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Faculty Diversity in Higher Education

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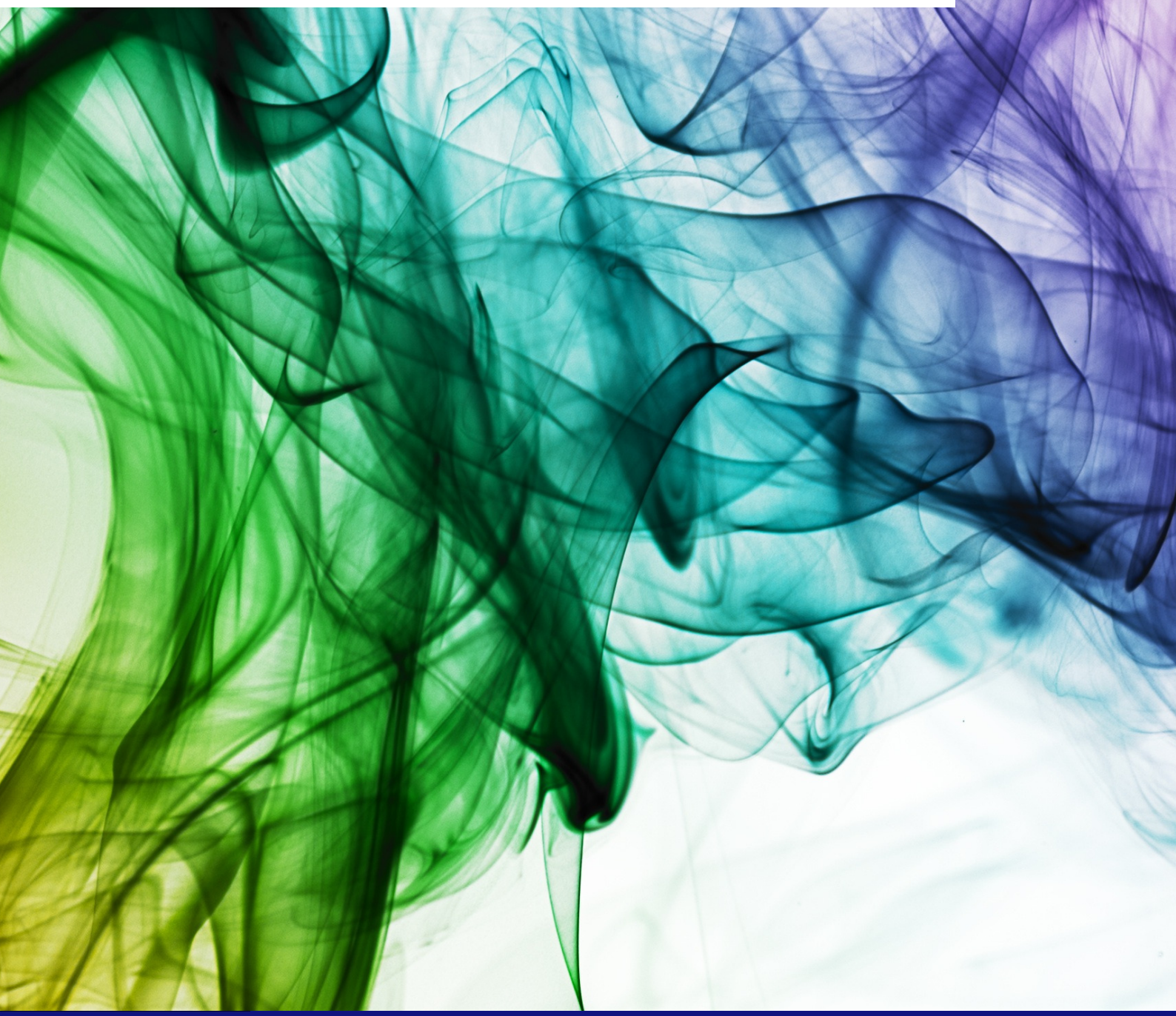

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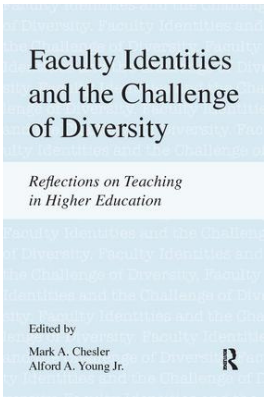
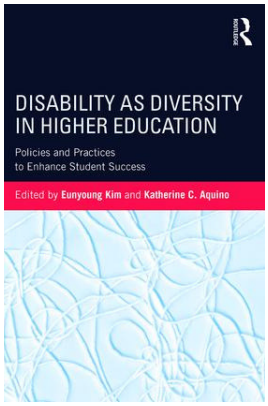


1. Chapter 4: How Race and Gender Shape Perceived Challenges to Classroom Authority and Expertise

From: *Faculty Identities and the Challenge of Diversity,* Edited by Mark Chesler & Alford Young Jr.



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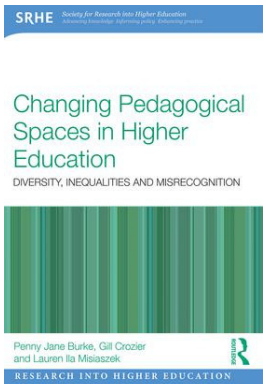

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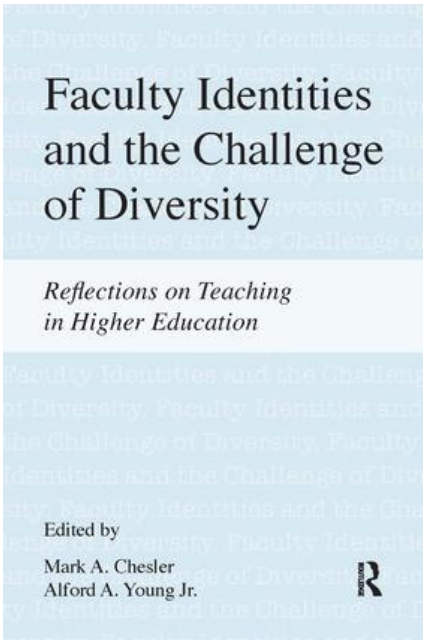

Chapter 4: How Race and Gender Shape Perceived Challenges to Classroom Authority and Expertise

From: *Faculty Identities and the Challenge of Diversity*

Edited by Mark Chesler & Alford Young Jr.

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Part II Difference and Diversity in Classroom Interactions

Chapter 4

How Race and Gender Shape Perceived Challenges to Classroom Authority and Expertise

Alford A. Young Jr., Megan Furhman, and Mark A. Chesler

> "But there's always, always, one male student, at least one white male student that I have, at least one in the class, who always wants to challenge me, you know." (AsAm, W, H)

The increased race and gender diversity of higher education faculty presents many students with the relatively rare situation of dealing with people in positions of authority who do not look like traditional white male authority figures. Students' preconceived notions of what faculty members are supposed to look like and what they might expect from them often are rooted in traditional race and gender stereotypes. These notions shape the ways that students react to their instructors and their classroom pedagogies, often resulting in a series of covert

and overt student challenges, especially to white women faculty and men and women faculty of color. Student orientations and behaviors also affect how faculty members anticipate and enact their roles and deal with students' reactions to them.

In this chapter we examine how the social group identities of faculty members are reflected in some of their pedagogical encounters and practices. More particularly, we consider how faculty members of different social group identities deal with two issues commonly faced by all faculty: (1) embodiment of the authority of the faculty role, and (2) assumptions about their subject matter expertise. Although related to one another, faculty authority in the classroom and faculty expertise concerning subject matter are two distinct phenomena. The first has to do with how students evaluate, interact, or otherwise respond to the faculty member's power and status to make and enforce decisions. The second has to do with students' perceptions of the instructor's repository of knowledge about the course matter or topic. In the case of men and women faculty of color and white women faculty, research has demonstrated that both groups are often covertly or overtly challenged by students on these bases (Gitli 2002; Harlow 2003; Hendrix 2007; Hubbard and Stage 2009; Perry et al. 2009; Thompson and Dey 1998). Our objectives here are to explore whether and how faculty members experience, think about, and navigate the challenges they perceive being received from students, and if so, how they see and react to these challenges differently based on their race and gender. In so doing we shed empirical light on several of the constitutive elements of classroom conflict identified in the prior chapter—instructors, students, and pedagogies.

We anticipate that faculty members of color and white women faculty experience more challenges and more intense challenges to their authority and expertise than do their white men colleagues. In addition, we suggest that faculty whose social identities are comprised of more privileged characteristics (i.e., whites, men) are able to demonstrate greater agency in handling classroom issues concerning their academic credentials and subject matter knowledge than do (or can) white women and men and women of color. This is also the case for how these scholars express themselves in regard to their institutional role as faculty and the authority presumably associated with traditional student behavior (e.g., respect and deference, acceptance of the status hierarchy, grading practices, etc.); that is, those faculty who possess more privileged social identity characteristics are less likely to be challenged and less likely to feel challenged about these matters (or to feel distressed by such challenges) or to seriously consider that students or others in the university community might issue such challenges.

Analytic Strategy

We approached this inquiry with an intent to examine these two types of challenges. Thus, we read through all the interviews and coded the challenges faculty

members reported into these two major categories. We then discovered and focused on some different subthemes within each major category.

One example of a challenge to authority is reported by an African American faculty who shares a story about an experience in the classroom that she wishes she had handled differently.

> I haven't figured out how to effectively deal with my white males who are resistant to me for I guess a number of reasons … snide looks, rolling their eyes, I mean it's a lot of even nonverbal aggression—and I haven't figured out how to deal with that because it's not overt. (AfAm, W, SS).

Her response does not speak to a specific classroom situation but instead to a continuing problem she faced with white men students.

This same young African American woman faculty member who discusses students' challenges to her authority also reports several challenges to her expertise. In one example she describes a white male student e-mailing her regarding his desire to do a final paper on a topic not covered in the syllabus because he felt it should have been covered and that it was more important than the topics the professor had chosen. She goes on to say,

> I think that kind of challenge as to why I would organize a class and not include his particular topic comes out of how he's situating me and would he have been so vocal if I assumed a different identity? I don't think so, I could be wrong, but I doubt it. (AfAm, W, SS)

Analysis of these data yielded four types of reported challenges to authority and two types of reported challenges to expertise. The challenges to authority include mistaking or addressing faculty as nonfaculty, expecting faculty to be parental figures or servants, in-group boundary breaking, and disrespectful or harassing behavior. The two types of challenges to expertise include not being perceived as an expert and thus having to prove credibility and accusations of biased curriculum or behavior. The data also reveal that some faculty discuss receiving no challenges, feeling that their authority and expertise are safe from students' challenges in the classroom and/or that they dismiss these challenges easily.

Findings

Table 4.1 presents the aggregate number of faculty reports of challenges (combined challenges to authority and expertise) by the race and gender of the faculty member. This table makes abundantly clear that faculty members of color report substantially more challenges than do white faculty members, and that this trend is true for all racial/ethnic categories of faculty of color. The eighteen

white faculty report a total of 15 challenges, or less than 1 per person, whereas the forty-eight faculty of color report 125 challenges, an average of 2.6 per person. Among faculty of color African Americans report the most challenges (per person) and Asian Americans the least. Moreover, it is clear that in each racial/ethnic category women faculty report experiencing more challenges than do men faculty. Overall, the thirty-two women faculty report 95 challenges (an average of 3), whereas the thirty-four men report 45 (an average of 1.3). Moreover, when we disaggregate the data, the above trends hold true for both types of challenges—to authority and to expertise.

Table 4.1 Total Challenges to Authority and Expertise, by Race and Gender

Race/ethnicity	*Women (n = 32)*	*Men (n = 34)*	*Total challenges mentioned and means*
Faculty of Color (n = 48)	82	43	125 (2.6)
African American (10W, 10M)	38	23	61 (3)
Asian American (7W, 7M)	22	8	30 (2.2)
Latino (4W, 4M)	14	8	22 (2.75)
Native American (2W, 2M)	8	2	10 (2.5)
Other (2M)	0	2	2 (1.0)
White (n = 18) (9W, 9M)	13	2	15 (.8)
Total challenges mentioned and means (n = 66)	95 (3.0)	45 (1.3)	140 (2.1)

Challenges to Authority

Mistaking or Addressing Faculty as Nonfaculty

Both in and out of the classroom faculty members of color disproportionately perceive challenges to their authority that come in the form of not being recognized or addressed as a person holding their professional status. However, no white faculty members spoke of not being recognized or addressed as a faculty member. For instance, an Asian American woman faculty member explains that

> People would always stop at my office and ask questions. I was not [in the] office at the end; I was fourth in. But people would look in and figure woman, woman of color—secretary. (AsAm, W, H)

This colleague attributes the mistake about her professional status to the stereotype of a woman of color that allows people not to consider her as a person

of authority and professional status. She goes on to say that such interactions initially left her feeling very angry, but they were not unfamiliar: "I frequently get the feeling that people have absolutely no expectation that I can be a faculty member" (AsAm, W, H).

