thus leave instructors unsupported and their struggles in the classroom invisible and unspeakable. In the eyes of many, those who teach and learn from the margins just do not fit into the framework of traditional liberal, rational knowledge (re)production.

- The data we have is rich and I am excited about working with it further in order to tease out just how we can collectively imagine more engaging, inclusive and productive teaching and learning practices. Students should not feel unsafe in their classes, or feel it is their -and their alone- responsibility to educate and correct racism and discrimination. Instructors should not be aware of their bodies that announce identities that always already make them vulnerable when they walk into a classroom. We need better education about what it means to experience racism and discrimination in order to be quick to identify it when it happens and engage with it in ‘a teachable moment.’

- I learned that both faculty and students at Ryerson are very much aware of issues of marginalized knowledges and critical pedagogies, and yet we still have such a long way to go. Voiced along with the realities of difficulties in the classroom was ongoing frustration at lack of institutional support and recognition of the need for action by administration. What I already knew, and what was reinforced for me, was that we continue to gripe, vent and share strategies amongst ourselves as a tool for survival in the academy – a short-term solution but not one that effects real structural change. I would like to see real, substantial recognition by administration that curricular changes, changes to hiring practices and better faculty support must occur, among other things, and that students who are marginalized must have better resources to assist them.
- I consider this study to be significant because of the multiple ways in which it instantiated, contextualized, and reaffirmed some of those experiences and events that many of us have trained ourselves to accept as the limitations and possibilities of teaching and working in the contemporary academy.
- Despite the limitations of time, resources and scope, we have been able to identify and scrutinize what we may--drawing on Judith Butler-- call the precariously performative nature of teaching in the spaces of the modern university. Indeed, many of the narratives and experiences recorded in this project testify to the destabilizing of self that happens when we realize, as did Fanon (Look, a negro!), that particular, marginalized experiences of embodiment may make teaching a highly precarious process for which no amount of knowledge, training or skill is an adequate safeguard. Many of those who are represented in this project have meticulously inculcated the sartorial, pedagogical and technical accoutrements of 'the professor' yet seem to be suggesting that these tirelessly accumulated intellectual, cultural and technological resources and skills are tested on a daily basis.
- The narratives offered here also point to ways of imaging how things could be different. This, I think, should be the main guiding concern for reading this handbook; and such a reading calls for the painfully difficult, but ethically possible, task of relinquishing our given and conventional ways of approaching social research. We are keenly aware of the ways in which the constraints of time and resources have restricted our project; it would be a pity if these were understood as external factors rather than strands woven into the texture of experiences about which this project seeks to raise awareness.

- Transcribing the focus group interviews across the various groups was a richly fulfilling experience that allowed me to think through ways in which I, as an educator and facilitator of ‘difficult’ knowledges, could begin to engage with and tackle the challenges of *teaching and learning at the margins*. Being the primary transcriber afforded me unique access into the narratives of faculty and students at Ryerson and increased my understanding of the importance of having various voices represented in research. I sincerely hope that the project's findings will increase and inspire learning and educating for change.

*The Research Team: Adwoa, Azar, Amina, Camille, Doreen, Melanie and Nicole.*

## **Appendix 1**

### **Focus Group Questions**

#### **Questions Posed to Instructors**

##### **Definitional**

1. What does it mean to teach from the margins and can you provide an example that exemplifies it (either your own or one told to you)? (For instance, do you engage with issues such as racism, queer phobias, (dis)ability, gender identity, or sexism?)

##### **Experience**

1. What have been your experiences of teaching 'difficult' knowledges, that is, knowledge that some students resist, or may make them feel awkward, etc.?
2. Do you think that your subject position/identity affects the response you receive in the classroom? If so, do you believe that this has more to do with the resistance than the critical approach you take?(What are some of the pedagogical implications for teaching from the margins?)

##### **Strategy**

1. What strategies have you developed to mitigate resistance amongst students in the classroom or in private (i.e., office consultation) or with fellow colleagues?
2. Can you think of any instances where you felt that you successfully engaged students with difficult knowledges? Why do you think your attempt was successful?

##### **Support**

1. What experiences have you had seeking out and or accessing resources and support in order to pursue teaching at the margins or engaging students in difficult knowledges? And where have you accessed such support?
2. What kind of support do you feel would be useful to you?

#### **Questions Posed to Students**

##### **Introductory and warm-up questions**

1. How important are race, gender, sexual identity and class in helping you link course topics with your own experiences?

2. How often are these topics discussed in the classes that you have taken at Ryerson?
3. Why is it important to acknowledge race, gender, sexuality and other differences in the classroom?
4. How does this affect your learning?

