Who's Curating in the Classroom?: Situating Autohistoria-Teorías in The Archives

Leslie C. Sotomayor & Julie M. Porterfield

Abstract

During the 2018-2019 academic year, we collaborated to facilitate a workshop for students in an Art Education course, using archival material from the Eberly Family Special Collections Library at Penn State. The course centered on diversity, pedagogy, and visual culture. Using our respective expertise in Art Education and primary source literacy, we chose the design and scope of the two-day workshop and subsequent assignment as a reflection for our passion for feminist theorizing and reimagining the academic White patriarchal canon in a predominantly White institution. As critical, feminist pedagogues, and in an effort to match the course theme, we chose to focus the workshop on critical analysis of primary sources that contain visual depictions and documentation of culturally diverse experiences, many of which were not positive experiences. In lesson planning, we focused on planning student interactions with the library archival materials as a way to critically reflect on historical visual culture and narratives of lived experiences. What we could not have predicted is the way that student reactions would urge us to evaluate and reflect on the emotional impact of our pedagogy on students.

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Bios

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During the 2018-2019 academic year, we collaborated to facilitate a workshop for students in an Art Education course, using archival material from the Eberly Family Special Collections Library at Penn State. The course centered on diversity, pedagogy, and visual culture. Using our respective expertise in Art Education and primary source literacy, we chose the design and scope of the two-day workshop and subsequent assignment as a reflection for our passion for feminist theorizing and reimagining the academic White patriarchal canon in a predominantly White institution. As critical, feminist pedagogues, and in an effort to match the course theme, we chose to focus the workshop on critical analysis of primary sources that contain visual depictions and documentation of culturally diverse experiences, many of which were not positive experiences. In lesson planning, we focused on planning student interactions with the library archival materials as a way to critically reflect on historical visual culture and narratives of lived experiences. What we could not have predicted is the way that student reactions would urge us to evaluate and reflect on the emotional impact of our pedagogy on students. The title of the workshop, "Who's Curating?," was meant to be a call to students to consider the sources of the materials that they examined and question who deems those materials worthy of being placed in an archive. Ultimately, we were asking whose experience and education the chosen archive privileged? Our objective was to encourage active listening and culturally responsive teaching through stories that are connected to history and lived experiences in an art education undergraduate classroom. Could participants also become active listeners

and participants in their own histories? Furthermore, we could not have predicted that as we reflected on our experiences from this classroom workshop the turmoil escalating within the United States; one of an increased volatile racial divide. As we reflect and write this article, the significance is even more apparent of the need for transformative and culturally responsive teaching and critical reflection as educators.

As an instructor for the School of Visual Arts, co-author, Dr. Leslie C. Sotomayor, served as the instructor of-record for the course for the full semester term. Co-author, Julie M. Porterfield, serves as a faculty member in the University Libraries, meaning that she is responsible for collaborating with multiple instructors and classes throughout the term, rather than serving as an instructor of record. Having previously collaborated to plan and execute one-shot primary source literacy lessons and visits to the Special Collections exhibition gallery, working together to create the Who's Curating workshop was a natural partnership. Within this context of identifying our roles within the bureaucracy of the University, it is also important for the reflective tone of this article that we acknowledge our positionality as educators facilitating a diversity workshop. Leslie and Julie, both identify as white although Leslie also identifies as Latina. Both authors identify as cisgender, heterosexual women. Our personal narratives have many similarities and differences related to navigating through our lived experiences, offering a kaleidoscope of perspectives that interlock and work together. We navigate many parts of our identities within our job description that are extensions of traditional roles for cisgender women. For example, Leslie's teaching experience and scholarship background has been strongly cemented in working with underrepresented peers in her interdisciplinary fields and graduate work. Her experiences coded as a woman have been one of primarily a Woman of Color within a predominantly White institution, often fulfilling a diversity checkbox, and her whiteness being measured by the person next to her. The constant border crossing between identities has become a consistent inhabited space, what Chicana, feminist and queer cultural theorist Anzaldúa (2015) calls nepantla, the Nahuatl word for in-between spaces. The nepantla space that we created with the class was one of critically self-reflecting on overarching narratives that we may or may not recognize as absorbing due to our individual and collective positionality within society and culture. An example of an in-between space in the classroom was White historical narratives and Black lived experiences, theoretical rhetoric about inclusion and diversity and lived experiences of students with a deep sense of not-belonging. This is an important premise to unpack because in theory there is often specific conversations that differ from lived experiences of marginalized identities and communities.