In the classroom arena as well several women faculty of color report being mistaken for a graduate student, an undergraduate, or even a staff member. As an African American woman reports, this occurred "even by my own students in the classroom. It was very odd, because all I was seen as was a black American" (AfAm, W, H). She attributes this lack of recognition of her status and authority as due to her race and argues further that a black American does not fit the phenotype that students generally associate with faculty members and, thus, do not acknowledge her as an authority figure.

Both women of color indicate that these initial student perceptions and reactions to them make it more difficult and take longer for them to establish their appropriate classroom role and authority.

Even when they are recognized as faculty members, some faculty of color report that students sometimes choose not to address them as doctor or professor; instead, students may address them by their first name or simply avoid calling them anything. Although these faculty members are not being mistaken for nonfaculty, similarly stressful and intense feelings are involved in these approaches:

> I think students are very, very careful not to reveal their source of domination, or they may not be aware that they're feeling more comfortable attacking me because I'm an Asian or an immigrant or a woman. I think women as a whole and women of color faculty [in particular] are an easier target [for students]. And I think a lot of times it's very unconscious on the part of the students. In a situation where there are male faculty and female faculty, a student may call male faculty Dr. So-and-So [and call the female faculty by her first name]. (AsAm, W, SS)

This Asian-American woman faculty member grapples with the issue of intent or consciousness behind a student's choice of forms of address. She believes that either students do not realize their biases about faculty of color and women faculty or that they intentionally keep their challenges covert so they cannot be proven to be race or gender motivated.

Reports such as these are confirmed by other informants and have been consistently confirmed in the literature (Harris 2007; Takiff, Sánchez, and Stewart 2001). Whether such challenges are made consciously or not, these incidents are examples of a more general and problematic trend. Harris explains why behavior like not calling a professor by her title, which she calls a "very casual approach to faculty-student interaction," is problematic. She argues that such interaction is a way that students "try to define, determine or shape a professor's identity

through the messages communicated" (2007, 57). It also places an extra burden on the faculty member to assert or defend their professional role and status and its accompanying legitimate authority.

One Latino professor reflected on the duality of his role as a faculty member and a member of an underrepresented group and how the constant feeling of having to prove himself is transferred into his interactions with students. He says,

> While I recognize myself as a Latino who is capable of performing as an academician, sometimes … it almost feels like I always have to prove myself, to prove I belong here. When I come into the classroom I say, "If some of you think I'm here to fix some of the equipment or something like that" or "If maybe I lost my way to the garden" or "What's the janitor doing in here?" (L, M, SS)

His anticipation that students are likely to see him as a blue-collar worker rather than a professional has a powerful impact. Whether or not any students have actually responded to him in this way is unclear in the interview, but the emotional impact of the possible challenge is strong enough for him to identify and discuss it with students ahead of time.

This example perhaps is the best indicator of a unique form of stereotype threat that many faculty have encountered. Stereotype threat has traditionally been studied in terms of how students from racial, ethnic, and gender groups that often have underperformed on standardized achievement tests or other academic evaluative measures continue to do so precisely because of the angst they feel given their knowledge of that history of that performance (Aronson and Steele 2005; Steele 1997, 2007, 2010). The stereotype threat has also been extended to explore how it relates to faculty members' feelings of tokenism (Niemann 1999). The instructor above reveals that rather than simply withdraw into some sense of inner angst or turmoil, he publicly foregrounds a negative identity that can be attributed to him on the basis of his ethnicity in order to challenge others to dismiss that negative image and, instead, regard him as worthy of being regarded with authority.

Expecting Faculty to Be Parental Figures or Servants

Some faculty members report that students treat them like parental figures, not as people operating in a professional instructional role. Faculty members who express this feeling do so with intensity and, unlike some other challenges to authority, say conclusively that they receive this type of challenge because of their racial and/or gender identity. Although there is a relatively low frequency of such reports, they occur particularly in the interviews with Latina and African American women faculty, and the intensity and specificity with which it is described warrant it being a separate category. One African American woman tells the story of a time

when a student expected motherly treatment from her (she also reports that this happens often to African American women).

> [A student left me a message saying,] "I'm joining your class tomorrow, and I realize that I'm joining late and that I have heard about the books, and … now I would like for you to call me back and I would like to have the syllabus and I want to know exactly what readings we're going to be doing for tomorrow, and I expect to hear from you, and here is my number." … I thought, please never mistake kindness for weakness. So don't call me up [saying,] "Oh, yeah, well you're just going to be around to do blah-blah-blah." No, I'm not. Never. Ever. (AfAm, W, SS)

This scholar continued to say that she was going to have a face-to-face encounter with this student to address the assumptions that went into the student's lack of deference.

One of the key dilemmas reported here and in several earlier comments is the tension between authority and warmth or kindness and the ways in which accessibility, warmth, or pedagogical innovation on the part of white women scholars and women scholars of color may be interpreted and reacted to by students as signs of weakness or loss of traditional forms of authority (Fiske et al. 2002). Men who are not expected to be particularly warm and friendly have greater freedom in their approach to an available and relaxed classroom demeanor/role.

The prior excerpt is wrought with emotion about how African American women are stereotyped and mistreated as a result of these stereotypes. An African American man explains why he thinks students treat African American women in stereotypic and disrespectful ways:

> If they've always had maids, then they can respond to you the way they've responded to their maid. Yes, there's genuine affection. You're a member of the family.… There's patronizing behavior that's as offensive as someone calling you a nigger. (AfAm, M, H)

He argues further that this challenge can be so detrimental that it can seriously hinder an African American faculty member's career, either through alienating him or her from the academy or forcing him or her to accept a position of little authority and control in the classroom. As in the case of mistaking or addressing faculty as nonfaculty, these challenges are perceived to be the result of students' stereotyping their professors and expecting things from them based on those stereotypes rather than on their true positions of instructional authority.

In-Group Boundary Breaking

Some scholars of color indicate that challenges to their status and authority were not made exclusively by white students but also by troubling interactions between

themselves and students who share their race/ethnicity. These interactions come in the form of expecting special treatment, grading, and attention from their instructor and/or expecting him/her to act in certain ways based on assumptions or requests for racial/ethnic loyalty (Guiffrida 2005). It is only faculty members of color who experience this with their students; white faculty members do not talk about any of their white students having similar expectations for special treatment or grade leniency on the basis of common racial group membership.

Because faculty of color are often expected to be role models for students of color, these students may feel a special bond with their professors and look to them for guidance and support. However, some students appear to take this bond too far and push the boundaries of the student-professor relationship. An African American woman shares a story about a situation that she feels a white male professor would never have to deal with:

> I run into black students who do the "You're my sister, and I don't have to do any work." … One woman wrote a paragraph in pencil … big, old letters for her final project … So, I wrote in pen, big bold letter, F. And, she was like, "You know, but my family … and I'm taking care of me." And she did this whole thing about, you know, "You're the first black professor I've ever had." … Then I said, "You should know better.… You would never turn that in to a white professor. Never, ever in your life." So I get those every once in a while. (AfAm, W, SS)

This faculty member perceives that the student blatantly uses their common racial group membership race in an attempt to bargain, hoping their in-group bond will trump the more typical student-faculty relationship. She clearly objects to the way the student sees their shared identity as more salient than her position of authority.

In a similar example a Latina faculty member explains how two of her Latino students reacted when they felt they should have received better grades:

> In terms of authority, an experience with this one student was a good example [of my authority being undermined]. He actually accused me of giving grades preferentially. He said that I was grading the Anglo students much easier than I was grading the Hispanic students. I also had an experience with another Latino male student who did not like the grade I gave him at the end of the semester, and then I found out later that he had been talking to other students. Those have been experiences where students have defied my authority. (L, W, H)

This example is slightly different from the prior one because here the professor believes that the student feels she is biased, but she similarly suggests that these students who share her racial/ethnic identity were challenging her authority.

Grading is often a bone of contention between students and any faculty member, but here it is turned into a loyalty test.

Minority in-group identity sharing also becomes problematic for professors who are verbally attacked for not representing their race or ethnicity in the way students feel they should. A Native American man explains that more than one student has challenged his ethnocentricity and racial group representation:

> There was this woman who called me out in class for not being Native enough. They say, "You're not Native enough." There is always this thing between Natives, "You're not brown enough," She really unleashed her anger at me. (NA, M)

By using the language "they call me out in class" and repeating it several times (some of which do not appear in the portion of text above) this colleague notes the intensity of this challenge by its repetition and the length of time he talks about it. Although minority in-group identity sharing allows many students and faculty to bond, in the classroom it sometimes can lead to students crossing an authority boundary that faculty believe should be steadfast in any student-faculty relationship.

Disrespectful and Harassing Behavior

Another type of challenge to professorial authority arises in faculty members' reports of students engaging in disruptive and disrespectful behavior toward them in the classroom. Women faculty of color more often report disrespectful behaviors or perceive them at a higher level of intensity than do men faculty of color or white men and women faculty. For example, in one interview a white woman faculty member briefly mentions students sleeping or reading the newspaper in class but is very quick to move past it and does not bring it up again. Although she affirms that students have slept or read during her class, she is not distressed enough to dwell on it and does not attribute the behavior as racially (or gender) based. She is, of course, pleased when students do pay attention and are engaged in the work. African American men's quotes about disrespect generally follow a pattern whereby they report what the disruptive behavior is, how they responded to it, and that their response put a stop to the behavior. Most faculty of color suggest that this behavior is racially based and cannot be attributed solely to students' lack of respect for "people in general." Women of color report such challenges in a variety of ways but generally do not say they are able to stop the behavior easily. This loss of agency reflects the ways in which such challenges can lead faculty members—especially women

of color—to wonder whether they really have the power and authority to be in charge of the classroom.

It is not possible for us to say that white faculty members do not experience students disrupting or disrespecting them in class as often as do faculty of color. But whether or not it is happening to white professors with the same frequency that faculty members of color experience it, white faculty do not feel it is important enough to mention in interviews. This suggests that they seldom perceive it as a significant (even of low intensity) challenge to their authority. It is possible, of course, that faculty of color expect their authority to be undermined and interpret it in the context of a history of racial/ethnic slights, whereas white faculty members do not expect it and thus do not interpret or react to students' disrespectful or disruptive behavior in the same way (a potential outcome of "stereotype threat").

A white woman colleague emphasizes the importance of gender in discussing her classroom experiences and struggles in comparison to other professors:

> I think men have it way too easy in the classroom. They don't have a clue how much harder it is to have authority and to get respect and to just not have to deal with a lot of bullshit from some students. I mean, I take a real risk, because I do break down authority relations and so then I have to deal with the people who want to exploit that and abuse that and are more likely to do that because I'm a woman. (Wh, W, SS)

As a tenured professor, this scholar benefits from having a privileged identity characteristic—seniority—that allows her to navigate the challenges that she faces because of her gender identity (of course, her privileged identity of whiteness may also be a factor in her agency). Accordingly, she speaks as if she has achieved a secure level of comfort and security in dealing with such challenges.

This commentary also is verified in the contrast a senior African American man draws between the relative ease with which he functions and what he believes women faculty of color in particular have to deal with in the classroom:

> So I let the students start off. And so long as I can get them where I want them to go without telling them, you get the same result each time, but never the same route. And that's easy, see, that's fun. I don't know why we don't do that more often. I think it's because, you know, many teachers are insecure. They'd enjoy teaching more if they weren't. And when I mention to younger colleagues that this is the way I do it, especially black women can't fathom going into a classroom that way. Because, you know, they're concerned that their authority will be undermined. They say, "You're male and you're older." (AfAm, M, SS)

With disrespectful behavior, like many challenges to authority, it often is particularly difficult for faculty members to identify the basis of the challenge. Often

they are not sure if they are experiencing it because of their race and/or gender or if it a common occurrence in all professors' classrooms. This uncertainty makes teaching even more confusing for faculty members who frequently perceive such challenges.

At the extreme of disrespectful behavior, some faculty members tell stories of feeling harassed by students, reporting serious disrespect, often experienced with great intensity, distress, and emotion. These unacceptable behaviors are most often reported by women of color, and are perceived by both women of color and white women as usually coming from men students of various races/ethnicities. One woman faculty member says that she has a number of issues with male students challenging her authority, and in one particular case she says that a white man went so far as to "sexually harass me in front of the other students in the class" (Wh, W, SS). When she later shares an experience of feeling humiliated by a black male student while teaching a class on race and ethnicity, she says,

> White guilt intervened in how I handled that situation in ways that I think inhibited me from probably handling it the best way possible. (Wh, W, SS)

Although she felt this challenge to her authority was related to her race and gender, the racial dynamic she felt between her and the African American man student may have prevented her from effectively dealing with both the student's behavior and her own feelings of humiliation. This dilemma in dealing with unacceptable and humiliating behavior provides a good example of how difficult it can be for faculty members to address the challenges they perceive occurring in a racialized situation.