### **Experiential and reflective questions**

5. Please think back to an experience when race, gender, sexuality were discussed in a classroom. What kind of classroom dynamics did you notice? How was the discussion received by students? How would you describe the feedback?
6. Who introduced the topic (the instructor, another student, yourself)?
7. How many students participated in the discussion? Why do you think some students do not like to participate in such discussions?
8. How did the students interact with each other?
9. How were students responding to the instructor?

### **Evaluative**

10. Do you think it was a successful discussion? If so what made it work?
11. What were some of the problems?
12. What was the role of the instructor in the discussion?
13. Did the identity of the instructor affect the classroom environment in your view?
14. What could be done differently? What would you have included or excluded from the discussion?

## Appendix 2

### **Selected Resources**

Offered below is a selection of abstracts of peer-reviewed journal articles related to higher education in Canada, the US and elsewhere that were collected using various combinations of the search words: Critical pedagogy; Canada; post-secondary; race; pedagogy; university; teaching; gender.

**Abrums, M. E., Resnick, J., & Irving, L. L. (2010). Journey or Destination? Evaluating Student Learning About Race, Class, and Privilege in Health Care. *Nursing Education Perspectives, 31(3), 160-166.***

The purpose of this research was to use narrative analysis to study final papers in a Social and Cultural Issues in Health Care course in order to understand how to improve nursing student learning about discrimination and oppression in health care. The study addressed two questions: a) What were the dimensions of diversity in the student population, including hidden dimensions such as social class and religion? b) How effectively did students analyze and synthesize course content on race, class, and privilege through autobiographical reflection and cognitive, attitudinal and applied learning? Dimensions of diversity were identified through narrative analysis of student autobiographical information. Four levels of learning emerged from a thematic narrative analysis of how students used personal autobiographical reflection and cognitive, affective, and applied learning to analyze and synthesize course content on race, class, and privilege in health care. This study makes a unique contribution to nursing educational research by exploring the use of narrative analysis in evaluating student learning about discrimination in health care.

**Adams, G., Edkins, V., Lacka, D., Pickett, K. M., & Cheryan, S. (2008). Teaching About Racism: Pernicious Implications of the Standard Portrayal. *Basic & Applied Social Psychology, 30(4), 349-361.***

Resonating with understandings prevalent among White Americans, psychologists tend to portray racism as a problem of individual prejudice rather than a systemically embedded phenomenon. An unintended consequence of this portrayal is to reproduce a narrow construction of racism as something that does not require energetic measures to combat. We describe 2 studies that provide support for this idea. Tutorials presented the topic of racism either as individual prejudice (standard condition) or as a systemic phenomenon embedded in American society (sociocultural condition). Results confirmed that perception of racism and (in Study 2) endorsement of antiracist policy were greater among participants in the sociocultural tutorial condition than among participants in the both the standard tutorial and no-tutorial control conditions. An ironic consequence of standard pedagogy may be to promote a modern form of scientific racism that understates the ongoing significance of racist oppression.

**Apsel, J. (2011). Educating a New Generation: The Model of the 'Genocide and Human Rights University Program'. *Human Rights Review, 12(4), 465-486.***



This paper examines the design and teaching of "Genocide and Human Rights," an innovative, higher education course introduced in 2002 to provide training for a new generation of scholars and teachers. The course was developed and funded by a small non-profit organization, the Zoryan Institute, in Toronto, Canada. One purpose of the course is to teach about the Armenian genocide within a comparative genocide and human rights framework. Another goal is to fill a gap in the curriculum in response to increased student interest and research in genocide and human rights. The course serves as a valuable pedagogical model including its comparative framework, teaching by invited specialists, adjusting the curriculum to reflect student interest and new scholarship, and setting up and maintaining formal and informal scholarly networks. Features of critical pedagogy include classroom dialogue and critique and respect for differences in background and opinion. For example, interactions between students of Turkish and Armenian background provide an opportunity to explore issues of stereotypes, memory, denial and reconciliation. The course provides training for a new generation in research, publications, teaching and advocacy in fields related to genocide and human rights.

**Breunig, M. (2005). Turning Experiential Education and Critical Pedagogy Theory into Praxis. *Journal Of Experiential Education*, 28(2), 106-122.**

The educational theories of experiential education and critical pedagogy intersect in a number of ways. One of the intended aims of both of these pedagogies is that the purpose of education should be to develop a more socially just world (Itin, 1999; Kincheloe, 2004). One of the key issues still facing experiential education theory and critical pedagogy is its implementation within the post-secondary classroom. There is a lack of congruence between the pedagogical theories that are espoused and the actual classroom practices that are employed. The purpose of this article is to explore some of the ways for experiential educators and critical pedagogues to begin engaging in a more purposeful classroom praxis that acts on the theoretical underpinnings of these pedagogies as one means to work toward their shared vision of a more socially just world.