What follows in this article is an account of our experiences as facilitators within the course and curated assignment as well as our witnessing of learners' experiences and the complexities of navigating culturally responsive environments within a university setting. In this article, we share our reflections about what we witnessed with our students and our own emotional labor throughout the process. One of the strengths we feel we have as gained experience in as educators is the positionality to facilitate conversations around important social issues.

We chose the title for this library archival workshop, Who's Curating? Because we situate curating as an active form of agency within our academic environments as a pedagogical and theoretical approach gleaned from our personal experiences as educators and navigating historical and contemporary spaces of marginalization. We disrupt the hierarchal and historical use of the word and meaning of curating to not reproduce power dynamics that by its nature is excluding knowledge that is not deemed 'expert.' However, we position ourselves as educators akin to curators and invite undergraduate students to also engage with library archives curatorially in conjunction with their expert knowledge by carefully and critically self-reflecting on their own knowledge bases. Sotomayor uses the term curator to describe the actions of an educator who is creating, implementing, and sharing a

pedagogical approach that centers on co-creating knowledge with care and stewardship (Sotomayor, 2020). In the account shared here, curating is a shared experience between Julie and Leslie and a classroom of undergraduate students. Next, we will explain our approach in contextualizing our curating of the archival workshop for undergraduate students as part of their taking a diversity, pedagogy and visual culture class.

Pedagogy & Theoretical Approach

After discussing our personal Feminist pedagogies for inclusion, critical self-reflection and analysis of power dynamics within institutions and the Art Education course objectives; we determined that a culturally relevant/responsive approach to the workshop would be the best fit. Culturally relevant pedagogy was first defined by Gloria Ladson-Billings as an approach to teaching that "empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, & attitudes" (1994, p.18). More recently, Brown University's, The Education Alliance (2019) outlines seven tenets of culturally responsive teaching. For the purposes of the workshop, we focused on three of these characteristics: culturally mediated instruction, learning within the culture of context and student-centered instruction. We have contextualized Culturally Responsive Teaching within our feminist and art education disciplines engaging with the scholarship of Gloria Anzaldúa (2015), AnaLouise Keating (2015), and Maxine Greene (1995). Anzaldúa, Keating and Greene warn us of the emotional toll and heavy work that conscious raising work requires by connecting and dismantling historical narratives that impact our lived experiences. In this reflection we attempt to unpack the impact to our own experiences and by extension the students. By curating a critically self-reflective space for ourselves and students the experiences become collaborative, a collective of mine, ours, and theirs; a suturing of stories as we co-curate.

In co-curating undergraduate environments, we aimed to facilitate conversations with students while employing Gloria Anzaldúa (2015) and Maxine Greene (1995) theories of curating spaces where vulnerability and exposure of wounds is shared, and learners bear witness to each other's internalized pain. This is a form of emotional labor. Anzaldúa explains that artists "bear witness to what haunts us, to step back and attempt to see the pattern in these events (personal and societal), and how we can repair el daño (the damage) by using the imagination and its vision" (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2015, p. 10). Through sharing of pain and trauma, exposure and a necessary fragmentation is enacted. The transformative acts of sharing our lived experiences, critically self-reflecting and actively listening encourage healing and integration of the self (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2015). Furthermore, the act of sharing our testimonios,[1] ignites the creation for the theory Anzaldúa coined, Autohistoria-teoría, a feminist writing practice of testimonio as a way to create self-knowledge, belonging, and to bridge collaborative spaces through self-empowerment. Anzaldúa offers a proto-definition of autohistoria as a term to "describe the genre of writing about one's personal and collective history using fictive elements, a sort of fictionalized autobiography or memoir: and autohistoria-teoría, is a personal essay that theorizes" (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2009, p. 578). We bridge Anzaldúa's call for self-liberation through testimonios to Maxine Greene's vision for consciousness and empathy work through art education.

