

MISSING VOICES: A FORMATIVE EXPERIMENT TO
IMPROVE DIALOGUE IN ONE ONLINE COLLEGE
CLASSROOM DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Students' voices are all too often missing in classrooms today. Research over the past 50 years has identified a number of problems associated with these missing voices. There are ingrained habits of "initiation-response-evaluation" (I-R-E) during which teachers assume responsibility for guiding classroom conversation and a tendency for many educators to engage in more monologic talk patterns. These classroom talk patterns intersect with several affective factors to significantly impede students' full and genuine participation in learning. The purpose of this study was to develop and implement an intervention drawn from theories of dialogic pedagogy that I called *Facilitated Participant-Centered Discussion (FPCD)*. FPCD was informed by a theory of dialogue grounded in the philosophic hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer. Given challenges associated with students' missing voices, I employed a formative design framework to investigate what conditions supported or impeded the development of dialogue in a college-level online classroom. Constant comparative methods were used to iteratively collect and analyze data in an embedded, single-case study; then, retrospective analyses of the findings sought to identify implications, unanticipated outcomes, and recommendations for future research. Results indicated that the instructor's understanding and facilitation of dialogue improved and students' participation in classroom discussion increased. Findings suggested: a) factors associated with a "classroom press" were significant barriers to developing classroom dialogue, b) a tension between authority and openness inhibited FPCD, c) despite supports built into the intervention, affective factors continued to challenge the instructor's leadership and

powerfully inhibit student participation, and d) modeling a spirit of openness that welcomes student perspectives was essential to facilitating dialogue.

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DEDICATION

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The role of dialogue in education has a long and storied history. Socrates, the fifth century BCE Athenian, engaged citizens in public conversations, challenging them to question unexamined opinions and think about how to live a good life. Likewise his student, Plato, wrote philosophical dialogues, portraying his teacher engaging in discussion and debate with other Athenians about ethical ideas like the good, the true, and the beautiful. More recently, John Dewey (1986) argued that social interaction and dialogue were instrumental in learning how to think and in building democratic communities. Paulo Freire (1996) wrote that dialogue was essential in developing critical consciousness and identifying and challenging systems of oppression. On a grander scale, John Maynard Hutchins (1990) called all of Western intellectual history a “great conversation” in which thinkers and writers reflect on and dialogue with their predecessors. For the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1984), life is, by its very nature, dialogic.

In recent educational research, dialogue is also a focus for better understanding and improving classroom learning. Early pioneers who explored classroom talk believed that improving student engagement and learning would require better understanding of and efforts to improve the dynamics of teacher-student interaction (Barnes, 2008; Cazden, 1972). Since that time, researchers have been observing and analyzing teacher and student talk patterns in classrooms. Beginning in the 1970’s, they noticed that teachers’ classroom talk was controlling behavior, instruction, and knowledge and precluding the possibility of student discussion (Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). A number of scholars identified the dominant pattern of classroom communication as “Initiation-Response-Evaluation”, or I-R-E (Cazden,

1988; Edwards & Furlong, 1978; Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). Here the teacher asked a question, a student responded, and the teacher evaluated the response. These scholars pointed out that in these exchanges, teachers were better able to control the classroom space by focusing attention on their own authority and the curriculum, but this unfortunately curtailed real student engagement and was a barrier to deeper learning (Nystrand et al., 1997; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wegerif et al., 1999).

A variety of explanations have been provided for these entrenched patterns of teacher-centered classroom talk, for instance: the need to manage student behavior (Edwards & Furlong, 1978; Mehan, 1979; Mercer & Dawes, 2014; Nystrand et al., 1997), the need of institutions to monitor and direct learning (Burbules, 1993; Wells, 1999, 2000), student conditioning and the absence of dialogic skills or virtues (Burbules, 1993; Nystrand et al., 1997), the pressures of limited time, mandated curricula, and measured outcomes (Mercer & Howe, 2012; Skidmore, 2007; Wells, 2001, 2006), inadequate teacher preparation and practice (Alexander, 2005, 2008; Lefstein & Snell, 2014; Mercer & Howe, 2012), or even inherent tensions within the practices and expectations of dialogue itself (Burbules, 1993; Lefstein, 2010).

In the decades that have followed, attempts have been made to better understand how classroom dialogue can be used to break the spell of I-R-E in classrooms and improve student engagement and learning. In the past 30 years, researchers have adopted a sociocultural lens to argue that social interaction is foundational to student cognition, growth, and learning. Drawing on the work of Lev Vygotsky (1980, 2012), scholars have emphasized the importance of socially constructing knowledge in the classroom together with students. They draw on practices of inquiry and dialogue in building more open and collaborative classroom communities (Daniels, 2016; Mercer, 2002; Rogoff, 1990; Wells, 1995, 2007; Wertsch, 2009).

A great deal of research has focused on the benefits of dialogue; this includes, for example, showing its effectiveness in improving textual comprehension (Murphy, et al., 2009), improving oracy (Mercer, Warwick, & Ahmed, 2017), improvements in thinking together (Wegerif et al., 2017), improving subject knowledge (O'Connor, Michaels, Chapin, & Harbaugh, 2017), or promoting reasoning (Anderson, Howe, Soden, Halliday, & Low, 2001; Mercer, Dawes, Wegerif, & Sams, 2004; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Reznitskaya et al., 2009). In a literature review of studies on student participation in college, Rocca (2010) found that factors such as contributing to discussion and group skills have been linked to increased engagement (Cohen, 1991) and motivation (Junn, 1994), critical thinking (Crone, 1997; Garside, 1996), as well as improved communication (Berdine, 1986; Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005).

Studying classroom dialogue is important for at least four reasons. First, as discussed above, dialogue has been viewed as instrumental for improved educational learning outcomes. Second, dialogue has been characterized as essential in the workings of democracy and the skill of democratic deliberation is deemed necessary to evaluate and compromise on competing values in a pluralistic society (Dewey, 1986; Gutmann, 1999; Levinson, 1999, 2012). Third, it has been seen as a tool for critical reflection to identify and eliminate systems of oppression and create more just social conditions for all (Darder, 2017; Freire, 1996; Giroux, 1988; hooks, 2014; Shor, 2012). Finally, and perhaps most foundationally, dialogue is the human way of expanding the horizons of one's understanding with the help of others (Fairfield, 2011; Gadamer, 2004; Grondin, 2011; Kerdeman, 1998, 2003; Taylor, 2017)

In each case, whether to improve learning, work to free others from systems of oppression, or engage in democratic deliberation, it is essential to develop in individuals, and the communities in which they live and work, the ability and willingness to engage in dialogue. As

Wells (2007) pointed out, “the disposition and skills to act in this way need to be acquired through the enactment of such practices in the formative years of schooling.” Nevertheless, despite years of research and attempts to encourage student thinking and discussion through more dialogic pedagogies, classrooms are still dominated by the voices of their teachers (Alexander, 2001; Lefstein, 2009; Mehan, 1998; Nystrand et al., 2003; Reznickskaya & Gregory, 2013; Skidmore, 2007; Wells, 2007).

In attempting to change the culture and practice of talk in classrooms, researchers have described two related problems. First, teacher-led attempts to develop dialogue in the classroom have been generally unsuccessful (Alexander, 2008; Kuhn, 2015; Nystrand, 1997; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013). Students could be passive and recalcitrant, conditioned by years of transmission-based schooling that saw student voice as a threat to the teacher’s authority and the official curriculum (Alexander, 2001; Mehan, 1979; Nystrand, 1997). Furthermore, even when dialogic interventions had been successfully developed, classrooms often relapsed into traditional teacher-centered talk patterns (Nystrand, 1997; Skidmore, 2000; Wells, 1999). Second, there has been a dearth of research into the affective dimension of dialogic learning and teaching (Burbules, 1993; Skidmore, 2006; Wells, 1999). In the classroom, and learning more generally, cognition and affect are intertwined in significant and complex ways that can make it difficult to facilitate and engage in dialogue (Burbules, 1993; Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002; Rocca, 2010; Vygotsky, 1987; Wells, 2007). These problems continue to plague the implementation and persistence of dialogue in schools today (Alexander, 2001; Burbules, 1993; Burbules & Bruce, 2001; Lefstein, 2010; Rajala et al., 2016; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013). Passive and minimally engaged students, who are memorizing and repeating information passed down to them, cannot be adequate classroom partners in learning, or active agents in the identification of social

inequities, or citizens skilled in shared democratic deliberation. Students caught in I-R-E exchanges assimilate information, but they are not personally challenged to question their own assumptions and grow through active engagement with others. Their own understanding, beliefs, and values are not implicated in their education.

Given these challenges, in this study I sought to investigate conditions supporting the development of classroom dialogue and impediments that prevented dialogue from flourishing between students and their teacher. To conduct this investigation, I drew on existing theory and research and developed an intervention called Facilitated Participant-Centered Discussion (FPCD). This dissertation includes a narrative of my work with one instructor as we co-constructed specifics of the intervention and put it into practice in a college level classroom over the course of one semester. Along the way, I describe our collaboration, what factors enhanced or impeded efforts to develop dialogue with all of her students, and what modifications we made to increase the effectiveness of the intervention.

Methodological Approach

In this study, I employed a formative design framework Reinking & Bradley (2008). Formative design experiments have evolved to address the discontinuity between research and practice. Formative design and design-based research in education are fraternal approaches that arose dynamically and concurrently in the 1980's and 90's to fulfill the need for a more applied kind of research (Brown, 1992; Cobb et al., 2003; Collins, 1992; Design-Based Research Collective, 2003). These approaches brought theory to be implemented and tested in the hurly-burly of the classroom. Researchers, versed in more traditional methodologies, sought to bring interventions, grounded in theory, to real instructional spaces. Many were also looking for research that, having been tested in the complexity of real classrooms, would provide the fine-

grained practical insights that would make instructional interventions effective and efficient for teachers' use. They saw this kind of research as imperative to change and improve instructional practices in contemporary schooling (Brown, 1992, Cobb et al., Collins, 1992; Design-Based Research Collective, 2003; Reinking & Bradley, 2008).

Reinking & Bradley (2008) described formative design as an applied educational science akin to engineering. It used theoretical underpinnings to build an effective classroom intervention in an attempt to achieve a pedagogical goal. In education, they contended, there had been “no category of research analogous to the work of designers, engineers, and test pilots whose coordinated efforts [were] aimed directly at getting an airplane to fly and to perform for specific purposes under a variety of conditions” (pp. 7-8).

In addressing a pedagogical goal, proponents of formative design emphasized that research must occur in authentic instructional spaces and that the researcher must partner with the practitioner in cycles of planning, implementation, and reflection. This dissertation study was guided by a framework of questions developed by Reinking and Bradley (2008) to conduct and report findings from a formative design experiment. In the chapters that follow, each of the guiding questions in this framework will be addressed: 1) What is the pedagogical goal to be investigated and why is that goal valued and important? 2) What intervention has the potential to achieve the pedagogical goal and why? 3) What factors enhance or inhibit the intervention's effectiveness, efficiency, and appeal of the intervention? 4) How can the intervention be modified to achieve the pedagogical goal more effectively, efficiently, and appealingly? 5) What unanticipated positive and negative effects did the intervention produce?

In formative experiments, this guiding framework of generic research questions is centered around one or more pedagogical goals. Therefore, in Chapter 2, I identified two

pedagogical goals for this study and highlighted relevant research to support the potential to achieve those goals (Questions 1 & 2). The intervention designed for this study, Facilitated Participant-Centered Discussion (FPCD), was designed to support one practitioner's understanding of the theory and practices associated with dialogic pedagogies so that she could more effectively facilitate classroom discussions in which students took an active and engaged role. Because classroom dialogue was jointly constructed in the classroom by the instructor, Cassandra and her students, there were two complementary and simultaneous goals:

Goal 1: Improve one college instructor's understanding of dialogic teaching and the strategies used in promoting it during online classroom discussions.

Goal 2: Improve college students' dialogic participation in an online college classroom.

The purpose of this study was to develop the FPCD intervention drawn from existing theories of dialogic pedagogy, and then implement it in order to test it in a genuine classroom context. This would allow me to respond to what I will refer to as the three-research question portion of the formative framework (Questions 3, 4, & 5). Implementation included identifying factors that enhanced or impeded the effectiveness of the FPCD intervention (Question 3) and making modifications to improve it (Question 4). These two questions are addressed in Chapter 4. Finally, as part of my retrospective analysis of the Chapter 4 results, I will discuss results of this analysis and unanticipated consequences of the intervention (Question 5) in Chapters 5 and 6.

To answer these questions, I employed a qualitative case-study approach (Yin, 2009) to collect and evaluate data through iterative cycles of a formative experiment. Then, I used retrospective analysis (Gravemeijer & Cobb, 2006) to conduct a holistic retrospective analysis of all phases of the intervention.

Key Terms and Concepts

The following is a list of key terms and concepts that will be used in this study. Some will be discussed again in Chapter 2.

Affect - The needs, emotions, or feelings that shape our thoughts and choices (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002).

Dialogue - A conversation in which two or more persons openly and respectfully participate in a spirit of shared inquiry. Interlocutors exchange ideas in order to develop their individual and shared understanding (Burbules, 1993).

Dialogic Pedagogy - The contemporary study of and research into a collection of educational practices outlined to improve student participation, engagement, and learning through discussion in classrooms (Burbules, 1993; Lefstein, 2010; Matusov, 2015; Mercer, & Dawes, 2014; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 1999).

Facilitated Participant-Centered Discussion (FPCD) - The name of the intervention elucidated in this research. FPCD focuses on developing discussions that are centered on participants' own thoughts and words, rather than the knowledge of the teacher. The components of FPCD are fully described in Chapter 2.

Hermeneutics - The theory and practice of interpretation and understanding (Kerdeman, 2014).

Metacognition - The reflective understanding of one's own thoughts, feelings, and learning (Flavell, 1979; Livingston, 2003).

Philosophical Hermeneutics - The investigation into the nature of human understanding. From this lens, understanding occurs as an experience; an event of truth arising in a dialogical encounter with someone or something beyond one's current horizons or prejudices (Gadamer, 2013; Kerdeman; 2014; Taylor, 2017).

Reflective Debriefing - Facilitated whole-class student-centered examination and discussion in which participants engage in making sense of a shared experience or activity (Nagle & Foli, 2020).

Self-determination - A theory of motivation that emphasizes the conditions that support a person's sense of their own autonomy, competence, and relatedness in thinking and working (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

Social Justice - The equality of opportunity, rights, and treatment for all members of society and “reconstructing society in accordance with principles of equity, recognition, and inclusion” (Adams & Griffin, 2007, p. 4).

Text - In this dissertation study, a text includes essays, articles, book chapters, documentary films, videos, and podcasts that serve as the objects for classroom inquiry or discussion (Burbules, 1993; Nystrand et al., 1997; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 1999).

Dissertation Structure

This dissertation follows a slightly modified structure and is organized into six chapters. In Chapter 1, I introduce the problem and purpose of the study and provide a general overview of the methods and key terminology. In Chapter 2, the content is organized into two sections; I begin with a review the philosophic tradition associated with dialogue and existing literature pertaining to dialogic pedagogy; in the second section, I outline essential elements of the FPCD intervention I designed and describe the potential of that intervention to achieve two pedagogical goals. In Chapter 3, I detail the methodological approaches chosen for this study and document early observations of the classroom under study that set the stage for implementing the intervention. In Chapter 4, I organize results of this formative experiment into four steps that evolved over the course of one fall semester; these steps included nine iterative cycles of

planning, implementation, reflection, and modification of practices associated with the intervention. In Chapter 5, I present four assertions resulting from my retrospective analysis of data collected across iterations of the intervention. Finally, in Chapter 6, I discuss considerations centered on the four resulting assertions as well as unanticipated outcomes of the intervention, limitations of this study, and directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND POTENTIAL OF PROPOSED INTERVENTION

Chapter 2 is organized into two parts. In Part 1, I review the ontological and hermeneutic tradition associated with the concept of dialogue and the contemporary theoretical and empirical literature informing this study. This review is organized in two sections to align with the two complementary and concurrent goals for this study:

Goal 1: Improve college instructor's understanding of dialogic teaching and the strategies used in promoting it during online classroom discussions.

Goal 2: Improve college students' dialogic participation in an online college classroom.

This study addresses these two goals with an intervention designed to support the facilitation of student-centered discussion in an online college course on education and social justice. Therefore, in Part 2, I discuss the ways that research, theory, and practice align with the potential of my FPCD intervention and then outline the essential elements that constitute the intervention. In doing so, this chapter answers two questions from Reinking and Bradley's (2008) framework for conducting a formative experiment:

- (1) What pedagogical goal is to be investigated and why is it important?
- (2) What intervention will be used and why?

Part 1: Review of the Literature

In line with formative research design (Reinking & Bradley, 2008), the primary purpose of this section will be to justify the importance of the pedagogical goals of the present study and identify any potential obstacles as described therein. The goals I have outlined for this research (improving an instructors' understanding and facilitation of dialogic teaching and improving students' dialogic participation) are interdependent and reciprocal.

Pedagogical Goal 1: Improve One College Instructors' Understanding of Dialogic Teaching and Strategies in Promoting It During Online Classroom Discussions

The meaning and purpose of dialogue for education reaches back to ancient Greece and the figure of Socrates, who questioned fellow citizens about the meaning of leading a good life. His student, Plato, wrote philosophical dialogues, based on Socrates' life, that modeled inquiry and discussion in search of a shared understanding of truths and directed toward an ethical life. Following this understanding of dialogue, I draw on the work of the German scholar, Hans-Georg Gadamer (1983, 1991, 2004), as he sought to interpret and apply the ancient meaning of dialogue in the light of the 20th century intellectual and social world. This study adopts Gadamer's notion of *hermeneutic* dialogue as foundational in the development of human understanding.

I will begin, therefore, by outlining the meaning of dialogue as an educational practice as interpreted in ancient educational antecedents. Then I will continue to justify my first pedagogical goal by introducing more contemporary research of dialogic pedagogies before outlining Gadamer's hermeneutic theory of dialogue that informs this study and is central to my formative intervention.

Ancient Antecedents: Dialogue as Practiced by Socrates

The centrality of dialogue in education in the West has a long lineage going back millennia at least as far as ancient Greece and the Athenian philosopher, Socrates, and his student Plato. The work and activity of these philosophers was especially influential on the thinking of Hans-Georg Gadamer, whose hermeneutic theory of dialogue provides a framework for this research. Therefore I begin by providing a summary survey of their place in making

dialogue a focus of educational practice. This summary also initiates a sketch of the educational purpose and meaning of dialogue for students and educators.

In Plato's dialogue, *Apology*, Socrates is reported to have seen himself as a gadfly to the city of Athens, divinely commissioned to "sting" his fellow citizens out of their complacency and toward reflection and thought. It is here he also asserted that "an unexamined life is not worth living," and that his wisdom consisted in "only knowing that I know nothing" (Plato, 1997, *Apology*, 21a-24b). This humility theory of wisdom (Ryan, 1996; Whitcomb, 2010) drove Socrates to dialogue with other citizens about ethical ideas and the true meaning of notions such as justice, virtue, courage, and knowledge. In dialogues such as *Apology*, *Phaedo*, and *Gorgias*, Socrates envisioned the shared pursuit of ethical inquiry as the foundation of a good life. His dialogic activity, however, challenged conventional morality and culturally transmitted norms. His questioning also embarrassed significant civic authorities and he was tried for "corrupting the youth of Athens and teaching false gods" (Plato, 1997, *Apology*, 23d). Socrates was put to death in 399 BCE. It is important to note, however, that he left a legacy of intellectual humility, shared inquiry and reflection as the search for ethical truths, and the practice of discussion as a personal and civic educational responsibility. At the same time, the figure of Socrates left an often-repeated warning that open dialogue into important matters can also lead to confrontation with civic authorities over the questioning of culturally transmitted norms and values.

Ancient Antecedents: Dialogue as Dramatized by Plato

It is with Socrates' student, Plato, that we get the first formalized and philosophic presentation of the purpose and conduct and dialogue. Plato artfully portrayed dozens of conversations between his teacher and other Athenian citizens. Judging from their influence on subsequent thinkers, it seems no exaggeration to say (slightly reformulating the words of the

British philosopher A.N. Whitehead (1979), “All of the western tradition of *dialogue* is a footnote to Plato” (p. 39). Plato’s collected work creates a gallery of dialogical dramas that imitates the life and character of Socrates and invites our own participation in these conversations (Friedlander, 2013; Gadamer, 1983; Klein, 1989; Strauss, 1978). The influence of these works on subsequent thinkers makes a brief survey of a few of the prominent themes pertinent to getting a broader view of the role of dialogue as an educational focus. In particular, these themes address the spirit in which dialogue must be conducted, its educational purpose, the role and orientation of discussion facilitation, and the social context in which dialogue occurs. As an image of dialogue, these themes will be important in bringing a traditional horizon of dialogue into view and perhaps seeing the limits and assumptions of more contemporary horizons.

In Plato’s dialogue *Meno*, Socrates speaks of the spirit in which participants must engage in dialogue; he urges his interlocutor (and us by extension) not to participate in the dialogue in the mode of “competitive and clever debaters” but in a manner appropriate to friendship and shared understanding:

If they are friends as you and I are, and want to discuss with each other, they must answer in a manner more gentle and proper to discussion. By this I mean that the answers must not only be true, but *in terms admittedly known to the questioner* [emphasis added]. (1997, *Meno*, 75c9-d4)

In Plato’s (1997) *Theaetetus*, Socrates describes his own role as a facilitator of dialogue.

Here he calls himself a midwife of the soul and not one who himself creates or explicates wisdom. Rather, he serves as an interlocutor to others in order to assist them in giving birth to their own thoughts so that they can be held up in a process of self-examination for the evaluation of their merit. As an image of discussion facilitation, it is worth (minus the overt sexism) quoting at length:

Now my art of midwifery is just like theirs in most respects. The difference is that I attend to men and not women, and that I watch over the labor of their souls, not of their bodies. And the most important thing about my art is the ability to apply all possible tests to the offspring, to determine whether the young mind is being delivered of a phantom, that is, an error, or a fertile truth. For one thing which I have in common with the ordinary midwives is that I myself am barren of wisdom. The common reproach against me is that I am always asking questions of other people but never express my own views about anything, because there is no wisdom in me...But with those who associate with me it is different....And yet it is clear that this is not due to anything they have learned from me; it is that they discover within themselves a multitude of beautiful things, which they bring forth into the light. But it is I, with god's help, who deliver them of this offspring. (150b6-d9)

As an image of dialogue, this passage reveals a number of pertinent characteristics associated with the practice of dialogue. First, in order to develop dialogue, a facilitator must be willing to take up a position of “not-knowing” or what has been termed “Socratic ignorance.” If knowledge and insight are appropriated by the teacher or discussion leader, the other interlocutors are left in a position of passivity and receptivity to expert knowledge. This provides little incentive to think autonomously and engage with others in coming to an understanding. Furthermore, in this context, the expert becomes the evaluator of knowledge and provides opinions while the interlocutors are left little opportunity to truly exercise their own judgment and assess the value of a variety of perspectives. Finally, if the authority of the teacher stands in the way of dialogic participation, students will not be able to “discover within themselves a multitude of beautiful things” (p. 167).

In Plato's *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*, Socrates describes thinking as an internal dialogue, of the soul taking up a conversation with itself:

When it thinks (soul) is simply carrying on a discussion in which it asks itself questions and answers them itself, affirms and denies....(and) when it affirms one thing consistently and without divided counsel, we call this its judgment. (Plato, 1997, 189e9-190a5)

Likewise in *Sophist*, the visiting Stranger asserts,

Aren't thought and speech the same, except that what we call thought is speech that occurs without the voice, inside the soul in conversation with itself....So when affirmation or denial occurs as silent thought inside the soul, wouldn't you call that belief?" (Plato, 1997, 263e1-264e2)

These passages look forward to a tradition that links external dialogue with internal thinking, reasoning, and judging. Here *interpersonal* conversations are mirrored and related to *intrapersonal* thinking. This is a theme picked up by later thinkers, from Aristotle to Augustine, and from Arendt to Vygotsky.

In the "allegory of the cave," Plato (1997, *Republic*, 514a-520a) likened education to the liberation of prisoners physically bound in a cave and intellectually captivated by *doxa*, the shadowy opinions projected onto the cave wall by mysterious puppeteers. Education, in this allegory, is described as the liberation of prisoners by an anonymous teacher, who forces a prisoner to stand up, ascend out of the cave, and see what is real by the true light of day. A *dialectical* education is subsequently described as the condition for such a liberation and the understanding of the true and the good. It further describes education as a form of "play" that asks its students to look again, in a spirit of wonder, at assumptions or prejudices that seem obvious to others (see also *Phaedo*, 96e; *Theaetetus*, 185b).

There must also be underlying and shared objects of inquiry around which dialogue between interlocutors occurs. In Plato's corpus, these objects are typically described as *eide* or *forms*. In the dialogue *Parmenides* (Plato, 1997), the character of Parmenides himself admits that despite the complexity and contradictions of any theory about such forms, to deny their existence is to preclude the possibility of understanding anything at all and "destroy the power of dialogue" (135c).

Finally, Plato reasserts his teacher's ethical commitments to dialogue and inquiry. For instance, in the *Meno*, Socrates argues that engaging in dialogue and inquiry "makes us better and braver and less lazy" (Plato, 1997, 86c), while the *Republic* is a prolonged discussion designed to argue that justice entails inquiring into the human soul and its arrangement in a good life.

