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Enacting Inclusivity Through Engaged Pedagogy: A Higher Education Perspective

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The purpose of this article is to describe a curricular change process used to incorporate inclusivity and diversity in a Higher Education Ph.D. program. The efforts of faculty members and students to practice engaged pedagogy as advocated by bell hooks are also described. Accounts from two agents, a professor and assistant professor working in the graduate program, of the re-envisioning and development processes focus on three types of changes: strategic administrative actions, curricular change, and pedagogical change. The authors use critical race and feminist perspectives and personal narratives to describe their experiences and how these led to incorporating radical and transformative perspectives in the classroom as they worked collaboratively with students to recognize various kinds of racism, sexism, and inequalities in their lives at the university and in society. Students were supported to find dissertation methodologies and topics consistent with their values.

Discussions about the nature, purpose, and future of doctoral programs are at the center of national studies, commissions, and conferences (Golde, Walker, & Associates, 2006; Narad, 2004). Among those fields receiving a high level of attention is education (Richardson, 2006; Schulman, Golde, Bueschel, & Garabedian, 2006), especially the area of educational leadership (e.g., educational administration and higher education). In the wake of calls for purposeful restructuring to make curricula relevant (Levine, 2005), early signs of reform have emerged. For example, the *Peabody Journal of Education* (2009) devoted a special issue to the need for change and changes in educational leadership programs are occurring, including the Harvard Graduate School of Education's (2009) announcement of a new doctoral program to reform U.S. educational leadership (see also, Caboni & Proper, 2009). Notably absent from these efforts, however, has been in-depth attention to issues of diversity and pedagogy and their relationship to the roles of individual faculty members.

In this article we describe the curricular change process used to incorporate diversity and inclusivity in a doctoral program at the University of Denver and the efforts of faculty and students to practice engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994). We employ a case study approach (Yin,

2009) that Alvesson (2003) describes as self-ethnography methodology, when academics study the “lived realities of” their own organizations. We focus on three types of changes: strategic administrative actions, curricular change, and pedagogical change.

We, Mary Ann Danowitz and Frank Tuitt, were hired in 2003 and 2004, respectively to transform the graduate program in our department to meet the needs of higher education professionals for the twenty-first century. Using critical race and feminist perspectives and personal reflections, we (Danowitz, female, white, full professor, and feminist; Tuitt, Caribbean American, black, male, assistant professor, and an emerging critical race scholar) describe our individual experiences (identifying them with our respective names) and our collective experiences (identifying them with “we”) at the University of Denver and how these efforts led to changing practices in that graduate program.

First, we sketch the broader social realities of the program by considering the changing landscape and demographics of U.S. higher education and society, focusing on students, faculty members, and the university setting. Second, we place our case in the context of the current discourse on inclusive excellence (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2005). Third, viewing curricular innovation as a political act, we describe the pedagogical change process from the perspective of teachers who recognize the value of using our own lived experiences as a critical component of the educational process. Finally, we discuss the implications for improving practice.

SOCIAL REALITIES

Educational achievement and skill levels are declining in the United States while the culture is experiencing sweeping demographic shifts (Braun, Kirsch, Sum, & Yamamoto, 2007). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2004), by 2010, 35% of the U.S. population will be an ethnic minority. Blacks will make up 13% of the population, Latinos/as 15.5%, Asians 4.6%, and all other races 3.0%. Much of the population growth will come from immigrants and their U.S.-born children (Passel & Cohn, 2008). We view this “browning” of high school graduates (Jones, Castellanos, & Cole, 2002) as a mandate for colleges and universities to transform their educational practices to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student body (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Petersen, & Allen, 1998; Tuitt, 2003a). At the doctoral level, this means preparing all graduates as scholars and practitioners with the skills to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds, especially underrepresented groups who have traditionally been subjected to discrimination.