The concept of transformative learning toward interconnectedness has also been important to the philosophy of aesthetic education (Greene, 1978, 1995). Aesthetic education philosopher, Maxine Greene (1995) explores concepts of possibilities, imagination, and interconnectedness towards transformation through art education. Her concept of an emancipated pedagogy, which merges art and aesthetics as one education that empowers students and "allows them to read and to name, to write and to rewrite their own lived worlds" seeks to create

inclusion and a making of "some common world" (Greene, 1995, pp. 147, 135). Greene (1978) defines art and aesthetic education as worlds that facilitate reflection and awareness in order to create meaning and new possibilities. She explains the possibilities for educators to "move more and more persons into the imaginative mode of awareness, as we free them to make their own visions real" (Greene, 1978, p. 196). Greene (1995) addresses a larger picture of art education advocating for active teaching in order to inspire active learners. She explains that imagination is an integral part of both the lives of teachers and learners' experiences to see new paths for learning, consciousness work, and also towards empathy (Greene, 1995). Greene, reaches beyond theorizing and creating environments for awareness, and expands the crossings into active and critical self-reflective work to rewrite one's own empowered stories and engage in a healing process. Her emancipatory pedagogy towards freedom specifically addresses the inclusion of groups of people and ranges of media and arts which have historically been excluded from the art education canon (Greene, 1995). Furthermore, she posits that engaging with "pluralities of persons" may inspire individuals to find their own images, and visions within an array of arts, experiencing "all sorts of sensuous openings" (Greene, 1995, p. 137). Greene (1995) writes,

> Yes, it should be education for a more informed and imaginative awareness, but it should also be education in the kinds of critical transactions that empower students to resist both elitism and objectivism, that allow them to read and to name, to write and to rewrite their own lived worlds. (p. 147)

In this reflective paper we ask, how may we instigate a rewriting of lived and witnessed experiences with students in the classroom space?

In order to meet the critical, feminist outcomes of both the workshop and the course as a whole, the selection of archival materials used for the workshop began with two criteria: items that document the oppression of marginalized groups, and items that demonstrate this oppression through visual representations. One of the archival literacy objectives that we intended for students to meet as a result of the workshop was an understanding of "archival silences," or the gaps that occur in the archival record, when evidence of certain experiences are not collected (Carter, 2006). We integrated this concept into the lesson through both the assignment and a brief lecture on archives at the beginning of class. The brief lecture included an explanation of archival practice, and a brief discussion of Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook's (2002) assertion that "Archives have the power to privilege and to marginalize. They can be a tool of hegemony; they can be a tool of resistance. They both reflect and constitute power relations" (p. 13). In the assignment, students were asked to address this theme by considering what was privileged and what was missing from their archival materials. As a result, we also hoped that students would interrogate the authority of those who make collecting and appraisal decisions for the collections that they would interact with in the workshop. Specifically, students were asked to consider whether the materials their group engaged with adequately document an experience, and whose experiences are represented. Thus, in addition to the original two criteria, it was also important to include materials that represented multiple perspectives on an issue when selecting the primary sources for students to analyze.

The first archival selection for the workshop were the student activism papers collected by Eric A. Walker, 1963-1986. The documents found in this collection were the least visual of those selected for the workshop. However, they document student activism and unrest on campus during the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War. The collection includes materials created by both the University's administration and student groups.