In sum, from these passages, five themes can be identified in relation to the meaning of dialogue as an educational pedagogy. First, the purpose of dialogue is not argumentation or debate, and it is not agonistic. In its ideal form at least, it is as an activity conducted in a spirit of friendship in which interlocutors try to use terms that are familiar and comprehensible to all involved and that moves toward shared understanding. This might mean eschewing technical vocabulary or trying to outwit or enlighten interlocutors from a position of authority or expertise. Rather, in dialogue, participants are open to learning from one another.

Second, the primary responsibility of a discussion facilitator is to provide opportunities for participants' active engagement, thought, and speech. They do this by taking a position of openness in which they suspend their own authority and perceived expertise and provide interlocutors with opportunities to discuss, evaluate, and find that they themselves are capable of beautiful things. Third, practice in this kind of dialogical activity is tied to silent thought and making judgments for oneself, and the role of a dialectical education is a kind of liberation from received opinion and directed toward individual and shared understanding of what is true and good. Fourth, the foundation of such dialectical education is found in the shared inquiry and reflection made possible by intelligible forms that interlocutors seek as they talk with one another. Finally, dialogue has a normative role in reflection, judgment, and determining a good life.

Contemporary Research into the Dynamics of Classroom Talk

To improve a college instructor's understanding and strategic use of dialogic teaching, it is important to first situate it within the contemporary practices and prejudices that inform the current horizons of classroom talk. Therefore, an understanding of dialogue in contemporary schooling must attempt to convey what is unique about it amidst the manifold ways that classroom communication is used. It is against the background of classroom communication patterns that as a formative researcher, I will contextualize my intervention. This intervention, Facilitated Participant-Centered Dialogue (FPCD), is based on Gadamer's (2004) ontologically oriented *hermeneutic dialogue*, its purpose, and the barriers that might impede it. Nevertheless, the intervention also borrows from other principles and strategies associated with other forms of dialogic pedagogy as described in the review of literature below.

For at least half a century, the study of classroom communication and efforts to reform the way teachers talk with students has been an area of inquiry. Research into forms of classroom discourse arose due to concerns about the structure and significance of talk exchanges. Scholars considered whether traditional teacher-centered didactic instruction, in which students remained largely passive receptacles of other's knowledge, was best serving student learning; or on the other hand, did student learning and development require students who were more actively engaged in thinking and participation in classroom talk? Early investigations into the importance of student talk for learning and achievement were conducted in 1970's by scholars such as Courtney Cazden (Cazden et al., 1972) in the United States and Douglas Barnes (Barnes et al., 1971) in the United Kingdom.

Cazden et al. (1972, 1988) believed that in order to improve teaching and learning, research needed to focus on understanding the different ways that language functioned in the

classroom and in other significant social contexts that informed the lives of students—such as their own families and communities. In order to guide students into more active engagement, participation, and thought, Cazden et al.’s research pointed toward the importance of using students’ family and cultural backgrounds in developing classroom instruction. In other words, it became apparent that while a teacher’s classroom talk was often used to establish control and convey the curriculum, it could also be used to invite students into learning using words and ideas that were already familiar to them.

Barnes (1976) described learning as floating on a sea of talk and asked what kind of talk and learning occurred in classrooms and what kind of talk best promoted learning. Teachers used talk not just when attending to the content of what was taught, but also in managing classroom social relations to effectively promote learning. Barnes found that learning could best occur through engaged students (rather than passive ones) who actively constructed new information and built new models of the world on their existing ideas. The flexibility of talk allowed students to try on ideas in order to improve their understanding. Barnes investigated student small group work and identified “exploratory talk” (rather than teacher lecture or presentation) as a model of student-centered knowledge construction that promoted active learning, trying out ideas, risk-taking, and thinking together: “In exploratory talk, the speaker is more concerned with sorting out his or her own thoughts” (Barnes, 1976, p. 4).

Edwards and Furlong (1978) also published detailed studies of teacher-student classroom talk interactions in order to demonstrate how the social organization of classroom instruction inevitably shaped school learning. These authors observed that while on the surface teacher-student exchanges differed across classrooms with some teachers seeming to engage in more interactive talk with their students, nearly all of this talk was in a highly authoritative

transmission-style teaching. They found “a basic structure of centrally controlled interactions and centrally managed meanings” (p. 147) that teachers used as a “coping strategy” (p. 149) to maintain order and authority in the classroom. Therefore, these authors believed that patterns in classroom interaction needed to become an object of educator self-reflection. They also noted that, in general, the pace and oftentimes rush of classroom events made it difficult for teachers to reflect and break out of pedagogical routines that were ineffective for student deeper learning.

By the mid-1970’s, researchers had initiated empirical studies to examine how student and teacher talk patterns affected both engagement and achievement (Bernstein, 1975; Heath, 1983; Wells, 1978). According to Mercer & Dawes (2014), this work brought about an understanding of the importance of classroom talk exchanges and led to criticism of teachers who only asked closed questions—or those for which the teacher knew the only correct answer. Such classroom talk left students passive in a way that was not advantageous for learning, as detailed next.

Initiation-Response-Evaluation (I-R-E) Pattern of Classroom “Discussion” and Intervention Responses

Early efforts to study classroom talk were often efforts to understand communication as it existed in classrooms governed by conditions of mass schooling and how that communication was directed toward certain ends. Early empirical studies also contributed to understanding the dynamics of talk exchanges in classrooms managed by long-standing traditionally teacher-centered pedagogical practices. These early studies were not yet, however, aimed toward developing specific types of dialogical practices, such as a hermeneutically oriented dialogue.

In the process of analyzing classroom talk during the 1970’s and 1980’s, important dynamics of power and authority were uncovered. Researchers became aware that classroom talk

was mired in a form of exchange between teachers and students that was identified as “Initiation-Response-Evaluation” (Cazden, 1988; Edwards & Furlong, 1978; Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). This exchange pattern, I-R-E, was characterized by teachers asking a question, students attempting a response, and teachers evaluating that response. This form of classroom talk bore little resemblance to shared dialogue and thinking (Burbules, 1993; Mercer & Dawes, 2014; Nystrand et al., 2003; Wells, 2007). In fact, teachers nearly always asked questions about which they already knew the answers; they simply wanted their students to respond correctly based on knowledge that had been taught or recently presented in books or lectures. In other words, even when talk was oriented specifically toward learning, it was managed and controlled by the teacher in a way that disempowered student thinking and intellectual initiative. Such patterns stifled participation and engagement, demotivated students, and curtailed deeper learning (Cazden, 1988; Edwards & Furlong, 1978; Wells, 1999, 2006).

The Absence of Student Participation and Dialogue in Higher Education

It comes as no surprise that the same teacher-centered patterns appeared in college classrooms. The continued prevalence of I-R-E discourses in secondary education (see Alexander, 2001; Lefstein, 2009; Mehan, 1998; Nystrand et al., 2003; Reznickskaya, 2013; Skidmore, 2006; Wells, 2007) could well affect student behavior in college classrooms. This may be because certain habits of participation have been de facto inculcated and made to seem normative to students. For example, Nunn (1996) described college classroom learning as a “spectator sport.... with little time spent in discussion and only a few students involved” (p. 243). She believed that college classrooms were even less discussion-based than in secondary education, with professors’ talk taking 80% of class time in all courses.

Further, participation in college classrooms is typically dominated by a few students

(Crombie et al., 2003; Fritschner, 2000; Howard & Henney, 1998; Nunn, 1996). Karp and Yoels (1976) described what they called a *consolidation of responsibility*, finding that a few students make 50%-75% of exchanges with the instructor. Likewise, Howard et al., (1996) and Howard & Henney (1998) found that approximately five students make nearly 90% of all exchanges. West and Pearson (1994) found there was an average of only 3.6 student questions per hour. They asserted that teachers are actually the “professional question askers in the classroom” (p. 306).

In a literature review of studies on student participation in higher education, Rocca (2010) found that classroom discussion and group work have been linked to increased engagement (Cohen, 1991), motivation (Junn, 1994), critical thinking (Crone, 1997; Garside, 1996), improved communication (Berdine, 1986; Dancer & Kamvounias, 2005), and civic democratic skills (Girgin & Stevens, 2005). However, Rocca (2008, 2010) also found several reasons for low student participation. These included logistical matters such as class size, seating arrangement, course policies and type, media use, teacher behavior and expectations, and gender differences. Several researchers reported lack of confidence and classroom apprehension as major factors for low student participation (Armstrong & Boud, 1983; Fritschner, 2000; Rocca, 2008; Weaver & Qi, 2005). These authors observed, “students may feel intimidated or afraid of appearing inadequate in front of their classmates, and thus choose not to participate even though they realize the importance of participation” (Rocca, 2008, p.191). Confidence has frequently been rated by students as having the strongest impact on their participation (Fassinger, 1995a,b; Rocca, 2010; Wade, 1994; Weaver & Qi, 2005).

Teachers’ behaviors and the ways in which they establish a classroom climate have also strongly influenced student participation (Fritschner, 2000; Karp & Yoels, 1976; Rocca, 2008, 2010; Wade, 1994). Professors who demonstrated a lack of interest or respect, and criticize or

dismiss student ideas, negatively affected student participation. A more supportive classroom climate that fosters care and respect is more conducive to participation (Crombie et al., 2003; Dallimore et al., 2004; Fassinger, 2000; Hyde & Ruth, 2000; Mottet et. Al., 2004). One would expect such affective factors (confidence, anxiety, intimidation, and feelings of inadequacy) to present significant barriers to students feeling willing and able to participate in dialogue—and therefore also inhibit learning.

Bakhtinian Dialogism and Monologic Discourses

In order to improve the understanding and facilitation of classroom talk, it is also important to note that many contemporary scholars have identified Bakhtin's distinction between dialogic and monologic discourses as a foundational theoretical approach (e.g., Burbules, 1993; Matusov, 2015; Nystrand, 1997; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 1999, 2006; Wegerif, 2008, 2011). Importantly, monologic discourse is not quite a monologue. A monologue is typically described as a long, often tedious speech, conducted by a single person. Bakhtin's monologic discourse, however, might include other speakers, but all authority and knowledge are vested in a single figure, such as a teacher (although, for students, a monologic discourse might also be equally tedious). A monologic discourse would then appear as a pseudo-dialogue, or one in which only the knowledge or opinion of the leader mattered. In contrast, a *dialogic* pedagogy would be one that recognized many voices and did not vest knowledge in the authority of a single speaker. In order to better understand this theoretical context of a dialogic pedagogy, a brief foray into the thought of Bakhtin is necessary.

Bakhtin (1990; 2010) elevated dialogue to ontology (the nature of being or existence) with his claim that our world is made through dialogue. We are always already caught up in the omnipresent flow of open-ended and living dialogue; thus, it is an essential feature of all shared

human life. Human beings are responsible moral agents in that they live amidst the diversity of others and their voices. They express themselves through a “*word*” or an “*utterance*” in relationship with others and the cultural world in which they find themselves; consequently, all of our speech is, in some way, what Bakhtin (2010) calls “responsive” (p. 69). Further, every human being is situated in a specific historical time and place that has been formed through a long and continuous series of discourses. These words of others (*heteroglossia*) reflect the many (*polyphonic*) voices that make up our current world of lived discourse (Bakhtin, 2010, 2013).

In other words, our world is formed by thought and speech; it is *dialogic*. Dialogue, therefore, is essential because in it, human beings attempt to make sense out of the words and ideas received from others. They live and act within a cultural and historical inheritance and they must respond to it dialogically, through their own living speech and thought, as they build a coherent and meaningful life with others. Therefore, the fundamental disposition of someone engaging in dialogue is an *openness* to the possibilities provided in the expressions of others. This open disposition is a key feature of dialogue as understood in this research.

However, set against a polyphony of discourses and meanings, Bakhtin (2010) argued there are always historical and ideological centripetal forces at work that seek to unify these discourses into “correct language” that guarantees “a certain maximum of mutual understanding” (p. 271). This tendency to socially unify and centralize language is an effort to stabilize “one language of truth” and the “canonization of ideological systems” (Bakhtin, 2010, p. 271). Unfortunately, the *monologic* voice ignores the reality of living in a “contradictory and multi-linguaged world” (p. 275).

Likewise, the texts and the utterances of others can be expressed in two modes—one monological and the other dialogical. In a monologic mode, discourses and texts are closed: “the

speaker's or writer's text assumes no expectation of a rejoinder; all that is required is comprehension and acceptance...a text treated in this way is by nature authoritative, not open to question or alternative perspectives" (Wells, 2007, p. 256). A *dialogical* text or utterance, on the other hand, is open to a response from the other in acts of thinking together, interpretation, or perspective taking. In the monologic mode, authoritative discourses convey what is to be valued and accepted, while in dialogism, it is assumed that many perspectives are presented as worthy of examination and discussion. In this dialogical mode, thinking and judgment occur because individuals are not passively receiving authoritative utterances, but rather, they are hearing a diversity of perspectives and considering what is an "internally persuasive discourse" (Bakhtin, 1991, p. 345). In this case, the text or utterance becomes a *thinking device* (Lotman, 1988); another concept that will be essential in this research.

Matusov (2009) describes an internally persuasive discourse (IPD) as one when an individual is "aware of someone else's voice shaping our words" and finds them persuasive because they are "dialogically tested and forever testable" (p. 179). A dialogic mode respects and promotes the freedom and autonomy of the individual rather than falling into the external and coercive imposition of values by another (Bakhtin, 2010, 2013; Matusov, 2015; Wells, 2006). Therefore, if students can be invited to participate in dialogue, and take up the opportunity to do so, they are legitimately on a path to recognizing their own voices and learning to make judgments for themselves.

Martin Nystrand was an early proponent of applying Bakhtinian theory to classroom dialogue. Skidmore writes (2006) that Nystrand's work showed:

Choices made by the teacher can influence the conditions for learning established in the classroom, and in particular that the teacher does exert a measure of control on the structure and organization of classroom discourse...the teacher can orient

towards controlling what knowledge is produced, or towards structuring the activities through which students produce knowledge. (p. 505)

Bakhtin's theory of dialogism describes, more broadly perhaps, the psychological and social rationales that underlie the control of "official" knowledge and the routinization of I-R-E discourse patterns. The use of monologic modes may be appropriate in transmitting information, conveying specific knowledge, or helping students develop particular skills. However, Bakhtin reminds us of the potential costs to shared discourses and the possibilities this allows students, such as the ability to make meaning on their own, hear a diversity of perspectives, cooperate with others, evaluate arguments and refine their own judgment, and recognize that the *correct* answer is not always the *final* answer.

In the context of a classroom, a teachers' individual use of monologic forms of discourse can have the effect of freezing out classroom dialogue and making students merely recipients of knowledge and information. The habitual control of knowledge, discourse, and thinking during the many years of students' formal schooling might have the effect of making students unmotivated and passive learners in institutional cultures that tend toward centralized systems, standards and assessment, and forms of monologism (Lefstein, 2010; Skidmore, 2006; Wells, 2001, 2004, 2006).

Such institutional forms and inveterate patterns of classroom talk likely make the development of more dialogical practices a formidable task in this research. The possibility of establishing conditions for classroom dialogue, the goal of this research, opens an opportunity for students to participate in dialogue and the ongoing discourses that make up their contemporary world—and therefore take their place as autonomous moral agents.

Understanding The Role of Others in Maximizing Classroom Discussions

In any dialogic pedagogy, it is important to understand the significant role that others must play in teaching and learning. In particular, learning through dialogue is possible through another's skillful facilitation; an educator must understand how to lead inquiry into a subject matter, but also the social conditions in which it is likely to unfold. This includes developing and maintaining a social context in which students themselves can develop, over time, the understanding and disposition to participate in it. Research informed by social theories of learning and sociocultural theory have focused on the ways in which talk has been used as a tool for teachers and their students to co-construct meaning and share authority in support of student development and thinking (Bruner, 1990; Mercer, et al., 1999; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1980; Wells, 1999; Wertsch, 1993).

Bruner and Dewey both saw social interaction as foundational to learning and development. Bruner (2020), influenced by Vygotsky, argues that one of the central contemporary views of the mind is that it is formed by human *culture*. The symbols and tools of culture allow human beings to make meaning, engage in acts of interpretation, and organize their thoughts and communities amid the ambiguities of life. Like Bakhtin (2010, 2013) and Gadamer (2004), Bruner (2020) asserts that we cannot carry out our own individual quest for meaning; rather, humans make meaning of our lives and the world through communication with others in living cultures. Accordingly, Bruner (2009) asserted the importance of student engagement in constructing their own knowledge and that knowing is a process, not a product (1966). He believed that interesting materials should be a focus for promoting learning, and that motivation must be engaged for students to prevent their passivity.

Likewise for Dewey (1923, 1986), learning occurs in social interaction that is connected to experience occurring in the actual conditions of life. He viewed the dialogic process as an all-

encompassing social phenomenon in which people build community. Dialogue is the “glue that binds the social group together in spite of the differing interests of the members” (Evans, 2001, page 773). Therefore, his democratic view of education was not simply to make students memorize and recite information transmitted by a teacher, but rather to teach students how to develop what he referred to as critical intelligence. This was guided by the open disposition of the teacher facilitating inquiry, and whose goal was to encourage students how to think (Dewey, 2022) versus what to think. Dewey believed that education is essentially social and that a classroom, and by extension a school, should be a community of shared activities. The teacher facilitates learning “in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute something” (Dewey, 1986, p. 23) and thereby develops a classroom built on dialogue and social interaction. Such a (progressive) teacher relinquishes some of her own authority and knowledge in order to make room for student freedom and thinking.

The work of scholars such as Bruner and Dewey point us toward adopting a point of view in which the social context, or a cultural point of view, is foundational for education. They argue that the mind, human development, cognition, and critical intelligence are built through free and open interactions with others. This social or cultural view of learning, adopted in this study, brings into focus questions of how the interactions involved in schooling, and culture more broadly, can contribute to the development of more dialogically-oriented individuals. Such individuals would have the potential to communicate in order to: a) actively engage in forms of learning that improved achievement; b) work together to develop critical awareness toward removing sources of injustice and oppression; c) participate in democratic deliberation and decision-making; and finally, d) live out their human potential by freely and openly using their

own minds and voices. But all of this assumes instructors have found a way to support students in feeling willing and able to participate.

Sociocultural Theory and the Social Practice of Developing Classroom Dialogue

Following the foundational influence of Lev Vygotsky, researchers and theorists have also been guided by a belief that the social experience of language use is formative in individual cognition. Sociocultural theory provides significant insights in justifying the two pedagogical goals for this formative study, how those goals might be achieved, and the obstacles that might impede progress towards them. Vygotsky built on Marx's dialectical idea that individuals shape and are shaped by the material (historical, economic, and cultural) circumstances in which they are born (Daniels, 2001; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Wells, 1999). According to Vygotsky (1980, 2012), language is a psychological and cultural "tool" for reasoning and development. "Through engagement in dialogue, children gain the psychological benefits of the historical and contemporary experience of their culture" (Mercer, 1999, p. 96). Research has progressively shown that more complex student language exchanges can shape student cognition (Bruner, 1990; Mercer, 1999; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1980; Wells, 1999; Wertsch, 1993).

Sociocultural theory conceives learning as socially constructed and intimately tied to the historical and cultural context in which it is developed (Daniels, 2016; Mercer, 2002; Rogoff, 1990; Wells, 1995; Wertsch, 2009). Therefore, who we are, how we speak and think, what we know, and what we are able to do are the result of the complex interactions of individuals in society—it is "culturally mediated." Vygotsky (1980) believed that individual development was the result of an internal incorporation of social activity. Others have also posited that we learn as a kind of affective, cultural, and cognitive apprenticeship (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002) in which "more knowledgeable others," or those with more experience and

knowledge in our communities, guide and teach through discussion and practice. Through this process, participants in the learning process gradually *internalize* the cognitive and affective understanding and habits needed to function effectively in social situations

Sociocultural theory informs developments such as Lave and Wenger's (1991) theory of Situated Learning. This emphasizes the need for learners to participate peripherally in communities of practice in order to gradually become full participants in the skillful activity and the knowledge of their communities. Wells (1999) envisioned *Communities of Inquiry* in which participants were willing, "to wonder, to ask questions, and to seek to understand by collaborating with others in the attempt to make answers to them" (p. 121). Mercer and Dawes (2011) developed a teaching model, *Thinking Together*, in which small groups of students used 'Exploratory Talk' and a set of ground rules to develop their thinking and learning. The use of inquiry in the form of exploratory talk, and the importance of the community as a socializing agent in developing dialogic habits and dispositions are important tenets of the current study. In each of the sociocultural theories described, the role of others and the socio-cultural context is understood as essential in individual learning and development.

I have also included sociocultural theory as fundamentally describing "how to" develop students' individual and shared capacity to engage in dialogue. Using it as a framework, one would say that successful classroom dialogue would require a "more knowledgeable other" (MKO) operating in a "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). Such a more knowledgeable other models and facilitates the skills and understanding needed for dialogue. Vygotsky (1980) defined the ZPD as, "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). In

other words, assistance should be provided to a student right at the point where she cannot quite manage on her own.

Mercer (2008) described the importance of the ways in which teachers guide student learning by drawing on shared knowledge in order to establish a common frame of reference, or a “referential perspective” (p. 4). Teachers also assist learning by relating students’ own understanding to the concepts and content of the curriculum (Mercer, 2008; Wells, 2000). In other words, assistance should be provided to a student in such a way that students cannot otherwise manage on their own—or as Socrates remarked in Plato’s *Meno*, in a spirit of friendship using words *understood by the other* (as quoted previously in this chapter).

Just as a parent may provide some initial guidance, careful assessment, and a steady hand in teaching her child to ride a bike, a successful dialogic teacher will need to carefully attend to student skills and group dynamics in order to support the development of conditions needed for dialogue. I have relied on sociocultural theory to indicate the need that any development of classroom dialogue *must be a facilitated and participant-centered social practice*. Sociocultural theories and research such as Wells’ (1999) *Communities of Inquiry*, Lave and Wenger’s (1991) *Situated Learning*, and Mercer’s (2011) *Thinking Together* have, therefore, all informed my views on developing dialogue as a social practice led by an experienced facilitator.

Further, I propose that practicing participating in a social context under the guidance of a more knowledgeable other would be a condition for the growth of the kinds of understanding and self-regulation that make dialogue possible. If students had opportunities for dialogic practice in schooling through carefully planned and facilitated interactions, they might carry such understanding into adulthood. If, however, such opportunities were not provided, and classroom communication was primarily monological, the disposition and understanding underlying

dialogue might not have the opportunity to develop (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Lefstein, 2010; Mercer, 2008; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 2007).

While sociocultural theory provides insight into some of the reasons why it might be difficult to develop dialogue in schools and society more generally, it also offers a possible remedy. Education is a particularly formative social setting in which children are raised and developed (Wells, 1999, 2000, 2007). Accordingly, the kinds of cognitive development that students would need to successfully participate together in dialogue might not simply arise naturally unless social conditions fostered it, nor would it arise in contexts that were rooted in transmission-based instruction.

Sociocultural Barriers to Classroom Dialogue

Understanding dialogic development in terms of an underlying need for social practice helps clarify why years of habituated patterns of I-R-E interaction might ossify monologic and authoritative approaches to teaching and learning while simultaneously stunting the skills needed for dialogue (Daniels, 2016; Mercer, 2008; Moll, 1992). Wells (2006) recognized that when individuals schooled in monologic discourse patterns attempt to participate in a dialogue, they may not have the ability to listen, consider other perspectives, regulate their reactions, cooperate, or build toward shared understanding (see also Wells, 1999, 2006, 2007). Furthermore, Wells believed that social inequities, oppression, “banking” or transmission models of instruction, competition and associated antagonisms and tensions, and externally prescribed curricula were connected to an absence of intrinsic motivation in classrooms today. All such factors are significant barriers to developing classroom dialogue and obstacles likely to be encountered in this research. Likewise, proponents of emancipatory dialogue (Freire, 1996; Giroux, 1988; hooks, 2014) have pointed out the way the banking method of instruction reproduces social

inequalities and clouds critical consciousness, while proponents of democratic dialogue have argued that traditional instruction makes students passive—and reduces learning to “animal training” (Dewey, 1997; p. 51). For my own dialogic framework, an ontological or hermeneutic approach, the absence of inquiry and conversation with others is a barrier to seeing beyond one’s own limited horizon of understanding, or even recognizing that such a finite horizon exists for each of us.

Sociocultural theory, rooted in Vygotsky’s work, has often focused primarily on supporting *cognitive* development in the young through social interaction with an adult or peers who could guide learning. But classroom dialogue is also deeply interconnected with affective dimensions of teaching and learning; it is my belief that promoting classroom engagement and participation is more heavily reliant on the affective conditions that exist in the classroom and are sometimes overlooked. Therefore, when I turn to the justification of pedagogical goal 2 which focuses on improving students’ dialogic participation, I will position affective principles that are intimately integrated in the “how to” of promoting dialogic engagement and participation in the framework of sociocultural practice.

Instructional Approaches to Promote More Student-Centered Classroom Dialogue

The prevalence and deficits of I-R-E exchanges and monologic discourse patterns in modern schooling prompted a generation of research into how to change the kind of talk that occurred in classrooms. Over the past thirty years, a multitude of instructional approaches designed to promote more classroom dialogue have been developed. Each of these approaches share some common dialogic features, but also vary, sometimes widely, in goals and practices. Next, I briefly describe ten of the most prominent research interventions and then integrate features of these research initiatives into three genres of pedagogy associated with dialogue in

education. These genres serve to illuminate that varieties of classroom dialogue, while often sharing many essential characteristics, can also be used toward different educational goals—and sometimes values or strategies associated with these goals might be in tension.