Higher education’s inability to align its practices with demographic shifts occurring in this country has been well documented.¹ This is most clearly evident in the failure of predominantly white institutions to develop adequate responses to the access and achievement gaps facing students of color. For instance, while African Americans constitute approximately 13% of the U.S. population, they earned only 9.8% of the total degrees awarded in 2007–2008 at the bachelor’s level, 10.4% at the master’s level, and 6.1% at the doctoral level (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2010a). The challenge of underrepresentation of people of color becomes even more acute in the case of faculty members. For example, in 2007 Blacks and Latinos comprised only 7% and 4%, respectively, of the faculty in higher education institutions (U.S. Department of Education, NCES, 2010b). Thus, it is important to institute policies to improve the educational

system and narrow the achievement gap (Braun et al., 2007) because it is morally right (Ladson-Billings, 2006). In addition, the nation's ability to close the gap will meet the urgent need to create the most qualified and skilled labor force in order to ensure the nation's economic competitiveness (Hanushek, Jamison, Jamison & Woessmann, 2008; Hanushek & Kimko, 2000; Hanushek & Wößmann, 2010; Obama, 2010).

The achievement gap crisis in Colorado is particularly critical because of its low high school graduation rates (Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation, 2008). Moreover, students of color in urban areas, mostly from lower income families, find the challenge of transitioning from high school to higher education especially difficult. For example, in 2002 only 43% of the students of color in Denver public schools graduated from high school and only 9% completed a four-year college degree (Lee, 2006). More specifically, in 2001 the high school graduation rates for Latino and black students attending Denver public schools were 30.5% and 38.6%, respectively, as compared to the national rates of 53.2% for Latino students and 50.2% for black students (Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004). In addition, the state is ranked 48th in state and local financing of higher education per full-time student (Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation, 2008).

While inequities in educational opportunities and achievement in the United States occur along the lines of race and ethnicity, gender inequities persist within higher education as well. Although women earn 56% of bachelor degrees within the broader academy, the percentage of women represented decreases at each step of the academic hierarchy: In research universities the percentage of women decreases from 46.9% of the doctoral students to 35.9% assistant professors, to 30.2% associate professors, to 15.8% full professors (Glazer-Raymo, 2007). The context for these data is an ungendering of public policy and the continuing existence of male norms in many disciplines and senior leadership circles and a lack of family friendly policies (Danowitz Sagaria & Agans, 2007). These conditions call for attending to gender equality and, in the case of women of color, addressing the multiple challenges and compounded forms of discrimination they face.

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

In 2005, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) called for colleges and universities to approach diversity through Inclusive Excellence, a comprehensive and innovative approach linked directly to teaching, a core goal of higher education. The AACU's approach was to challenge postsecondary institutions that have been predominantly populated by white male students since their founding to consider how to involve the entire academic community in order to merge inclusivity with excellence (Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). The AACU made a case for diversity in undergraduate higher education by connecting teaching to student diversity learning outcomes. The underlying assumptions of Inclusive Excellence were that teaching, research, and service must be linked to diversity. To help institutions frame and monitor their efforts to promote and achieve Inclusive Excellence, Williams, Berger, and McClendon (2005) proposed the Inclusive Excellence Scorecard, which consisted of four dimensions: (a) access and equity, (b) campus climate, (c) diversity in the curriculum, and (d) student learning and development. Although our efforts in our Higher Education Ph.D. program attended to all four dimensions,² in this article we focus on diversity in the curriculum and student learning and development because

the curriculum is a core responsibility of faculty and is inextricably linked to student learning and development, which influences the other dimensions.

In theory, higher education embraces the idea that what students study, the content of their courses, and the manner in which those courses are taught have significant implications for what and how students learn and develop. For example, diversifying the curriculum assists students in developing their cultural competencies, which, in turn, will help them work more effectively in a global society (Williams et al., 2005). In an increasingly diverse environment, multicultural competence is critical. The desire to develop a work force better equipped to engage and leverage the changing demographics of the United States becomes especially important in an increasingly diverse world economy (Duster, 1993; Milem, 2003). Moreover, changing demographics require that postsecondary staff, especially those in senior leadership roles and faculty positions, develop multicultural competencies³ to allow them to serve increasingly diverse student populations more effectively. In addition to helping students develop cultural competence, diversifying the curriculum helps transform graduate and professional schools into more inclusive environments (Williams et al., 2005). For example, using diverse content and perspectives lets students know that their perspectives are welcomed, especially if the content aligns with students' interests (Tuitt, 2009). While some faculty may attempt to present themselves as neutral in the courses they teach, we argue that despite their best intentions "our values and norms get embedded into [our course by] the way [we] structure our courses, the way [we] structure our curriculum" (Gair & Mullins, 2001, p. 26). In this regard, the curriculum can and ought to be regarded as racial and gendered text that exemplifies how professors value or do not value diverse perspectives (Castenell & Pinar, 1993).