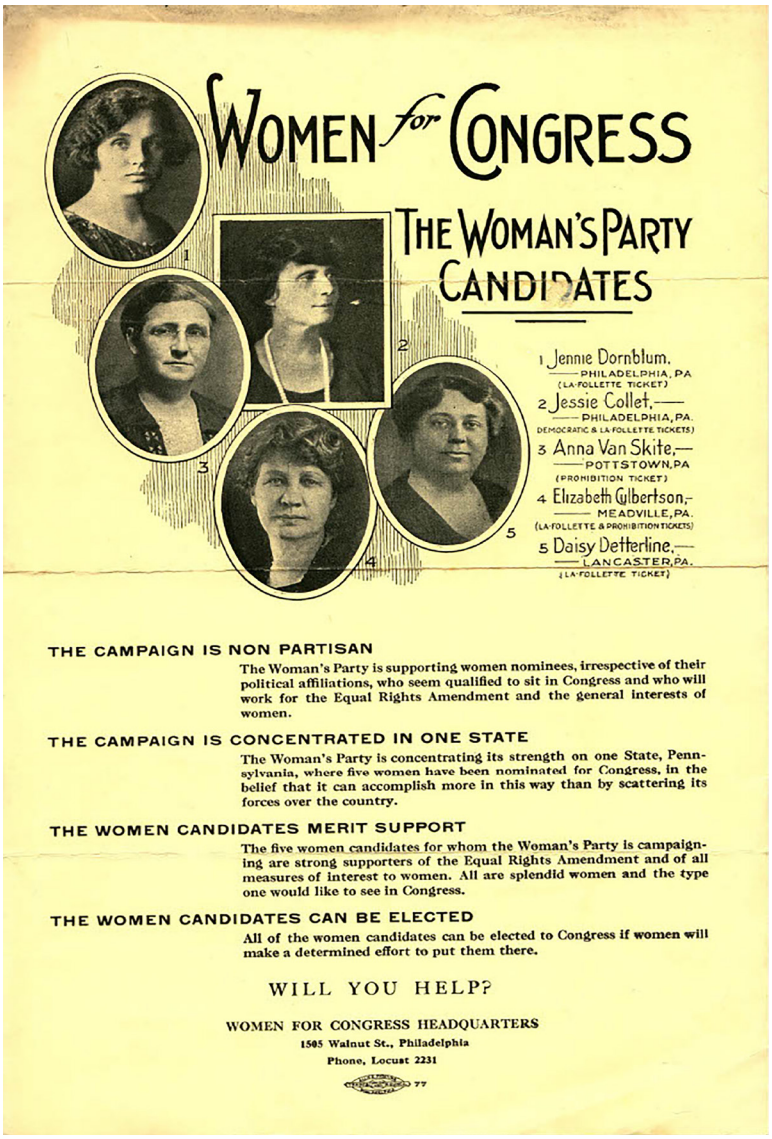

Figure 1. Women's Suffrage Collection, 1912-1920, The Eberly Family Special Collections Library, Penn State University Libraries.

The second collection selected for the workshop was the Labor Graphic Arts and Poster Collection, 1897-1983. This collection consists of oversized graphics and posters created by international labor unions, including the United Mine Workers, the United Steelworkers, and Federación de Trabajadores de la Caña de Azúcar y Sus Derivados de Venezuela. In contrast to the student activism papers, this collection is very visual in its representations of labor unrest. Additionally, it primarily documents the perspective of the unions, rather than employers. The next collection included was the Women's Suffrage Collection, 1912-1920 (Figure 1). It documents both suffrage and anti-suffrage campaigns in Pennsylvania through pamphlets distributed by organizations on each side of the issue. Most of the pamphlets include drawings and other visual depictions of women. The fourth grouping of materials came from the poster series of the larger Ken Lawrence collection, 1940-2010. Similar to the labor poster collection, the Ken Lawrence posters are extremely visual, international in scope, and were created by activist groups. The causes included range from racial inequality to anti-war sentiment. The final selection of materials

was the Charles L. Blockson collection of postcards and related materials, 1919-2000 (Figure 2), which consists of racist postcards and advertising cards collected by Charles L. Blockson, an advocate and historian of African American history and culture. The racist depictions found in the materials are highly visual and jarring. They primarily represent the viewpoint of the oppressive, dominant white culture that created and distributed them.

Figure 2. Charles L. Blockson collection of postcards and related materials, 1919-2000, The Eberly Family Special Collections Library, Penn State University Libraries.

Student Centered Reactions & Reflections

We divide this section up into three reflective perspectives. First, we discuss what we witnessed as student reactions during and after the library workshop. Next, Leslie shares her analysis and lastly, Julie shares her critical reflections.