Reciprocal Teaching (Palincsar & Brown, 1984) was designed to promote reading engagement and comprehension through dialogue between teachers and students. Students learned to lead discussions on texts through *questioning, clarifying, summarizing, and predicting* what they have read. The teacher’s role in facilitating discussions and making meaning from texts is reduced over time as students become more adept at using these strategies. These strategies were found to promote active student engagement and participation in classroom learning.

Next, Barnes (1976) identified *exploratory talk* as a particular kind of open-ended and inquiry-based mode of classroom discourse. During exploratory talk, students tried out new ideas, conversed with one another, took risks, and became active in the learning process—in essence, student speakers “sort out their own thoughts” (p. 4). He juxtaposed this kind of classroom discourse with *presentational talk*, in which the teacher focused on what she perceived as the needs of her students; in this kind of discourse, the teacher avoided the confusion of shared exploration, but, in the process, she also lessened the active engaged thinking and dialogue of her students.

A third scholar, Nystrand (1997), proposed that teachers and students could collaboratively negotiate learning and shape understanding through conversation in practice known as *Dialogic Instruction*. These dialogic conversations were characterized by “authentic” or open-ended questions that did not have prespecified answers determined by the teacher.

Large-scale research conducted by Gamoran and Nystrand (1992) showed that such open-ended discussion improved academic achievement in English classes.

To show more generally that classroom dialogic pedagogy mediated the co-construction of learning and knowledge, Wells (1999) adopted a sociocultural approach he termed *Dialogic Inquiry*. Wells too emphasized the role of shared inquiry and open-ended discussion in dialogues that assisted students in appropriating the language and concepts of schooling - and culture more generally.

Mercer's (2000) *Thinking Together* project also worked within a sociocultural framework. Mercer's research expanded an understanding of the benefits of exploratory talk (Barnes, 1976) and contrasted it with the detrimental nature of *disputational talk* (argumentative and competitive) and *cumulative talk* (uncritical sharing and agreement) to characterize prominent modes of classroom discourse. *Thinking Together* emphasized teacher modeling of exploratory inquiry and talk patterns to small groups of students, who then used exploratory talk to develop their own thinking and learning through curriculum-based activities.

Another intervention, known as *Dialogic Teaching* (Alexander, 2008), was designed to enhance student engagement and learning through repertoires of classroom discourse and five essential pedagogical principles. These principles characterized dialogic pedagogy as essentially *collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative, and purposeful*. In one large-scale study from 2014-2016, Alexander (2018) found that after 20 weeks, elementary students in the Dialogic Teaching group performed more than two months ahead of their control-group peers on standardized tests in English, mathematics, and science.

Resnick et al. (2000) introduced still another dialogic pedagogy known as *Accountable Talk*, a process through which students learned that the quality of their talk was important for

learning. Accordingly, Wolf, Crossen, and Resnick (2005) explained that students must learn to engage in structured classroom dialogue with clear standards in order to improve reading comprehension; their talk must be *accountable to the learning community* (following guidelines in assisting others' learning and showing respect), *accountable to accurate knowledge* (providing correct information), and *accountable to rigorous thinking* (thinking logically and providing explanations and justifications for one's thinking). In this study, the *Accountable Talk* intervention provided evidence that discussions emphasizing listening, questioning others, and linking talk moves were positively correlated with improving the rigor of students' reading comprehension.

Taking a slightly different perspective, *Collaborative Reasoning* (CR) was introduced as an instructional method for elementary school students to participate in small group discussions about complex humanistic or moral questions related to an engaging text (Waggoner et al., 1995). Building on the work in CR, Reznitskaya and Anderson (2008) identified *argument schema*, or generalizable elements of rational argument, that can be acquired through students having opportunities for dialogic practice. In *Inquiry Dialogue* (Reznitskaya & Wilkinson, 2017), students developed argumentation skills (i.e., giving perspectives, learning to speak clearly, providing reasons, and using logical validity) to engage in dialogue about controversial issues derived from texts. They did so in order to develop the ability to openly find more reasonable judgments or answers through rational argument.

Finally, Matusov (2009) eschewed consideration of dialogue as just one form of instruction, a specific pedagogical form, or a particular intervention. Rather, drawing on Bakhtin's (2010, 2013) work, Matusov argued that learning and education were always dialogic because teachers and students are always already involved in dialogic relations and, thus,

meaning is inherently dialogic. He saw this as a “pluralistic dialogic approach” and asserted that a dialogic education “is a critical examination of life, self, and the world” (Matusov, 2015, p. E2). The role of an educator in this approach is to critically reflect on all knowledge, opinions, and values in order to develop intellectual autonomy.

Lefstein (2010) pointed out that dialogue is promoted for a number of purposes, including: improving learning, building the skills needed in a democracy, improving intercultural understanding, empowering the oppressed, and improving reasoning skills. Yet, why he wonders, do classrooms remain teacher-centered and mired in I-R-E exchanges. He believed that dialogue had been unfortunately idealized and that ideal models of dialogue were “inimical” (p. 183) for classroom practice in authentic spaces. He argued that instead, dialogue should be understood as a situated practice full of competing and intersecting tensions (interpersonal, institutional, ideational, epistemological) that educators must confront; furthermore, they must address these problems, sometimes by accepting significant trade-offs, in the realities of contemporary schooling settings.

Over the past 50 years, the motivation of researchers and practitioners to improve student learning, in both secondary and higher education, has resulted in at least three concurrently-running and primary genres of pedagogy associated with dialogue in education. All of these pedagogies are “student-centered” even as they appropriate dialogic practices for distinct ends. Thus, for example, educators and researchers might choose to use dialogue to empower students to: use their own thoughts and voices in developing habits of sound argumentation (Anderson et al. 2001; Fisher, 2007; Reznitskaya, et al. 2012), improve important academic skills such as effective writing (Nystrand, 1989; Nystrand et al., 1993), improve reading comprehension (Lin et al., 2012; Waggoner et al. 1995), improve literacy skills (Applebee et al., 2003; Nystrand, 1997),

liberate themselves from systems of oppression (Freire, 1996), or even advance democratic skills and values (Fielding, 2004, 2007). All of these *student-centered* dialogic pedagogies are motivated by a desire to support students as active and engaged participants who are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning. In dialogue, students actively share in the collaborative construction or interpretation of meaning. Far from maintaining authority over knowledge in a monologic mode, proponents of dialogic pedagogies believe that students learn socially through interaction with others.

Three Genres of Dialogic Pedagogy

It is important for an educator facilitating dialogue to understand that not all dialogic theories or interventions have the same practices or goals. Instead, dialogue might not be united by a single idea but may be held together or related to one another by overlapping similarities, or what Wittgenstein (2010) described as *family resemblances*. These visions of dialogue are naturally directed at different goals and forms of achievement. For the purposes of this review, I have characterized these into three genres of dialogue.

1. ***Instrumental dialogue.*** The research and practice related to instrumental dialogue sees it as an application needed to improve teaching and student learning in schools, particularly with regard to demonstrable achievements or outcomes. Instrumentalist dialogue is prominent in educational research as the attempt to provide evidence and justification for the value of dialogue in schools that are already the sites of conflicting demands and complex pressures. Recent efforts have investigated the specific benefits of dialogue from this lens; this includes, for example, showing its effectiveness in improving oracy (Mercer et al., 2017), thinking together (Wegerif et al., 2017), subject knowledge (O'Connor et al., 2017), or reasoning (Anderson et al., 2001; Kuhn et al. 1997; Mercer et

al, 2004; Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991; Reznitskaya et al., 2009). Promoting student achievement is an important goal of dialogue, and developing the skills associated with dialogue are also important (e.g. clarifying, summarizing, reasoning, argumentation). However, from my perspective, when an educator uses dialogue in order to achieve certain academically desirable skills or knowledge, the emphasis on inquiry and *openness* required of all participants in order to *develop* dialogue may be absent.

2. **Emancipatory dialogue.** Proponents of emancipatory dialogue (Freire, 1996, 2021; Shor, 2012) see the need for individuals to use their own thoughts and voices in freeing themselves from oppressive conditions; they do this through developing “critical consciousness” (Freire, 2021). From this perspective, dialogue can also be a tool for critical reflection that can identify and eliminate systems causing oppression and create more just social conditions for all (Darder, 2017; Giroux, 1988; hooks, 2014; McClaren, 2015). Such advocates of emancipatory dialogue point out at least two important issues related to classroom dialogue. First, it can present a veneer of liberal tolerance without actually transforming social oppression and injustice. Second, it does not guarantee that all voices will be heard or that all participants will be treated with the dignity and respect to which they are entitled in liberating themselves from oppressive conditions. In fact, the perspectives of some participants might be subsumed beneath the privilege of purported neutral and dominant rationalist discourses. Ellsworth (1989), for instance, believed that critical pedagogy and dialogue can be “repressive myths” (p. 298) insofar as they serve to reproduce oppressive conditions in the classroom. Likewise, Boler (2004), in advocating for an affirmative action pedagogy, sees it as necessary to create what she calls “unreal spaces” (p. 5) that do not reflect current social realities. This may necessitate silencing or

ostracizing ideas or students that reflect privilege, hegemony, or oppressive views.

Overall, the use of dialogue in identifying and eliminating sources and systems of injustice and oppression are admittedly essential in education today. However, from my perspective, when an educator takes up a monologic or authoritative position in supporting these worthwhile goals, it may curtail opportunities for students, and the class as a whole, to develop and engage in inquiry and open dialogue that respects the limited horizon of each and every participant.

3. ***Democratic or deliberative dialogue.*** The democratic ideal of education has been espoused prominently by Dewey (1923, 1986), and more recently by scholars such as Gutmann (1999) and Levinson (1999, 2012). They view dialogue as necessary for living in pluralistic and democratic societies where there are competing values, opinions, and notions of what constitutes the public good. Dewey (1923), for example, saw democracy as a social phenomenon, rather than just a political one, and believed that dialogue promoted thinking, listening, deliberation, respect, compromising, and making reasoned judgments. Such habits were essential in building and binding together democratic communities and education was instrumental in producing these habits. The objective of supporting students in acquiring the skills needed to engage in deliberative dialogue is essential in building a democratic society for tomorrow. Such students learn to share perspectives, evaluate arguments, and negotiate differences; they are not taught “what to think ” but “how to think” in order to work together (Dewey, 1923, 2022). However, this study does not insist that the purpose of dialogue is specifically directed toward political ends—to learn, for instance, to exchange and weigh opinions of competing current public interest and action. Rather, the present study attempts to help the educator see dialogue as

a way to promote participant inquiry and openness, and thereby develop the conditions in which each and every student is willing and able to share, learn from “the other,” and expand their understanding from their own, potentially limited, horizon.

From my perspective, each of these three genres of dialogic pedagogy is characterized by important goals. In line with instrumental views, dialogue can and should be used to help develop the skills and knowledge determined by educators and the educational community—and this research contributes to these ends. Further, aspects of emancipatory dialogue can and should also be used to excavate sources of oppression that result in awareness and social action toward a more just and equitable society; this will be absolutely essential in a course on education and social justice. And third, dialogue can and should be used to develop the skills and understanding of deliberative and democratic citizenship in a pluralistic democratic society—a significant goal for a course on social justice in which students with potentially competing conceptions of themselves and the good must learn to study, work, and live together.

However, the intervention designed for this study focuses primarily on an ontological interpretation of dialogue, as further described below. This is because whether the final goal of learning is a particular branch of knowledge, academic skills or competency in a particular vocation field, forms of critical social awareness, or politically valuable skills, the underlying dialogical starting point is the opportunity for each and every student to participate in their own affective and cognitive development—to *acquire a disposition to listen, hold oneself open to others, recognize the values and prejudices of one’s own horizons, expand one’s understanding, and treat others with respect and care.*

A New Approach to Dialogue

The present study, while appreciating and borrowing from these three genres of student-centered dialogic pedagogy, espouses an ontological approach to dialogue, particularly by adopting the hermeneutic vision of understanding as argued by Gadamer (2004). Hermeneutics is a developing approach to research in a variety of fields, such as: the health professions (Gadamer, 2018; Hovey & Massfeller, 2012; Hovey & Craig, 2011), nursing (Austgard, 2012; Fleming et al., 2003; ; Hovey et al., 2020), psychology (Klinge et al., 2018; Martin & Sugarman, 2001; Slife & Christensen, 2013) and education (Fairfield, 2011; Galagher, 1992; Kerdeman, 1998). Proponents of hermeneutic or ontological dialogue see dialogue as constitutive of human life itself (Bakhtin, 2010, 2013; Buber, 1970; Gadamer, 2004; Wegerif, 2008, 2019). Gadamer (2004), for instance, refers to the “conversation that we ourselves are” (p. 378) and Bakhtin (2013) wrote that “to live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree. In this dialogue, a person participates wholly and throughout his life...and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life, into the world symposium” (p. 293).

As such, this study employed Gadamer’s (2004) hermeneutic dialogue, rooted in ancient Greek sources, as its guiding framework, even as it wove aspects of other dialogic genres into the FPCD intervention formally presented below. For instance, this hermeneutic approach shares with instrumental dialogue a commitment to a student-centered pedagogy that promotes student development through inquiry and reason in a social context. It undertakes, along with emancipatory dialogue, an effort to promote participants’ intellectual openness and liberation from the narrow set of inherited and unexamined opinions that often stunt their deeper understanding of themselves and their world. It shares with democratic dialogic pedagogies an approach to deliberation and shared understanding between persons in confronting problems through inquiry and discussion. Aligned with all of these dialogic pedagogies, the FPCD

intervention was designed to promote the significance of others in inquiry, collaboration, and reflection.

Hans Georg Gadamer: Framing Dialogue as Hermeneutic Conversation. The work of the 20th century German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer provided a deep and perspicacious description of the purpose and meaning of dialogue. Gadamer's work was rooted in Plato's dialectic and his dissertation, an interpretation of Plato's *Philebus* (Gadamer, 1983, 1986, 1991), remained closely tied to his work in classical interpretation. This study, and the intervention in particular, will be guided by Gadamer's reinterpretation of classical dialectic and his phenomenological understanding of dialogue as foundational in all human understanding (Gadamer, 1991, 2004; Gallagher, 1992; Malpas, 2018; Taylor, 2017).

As a student of Martin Heidegger (Malpas, 2018) working in the phenomenological tradition, Gadamer's (2004) development of hermeneutics, originally an art rooted in centuries-old textual study, described the conditions for the possibility of human understanding in general. Hermeneutics delineates the way in which we make sense of others' spoken or written expression through acts of interpretation. These acts are mediated through the "play" of language in open inquiry and dialogue around a subject matter. Through dialogue, we are able to broaden our horizons and improve our understanding of ourselves, others, and the world. This kind of understanding does not occur by simply engaging in lines of thought pre-determined and directed by a teacher, passively absorbing information transmitted to us, or memorizing facts. It occurs by openly interpreting the words of others and bringing them into a relation with our own horizon of understanding.

In the following sections, I will outline Gadamer's phenomenological description of the development of human understanding as an interpretive act that occurs through dialogue with

others. Consequently, in this study, it is important that the educator, serving as a facilitator of dialogue, understands that her role is not simply for students to acquire the knowledge she wishes to purvey, or take up intellectual positions in alignment with her own, but rather to assist them in expanding their own understanding from the horizon at which they stand. Further, in order for real dialogue to occur, many students may need to learn how to inquire, listen, and respond openly, and this may need to be modeled by the facilitator and practiced in the social context. Respecting students' own freedom and autonomy, and encouraging them to share with others in dialogue, also links with motivational factors as discussed in Pedagogical Goal #2. The following sketch will serve as my own guiding framework for supporting both the classroom instructor's understanding and facilitation of dialogue, and the students' interest in participating in it.

Gadamer's Rehabilitation of Prejudice as a "Pre-Judgment or Fore-Knowledge" and Implications for Classroom Dialogue. An important approach to understanding what is distinctive about hermeneutic dialogue is to begin with Gadamer's attempt to rehabilitate the notion of prejudice to some of its historic roots. In *Truth and Method* (2004), Gadamer pointed out that a *prejudice* was not something that needed to be stripped away in order for knowledge to be possible. A prejudice was a *pre-judgement*, a set of ideas, beliefs, and customs rooted in a given language and tradition. Just as making legal judgments required reference back to a body of case law, likewise, interpreting a text or understanding the words of another required previous knowledge and experience upon which to draw. Therefore, a foundation of pre-judgments is necessary for the development of understanding.

Prejudices are the result of our "*historically-effected consciousness*" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 336), and we all have prejudices because we are always immersed in language and history and

involved with others in a shared world. Therefore, Gadamer believed prejudices should be viewed as essential in the development of understanding, rather than as simply a stumbling block that needed to be eliminated; our partiality and prior involvement with the world enables us to have opportunities to expand our understanding through interpretive acts. Gadamer's project then was not to begin with a critique of our prejudices or methodological attempts to eliminate them, but to accept our fundamental finitude and insist on the importance of inquiry and openness. The only way out of narrow historical situatedness, he believed, was through recognizing that we each have a limited horizon and appreciating the importance of opening ourselves to questioning and other perspectives—whether that is in relationship to a text, other persons, or the world (Gadamer, 2004, 2008).

In terms of classroom dialogue, I begin with Gadamer's rehabilitation of the concept of prejudice. This means starting from the assumption that *everyone in the classroom discussion*, including their instructor and I, are historically-effected participants. We are all limited in our understanding of ourselves, one another, and the world, because we have all been “thrown” (Heidegger, 1962) into the history, language, culture, families, and tradition in which we find ourselves. This situatedness, while finite, is the building block for further growth and development. While some participants may have privileged understanding in particular areas, no one is so knowledgeable as to preclude the possibility of learning from others. Therefore, a precondition for hermeneutic dialogue is to help all participants understand that they should be open and available to learn from others. In the context of this study, this includes the instructor of the course, and me, as the researcher.

Gadamer's Notion of a Horizon and Implications for Classroom Dialogue.

According to Gadamer (2004), having a horizon includes whatever we can see from our current

position. But in order for this to happen, we can no longer simply be absorbed in the daily busyness of living out prevalent and unexamined prejudices; rather we must become actively aware of and recognize our own limited perspective. Gadamer (2004) wrote that:

A person who has no horizon does not see far enough and hence over-values what is nearest to him. On the other hand, “to have a horizon” means not being limited to what is nearby but being able to see beyond it. A person who has a horizon knows the relative significance of everything within his horizon. (p. 301)

Gadamer found it important to distinguish between two forms of understanding, both the product of our language and thinking: pre-reflective understanding (*Verstehen*), or “know-how,” and a deeper or genuine practical understanding (*Verstandigung*). Pre-reflective and practical understanding represents the general level of understanding that we all have as we learn to move about and navigate the world (Gadamer, 2004; Kerdeman, 2003).

The deeper sort of understanding occurs when we open our horizons and allow the ideas of another (text, opinion, person, work of art) to make some claim over us and potentially change our thinking through what Gadamer (2004) describes as a *fusion of horizons* (p. 305). This sort of hermeneutic reflective understanding allows us to call into question the very ideas and opinions upon which our prejudices are built and our own unexamined assumptions about ourselves and the world.

In this study, a goal of hermeneutic dialogue is to help participants understand that we each have a horizon of our own understanding. Thus, the goal is to recognize, through interaction with others, the outer edges of our own horizons of understanding and the finite range of our intellectual vision, as well as the limited possibilities for our own solitary thinking and reflection. Furthermore, in reflecting on our own limited understanding, we realize that we each stand in a liminal space between what is familiar and strange (Gallagher, 1992; Kerdeman, 1998, 2003;

Taylor, 2017). We can, through reflection and practice, learn to intentionally position ourselves there in conversation, taking up a position of openness and receptivity, while still appreciating that we have our own contributions to make. It is from this position that we recognize and respect our own and others' opportunities for the shared development of understanding.

A Theory of Hermeneutic Dialogue as Classroom Practice

For Gadamer, genuine reflective understanding is achieved through dialogue (Gadamer 1991, 2004, 2008). The basis of hermeneutic understanding consists in the shared willingness to inquire with others in dialogue about a subject matter. It is presupposed that those seeking to understand through dialogue, "are trying to recognize the full value of what is alien and opposed to them" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 388). But importantly, this subject matter, properly understood as the focus of understanding, exercises influence over those engaged in the learning community. The participants do not *construct* the knowledge, but rather the subject matter *transforms* the participants: "To reach an understanding in a dialogue is not merely a matter of putting oneself forward and successfully asserting one's own point of view, but being transformed into a communion in which we do not remain what we were" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 371).

For this purpose, taking an open position of inquiry is essential: "The path of all knowledge leads through the question. To ask a question means to bring into the open. The openness of what is in question consists in the fact that the answer is not settled" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 357). In hermeneutic dialogue, interlocutors orient themselves toward the truth of a subject matter which is at stake between them. They engage in an activity of giving and receiving accounts from their own horizons of understanding, in an effort to at least develop a shared frame of reference or a shared understanding, and at best come to some substantive agreement about the subject at hand (or learning content). Rather than simply resting in

difference or defending one's position, those engaged in a hermeneutic dialogue attempt to find a shared language that allows for deeper understanding and growth. For example, in a course on social justice and education, which is the context for dialogue in this study, this might involve recognizing the ways we exclude others, in our daily lives or in the context of the classroom discussion itself.

Gadamer (2004) likens hermeneutic dialogue to the activity involved in playing a game. In dialogue, as in a game, participants lose themselves in the play; they become actively involved and caught up in its guiding rules or structure. As in a game, participants submit themselves to the larger guiding structure that emerges in conversation about a subject matter, or text, or work of art. The "to and fro" of inquiry and dialogue, like the back and forth between players in a game, brings the subject matter to existence. This can culminate in the experience of an "event of truth" (Gadamer, 2004, pp. 112-113) through a "fusion of horizons" (p. 305). For a longer discussion of this "fusion of horizons", see Appendix A.

Key Principles Of Hermeneutic Dialogue Informing This Study.

Gadamer's conception of hermeneutic dialogue is rooted in and aligns with the traditional conception of dialogue as portrayed in the dialogues of Plato. Both are rooted in a sense of openness to the matter under discussion and respect for the views of others in realizing one's own limitations and coming to a deeper understanding about self, others, and the world (see also Matusov's [2015] formulation of dialogic pedagogy). Both see this form of shared inquiry as rooted in ethical goals of reflection and practice with others in trying to reach a shared language of understanding of the subject matter.

As such, six principles gleaned from the preceding discussion will inform efforts to implement hermeneutic dialogue in this study.

1. Dialogue is inquiry based around a subject matter.
2. Dialogue strives for an openness in which all participants can learn from each other.
3. This openness is grounded in the theory of human historically-effected consciousness and finitude, or Gadamer's notion of a horizon of understanding.
4. Dialogue is conducted in a spirit of friendship and is not agonistic.
5. The purpose of dialogue is liberation from unexamined opinion and it is directed toward a shared understanding of what is true (or good).
6. The ability to engage in this form of dialogue cannot be assumed. Therefore, an educator may need to facilitate it in order to develop the conditions and understanding that make it possible for all participants.

These principles, in particular, inform what is meant by “student-centered” in hermeneutic dialogic pedagogy and what the goals of such a classroom dialogue are. Therefore, these principles will be adopted in components of the intervention associated with facilitating student-centered discussion, the second essential element of the researcher-designed intervention more fully described at the end of this chapter.

Pedagogical Goal #2: Improving College Students' Dialogic Participation in an Online College Classroom

Research over the past 50 years began with the analysis of classroom discussion in order to identify how teachers orchestrated instruction and how learning might be improved. Nevertheless, classroom talk remains predominantly based in I-R-E exchanges between teacher and student, and a monologic orientation toward knowledge and authority (Alexander, 2001; Lefstein, 2009; Mehan, 1998; Nystrand et al., 2003; Reznikskaya, 2013; Skidmore, 2006; Wells, 2007). In fact, Nystrand's (1997) large-scale study of classroom talk patterns in 25 middle and

high schools in 1987-1989, found that “on average, discussion took 50 seconds per class in eighth grade and less than 15 seconds in grade nine” (p. 42). Applebee et al. (2003) conducted a large-scale study of 64 middle schools and found that on average, students engaged in dialogic interactions an average of 1.7 minutes per 60-minute class period. Over the past 40 years, the I-R-E pattern of classroom talk has remained remarkably intransigent; teachers rather than learners continue to do most of the talking (R. J. Alexander, 2005; Reznitskaya, 2013). In this next section, I address the second pedagogical goal of improving student participation in classroom dialogue. I will discuss research that shows how a dialogic facilitator can develop the conditions in which students decide to take risks to openly engage and participate. This requires attention to affective factors that underlie their willingness and ability to do so.

Understanding The Role of Affect in Maximizing Classroom Discussions

To address the affective needs of individuals and the group as a whole, a skilled facilitator of dialogue must attend to the affective dimension that encourages students to feel willing and able to participate (Skidmore, 2006; Wells, 2007). Therefore, the FPCD intervention will provide affective supports intended to improve dialogic understanding, practice, and participation. In this next section, I begin by considering how addressing affective supports inform the “how to” of sociocultural discussion facilitation in an authentic educational space before turning to Ryan and Deci’s (2000, 2001) self-determination theory and Noddings (2013, 2015) care ethics. These theories inform the affective supports that are interrelated with hermeneutic dialogic leadership as described in pedagogical goal #1.