**Cerecer, P., Ek, L. D., Alanis, I., & Murakami-Ramalho, E. (2011). Transformative Resistance as Agency: Chicanas/Latinas (Re)Creating Academic Spaces. *Journal Of The Professoriate*, 5(1), 70-98.**

In this study, we examined how tenure-track Chicana/Latina faculty negotiate and transform academic spaces by cultivating a social class consciousness and redefining notions of success through transformative resistance in teaching, research, and service. By acknowledging the intersection of race/ethnicity and class, we illuminate how a social class consciousness plays a role in these women's ways of being and thinking. The study's findings point to a redefining of academic success that transforms traditional deficit notions associated with the working-class into an asset. Furthermore, a social class consciousness was connected to viewing academic success not as an individual endeavor or accomplishment, but rather as community uplift.

**Cho, H. (2011). Lessons Learned: Teaching the Race Concept in the College Classroom. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 13(1), 36-41.**

For a faculty member of East Asian ancestry, raised in Latin America, race became a salient part of the author's identity during adulthood while living and working in the southern United States. While

the race-related experiences the author continues to have on and off campus are deeply personal, race became an academic undertaking, and centering race has changed her approach to understanding and teaching her area of specialization. As a biological anthropologist, she finds the race concept interesting in its many applications and abuses in the social and life sciences, and she is particularly interested in the works of those individuals who study humanity as a research subject. But the four-letter word, imbued with deep historical and emotional roots, can be a precarious topic to teach to undergraduates in this age of political correctness. The concept eludes many students, creating anxiety, fear, and confusion. This essay recounts the author's experiences in teaching about race as a faculty member of color at a predominately white liberal arts college, and the valuable lessons she has learned.

**Chu, J. M. (2004). The Risks and Rewards of Teaching Race. *History Teacher*, 37(4), 484-493.**

Advanced Placement brings into sharp focus the dilemma faced by middle, secondary and university teachers of American history. The search for an introductory synthesis stumbles more frequently these days because texts and curriculum frameworks all too often depend upon what Mary Fredrickson refers to as the tyranny of chronology. With extremely rare exception, texts are shaped by a paradigm that has remained relatively constant over the last half century. A comparison of the table of contents of Morison and Commager's "The Growth of the American Republic," 5th ed., published in 1961 with Faragher et al.'s "Out of Many," 4th ed, 2003 and Jones et al., "Created Equal," 2003 reveals some different periodization and topical treatment. Still, the texts remain locked in a familiar analytical structure. While Faragher's and Jones's treatment of late-nineteenth century America obviously reflects the considerable amount of research social history that has generated since the 60's whereas Morison and Commager reflects the more political concerns of their generation, periodization and chapter headings have not significantly changed in the nearly half century that separates the former from the latter.

**Cobb-Roberts, D. (2011). Betwixt Safety and Shielding in the Academy: Confronting Institutional Gendered Racism--Again. *Negro Educational Review*, 62/63(1-4), 89-113.**

This article represents a critical reflection of a Black African American female associate professor who, while teaching a diversity course, unknowingly enabled systems of power and privilege to undermine her faculty role in the course and in the academy. The author revisits a story of this experience and its vestiges using Critical Race Theory (CRT) and an autoethnographic approach. In doing so, she comes to terms with her complicity in supporting White supremacy and patriarchy and reclaims a voice previously suppressed yet still vulnerable in the matrix of institutional power. Two significant shifts are captured in this account--a narrative shift from the individual to one that includes the institutional and a political shift from a position of naiveté to critical consciousness. These shifts, illustrated by the metaphor of safety, reflect the dissonance experienced by the author in seeking to negotiate a balance between the personal, professional, and socialized traditions of academia.

**de Freitas, E., & McAuley, A. (2008). Teaching for diversity by troubling whiteness: strategies for classrooms in isolated white communities. *Race, Ethnicity & Education*, 11(4), 429-442.**

This paper explores strategies to help prepare pre-service teachers from a predominantly white, relatively isolated island in Atlantic Canada to teach for diversity. The paper proposes a modified framework for 'teacher identity development' that pivots around three foci for enhancing teacher awareness and commitment to action: (1) relations of power and privilege; (2) youth culture and critical media literacy; (3) theory as an interpretive tool. These foci contribute to a 'pedagogy of discomfort' through which white pre-service teachers confront their resistance to and complicity in the inequities that play themselves out in the school system. The ongoing capacity to sustain the emotional labour of confronting this discomfort is seen as critical to making a positive difference.