Student Reactions

Students had various reactions during the workshop, presentation, and afterwards in critically listening and reflecting on their archival research experience and their peer's presentations. The witnessing of the accumulation of trauma came forth in a way that we were not anticipating. One Black student's reaction was to the archive selection in particular, she reacted emotionally to the one set of archives that she had been randomly selected to

engage with her peers. In her attempt to explain why it was so disturbing to her as a Black student to view these violent postcards from the archives, she choked on her words. It was hard for her to articulate fully what she felt being one of three Black students in class with twenty-six White peers. As the class facilitators and educators, we were not quite sure how to proceed. In that moment, our White privilege was glaring.

Leslie addressed the violent atrocities depicted on the postcards that the Black student was referencing and attempted to make the connection that all of the archives in some way had a crude violence to them, however, she acknowledged this particular set was the most visually violent--yet no other student had reacted in quite this way. Concluding class shortly after the students distressed response, Julie and I met one on one with the student. She was embarrassed to have become so emotional in a predominately White class, where she was exposed and became the center of unwanted attention. This, she explained, was on top of carrying the burden in every class on campus of being Black during Black History Month in February, a detail that escaped Julie and I in our white skins. Leslie followed up with her student in person and via email, whom 'til this day she continues to maintain a relationship with. However, Julie and I walked away that day with many emotions as we reflected on our pedagogies and facilitation styles in the classroom space. We met multiple times to discuss what we could have done different and what does this experience do for our teaching going forward.

Leslie's Reflection

I, Leslie, felt enraged that no-one else felt visibly uncomfortable with the archives; including myself. That no one else reacted in a visceral way. I questioned my pedagogical and facilitation approach looking for my flaws and ways to improve. In self-reflecting, I remembered a few weeks prior, during a discussion about Coco Fusco and Guillermo Goméz-Peña's, The Couple in the Cage (1993) when another one of the Black students from this same class did become emotional during the discussion. And I remembered how there were multiple incidents before that with thick tensions between Black and White students about race and racial construction and the lived experiences of People of Color in the United States. My mind became flooded by memories from the few classes I had taught previously where I was called out by multiple students for having an 'agenda', a 'clear political view' that was biased in my curriculum curating.

Our White privilege in a predominantly White institution was glaring, and we could not hide. We could not brush it aside. Although I identify as a woman of color, I am also White. And in that moment, I was very White. The premise for this attempted conscious raising in the academic environment meant connecting to parts of ourselves that were hard to look at while trying to dismantle historical narratives.

During the last segment of our class time in the archives, we reconvened as a large group, sharing our initial feelings and reactions to the archives just analyzed. Several students shared how they had never heard of some of the social movements and groups represented in the archives viewed. Others reflected on their surprise at some of the racist content found in many of the archives such as posters for social movements from Western Pennsylvania that only depicted white abled male bodies or the Woman's suffragette movement only showcasing white women. The Black student who shared her visceral, emotional response to the racist, violent images in the archive she was randomly assigned was poignant. The student, as we mentioned earlier could barely speak because of her pain in viewing the images. As we acknowledged the crass nature of the imagery, and the traumatic experience of viewing them, we wrapped up the end of class, making sure to follow up with the student

one on one. The conversations between us as co-facilitators and the student's that followed caused much pause for reflection by us, the facilitators of the workshop. The students overwhelming feeling caused by so much of the race talks that she was burdened by in almost every space on a predominantly white campus during Black History month, when this workshop took place, caused her to feel acutely aware and tokenized by the subject matter. The historicized racism that the United States was born out of, and built upon, haunts us as a nation and a people even to this day. White privilege awareness and the trauma of racism has once again torn open a huge deep wound in our country that continues to bleed out onto our streets--how do we as a society expect students of color to go about education and daily mundane life experiences when they are continuously being killed and their wounds reopen? What are we educating for?