The Interdependent Relation of Affect and Cognition in Dialogic Development

The affective dimension of dialogic pedagogies is under-examined and yet essential to effective dialogue (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Skidmore, 2006; Wells, 2007). Near the end of

Thought and Language, Vygotsky (2012) wrote briefly that thinking arises due to affect; “engendered by motivation, i.e., by our desires and needs, our interests and emotions. Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last ‘why’ in the analysis of thinking” (p. 252). Drawing on Vygotsky’s work, Wells (1999, 2004) asserted that learning in a social context must entail thought as well as feeling, and that students’ success was dependent on “positive emotions that derive, to a large degree, from successful activity with other people. Jointly undertaken endeavors that lead to valued outcomes generate positive feelings which, in turn, provide the energy and motivation for continued participation” (2004, p. 11). These passages speak to the interrelatedness of cognitive and affective aspects of human thought and speech. Affective factors lie behind, depend on, beget, and explain the origin of human thinking. Likewise, the good feelings associated with successfully working with others provides the energy and motivation to continue in a kind of feedback loop.

Mahn and John-Steiner (2002) also argue that the relationship between affect and thought are essential to understanding Vygotsky’s ideas. They emphasize that an important part of Vygotsky’s legacy is his belief that a teacher must instill confidence in students by providing caring support and building on their own prior experiences. This, in turn, can instill in students a sense of their own competence, enabling them to feel willing and able to take the social risks required in shared learning (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). A skilled facilitator of dialogue will help participants develop a sense of their own interrelatedness and reciprocal affective support. Mahn and John-Steiner assert that the ZPD should be imagined as a complex whole, with a dynamic “complementarity” active between participants, artifacts, and social setting. These authors introduce one of Vygotsky’s lesser-known concepts, “perezhivanie,” and say that it “describes the affective processes through which interactions in the ZPD are individually

perceived, appropriated, and represented by the participants” (2002, p. 7). In other words, one cannot fully understand or promote individual cognitive development, or in this case, the ability to engage in dialogue, without also understanding the complex ways that emotions, personal experiences, and motivations are tied to the social experiences necessary for the internalization of essential skills and knowledge.

The work of these scholars and researchers points to the need for the development of positive affect and motivation in the dynamics of a dialogic group of whatever size; it is essential for the origination, continued functioning, and reproduction of dialogue (Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002; Skidmore, 2006; Wells, 2007). These scholars also point to the way in which, according to sociocultural principles, the shared practice of dialogue under positive affective conditions would result in the internalization of the understanding, skills, and self-regulation needed for future collaboration, discussion, and civic responsibility.

Using Vygotsky’s sociocultural learning theory as a framework, I posit that successful classroom dialogic development requires a “*more knowledgeable other*” (MKO) operating in a “*zone of proximal development*” (ZPD) to model and facilitate the development of individual and group *affective knowledge and skills* needed for dialogue. Here, I suggest that the notion of the ZPD be expanded to clearly include affective development as a foundation for successful dialogue (see Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002). This kind of apprenticeship to dialogue (Lave & Wenger, 1991, Matusov, 2009; Wells, 2000), with an MKO attending to the affective development of each student and the dynamics of the group interaction, might provide the conditions for students to feel willing and able to participate.

Supporting Affective Dimensions of Individual and Group Dialogical Development

Any dialogue that is a genuine exchange of ideas and opinions requires the active engagement and participation of all participants. Whereas a teacher-centered classroom operating in routine I-R-E exchanges does assume minimal participation, student-centered dialogue asks that students feel willing and able to listen and contribute in the meaningful exchange of ideas. Hermeneutic dialogue (Gadamer, 2014), in particular, requires sharing one's own perspectives, being open to others, and making oneself available to hearing interlocutors' horizons of understanding. It even asks that participants listen in "acts of self abandonment" in which the words of others can "pull one up short," "bite back," or cause oneself to be "interrogated by the other."

Therefore, this study assumed that affective support is needed, working together over time, in the course of discussion facilitation in order to set the conditions that might induce students to take the risk to participate, use their own voices, and trust others in the classroom to do the same. Two theories in particular inform the intervention. First, self-determination theory (STD) (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b, 2017) informs an instructor's use of supports designed to address participants' beliefs in their own competence, a sense of their own autonomy, and well-being as they interact with others in the group. Second, feminist ethics of care (Noddings, 2012, 2013, 2015) view the ability to facilitate discussion as an ethical educational practice that both depends on and ideally builds a shared sense of respect and trust.

Self-Determination Theory. Ryan and Deci (2000b, 2017) theorize STD as developing human motivation by supporting basic innate and universal human *needs* for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The authors correlated the development of students' sense of their own autonomy, competence, and relatedness with a sense of well-being defined as *eudaimonia*, the ancient Greek concept associated with happiness or flourishing. They argue that flourishing,

understood as eudaimonic well-being, is not most intimately correlated with transient positive feelings per se, but rather with growth, fully-functioning activity, and the actualization of individual potential.

Central to SDT was fostering social conditions that encouraged students to transition from externally socially-valued behavior into self-regulated action and self-motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000b, 20017) argued that this is done through supporting student *competence* by, for example, providing intrinsically interesting and appropriately challenging work along with positive feedback. Students must feel their own *autonomy* in relation to their own competence by experiencing a sense of freedom and choice, relatively free of the demand for compliance in the form of commands, punishments, threats, imposed goals, and external evaluations.

Finally, such intrinsically supportive activity must often be expressed with a sense of *relatedness*, or care for the well-being of students undertaking their own self-determination. The transition to self-determination is essential in open dialogue: rather than simply replying correctly to teacher requests, students learn to express their own ideas; rather than passively receiving information, students learn to interpret and evaluate it; rather than accepting authority, students learn to challenge it; and rather than interacting only with a teacher, students learn to work together.

Deci et al. (1991) explain that events (such as classroom learning and instruction) are “administered by people within a general *interpersonal ambience*” (p. 336), such as controlling knowledge and behavior and pressuring students. Such an ambience contributes to a classroom climate that demotivates students by diminishing feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Deci et al. (1991) also warn that if teachers' sense of their own self-determination is undermined by educational policies or school administrations, “they are likely to respond by

being more controlling of their students” (p. 340) such that motivation and learning are diminished. This can take the form of external demands for students to perform better, more standardization, improved outcomes, and greater accountability and discipline. They conclude that, “the extent to which the school context is more autonomy supportive, rather than controlling, will directly affect the extent to which teachers support the autonomy of their students” (p. 341). Controlling institutional or administrative structures are precisely what Bakhtin (2010, p. 270-271) described as constitutive of the attempt to monologically centralize knowledge. Such social contexts would also likely influence educators to position themselves in more monologic discourses.

In sum, SDT theorizes that students who are more intrinsically motivated have higher esteem, more positive emotion and school, lower anxiety in classrooms, and are better able to cope with setbacks—all essential factors in supporting student willingness to participate (Vallerand et al, 1989; Ryan and Connell, 1989). Thus, in order to foster conditions for the authentic sharing of ideas from students’ true horizons of understanding, it is essential that dialogic pedagogy meet the universal needs described above—rather than trying to coerce desired behaviors and opinions. That is, extrinsically motivated behavior, such as anticipating and replying with teachers’ desired information, are instrumental in nature; therefore, it would be a potentially significant barrier to autonomous student motivation, participation and their broadened understanding.

Nel Noddings on Dialogue and an Ethics of Care. A second body of work that encourages a focus on student affect in learning contexts is that of Noddings’ (2013, 2015, 2018) feminist care pedagogy. She makes a both moral and practical case for the value of dialogue in student learning. In fact, dialogue is one of the four central components of her care pedagogy and

it is built on the affective attitudes of receptivity, relatedness, and responsiveness. These attitudes require that educators facilitate the development of a classroom culture in which students learn to respect themselves and one another.

Noddings (2013) writes that, while in an educational setting it may be theoretically conceivable to separate students' intellect from their feelings, they are thereby "shaped into something less than fully human by the process" (p. 172). She argues that instead of seeing students as canisters for teacher efforts to "train intelligence," or as objects that can be trained, manipulated to produce outcomes, sources of data, or correct opinions, we should advocate for educators who are inherently relational, who care for and are receptive to their students and respect their freedom.

Moreover, Noddings (2013, 2105) understood care as a relational activity in which "feeling with" the other as "engrossment" shifts attention to the needs and projects of the student. This entails learning to experience the other's reality, feeling what she feels, and seeing things from her perspective. She believes that teachers must "talk to the participants, to see their eyes and facial expressions, to receive what they are feeling" (Noddings, 2013, p. 2). A dialogic interlocutor, whether teacher or student, must learn to listen to and hear the other. Teachers build affective conditions for a care pedagogy through four central components: *dialogue*, *modeling*, *practice*, and *confirmation* (Noddings, 2013, 2015). Tappan (1998) believes that these four components share the same moral commitments that inform Vygotsky's sociocultural psychology.

Dialogue, according to Noddings (2012, 2013, 2015), is respectful and open-ended inquiry into shared understanding in which interlocutors care about what others think. Noddings (2013) believed that dialogue connects people, promotes understanding between them, and can

facilitate caring relationships; it is important in understanding what others need and how we might care for them. Therefore, “to receive the other is to attend fully and openly” (p. 23).

The other three components that inform the practice of a care pedagogy are modeling, practice, and confirmation. *Modeling* means showing rather than telling. A caring pedagogue avoids didactically explaining how to behave and speak with care, but rather demonstrates it by example in the development of a caring climate (Noddings, 2015; Tappan, 1998). *Practice* is providing students with the opportunity for the “active, engaged, experiential quality of caring and learning how to care” (Tappan, 1998, p. 27). *Confirmation* is an act of encouraging the best in others (Buber, 2012; Noddings, 2015; Tappan, 1998) with the belief that such an attitude will best bring out the interlocutor’s “better self.”

Noddings’ work intersects with and ties together elements of theories described above. In practicing with an ethic of care, the teacher shows respect for students and confidence in their competence to pursue their own learning and development. By demonstrating care, she enhances her students’ inclination to develop their receptive capacity to listen to others in dialogue, see and feel things from the perspective of others, and thereby build respect and trust. In being open to where her students are, emotionally and intellectually, she models and creates an environment in which students are willing and able to do the same. The ethic of care is also essential in helping students see their own autonomy, competence, and relatedness, build a sense of self-determination, and find the motivation for participation.

As instructors grapple with how to facilitate the development of dialogic practices among a diverse group of students while also incorporating ethics of care, it is likely they acquire these skills through a series of developmental phases (Dreyfus, 2004) rather than all at once. While most educators will have experience with discussion in the classroom, many will be in the

position of a novice when it comes to facilitating a student-centered approach to dialogue. Before classes begin, the instructor can be provided with a context-free presentation of a few rules for facilitation during the intervention. But ultimately, she must develop the skills needed to expertly intuit what might be needed to support the engagement and participation of all students amidst the dynamics of any given discussion. Dreyfus (2004) argued that this not only takes time, but the instructor must process an abundance of situations and experiences in order to learn what responses are needed at any particular time. This includes the emotional involvement in the process, the ability to make deliberate choices about strategies to support the students, and finally an intuitive, nearly unconscious, response to the needs of a discussion group.

Finally, this study occurred in a fully online environment during the first year of the Covid-19 Pandemic. By online learning, I mean that the course was conducted over the internet, through Zoom, and therefore in a virtual environment. Rapanta et al. (2020) characterize online learning as one in which the student: a) is at a distance from the instructor; b) uses technology to access materials; and c) uses technology to interact with others. I anticipated that unique challenges would appear in this virtual classroom space, such as how cameras were used, how much body-language could be interpreted, and how easily students accommodated turn-taking during class discussions. Nevertheless, Anderson (2004) argued, the online environment is similar to any formal learning space: “learners’ needs are assessed; content is negotiated or prescribed; learning activities are orchestrated; and learning is assessed” (p. 273).

Part 2: Potential of the FPCD Intervention to Achieve the Two Pedagogical Goals

In line with formative research design (Reinking & Bradley, 2008), beyond situating the study in relevant theory and literature, a second important goal of this chapter is to establish the reasons that this researcher-designed intervention, called *Facilitated Participant-Centered*

Dialogue (FPCD), has the potential to promote classroom dialogue. This study was a formative research partnership in which an intervention was provided to the practitioner, accompanied by strategic iterative coaching provided by me, as the researcher. Through the provision of the intervention and ongoing iterative analysis and coaching, this study examined how one educator's understanding and strategic use of dialogue could be improved (Goal #1). Further, as the research above has shown, improving students' participation in dialogue (Goal #2) is intimately intertwined with the way their teacher uses her own authority and communicates in the classroom. Therefore, it was essential to support the instructor's understanding and strategic use of dialogue in order to improve student participation.

Nevertheless, developing dialogue in a classroom is beset by a host of entrenched historic, institutional, and dispositional barriers, as described previously. The purpose of this intervention then, was to nurture the conditions needed for dialogic development, while supporting both the instructor and her students. The intervention did this through several research-based elements.

In these final sections of Chapter 2, I first describe one additional practitioner-based intervention developed by *The Touchstones Discussion Program* that was used in support of Pedagogical Goal #1, which was to improve the educator's understanding and facilitation of classroom dialogue. Then, I outline six principles derived from *Concept Oriented Reading Instruction* (CORI) that will be used in support of Pedagogical Goal #2, which was to improve student participation in classroom dialogue. Finally, I explain how these additional interventions will be integrated with the research-based practices described previously, to identify eleven components, clustered into three Essential Elements of the FPCD intervention that will be studied in this formative design experiment.

Supporting The Potential to Achieve Pedagogical Goal #1

Many of the practices that make up the FPCD intervention are related to strategies I learned while using the *Touchstones Discussion Project* over many years in classrooms and organizational meetings. Touchstones is a highly structured and scaffolded series of discussion lessons, focused on a text, and led by a facilitator. It aims to nurture student autonomy such that students share with their teacher's responsibility for their own education. The program describes itself this way:

Touchstones discussions foster the skills of speaking clearly and precisely, listening actively, supporting an opinion with evidence, and considering the opinions of others carefully and respectfully, yet critically. Acquiring these skills is fundamental to becoming responsible for one's own thinking and speaking.
(Zeiderman, 2012)

Touchstones provides discussion facilitators with texts, strategies, and goals to foster individual and group skills needed for dialogue. The program begins with a set of ground rules, and each scaffolded lesson consists of a text (read aloud) and guidance for helping facilitators establish goals for the class. Students move through four interrelated stages of dialogic development, culminating in individual and shared responsibility for their own learning: participation, cooperation, active listening, and collaborative leadership. Touchstones also designs discussions to confront barriers to dialogue associated with authority and expertise, and who typically counts as a legitimate speaker. There is no prior homework to prepare for class to ensure that all students begin the discussion with all of the knowledge they need to participate. Facilitators are guided in observing and identifying group discussion dynamics through ongoing individual and small group work, as well as whole group reflection rubrics. This personal and group reflection is instrumental in bringing the affective and cognitive dynamics of the discussion interactions to the awareness of each student as they reflect on how to build their own community of learning.

The integration of research-based reflection practices is further described below.

Supporting The Potential to Achieve Pedagogical Goal #2

Aligned with improving student participation in classroom dialogue (Pedagogical Goal #2), the intervention will adopt principles of motivation derived from Concept Oriented Reading Instruction [CORI] (Guthrie et al., 2007; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014). CORI principles are grounded in tenants of self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), social cognition theory (Schunk & Pajares, 2002; Schunk, 2003), and goal theory (Pintrich, 2000), which shape instructional practices designed to promote student engagement around reading a text. While the CORI intervention is typically used in the context of primary education, the underlying theories are more universally applicable and thus the specific elements are also likely to engage college students.

In this formative experiment, the researcher collaborated with the instructor to introduce practices oriented around texts that are built on CORI principles of relevance, choice, collaboration, success, teacher relationships, and mastery goals/thematic reading [see Appendix B) (Guthrie et al., 2007; Guthrie & Klauda, 2014).

The Intervention: Facilitated Participant-Centered Dialogue (FPCD)

The three Essential Elements (and eleven components) of this researcher-designed intervention were grounded in my own experiences leading discussions with strategies adapted from my work using Touchstones, and research in the area of dialogic pedagogy over the past 50 years. My plan was that these components, as discussed below, would help scaffold the instructor's facilitation of the intervention while also allowing the instructor flexibility to customize the intervention to her own needs and those of her students. Note there are a number of areas of overlap between these components and dimensions of Gadamer's hermeneutic dialogue, sociocultural theory,

Bakhtin's dialogism, self-determination theory, CORI principles, and Noddings' ethics of care.

Engaging Text

First, dialogue would be centered around an engaging *text*, which was considered fundamental to student-centered dialogue. The text is viewed as an object of inquiry and could, for instance, be a reading, a video, a podcast, or a film used for discussion. By centering the discussion around a text rather than knowledge and authority in the person of the teacher, inquiry becomes possible as well as an opening for student thought and speech (Alexander, 2001; Burbules, 1993; Matusov, 2015; Nystrand et al., 1997; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 1999). A text has traditionally been the focus of hermeneutic interpretation, especially when a reader, seeking to understand, is confronted with a problem or obstacle to his understanding. From a facilitation perspective, I saw a text as a *thinking device* (Lotman, 1988) that promoted inquiry and dialogue around a subject matter (Gadamer, 2004), and not as a source of monological and authoritative knowledge.

Aligned with Pedagogical Goal #2, the text must be effectively engaging to increase motivation; it should, therefore, be *relevant* to student interests and *aligned with student development* in order to support perceptions of their own competence (Guthrie, 2008; Guthrie et al., 2018). Students should optimally also be given some *choice* about the topic for discussion inspired by this text and the texts should build over the semester to create shared meaning and deeper conceptual understanding (Guthrie, 2008; Guthrie et al., 2007). These motivational supports enable students to perceive their own self-determination and engage it in the process of making meaning together (Burbules, 1993; Mercer, 2002; Nystrand et al., 1997; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2013; Wells, 1999). Therefore, as reflected by the first three

components of the FPCD intervention listed in Figure 2.1, selected texts should be relevant to students, offer students choice, and align with student development.

Figure 2.1

Three Elements and 11 Components of The FPCD Intervention

<i>Engaging Text</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevant to students 2. Offers students choice 3. Aligned with student development
<i>Strategic Student-Centered Facilitation</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Provisional ceding of teacher authority 5. Co-constructed set of discussion rules 6. Strategic use of questions 7. Scaffolded small group work 8. Everyone is seated such that they can be seen and heard 9. Development of group cohesion 10. Focal students
<i>Student-Centered Reflection Through Debriefing</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Regular student-centered debriefings on discussions

Strategic Student-Centered Facilitation

While the text serves as the locus of shared inquiry, the teacher must also actively change her pedagogical orientation in the class to strategically facilitate *student-centered* discussion.

This means making a number of adjustments to classroom practices, as identified by components four through nine of the intervention in Figure 2.1. Most importantly, educators must know how and when to *provisionally cede their authority* over classroom behavior and knowledge (the fourth intervention component). In other words, the educator who is trying to facilitate dialogue must model and facilitate openness (Gadamer, 1991, 2004; Kerdeman, 1998, 2014; Taylor, 2017; Wells, 2007). Using a Bakhtinian framework, one would argue that a facilitator must avoid asserting monologic discourses in order to promote dialogue. Instead, she must focus on

facilitating discussion such that all feel willing and able to participate (Alexander, 2006, 2008; Burbules, 1993; Guthrie, 2007; Nystrand, et al., 1997; Zeiderman, 2012). This would entail, especially at first, resisting the impulse to evaluate student responses (Wells, 2001, 2007) and allowing for students to experience their own autonomy and self-efficacy as engaged participants and intellectuals (Guthrie et al., 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017).

Several scholars have pointed out the importance of the fifth intervention component in Figure 2.1, *a co-constructed set of “rules” to provide a foundation* for the discussion activity and for reflection on individual and group development (Alexander, 2018; Burbules, 1993; Mercer, 2002; Michaels, et al., 2008; Zeiderman, 2012; Wells, 1999). Relinquishing control does not mean countenancing classroom chaos or relativism. Empowering students with choice in building and monitoring their own participation develops collaborative and engaged dialogic participants with a sense of their own self-efficacy (Guthrie, 2007; Guthrie et al., 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2017).

In a dialogic pedagogy, the teacher’s role as leader or facilitator of inquiry (Gadamer, 1991, 2004; Kerdeman, 1998, 2014; Wells, 1999) would involve *asking strategically constructed questions* (the sixth intervention component). Teachers must learn the strategic use of *exploratory* (Barnes, 1976), *authentic* (Nystrand, 1997) or *open* questions (Burbules, 1993; Gadamer, 1991, 2004; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 2007) to accomplish a variety of facilitation goals. This includes asking questions that are relevant to students and aligned to their development (Guthrie, 2007; Guthrie et al., 2018), eliciting a diversity of perspectives, making moment-by-moment decisions about directing student attention toward text or classmates’ thinking, building progressively toward deeper conceptual understanding and mastery, and developing the individual and group collaborative skills needed for dialogue (Guthrie, 2008;

Guthrie et al. 2007). These questioning strategies are juxtaposed to simply using questions to arrive at predetermined or desired responses.

In order to overcome concerns about student confidence, competence, trust, and risk in a whole classroom discussion setting, research has shown that it is also helpful to use *preliminary individual and small group work* (the seventh intervention component) to increase student comfort about the discussion topic and their own participation (Alexander, 2017; Guthrie 2008; Guthrie et al., 2013; Shor, 2012; Zeiderman, 2012). Therefore, this intervention also calls for the strategic scaffolding of individual and small group work with whole group discussion.

Research and practice have also shown that the classroom structure must reflect the conviction that all participants are equal and worthy of respect. Therefore, it would be essential for engagement that *everyone is seated such that they can be seen and heard* (Zeiderman, 2012), the eighth intervention component. This promotes a positive classroom climate, collaboration, and students' perception of their own self-efficacy (Guthrie et al., 2007; Guthrie et al., 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2017). In an online classroom, this means using a gallery view and encouraging all students to participate with cameras on so that everyone is present and visible during discussion.

Particularly at the beginning of a group's dialogic development, the role of the discussion leader will be to model and nurture a sociomoral context of mutual respect and care (Noddings, 2013, 2015). In other words, rather than focusing primarily on academic content and knowledge acquisition, and managing student behavior toward those ends, a facilitator of FPCD would, at first, need to gently encourage and restrain participants to develop the conditions in which all students feel willing and able to participate (Alexander, 2017; Wells, 1997; Zeiderman, 2007, 2012). Therefore, a facilitator of student-centered discussion should focus on maintaining the ninth intervention component, *the cohesion of the whole group discussion*. Efforts to encourage

inquiry and collaboration serve to engage students and provide them with a sense of their own autonomy and competence in making meaning in the process of thinking and learning (Guthrie et al., 2007; Guthrie et al., 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Finally, during the intervention, a tenth component is the use of focal students who serve as both sources of information about class dynamics and attitudes and as co-constructive leaders of building a cooperative classroom of mutual trust and respect in which dialogue can occur (Beltramo, 2018; Cook-Sather, 2002; Emdin, 2016). The focal students are selected by the instructor to represent a range of students, both in terms of demographic factors and their perceived level of engagement in the class.

Student-Centered Reflection Through Debriefing

The FPCD intervention also calls for the use of meta-analyses of the discussions by shared participant reflection. This is a regular component of scaffolded group development in the Touchstones Discussion Project (Zeiderman, 2007, 2012) and the final (eleventh) component of this intervention listed in Figure 2.1. A summary of the practices and rationale for debriefing using Touchstones is found in Appendix C. Borrowing from a theoretical debriefing frame used in undergraduate medical training (Nagle & Foli, 2020), participating students would regularly practice facilitated whole-class student-centered reflection on the interpersonal dynamics of their shared discussions (e.g., cooperation, interruption, respect, silence, or dominance). Nagle and Foli (2020) defined student-centered reflection as:

An intentional metacognitive examination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in which students dialogue with peers and an experienced facilitator to make sense of the simulation experience resulting in cognitive adjustments and perspective reframing. Student-centered reflection involves a sense making process where students seek to understand what they just experienced or observed. Reflection includes emotional and personal elements, as the student analyzes thoughts and

feelings related to the experience and compares this situation to previous experiences and knowledge. (p. 35)

Fey et al., (2014), for example, conducted a phenomenological study of nursing students and found that the students valued the themes of *safe environment, debriefing to explore thoughts, feedback from multiple perspectives, all in this together, and group facilitation* as important in supporting their learning. In another study with 300 third year nursing students, Wotten et al. (2010) found that students valued debriefings that were conducted immediately after a simulation, under the guided facilitation of a faculty member, and for longer than the standard of 20 minutes. Elsewhere, in a short literature review, Waxman (2010) reported the importance of holding the debriefing immediately following the simulation or practice, using open-ended questions, maintaining a safe environment for discussion, and the need for debriefing sessions that were significantly longer than the simulation itself.

In the present study, the “simulation experience” would be the facilitated attempt by students to engage in hermeneutically-oriented dialogue using the FPCD intervention. The debrief is typically led by an experienced facilitator in order to examine the affective and cognitive development of the group dialogue. In this case, students and their facilitator would learn to “dialogue about dialogue,” in an attempt to make sense of what had occurred and to set the stage for improvement. This would include both consideration of how inquiry into the subject matter was conducted, how participants had responded, what obstacles to dialogue arose, and what interpersonal dynamics occurred. This, in turn, can lead participants to cognitive adjustments in the shared activity (Nagle & Foli, 2020, Zeiderman, 2007, 2012).