The preceding comments demonstrate that mastery of course content is far from all that is necessary to ensure that faculty of color and female faculty secure the kind of respect and deference accorded to higher education faculty who occupy more privileged identity categories. They reflect what it means for some professors to appear in front of a classroom in possession of bodies that do not correspond with the image that many students, of whatever race or gender, associate with the professoriate.

Challenges to Expertise

University faculty, especially those in prestigious institutions, may be expected to have technical expertise in their fields, and students can be expected to receive them as such when they enter the classroom. As the dominant face of the faculty, white men faculty members can make and can assume that students will make just such assumptions about their high level of course content mastery and general

subject matter expertise. White women faculty and men and women faculty of color cannot always make these assumptions.

Not Being Perceived as an Expert and Having to Prove Credibility

Faculty members almost always attribute perceived challenges to their expertise as related to one or more of their social identities—race, gender, age, nationality—and sometimes their personal/political views. Several informants of color feel that if they were white men, the students would not question their expertise. These findings reproduce Harlow's (2003) research with a sample of fifty-eight white and black faculty members at a Midwestern state university. She reports that black professors believe that students question their intellectual competence but that very few white faculty say the same thing. Several similar reports exist of the ways many faculty of color and white women faculty, especially young women of color, feel that students test their expertise, almost regardless of the class's manifest content, and especially so when the subject matter is not directly linked to their race or gender (see chapter 1 of this volume and Harlow 2003; Messner 2000; Turner and Myers 2000; TuSmith and Reddy 2002).

One woman faculty member reports that the combination of being young, a woman, and a woman of color made it particularly difficult for her to feel accepted as an expert by students. She says,

> [It was hard to get] students to take me seriously when I started out when I was younger. Now I'm feeling older, but looking young and being a woman, and being a woman of color, there are always these issues of [students asking,] "How are you qualified to teach me?" (NA, W)

Whether students actually ask her how she is qualified to teach or she just perceives that they wonder about this, she still feels that her expertise is challenged and that she has to work harder than some other professors to convince students to trust her qualifications.

An African American natural scientist also discusses his experience as follows:

> When I walk into the classroom, my anticipation is that I will be challenged, that's why I've got to be prepared, and I think that with that philosophy, it's easier for me to be well prepared, because I expect and anticipate, you know, the worst. (AfAm, M, NS)

He clearly expresses an anticipatory vigilance and even sense of dread accompanying his entry into a challenging and potentially disconfirming environment.

An African American woman faculty member says that she gets a similar feeling from students, and this affects what she can do in the classroom:

> I don't walk into a classroom expecting that, especially, my white students, and particularly my white male students, will automatically accept that I'm a scholar in my area. My white colleagues can do that. And I think a lot of students come in expecting that "Oh, a black professor. I'm not going to learn that much and not going to learn that much about anything that's real." I think my white colleagues can teach about lettuce heads for like a whole semester, and that's got nothing to do with what they're supposed to be teaching and it's automatically assumed that, really the knowledge is there, but this may just be sort of an eccentric person. I could not get away with that. Not at all. No. (AfAm, W, SS)

The high intensity of her comment is made clear by the dramatic example—white colleagues being able to "teach about lettuce heads for an entire semester"—of the expertise students automatically attribute to white professors.

Many faculty women of color suggest that especially white men students' challenges are rooted in their disbelief that a woman of color could have the knowledge to teach the course. In the following excerpt an African American woman discusses her experience with white male students directly challenging her expertise in the classroom:

> Now I can't prove that these are racial events, but I have some supposition that they may be racially motivated. One of them is the occurrence of white males coming into my class and questioning my expertise. I can't prove this, but I don't believe that they go into their [science] class and challenge their chemistry white male, perhaps, or even Asian [professor]. I would think now that it may be gender as well as race. Because I just don't think that they'd go to some of their other classes and question or challenge their professors in ways that I've been questioned or challenged. (AfAm, W, SS)

In this situation perceptions of racism and sexism are so fused that the respondent cannot tell which she is experiencing, as is often the experience of double discrimination. The interconnectedness of these "isms" compels her to experience this challenge in a way that a professor who does not have two marginalized identities would not experience.

This is not a burden of self-presentation for most white faculty members, especially white men faculty. As the expected and normative inhabitants of the faculty role, very few of the white faculty interviewed expressed concerns about how their own academic background or technical credentials would be received by students. Nor did many of them anticipate or encounter a challenge to their expertise. Indeed, when faced by the occasional student challenge to this expertise,

they responded with relative ease. In fact, one white man faculty member indicates that he can afford to be challenged and even to make mistakes.

> *Are there things that you can do in the classroom because of who you are, that you can get away with, that other people can't?*
>
> Fabulous things, absolutely. Oh, my God! [laughs] I can make errors, I can make mistakes, I can have a bad day, I can be disorganized … I can use terms incorrectly, which most people of color can't use … or they'll be nailed—not only by the majority but by the minority students. (Wh, M, SS)

This colleague clearly recognizes that his privileged status as a white man leads students automatically to assume he is expert even when he performs less than perfectly. He also confirms the notion that his colleagues of color do not have this privilege. His perception of how students react to him positively based on his race supports the contention of faculty members of color who believe that students are less apt to trust their expertise than that of white men.

Accusations of Biased Curriculum

Some faculty members report that students sometimes make accusations that the curriculum material or professor is biased and/or racist. For example, some professors perceive that students challenge their expertise by suggesting that the material covered in a class is too focused on women or on people of a certain race or ethnicity. Others feel that no matter what or how they teach, students perceive their actions—and thus their expertise—through their stereotypes of the professors' identities.

An Asian American female faculty member talks about how difficult it is for her to teach Asian-related material because of students' challenges to her expertise:

> I used to teach a course including work from Chicano writers, African American writers, Asian American writers, and some Native Americans. But I found that when I taught the Asian American section, they responded to me in a totally different way; they perceived me as representing this group. That made me very nervous. I felt like that was inhibiting their experience; it made me uncomfortable. It felt like after that moment they always saw me as somebody who was speaking for minority issues. (AsAm, W, H)

Although this informant teaches a large variety of writers from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, she feels that some students frame or stereotype her in a way that makes her uncomfortable. The high level of intensity she feels is demonstrated throughout her interview as she talks about it several times.

In one of the few instances in which a white woman reports a challenge to her expertise, this colleague indicates that some students have complained about the gendered focus of her course materials:

> I've had the comment in a class that I taught that it was much too much about women, that one lecture about women [scholars] was fine, but thirty was way too much. I saved the comment. And I think that even if they don't say so, they sometimes feel that way. White maleness is invisible, it's just normal. And when we put other things in like disabilities, broader ethnic concerns, different mixes of scholars, or some not known to them, they think that is all we covered in the course, that it is way too much. And I understand that it doesn't have to be very many to seem way too much to these students. (Wh, W, H)

She feels that if she covers even a limited amount of material that is not about white men and their works, her students sometimes feel that it was all she covered, especially when it is about women.

Within this category of accusations of biased curriculum one challenge stands out because it comes from a white man, one of only two white men who talk about perceiving any type of challenge to either their authority or expertise:

> I had this one black woman who was a basketball player, female basketball player, and she was quite militant, and she did speak out in class, and a number of white students were angry and didn't like that. And so they would, you know, jump on her. And they always felt I was taking her side. And they wrote letters saying that I was a racist. They wrote these letters saying that I was antiwhite [and saying that] … it was impossible for white students to take my classes because I was so prejudiced.… You know, there's no way you can respond to student evaluations. So I think I carried those evaluations around with me a few times, showing them to people and saying, "Isn't this unfair—you know I wouldn't say that." That was a bad moment. (Wh, M, H)

This perceived challenge is by far the most intense of any mentioned by a white man informant. He clearly is distressed at the white students calling him "antiwhite" and accusing him of teaching the material in a racist way. His intense reaction—even showing the evaluations to colleagues—is an indication that it is not easy for faculty members, white faculty or faculty of color, to dismiss such challenges.

Once professors begin teaching materials related to their own race or gender, students often start to see the class material and the professor as focused on that one group or particular point of view to the exclusion or minimization of any others, even when many other points of view are taught. Furthermore, several faculty suggest that any diversion from white-centeredness (and, to some extent,

men-centeredness) may be very disconcerting to students who are accustomed to learning primarily about and from white men. And when the normative forms of racial power are disrupted, as when the white colleague above acts to slow down attacks on a black woman, white students may become distressed and react accordingly.

Faculty Members Who Mention Not Feeling Challenged

Not all faculty informants perceived challenges to their authority or expertise. Many men, both men of color and white men, talk about the authority students naturally attribute to them in the classroom. They often use terms like "confidence," "personality," and "privilege" to describe why they believe they easily receive students' respect. In reciprocal fashion, they often say that they feel their self-confidence, personality, expertise, or presence shape how students receive them. In particular, one white man informant specifically says that he feels he has never said anything that would cause him to be challenged by a student in the classroom (of course, most of the women and minority faculty quoted earlier also feel they said nothing offensive but were challenged anyway).

> I've never had the experience, thank goodness, where I said something that was offensive to a student and they challenged me in class. I don't think I have. And if I did, like I said, I sort of have this sense from my reputation or something that people don't take offense as quickly as they might if I said the same thing and was somebody else. So I don't think there's ever been a situation where I said something terribly offensive. (Wh, M, SS)

He is aware that students do challenge professors in the classroom, but he does not experience this himself, and he attributes this to his or others' reputation or personality (not to his or their gender, race/ethnicity, or seniority). This tendency to minimize the categorical or structural impact of race and gender and to reduce matters to individual factors such as personality and personal characteristics is, itself, a mark of privilege—and close to color-blindness or gender-blindness (Bonilla-Silva 2001, 2006).

For some, intellectual respect comes automatically, and thus, potentially difficult situations or feelings do not arise. However, as we have shown, many professors do not perceive that their title automatically earns them authority and credibility with their students; in fact, some perceive that they are not even always perceived as a person with the title of a faculty member. Thus, whether these men escape challenges because of their gender and/or race—or for other reasons like

personality—they do not face the same emotional taxation as do professors who perceive intense challenges.

Conclusion

The material presented here indicates that some professors perceive that students challenge their authority, their expertise, and sometimes both. Although analytically distinct, these two types of challenges often are interwoven in everyday experience. The challenges that faculty members perceive differ in type and intensity, but some general trends are clear. First, challenges to faculty members' institutional role and authority status as well as their standing as subject matter experts can occur to anyone, regardless of race, gender, or seniority. However, the racial and gender (and, in some cases, seniority) status of professors directly affects the degree to which they feel challenged about their classroom roles and pedagogical approaches, how much or what they know about their topic, and the manner by which they interpret and respond to such challenges (including whether they feel inclined or obliged to respond at all).

Second, challenges of any type do not have to take the form of aggressive or pernicious interactions. Alternatively, they can occur as students try to reposition faculty members as fulfilling supportive, nurturing, or intimate roles rather than professional ones. This is done—or at least expected—precisely because such faculty members stand in social identity categories that have not been traditionally associated with faculty status in the academy. Although faculty in such "nontraditional" identity categories sometimes may be seen as particularly expert in course content that addresses issues of race, ethnicity, multiculturalism, or social inequality, their very location in these categories can lead to them being challenged with regard to their expertise in other areas.

Third, the extent to which professors occupy dominant identity categories (e.g., male, white, tenured) reflects the extent to which they are able to discuss and respond to these challenges without an extensive degree of threat or anxiety. However, faculty with less privileged identities meet more such challenges and are more likely to anticipate and be concerned about such threats or anxieties such that they become consistent and durable points of concern in their everyday lives in the academy.

Finally, the relevance of faculty members' social identities is apparent in many ways. Although women of color talk about receiving challenges from students of varied social identity groups, they especially and repeatedly talk about experiencing problematic behavior from white men students. This specific mention of white maleness illuminates the particular way that race and gender power dynamics

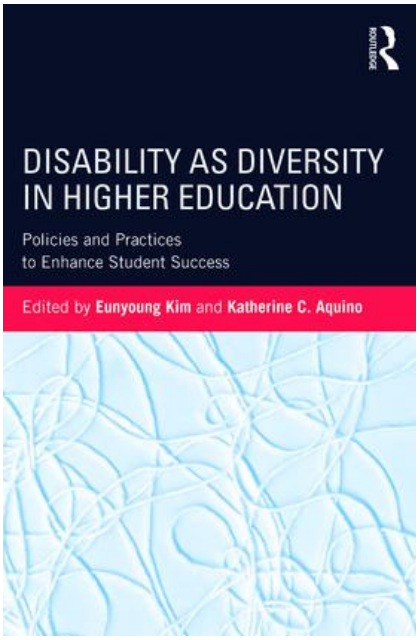
can affect professors. Women of color and occasionally white women and men of color not only perceive more frequent challenges to both their authority and expertise than do white men, but they also interpret the same behaviors from students very differently. Harris (2007, 61) suggests that although whites can dismiss challenges from students as "infrequent, impersonal infractions, marginalized individuals perceive them as a lifetime of repeated exposure to racial offenses, with an emotional tax that affects their psyche in various ways."