Leslie, in previous weeks before this assignment aimed to the trauma of racism, but her lecture fell short, a more vigorous discussion and context was needed. Leslie also realized that the courses she taught before this one, were smaller and predominantly students of color, providing a much different context for discussions through lived experiences and testimonio work. In a different iteration of this undergraduate course and workshop, perhaps testimonios curated more specificity connected to the identities represented in the classroom would have been beneficial. In this particular class and classes like it, alluded to previously in this article, I, Leslie, am often told at the end of the semester by students that too much emphasis and context was given to the histories of people of color--despite public education in the U.S. being one that is centered in Westernized White patriarchal canons; anything that disrupts the traditional narrative is seen as a threat. We see this now amidst the continued intensified turmoil of our country with the public murders and lynchings of black victims (Haywood Rolling Jr., 2020). White ideologies are often threatened by anything that challenges the historical dominant narrative. Brown and black bodies continue to carry the burden wherever they go.

Often as teachers, we have both felt the amount of emotional labor that is part of our culturally relevant and feminist pedagogy. However, we did not anticipate how our students and how we would feel in facilitating this classroom assignment and the emotional labor it entailed. I have reflected often on that semester and how vulnerability came out in a variety of ways for students and myself. Because of my own experiences as a student of color in classrooms where often I did not 'belong', as for example, my Puerto Rican and Cuban heritage was not represented, nor my Spanish language, my mixed identities, my histories. I became an educator, first as a student learning about herself and second to represent what I failed to see in education for myself. I live in nepantla, curating my own autohistoria, suturing parts of myself. I have aimed to curate my life by taking all the bits that make up parts of me and reframe them for myself, my stories, my education, my art, my experiences, finding empowerment and transformation through this process. I aim to share this as an educator. And felt that I had failed in that semester, in that class. But we, Julie and I, also need to be careful not to fall into the grips of White fragility and White tears, this isn't about us only, it is about the students and their vulnerability as well. However, I have chosen to gather up those experiences and to continue to become a better educator, curating environments anew that empower students towards conversations of inclusion within diversity, respect and listening to each other despite differences of perspectives.

Julie's Reflection

I have spent a large portion of my career researching, writing, and practicing culturally relevant, and other critical/liberatory approaches, to teaching information literacy skills. In particular, I have extolled the virtues of primary sources for consciousness-raising in the classroom. While I have done this work within the context of li-

braries and archives, my primary professional identity is as a teacher, and it is important to me to be a very good one. As I watched our student's eyes well up with emotion, I immediately realized that I had totally, unequivocally failed this student. Worse yet, I had done so by leading the charge with a pedagogical approach that I had previously thought to be a movement in the right equity, diversity, and inclusion direction.

My next realization was just how blatant my White Privilege was at that moment. I was also immediately aware of my relative Whiteness to everyone in the room. I saw myself in the anguished faces of the young White women who lingered after class, wanting to comfort their classmate, but not knowing if it was appropriate. I did not have the heart to tell those young women that I was not entirely sure what level of comfort was appropriate to come from someone with our privilege at the moment either. The difference was that I was one of the co-teachers of the workshop, and I had to address the situation. So, I carried a box of tissues to the table, and pulled up a seat with Leslie and the student. The room had cleared out, and it was now just the three of us. But, my new found realization of relative whiteness was still reeling. I looked at Leslie, who is my dear friend outside of our work together, with fear-stricken eyes that said help me navigate this: you are Latina.

Despite all of my fears, I took responsibility for the situation right away. I let the student know that I was deeply sorry that she was upset. I had selected the materials, and it was my fault. What she said next changed my understanding of pedagogy and classroom dynamics forever. She clarified that she was not sad. She was embarrassed, because the onus to explain and embody the racist experiences of a Black person that were found in the postcards was on her in the White majority classroom. I was stunned. It is always my goal for students to leave my classroom more aware of social injustice, but never embarrassed. Stupidly, I told the student that I understood, and was glad she was there to help the other students understand.