**Dumbrill, G. C., & Green, J. (2008). Indigenous Knowledge in the Social Work Academy. *Social Work Education*, 27(5), 489-503.**

This paper provides a model for including Indigenous knowledge in the social work academy. This model does not hinge on being sensitive to Aboriginal world views and open to including them in the academy, but on being sensitive to the ways Eurocentric world views dominate the academy and open to disrupting this dominance. Disruption is necessary because despite a commitment to diversity and inclusion, social work education continues to be taught from a Eurocentric perspective in a manner that perpetuates the colonization of Indigenous peoples. The authors triangulate their interrogation of Eurocentrism from the vantage of their own social locations: Jacquie is a female Indigenous professor from the Haisla Nation of the upper part of Turtle Island (known as Canada to non-Indigenous people) and Gary is a White male Canadian professor originally from London, England. Adopting a critical anti-racist approach and drawing on Whiteness theory, Indigenous storytelling and the Medicine Wheel, the authors present a pedagogical framework that enables Indigenous knowledge to be included in the academy in ways that ensure that it is not colonized in the process.

**Eden, J. (2011). Answers to the Question: "Who Developed Race?". *History Teacher*, 44(2), 169-177.**

In this article the author provides examples to college teachers on ways in which to approach teaching students about the concept of racial ideologies. He argues that students often have difficulty comprehending that race is a socially constructed concept and presents various teaching methods he uses in his college history courses to explore the origins of race as an aspect of society. He also uses multiple theoretical models to explain how humans are responsible for the formation of racial ideology, discusses the documentary films "Race: The Power of an Illusion" and "Africans in America," and mentions ways in which these approaches to teaching about race have benefited his students.

**Gasker, J., & LaBarre, H. A. C. (2010). The elephant in the room: Understanding barriers to students' articulation of diversity. *Creative Education*, 1(2), 69-74. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.lib.ryerson.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/817269079?accountid=13631>**

A scholarship competition designed to foster classroom discussion and introspection about diversity had few participants despite its cash prize. This paper explores undergraduates' view of the project via focus groups and reveals surprising depth in students' answers to the question of why students did not participate. Analysis uncovered emergent themes related to emotional discomfort with diversity in general and self-reflection in particular. Implications include the conceptualization of 'diversity,' teaching methods, and instructors' professional development.

**Green, T. T. (2008). Meeting Richard Wright in the Mountains: Reflections on Teaching at Northern Arizona University. *Papers On Language & Literature*, 44(4), 382-387.**

This article discusses the author's experiences teaching the literature of 20th-century African American author Richard Wright at Northern Arizona University, where blacks are a small minority of the student population. She discusses introducing students unfamiliar with it to the history of lynchings and racial violence in the U.S. through Wright's works.

**Housee, S. (2010). When silences are broken: an out of class discussion with Asian female students. *Educational Review*, 62(4), 421-434.**

This article reports on the views of seven Asian female Social Science students following a class seminar on religious issues and schooling at a university in the UK. It explores the importance of the post-class spontaneous student dialogue where participation in much teaching and learning is voluntary. The concern is with engaged pedagogy and interactive teaching methods that allow space for students to voice their views and experiences. This is especially important when dealing with 'controversial' topics such as Islamophobia - anti-Muslim racism - and 'war on terror'. Whilst the issues are provocative, some students remain silent and do not participate in the formal class setting; they hold back their comments for a less exposed moment. In this case, the post-class discussion threw up insights into the reasons for student 'silences' and possibilities for 'breaking' them. A key insight is the importance of 'safer spaces', usually after classes, in the corridors and refectories, and how to bring the discussions back into the classroom environment. Another is the political significance of 'counter-stories' told in safety for pedagogic and political theory and practice. This article refers to one such moment and explores the value of post-class student 'counter-narratives' that developed organically.

**Kim, Y., & Sax, L. (2009). Student–Faculty Interaction in Research Universities: Differences by Student Gender, Race, Social Class, and First-Generation Status. *Research In Higher Education*, 50(5), 437-459.**

This study examined whether the effects of student–faculty interaction on a range of student outcomes—i.e., college GPA, degree aspiration, integration, critical thinking and communication, cultural appreciation and social awareness, and satisfaction with college experience—vary by student gender, race, social class, and first-generation status. The study utilized data on 58,281 students who participated in the 2006 University of California Undergraduate Experience Survey (UCUES). The findings reveal differences in the frequency of student–faculty interaction across student gender, race, social class and first-generation status, and differences in the effects of student–faculty interaction (i.e., conditional effects) that depended on each of these factors except first-generation status. The findings provide

implications for educational practice on how to maximize the educational efficacy of student–faculty interaction by minimizing the gender, race, social class, and first-generation differences associated with it.