Although diversifying the curriculum can assist in the creation of an inclusive learning environment, this is only the first step. Even in cases where the curriculum is diverse (Banks, 1991), faculty members often use traditional modes of instruction,⁴ which serve to exclude rather than include students (Tuitt, 2003b). Thus, faculty members must not only concern themselves with what they teach; they must also be concerned with how they teach. In the area of pedagogy, Inclusive Excellence calls for the integration of practices that embody multiple student identity groups. This involves:

1. Focusing on students' intellectual and social development; offering the best possible course of study for the context in which the education is offered.
2. Purposely developing and using educational resources to enhance students' learning; establishing an environment that challenges each student to achieve at high levels academically while encouraging each member of the class to contribute to students' overall learning and knowledge development.
3. Paying attention to the cultural differences diverse learners bring to the educational experience and how those cultural differences enhance the teaching and learning environment.
4. Creating a welcoming classroom environment that engages all of its diversity in the pursuit of individual and collaborative learning (Williams et al., 2005).

Through an Inclusive Excellence framework, educators use a range of teaching/learning strategies that help students see how they can promote equity, ask questions, examine assumptions, and question cultural myths regarding the social order and their place in it (Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002).

THE PH.D. PROGRAM: STRATEGIES AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE KNOWLEDGE AND PEDAGOGIES

Using our experiences in a feminist reflective fashion (Deem, 1996), we focus on the developments in the professional Ph.D. program around race, gender, and inclusive values, knowledge, and pedagogy. The setting, the University of Denver, is a private research university with a current enrollment of approximately 4,500 undergraduate and 5,000 graduate students. It is located in Denver, Colorado, which has a population of about 51% people of color (Denver Office of Economic Development, 2010). In 2004 our academic unit, the College of Education, had approximately 600 graduate students taught by 27 full-time faculty members and a larger number of part-time adjunct faculty members. Of the full-time faculty members, two were black, two were Latino, and one was Latina. Most faculty members were women. There were no staff members of color, and fewer than 11% of the students identified as racial/ethnic minorities (Office of Institutional Research, 2008). At the time, our program represented the racial and gender make up of the college in that 2 of the 12 Ph.D. students were male and 2 were students of color. Most of the students were professionals studying part-time, thus some of the programs were viewed as a form of professional development.

Six years prior to writing this article, I (Danowitz, the first author) had been hired by the University of Denver as professor and director of the higher education program to transform the doctoral program so it would prepare graduates to provide effective leadership to the changing needs of higher education institutions. I had developed curricula and supervised Ph.D. students in higher education administration for two decades at Ohio State University, and my research had a strong feminist orientation, often examining issues of access and equity in universities. I interpreted the task of developing a higher education program as an opportunity for curricular and pedagogical reform that would lead to committed students who would go on to provide leadership for highly diverse organizations. To bring about this reform, strategies were needed to lay the groundwork for the changes and to implement the change process. One of the first activities was to fill a faculty position by hiring a junior colleague.

The dean, Ginger Maloney, a visionary committed to life-long learning, wanted the College of Education to become more responsive to equity and diversity issues; she was receptive to my research and teaching. When finalizing my appointment in 2003, we agreed that I would become the chairperson of a search committee to hire another faculty member in higher education. The committee would recommend a candidate or candidates to the dean, who would then make the final hiring decision.

Hiring a new colleague would be one of the salient strategic decisions affecting my role and the future of the graduate program. He or she would be a crucial partner in the transformation process, and together we would be the two principal faculty members directing Ph.D. students with teaching support from other faculty members, including one with administrative responsibilities in the College and approximately eight adjunct faculty members contracted to teach one or two courses each year. The hope was that the arrival of two of us at the University of Denver would signal a change in the direction of the program's commitment to diversity to faculty and staff of the University and the national network of the profession.

The strategic change process began with a revision of the position description and its posting to appropriate national outlets, such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. I also contacted senior scholars in the specialty area for which we were searching and asked them to recommend junior

colleagues for the job. The position description was explicit about important characteristics and qualities. For example, it stated, “We seek a colleague with a demonstrated line of research and a commitment to teaching that includes ethnicity and race in relation to postsecondary education.”