Dialogue is a complex activity that requires reflection on the dynamics of self and others, in terms of both cognition and affect, in order to promote effective dialogue and facilitate understanding. Therefore, protocols for debriefing sessions will be used to scaffold reflection in

order to develop the individual and group skills that create the conditions for discussion. Students need individual and group protocols as opportunities for reflection and discussion on their own attitudes and behaviors, and analyses of the group dynamics. This research will borrow protocols derived from the *Touchstones Discussion Project* (see Appendix D). This shared reflection builds student collaboration, self-efficacy, and understanding of the skills needed for effective dialogue (Guthrie et al., 2007; Guthrie et al., 2013). Teachers need these protocols to allow self-reflection on their own practices and support their transition away from more traditional monologic modes of instruction and toward dialogue (Bakhtin, 2013; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 2006, 2007).

In summary, research presented in this section points to the potential of this formative experiment to effectively build an instructor's understanding of student-centered dialogue (Pedagogical Goal 1), and in turn, maximize student participation in classroom dialogue (Pedagogical Goal 2). As planned, one complete session of the FPCD intervention would consist of three Essential Elements: a concerted attempt to facilitate dialogue as a whole group, inspired by at least one text, and followed by a facilitated reflective debrief of what occurred. Sometimes, the instructor might decide that this debriefing should actually occur at the beginning of the discussion session in order to reflect on the progress of the group and set the stage for the forthcoming discussion. Together, the eleven research-based components of the FPCD intervention outlined in Figure 2.1 were designed to reduce the monologic orientation of the teacher, reposition her as a discussion facilitator, reduce the habitual use of I-R-E exchanges, and support students in feeling willing and able to participate in discussion oriented toward dialogue that was hermeneutic in nature and designed to broaden individual horizons.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I first reviewed the meaning and purpose of dialogue, as portrayed in antiquity by the activity of Socrates and the thought of Plato. Next, I examined contemporary research on classroom discourse and its relationship to instruction and student learning. Early research into classroom talk revealed the I-R-E discourse pattern, and this prompted a variety of dialogic pedagogical responses. The difference between monologic and dialogic discourses, as described by Bakhtin (2010), and the importance of sociocultural theory were each discussed as playing a significant role in these responses. Next, I identified three genres of dialogic pedagogy utilized in more contemporary practices, before turning to a hermeneutic theory of dialogue grounded in Gadamer's (2004) work. From there, I described the theory and practice that supported the potential to achieve this study's two pedagogical goals. Finally, I turned to a description of a researcher-developed dialogic intervention, *Facilitated Participant-Centered Dialogue (FPCD)* drawn from recent and contemporary research on the dynamics of classroom talk. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the methodological approach used in this study, formative design research, and present early observations that describe the context within which the intervention was implemented.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND PRE-INTERVENTION OBSERVATIONS

This study will use a formative design framework. Formative design experiments have evolved to address the discontinuity between research and practice. Following Reinking and Bradley (2008), this section will explain: a) the research design; b) the intervention; c) the participants and setting; and d) data collection and analysis for evaluating progress toward the pedagogical goal.

Research Design

Formative design research has evolved over the past 30 years to address problems of educational practice and find workable solutions. Reinking and Bradley (2008) described formative design as an applied educational science akin to engineering. In education, they contend, there has been “no category of research analogous to the work of designers, engineers, and test pilots whose coordinated efforts are aimed directly at getting an airplane to fly and to perform for specific purposes under a variety of conditions” (pp. 7-8).

This research was designed to address the very practical, yet complex, problem of how to effectively develop hermeneutically oriented dialogue in an online university classroom. In addressing a pedagogical goal, formative design emphasizes that research must occur in authentic instructional spaces and that the researcher must partner with the practitioner in cycles of planning, implementation, and reflection. It is, therefore, a methodology meant to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Since I was a single researcher working on a dissertation study through iterative cycles, a small, focused sample was necessary. Reinking and Bradley (2008) emphasized that since formative design focuses on effective practice, obstacles and setbacks during the intervention are as important as successes in coming to a clear understanding of what

works. Failures and successes in authentic instructional practices may better provide “the fine-grained information most helpful to an individual teacher working in a particular classroom” (p. 10).

This study was guided by Reinking and Bradley’s (2008) framework to conduct and report its findings. More specifically, the study was developed to address the following questions: 1) What is the pedagogical goal to be investigated and why is that goal valued and important? 2) What intervention has the potential to achieve the pedagogical goal and why? 3) What factors enhance or inhibit the intervention’s effectiveness, efficiency, and appeal of the intervention? 4) How can the intervention be modified to achieve the pedagogical goal more effectively, efficiently, and appealingly? 5) What unanticipated positive and negative effects did the intervention produce?

In formative experiments, this guiding framework of generic research questions is focused on a pedagogical goal. The purpose of my research was to develop and maximize dialogic pedagogy and therefore was focused on the efforts of both the teacher and her students to *jointly* construct classroom dialogue. Therefore, the research was guided by two complementary and simultaneous goals:

Goal 1: Increase one college instructor’s understanding of dialogic teaching and the strategies used in promoting it during online classroom discussions.

Goal 2: Maximize a group of college students’ dialogic participation in one online college classroom.

Research Site and Participants

Since formative design research requires a partnership between researcher and practitioner that is collaborative, iterative, and adaptive in nature (Reinking & Bradley, 2008), the

basic requirement for choosing a site was to find an educator who was flexible and was perceived to have a genuine interest in the study's two pedagogical goals.

The course was taught at North University [pseudonym], a large public university in northeastern United States. At the time of this study, the university's undergraduate student population was 55% female and 45% male, and approximately 73% of students identified as White, 11% as Hispanic, 5% as African American, and 3% as Asian. The course on education and social justice, a 100-level education class that met several general education requirements at the university, was attended by 25 undergraduate students. Of those, 19 were female and six were male. Students typically selected the course for a variety of reasons, including an interest in education and social justice issues or because the course helped to fulfill graduation requirements.

Formative research also requires the researcher "to enter deeply into the ecology of a classroom, often with the aim of transforming teaching and learning. To some degree a researcher becomes a purposeful agent of change" (Reinking & Bradley, 2008, p. 79). To this end, Reinking & Bradley position the researcher as a "participant-observer" and contend that it is "unrealistic for a researcher to be simply a dispassionate observer or consultant largely disengaged from the activities and interactions taking place in a classroom" (p. 79). They describe a range of classroom activities in which the researcher might need to become involved, including: teaching lessons, working in small groups, tutoring, overseeing activities, or even attending class field trips. In this study, I was a participant-observer each week, but only occasionally participated in discussions; once, at the instructor's request, I modeled an intervention session for her.

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

Instructor and student participation in this study was entirely voluntary and included the right to withdraw at any time. Pseudonyms were used for the instructor and all of the students. All participants completed consent forms prior to data collection (see Appendix E). All forms were approved by the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). All data were stored on a password-protected computer.

Positionality

I have many years of experience leading students in classroom discussion and refining my own beliefs about what this might entail. This is all rooted in my experience as a graduate student attending a Great Books liberal arts college that was entirely conducted through seminars. Here, the text was the focus of attention for teacher and student alike; in fact, the text was the teacher. While I never subscribed to the idea of canonical texts, I did experience the profound benefits of engagement, respect, and trust shown in each individual's ability to participate in and contribute to understanding beautiful and difficult intellectual works. This paradigm of collaborative interpretation became a guiding framework for my work as a secondary school educator. I always saw the subject matter of a course as potentially deeper than my understanding or my ability to convey it fully to my students. I believed that I needed my students' participation in the learning in order to find the means to help them better understand the content of a course. In my own experience, this had also often included personal conversations by respectful and patient educators who took the time to meet me and others from our own horizons of understanding.

I have also been profoundly influenced by 20 years of association with the Touchstones Discussion Project (<https://touchstones.org/>). This structured program taught me the importance of discussion facilitation that empowered students to raise their own voices and become

classroom leaders through reflection on discussion dynamics and their own needs as engaged participants. Through this reflection, I saw the ways that students could learn to regulate their own behavior and collaborate with one another. My experiences as a graduate student in the Great Books program, and working with Touchstones, shaped my own view of dialogue. In fact, it led me to further examine research into dialogic pedagogies and recognize the distinctions between the three genres described in Chapter 2. Having facilitated dialogue in each of those genres myself, I am very sensitive and aware that educators may have different ways of using dialogue and for different goals. Approaching this study, I wanted to both respect the instructor's purposes for using dialogue and share my own understanding of the theory and research behind the intervention I had designed.

In addition to teaching, I also worked for many years as a secondary administrator, wherein observing and mentoring teachers was a regular part of my job. My style of evaluation was collaborative and based on shared reflection of classroom practice. At times, I struggled to balance the role of "participant-observer" as described in Reinking and Bradley (2008) with my work as a researcher. Both during my pilot work, and then again in this dissertation study, I grappled with how much leadership to take up in the classroom to guide practitioners through stages of their own facilitation development.

For the present study, and in accordance with the notion that novices seek to understand the basic principles or rules of a skill (Dreyfus, 2004), I proceeded with the assumption that *telling* Cassandra how to facilitate dialogue was likely necessary at the beginning to assist her in acquiring a core set of skills in facilitating dialogic conversations in the classroom. Then, as the weeks passed, I believed that she would begin to internalize those skills with practice and move toward a level of expertise. I spent much time over the ensuing weeks pondering how much to

allow the intervention to guide the development of dialogue, and how much modeling I should provide in order to make the classroom a community of practice.

My work in secondary education as an administrator and teacher in traditional face-to-face classrooms allowed me the luxury of getting to know teachers and students over a year or multiple years in classes that met every day. Most of these teachers and students would know one another well already, thus alleviating some of the anxiety of collaborating in new and strange contexts. This also provided the opportunity to slowly develop dialogic skills in many different contexts but with regularity and over time. Therefore, I knew the opportunity to work in an online university course that met twice per week (with discussion interventions once per week) would be both a challenge and novel experience in which I too had much to learn.

It was also the case that I had previously taught the course on education and social justice at North University once myself. Therefore, I was familiar with the course's content as well the standards and outcomes prescribed for it. During my own preparation for teaching the course, a colleague had shared with me the social justice and education case study book from which Cassandra and I selected several discussion texts. While I had my own views of how I would run the class, I understood that, aligned with formative research work, the practitioner was the leader of the class and maintained the ultimate responsibility for student learning according to her own goals and best practices.

Finally, over the course of this study, it was never lost on me that I lived within the horizon of a straight, white, cisgender, middle class male in his fifth semester of a doctoral program. This inevitably shaped my own understanding and would likely have significant influence over how the participants in dialogue viewed me. Throughout this intervention, I tried to be aware of the ways in which my opinions or presence might affect participants or the

instructor. In this course on social justice and education, I tried to stay particularly cognizant of practices that seemed to impede or interrupt historically marginalized voices or perspectives that were offered in dialogue.

Characterizing the Research Context

Reinking and Bradley (2008) asserted that finding and describing a research site is one of the dimensions of establishing rigor in formative experiments. In finding a site, they argued that the practitioner must be willing to accommodate the intervention and contribute to the goals of the practitioner's instruction. Once a site had been determined, one of the first goals was to characterize the instructional environment using "thick description" (p. 48). In the following section, I describe the setting of this study including: a) the pilot study, b) recruitment and selection of the instructor, c) the university site and the course, and d) summer follow up, which included setting a collaboration start date.

The Pilot Study

My own efforts to support the FPCD intervention began the year prior to this study. In 2019-2020, I collaborated on a pilot study with one English teacher and 28 high school students in an urban high school classroom in the northeastern United States. During my work as a research assistant in this school district, this teacher had expressed an interest in improving the quality of her classroom discussions.

During the pilot study, I learned three things that informed the work described here. First, formative design research provided the necessary framework for improving classroom pedagogy iteratively, over time, and in collaboration with a practitioner. The pilot experience, as well as my own work in secondary education, informed my decision to adopt Dreyfus' (2004) model of skill acquisition as a way to understand the challenges educators and their students may face in

learning to collaborate in dialogue in classrooms. The structured iterative process of planning, implementation, and reflection was crucial in learning to develop the understanding of how to facilitate and participate in classroom discussions.

Second, I was reminded of the very tangible dynamics present in any classroom that can stand as barriers to facilitating dialogue. For example, in the pilot classroom, students were not always engaged, they sometimes didn't have the skills to participate effectively, and the teacher felt responsible for delivering content and preparing students for the future with the academic skills she believed they would need. While the teacher believed in the importance of student voices and dialogue in order to improve learning, classroom discussions sometimes took time away from efficiently delivering learning standards and outcomes. Therefore, facilitating discussion could cause disruption, take up considerable time, and appear ineffective.

Finally (and relatedly), at the beginning of my collaboration with this practitioner, I realized it was very important to provide a clear vision of what a good discussion could look like, including the benefits of student engagement and participation in their own learning. This was because in the messiness and slow development of all participants acquiring the necessary skills as well as the many challenges, disruptions, and costs could threaten to overwhelm the long, patient road to improved student engagement and learning.

These findings and the experience of working with a high school teacher guided my preparation for the present study in an undergraduate university level classroom. More specifically, I hoped to work toward a theoretical vision of the purpose of dialogue (as outlined in Ch. 2) that would serve as a justification for my pedagogical goals and help the practitioner position herself as a facilitator focused on student-centered hermeneutic dialogue.

Recruiting and Selecting Cassandra, the University Instructor

During the year prior to the initiation of the present study, I had met Cassandra (a pseudonym derived from the final intervention text), a fellow doctoral student in the same PhD program. In previous conversations, she had expressed an interest in learning more about dialogic teaching strategies and improving classroom discussion in her university course on education and social justice. I first formally contacted Cassandra via email in May 2020 to ask if she would be interested in collaborating on my research. She expressed a willingness and stated that it was important to continually engage in professional learning opportunities and reflection on her teaching practice. She was eager to learn how to maximize students' participation in her classroom discussions and open to acquiring new strategies for discussion facilitation.

Cassandra had earned a Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies as well as a Master of Science in Developmental Science. She also had a teaching certification in Early Childhood Education and had taught kindergarten and Grade 2 for six years in a nearby school district. At the time, Cassandra was a full-time education specialist employed at the university and a fellow student in the same PhD in Education program. She worked with a local school district in a research-practice partnership supporting pre-service and in-service elementary science education teachers. Over the course of the semester during which we worked together, Cassandra also had responsibilities writing grants, attending conferences, and collaborating on research proposals for the university outreach program through the School of Education. In addition to her work responsibilities, Cassandra taught one class each semester as an adjunct instructor. Her favorite course to teach was the one on education and social justice that was the context for this study.

Our first meeting, held on a Zoom call on May 14th, 2020, included a discussion of my pilot research in a local high school and my wish to move it to an online learning environment

due to the pandemic. Cassandra had taught the course on social justice and education for the past three semesters and hoped to offer it again in the fall. She explained her preference for students to co-construct their knowledge of social justice in her class, and she believed that student participation was essential for critically holding up and examining systems of injustice. I briefly described the formative research framework and my dialogic intervention and suggested that we collaborate for the fall semester. We agreed to work in partnership to improve her understanding of how to facilitate classroom discussion and maximize student participation. We agreed to meet again over the summer to begin our planning.

Advantages and Challenges of the Research Context

The opportunity to work with Cassandra and her class, as a convenience sample, had certain distinct advantages. First, in our doctoral classes together, she had previously identified herself as having a constructivist and transformative educational worldview. I believed that this orientation provided a basic understanding of the pedagogical orientation needed for hermeneutic dialogue, namely that the teacher must be willing to surrender some of her own authority and expertise to make room for students to inquire and discuss a subject matter. Working with Cassandra, who wished to more deeply involve students through discussion, provided a reasonable opportunity for examining how to foster dialogue. The alternative was trying to work with an instructor who had ingrained habits of lecture and was committed to transmission-based instruction. During a one semester course, it might be difficult to persuade such an instructor to take the time to acquire the skills needed to facilitate discussion. Reinking and Bradley (2008) warned about conducting research in situations where the possibility of an effective implementation were low, so I opted for working with someone who desired to improve classroom discussion.

This research context also offered the opportunity to study online dialogic pedagogy as educators pivoted to serve their students during the exigencies of a once in a century pandemic. In addition, a course on social justice and education offered us the chance to understand how to facilitate dialogue about social justice issues during a time of immense social tensions. At the time, the United States was riveted by the summer of 2020 protests around issues of racial justice and equity, the shootings of several unarmed black men, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the buildup to a momentous election. Consequently, the instructor and I were presented with a unique opportunity to learn how to facilitate dialogue around complex and tense issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in ways that were designed to motivate students, build trust and respect, and broaden their understanding of social justice issues.

At the same time, this research context offered significant challenges. Cassandra had to quickly pivot and conduct the course online for the first time, and I had to conduct research in higher education that was fully online during a pandemic. For me, this included the novelty of facilitating dialogue in a setting in which class met only twice per week over the course of a 14-week semester rather than a more familiar timeframe of a year-long middle or high school setting that met 3-5 times a week over the course of an entire year. Thus, there was significantly less time to carefully and patiently facilitate the unfolding of a dialogic classroom culture in the setting. Furthermore, since undergraduate students in an introductory course in a large public university were less likely to know one another, there was the significant barrier of trying to overcome issues of building relationships and trust during that shorter window of time.

Cassandra's Course on Social Justice and Education

A college course on education and social justice seemed a particularly fruitful area for research centered on dialogical practice. First, college students have typically had years of

experiences in educational settings and were therefore likely to have their own ideas and opinions to share about them. Second, during the time of this study, the nation was in the grip of a global pandemic, a contentious presidential election, and pervasive social concerns over violence, equity, and racial justice. Thus, students in the class would very likely be aware of and have their own opinions about contemporary social justice issues. The course was scheduled to meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00-3:15 PM and it was designed to be conducted fully online over the Zoom platform. The instructor used the university's new learning management system, known as Brightspace, to share course information, assignments, and grades.

In the textbook used for this course, titled *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, authors Adams and Griffin (2007) described the goal of social justice education as helping students to “develop awareness, knowledge, and processes to examine issues of justice/injustice in their personal lives, communities, institutions, and the broader society” (p. 4). These goals were in line with what many scholars have suggested are the goals of dialogue, namely, developing and deepening awareness and understanding (see Burbules, 1993; Gadamer, 2004; Kerdeman, 1998, 2003; Lefstein, 2010; Taylor, 2017).

Furthermore, social justice education pedagogy aimed to “affirm, model, and sustain socially just learning environments *for all participants* [emphasis added], and by so modeling, to offer hope that equitable relations and social structures can be achieved in the broader society” (Adams & Griffin, 2007, p. 27). Likewise, the goals of developing a classroom environment that was not only open and equitable, but also invited the honest participation of every student, were also necessary conditions for student-centered dialogue (Alexander, 2004; Burbules, 1993; Matusov, 2009; Wells, 1999). In a truly dialogical course on social justice, all students' horizons

would be understood and encouraged. It would be up to the participants (as it is up to members of society) to learn how to respect each other and navigate their differences. Growth would be available to all students since each would have the opportunity to recognize their own limited understanding and begin to listen to others.

In summary, the facilitation of hermeneutic dialogue in the context of a course on education and social justice was designed to be inquiry-based, student-centered, and focused on shared discussion of a subject matter. This shared interpretive activity depended on an educator's willingness to facilitate conversation in which all students were understood to be arriving to class with their own inherited horizons of understanding and in which mutual respect was developed. Most importantly, a hermeneutic interpretation of dialogue assumed that the educator would resist the temptation to proceed didactically by using her own authority and expertise in coercing student perspectives or by driving the dialogue toward certain predetermined conclusions.

The Course Curriculum

The general structure for the course was designed previously by education faculty at North University, so Cassandra had access to a course syllabus (see Appendix F), standards, and specified outcomes around which to design her curriculum. Cassandra, (who had previously taught the class three times), explained that she “never taught the same course twice,” meaning that her syllabus was structured and yet open and evolving. She described the importance of aligning the curriculum with current social events as well as student interests. Therefore, while there were a number of social justice topics that she insisted were essential (i.e., racial justice, LGBTQ rights, gender equality, and economic inequities), the particular material she used to investigate, discuss, and analyze these topics could change over time. Nevertheless, the course

was also linked with a textbook with content that became the occasional topic of our conversations.

The course text, *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Adams et al., 2000), was divided into chapters of scholarly writings on a host of contemporary social justice issues such as racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, trans* oppression, youth and elder oppression, and ableism. Cassandra described the book and course, as witnessed by previous instructors' syllabi, as built around what she described as this series of -isms. While prioritizing the importance of some of these topics in light of current social events, she believed in the importance of each topic and felt responsibility to cover as many as was reasonable in a 14-week semester. Headed into the study, we both questioned whether or not discussions could be built around the textbook articles, as they were written in scholarly and abstract language and did not always provide easy contact points with student experience.

Summer Follow Up and Setting a Research Collaboration Start Date

In the third week of July, I contacted Cassandra to ask about when she might like to begin planning for the course, which started in the second week of September. My purpose was to touch base before she began formally planning for the fall. Since she had taught the class three times previously, I knew she already had a syllabus and a curriculum for the course. My hope was to have a meeting to begin thinking with her about whether the coursework might need to be adjusted to make room for developing classroom discussion. My goals were to introduce Cassandra to a hermeneutic approach to dialogue along with the essential elements of the FPCD intervention. I understood that she would need time to interpret, plan, modify, and implement the intervention based on her own instructional practices.

With Cassandra's many professional and educational responsibilities, we decided to begin our planning at the end of August 2020 when her schedule had cleared and vacations were finished. All of our meetings were all conducted using Zoom. The first planning meeting was set for September 1st and the first day of class was Wednesday, September 9th. Next, I briefly reiterate the core essential elements of the FPCD intervention and describe what took place in our planning sessions prior to applying that intervention in Cassandra's online classroom.

The Planned Intervention

Formative design interventions are developed around a framework of *essential elements*, or "absolutely essential features that must be in place to cause change under conditions that one can reasonably hope to exist in normal school settings" (Brown, 1992, p. 173). Likewise Colwell and Reinking (2016) write that:

If [these defining elements were] removed, [it] would result in a different intervention.

Nonetheless, essential elements can be implemented in infinite ways to accommodate the conditions of a particular classroom and a teacher's preferences, as well as in response to data suggesting necessary or useful modifications." (p. 7)

Essential Elements of Facilitated Participant-Centered Dialogue (FPCD)

The theory and components that comprised *Facilitated Participant-Centered Dialogue (FPCD)* as well as justification for these components, were described in detail in Chapter 2. For the purposes of this study, the three essential elements for implementing an FPCD intervention included: 1) an engaging text; 2) instructor-facilitated and student-centered discussion; and 3) reflective debriefing. These three elements were designed to provide a guiding FPCD framework for introducing and developing classroom dialogue, while also allowing the instructor flexibility

to customize the intervention to their own needs and those of their students. Next, I provide a very brief summary of each.

The Text

The first element, the text, was fundamental as the focus of the FPCD intervention. Hermeneutics was traditionally focused on a text even before it was expanded to become a description of human understanding. A “text” can facilitate the vital de-centering of teacher authority and open a dialogic space for student thought and speech (Alexander, 2001; Burbules, 1993; Matusov, 2015; Nystrand et al., 1997; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 1999). Cassandra and I would work through the semester to gather engaging texts that met these principles and course requirements and were aligned with her own interests and strengths. Because I had previously taught the same social justice course, we also drew from my own set of resources.

Strategic Student-Centered Facilitation

The second essential element, strategic student-centered facilitation, was composed of seven components gathered from previous research on dialogic pedagogy and particular practices derived from the Touchstones Discussion Project (Zeiderman, 2007, 2012). These components, detailed in Chapter 2, included: a) provisional ceding of teacher authority; b) the co-construction of discussion rules; b) strategic use of questions; c) strategic use of individual and small group work; e) egalitarian seating; f) a focus on maintaining group cohesion; and g) focal students.

Student-Centered Reflection through Debriefing

The third and final essential element was student-centered reflection through debriefing. I began the study with the assumption that the teacher and students needed instructional scaffolding in order to develop the skills to create the conditions for dialogue. Teachers can

benefit from rubrics that allow self-reflection on their own practices and support their transition away from more traditional monologic modes of instruction and toward dialogue (Bakhtin, 2013; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 2006, 2007; Zeiderman, 2007, 2012). Further, students can benefit from individual and group rubrics to reflect on and discuss their own attitudes and behaviors, and analyze group dynamics. The intervention employed a rubric derived from the Touchstones Discussion Project (see Appendix D) which occurred through student-centered reflection during embedded debriefing sessions (Nagle & Foli, 2020; Zeiderman, 2007, 2012). This shared reflection was designed to build student collaboration, self-efficacy, and understanding of the skills needed for effective dialogue (Guthrie et al., 2007; Guthrie et al., 2013).