**Kranz, P. L., & Lund, N. L. (2004). Successful Teaching Techniques in a Race Relations Class. *Journal Of Psychology, 138*(4), 371-383.**

The authors present suggestions for enhancing a university course in race relations. These approaches were used in a series of classes offered at a state university in the southeastern United States during a historical period of notable racial tension. This course provided a supportive arena for personal questioning, student interaction, and positive change. Even 20 years later, former students reported that experiential components, such as living with a family of another race, were powerful instruments in self-growth, development, and racial understanding. Many reported this class as the basis of profound, life-long positive changes in racial attitudes.

**Kranz, P. L., Ramirez, S. Z., Steele, R., & Lund, N. (2006). Challenges of teaching an experiential course in racial understanding. *Education, 126*(4), 792-798.**

Instructors who consider creation of an experiential course in race relations at the university or college level may benefit from information provided in this article. One of the coauthors, a licensed psychologist and pioneer in this type of educational experience, provides insights regarding challenges of the course from an instructor's perspective. In this article, the following are discussed: optimal instructor characteristics, course preparation and promotion, and administration and student considerations.

**Leibowitz, B., Bozalek, V., Carolissen, R., Nicholls, L., Rohleder, P., & Swartz, L. (2010). Bringing the social into pedagogy: unsafe learning in an uncertain world. *Teaching In Higher Education, 15*(2), 123-133.**

The paper describes a collaborative curriculum development project implemented over 3 years at 2 universities in the Western Cape Province of South Africa. The project involved a short module in which students in their fourth year of study interacted and learnt collaboratively across the boundaries of institution, discipline, race and social class, about the concepts of community, self and identity. The pedagogic approach adopted is described, as well as the responses of the students, and a brief reflection on some of the learning outcomes attained. The paper considers the learning processes which the curriculum development team experienced, and suggests that in order to facilitate learning for an 'uncertain world', the curriculum designers, too, need to engage in learning processes in which they make themselves vulnerable, mirroring some of the learning processes they expect the students to undergo.

**Lund, C. L. (2010). The nature of white privilege in the teaching and training of adults. *New Directions For Adult & Continuing Education, (125)*, 15-25.**

The author describes white privilege and how it impacts the learning environment. Included are actual examples of white privilege from practice and how enforcing white privilege results in racism.

**Martin, K. J. (2010). Student attitudes and the teaching and learning of race, culture and politics. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 26(3), 530-539***

Although multicultural education and teaching for and to equity and diversity often are viewed in higher education as important around the globe, the mismatch between theory and public opinion can remain a challenge when teaching the subject. This study investigates student attitudes and learning before and after completing a course in race, culture and politics at an American university in California, and data were gathered over a three-year period from 365 students. Utilizing a Confluent Education framework that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions of teaching and learning, faculty structured opportunities for students to study and discuss issues, and then, examine social settings for evidence to tie cognitive study with real world experiences. Teaching and developing courses around issues of multicultural education, diversity, and issues of power that strengthen students' abilities to perceive multiple perspectives, think critically, and learn from others are made.

**McClain, L. (2008). A Whiter Shade of Pale: Teaching Race in the Midwest. *Midwest Quarterly, 49(3), 245-262.***

This article presents the race identity of white students in the U.S. The author discusses his experience of teaching at Nebraska Wesleyan University, which is a liberal arts college mostly attended by self-identified white students. The philosophy of individualism is examined and the cultural background of the Nebraskan students is explored. Information about research conducted about race is also provided.

**Meyer, E. J., & Lesiuk, V. (2010). Subverting the Ivory Tower: Teaching and Learning Through Critical Dialogues. *Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies, 10(5), 394-396.* doi:10.1177/1532708610374813**

The article relates the authors' experience as students of the late professor and scholar Joe L. Kincheloe. They recall how Kincheloe would make himself available to anyone who would need his help, opinion and advice. Instead of the traditional subject outline for the semester, Kincheloe presented his critical pedagogy which received mixed reactions from his students. Also discussed is the impact Kincheloe made on his class in terms of learning to think beyond and to create an area for open dialogue.

**Muhtaseb, A. (2007). From behind the veil: Students' resistance from different directions. *New Directions For Teaching & Learning, (110), 25-33.***

In this chapter, critical race and expectancy violation theories are used to deconstruct students' resistance to a female faculty member of color, a Muslim Arab American who wears the traditional Islamic cover. The author provides a narrative of her teaching experience and some techniques she has used to face such resistance.