I also recommended that the dean make changes in the search committee membership. This second strategic decision was intended to ensure that members would be sensitive to diversity and inclusivity and that their participation in the search process would become a foundation for future collaboration and alliances. Having successfully assembled a diverse search committee representing key constituencies, we set out to find a candidate with whom I could partner to transform the program.

This is where Tuitt entered the picture. He earned his doctorate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2003. In his search for a faculty position, two things were especially important: (a) working with a diverse group of faculty and students committed to access and equity in education and (b) working for an institution that had an explicit commitment to diversity and excellence. When he first saw the job description for an assistant professor of higher education at the University of Denver, he remembers thinking, “Wow, this position is perfect for me!” The position description described the institution’s desire for a faculty member who was committed to multicultural issues as they related to teaching and learning in higher education. This was precisely what his research, in general, and his dissertation (Tuitt, 2003b), in particular, were about. Having recently worked as a research assistant for the Harvard National Campus Diversity Project (2005), he was keenly aware of the potential for disconnect between espoused intentions, theory and practice. It was important for him to know that his research and scholarship on access and equity would align with the mission of both the college and the program.

It did not take long to perceive a true commitment to diversity at the college in particular and the university as a whole. I recognized that making connections with people of color in and outside of the College of Education would be important to Tuitt and advantageous to the program. The search committee arranged for a black graduate student to pick him up at the airport, which gave him a sense of student diversity. He also had dinner with several faculty members of color from the college and the university. This gave him an opportunity to meet potential allies and supporters from throughout the institution. In short, his experience in the search process confirmed that this program was a good fit. He subsequently accepted the offer to join the faculty.

STRATEGIES AND SUBSTANCE OF CHANGE

The college was organized into seven more-or-less autonomous programs or departments, including higher education; child, family, and school psychology; counseling psychology; curriculum and instruction; educational administration; library and information sciences; and quantitative research. Each was expected to generate enough money from student tuition fees to pay for its faculty salary expenses. Thus, there was pressure on the programs to maintain or increase the number of students enrolled. The College Program Planning and Review Committee held the authority to approve or veto new academic programs, specializations, and courses. However, changes in course names and descriptions did not require the committee’s review and approval, but were subject to an administrative review focusing on form rather than substance.

Considering the ambitious task of transforming a doctoral program and the policies and norms of the college, we strategically decided to innovate incrementally by graphing (Nag, Corley, & Gioia, 2007), bringing new knowledge and pedagogical approaches from outside the university and incorporating them into the existing curricular structures. This approach allowed us to reduce the amount of internal stakeholder involvement required for approval. Thus, we could avoid potential resistance and expedite the process, so that the incoming group of students in September 2005 could begin with the new curriculum.

Mission

The Higher Education program at University of Denver is one of more than 213 graduate programs offering this specialization (Association for the Study of Higher Education, 2008). Program directors meet annually in conjunction with the Association for the Study of Higher Education to discuss curricular matters, but the association does not provide any external requirements or standards for a higher education Ph.D. specialization. All are course-based programs requiring a thesis or dissertation for completion. The program at the University of Denver, like many others, was developed in the 1960s along with the mass expansion of universities and colleges in the United States and the need for individuals trained in research and administration of higher education. These programs have followed a traditional structure (with some variation) of required courses, including the history of higher education, curriculum and instruction, students and clientele, administration, and organizational theory. Students then choose advanced courses for their area of expertise. After analyzing our graduates' prospective work environments, the general higher education environment, and the institutional environment, we began the curricular reform process by considering major social, economic, and demographic trends in higher education and the United States and how the program should change to respond to dominant trends. After a series of meetings the decision was reached to change the mission of the graduate program to include multiculturalism and diversity:

The Higher Education Program's mission is to prepare professionals for administrative and teaching leadership roles in postsecondary institutions, public and private agencies of higher education, and training and development settings in a multicultural and changing world. Colleges and universities throughout the world face multiple challenges in this new century associated with decreasing governmental funding, managerialism, globalization, and increasing cultural diversity. These institutions and the larger systems of which they are a part need responsible and effective administrative and faculty leaders who can guide various internal and external constituencies to new solutions to social, political and economic challenges. (University of Denver, 2004, p. 5)

Thus, we defined a specific market niche for the doctorate. We explicitly recognized critical issues in higher education in the United States and, especially, in Colorado. This also distinguished our program from others. Based upon a review of the mission statements and curricula of the top ranked higher education administration programs in the 2003 *U.S. News and World Report* and other related graduate programs from highly ranked universities there were only a couple of programs that explicitly identified multiculturalism or diversity as a defining value. We also recognized what was implicit in most graduate programs in education: The majority of students were women (Narad, 2004). The growth in midlevel managerial positions associated

with entrepreneurialism, cost containment, external relations, and student and client services was increasing the number of female employees (Danowitz Sagaria & Agans, 2007). Hence, we assumed that the majority of students would be women.