I spent the next week reflecting on my own, before I met up with Leslie to debrief and reflect further. During this time, I started thinking about the responsibility that we had inadvertently put on this student. It was the same responsibility that I had put on Leslie when I looked to her to lead the conversation with the student, because she is Latina. How do we help White students to be aware of racial injustice and their privilege without requiring students of color to be their guides without consent? When I met up with Leslie a week later to debrief and discuss, I was relieved to learn that she had been asking herself the very same question. As we reflected together, the importance of context emerged as a theme. First, there was the overall makeup of the classroom. At a predominately White institution, it is not unusual to have an overwhelmingly White majority class, like this one. I had previously spent a lot of time thinking about how this was racist and unjust, but, inexplicably, I had never considered how this context damages the ability of educators to effectively leverage culturally relevant pedagogy. Second, I did not effectively situate the collections that students viewed within their individual contexts. For example, the postcards that provoked the student's reaction were collected by Charles L. Blockson, a Black scholar of African American history, who began collecting documentation of African americana and African diaspora after being told by a grade school teacher that Black Americans had no history. The group of students who worked with these postcards ultimately found a documentary about Mr. Blockson, and incorporated it into their final presentation. They indicated that having this context helped them to understand why documentation of racism is important.

While a major takeaway of this experience was the importance of context, the most important lesson learned was that I can always be a better teacher. It would be easy to hide behind White fragility, and say that upsetting

the student was not my intent. Blame her for not understanding my pedagogical goals. However, the truth is that I am the one that did not understand. I did not understand how it feels to look at racist imagery when you are Black, and I never truly will. I can, however, endeavor to present these images in a more informed manner the next time.

Lessons Learned

This experience challenged us to critically look at our pedagogy and how we may have facilitated and culturally mediated our instructions differently. Using tenets of culturally responsive teaching in another iteration of this workshop we would reshape the curriculum due to students' insights and critical reflections with the archives. A few things have come up for us in how to do this. For example, situating a more in-depth historical context for the construction of race in our U.S. history would be beneficial to create the language needed to grapple with many of these hard conversations. In our subconscious, as a U.S. nation, we tend to forget that many who have since assimilated into mainstream White culture weren't always in that position (Figueroa, 2011). For example, the Irish, Italians and many other ethnic groups migrating from Europe were racialized and marginalized when immigrating to the U.S. However, with time these groups of immigrants assimilated and anchored their citizenship throughout the U.S. due to being accepted because of their status as White Europeans (Fox, Moroşanu, & Szilassy, 2015). Critically looking at the history of the construction of racial politics that precede U.S. history and the forming of our country would better connect the ideas deeply embedded in what racial construction is and the power dynamics within it (Omi & Winant, 2014; HoSang et al., 2012).

Learning within the Context of Culture ideally takes into account varying cultural backgrounds of students. Despite this, we did not foresee several things from our privileged location as white identified women professors. The first is that this archival workshop took place during Black History month, adding an additional emotional burden on students of color in the class. Second, although before this point there were uncomfortable conversations that took place and were acknowledged by the facilitator; a clear plan was not in place for how to navigate these spaces for the well-being of the students of color. Third, a more in-depth contextualizing of the construction of race as institutionalized and historicized may have better couched the larger conversation of Whiteness and otherness, to not position them as oppositional but rather as different perspectives about the construction of race in the U.S.

As we reflect further on our teaching as facilitators and reshaping the curriculum we consider: How could we make the assignment in future iterations meaningful for all students? How could we consider more preemptively mental well-being and trigger warnings for our students engaging in these difficult and complex issues? Despite the emotional toll and navigating of difficult and complex discussions, students of color felt heard within the classroom space.

Quote from student's email reflection:

> *"Thank you for always allowing a safe space for me to express my opinions and feelings. As a black female student at a PWI, that does not happen a lot for me and you created a small window of that. For that I am beyond grateful...You've been kind to me, and supportive…"*