Given our nation's complex racial history, faculty of color standing in the front of a classroom immediately and starkly become visible examples of difference for their students. At the least, for many students they appear as unusual or unfamiliar images, given most students' limited contact and negative stereotypes regarding members of underrepresented groups in positions of authority or as models of scholarly expertise. Indeed, Purwar (2004, 53) argues that "Because they are not the 'natural' bodies for academia, black academics [sic—and other academics of color] have to endure a burden of doubt from those around them. And it comes with a level of hypervigilance, giving a feeling that colleagues and students are more likely to pick up on any mistakes and see them as signs of misplaced authority." This perspective on the ways in which faculty expertise may be perceived as a function of race/ethnicity is commonplace in the experience of faculty of color interviewed here.

Some faculty members of color also suggest that repeated past incidents of racial offense cause them to anticipate receiving challenges from students, such as worrying about being perceived as someone other than a professor, being thought to be less credible than white men faculty members, or even being harassed by students. A few white women also anticipate receiving challenges from students. These are good examples of how one's recognition or memory of past discrimination may create future expectations and perhaps hypervigilance. However, neither the experience of hypervigilance nor stereotype threat suggest that such memories of anticipations are divorced from the social reality of what happens in intergroup relationships.

It is not unusual for historically—and currently—marginalized group members to see the world differently and to anticipate challenges and interpret experiences differently than do members of more privileged groups. However, the great differences in numbers of challenges mentioned and the rarity of any mention of challenging student behavior in white faculty men's interviews strongly suggests that the actual frequency of students behaving in challenging and disrespectful ways does vary depending on the race and gender of the faculty member. These reports and prior literature (see chapter 1) suggest that we are not simply dealing with differential sensitivities or misinterpretations of challenging behaviors; white women, women of color, and men of color do receive more frequent and

more intense challenges from students than do white men. Ultimately, whatever the causes of perceived challenges to authority and expertise, the key pedagogical dilemma for faculty is to work at ensuring and preserving the authority that has a place in relationships with students while also maintaining an inquiring, empowering, and vibrant educational climate.



Chapter 9: Working it backward

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9

WORKING IT BACKWARD

Student Success through Faculty Professional Development

Cali Anicha, Chris M. Ray, and Canan Bilen-Green

Introduction

In this chapter we take a series of steps backward to explore key influences on our outcome of interest—student success. Student success is linked to faculty professional development (PD) via a somewhat circuitous route: because faculty are pivotal in the production and performance of education programs, and because their responsibilities extend beyond teaching to include research, service, and participation in university governance, faculty play central roles in the (re)production of campus culture and are uniquely positioned to influence student success from multiple directions. We trace a path on which student classroom experiences, faculty workplace experiences, and campus climate intersect and overlap. These way stations are then connected with a broadly conceptualized approach to PD designed to leverage faculty roles and responsibilities in service to institutional transformation.

After reviewing demographic disparities in education access and attainment we highlight the growing recognition of disability as an important though underattended facet of diversity. We explore the claim that assumptions about disability are foundational to discriminatory beliefs and behaviors in general and consider a number of critical emancipatory narratives of disability that invoke more fully inclusive concepts of diversity. With this understanding of diversity as inclusive of disability, we review evidence that a diverse student body brings substantive benefits for all students. Next, we link the presence of a diverse faculty with academic success for all students and make the case for a welcoming workplace as a prerequisite for recruiting and retaining a diverse professorate. Coming full circle, we find that student success is enhanced when a welcoming campus climate is generated through inclusive classroom and academic workplace practices that explicitly value social equity. Finally, we link a welcoming campus climate with a

critical and intersectional faculty PD approach designed to advance institutional transformation for social justice from a disability studies vantage point.

In brief, the three components of this PD approach, the ACT (Accessibility, Climate, Tenure) Framework, focus on classroom and workplace practices that (1) promote a broadly conceptualized view of *accessibility*, (2) establish a welcoming and inclusive campus *climate*, and (3) leverage faculty roles in university governance to alter *tenure* policies. This model is fashioned after the faculty gender parity work of National Science Foundation ADVANCE initiatives and primarily addresses tenure; however, other tactical policy adjustments are relevant for all campus organizational change efforts.

Descriptions of Student Success

Acquisition of skills and degree completion are two self-evident aspects of student success. A third aspect comes into view when degree attainment is disaggregated by demographics such as race, gender, disability. From here we immediately see what Nieto (2010) has identified as an advantage gap: students from dominant/majority sociocultural backgrounds continue to be overrepresented while students from marginalized sociocultural backgrounds continue to be underrepresented in recruitment and retention figures in undergraduate as well as graduate programs (Baldwin, 2010; Fleming & Fairweather, 2012; Kena et al., 2015). Such advantage gaps have profound and long-term consequences because considerable benefits in socioeconomic opportunities arise from increased educational attainment, and this is especially so for those who may not have otherwise attended college (Erisman & Looney, 2007). One clear benefit concerns lifetime earning potential. Bachelor's degree recipients may earn up to 75% more than the income of persons with a high school diploma (Day & Newburger, 2002), translating to approximately $1000/week in 2014 dollars (BLS, 2014). College graduates report increased financial savings, greater personal and professional mobility, expanded leisure activities, better overall health, and improved quality of life for themselves and their families (IHEP, 1998).

Chronic educational disparities are clearly at odds with the mission of higher education (APLU, 2012). How do we understand this state of affairs when postsecondary education promotes socioeconomic successes for individuals and communities (Baum, Ma, & Payea, 2013) and benefits our economic standing in the world (Eberly & Martin, 2012)? Data regarding education disparities offer compelling evidence to suggest that conventional college practices may thwart efforts to recruit and retain a diverse student body. To increase the rates of matriculation and degree completion for all learners we need to look at student experiences within programs.

Employers increasingly plead for workers with proficiency in communication, collaboration, complex problem-solving, and critical thinking. When student success is gauged through performance in the workforce, programs that garner reputations for academic excellence are those with graduates who apply a

strong fund of knowledge while working collaboratively in diverse team settings (AAC&U, 2013). Developing those skills requires practice through active learning opportunities (Bellanca & Brandt, 2010). Popularized as 21st century skills, these proficiencies are also associated with education experienced in the context of a diverse student body, a finding we will explore later in this chapter.

For now, our definition of student success compels the question: How can academic institutions cultivate a welcoming climate that permeates classroom and campus spaces and encourages *all* students to persist to degree completion? Before moving further in this inquiry, we briefly review the evolution of disability as a protected demographic and take note of its growing recognition as an important facet of diversity.

Brief Contemporary History of Disability

Individual differences that are currently perceived as disabilities have always been present. In large measures, the idea of disability as understood today in the United States has roots in the Industrial Revolution and the concomitant standardization of labor/laborers, as well as unsafe factory conditions that produced impairments and then disbarred impaired workers (Nielsen, 2012). Industrialization also spawned urbanization with dense neighborhoods of immigrants often unknown to one another. During this period the infamous "ugly laws" were enacted, criminalizing the public appearance of persons with physical, health, or cognitive atypicalities (Schweik, 2009). Notably, discriminatory beliefs about race and gender have applied the same standards of normativity that characterize notions of disability. For example, sexist and racist ideologies have asserted that the bodies and minds of women and men of color and of white women were deficient relative to white men (Baynton, 2008).

Persistent creative campaigns by disability activists have established disability as a minority demographic warranting broadened legal protections with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Davis, 2015). Disability as a positive dimension of diversity continues to evolve; disability as civil and human rights concerns are gaining international recognition as well. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted in 2006 and a recent report on the global status of disability included recommendations for community-wide actions to create "enabling environments" (Officer & Posarac, 2011, p. xi). Bickenbach (2011) asserted that the report represented disability as simultaneously a social construction and individually embodied, resulting in a portrayal of disability as "a complex, dynamic, multidimensional concept [including] features of the physical, human-built, social, and attitudinal environments" (p. 656).

These developments reflect a consequential shift in the focus of accountability, from individuals perceived as disabled to the beliefs, policies, and practices that create and maintain social and physical barriers to access and participation. Many scholars contend that such analyses do not go far enough to interrupt notions of disability

as always negative (Price, 2011). Nonetheless, views of disability as simultaneously a function of a disabling society and as a positive aspect of human diversity are increasingly common. In the following section we explore disability from a spectrum of perspectives in order to develop a foundation for our PD framework.

Contours of Disability: Ground of Discrimination and Foundation for Social Justice

As discussed later in this chapter, it is well established that myriad benefits are associated with diversity, and that these benefits are a function of the multiple perspectives brought by individuals with varying beliefs, experiences, and sociocultural identities (Page, 2007). Even so, disability is frequently missing from diversity discourses (Davis, 2011). The burgeoning transdisciplinary field of disability studies (DS) seeks to resolve this absence through explorations of "social, political, cultural, and economic" facets of disability (SDS, n.d., p. para. 2). Grounded in critical theory (Burghardt, 2011; Guess, 1981), DS calls us to question dominant cultural narratives for the purpose of guiding actions toward emancipatory democratic ends. Next we consider the paradox of disability as a belief central to all systemic discrimination and as a positive identity-marker with profound implications for social justice.

Similar to critical theorizing in race and gender discourses, critical disability theory has given rise to myriad models that reveal, and thereby resist, inherently discriminatory paradigms. The social model birthed in the United Kingdom characterizes disability as that which is superimposed upon impairments, disabling individuals via social structures (Finkelstein, 2007). Disability activism in the United States has centered on the civil rights of individuals perceived as having a disability (Davis, 2015). Intersectional investigations explore disability through the lenses of racialized (Ferri & Connor, 2005), classed (Barnes & Sheldon, 2010), and gendered identities (Arenas Conejo, 2011; McRuer, 2006). Scholars are increasingly exploring experiences of disability in local through global contexts (Campbell, 2009; Erevelles, 2011). Contemporary scholars and activists offer nuanced analyses of overlapping personal and political implications of disability from spatial (Kitchin, 1998), identity (Putnam, 2005), social-relational (Thomas, 2004), linguistic (Harpur, 2012), psychological (Watermeyer, 2012), and academic perspectives (Price, 2011). Each of these approaches provides meaningful illumination of the multifaceted networks of beliefs, experiences, and social behaviors that co-create notions of disability.

Yee (2007) identifies crucial conceptual shifts reflected in these critical investigations—a move from social or civil rights toward human rights and a step beyond mere "normalizing" of disability to a more radical recognition that normality itself is a pivotal myth. The premise that disability discrimination is foundational to the construction of difference-as-deviance is found in a number of scholarly analyses (among many others see Dudley-Marling & Gurn, 2010),

which brings us to the next theoretical bend in our inquiry. Rather than diminishing Lorde's (2009) assertion that there is no hierarchy of oppression, this framing suggests that there is much to be gained in diversity and justice work by beginning with a critical intersectional analysis of perceptions of disability and disability discrimination. Burch (2003) captures this insight in her review of Davis (2002) when she notes that because cultural notions of normalcy are built on mutable assumptions of non-normalcy, it is "paradoxically the most marginalized group—people with disabilities—who can provide the broadest way of understanding contemporary systems of oppression" (Burch, 2003, pp. 1, quoting Davis, 2002). Mingus (2011) similarly dares us to move toward an "understanding of disability justice . . . that embraces difference, confronts privilege and challenges what is considered 'normal' on every front" (para. 5). These critical and intersectional models of disability offer vantage points from which we can build more broadly inclusive approaches for transforming our classrooms, workplaces, campuses, and communities. With this inclusive framing of diversity we turn next to an exploration of benefits for all students.

Academic Benefits of a Diverse Student Body

Relatively few studies documenting the benefits associated with diversity (e.g., innovative performance, constructive problem-solving, effective collaborations) examine disability directly. Nonetheless it is well established that the gains associated with diverse groups arise from variations in perspectives brought by individuals with a range of experiences and beliefs rather than by demographics per se (Page, 2012). A robust body of research has established that a diverse student body is associated with educational, psychological, and financial benefits (Milem, 2003). These benefits accrue to all students, whether they hail from dominant/majority or underrepresented groups (Zirkel, 2008).

Theories and empirical work concerning the development and socialization of college students indicate that interaction with diverse peers results in numerous positive inter- and intra-personal outcomes such as self-confidence, empathy, and even enhanced cognitive development (Antonio et al., 2004; Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). In a study exploring peer interaction during college, Astin (1993) found that frequent interaction with peers diverse from oneself was connected to increased cultural awareness and commitment to understanding others' perspectives. These peer interactions were also related to increased knowledge, analytical and writing skills, and satisfaction with the college experience. When exploring the impact of a diverse campus environment, Chang (1996) found that increased racial diversity on college campuses resulted in greater socialization across race, which ultimately led to increased discussions of racial issues and enhanced racial understanding. In the same year, Pascarella and colleagues reported that interactions with diverse others promoted critical thinking skills (Pascarella, Edison, Nora, Hagedorn, & Terenzini, 1996). A 2005 study of

college students revealed that those who reported more diversity experiences also showed higher scores on measures of academic self-confidence, social agency, and dispositional critical thinking (Nelson Laird).