Curriculum

After refining our mission statement, the next step was to determine how to bring this new vision to life. We began by examining the content of our course offerings and making several changes. Specifically, we identified a set of courses that could be revised to assist our students' understanding of education and its technologies of teaching and managing through the lenses of power, inequality, race, ethnicity, class, and gender. For example, we reconceptualized and redesigned our introductory course on higher education from a mainstream historical approach to a social, political, and economic contextualization of education. This portal into Ph.D. studies introduced students to critical perspectives (e.g., Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Apple, and Lois Weiss) and the nature of and the consequences of class, access, and disenfranchisement in postindustrial societies. It also brought theory to life by encouraging students to use critical theory to analyze their own identity formation related to dimensions like gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, and class in a major paper. As students gained awareness of the meaning of growing up as a black, biracial, or white girl or boy, this provided an important opportunity for students to learn about intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1996). Accordingly, through our engaged pedagogy, we were able to help students begin to deal with sexism and racism as they had experienced it and as they were continuing to experience and perpetuate it. This pedagogy also laid the groundwork in the classroom and in professional settings for male students to begin to engage with gender equity issues and for white students to interrogate their own privilege. Recognizing that these tasks would be difficult for some of our students, we incorporated our own perspectives and experiences into our teaching by sharing examples of how our multiple identities and experiences were influenced by our multiple dimensions of diversity. This modeling often occurred in the form of sharing personal narratives with the addition of an analytical component that helped students see how they might make connections between their own lived experiences and the concepts and ideas about which they were reading.

One course, *Learning in Organizations*, focused on the process and benefits of becoming a learning organization (e.g., Peter Drucker, Chris Argyris, David Garvin). We changed the title to *Diversity in Organizations* and introduced students to the theory and practice of enhancing cultural diversity (e.g., Taylor Cox, Daryl Smith, and Jeff Milem). We also added elective courses, including *Women in Higher Education Globally* and *Critical Race Theory in Education*. From 2004 to 2005 we made the changes shown in Table 1.

We incorporated these new courses through what the institution considered a technical revision process (minor changes related to the title and content of a course) in order to lay the foundation for our most significant initiative: changing our concentration from *Teaching and Learning* to *Diversity and Higher Learning*. The decision to make this change was related to our desire to be explicit about our focus and to signal to our faculty and students that we valued this area of scholarship. This concentration was developed for students interested in diversity, access, and equity, or teaching and learning (in adult education).

TABLE 1
Course Changes

Program Courses in 2001–2002	Program Courses in 2003–2005
Current Issues (Historical Foundations) II	Social & Political Context of Education
Learning in Organizations	Diversity in Organizations
Design and Administration of Adult Programs	Design and Administration of Multicultural Programs
	Women in Higher Education Globally
	Critical Race Theory in Education

The Diversity and Higher Learning concentration offers a four-course sequence concerned with enhancing diversity, access, and equity in organizations. It provides a critical theoretical and practical understanding of the impact of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, and other social identities on organizational and individual learning. We thought that individuals pursuing (or planning to pursue) careers in multicultural affairs, curriculum and faculty development, university instruction and administration, consulting, or training might find this concentration to be a good fit and provide them with information and strategies to leverage change for more inclusive practices in organizations.

Changes in Philosophy and Pedagogical Principles

In addition to changing the curriculum, we made a conscious effort to become more inclusive in terms of the content offerings and competencies we expected from our students. First, we established the principle that our courses would address diversity in real and meaningful ways; diversity would not merely be an add-on. For example, we changed our class on teaching strategies from a narrow focus on specific teaching techniques to an explicit analysis of the classroom as a space of liberation in which each classroom encounter had the potential to make a profound impact on an individual's life, the lives of people they came in contact with, the organizations in which they worked, the communities in which they lived, and society as a whole. This Freirian (1970/2008) philosophy rejected learning for learning's sake and instead embraced the idea that education should be used for social and political change. Thus, we challenged students to use the knowledge they acquired to promote equity and social justice for society, in general, as well as for marginalized groups and communities, in particular.