As we look critically back on our archive workshop experience, we realize that in the initial planning and implementing of the assignment we did not approach it as facilitators, but rather as educators with parameters for a reflective assignment. We used this strategy in a responsive rather than a proactive way. In the future, we will be

more conscious of using resources and materials as ways to initiate conversations, with accompanying supplemental sources that will bolster more in-depth critical reflections to help analyze and unpack larger issues, and allow more time to process complex territories and the emotional responses that may arise. Although we did not read Gloria Anzaldúa's books in the course, Leslie structured the course on the premise of Anzaldúa's autohistoria-teorïa, bringing excerpts into the class curriculum and having discussions about the curating of our lives through our lived experiences. For example, one of the assignments in the course was writing an identity poem as a way to create more intimate conversations and discuss the complexities of our identities. In wanting to layer various approaches to unpacking our lived experiences, during the process throughout the semester, it overall felt hard to initiate deep discussions. In an effort to expose systemic racism through the curated curriculum through lived experiences, critical self-reflection writing and discussions around it proved to be a very hard space to navigate.

Leslie felt a lot of resistance and it seemed to be hard for many students to fully grasp systemic racism and oppression because of their own privileged experiences. Moving forward, we would include resources and collaborations with outside support, such as professional guests connected to campus support counselling groups. Inviting them to participate in potentially sensitive discussions relevant to the course materials. Both of our backgrounds in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies led us to take for granted the often-vulnerable exposure of self that is required to address larger issues of oppression through classroom consciousness-raising. As feminist educators, we so often take part in critically reflective activities in the courses we teach shouldering the emotional labor that falls on us, but how do we navigate emotional labor when it falls on a student? We forgot how fragile these spaces can be at times because of our White privilege. In curating our autohistoria following this experience we are finding the need to be honest and confront these 'shadow' sides of oneself. We did not fully realize the risk we were taking in curating the course assignment and attempting to dismantle historical narratives.

Two main points for reflection and caution emerged from this experience for our roles as teachers: First, the emotional labor as teacher/facilitators that often goes unspoken needs to be addressed and supported within educational structures. To be present for our students, as educators, requires a tremendous amount of time, commitment, follow-up, listening, knowledge about resources, and consistency to reimagine curriculum. Second, educator collaborations, co-teaching and mentorship opportunities for educators such as this one helps to create solidarity within educational spaces to support each other in in-between, nepantla spaces. The experiences and critical reflections expressed in this article are an example of inhabiting a nepantla state where we (as a class) were jolted from our complacent realities. To be a true facilitator also means to be proactive in helping to contextualize conversations for students. In this one example we highlight as educators, the time we have taken to process this experience. It has taught us about our own pedagogy and facilitating in our classroom spaces, the things that may be taken for granted. In addition to the time and emotional bandwidth spent to support, encourage and make ourselves available to our students, we took on the emotionally laborious task of both collective and individual reflection to grapple with the complexities of our own histories, representations and identities. While this experience was intense and complex as a collective project, having the support of a co-teacher was invaluable. The emotional pain and trauma as one of the consequences of this workshop becomes an in-between place of nepantla in our autohistoria. The emotional trauma, once revealed becomes a site for healing, repairing the damage (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2015). As educators we are unlearning the repressive narratives within academia that reproduce a knowledge production that is inherently racist. Furthermore, students are also unlearning how racist and systemic oppressive narratives have been embedded into their psyches. As students and educators unlearning the deep infiltration of racist ideologies, pain and trauma we, as a collective, can carve out spaces to create

a new world by re-imagining new spaces and narratives. The emotional labor of investing our time we hold as one of the highest values in our teaching, because emotional connections and vulnerable experiences are often what is remembered most by learners, an exchange between humans that leads towards conscious work growing mutual empathy.

Endnotes

1. Testimonio: a public testament of a lived or witnessed experience.
2. Intersectionality was coined by black feminist Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989) as a theory to identify how overlapping categories of identities impact individual, collective, and systemic institutions affecting social and cultural norms. Class, race, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, and age are some of the intersections that Crenshaw theorized about as various forms of social stratification. Feminism is defined here as the movement to end sexist, white, patriarchal oppression towards everyone (bell hooks, 1995).
3. Teaching Diverse Learners, The Education Alliance at Brown University. Retrieved on March 4, 2019. https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/search/google?cx=001311030293454891064%3Alwlrsw9qt3o&cof=FORID%3A11&query=citation&sa.x=0&sa.y=0&form_id=brown_google_cse_searchbox_for

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