More recently, in a series of six studies undertaken in four countries (Israel, Singapore, China, and the United States), repeated diversity experiences were shown to reduce discrimination and to lead to enduring attitude and behavior change *when existing preconceptions were simultaneously recognized and questioned* [emphasis added], a process identified as "epistemic unfreezing" (Tadmor, Hong, Chao, Wiruchnipawan, & Wang, 2012). Moreover, anti-discriminatory influences were observed to apply to "cultural groups not involved in the initial exposure" (Tadmor et al., 2012, p. 753). In the following section we link success for all students with faculty diversity, then identify a welcoming workplace as a prerequisite for recruiting and retaining a diverse professorate.

Campus-Wide Benefits of a Diverse Faculty

A commitment to equity and diversity has been identified as "critical to the health and functioning of colleges and universities" (Worthington, Stanley, & Lewis, 2014, p. 227). Whereas student diversity is increasing on many campuses, university faculty remain remarkably demographically homogeneous (Moody, 2012). Given the above-detailed beneficial influences of a diverse student body on learning as well as on the development of workplace and interpersonal skills, it is reasonable to expect that a diverse faculty, inclusive of faculty with disabilities, may also support student successes. Indeed, an abundance of research shows that a diverse faculty promotes academic excellence (Xu, 2012). As Smith (2004) notes, faculty diversity is valuable for its "contributions to the diversity of the scholarship and curriculum available" (p. 8) and a diverse faculty may reach a broadened range of learners. Additionally, substantial scholarship indicates that the presence of role models with similar identities (in-group members) offers positive support for non-majority individuals (Knapp, 2008).

Student success does not, of course, rest on the presence of in-group faculty role models for every form of diversity—nor is that even possible when intersectional and intra-group diversity are taken into account. Indeed, simply adding token faculty who appear diverse from dominant norms may do little to benefit students. Taylor and colleagues (2011) found that when individuals felt at risk for confirming negative stereotypes about their own demographic group, known as stereotype threat, in-group members who were believed to have gained success by luck rather than by skill did not elicit positive influences. However, when in-group role models were perceived as deserving of their successes, their presence reduced stereotype threat and was associated with improved academic performance (Taylor, et al., 2011). Taken together, these findings affirm that a diverse faculty promotes student success in a number of ways and indicate the need to prioritize the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty.

Not only do benefits accrue for students—a diverse faculty engenders significant beneficial influences on overall workplace satisfaction, research productivity, and teaching quality (Major, Fletcher, Streets, & Sanchez-Hucles, 2014). The recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty depends on a host of factors. Influences include cumulative advantaging or disadvantaging resulting from subtle biases in selection for training or promotion opportunities, availability of effective mentorship, and a welcoming or chilly climate for diversity (Weinberg, 2008).

Certainly a diverse faculty does not guarantee that any given faculty member will be prepared to meet the needs of all learners. Although faculty are expected to provide accessible, relevant, and cutting-edge educations for all learners, their own education regarding systemic inequities, culturally responsive pedagogies, and/or instructional design may be quite limited (Edyburn, 2010; Tierney & Sallee, 2008). Thus, there is a clear need for ongoing PD that supports educators in broadening their repertoire of instructional strategies and skills regarding bias-based discrimination (McIntosh, 2012). Moreover, those PD opportunities will be most productive when approached within a comprehensive strategic *culture plan* that includes campus-wide engagement in the co-creation of, and thus co-accountability for, institutional transformation (Leigh, 2013).

Given the above findings, we posit that student success can fruitfully be addressed by first attending to workplace climate and equity concerns related to a diverse faculty. We acknowledge the crucial roles of Student Affairs and anticipate that professional development opportunities that include all campus staff will be most productive. Though our PD framework focuses on faculty roles, the approach is flexibly designed to support the institutional transformations necessary for postsecondary education to fulfill its mission for the public good.

Professional Development in Service to Institutional Transformation

Most US postsecondary faculty continue to be overrepresented relative to the general population by white cisgender heterosexual men who are not perceived to be disabled (Bilimoria & Stewart, 2009; NCES, 2013). Although dominant/majority members may adopt ally identities and intervene to promote equity (Stoudt, Fox, & Fine, 2012), many are unaware of systemic over-advantaging that accrues for them (Pratto & Stewart, 2012). Given that faculty are pivotal in the production and performance of education programs, and consequently in the (re)production of campus culture, an unwelcoming campus climate is a frequent result (Acker, 2012). Dominant/majority individuals may resist diversity trainings, perhaps especially so when trainings do not adequately address the painful emotional aspects of long-standing privileging and oppressing (Bishop, 2005).

Postsecondary faculty have numerous responsibilities beyond the traditional role of teaching, such as research and service, including participation in university governance. The ACT Framework focuses on PD that leverages those aspects of faculty positions. Applying a critical DS lens, we adopt the perspective that

dominant cultural norms around disability may be foundational to multiple systems of privileging and oppressing (Campbell, 2009). Discrimination manifests similarly yet uniquely across academic workplaces and addressing disability discrimination through an intersectional approach simultaneously tackles multiple forms of over-privileging and/or discrimination.

Disability discrimination occurs when there are structural or functional *accessibility* problems such as inaccessible classrooms or technologies, or when a chilly *climate* is reflected in unabashed use of pejorative terms such as lame or idiot, or when *tenure* policies and practices (including promotion, annual evaluation, and post-tenure review) ignore or perpetuate systemic advantaging and disadvantaging based on perceived disability status. Notably, these three interdependent elements are relevant for all faculty: the ability to meaningfully access workplace resources contributes to a sense of belonging and a welcoming climate, experiences which are profoundly influenced by tenure policies and practices that promote equity. Thus addressing accessibility, climate, and tenure from the perspective of disability can aid in the successful recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty in general, thereby contributing to a productive and welcoming workplace for all faculty and simultaneously providing a stronger foundation for student success.

Figure 9.1 depicts the ACT Framework as operating within day-to-day micro level environments via PD focused on Accessibility, Climate, and Tenure, components which simultaneously arise from and influence campus climate at the

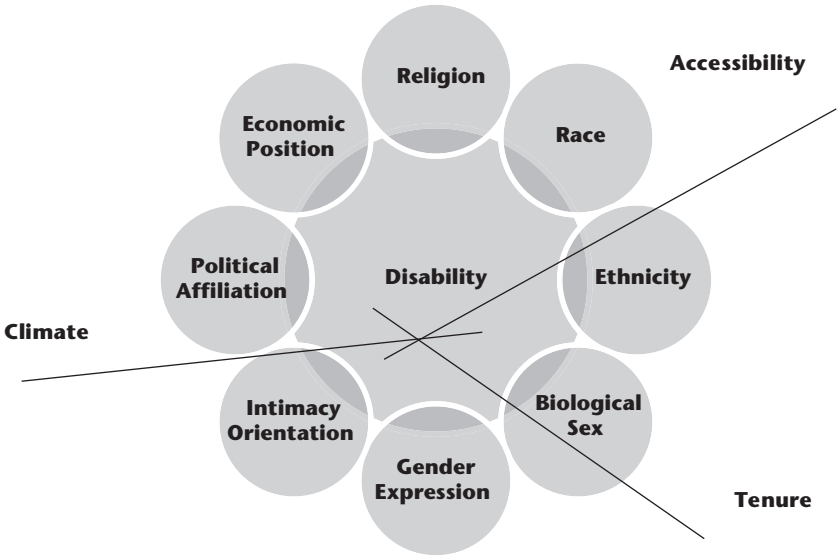

FIGURE 9.1 Toward a Norm of Difference-as-Normative. The ACT Framework: Faculty Professional Development focused on Accessibility, Climate, and Tenure in service to institutional transformation for social justice via a critical and intersectional disability studies approach.

macro level with an ultimate goal of fostering a norm through which differences are expected and embraced. In the following section, we describe an anticipatory social imaginary in which each element is effectively manifested.

Accessibility, Climate, and Tenure: A Framework for ACTion

The ACT Frameworks identifies Accessibility, Climate, and Tenure as essential components of a successful program serving the retention and recruitment of underrepresented faculty through the establishment of a welcoming workplace for diversity, inclusive of disability. Taken together the three elements provide faculty-relevant avenues for positively addressing equity from multiple vantage points across the university and sustaining those efforts over the long haul. Each element overlaps with the others representing unique aspects of a comprehensive strategic culture plan, one that intentionally builds a unified organizational culture through explicitly valuing diverse perspectives. Inspiration for this approach comes in large measure from the gender parity work developed through a recent ADVANCE initiative (NSF_HRD_0811239, 2008). An intersectional critical DS perspective ensures that multiple aspects of diversity are also addressed within each element with the intention of exposing and amending beliefs and practices that perpetuate biases. In the following section, we describe an anticipatory social imaginary in which each element is effectively manifested.

Accessibility

The first element, accessibility, includes architectural spaces, materials such as curricula, the digital commons of the Internet and wi-fi technologies, as well as social spaces in classrooms and campus gathering spaces. Meaningful and functional accessibility is considered across all contexts and is grounded in the tenets of Universal Design (UD) and Universal Design for Learning (UD/L). That is, products, environments, learning materials, and instructional approaches are usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for modifications or adaptation (Salmen, 2011).

On campuses where accessibility is actively valued, offices, classrooms, and student unions are physically as well as technologically available. Event planners recognize that gatherings are constituted by physical, cyber/online, and social spaces and each of these aspects are addressed in manners that promote accessibility. During professional workshops or conferences adequate transition time is scheduled for persons with mobility concerns and quiet spaces are identified for attendees who need reprieve from the conference pace or the social demands of day (Price, 2009).

Discourses that unfold in classrooms, administrative meetings, lounges, or the faculty senate are critiqued to reveal potential avenues for dismantling access barriers across communities of difference. In accessible and inclusive environments where UD/L considerations have been centralized, the vast majority of

workplace and academic adjustments (accommodations) are simply available as needed. In such genuinely accessible contexts procedural requirements emblematic of the inherently discriminatory medical model of disability, such as documentation of impairment provided by a licensed practitioner (Huger, 2011), will eventually fade from institutional practice and cultural memory.

Climate

The second element of the ACT Framework concerns workplace and campus climate. Campus climate arises from a complex social web of relationships within and outside academic institutions (Rankin & Reason, 2008). This concise definition of campus climate was offered by a University of California diversity study group: "a measure—real or perceived—of the campus environment as it relates to interpersonal, academic, and professional interactions. In a healthy climate, individuals and groups generally feel welcomed, respected, and valued" (SGUD, 2007, p. 1). Climate has been identified as central to the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty (Moreno et al., 2006).

When educational institutions actively value a welcoming climate, common practices include the intentional and ongoing promotion of awareness regarding what constitutes discrimination while simultaneously cultivating a generalized attitude of cultural humility (Duntley-Matos, 2014). PD opportunities impart culture-general interpersonal skill building and culture-specific information (Roybal Rose, 1996). Campus-community alliances are fostered in order to develop increasingly successful solutions (Warren & Mapp, 2011); for example, formal ties to Centers for Independent Living support the recruitment of faculty and students with disabilities and offer avenues for timely information exchange. Ally relationships create multi-directional pathways for access to resources, mentoring, and other forms of support (Tierney, 1993; Wilcox, 2009) and establish networks of professional and personal relationships that facilitate the ongoing (re)education needs of us all.

Tenure

The third element concerns institutional practices related to tenure and promotion policies that perpetuate unearned advantaging and disadvantaging (Moody, 2012). Policies originally developed with women faculty in mind—such as longer probationary periods, tenure-clock-stopping options, working less than full-time while remaining in tenure-track positions, and modifications of duties—also provide flexible benefits for all faculty, inclusive of faculty with disabilities (Fox, Schwartz, & Hart, 2006; Thornton, 2005). Implementing these policies without additional institutional changes potentially allows for an accumulation of disadvantage such as a career-long deflated salary due to delayed time to tenure (Valian, 2000), thus additional tenure policy changes are enacted to address those issues.

University tenure policies designed to recruit and retain a diverse faculty begin with the recognition that outstanding faculty members with disability are already

present in the institution. Policies that support faculty in accessing needed resources and accommodations are clearly stated and well known to faculty and administrators. Social stigma associated with disability (Knapp, 2008) is more and more rare since avenues for advocacy and collective voice have been established for faculty experiencing disability, including faculty in contingent and non-tenured positions such as clinical faculty, full and part-time instructors, and adjuncts (Beretz, 2003).