**Ortiz, L., & Jani, J. (2010). Critical race theory: A transformational model for teaching diversity. *Journal Of Social Work Education, 46(2), 175-193.***

Rapidly changing demographics in the United States, the 2008 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, and recent developments in the literature that question the effectiveness of multiculturalism and cultural competence suggest social work education, research, and practice are in need of a new approach to diversity. In conceptualizing diversity, social workers need to address a broad social context that includes institutional/structural arrangements, recognize the intersection of multiple identities, and integrate an explicit social justice orientation. This article presents critical race theory as a paradigmatic framework that focuses on both institutions and the pain they create for marginalized people. The critique is multidimensional, addressing root causes and personal distress while pursuing transformational change.

**Pedersen, A., & Barlow, F. (2008). Theory to social action: A university-based strategy targeting prejudice against Aboriginal Australians. *Australian Psychologist*, 43(3), 148-159.**

The level of racism in Australia against Aboriginal Australians is well documented. This has an extremely detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal Australians. One part of the solution may be anti-prejudice strategies, but to date few strategies that include a pre-test and a post-test assessment have been conducted in Australia. The present study describes the interventional qualities of a cultural psychology unit at an Australian university. Results indicated that after a 6-week period, students reported a significant reduction in prejudice, acceptance of false beliefs about Aboriginal Australians, and the perception that Aboriginal Australians unfairly receive preferential or special treatment. The article concludes that cultural psychology units have the potential to be an effective way of developing acceptance of cross-cultural differences.

**Racine, L., Proctor, P., & Jewell, L. M. (2012). Putting the World as Classroom: An Application of the Inequalities Imagination Model in Nursing and Health Education. *Journal Of Transcultural Nursing*, 23(1), 90-99. doi:10.1177/1043659611423832**

This article focuses on the description of an educational initiative, the Interdisciplinary Population Health Project (IPHP) conducted in the academic year of 2006-2007 with a group of nursing and health care students. Inspired by population health, community development, critical pedagogy, and the inequalities imagination model, students participated in diverse educational activities to become immersed in the everyday life of an underserved urban neighborhood. A sample of convenience composed of 158 students was recruited from 4 health disciplines in a Western Canadian university. Data were collected using a modified version of the Parsell and Bligh's Readiness of Health Care Students for Interprofessional Learning Scale. A one group pretest-posttest design was used to assess the outcomes of the IPHP. Paired t tests and one-way analyses of variance were used to compare the responses of students from different academic programs to determine if there were differences across disciplines. Findings suggest that students' readiness to work in interprofessional teams did not significantly change over the course of their participation in the IPHP. However, the inequalities imagination model may be useful to enhance the quality and the effectiveness of fieldwork learning activities as a means of

educating culturally and socially conscious nurses and other health care professionals of the future.

**Redmond, M. (2010). Safe Space Oddity: Revisiting Critical Pedagogy. *Journal Of Teaching In Social Work, 30(1), 1-14.***

Inspired by an incident in a social work graduate classroom in which she was a teaching assistant, the author reflects on her commitment to constructivist teaching methods, critical theory, and critical pedagogy. Exploring the educational utility of notions such as public space and safe space, the author employs this personal experience to examine the roles played by ideology and concertive control in (re)creating societal power imbalances—with surprising results. Finally, rather than attempting to avoid inherent classroom tensions through rhetoric ('safe space') or repeatedly finding herself shocked and ill-prepared for the inevitable facilitation of emotional topics teaching requires, the author posits that the role of the educator may be to maintain these tensions while embracing a "pedagogy of discomfort" (M. Boler, 1999).

**Reis, G., & Roth, W. (2010). A Feeling for the Environment: Emotion Talk in/for the Pedagogy of Public Environmental Education. *Journal Of Environmental Education, 41(2), 71-87.***

Emotions are important aspects in/for the pedagogy of environmental education (EE). However, the literature on the relationship between emotions and EE has not explored how emotion talk furnishes teaching identity claims and mediates instruction in/about the environment. Therefore, the present study draws on two ethnographic case studies to investigate the rhetorical and situational use of emotion discursive categories in interviews and authentic EE learning situations. Our findings suggest that rather than just being an outcome of effective instructional models designed to instil an environmental consciousness in students, emotion discourses are means to help account for and concretely realize the pedagogy of EE.