Our hope was that through a social justice paradigm that focused students' learning on both disadvantaged populations and systematic structures of oppression (both social and academic), they would develop a commitment to the deconstruction and disruption of such structures (Gewirtz, 1998). In theory, creating a bridge between our students' knowledge and engagement allowed them to make historical and current inequities and oppressions the focus of their own research, leadership, advocacy, and practice within higher education (Theoharis, 2007). In this manner, students' intellectual and moral commitment to social justice would be established by their examination and action toward filling the unmet needs of historically underserved populations (Marshall & Oliva, 2006). For instance, in the Design and Administration of Multicultural Programs class,

students had the option to conduct a case study of an existing program or organization that sought to promote equity and social justice or to design a multicultural program that addressed some inequity in education. In both cases, students were encouraged to share their assignments with those individuals and institutions that could directly benefit from the work.

Second, we embraced a principle of “engaged pedagogy” (hooks, 1994). This reflexive, experiential, and critical approach aligned with womanist, feminist, and critical values and pedagogies. An underlying assumption of the pedagogy was that one’s own experience is central to understanding and developing knowledge. David (2007) explains, “[T]his involves an exploration of personal experiences, reflections, and narrative or biographical accounts of both professional and personal developments as part of the approach to learning and teaching the *curriculum* and the *knowledge* created” (p. 148). This approach recognized that personal and private matters are highly political and are shaped by power relations, such as those between men and women.

Our approach to pedagogy in our respective courses established an opportunity to recognize and distinguish various kinds of racism, sexism, and inequalities. Furthermore, engaged pedagogy led some students to seek research methodologies for their dissertations that were consistent with their values. Dissonance was created for others because they were asked to critically question and identify underlying assumptions of traditional quantitative methods, which they had been socialized to accept as truth. For example, students struggled to accept how narratives of lived experiences (their own and others) could be powerful tools for understanding oppression and discrimination.

Some students (usually practicing administrators) who had not deeply queried their own racism, sexism, or the influence of their class experiences, were encouraged to confront these issues in a reflective fashion through autobiographical journaling. This became especially challenging and disturbing to some white students who had not previously acknowledged their white privilege and/or racism. Sexism also became a topic of discussion in the classroom; men and women questioned their implicit assumptions and language use. Moving from the personal to the organizational and then to broader social, political, and economic contexts, students came to think about how their work settings reduce or reproduce inequalities.

As professors, we modeled and attempted to make our teaching more transparent. For example, we developed an orientation (i.e., induction) program for our incoming Ph.D. students based on the book *Teaching to Transgress* (hooks, 1994) to begin the formal socialization process of preparing students for engaged pedagogy. During this event, we were explicit about our intention to provide doctoral training that would challenge students to interrogate their existing beliefs, values, and worldviews. We also modeled personal engagement with radical and transformative perspectives and alerted them to the type of deep reflective work in which they would be expected to engage. To that end, Tuitt shared a personal narrative of a fictional conversation he had with bell hooks, an important member of his intellectual family. During this presentation we asked students to imagine that this conversation centered around two important questions:

1. What is my responsibility as a teacher related to teaching in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of my students?
2. What are my students’ responsibilities related to engaging in education as a practice of freedom?

Another way to think about this conversation was to imagine what hooks would say if we were to ask her to describe her vision of a teaching and learning environment that provided students

with a first rate, highly rigorous, and transformative education. During this presentation we asked students to consider the following (building upon the words of hooks, 1994):