Conclusion

Diverse learning environments are well established as effective means to enhance educational and lifetime outcomes of all students. Meaningful access for a wide diversity of students to a high quality postsecondary education is a democratic ideal that continues to be greatly valued for its individual as well as collective benefits. Although diversity discourses have emphasized categories of race, gender, or socioeconomic status, disability is increasingly included as one among many diverse attributes. Just as it is important to diversify the student body according to other areas of individual difference, including diverse perspectives associated with experience of what we have come to call disability will enhance the capacity of all students to participate in workplace and social spheres through meaningful interactions with others.

An important route to diversifying the student body inclusive of students with disabilities is through supporting not only students with disabilities, but also faculty and staff with disabilities. A critical focus on disability may not directly address the unique needs of every underrepresented group; however, the cross-cutting nature of disability provides fertile ground from which to cultivate critical examinations of our social responses to a broad range of diversity. Situated within a strategic culture plan, the ACT Framework provides a comprehensive scheme for student success by addressing the multilayered and multi-faceted forms of discrimination and injustice present today on college campuses.

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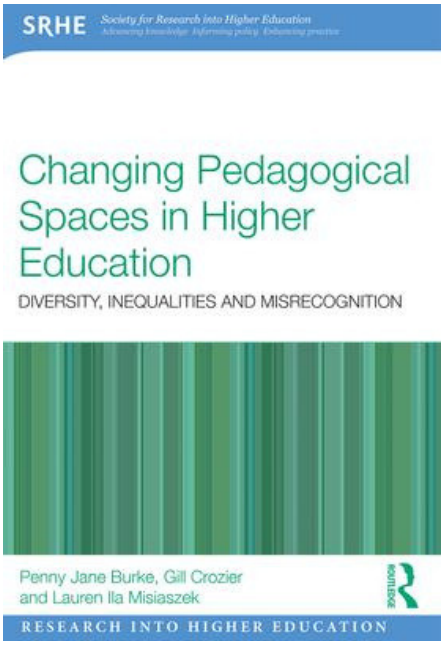

Chapter 4: Diversity, difference, inequalities and pedagogical experiences

From: *Changing Pedagogical Spaces in Higher Education*

By Penny Jane Burke, Gill Crozier, Lauren Ila Misiaszek

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Chapter 4

Diversity, difference, inequalities and pedagogical experiences

In this chapter, drawing on both the GaP and the Fulbright projects, we foreground the perspectives of the academic staff in considering their pedagogies and experiences as HE teachers within the context of widening participation together with issues of diversity and in/equalities. We look at the different pedagogic approaches teachers take and the various influences they feel impact on these. In relation to this we also explore the different subject disciplines that we researched and consider the internal and external dynamics that disciplinary cultures may have on discourses of pedagogy.

Immense changes have taken place in higher education in Britain (where the GaP project was located) over the past decade involving, in addition to the increased ethnic, social and gender diversity of the student body, the policy frameworks and expectations on academic staff and the requirements for them to adjust their practices and reorient their approach to their subject (Clegg, 2008). As well as the nature and style of governance and management orientation of HE, the question of the purpose of the university has been raised (see for example Collini, 2012). Indeed the purpose of higher education has taken on a narrow, more pragmatic, view of learning outcomes, focusing more on vocationalism and the employability of graduates (Mann, 2008; Clegg, 2015).

At Riverside there was an expectation that new members of staff undertake the then Higher Education Academy postgraduate higher education teaching qualification, which arguably provided some support to prepare for these changes but at the same time the teachers, in the GaP project, explained that the changes represent a significant departure from their own experience of HE. This may be a positive development, giving rise to creativity and critical engagement with change and a challenge to historical elitist practices but the changes also represent disruption and risk. We found from our interviews with participants that these changes present challenges, not only to the teachers' practice, but also to their identities as academics and subject specialists. In this chapter we explore how the teachers in our study negotiated this.

As we have indicated in Chapter one, the British Government is currently devising a framework for evaluating teaching in higher education (TEF). There are various speculations about the main purpose of this but one of our concerns

relates to the impact that this initiative will have on HE pedagogies. As in all such evaluative measures, tight criteria are applied which tend to force the participants to adapt and change in order to meet these. This can have negative as well as potentially positive effects and consequences. Whilst the TEF was not an issue during the period of our research, other effecting conditions, such as the impact of marketisation, were apparent. For some teachers, these included the socially and ethnically diverse students themselves (perspectives about whom we will discuss below and also in later chapters). Many teachers already felt under surveillance, particularly regarding the need to 'keep the students happy' and achieve good teaching evaluations, as part of the pressure to ensure measurable indicators of 'the student experience', and some teachers spoke of the resources and teaching conditions and environment as impeding how they 'would really like to teach'.

The pedagogical methodology involved teachers and students re-examining some of the data as it emerged, which resulted in some disquiet amongst the academic staff when reading (anonymised) extracts of the GaP data of student experiences of their pedagogic practices. The data revealed a sense of disjuncture between the aims of their pedagogy, the tacit knowledge and assumptions, which underpinned their practice, and how these were experienced on the ground by students. Some academic staff appeared anxious about asking for advice and sharing concerns and seemed constrained by normalising discourses of academic identity which constructed what an academic should be, in ways which were felt to be sometimes marginalising.

As Ros Gill (2009) has said, in spite of the interest in reflexivity, the experiences of academics within the context of their institutions have been neglected. Following Gill, we also explore academic staff experiences and teaching within a context of neo-liberal discourses that increasingly heighten competitiveness and the focus on particular performativities. Alongside or possibly arising from this, in part, is the emergence of writings on the emotions and the emotionality of teaching and working in higher education.

The anxieties, lack of confidence and sense of pressure to perform in prescribed ways identified in our study, echo Gill's (2009) work. However, additionally in our project, a central concern is the widening participation agenda and how teachers' perspectives, attitudes and practice relate to BME and working-class students and learning/teaching experiences. We are also of course interested in the interrelation of gender within the expressed views, their practice and its impact. These are the key themes discussed in this chapter.

Constraints and collusion in pedagogical practices

Both the internal and external contexts of HE created competing and often contradictory demands on the teachers, which we found also challenged their pedagogic principles. The institutional focus on retention, student satisfaction and

maintaining student numbers for example, led some academic staff to feel that their identity as an academic, intellectual leader or disciplinary expert was valued less. There was a sense that this had been displaced and challenged by an expectation that pedagogic practices should be more focused on support, more orientated towards meeting student learning needs in a pragmatic, functional way and 'keeping students happy'. Most staff found the drive-by external forces (Deem and Brehony, 2005) oppressive, whilst at the same time aiming to maintain their pedagogic principles and do what they felt was best in the interests of their students' learning needs. How they endeavoured to do this and were enabled to, was often in conflict. The perceived emphasis on 'looking after' the students seemed to stand in contrast to developing students' interest in intellectual pursuits and critical engagement, activities which can be challenging and unsettling to students; arguably all part of the learning process. They often felt an expectation on them to ensure emotional well-being and some likened this to a highly gendered description of 'mothering', 'babying' 'caring for' and so on (see Chapter six for a development of this analysis and the problematisation of the feminisation of HE discourse which these sentiments reflect). This is exacerbated by and in relation to, the perception that certain student identities as higher education learners are not fully formed – that there is some kind of deficit that teachers have to remedy.

> I feel because of retention rates and all these systems which are in place when you first . . . I am expected to be caring, more caring than I actually want to be.
>
> (Male lecturer, GaP project)

> I understand we have, to some extent, to spoon-feed them for the first year . . . but I feel that if I have to continue with that in the second and third year, I feel I am not doing my job as a lecturer.
>
> (Male lecturer, GaP project)

Although some blame is placed by the teachers on external policy changes and the institution itself, there is also a view that the student body is not capable of university-level work. As we see above some students are infantalised by staff and purportedly need to be 'mothered' and 'spoon-fed'. This view suggests that university students do not need to be 'cared for' as learners implying a more distant and even pragmatic philosophy of teaching. As others have also written (e.g. Morley, 2003) there is evidence that lecturers regard 'Widening Participation' (WP) students as different from the norm and there is an implication that they are 'not quite good enough'. Or according to the following lecturer, they are not very well equipped or prepared for university, and they often do not know what it is for:

> It's one of these bugbears I have, that students don't know what a university is, and what it's for, and what their role as a student is, and what our role is.

> And they, the perception is it's a bit like school, but not quite, so they come with a certain attitude.
>
> (Female lecturer, GaP project)

Similar views emerged in the Fulbright study. This Spanish lecturer for example commented that: students' lack of prior 'appropriate' preparation has implications for how she and her colleagues can teach:

> . . . it's . . . like "okay, can't discuss this because you don't have the background knowledge that you'd need because the ideology – the way that you've been taught before – has cut out all of these other possible ways of looking at it, and if you don't have knowledge of these other possible ways of looking at it, we can't begin to discuss the points that we're supposed to cover in this class.". . . . What do you do [if they don't come into the course with the required prerequisite knowledge]? You can't just start in with the course materials. No, . . . you have to start all over.
>
> (Female lecturer [pre-PhD], Fulbright project, Spain)

Amongst some of the teachers there appeared to be a sense of irritation that not all students were of the type they had come to expect. The Spanish teacher complained that she had to change the way she teaches – she had to spend "*the whole summer constructing how I was going to give the class*". The emphasis and expectation is on the student to adapt and conform; this is resonant of the view that the student is responsible for her/his own failure or inadequacy.

The lecturers expressed a concern with the ways multiple expectations and demands, including wider policy discourses about teaching in HE, as well as their pedagogic practices, amongst other sets of issues, contributed to the instrumental approach to learning they described students engaged in. It became clear that lecturers were often faced with complex and competing situations, which in turn led them at times to decisions about which they were unsure or unhappy. Some expressed a concern that they might be complicit in a pedagogic practice that positioned the students as passive recipients of higher education teaching:

> . . . we are giving them too much and so therefore they don't feel they need to listen, and they don't feel they need to engage, because they know they are getting it all anyway.
>
> (Male lecturer, GaP project)

> There's something about some courses that's feeding into that passivity, this kind of "I'll just stand at the front and talk and you'll just listen".
>
> (Female lecturer, England)

Others expressed a sense of frustration that they were being thwarted or constrained in fulfilling their role as lecturers and that the university needs to have clearer expectations, explanations and communication strategies:

> I mean there should be a culture . . . from the first year, and expectation from the first year and second year, and second and third year, and that message should be given to the student, you know, they are here, to some extent to learn, some, most of the learning, you know, through their time period in the first year, is to some extent part of that independent study. When I give a lecture, one hour, two hours, that is not the end of the story. You expect, the university expects, as well in terms of their policy and obligation, is to do for every two hours maybe another five hours or six hours that they have to do outside there. They don't do that, you know.
>
> (Female teacher, GaP project)

Some of the Fulbright participants also expressed a disjuncture between students' pedagogical expectations and their own, including in terms of engagement, and the balance of how and what theory/practice is incorporated within the classroom:

> I'll comment on . . . the constant resistance in the classroom to revisions and self-critique – to thinking by the students due to the 'non formal' education (on TV, out on the streets, etc.) they continued to be more used to information that's very processed. That they don't need to think about. So this topic (gender), if you do it well, or even if you do it poorly, it makes them have to think and look inside themselves. So it's there that there's resistance. A very big resistance. More likely with the guys because this [need to] look inside themselves [and] critique themselves as guys who are treating their sisters poorly . . etc. . . . so maybe the guys are more scared of those topics because of this. But generally there's a resistance in all of the topics that let's say [require] critical reflection and this topic is one that there's a lot of self-reflection in.
>
> (Female associate professor, Fulbright project, Spain)

> . . . Some of the students tell us, like "I didn't like this part" or "this was too hard to follow" and stuff like that, but usually they complain about the theoretical part. Like "this lesson . . . we had too much theory. We wanted to do something" because when you show them that there is another way of learning things that is not only theoretical or just lecture in front of the class, they tend to ask for direct engagement. So whenever you try to go back to theoretical and lecture, they say, "Ok, why? I mean, we want the other."
>
> (Male lecturer [pre-PhD], Fulbright project, Italy)

Although, in the GaP project, teachers indicated reflexivity at times, the outcome was often inappropriate or reinforced negative constructions of the 'Other'. There was a tendency to lower expectations; reference to 'our kind of students' and little recognition of the need for enculturation (although this in itself is not without its problems).

The student associated with WP and the challenges they face in higher education are often linked to the discourse of emotion. The emotionality of learning is frequently dismissed and disparaged, implying that the 'emotional learner' is somehow inadequate and inferior. However, there is a growing body of research that points to the significance of the psychosocial in the learning process (e.g. Leathwood and Hey, 2009). The 'fitting in and belonging' thesis is associated with these discourses together with the importance of students' confidence in the learning context that they need to feel a strong sense of identification with the learning context they are situated in. However, we suggest it needs to be recognised that it is the responsibility of the university (in terms of the organisation, ethos and pedagogic practices) to make changes in order to develop an inclusive environment conducive to learning by all its students. As we see from the above, the opposite view prevails.