**Schick, C. (2000). 'By Virtue of Being White': resistance in anti-racist pedagogy. *Race, Ethnicity & Education, 3(1), 83-101.***

This research, which employs post-structuralist and psychoanalytic theories of identity, investigates processes by which white, racialised identities are inscribed as normative constructions in the discourses of white pre-service teachers at a Canadian university. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with white students whose desires for respectability and legitimacy are at odds with the imminent critique of anti-racist pedagogy. The analysis indicates processes by which research participants are able to profess liberal values and innocence from racist acts while accessing discursive repertoires which perform them as racially dominant. The power of dominant groups to resist oppositional pedagogies problematizes the potential for whiteness to affirm itself, even as a virtue, in sites of liberal teacher education. The article questions how white pre-service teachers' desires for goodness might be thought in ways which support instability and flux, notwithstanding students' desires for secure identities.

**Simmons, H., Mafle'o, T., Webster, J., Jakobs, J., & Thomas, C. (2008). He Wero: The**



**Challenge of Putting Your Body on the Line: Teaching and Learning in Anti-Racist Practice. *Social Work Education*, 27(4), 366-379.**

This paper explores ways in which social workers, community workers and social work educators have developed anti-racist practice in relation to indigenous issues in Aotearoa/New Zealand. A brief history of anti-racism training in Aotearoa/New Zealand is provided, showing how this has been reflected in the Massey University Bachelor of Social Work programme. The core of the discussion describes the application of a structural analysis model to engage students in identifying their own culture and how they situate their experiences in relation to the indigenous Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Processes of Maori tikanga (custom) and whole person/soul learning are utilised to prepare students to engage with the Bicultural Code of Practice of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers, which mandates partnership under the Treaty of Waitangi, acknowledging Maori as the indigenous people of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

**Wagner, A. E. (2005). Unsettling the academy: working through the challenges of anti-racist pedagogy. *Race, Ethnicity & Education*, 8(3), 261-275.  
doi:10.1080/13613320500174333**

Teaching antiracism is a political project, which will be especially challenging in a university environment which has traditionally valued 'objective' and 'apolitical' knowledge. This analysis focuses on specific pedagogical practices which promote an antiracism framework, with specific attention directed to the process of learning antiracism and how these goals may be furthered within the academy. Exploring some of the inherent challenges and benefits associated with dominant group members assuming responsibility for antiracist teaching, the focus of the paper will also be to examine specific pedagogical practices which may be helpful in introducing students to such emotionally powerful material. The efficacy of such practices will then be explored as a means of challenging the status quo and envisioning a less Eurocentric approach to higher education.

**Zimmerman, L. W., McQueen, L., & Guy, G. (2007). Connections, Interconnections, and Disconnections: The Impact of Race, Class and Gender in the University Classroom. *Journal Of Theory Construction & Testing*, 11(1), 16-21.**

Three female academicians, two white and one African American, share personal narratives about their experiences teaching, and how who they are, where they teach, and the meaning they give to critical pedagogy are extensions of their individual and collective cultural experiences. The personal value of what they do is significant for each of them as they situate themselves in the academy and in the larger society. They explain that they continue in their endeavors because they desire to see a more just society, and believe that by teaching future educators using critical pedagogy, they can work toward that goal. These women believe that the students they teach will make their own determination of the value of the work and the impact it may have as they strive to become future practitioners.

**A SELECTION OF REPORTS RELATED TO ISSUES OF DIVERSITY AND EQUITY  
(2000-2012)  
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**Race and Racism:**

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## Researcher Profiles

### **Dr. Doreen Fumia**

Doreen Fumia is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology. Doreen teaches in the areas of critical sexualities, social diversity and theories of migration and identities. Her current research collaborations are two community-university research alliances that investigate anti-poverty community organizing and learning (APCOL, SSHRC) and poverty and precarious employment in Southern Ontario (PEPSO, CURA). As well, building on her community and academic work with LGBTQ communities, in particular the Toronto secondary school program, Triangle (*Beyond the Queer Alphabet*, Equity Matters 2012), she is embarking on a study with older LGBTQ populations. During her recent stint as a visiting scholar at Brighton University, UK (2012) she piloted a project on LGBTQ Women and Aging (GScene, April 2012). Doreen has also contributed to works that engage with decolonization (*Resources for Feminist Research*, Volume 33: 1&2) and same sex marriage (Oxford U Press, 2010). She is the first Co-Chair of the Equity and Diversity Council at the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