1. Keep in mind that to educate as a practice of freedom is a way of teaching where anyone can learn. Many of today's students want a meaningful education, one where their professors will not offer them information without addressing the connection between what they are learning and the impact it can have on their overall life experiences. Hopefully, your students are at the University of Denver because they are passionate about something and want to make a positive difference in this world. Please encourage them to follow their passion and use it as a source of motivation for learning.
2. In addition to being meaningful, education should be exciting. It is rare that any professor, no matter how eloquent, can generate through his or her actions enough energy to create an exciting classroom. Excitement is generated through collective effort. The classroom should be an exciting place, never boring. And if boredom should prevail, have in your teaching repertoire a variety of pedagogical strategies that can intervene, alter, or even disrupt the boring atmosphere.
3. Even though your faculty earned doctorates, they must resist the temptation to present themselves as the all powerful and all knowing; and that they and only they have control over the learning process. Please be advised that everyone (professor and students) influences the learning process. Consequently, they must genuinely value everyone's presence. These contributions are resources. Used constructively, they enhance the capacity of any class to create an inclusive and transformative learning community.
4. One way to avoid having a professor-centered teaching and learning process is to make your classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute. In this regard it will be important for you to establish a dialogical relationship between you and your students in which you affirm your students' presence and their right to speak in multiple ways on diverse subject matters. In this dialogical professor-student relationship, everyone brings to the classroom intellectual and experiential knowledge from previous encounters that can only strengthen the learning environment.
5. Your students must enter the classroom with the conviction that it is crucial to be an active participant and not a passive consumer or empty vessel waiting for you to impart your wisdom and expertise. They must own their education. Although professors are here to teach, ultimately, students are responsible for what they learn.

Many of our students, in both reflective writing and class discussion, responded with excitement and anticipation to this introductory event because they saw that we were intent on delivering on our program's mission to prepare and train transformative intellectuals who would become agents of change. A few students expressed anxiety related to how their own personal beliefs and values might be challenged.

We sought to leverage students' lived experiences with the understanding that it would be critical for the overall learning process. Carnell (2007) identifies three characteristics of effective teaching: (a) learning is transparent, (b) dialogue enables learning, and (c) a community of learners generates knowledge. Likewise, hooks (1994) emphasizes the importance of engaged pedagogy in leveraging critical thinking for intellectual development and suggested that "engaged pedagogy not only compels [us] to be constantly creative in the classroom, it also sanctions involvement with students beyond that setting" (p. 205). Thus, in faculty meetings we verbally encouraged our

adjunct faculty colleagues to engage in a pedagogy and curriculum that leveraged the experiences of the students, both as individuals and as a community of learners, and encouraged them to reflect and act.

The course activities and assignments we chose attempted to balance personal reflection with team learning. For example, in the Diversity in Organizations course, taught by Tuitt, students were evaluated on five activities: (a) class participation, (b) analytical reflection, (c) an individual paper, (d) a group case study paper, and (e) a group case study presentation. The first three activities focused on individual experiences and contributions; the last two emphasized teamwork in multicultural settings.

In addition, the assignments highlighted integration of theory with practice. For example, in the Diversity in Organizations course, students were expected to write one- to two-page analytical reflections that integrated personal experiences and readings in their weekly journals. Likewise, group case studies required students to research actual organizational efforts to enhance diversity through the lens of diversity change models (Smith, 1995, 1996a) and other course readings.

In the introductory Ph.D. seminar, Social, Political and Economic Context of Education, we examined the role of social institutions and analyzed how they perpetuated and challenged classism, racism, sexism, and homophobia. Students were expected to write a 12–15-page educational autobiography that used theory to reflectively analyze how dominant institutions, such as education and religion, or ideologies, viewpoints, norms, and expectations, influenced their relationships and identity. The instructor treated the autobiography confidentially, and, during the last class session, students could elect to read a passage or a couple of paragraphs to the class. All students chose to read. Danowitz read from a narrative about how and why she, a lesbian (who was previously married), considered the Catholic Church my spiritual home, although it did not accept homosexuality. This enabled her to teach reflexive analysis to illustrate fluidity and identity, and the example tended to break down stereotypical perceptions that lesbians and gays did not belong to traditional and patriarchic religious groups. It also showed how someone could be a member and activist in an organization they hoped would change.

In expecting our students to move from theory to practice and from practice to theory, we recognized that an environment embracing Inclusive Excellence would also inspire students to become more engaged in research for the public good (Bowen & Bok, 1998). This resulted in two significant outcomes. First, many students chose to write their comprehensive examination paper (their major academic work preceding the dissertation) on topics associated with Inclusive Excellence.