The issues of identity and performativity discussed above impact on any approach that may appear to be risk-taking. As Ball (2012) observed:

> [N]eoliberalism gets into our minds and our souls, into the ways in which we think about what we do, and into our social relations with others. It is about how we relate to our students and our colleagues and our participation in new courses and forms of pedagogy and our "knowledge production", but it is also about our flexibility, malleability, innovation and productivity in relation to these things. Knowledge has its price.
>
> (p. 18)

The neo-liberal ethos and regulatory discourses seemed to cause teacher confusion and destabilise their practice or principles, leading to a loss of the sense of meaning in what they do (Ball, 2012). Hence, for example, even though teachers were often clearly frustrated that students seemed unable or reluctant to engage critically with academic knowledge, many seemed to find it difficult themselves to employ a range of pedagogic practices that could engage students more fully. Much of their practice involved more 'teacher talk' than student participation. And in many cases student interaction was fairly limited with students remaining quiet. Although many teachers were reflexive about their approaches and critical of unequal power relations, at least in relation to gender and their own role as the teacher, this did not tend to translate directly into inclusive practices.

As Ball goes on to say, one of the impacts of performativity is to reorient the teacher's pedagogy to something that is clearly measureable (Ball, 2012). Ensuring a positive student evaluation at the end of a module is one such key

driver (Gill, 2009). Having the knowledge and expertise to change practice is another factor and the more prosaic but nonetheless salient aspects of class size, facilities, room space and time-table slot are all important considerations, all of which the teachers whom we interviewed at Riverside referred to. Inappropriate rooms were a particular concern; the learning space represents a signifier of the value of learning and arguably of the student and teacher. Inadequate or poor rooms suggest a lack of respect and recognition. One teacher, for example, complained that they sometimes had to teach in the chapel and another lamented that:

> I am forced to teach in a space with a little kitchen in it. It's a bit of a junk room. We started in a good room but now squashed in with 30 people and a kitchen and it's not good. Students do get up and use the kitchen during the session.

Clegg (2008) points out the contradiction between international governments driven by global competitiveness and the desire to produce employable and flexible graduates, whilst at the same time they are de-investing in the unit of resource as well as student support.

Moreover, increased student numbers leading to larger class size and or increased teaching loads, leads to less contact with students and the exacerbation of distancing and thus less opportunity to get to know students as individuals and discern their specific needs (Mann, 2008). Arguably where the student body is increasingly diverse socially and ethnically, from the teachers, the need to develop this knowledge and these relationships is all the greater. Whilst teachers referred to 'our kind of students' and gender at times, there were few references specifically to the social class composition of the students and to race or ethnicity from White teachers, as social dimensions and equity concerns that might inform their pedagogy. By contrast the two Black teachers we interviewed spoke about themselves as Black academics and how this had varying effects on the Black, and in one case White, students. Sarah Mann (2005) argues engaging students is not simply concerned with making them feel at ease; she goes on to say that developing communication within the learning environment, rather than a community of practice or focusing on belonging in a learning community, is more important. We take a less polarised view since identification with the learning context and the need for teachers to enable this is part of the pedagogic endeavour to develop better communications. But communication is not simply about giving an explanation or conveying an idea; it is as much if not more about the embedded and implicit nature of that knowledge and the powerful processes that structure teaching. The knowledge has to be 'worth' engaging with; students need to relate to what is taught or otherwise the learning process will be reduced to a perfunctory, surface level, technicist process of learning to pass the course assessment. One of the Black teachers we interviewed talked of an interaction with her group of Black and White students which depicts the importance of meaningful

knowledge and ideas but also how existing perspectives and beliefs, and in this case racialised discourses, are brought into the learning space and influence the dynamics. This underlines the importance of teachers thinking through the implications of their practice but also having knowledge of such issues and some kind of support for developing inclusive and robust practice:

> At some point, just because of my personality, it becomes clear across the term that I'm Jamaican, in particular. And as a personality I do identify myself as Black, because I'm aware that some people don't know that I am, it just kind of comes out at some point along the way. But I find then that Black students will particularly align with me. And so there is a dynamic within the group, and it's the subtlest, subtlest thing in the world, often, but one has to be very careful that there is no perception from the whole group that somehow I am showing any favouritism, or any kind of extra layer of understanding, or even mummydom to the Black students in particular. I remember one particular case, we were talking about something we were talking about in life writing, called social languages, just essentially the different positionality of people depending on what kinds of dynamics and who they are and how they meet the world. And people were identifying social languages, and a group of Black students had gotten together, and they were identifying social languages that I knew, so I went across and went oh, that's my grandmother, and we all dropped into a different social language around me. And then I became aware of a silence around me, and I looked up, and the larger group of students were all going . . . and looked very unhappy.
>
> I said "hello", what's happening? What is everybody feeling, what's going on? And they were brave enough to say we suddenly thought you had something in common with them that we don't have in common.
>
> And I said oh, that's what happens to people, that's the power of social languages.
>
> I just dropped into my grandma's social language, which they share as well, and what did you suddenly feel? You felt left out, didn't you? And so then we could all come together as students and have another conversation. But I did have a moment of oh, shit, what do I do with this dynamic? Because it is true that I felt on some level closer, but it was a perfect situation.
>
> (Female teacher, GaP project)

This teacher, who identified as Black, had experiences that had resonance with some of the Black students. She responded to this and exploited it for pedagogic purposes. From her account the emerging issues and situation gave rise to some meaningful engagement both positive and potentially negative: lived experiences drawn on to discuss theoretical ideas. She was also sensitive to the White students' reaction and in turn utilised the themes embedded in this scenario to engage all of the students in the group.

This kind of approach and its value is difficult to 'measure' and is potentially risky. Failure to engage the students makes blaming the students themselves as a more plausible and 'safer' explanation. So often in teachers' accounts of the 'WP subject', ambiguity about his or her authenticity as a university student tended to dominate their perspectives and understanding of the students. In relation to this, the issue of powerful knowledge and knowledge that is owned by the teacher, but not or not yet the student, can render the student silent and afraid. According to the teachers interviewed, students frequently did not contribute to discussions and did not question or challenge. Such silences were regarded as an indicator of a lack of engagement, disinterest, or 'inability' and were seen as representing the passivity of the students. Teachers expressed anxiety about the silence in seminar sessions and the powerful positioning of the teacher in controlling discussion, which in turn often exacerbated the silence. Overall, the responsibility for the lack of participation was seen as lying with the student. Teachers were often aware of the contradictions in what they did and what they expected but there is a sense that they felt faced with an impossible task to motivate the students:

> Actually my experience is thinking about the power dynamics in business studies as well because . . . I don't think any of us would think we have to go in and manage that space because as a lecturer it's not about allowing silences and not allowing silence and telling them when they can speak and when they can't. But there is that dynamic about independent learning and reflective learning – probably you go into a situation and you are the manager, if you have power.
>
> (Male teacher; focus group interview, GaP project)

Teachers' constructions of students as passive did not remain there: teachers also had a concept of the 'good' student. The good student, as Grant (1997) suggests, is what the global and, as she says, 'enterprising' university seeks to develop; the good student is necessary in order to achieve the ambitions of the global/globally competitive university. Conversely, according to Williams (1997), the binary opposite is seemingly the 'bad' student or the 'non-standard', 'non-traditional' student. The 'good' student, Grant argues, is a cultural construction and for some this 'idea' is impossible or undesirable from their perspective, for them to become. Those students regarded as lacking confidence, dependent, anxious or troublesome, in other words not 'good' students, were frequently working class, both BME and male, especially when regarded as troublesome, and female. In a focus group interview one of the teachers described noisy and disruptive Black male students who sat at the back of the lecture theatre, at times arriving late:

> [W]e've got your classic middle-class blokes who performed very well in school, they are quite sporty, they are quite middle-class, quite confident, all of that, they are generally the rugby team. And then we have the footballers

> who are a mixture of White and Black, and they are a bit "alright love" . . . you know, and they mix together, and then we've got the Black boys who sit at the back, and they are, without question, giving the impression of being . . . it's going to be uncool, kind of falling asleep. A number of them are incredibly talented, but it's not cool to show that talent. . . .
>
> . . . so they are the dudes, they are down the back, they are coming in late, they are slouching in their seat, and I do quite a lot to engage them, and I've even said to them if you sit up I won't pick on you, but if you slouch like that I will pick on you to make sure you don't fall asleep in my class and things, to try to get them to engage and things. If you try and mix the groups they don't like that at all, they just, they have formed their groups.
>
> (Female teacher, GaP project)

In the same group interview another teacher who had previously taught at a Russell Group University, expressed disquiet at the students at Riverside and also made negative comments about the Black students. In one of his teaching groups of first year students, 70% were Black men. This seemed to be a shock in itself to him:

> Race and ethnicity is all that identifies them. I am intimidated by the group of Black boys (sic) at the back. Having the bravery to go back and break up [the talking] that is very difficult. The problem is more that they are Black. And they are at level 1. . . . One or two students arrive 30 minutes late all the time. If you ask them they say they are late and make no apology.
>
> [There are] problems of attendance. We write a letter but they still don't come. If they have to submit a piece of coursework for another module they don't turn up to the lectures that are not having that assessment.
>
> At X [Russell Group University] the writing skills were better. The quality is better. At [another traditional university, where he also worked] there were mainly White middle class blokes but here you have to say WHOAH! I have to think about this. Black lower class blokes here. It's a completely different management style.
>
> (Male teacher, GaP project)

Whilst voice was often seen as the key indicator of participation, here we see that some voices are less welcome. Language is a mechanism of power and in the university it is a 'polished' language that has to be adapted to in order to succeed (Bourdieu, Passeron and De Saint Martin, 1994). In capitalist society it reflects individual's relational position in the field (in the Bourdieusian sense) and it determines who has a right to be interrupted, ask questions, be listened to (Crozier, Burke and Archer, 2016). The Black male students are not complying with the behaviour of the good student and seemingly they have not adapted to

using 'the polished language'. They are also not given the respect of being fully fledged adults but rather are described as 'boys' which in the USA, for example, has historical racist connotations. It is the students who are blamed for their lack of engagement, but these Black male students are not positioned simply as passive, but on the contrary, they are perceived here as the 'dangerous' Other. Nirmal Puwar (2004) describes the Black presence in *White spaces as 'space invaders': Black bodies out of place*. She goes on to say:

> They have entered spaces where their bodies are neither historically or conceptually the "norm". For those whom the whiteness of these spaces provides a comforting familiarity, the arrival of racialised members can represent the monstrous. . . .They threaten the status quo.
>
> (p. 50–51)

It is notable that the teacher says in order to teach these students a different management style is required rather than a different pedagogic style. The Black students need to be controlled.

As we have said the teachers are also caught up in regulatory discourses, and thus they are compelled it seems, to take up a position as controller of student voice and student behaviour, suggesting explicit forms of power in teaching in HE and different levels of class, race and gender consciousness. Some teachers expressed awareness of the complexities of unequal power relations. Anxiety, fear of risky situations and experiences, and uncertainty, are pervasive themes amongst the teachers but also the students. In the students' accounts, which will be discussed more fully in the next chapters, significant levels of anxiety were raised in relation to giving voice in the classroom space, blaming fellow students as much as teachers. Seminar contexts, and specific expectations of students within this context, created uncomfortable and disempowering spaces.

Academic identities, disciplinary differences and practices

In spite of these expressed views and doubts, a more complex relationship to the students manifested itself. Teachers' views comprised both negative and positive perceptions; sometimes held simultaneously and in tension with each other. Some individuals, for example, expressed the benefits of working with a diverse student body:

> The fact that you have a kind of range of age groups often, in the class, people from different social backgrounds and so on can be quite an advantage. . . . And increasingly I've found that I absent myself from discussions in seminars, either not talking or actually just going off.
>
> (Male lecturer, GaP project)

Others discussed the pedagogic practices they developed to create a productive and engaging learning environment.

> I would like to push the students more and unattach myself.
>
> (Female lecturer, GaP project)

> When the technology breaks down . . . you just have to give an ad-libbed 50-minute lecture, it turns out the students really like that.
>
> (Male lecturer, GaP project)

One lecturer talked about an elaborate process of peer assessment of student presentations that he had instigated and how he could see its efficacy through the engagement of students who hitherto had been reticent or silent. In these reflections lecturers expressed a sense of excitement and creativity about their pedagogy particularly when they could see the students' intellectual development.

Some disciplinary subjects facilitated close relationships with students partly because of 'class size' but also perhaps because of the way that the discipline was perceived and the identification that arises or was promoted (by the teachers) through this. As we know disciplinary subjects in Western society at least, are hierarchised with some such as philosophy, history and literature being highly valued and interdisciplinary and vocational subjects being less so (Bourdieu, Passeron and De Saint Martin, 1994; Bernstein, 2000). In one of our observations of a Classics/History lecture, we observed the lecturer spending time displaying her status within the disciplinary field and the importance of knowing and associating with other internationally recognised Classics/History academics. She aimed to involve her students in this culture encouraging them to write for a journal which she edits and she had arranged a visit to a conference/workshop where the students were able to meet and interact with these internationally known scholars. This strategy is a mechanism, we suggest, of enculturation and 'educational cultivation' (Lareau, 2003) to engender identity (with the discipline) as well as cultural capital. This has privileging implications for students but also as we are suggesting here, for academics.