Initial Planning Sessions

Initial Planning Session 1: September 1

Our first formal Zoom meeting was held on September 1st and lasted approximately 1¾ hours. My goal was to touch base after the summer break and plan two meetings to introduce the intervention and create a working schedule for our collaboration. Our meeting turned into a nearly two-hour wide-ranging discussion in which we got to know one another better and discussed our goals for the research. While my focus was on introducing the intervention and my own hermeneutic orientation, Cassandra spoke frequently of her own aspirations to be an educator who encouraged personal and social change. Together, we began to consider the meaning of a discussion-based course on social justice that helped all students feel willing and able to participate. I understood that I needed to be open to Cassandra's pedagogical views and build a bridge to her own conceptualizations in order to "fuse" our horizons into a shared

understanding. This included the three essential elements, but she would interpret how to apply them in her course and pedagogy.

First, I introduced Cassandra to the FPCD intervention. My main points included: a) the two pedagogical goals of the research; b) the relationship between researcher and practitioner in formative designs; c) the theoretical framework that informed the research; d) the Essential Elements of the research; e) Cassandra's course curriculum and my own available resources; and f) an intervention schedule.

After explaining the dual pedagogical goals of the research, I shared my wish to work as collaborators. I emphasized that we each had foci of expertise as researcher and practitioner and that it was only through a fusion of our experiences in ongoing classroom instruction that progress would be made. While Cassandra was the primary classroom instructor, I would be present online during the discussions and would assist in planning and debriefing each intervention in regular weekly planning meetings. I explained that each class discussion would be captured via the Zoom record function for review and analysis as needed. Since facilitating dialogue followed a developmental model of skill acquisition (Dreyfus, 2004), I explained that the essential elements provided the basic framework for the intervention, but that we could gradually discuss additional strategies as the need arose in practice and reflection. We also discussed the possibility of co-authoring articles related to this research at some point in the future.

To support Cassandra's initial planning for the course, I provided a Google drive folder of resources for the intervention as well as materials that I used when I taught the course the previous spring. I recommended a text called *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education* (Gorski & Pothini, 2018) as a way of offering students short texts that were eminently

discussable and aligned with both the course outcomes and engaging text features as proposed by the FPCD intervention (i.e., short texts, written in accessible language with relevant and interesting topics, and presenting multiple perspectives).

During the back-and-forth discussion of the intervention framework, Cassandra reported that she had just completed teaching the same course in a five-week summer program. She explained that current events involving the shooting of black citizens by police, the Black Lives Matter protests, and the upcoming presidential election had been integrated into her summer curriculum such that,

One day, on an asynchronous day, they (the students) watched some YouTube videos about the other -isms, as I call them. But other than that, we pretty much talked about racism the entire summer. But we only had five weeks.

Cassandra shared that issues of social justice were personal and had been part of her identity “since she was eight years old.” She recounted a field trip when her classmates made fun of a homeless man picking through the trash, or a recent friend challenging her for giving money to a panhandler. Cassandra also spoke generally of her own pedagogical beliefs, specifically:

I’m not into, like, just shoving information down your throat, if you’re not going to learn from that right? . . . I always tell my students that the goal is for you to learn and grow, to be able to critically think about what’s happening in our current events, and how to support your own argument, you know, using evidence. I have them read both sides of the story, and really think about why it is important to understand other people’s points of view...so my goal is really for them to think beyond individualism and into systemic thinking and structuralism. (Planning Meeting 1)

Later, however, she shared her concern that while she was comfortable prompting discussion through questioning, she found that:

I think my biggest challenge that I found in this class is just what we’re working on right here—getting them to question one another, getting them to question. And I say it all the time, please, I am not standing up here to tell you what the

way things are. . . . I want you to share and listen . . . I'm going to push back on you and I want you to be pushing back on each other . . . and there's some groups [of students] . . . you'll have those really good conversations . . . and then there's other groups that you don't, for whatever reason. (Planning Meeting 1)

Cassandra's comments focused on the need for dialogue and the problems she had encountered in relation to it. She believed that dialogue could promote reflection and growth through bringing to light issues of racism and injustice and the emotional barriers to communication. However, at the same time, she confessed that having discussions about social issues was an area of struggle in her personal life and an area in which she wished to pursue professional growth. Cassandra recounted several recent incidents with friends and acquaintances in which discussions occurred that she found morally troubling—others using racial stereotypes or failing to recognize sources of injustice and racism. She recognized that such conversations were “emotionally charged” and that she often felt “triggered” (she used this term frequently) by others' opinions. In her personal life, she was troubled that such opinions could precipitate either heated exchanges (that had already cost friendships) or reduced her to a reluctant silence (in which case she could feel complicit in others' prejudices). At such times, she felt personally conflicted and struggled to find the right words or an approach to discussion that resulted in a meaningful exchange. As she explained,

I don't know, I wasn't articulating myself well. So what ends up happening is I just get mad, mostly at myself, because I'm getting so emotional and triggered. And I'm not articulating myself well and not getting my point across and I'm not helping the other person understand, or even listen to a different side of the story. I guess that is what I would want. That's what I'm looking for is for you to listen... and I need a little guide book. Do you have that? (Planning Meeting 1)

The desire to promote a meaningful discussion on issues of diversity and equity was both a personal and professional priority for Cassandra. The hope to promote personal and social transformation was an essential part of her own identity as an educator, and it was clear she saw

herself as an educator outside of the classroom too. She believed that facilitating discussions, self-reflection, and challenging one's own beliefs were things that everyone needed, and that this work took place over a lifetime.

In summary, Cassandra had a real desire to improve her own discussion facilitation skills and was willing to make whatever adjustments might help make the conditions right for it. Although she had taught the course three times previously, she was still adapting it for an online format and also to suit her own vision of social justice work and the many powerful diversity and equity events that were occurring regularly in American society during this time.

Initial Planning Session 2: September 3rd

The bulk of the follow-up Zoom session, which lasted approximately 1 hour and 22 minutes, was spent introducing the particulars of the research intervention, *Facilitated Participant Centered Dialogue* (FPCD). In the previous meeting, we had ended with the three essential elements of the intervention, so it was important to move into the particulars of how the instructor would strategically introduce and facilitate discussions. First, I shared a potential 12-week schedule (see Appendix G) that outlined four intervention cycles; each three-week cycle included a pre-assessment, student engagement surveys, reflection periods, and focal student interviews. However, as the semester proceeded, there was far less time available for all of the data collection elements that had been planned. Working together online during the pandemic seemed to require a more sensitive approach to collaboration and the demands asked of Cassandra and her students. Therefore, Figure 3.1 shows the intervention as it was actually implemented over the semester.

Figure 3.1

Schedule of Facilitated Participant-Centered Discussion [FPCD] Intervention

STEP 1
Pre-assessment/Engagement Questionnaire/ Co-constructing Discussion Rules
Iteration 1 & Touchstones Discussion Evaluation Rubric
Iteration 2
Iteration 3
<i>Adjustments to the Intervention</i>
STEP 2
Iteration 4
Iteration 5 & Essential Elements Surveys
<i>Adjustments to the Intervention</i>
STEP 3
Iteration 6 - Touchstones Discussion Evaluation Rubric
Iteration 7 - Touchstones Discussion Evaluation Rubric & Discussion Map
<i>Adjustments to the Intervention</i>
STEP 4
Iteration 8 & Touchstones Discussion Evaluation Rubric
Iteration 9
Engagement Questionnaire (not issued due to time constraints at end of semester)

I explained to Cassandra that facilitating dialogue was a complex activity that required practice as situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and developmental skill acquisition (Dreyfus, 2004), often requiring the leader to make intuitive and instant adjustments based on the dynamics of a class. I also shared Lefstein’s (2010) perspective, that it was helpful to think about classroom dialogue as a problem of complex interpersonal interactions that required judgment about what tradeoffs might be required at any given moment. In order not to overburden

Cassandra with too much advice, I decided to keep my introduction of dialogic facilitation as simple as possible in these early conversations, focusing on what was appropriate at a novice stage (Dreyfus, 2004): the first essential element of an engaging text, and a brief overview of the second essential element, the strategic facilitation of a student-centered discussion.

Providing engaging texts entailed considering whether the texts were relevant to students' interests, offering choices to students, and selecting texts that were aligned with student development. I provided the research-based rationale for these components and encouraged Cassandra to consider what texts she would like to use for discussion in the coming weeks of the intervention. For the second essential element, strategic facilitation, we briefly discussed strategies for co-constructing with students a set of discussion rules, the meaning of egalitarian seating in an online setting, using individual and small group work to scaffold discussions, and establishing a group of focal students to provide feedback on class dynamics. While I summarized the meaning of the remaining components of Essential Element 2 (ceding authority, maintaining group cohesion, and the use of questions), I explained that these components would also be elucidated as we began practicing discussion facilitation in the classroom.

For her part, Cassandra expressed a commitment to involving students in decisions and soliciting their input about areas of interest. She strove to be flexible, adapting her curriculum and encouraging students to exercise their own thinking and judgment. Her comments reassured me that soliciting student interests in finding engaging texts for the intervention would not be a problem. Furthermore, it was encouraging to hear that she put student thinking and judgment first, the potential mark of an educator who valued student-centered dialogue.

To get a better sense of Cassandra's understanding of classroom dialogue, I asked her to elaborate more specifically about her own practices and past experiences facilitating it. She

repeated many of the same themes mentioned two days earlier in our first meeting, advocating for discussion in order to gain different perspectives, push one's own thinking, and engage in personal reflection. Cassandra also cited her own experience in a teacher-in-residence program:

[The program] deepened my understanding of things....because we had time and space for discussion. I don't think we give teachers enough time or space to have conversations, which is why we get stuck in these cycles, because that is where the learning happens...this is where I grew. And I do remember it felt like the first time a light bulb went on—this is a really important piece to my professional development—our time and space for discussion. (Planning Meeting 2)

It was because of such experiences that Cassandra saw her own role of instructor as introducing topics for discussion. She repeated that she proceeded by asking questions, getting students to think, and providing thought-provoking personal examples for consideration. Since she “didn't want her students to flounder” in a discussion, she elaborated on how she would provide “examples from my life and put myself out there. And if I'm asking students to take a risk, then I think I should be taking a risk as well. And I do and sometimes I leave that day and feel like, ‘Oh my God, that was a bear!’”

Cassandra's comments about the importance of dialogue for professional learning, as providing the interpersonal space for reflection and improvement, formed one important foundation of our collaboration. We shared and expressed an appreciation for simply having the time and opportunity to engage in discussion about matters of teaching and learning. Another important aspect of our developing shared understanding was a belief that, in her own words, teaching wasn't about shoving information down students' throats. We both also understood that engaging in dialogue could be exhausting and entailed taking risks.

In these early planning sessions, Cassandra shared her awareness of other challenges pertaining to dialogue as it related specifically to social justice topics. She was committed to

students' critical reflection and the hope that they would become agents of change. She expressed the belief that, "learning is risky" and that it was essential to her own discussion practice to make a "no judgment zone" where sharing was safe. While she understood that it was likely impossible to prevent human beings from making judgements, she also believed that working to set conditions of respect was important. She shared that there are, "a lot of questions we don't ask because we don't know how to frame the question without feeling like I'm going to offend somebody or say something wrong. Or I think too much before I speak and sometimes I think that inhibits conversations." Cassandra's concern for creating a safe learning community aligned with my own views of having students themselves participate in creating the guidelines or rules for participating in discussion. Student involvement and participation in this was important in supporting students' own self-determination and motivation.

Toward the end of Planning Meeting 2, we discussed a few practical matters. Since the class was scheduled to meet for 75 minutes on Mondays and Wednesdays, we agreed that she would attempt to adhere to a schedule in which she facilitated a discussion with her students on course material each Wednesday. We would then follow up with a planning and debriefing meeting each Thursday morning at 9AM. During that time, we would consider what had occurred during the discussion, how the students had responded, what obstacles had been identified, and what modifications might be helpful. We decided that she would not introduce me to the students until the third class, on Wednesday, September 16th. We hoped that this would allow the class to settle into the semester and help them to be more comfortable about participating in the research.

On day one, the plan was for Cassandra to introduce the course, review the syllabus, set expectations, describe it as a discussion-based course on education and social justice, administer

a pre-assessment on student engagement, and co-construct class rules for discussion. The plan for day two included her own presentation of what she described repeatedly as the core of the course, “identity work.” On day three, I would visit the online class and distribute, via email, the consent form. I would review the student consent form with students and then ask them to return the form by the following Monday if they would like to participate in the study. I would then visit the class at the beginning of class that Monday to offer students an additional opportunity to express concerns or ask questions.

Overall, I reflected in my journal, Cassandra was proving to be a very open and flexible instructor when it came to planning and adjusting curriculum and expectations. She expressed a real desire to improve her own discussion facilitation skills and was willing to make whatever adjustments we might jointly consider to make the conditions right for it. My journal entries reflected a feeling of overall satisfaction that I had introduced only the essential elements and a theoretical frame for how I understood dialogue. I thought that my presentations and our discussions had provided flexibility for Cassandra to interpret and implement the intervention in a way that suited her strengths and values. I was also, however, concerned that there was still much work to do in terms of collaborating on the specifics of her intervention lessons and we had already met for three hours.

Initial Planning Session 3: September 8

Our third planning meeting lasted for 33 minutes. I had anticipated that introducing the intervention to Cassandra before classes began would take approximately three hours and our first two planning sessions totaled just that. The ad hoc addition of a third session seemed helpful to tie up any loose ends and respond to Cassandra’s questions after she had a chance to integrate the essential elements of the intervention into her curriculum and syllabus. Therefore, I

approached this third meeting as an opportunity to serve as a sounding board for Cassandra's own thinking about how the course would proceed and what her first intervention implementation would look like. During the intervening five days, she had looked through some of my resources and decided to use a *New York Times* book review article entitled *Talk Less, Listen More, Here's How*, by Kate Murphy during the first-class lesson. She believed that emphasizing listening was foundational to the work she wanted students to engage in over the semester.

Next, she turned her attention to the syllabus and asked about the grading. She wondered about weighing participation as 20% of a student's grade since discussion was such an important factor. She recollected difficulties from past classes in which she struggled to fairly "keep track of who is really doing the participation—really kind of digging in." She wondered whether the student self- and group-assessment rubrics that I would provide were used for grading or were simply student reflection tools. The issue of grading had not entered into my own considerations when developing the intervention, as this seemed to me to fall squarely within the prerogative of the instructor. Nevertheless, I was reminded that grading could be a factor that powerfully enhanced or inhibited participation, serving as potentially motivating (to achieve extrinsic rewards) or debilitating (by making students risk averse and reluctant to speak their own minds). The threat and reward of a grade potentially coerced participation in directions sought by the instructor and could simultaneously block the free expression necessary for honest thinking from students' own horizon of understanding. I spontaneously shared these thoughts with Cassandra, but left it to her to decide how they should be addressed. This early introduction to an instructor's concerns about grades served as a reminder that open dialogue and research in an

authentic instructional space is nested in a context that could powerfully affect the possibility and success of an intervention and must be openly navigated in a formative partnership.

By the conclusion of this meeting, Cassandra had decided on the content of the first two classes, for which I would not be present. She had settled on student introductions in the form of a “serial testimony,” the syllabus and course expectations, reading the *New York Times* article, co-constructing discussion rules using breakout rooms and then whole class discussion, completing the student engagement survey. She would explain to students that I would join them during the third class and that we were working on an educational research project together on classroom discussion. They would be invited, but not required, to participate in that research.

It became clear during this session that I was serving as a dialogic sounding board to allow Cassandra to think back over previous semesters and integrate what she learned from me with what she had learned from previous experiences teaching the course; in that sense it often felt that we were co-constructing the curriculum; this was a trend that continued throughout the semester, although I had not originally envisioned serving in that capacity. Over the next 12 weeks I frequently found myself wondering how I had become absorbed into so many facets of the planning. I later reflected that this might be a by-product of engaging in a formative design partnership with one instructor. As Reinking and Bradley (2009) had suggested, it was difficult for a formative researcher not to become involved in the life of the classroom and students; this might apply equally to the ongoing life, practice, and reflection of the practitioner.

Potential Factors Contributing to or Impeding Success of the FPCD Intervention

In sum then, through our first three planning meetings, I recognized a number of factors that were worth noting as contributors to the potential success of our collaboration on the intervention. The first was a potentially enhancing factor for our work moving forward—the

importance of her commitment to student dialogue and her openness to improving it in her own practice. A number of her expressed beliefs supported this commitment: a) she believed that discussion could lead to reflection and personal development; b) she believed that students should independently develop their own opinions and critical thinking skills; c) she therefore desired a class where students questioned each other and discussed a variety of viewpoints; e) she was amenable to adjusting her own curriculum and pedagogy in order to improve her facilitation skills; and f) she recognized the need for time for metacognitive reflection and dialogue on her own professional practice.

On the other hand, I had noted a few beliefs or practices that were factors that might impede the success of the intervention. These included beliefs that some groups of students just wouldn't share or discuss "for whatever reason" and the discussions were "personality driven." Finally, there was a belief that I found could be either a significant factor in enhancing or impeding discussion. This was Cassandra's understanding that for many students "learning was risky" because one had to put oneself out there and potentially offend others with one's own opinions. Understanding this risk was certainly important and allowed opportunities to overcome it, but sharing with students how fraught and potentially embarrassing unwittingly giving offense could be was problematic and potentially demotivating.

The Authentic Instructional Space: Pre-Intervention Observations and Discussions

In formative experiments, researchers design interventions to improve pedagogical practices in authentic contexts. Therefore, before formally implementing the intervention, I gathered data to get a sense of how Cassandra interacted with students during the first two weeks of online instruction. This information provided baseline insight into the obstacles and opportunities that we would face during our collaboration. These observations (see Figure 3.2) resulted in the

identification of three themes noted about Cassandra and four themes noted about the students, as described below.

Figure 3.2

Pre-Intervention Observations and Discussions in Phase 1

<u>Cassandra</u>	<u>Students</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Classroom press ● Talking about dialogue ● Limited opportunity for dialogue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unspoken boundaries ● Transgressing discourses ● Others not truly listening ● Tensions with social justice

Cassandra

Six of our 20 meetings (30%) occurred before the first formal application of the intervention. These meetings introduced a conceptual framework for dialogue, the essential elements and some components of the intervention, how the interventions could be integrated into the online environment, how to use new technology, scheduling our future meetings, and organizing intervention files and resources.

The three classes I observed prior to implementing the intervention took place concurrently with our first six planning meetings. I watched recordings of the first two classes, but was present for the third in order to introduce myself and the research. This was for several reasons. First Cassandra had expressed a need to introduce herself and the course before introducing me. Second, upon the advice of my advisor and reflection with Cassandra, we decided to allow students time to gain some comfort with the instructor before introducing me and asking for their consent to participate in a research project. Third, Cassandra expressed a desire to introduce what she saw as a key component in the course, “identity work.” She believed

assignments on the concept of identity, and how it pertained to student self-understanding, was a kind of prerequisite to meaningful engagement in and discussion of issues of social justice.

In these three classes before the intervention began, I made certain important observations pertaining to the context of the study: (1) the existence of a “classroom press” (Fullan, 2007; Huberman, 1983) appeared to place significant time constraints and pressure on the instructor; (2) in talking about dialogue, the teacher retained responsibility and authority in the classroom; (3) and, these factors led to little time for students to participate in discussion.

The Classroom Press

First, Cassandra clearly struggled under a “classroom press” in the opening weeks of the course (and it continued throughout the semester. Huberman (2007) identified the daily working reality of teachers as one of sustained and conflicting pressures and time constraints as they are confronted by a variety of demands from stakeholders. Teachers must navigate frequent disruptions and adjustments to their planning such that they are often left with little time for critical distance and reflection on their own work. This topic will be addressed further in Chapters 5 and 6.

In the first weeks of our planning and my observations of the first three classes, it became clear that conducting an online class required more technical planning, real-time adjustments, and time consumption than imagined. The course introductory material and expectations took two full class sessions. The night before the first class, the learning management system crashed and Cassandra’s content disappeared, resulting in a frantic effort to rewrite it in the early hours of the first day. During that first class, she also was unable to construct the breakout rooms needed for a planned activity. She believed this was perhaps the result of logging in through her calendar application rather than directly into her Zoom account. In addition to the typical review

of the syllabus with students, Cassandra also needed to spend time reviewing the learning platform, Brightspace, and outlining and discussing with students the “Zoom Protocols” (expectations for student conduct during a virtual class.) Finally, she did a thorough walkthrough of how to set up a virtual background for any student who wanted to protect their privacy while learning at home.

In these early pre-intervention classes, Cassandra reiterated many times the imperative of having cameras on so that participants in discussion could see each other and make a more personal connection. She repeatedly emphasized the importance of using smaller group breakout rooms in building student comfort and relationships in the class. She also made repeated efforts to bring relationship building opportunities into lesson plans to try to reproduce the kind of caring class atmosphere that she valued in face-to-face meetings. There were other minor but regular technological nuisances, such as repeatedly resending lesson content links through the chat feature of Zoom for late arriving students.

Talking About Dialogue

In the first three classes, Cassandra spent a great deal of time talking about discussions. She repeatedly described the course as discussion-based and made a great effort to signal to students that their discussion participation was an essential element of the class. For instance, in the first minutes of the first class, she shared:

We'll start to get to know each other, and it'll allow us to feel, you know, to build that relationship to feel more comfortable to take risks and conversations that are really important conversations to have, but not always something that we're practiced in having. So we're going to talk a lot about how to have conversations, especially the first couple of weeks. (Pre-Intervention, Class 1, September 9)

And again in the middle of class two, she asked students about the difficulty of having class discussion and what they might need to support their own efforts:

If you have time, I want you to think about participation guidelines—what you need to participate fully in this class—because we've talked a lot about how this class is very much about the discussions that we have; we're starting to think about what does it mean to have a discussion - we're not taught how to talk to each other. We're not taught to do this and we are taught to debate with one another. We're taught to have an argument—and a debate team is like winning an argument, right? But that's not what it's about. That is not a conversation or a discussion and we have to really teach each other. So what are the guidelines? What do you need from your group and what do you need from the larger group in order to participate fully—because we all participate in different ways. (Pre-Intervention, Class 2, September 14)

In order to support a more dialogic pedagogy, Cassandra described herself to the class, verbally and on the syllabus, as the course “facilitator” rather than the more traditional “instructor.” She also spoke about the value of dialogue in our society, and described some of the obstacles to dialogue today. This is a theme that she repeated throughout the semester, and frequently spoke of the need for conversations in the United States: “We are all looking to have deeper conversations in America about race and structural racism.” She emphasized the need for students and citizens to take risks in order to hear a variety of perspectives, learn from the experiences of others, engage in personal reflection, and grow intellectually. To this end she highly valued individual journaling and frequently gave short journaling assignments.

In the first three classes, while Cassandra emphasized the significance of dialogue in class, personal relationships, and society at large, a variety of factors made it difficult to develop dialogue in a meaningful way. She was enthusiastic to talk about the value of dialogue, center the class on it, and warn students about the difficulties that often worked as barriers inhibiting it. She stressed the current social need for dialogue and the polarized social and political contexts in which it rarely occurred. For instance:

This is something I'm working on, as well—how to listen to others who have a different opinion than you do. That's really hard because you're so tied into your own opinion. But if you're not listening people will tune out so change doesn't happen because tuning out means that we've stopped learning from one another and that's what's wrong right now in the country. We were saying we have to have discussions and we have to have discourse,

we are very right now in this time where people are divided in America. In a way that nobody's listening to each other, which is really hard. So we are aligning ourselves with like-minded people and just don't understand each other at all like, it feels that divisive. Sometimes I don't know if you've had that experience, but I certainly have often. So how do we learn how to have this discourse and listen to people who we don't always agree with, so that we can find out what's interesting about that person. Where is this coming from, right? Because it can't just be right and wrong. There are things that I would say are definitely wrong and I think that often. But how do we listen so that we can understand better. Now I'm going to move you into your breakout rooms. (Pre-intervention, Class 2, September 14th)

In speaking at length about these matters, however, Cassandra firmly positioned herself in a traditional role of teacher-centered authority and responsibility. Therefore, the class continued in traditional patterns of I-R-E, even when she attempted to refrain from evaluating the sparse student comments. It seemed apparent to me that a more radical approach to facilitating dialogue would be required. The nexus of early semester classroom press, teacher-centered responsibility, and limited dialogic opportunity appeared to crowd out real opportunities for student-centered talk and students appeared to lack the skill or inclination to accept Cassandra's earnest invitations to more robust participation.

Little Time for Student Dialogue

Third, there was limited opportunity for students to engage in dialogue during the three class sessions prior to the intervention. It was abundantly clear that Cassandra highly valued and emphasized this as a discussion-based class; she also wanted to engage students in developing comfort, engagement, and relationships in these important first days. However, circumstances did not truly permit student-centered discussion to materialize. At one level, time constraints were a considerable factor inhibiting student interactions. The novelty of teaching and learning online and the additional burdens of setting expectations in the virtual space took up considerable class time. Lesson plans were disrupted as technical difficulties arose. As a result, Cassandra had

to adjust and hurry from one activity to the next. She also felt that opportunities to encourage participation and relationship building were not as successful online. When break out rooms on day one did not work, she had to think on the fly and attempted a “Zoom around” that ended up adding little substantial participation. The fun ice-breaker of asking students to fetch common household items and bring them “back to class” required no interaction and lasted less than a minute. In Week 3, the “serial testimony” occurred in small break out rooms and each student had exactly one minute to share information about her/himself. Cassandra ran out of time for the co-construction of discussion guidelines, squeezing them into the last few minutes of class two and then simply presenting a summary in the first few minutes of class three.