Second, many of our students began to view their academic work and sustained personal engagement with underrepresented communities as an opportunity to transform the ways in which people view the world and their role in it. Thus, the centrality of diversity and inclusivity in the curriculum and engaged pedagogy changed the way students chose to engage in their professional roles.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

We have presented an analysis of our efforts to transform a Higher Education Ph.D. program to be inclusive and embrace diversity. Chen and Van Velsor (1996) claim that successful incorporation

of diversity into an organization requires the leaderships' commitment to diversity as well as a willingness to learn from the challenges that accompany the change process. When successful, the "diversity leader develops the capacity to be an open-minded, continuous learner, a relationship builder, and a people developer" (p. 299). Our experience re-envisioning the curriculum to enact inclusivity at the University of Denver suggested that the Higher Education graduate program was able to make significant changes by being strategic, intentional, creative, and engaged. These changes have allowed our program to become recognized in the college, on campus, and in the community for its commitment to diversity and equity. For example, the dean frequently spoke about our program in public venues and the Center of Multicultural Excellence at the university awarded Tuitt the Profiles of Excellence Outstanding Faculty Award for our program's efforts to promote inclusive excellence.

Based on the practices and experiences described in this article we share some of the lessons we've learned.

1. Re-envisioning a program to be inclusive calls for a careful examination of both the content (what) and the pedagogy (how) used to train future scholars and practitioners. The latter is crucial for dealing with the personal and structural nature of racism and sexism and other inequalities. Changes in the curriculum and pedagogy should be supported by theory and research to ensure that organizations move away from a change model in which diversity efforts are framed in the context of lowering standards and instead embrace the tensions that are an integral part of the organizational learning process (Smith, 1996b).
2. Strategically assess the organizational context, policies, procedures, and politics (Danowitz, Hanappi-Egger, & Hofmann, 2009) to determine the desired form of the revision and how to best align and expedite the change process. This should include developing knowledge about both the university's espoused policies and procedures and those in use as well as creating allies to bring about curricular change and to reduce resistance.
3. Expect and be prepared to engage student resistance in teaching and learning. Communicating clear expectations and faculty modeling are important to explain how and why the program may be different from other programs and prior learning experiences. Confronting student resistance may reduce it and the process teaches students ways to engage in the resistance that they may encounter in their efforts to be more inclusive or confront inequities.
4. Talk with other faculty members about your curriculum and pedagogy. Once students have experienced engaged pedagogy, they may be less receptive to extensive lecturing and the use of exclusively mainstream scholarship and research in teaching.
5. Think of yourself as an academic change agent with the goal of developing a "diversity change infrastructure that is holistic, multidimensional, and focused on making a real difference" (Williams et al., 2005, p. 13). Moving toward Inclusive Excellence means having a programmatic focus on the intellectual and social development of students, engaging in the purposeful development and utilization of resources, paying attention to cultural differences, creating a welcoming community, and embracing all of its diversity to enhance student and organizational learning (Williams et al., 2005).
6. Neither the curriculum revision process nor teaching and learning through engaged pedagogy are not easy; equally important, they are never completed. Evaluations and adaptations are crucial to maintain quality and to support the growth of all community members (faculty, students, administrators, and staff).

Taken together, the values, behaviors, and organization activities we have described in this article have contributed to progress in overcoming exclusionary practices and put in place strategies to incorporate diversity into the curriculum and culture of one graduate education context. In this sense, we embraced hooks' (1994) notion:

[T]he academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility, we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. (p. 207)

In our effort to promote inclusivity through engaged pedagogy, we came to understand that education as the practice of freedom requires that both students and faculty resist the temptation to fall back on traditional ways of teaching and find the courage to embrace change and learn without any limits.

NOTES

1. See *Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Higher Education* (ASHE Reader Series Editions 1–3) for selected publications. http://vig.pearsoned.com/store/home/1,1205,store-18100_id-2,00.html
2. Specifically we have increased the diversity of our students and placed a high priority on developing an inclusive program climate by setting clear expectations in orientation about the learning environment we seek to create for our students.
3. Multicultural competence “entails the awareness of one’s own assumptions, biases, and values; an understanding of the worldview of others; information about various cultural groups; and developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques” (Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004, p. 9).
4. By “traditional” we mean teaching styles born out of the Western European tradition that has minimal professor–student interaction (Chesler, Wilson, & Malani, 1993). In traditional teaching, only the professor is responsible for the learning that is to occur (Zimmerman, 1991). Traditional teaching requires that students be unemotional, detached, and apolitical (Adams, 1992).

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