The disciplinary subjects were seen to influence the identity of the teachers often presenting different emphases in what is regarded as important and indicating their view of their role as university teachers. This in turn appears to influence or be reflected in their pedagogy. History and Classics is quite varied in terms of the kinds of identities the lecturers construct and practices they reflect on in the focus groups. They present themselves as highly academic, which in a sense is reflected in the example above. Unsurprisingly therefore, the teachers responded to the discourses of student deficit as posing a major problem for their pedagogical practices.

Creative Writing lecturers tended to construct themselves primarily as 'writers' rather than 'teachers' or 'academics', although they claimed that their students wanted them primarily to be 'teachers':

> It's kind of they need to know that we are writers who, because they also talk about that, how they are convinced by us, because they know that we are writers. But they don't want that to be the kind of primary way that we have a relationship.
>
> (Female teacher, GaP project)

They talked about being misunderstood in the institution and as misrecognised by others as being English Literature's poor, un-academic cousin. However, some teachers expressed a rejection of the identity of 'an academic' because it detracts from the salience of teaching and because of the pressures it seems to entail. These sentiments were expressed in the following focus group interview for the GaP project:

FL1: I think of myself as an accidental academic.
FL2: Yes, me too.
FL3: I refuse to define myself as an academic. The day that I say I'm an academic . . .
FL2: I never tell people I'm an academic.
FL3: . . . feels like I will have lost the battle, I will have lost the balance in my life. However I did find myself the last couple of days, last couple of years, you know, you sit next to somebody on a plane and they ask you what you do, and the other day I heard myself saying I'm a teacher. I thought no, no, no, no, that's horrible.
FL2: Because I feel, you know, on the research, that I'm a disappointment to them, I don't, I am not an academic, because I am not.
FL1: You are not doing academic things.
FL2: I'm a lecturer, I'm a teacher, fine.
FL1: I suppose that's what I mean when I say I am an academic. I mean some people put teachers in university, that's kind of really what I mean by that.

(GaP staff focus group discussion; FL = female lecturer)

A conflict is being expressed here over the teachers' value of teaching in that to describe yourself as a teacher is, or is perhaps perceived as, undermining one's status or value as an 'academic'. There may also be some significance here that creative subjects are not as highly valued in the pecking order of subject hierarchies.

In their focus group interview they placed significant emphasis on the emotional side of learning and teaching. At times their gaze becomes very introspective and

they seem to situate themselves at the centre of their teaching, although they claim to embrace student-centred pedagogies. There is a lot of talk around being creative with and within the space in which they teach. For example:

> . . . when they are writing, so there are periods of times, this is not when there is a formal lecture, but I've asked them to write something, I've also given them the opportunity to leave the room if they want to. Or I say to people, provided there are no health and safety issues, you can lie on the floor if you like. I've done so to give them permission to do so. You know, I've sat on the floor and said I am going to do the exercise with you, this is my easiest position to write, you can get into yours, so long as you are not getting in anyone else's way or whatever.
>
> (Female teacher, GaP project)

By contrast, Sports Science teachers position themselves as science academics, beset by the problems of students who do not appreciate the scientific nature of the discipline. They strongly position themselves as researchers who teach.

> I think there is an enormous pressure on us to become school teachers, and we can't be school teachers and researchers and administrators and all of those sort of things, and I think it would be a disaster if you became a teacher, and other people were researchers. We are very lucky in this university that that doesn't happen, that the researchers are teachers, and we are expected to bring our research into our teaching, and our teaching into our research.
>
> (Female teacher, GaP project)

They also express though, a sense of being beleaguered by institutional demands as well as by the constant changes in the institution. There is much talk of the institution as some powerful and fairly malign force that makes unreasonable demands on them. They strive towards an ideal of collegiality as well as becoming 'more effective' teachers, but feel that the pace of change and overall institutional environment constrains these aspirations. They are conscious about the impact their approaches will have on the students, but do not have the time to pursue this and, when they do, express their frustration that the students seem to just want 'spoon feeding' rather than being encouraged towards independent learning. The deficit discourse of recalcitrant (male and BME) students and the WP student who is 'underprepared' for university education, is very strong amongst this group of teachers.

> When I started lecturing, as I said, you could assume that they'd get it, and now we have to work so hard, and we do some students an enormous disservice, because I'm standing up there telling them that F equals mass times acceleration, means if you know the force, and you know the mass, you can

> work out the acceleration, this is how you do that maths. And there are people there just thinking this is ridiculous, I knew this when I was twelve. And then there are people there going I don't know what she's doing. I have no idea, there are numbers flying around on the board and they might as well be airplanes, I have no clue, you know. And so that's what I have found, I feel that I am being pulled in a number of different directions, and I'm pulling myself in a number of different directions. And I don't want you to think that I just stand up there and don't reflect, I do reflect, and often my reflection puts me into such a spin of crisis that the best thing to do is to stop reflecting and to just keep going, until, also until it's all settled, but it will never settle, because it's like everything around, you know, it goes around in cycles doesn't it?
>
> (Female teacher, GaP Project)

Teachers of Dance, also a creative subject, did not indicate the self-consciousness or feelings of misrecognition experienced by the creative writers. Dance teachers embraced the insights of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) and attempted to put these into practice. Their identities as teachers are invested in critical pedagogical approaches. In drawing on such insights, the lecturers have a strong sense of the relationship between identity and pedagogy, and talked about the relationship between their own personal histories and perspectives and their pedagogical practices:

> In dance we have a lot of assumptions about what dancers are, and their relationship with their teacher, and it used to be a very matriarchal kind of world, the training world, and for us to be in academia there was a lot of thinking, clinical thinking around our roles, so we don't necessarily want to think of ourselves as mothers, teachers, in that sense. But there are moments where I think it is important to consider my biography, and the biography of my students, and I have found that these are the moments you take a risk, you might make a link that might motivate the student, might make them more aware of themselves and their own relationships, but I have also felt that there is a risk there, there is a risk for me, maybe, you know, not having boundaries as a, pedagogical boundaries and professional boundaries, maybe imposing my own understanding of what motherhood, what independence is. But I definitely think that there is, the two should be explored, and they come up organically in class, in conversations, and yeah, that's a recent experience that we had.
>
> (Female teacher, GaP Project)

In conducting the observations, it was notable that Dance as a disciplinary framework presented opportunities, not visible or as visible in other subjects, for the lecturers to teach differently in higher education spaces, and the critical pedagogic framework that shaped the Dance team's approaches supported

this. For example, the students were invited to lead different sections of their session and were encouraged to engage in reflexive discussions. Furthermore, the physical space, which included a spacious dance floor, provided a symbolic openness in which the dance students positioned their bodies through movement across space and this disrupted any hierarchical positioning of either the students or the two dance teachers. When the dance teachers presented ideas, they did this in short bursts, then opened up to the whole group for student contributions to develop and build on these ideas. The students observed were all female and White but they were physically and generationally diverse, displaying different levels of dance technique, without any sense of hierarchical ordering. This provided an overall sense of inclusion and of encouragement to creatively express individual differences in what appeared to be a supportive environment.

However, not all teachers held strong identifications with their discipline or perhaps it was a lack of identification with their subject team. Some spoke repeatedly about feeling isolated and having to work alone and how these individualised approaches to pedagogic practice were at odds with the collaborative discourses, which underpinned the design of their degree programmes. Some members of the programme team felt that a solitary and competitive existence lay at the centre of the identity as a researcher in academia. A number of staff described the isolation experienced because of the way teaching and research was organised. Far from feeling part of a disciplinary or pedagogic community and perhaps developing an identity from shared practices and dialogue, one young female member of staff described her existence as solitary and described her work as causing her to feel as though she was 'in a cage . . . '. The respondent described the 'professional bubble' she had created within which she worked with her students in order to 'survive'.

Conclusion

The teachers' accounts expressed contradictory sensibilities about professional and academic identities in higher education. These are framed by wider regulatory discourses of what is expected of an academic in contemporary higher education, mediated by the subject or disciplinary area. The individual academic is caught up in the complex sets of competing demands and expectations of the specific disciplinary context, the overarching and standardising frameworks of research excellence and quality assurance and the ethos, missions and strategic plans of the institution. This affects all academics but in different ways in a highly stratified and competitive sector.

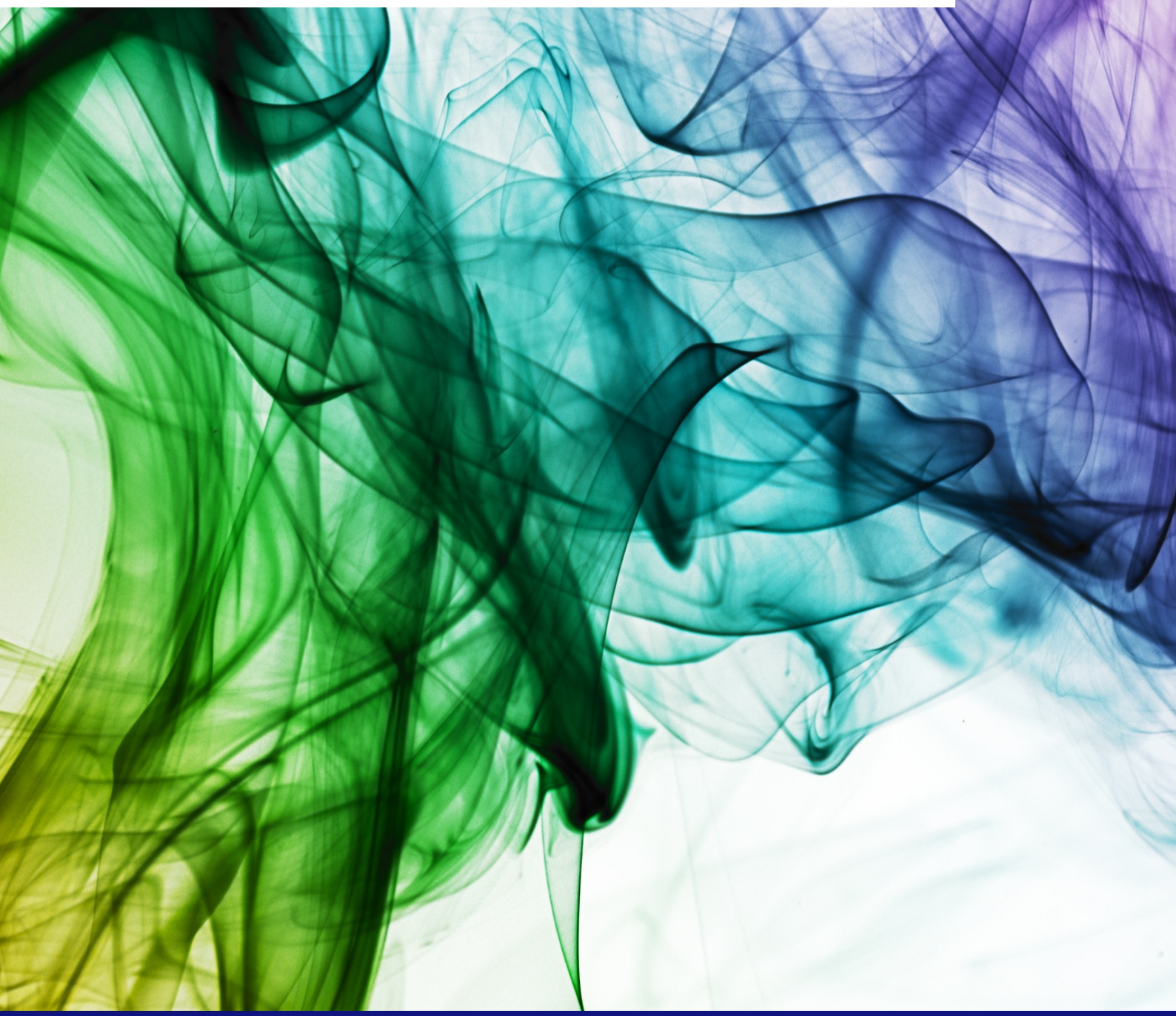
Pedagogic practices of teachers were significantly shaped and constrained by such discourses as well as university systems, strategies and procedures. Some teachers were anxious to admit that they needed advice as though this did not fit with what being an academic 'should be'. The accounts of academic staff raise questions about the possibilities of achieving student-centred pedagogy and

enhancing the engagement and learning experience of students who in many cases appear to remain marginalised from the university experience and learning community. They also raise questions about the deficit – racialised, classed and gendered – discourses and the effects of these on the students. In the following chapter we will explore these themes focusing on the perspectives and experiences of the students.

ROUTLEDGE ▪ TAYLOR & FRANCIS

Faculty Diversity in Higher Education

A Chapter Sampler



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