In the midst of the rush through these hectic first days of class, Cassandra frequently solicited student input in the hope of starting discussion. But these solicitations resulted in very limited and traditional forms of student participation, brief responses to her queries, or non-responsiveness to many questions of the sort: “What are your thoughts?” or “Did we miss anything?” or “Does anyone have anything to add?” For instance, after completing the reading of a *New York Times* article on the importance of listening during class two, she asked if anyone had comments—three students shared. After the serial testimony in a small group activity, she asked what students had learned about each other; after some hesitation and a cold call to get things started, a few students shared brief anecdotes. At the end of class two, when, following small group work, she asked what they needed in terms of ground rules for discussion, three students responded. At the beginning of class three, when she asked about her students’ experiences of listening to others and being listened to as they “moved about the world” (an informal assignment), no one chose to respond. These early attempts at soliciting student

discussion were typical of I-R-E patterns with which students would have been familiar. Such queries did not succeed in prompting significant student input or dialogue.

At the beginning of class three, Cassandra returned to formally introducing participation guidelines. These were guidelines that she had hoped to co-construct, through discussion, with students in classes one or two. Given the classroom press, she was forced to simply adopt the discussion rules I shared with her from the *Touchstones Discussion Project*. During class, she attributed the guidelines to Touchstones, explained that they were also based on what she had heard from them (the students), and “what typically happens for what we need to participate.” The discussion guidelines that the class reviewed, she added, would be used during the semester for discussion classes to remind everyone “what we’ve agreed upon.”

Co-constructing the guidelines dialogically would likely have encouraged more initial student self-determination, shared reflection, and practice. Nevertheless, while quickly explaining three of the rules: “Read the text carefully; speak clearly; listen to others and don’t interrupt,” Cassandra took time to solicit student’s opinions about the meaning and significance of “giving others your respect.” The topic of respect resulted in two of the more meaningful student responses during the first classes, but here I include them to show how I-R-E patterns can dominate classroom talk and effectively squeeze out opportunities for students to speak to one another and collaborate on co-constructing their own classroom environment:

Amy: Like when they’re expressing their opinions about something. Don’t shut them down. Let them talk before you say what you want to say.”

Olivia: I almost feel like sometimes if you might not totally agree—sometimes it’s harder to completely understand what their viewpoint is if it’s not like what you might think. So sometimes I feel like to be a good listener, to fully understand where they’re coming from, even though you might disagree with it, it’s good to inquire more about what they mean—or what their intention was behind that. Not in order to intimidate or anything like that. But just to be able to fully understand a different viewpoint. I feel like that has a lot to do

with respect, like understanding a different viewpoint like seeing where they're coming from. But you don't necessarily at the end of that be like okay I agree; you can say okay, like I get where you're coming from. That makes sense. (Pre-intervention, Class #3, September 16th)

Cassandra evaluated and summarized these comments about respect at length:

I love that you brought up asking more questions because I will tell you there are people that I just don't agree with that I have a really hard time saying I understand where you're coming from - when I really don't. I feel like it's something that we, especially in this time and in this climate, are challenged with often...we are in a very divisive state right now. And so it is very hard to hear somebody say something that you wholeheartedly don't agree with. That may happen in our class. I don't know where we are—we haven't gotten to know each other well. So respecting others, giving others your respect, and allowing you your opinion—we're going to need to work through this a little bit more—but allowing that and then helping each other to understand where we're coming from. I think the next couple of weeks we're really going to start talking about identity and implicit bias and trying to understand how those influence our beliefs - I think that might help us answer this question a little bit further, of how can we show respect, ask to understand more, and really what I'm hearing all of you say, is being non-judgmental in a way that we can open up these conversations because that's what we need in order to move forward. And if we don't talk respectfully, we're not going to move forward. So it's a skill. It's a skill that I think we all probably need to continue to develop and hopefully we'll have some good practice. Other thoughts? (Pre-intervention, Class #3, September 16th)

Overall, these three pre-intervention findings were significant indicators of what lied ahead. A variety of factors throughout the semester would make it difficult to provide the time needed to facilitate classroom discussion. This was compounded when Cassandra felt the “press” of responsibility for content and fell back on teacher-centered instruction.

Cassandra believed that she had “really good wait time” in class after she had posed a question. She repeated this several times during the semester. The question of how long, when, and why a teacher should wait for students' responses is a significant one because it is connected to affective dimensions of discomfort and anxiety and questions of student agency. That being

said, in these early classes, I witnessed her wait up to 8 seconds before stepping back into a leadership role by posing a different question or attempting to rescue the class.

It was clear how significantly Cassandra felt the onus of responsibility for the class. She came prepared with a variety of activities that she felt were important and engaging. In the early classes of a semester, this is typical. However, in doing so, she spoke the vast majority of the time. She explained and prepared for what is to come, while maintaining, consciously or not, authority and responsibility. This left little time in which she was able to take her hands off the reins long enough for students to experience their own responsibility and struggle with the dynamics of shared collaboration, even in the co-construction of classroom rules.

The Students

In these pre-intervention meetings early in the semester, there was a great deal of talk about the nature and significance of dialogue; yet, there had not been an opportunity for students to engage meaningfully in it. Nevertheless, the insight and wisdom of students was apparent in the few highly pertinent comments they made in brief exchanges. Even early on, before opportunity for real dialogue emerged, students showed an acute awareness of key problems associated with it. These concerns were less theoretical and more relational, about the nature of listening and sharing. In their early comments in class, students appeared to demonstrate: 1) an awareness of unspoken boundaries regarding the kinds of questions that are appropriate to ask; 2) an awareness that in order to have deeper understanding, is necessary but difficult to transgress the everyday limits of discourse; 3) the belief that people who ask questions often are not listening to the other's response because they are consumed with their own thoughts or goals; and, 4) discussions about contemporary social justice issues might pose specific challenges to facilitating dialogue between students.

These points can be illustrated in a few pertinent early remarks made by students. Take for instance a comment made by Sandra in class two, after reading an article about the importance of listening:

I thought that the questions that [the article] said weren't helpful to help you see the deeper meaning to what people are saying, [these questions] were things that you hear so often. Like it [the article] really highlighted questions that were bad questions or the normal questions that people wouldn't consider weird, I guess. But then that made me think that when you do ask more thought-provoking questions it is a little bit more personal or not what people usually talk about . . . some people tend to think that it's like an invasion or . . . it can be taken as a little odd or an invasion of privacy, like that was a weird question to ask—because I feel like we're so used to people not being genuinely interested in what we have to say. (Pre-intervention, Class #2, September 14th)

Sandra provided significant insight into how she perceived individuals tended to ask questions of one another and the feelings associated with asking “thought provoking” questions—or having to respond to them. First, she recognized that there were unspoken and perhaps ambiguous boundaries regarding the kinds of questions that were appropriate to ask; these boundaries demarcated what was “too personal” and threatened to make another feel uncomfortable. One can imagine that for students in a classroom, these boundaries were highly complex and ambiguous, a space where the formal nature of the classroom intersected with the size of the group, unfamiliarity with classmates, and the online format. Students might be uncertain and therefore anxious of crossing hidden or unarticulated boundaries, and thus, making themselves or others (including the instructor) uncomfortable. Therefore, it appeared to be a general anxiety and consideration for others that would bind the voices of many. But second, Sandra also showed an awareness that in order to get to these “deeper” or “thought provoking” questions, one must transgress the “normal” limits of everyday discourse into areas of

“weirdness.” In order to venture beyond everyday talk into this land of honesty and weirdness, relationships and trust were preconditions.

Another student, Luna, captured what appeared to be a third barrier to dialogue from the students’ perspective. She might have been describing discussions with friends, but had perfectly summed up the problem with IRE exchanges in class:

I just wanted to say I related to the part where it was talking about how when people feel that they're not being listened to, they *give short answers*. I see that a lot because you can just tell that the other person already knows what they're going to say, and they're either jumping to conclusions or like they want to defend what they're saying and they're not listening to you. [italics added] (Pre-Intervention, Class #2, September 14th)

While Luna may have been describing relationships outside of class, it struck me just how pertinent her comments were in revealing the problem with classroom discourse and the structure of I-R-E exchanges that probably dominated her schooling. Friends or teachers who already knew what they wanted to say and what they wanted another to think were not engaging in good faith dialogue because they were already anticipating what should be said. The habitual use of such exchanges must make interlocutors feel unappreciated for their own thoughts and ultimately dialogically disaffected. If a student does not really believe that a teacher is genuinely interested in what they think, conditioned over many years of schooling, their responses could tend to be short and directed toward what they believed the teacher wanted. On the part of the student, failure to grasp what the instructor expected might lead to uncertainty about how to respond, and hesitation, recalcitrance, or a blank stare. Responding in a way that failed to address the interest of the teacher might also result in correction or indifference by that teacher, leading to embarrassment or frustration.

I wondered if this student was speaking directly to her experiences in formal schooling when she stated that she saw “a lot that the other person already knows what they’re going to

say.” Did her teachers habitually evaluate responses, or reinterpret her comments to align with the needs of their lesson? Did they simply pass over her remarks as incorrect or not pertinent? If this were the typical experience of students over many years of schooling, it would be no wonder if they were hesitant to speak or kept their comments brief in order not to risk saying too much.

Finally, fourth, it was difficult to know precisely how students perceived these early classes in which Cassandra discussed the significance of dialogue on social justice in our contemporary society. I noted in journal entries during the pre-iteration classes that it was possible that her well-intentioned effort to emphasize the risks of dialogue (in giving and receiving offense for instance), and the societal need for it to improve, only increased the students’ trepidation to engage in it. I also found myself wondering about how students might be feeling in the midst of ferocious political polarization and racial tension during what was being broadcast as a momentous election year. Cassandra herself described tensions between family members and friends and admitted to broken relationships and scenarios that provoked anger and frustration. As I would learn later from students, some experienced the same kinds of situations in their own families. I wondered how willing students would be to speak publicly about any matters that might unwittingly provoke anger, frustration, or even ostracism. All of these feelings were a layer on top of the normal anxiety many admitted feeling in classrooms.

Illustrative of this point is the heuristic that Cassandra provided in class three. Here she explained that when talking about social justice, feeling in one’s *comfort zone* or *feeling triggered* (“where your blood boils”) were negative intellectual and emotional poles to be avoided. Instead, students should find their *learning edge*. She warned,

You may be triggered in this class. Someone may say something completely unintentionally that really triggers you. . . . Everyone makes mistakes and we should. And we’re going to, and I’m going to, and that’s okay. Own the mistake and apologize for it. You don’t need to explain it. And maybe inquire a little more

and tell me why that triggers you—help me understand why what I just said triggers you—and then listen. (Pre-Intervention, Class #3, September 16)

Cassandra also explained that “Sticking your foot in your mouth is an opportunity for learning.” I believed that these were highly developed principles of interaction and required mature relationships in a group.

These brief observations, over three class periods and a combined three hours, begged the question of how to overcome years of conditioning in which students’ voices and thinking were not truly valued. On the one hand, the instructor was pressed for time and found herself struggling with complex pressures related to online logistical challenges and her own responsibilities as an educator. On the other hand, there were students who gave voice to a recognition that many questions were not truly open but leading toward predetermined responses. Others expressed underlying affective barriers to individual expression that were fraught with anxiety about the risk of giving and receiving offense. Could these problems be overcome in a 12-week course using a scaffolded intervention? These were perfect questions to introduce into our collaboration on the implementation of a dialogic intervention.

The Student Engagement Questionnaire

Prior to the start of the formal iterations of the FPCD intervention, a questionnaire was administered in order to establish a baseline for student engagement in the classroom. In assessing the context of the intervention, a brief analysis of the results found that students scored strongly in the behavioral engagement aspect of the survey. For instance, students either agreed or strongly agreed that they listened carefully to the teacher (91%), tried very hard in school (86%), and paid attention in class (86%). In other words, students saw themselves as well behaved and diligent about their work. They also rated themselves highly on items related to emotional engagement. For instance, they either agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed

learning new things in class (86%), were interested in their classwork (73%), and were curious about what they were learning (64%). They were however less likely to agree that class was fun (41%).

On the other hand, students rated their engagement much lower in cognitive aspects of participation. That is, few saw themselves as cognitively engaged or exercising their own agency in the process of learning. In terms of cognitive engagement, only 41% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they “kept track of how much I understand, not just if I am getting the right answers,” or stop to review what they have been doing. Only 45% thought they tried to change the way they were learning if they didn’t understand something.

But the lowest forms of engagement were agentic in nature. Only 14% of students in Cassandra’s online class agreed or strongly agreed that they asked questions during class or told the teacher what they liked or didn’t like and only 9% offered suggestions on how to make class better. Finally, only 27% of students agreed that they offered their opinions during class. 36% agreed that they expressed their own interests.

Overall, pre-intervention survey responses suggested that these self-identified well-behaved and hardworking students were somehow actively engaged in their education while taking up a passive stance. This observation reflects studies that have shown the difficulty in transforming learning in the classroom toward a more dialogic stance (Alexander, 2001; Lefstein, 2009; Mehan, 1998; Nystrand et al., 2003; Reznickskaya, 2013; Skidmore, 2006; Wells, 2007). Unfortunately, the post-intervention engagement assessment was not issued at the end of the term. A confluence of pressures curtailed the time available for the intervention at the end of semester, most significantly the stresses associated with the pandemic and the presentation of student service-learning projects that were a course requirement.

Data Collection

This study was structured as an embedded formative experiment case study (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2009) in order to collect and analyze data throughout the intervention. My approach was primarily qualitative with some quantitative data used to inform iterations of the intervention and the retrospective analysis conducted after its completion. Yin (2009) defined case study as an inquiry that, “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 18). A case study is a methodology used on a system or process, such as a pedagogical intervention in a classroom, that is bound to a particular time and place. Creswell (2013) defined case study as a qualitative research approach that investigates “a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) . . . through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information and reports a case description and case themes” (p. 97). The case studied here was one undergraduate fully online course about social justice in education taught by one instructor who worked with me in the fall of 2020 to collaboratively co-construct an intervention comprised of four steps and nine iterations to facilitate student-centered dialogue.

In this formative experiment, data were collected throughout the intervention. Prior to the formal introduction of the intervention, data were collected to provide a rich description of the context, instructor, and participants. These data were used to provide a baseline from which to measure progress toward the two pedagogical goals. Next, data was collected during the intervention, over the course of the nine iterations that were eventually organized into four steps. During the intervention, the instructor and I engaged in cycles of planning, implementation, and reflection that informed our decisions about how to modify the intervention; these processes also became data for post intervention analysis.

Data collection (see Figure 3.3) prior to and during the intervention was designed to address questions three through five in Reinking and Bradley’s (2008) framework (pp. 75-77):

Question 3. “What factors enhance or inhibit the effectiveness, efficiency, and appeal of the intervention in regard to achieving the set pedagogical goal?

Question 4. “How can the intervention be modified to achieve the pedagogical goal more effectively and efficiently and in a way that is appealing and engaging to all stakeholders?”

Question 5. “What unanticipated positive and negative effects does the intervention produce?”

Figure 3.3

Overview of Data Collection

	Data	Collection	Primary Purpose
Phase 1	Student engagement questionnaire	Before intervention begins	Measure student baseline engagement in terms of: agency, behavior, emotions, cognition
	Semi-structured interview with instructor	One month prior to intervention	Characterize the instructor's orientation toward classroom dialogue, its conduct, and purpose.
	Pre-intervention observations	2 classes prior to intervention	Establish baseline classroom talk patterns
	Pre-intervention content assessment	First week of class	Measure student understanding of course content prior to intervention.
Phase 2	Semi-structured interview with 3 focal students	At the beginning, middle, and end of intervention <i>The meeting after Iteration 1 was not conducted due to time constraints</i>	Characterize students' understanding of discussion and its success in the classroom – as well as their perceptions of their own competence and motivation.
	Audio-video recordings of discussion interventions	6 class periods <i>Although I did occasionally watch segments of these recordings, we had very limited opportunity to view these together.</i>	"Determine enhancing/inhibiting factors, unanticipated outcomes, outcome of modifications, and progress toward goal." *

	Meta-analysis of the development of discussion dynamics with students during the intervention	Six student self-evaluations using protocols	Ongoing student reflection on the roles and responsibilities for themselves individually and the discussion group as a whole.
	Planning and debriefing with instructor	Weekly 60 minutes total	"Determine enhancing/inhibiting factors, unanticipated outcomes, outcome of modifications, and progress toward goal." *
	Guided field notes/Journal	After each class intervention, collected by research and teacher	"Determine enhancing/inhibiting factors, unanticipated outcomes, outcome of modifications, and progress toward goal." *

Baseline Data Collection

In a formative experiment, data collected prior to implementation of the intervention provides a baseline from which to later assess its effectiveness toward the pedagogical goals. The first pedagogical goal of this research was to maximize a college instructors' understanding of dialogic teaching and the strategies used in promoting it during online classroom discussions. Therefore, it was important to assess the instructor's understanding of the purpose and practice of dialogic pedagogy and how she went about facilitating it in the course of her classroom instruction. The second goal of this research was to maximize college students' dialogic participation in an online college classroom.

Instructor Interviews

Over the summer, I conducted a 60-minute semi-structured interview (Appendix H) with the instructor to capture her basic understanding of the purpose of classroom dialogue and the strategies she used to facilitate it.

Classroom Observations

Before the intervention, qualitative data was collected to help describe the site and the context of the intervention. This provided a baseline for evaluating growth toward the pedagogical goals (Reinking & Bradley, 2008). During the first weeks of the fall semester, I

observed and recorded four online classroom meetings. The purpose was to provide a thick description of the research context (Creswell, 2007). I was particularly interested to observe how the instructor used the online environment to generate discussion, what were possible impediments to dialogue, and how dialogic interactions could be maximized through our collaboration.

Pre-Intervention Student Questionnaire

During the first week of school, but before the formal dialogic intervention began, the instructor administered a Likert-scale based student questionnaire (Appendix I) borrowed from Reeve and Tseng (2011) to acquire a baseline measure of student engagement in terms of behavior, emotion, cognition, and agency.

Data Collection During the Intervention

Reinking and Bradley (2008) explained that at the heart of a formative experiment is the collection of data to elucidate the effectiveness of the intervention in reaching the established pedagogical goal(s). They suggested fluid and sometimes overlapping cycles of iterative data collection and analysis can help identify and document modifications needed to improve pedagogical practices and therefore also informs theory. Thus, after establishing baseline data, data was collected iteratively during the intervention itself.

Working in an authentic instructional space also meant accounting for highly complex and dynamic factors contributing to the pedagogical goal. Therefore, data collection was designed to support the identification of factors associated with unanticipated effects in the classroom that could, in turn inform “modifications to existing theory or the development of new theory,” and “suggest further research that might be aimed at accomplishing other goals or testing other theories” (p. 51). Data was gathered from multiple sources during the intervention

occurred over the four months of classes in the fall of 2020.

Classroom Observations

During the intervention, nine classroom discussions were recorded and analyzed to identify factors that enhanced or inhibited student-centered discussion. These factors were then shared with the instructor; together we discussed my observations and adapted facilitation strategies in our weekly planning and debriefing sessions.

Debriefing Reflection Protocols

We asked students to reflect on and discuss the group dynamics by using a rubric borrowed from the Touchstones Discussion Project (Appendix D). These were distributed three times and were meant to serve as “texts” for class reflection; this qualitative and quantitative data was also collected and analyzed to determine factors enhancing or inhibiting dialogue. The original design of this intervention included distributing the rubric once during each step. However, the many pressures we faced resulted in no rubric being used during the second step.

Brief Reflection Surveys of Intervention Components

Surveys (see Appendices J & K) asking both students and the instructor to reflect on the intervention were distributed twice. The survey included eight scaled responses and four optional open-ended questions. This qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed in order to reflect on progress toward the pedagogical goal.

Planning and Debriefing with Instructor

Data was collected from weekly planning and debriefing with the instructor. These were in the form of guided field notes, journal entries, and recordings of our virtual planning and reflection sessions. Debriefing sessions were guided by a list of semi-structured questions (see Appendix L) that pertained to developing a dialogic classroom environment.

Focal Student Interviews

The instructor and I selected four *focal students* and asked them to participate in two semi-structured interviews (De Corte et al., 2001; Reinking & Watkins, 2008). The original plan was to meet with focal students after the first three steps to help inform modifications to the intervention. However, due to time constraints, the first meeting was dropped and we were unable to make time to gather and meet with the focal students until after Iterations 6 and 8. We attempted to select students who presented a range of engagement levels in order to ascertain the needs and perceptions of our students' attitudes toward participating in class dialogue. In other words, we tried to choose a student who seemed comfortable participating, a second who rarely if ever participated, and a third that participated occasionally. Listening to this range of students, we hoped to understand their perceptions and gain a variety of insights into what different students in the class needed in order to engage in collaboration that was open to all voices. These interviews occurred for 20 minutes immediately after class via a Zoom meeting. Protocols for these interviews are included in Appendix M.

Post-Intervention Data Collection

Due to time constraints, the two post-intervention assessments were not administered at the end of the semester to support the retrospective analysis. The summative assessment for the course was a service-learning project and Cassandra was unable to squeeze in additional assessments associated with this study.

Data Analysis

The intervention resulted in nine iterations of four steps (see Figure 3.1) and analyses of the data occurred over three distinct phases. In Phase 1 of my analysis, data was collected and analyzed in a process of ongoing collaborative curriculum design (Voogt, et al., 2011) with

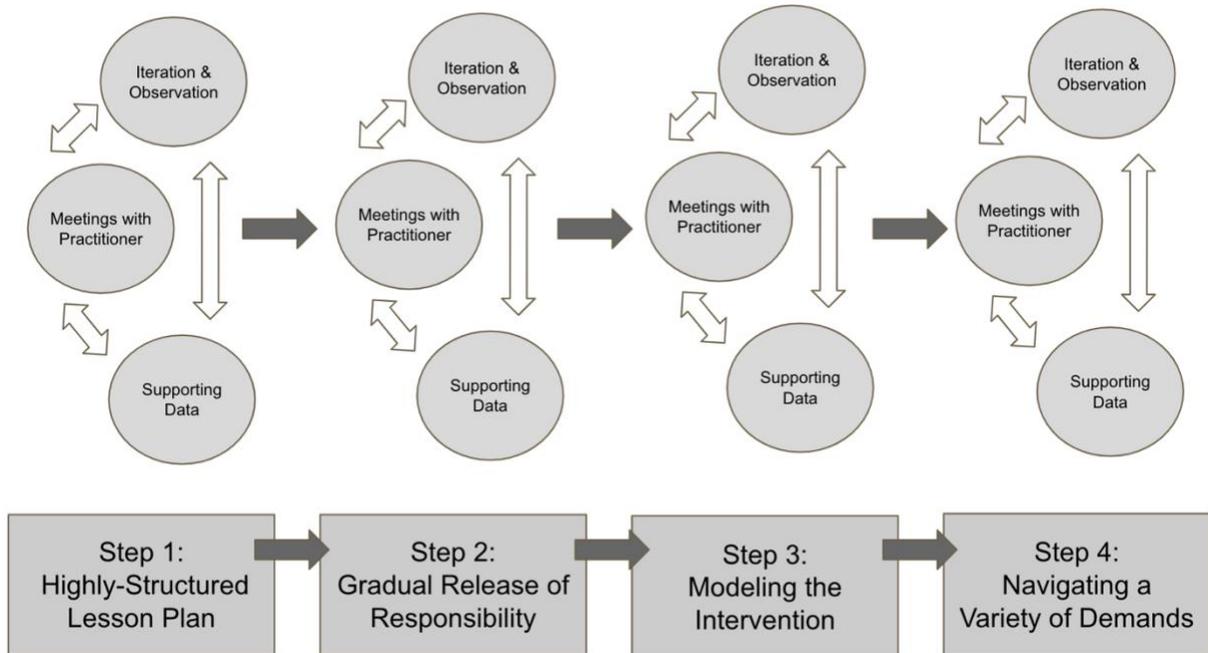
Cassandra, the course instructor. During the intervention itself, we co-constructed lesson plans and discussed facilitation strategies to make progress toward our pedagogical goals. In Phase 2, after the intervention was completed, constant comparative methods (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were used to identify any factors that were enhancing or impeding progress, as well as any modifications that needed to be made toward reaching our pedagogical goals. Finally, in Phase 3 of my analysis, data across the entire intervention was analyzed holistically in a retrospective analysis (Gravemeier & Cobb, 2006) to provide important insights about implications, unanticipated outcomes, and recommendations for future research and classroom practice. These multiple sources and analyses, described below, provided evidence of methodological rigor – as discussed at the end of this chapter.

Phase 1: Collaborative Curriculum Design

Planning, implementation, and reflection during the intervention proceeded iteratively through a process of collaborative curriculum design (Voogt et al., 2011). Cassandra and I had weekly meetings in which we planned iterations of FPCD and then debriefed on what had occurred. In our planning meetings before each iteration, we identified the topic for discussion, selected texts, considered or refined facilitation strategies, and co-constructed lesson plans. Then, I observed the discussion session between the instructor and students and took notes on what occurred. Sometimes during these sessions, I would send Cassandra private messages using the Zoom chat feature or we would discuss what was occurring while students worked in breakout rooms. Finally, after each iteration, Cassandra and I debriefed the session and discussed factors we believed enhanced or impeded progress toward the two pedagogical goals. It was also during this debriefing that we considered what FPCD strategies to focus on for the next iteration. Figure 3.4 presents an overview of our ongoing collaboration and reflection during the intervention.