### **Dr. Camille Hernandez-Ramdwar**

Dr. Camille Hernandez-Ramdwar is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada, who also teaches in Caribbean Studies. Her areas of research include Caribbean cultures and identities; African Traditional Religions in the Caribbean; tourism and Caribbean culture; popular culture, youth and crime; diasporic, transnational and second generation identities; and racism and Caribbean peoples in Canada. Her recent work appears in *Caribbean Sexualities*, (University of West Indies Press, forthcoming); *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, (2013); *Caribbean Journal of Education* (2010); *Searching for Equality: Inclusion and Equity in the Canadian Academy* (University of Toronto Press, 2010); *Caribbean Journal of Criminology and Public Safety* (2009); *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies* (2008); and TOPIA (2008). Dr. Hernandez-Ramdwar has also written short stories, narratives, and poetry dealing with the issues of diasporic, transnational, and multiracial identities, work which has been published in anthologies such as *Talking About Identity: Encounters in Race, Ethnicity and Language* (2001), *Beneath the Cotton Tree Root* (2000), and "...but where are you really from?": *Stories of Identity and Assimilation in Canada* (1997).

### **Dr. Amina Jamal**

Amina Jamal teaches courses in social theory, race and ethnicity, immigration and Women and Islam. Her research focuses on women, gender, Islam and modernities in South Asia and Canada from a poststructuralist and transnational Muslim feminist location. She has published on the politics of Muslim women's representation, gendered Islamism and the ongoing discursive struggle of feminism and Islamism in Pakistan. Her forthcoming book *Jamaat-e-Islami Women in Pakistan: Vanguard of a New Modernity?* (Syracuse University Press: Fall 2013) situates these topics within the history of anti-colonial Islamic modernism, postcolonial nation-state formation, recent geopolitical conditions and the unique mystical dimensions of South Asian Islam. Dr. Jamal is presently engaged in a research study on the implications of dichotomous

constructions of social life and subjectivities as secular/religious for feminist projects in South Asia and Canada. This 3-year study *In and against the Islam/secular dichotomy: South Asian Muslim women's struggles and transnational feminist practices* is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

### **Dr. Melanie Knight**

Dr. Knight's research interests are primarily focused on race, gender and the labour market economy with a specific focus on entrepreneurship. She is currently working on two research projects. The first entitled "Diaspora Markets: Racialized Women Entrepreneurs and the Creation of New Markets" where she examines how racialized women entrepreneurs negotiate the labour market, create new diasporic economies and hybridized forms of identity as entrepreneurs. Dr. Knight is also working on a 3 year SSHRC project entitled "The Making of the Enterprising Self: Education, Subjectivity and Processes of Governance in Late Modern Society". The project combines research objects including popular media sources on entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship training documents/curriculum, entrepreneurship/ business students' and educators' narratives in order to explore how entrepreneurship is socially constructed and how students in training are interpolated within the discourse of enterprise.

### **Dr. Nicole Neverson**

Nicole Neverson's research is grounded in the areas of mass media analysis and socio-cultural aspects sport and gender. Her most recent publication examines the complex narratives constructed around race and class via trash talk in the sport of track and field. Another recent work examines the intersection of new media, sport, and gender in Canada via the curtailed digital television network WTSN (Women's Television Sports Network). In addition to her research interests in sport, media, gender, race, and critical pedagogies, Dr. Neverson is currently engaged in an on-going collaborative study that examines Taser use in Canada, the social construction of 'risk' and risk narratives of the mentally ill and socially downtrodden. Her most recent publication is an examination of alternative media perspectives of the Canadian Caribbean diaspora in relation to the Toronto District School Board's Afri (Afro)-centric school.

## **Research Assistants**

### **Azar Masoumi**

Azar Masoumi did her BA in Sociology at Ryerson University. During her undergraduate years she had the opportunity to work as an assistant with the TA Development Program in the Faculty of Arts. This opportunity exposed her to many stimulating discussions on learning and teaching in higher education. She completed an experiential course on peer learning which encouraged her to engage more seriously with questions of pedagogy. As the co-director of Ryerson Sociology Students' Union and the director of Faculty of Arts at the Ryerson Students' Union, Azar had many chances to learn about students' perspectives on issues of learning and teaching at Ryerson University. Once the research position with the Inhabiting Critical Spaces project was announced, Azar enthusiastically jumped at the opportunity, knowing that this project would bring together two of her great interests, pedagogy and research, and allow her to work with an amazing group of scholars.

**Dr. Adwoa Ntozake Onuora**

Adwoa Ntozake Onuora completed her Ph. D. at the University of Toronto. She brings rich experience in research, advocacy, and community development, and is deeply committed to the principles of anti-racism, anti-discrimination, and anti-oppression. She has worked in formal and informal educational settings and has established expertise in community-situated learning, indigenous knowledges, equity, and social change. As a facilitator, Adwoa brings to life critical equity frameworks, storytelling, and narrative. Her research interests include diversity in education, critical pedagogy, cultural studies, and indigenous knowledges.