Figure 3.4

Overview of Collaborative Curriculum Design Across Four Steps of the FPCD Intervention



Voogt et al. (2011) described the significance of this type of collaborative curriculum design as situating and actively engaging the educator (and I might add, researcher) within the meaningful context of their own professional teaching and learning. Through collaboration within an authentic teaching context, educators can focus on developing a deeper understanding of their own practice, develop new strategies to meet their goals, and apply them within a concrete classroom setting. In-the-moment teaching practices are then followed by shared reflection and ongoing support. Using this collaborative curriculum design, Cassandra and I iteratively evaluated what factors appeared to be improving or impeding progress toward the two pedagogical goals and then jointly modified the intervention. Data from recorded planning sessions and teaching sessions, my field notes, and descriptive analyses of survey data (the *Touchstones* protocol and intervention component surveys) were used to inform these decisions.

Adjustments to the intervention occurred as needed after each iteration.

While modifications to the intervention occurred as the result of analysis and discussion in weekly planning meetings, I tried to refrain from making any significant changes until sufficient time and reflection had passed to make more secure generalizations. Therefore, more significant modifications tended to occur after what was later clustered into “steps” of the intervention. So for instance, it was after the first three interventions (Step 1) that we decided that Cassandra would break from the established written text-based lesson structure to adapt facilitation to her interest in having students view the documentary film, *13th* (see Chapter 4), which became the start of Step 2.

Phase 2: Constant Comparative Coding

Phase 2 of my analysis occurred after Cassandra and I completed the semester-long intervention. Analysis began in January 2021, a month after the intervention ended. First, I created digital files of all class recordings including those in which the intervention was implemented (n = 9) and those where it was not implemented (n = 12). These files included recordings of the two focal student meetings that occurred immediately after Iterations 6 and 8. I also created a file of all planning meetings with the instructor (n = 20) and another file of my reflective research journal and field notes. Finally, I created a file for my survey data: Touchstones Rubrics, Intervention Reflection surveys, and engagement surveys. I transcribed recordings from all 20 of our planning meetings and all nine of the interventions, plus four classes during which the intervention did not occur; this provided important supporting data particularly before the intervention began.

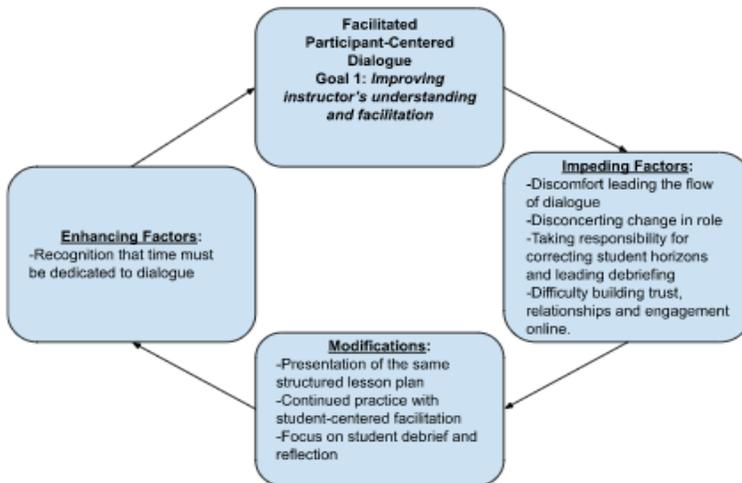
Then, I engaged in constant comparison coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of transcripts from all planning meetings, discussion iterations, and field/journal

notes at the level of each iteration. My coding was guided by what Saldana (2013) described as research-question alignment, affective coding, and structural coding. When coding data for research-question alignment, I looked for data that aligned with the framework of questions developed by Reinking and Bradley (2008) regarding what factors enhanced or impeded progress toward the goals of the intervention, and what modifications needed to be made to improve the intervention's effectiveness. When coding data for affective elements, I focused on feelings, values, thoughts, and judgments of the facilitator and participants regarding their experiences of classroom dialogue. Finally, during the structural coding process, I examined, labeled, and categorized themes that emerged within the iterative chronological structure of each step and its constitutive iterations.

My first cycle of coding for research question alignment and affective elements focused on data from transcripts of planning and debriefing meetings, discussion iterations, and my field notes. Although this cycle of coding was guided by the overarching framework of what factors enhanced or impeded progress toward the pedagogical goals, the codes generated at this level were relatively open in nature. While proceeding through my analysis of each iteration, I also kept chronologically arranged analytic memos to begin constructing a narrative of what had occurred during the intervention. Figure 3.5 exhibits this open coding process of a planning session transcript on the left and an example of a corresponding analytic memo on the right.

Figure 3. 5

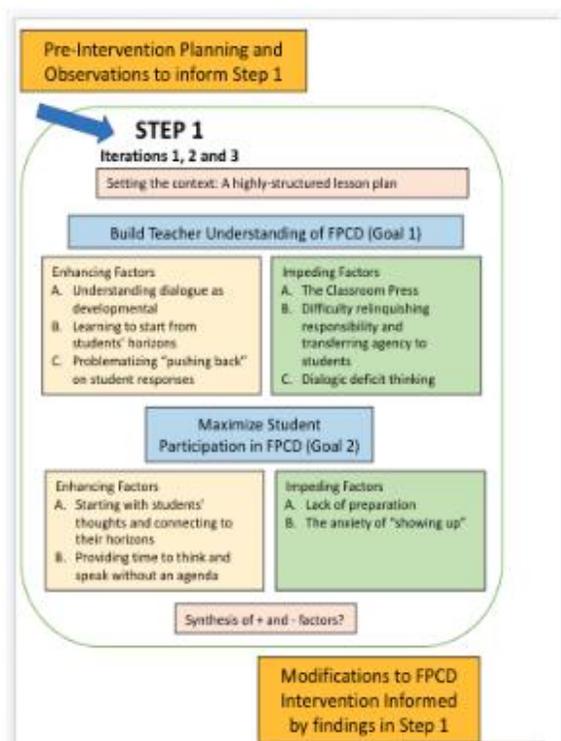
First Cycle/Open Coding for Iteration 1



Finally, in a third cycle of coding (Figure 3.7), these findings were further generalized at the structural level of each step, by selecting and labeling categories of codes that characterized enhancing and impeding factors across a specific set of iterations, and then using these data to describe modifications to the intervention before moving to the next step.

Figure 3.7

Third Cycle/Selective Coding for Step 1



Phase 3: Retrospective Analysis

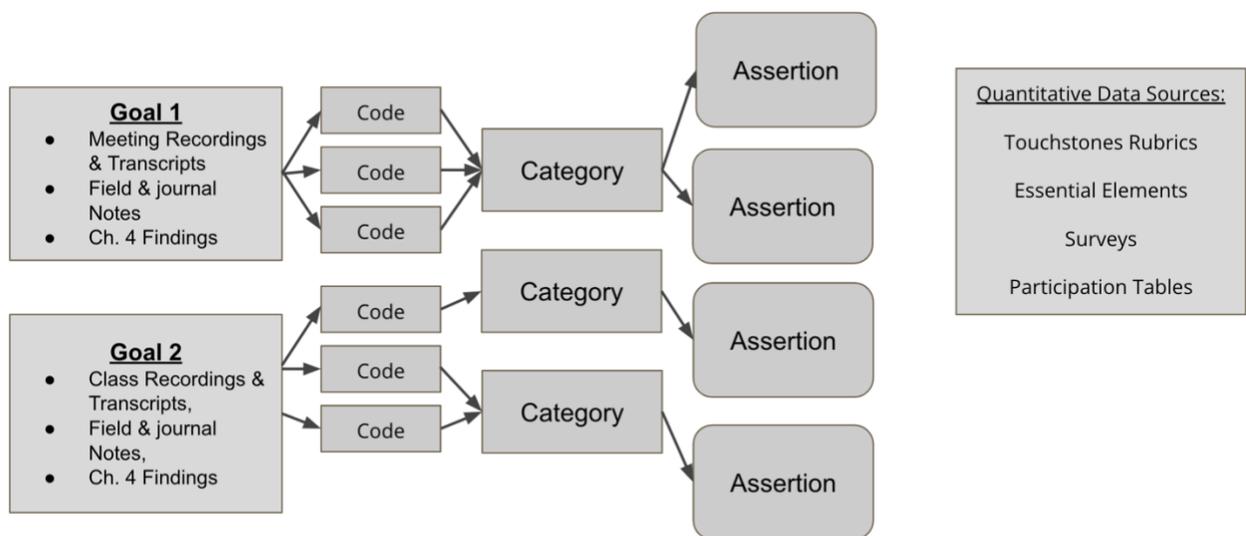
Data analysis for this study concluded with a retrospective analysis of data collected across the intervention (Gravemeijer & Cobb, 2006; Reinking & Bradley, 2004). The purpose of this analysis was to holistically examine all sources of data (see Figure 3.3 above) to ascertain what progress was made and what factors were significant in the implementation and modification of the intervention. This retrospective analysis provided me an opportunity to link back to the theoretical underpinnings of this formative experiment and allowed a broader view from which to assess the overall transformation of the classroom, any unanticipated outcomes, and directions for future research. It also served to empirically ground the findings and provide insights for improved implementation of future interventions.

Following Gravemeijer and Cobb's (2006) model of retrospective analysis, I applied

constant comparative coding methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and drew on video recordings of the interventions during classes, recordings of planning and debriefing meetings with the instructor, and data gleaned from observation notes, journal notes, interviews, surveys, and reflection instruments. This chronological analysis and coding proceeded through cycles of analyzing and comparing data from each iteration and each step of the FPCD intervention. With an eye toward the two stated pedagogical goals, I conducted open and axial coding to develop categories of findings and make final assertions about factors that appeared to enhance or impede growth toward these pedagogical goals (see Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8

Retrospective Coding and Analysis

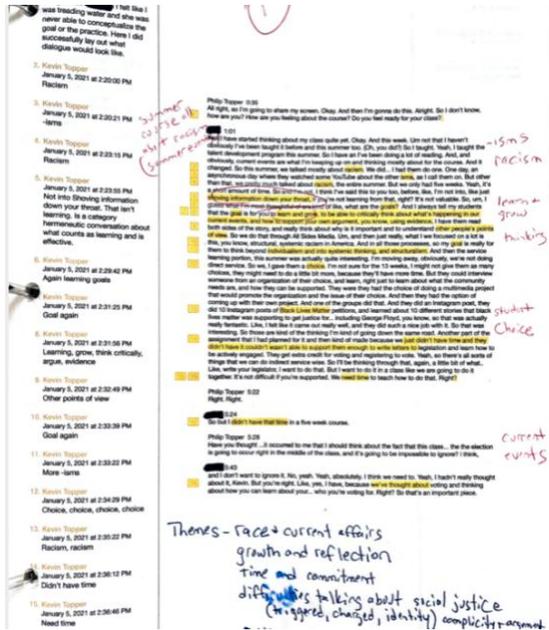


I began retrospective constant comparative coding by reviewing the findings from Phase 2 of my analyses, examining the iterations and steps across the duration of the intervention. As needed, I also referred back to the transcripts, iterations, and field notes to compile a set of comprehensive selective codes. In doing this, I was guided by the a priori lenses of research question alignment, as well as affective and structural coding. Figure 3.9 presents my work,

moving from transcripts and results to a second level code that I called *technology*. This code gathered all of the data, across the nine iterations and four steps, that related to the way online learning and technology enhanced or impeded our progress toward our pedagogical goals.

Figure 3.9

Retrospective Coding for Axial Level Codes



a. Technology

At the intersection of technology and pandemic - we would spend our meeting time building the slide deck together.

For all the benefits of technology it did add another layer of complication that consumed significant amounts of planning and class time. The pandemic also made the fully online class a reality. This brought new technological demands for relative novices in this kind of instructional space. It consumed additional planning and instruction time. Cassandra sought new applications to reproduce elements of regular classroom pedagogy and curriculum. A good bit of our planning time was consumed with the following activities:

- Frozen screens, power drained, moving to better location, lessons not loading on Nearpod, Flipgrid spinning, interacting with IT at the University.
- Audio breaking up.
- Sending emails & those about technology
- Especially at the beginning of the semester!
- Designing and practicing a discussion map
- Fussing over getting break out rooms made 9/21
- Getting students back into breakout rooms they fell out of
- Finding moved files before interventions 9/23
- Editing slideshows
- Keeping students from slipping out of gallery view or camera off
- Generating online surveys
- Practice together Nearpod and its online polling how to share reports
- Taking our time together to put together polls, slides, etc.
- Take class time to discuss online and zoom protocols
- Spend class time walking through how to set up a virtual background for privacy
- Discussing how to conduct selves in breakout rooms, having a leader and timekeeper, notetaker
- Student concerned that connectivity issues would affect participation and thus grade (8:10:51)
- During class tutorials on apps

Good section 11: 24:23 & 11:27:05 esp.

Lawnmowers outside windows, house repairs

Even in class 1 disrupted because she couldn't make breakout rooms and had to adjust plans on the fly. She believed she had logged in to zoom through her calendar and was not a host and didn't have the option to create them.

Working through these axial codes across the breadth of the intervention, I then further abstracted these themes to create sets of selective codes reflecting more general categories related to enhancing and impeding factors during the intervention. Figure 3.10 presents a table that I created in order to discern the selective called that revealed what I described as the classroom press.

Figure 3.10

Example of Retrospective Selective Coding

A. Classroom Rush

Number of factors "crowded in our time and space for planning and reflection. Pertinent when one is trying to change the orientation of the students and instructor and their pedagogy. Took time for fully elaborating and integrating the components of the essential elements into the coursework and instructional practice.

Text
 Debriefing (during class)
 Time to view previous session (during debriefing)

Constantly planning mere days before the class. How much is because my intervention made claims on "text" and pedagogy? Waiting to plan with my collaboration. How much is because it is so difficult to identify what can serve as a "text" for college students. Because they aren't trained to read carefully, evaluate, and discuss. We were both familiar with the textbook and neither of us even suggested that a reading from it would be "discussable".

There were a number of course components already: reflection journals, self-assessment assignments, all sides media, service project with multimedia presentation, educational autobiography, all sides media work, discussion boards possible, social justice activities for reflection and transformation, guest speakers, documentary films, current events, social inequities and injustices in the state of Rhode Island.

Transformation and discussion.

Sheer weight of the intervention and research components: text, facilitation strategies, debrief and planning, pre&post assessment, surveys, focal students, reflection rubrics, intervention reflection survey, rules construction, pre & post planning of intervention, consent forms,
 Social workshops - environmental ed association. Workshop professional learning, de| work, brought people in etc. phd
 introduction to class, and organizing and integrating into the coursework and busy schedule already.

Ran out of time in several lessons, ran out of time in early classes before i even started with her, moved around scheduled events
 The classroom rush effects the
 Background in classroom teacher; human development BA; certification early childhood; masters: developmental science;

- Research,
- adjunct,
- Education specialist - research practice partnership; support in-service in science education; and pre-service teachers; responsibilities on research side
- project through school education. Funded by district
- outreach program through the school of education
- full-time job, NSF Grant
- doctoral program, conferences, proposals

Borrowed from the sense of being overwhelmed in secondary school classrooms in the hurley burley of school life. Cassandra was a doctoral student, is adjuncting to have the opportunity to teach a class that she loves, at the same time, she has a full-time job working for

Finally, I gathered and analyzed my selective codes to derive a series of four assertions associated with the intervention and our progress toward the two pedagogical goals. Figure 3.11 presents a summary of the entire cycle of coding leading up to the assertion that factors associated with the classroom press impeded the development of classroom dialogue.

Figure 3.11

Example of Coding Cycles and Associated Codes Leading to Assertion 1

Open codes	Axial Codes	Selective codes	Assertion 2
Things are simply different; stressed out; emotional exhausting; students in quarantine; check-ins on feelings; no service learning project; social isolation; anxiety; national guard at my door; difficult feeling connection; no body language; Students in bed; everyone's just a mess	Pandemic	Classroom Press	Many Factors Associated With The "Classroom Press" Were Significant Barriers To The Development Of Classroom Dialogue
Political polarization; Feeling baited/triggered; loss of friendships; social and family tension; presidential election; fear of being judged, avoiding conflict; what does this say about our country; indignation & offense	Political/cultural divide		
Frozen screens, power drained, moving to better location, apps spinning; Interacting with IT Audio breaking up; breakout room issues; gallery view or camera off; discuss online and zoom protocols; virtual backgrounds/privacy; tutorials on apps	Online learning		
Doctoral student; adjunct teaching; research agenda; professional learning conference; grant writing; just keeping my head in the game; I do too much; family responsibilities; work-life balance	Professional responsibilities & adjunct		
Introducing FPCD; finding texts; planning/debriefing meetings; reviewing recordings; facilitation strategies; generating questions; focal students; assessments; imagining arguments; small group work; whole class discussions; surveys & rubrics; co-constructing guidelines, significant class time for long discussions	Intervention complexity		

Methodological Rigor

In this embedded case-study formative experiment, I used several strategies to establish methodological rigor and ensure trustworthiness of the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) established four main criteria for strengthening the trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

Credibility of the findings refers to confidence that the data reflects what occurred in the intervention. In this study, I used multiple sources of data to triangulate findings. Data were collected from practitioner interviews, classroom observations, recordings of nine sessions of FPCD, student focal groups, student and instructor surveys, and planning and debriefing meetings with Cassandra. The 11 collaborative conversations (excursi) provided a deeper and richer examination of the challenges Cassandra faced while trying to transition to a more dialogic

classroom. Furthermore, our collaboration revolved around a certain set of recurring questions regarding the nature of dialogue that was student-centered, how to motivate all students to participate, and what obstacles consistently arose during the nine iterations.

The survey utilized in this study also supported the credibility of this study. The Touchstones Discussion Evaluation rubrics provided sets of shared reflections and responses by all students about what was occurring in the classroom and what dynamics they observed. These rubrics were the basis for discussion between teacher and students as they individually and collectively experienced FPCD iterations and the development of their class discussions over time. Likewise, the student and instructor Essential Element surveys were paired to determine if the students and their instructor had the same perceptions about implementation of the essential elements in the FPCD iterations and the changes that were occurring over the semester.

Reinking and Bradley (2008) argued that the careful selection of an appropriate site for research was important for establishing rigorous formative experiments. The researcher should identify a site in which opportunities to learn through practice and observation are likely. In other words, the site should not be one in which success was a foregone conclusion and few real challenges arose, nor should it be a place where failure was all but guaranteed. In the case of conducting research during a pandemic, the selection of an online 100-level university course presented unique but surmountable challenges to classroom dialogue.

Transferability indicates the potential for this study's pedagogical practices and findings to be applied in other contexts, such as different populations, situations, or locations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Creswell (2014), as well as Reinking and Bradley (2008), both describe the importance of providing thick-rich or fine-grained details in order to encourage transferability. In this study, I provided a rich description of the pre-iteration setting, including Cassandra's

interpretation of classroom dialogue, as well as her attitude and approaches associated with it. I also described her early interactions with her class at the beginning of the semester, before we implemented FPCD formally. This included observations of students and dynamics of participation and discourse that occurred before we began implementing FPCD. Next, I provided detailed reporting of the setup, implementation, and results of each iteration, along with episodes of dialogic exchange that occurred in the classroom during FPCD. I also provided detailed descriptions of the discussion dynamics that occurred throughout the implementation. Descriptions of the planning sessions, including the decisions made and obstacles that we faced also provided significant data. The richness and fine-grained details of all of these narratives and data were included to improve transferability to other contexts through adopting or adjusting the practices found here. Thick description and fine-grained detail helped paint a picture that was recognizable to any educators who had attempted to facilitate classroom discussion with their students.

To increase the dependability of this study, we maintained a lesson structure based on the three Essential Elements of FPCD throughout the intervention. These Essential Elements emerged as a result of a pilot study conducted in 2018-2019 and were the core theoretical underpinnings of the intervention. Through collaboration with Cassandra, these elements were implemented in Step 1 in a highly structured lesson plan. This plan consisted of a short and engaging social justice text, small group work, whole group discussion, and attempts at student-centered debriefing. We regularly collaborated on selecting different texts to meet the needs of the course curriculum, and our efforts to identify and utilize appropriate texts was described in great detail. Cassandra and I also attempted to maintain consistency in the intervention through the course of the study. The few significant adjustments to the implementation of the

intervention were made at the level of incremental steps as the needs of instructor and teacher became more apparent. These changes were carefully documented as modifications and described at the introduction of each step in the results of this study (Chapter 4). The iterative nature of formative design research also increases dependability. In this study, observation over time revealed certain recurring themes during the implementation of FPCD and in the resultant findings. These themes were gathered and further generalized as four assertions that are found in Chapter 5.

Reinking and Bradley (2008) argued for the importance of adequate time for the research. Adequate time is needed to recruit and support a teacher, understand the classroom ecology, work through logistical issues, and collaborate on achieving a pedagogical goal. A five-month time frame for this study seemed the appropriate duration for this research as it reflected the time available to most college educators for planning and leading a course and focusing on a professional learning goal of improving classroom dialogue.

Confirmability indicates the degree to which the findings are reported without bias and verifiable by other researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, student and practitioner discussion exchanges are reported consistently and sometimes at length, in order to increase trustworthiness. I have carefully detailed the procedures for collecting and analyzing multiple data sources and my dissertation advisor has challenged me, playing devil's advocate, during the implementation, data collection, and reporting of my findings. I also used digital and paper journals to support my reflexivity and transparency.

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 3, I outlined the methods informing this study including the design, context and participants, intervention, data sources and collection procedures, analytical methods, and

efforts to establish rigor. Two pedagogical goals were identified, one for the instructor and another for her students. The intervention occurred over the course of a one semester undergraduate college class on education and social justice and, through several iterative cycles of analyses, I attempted to identify barriers and enhancements to increasing teacher understanding of and student engagement in student-centered classroom dialogue. Phases of this study from pre-intervention preparation and description, through the iterations and steps of its implementation were also thoroughly described. Next, Chapter 4 presents the results of carrying out the FPCD intervention and Chapter 5 reports the resulting assertions of my holistic retrospective analysis of the data set.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE INTERVENTION

This chapter presents results of nine iterative sessions of the FPCD intervention and modifications made along the way in response to specific impeding factors identified during classroom implementation. In addition to questions focused on identifying two pedagogical goals and details of the FPCD intervention designed to achieve those goals (as presented in Chapter 2 and 3), Reinking and Bradley's (2008) framework included three questions for analyzing the implementation of this intervention:

1. What factors enhanced or inhibited the effectiveness of the FPCD intervention?
2. What modifications would be made to the intervention to more effectively reach the pedagogical goals?
3. What unanticipated effects did the intervention produce?

Answers to the first two questions are provided here in Chapter 4 and answers to the third question will be outlined as part of my discussion in Chapter 6.

Overview of Four Steps for Implementing the FPCD Intervention

In the two weeks before the first iteration of the intervention, Cassandra and I had engaged in hours of discussion over six meetings. She shared her instructional preferences and course goals and I shared the priorities of my research. I presented details of the FPCD intervention over the course of several meetings, and she introduced the course to her new students; during that time I also made some valuable observations of the online classroom context. These observations helped me to identify patterns of instructional practice that were potentially inhibiting factors for successfully implementing the FPCD intervention during the research. The intervention was implemented in four *steps* as depicted in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Four Steps of the FPCD Intervention

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
A Highly Structured Lesson Plan	Gradual Release of Responsibility	Modeling the Intervention	Navigating a Variety of Demands to Effectively Wrap Up the Semester
Iterations 1, 2, & 3	Iterations 4 & 5	Iterations 6 & 7	Iterations 8 & 9

In each step of the intervention described below, the first two questions are addressed in light of our iterative planning and implementation. In *Step One*, consisting of Iterations 1, 2, and 3, Cassandra introduced three highly structured lessons and data suggested that she achieved a paradigmatic student-centered dialogue—one in which most students spoke to each other for 60 minutes rather than responding to her. In *Step Two*, consisting of Iterations 4 and 5, Cassandra and I made modifications to gradually release responsibility—or my own control over the iterations—in order to allow Cassandra more autonomy and thus adapt FPCD to her own style and curriculum. In *Step Three*, consisting of Iterations 6 and 7, we attempted, through my modeling, to refine the practices and structure of the intervention toward the two pedagogical goals. Finally in *Step Four*, consisting of Iterations 8 and 9, Cassandra and I navigated a variety of demands in attempting to integrate the intervention as fully as possible into her own pedagogical practices.

The unit of analysis during the planning and implementation of the intervention was a single iteration. It was mostly at the level of the iteration that Cassandra and I collaborated on improving the intervention and moving toward the dual pedagogical goals. Planning, implementing, and analyzing data iteratively was absolutely necessary in order to capture the

complexity of the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of those involved, individually and as a group. I formed baseline data on which to shape the *first* iteration through several pre-intervention observations of Cassandra's classroom practices amidst the complex social and interpersonal factors of teaching online during a pandemic.

Results, however, are thematized and presented at the level of the step, which included all of the planning and debriefing meetings that occurred at those times. Each presentation of a step follows the same general pattern: a) a summary of the context and iterations occurring in that step; b) any modifications made to improve implementation in that step informed by the previous step; c) identified factors enhancing the pedagogical goals; and finally, d) identified factors impeding the pedagogical goals. The process then repeats—these new observations are summarized and included in the next step.

The one to two hours of planning and debriefing with Cassandra each week were the locus for informing and supporting her understanding of hermeneutic dialogue and its facilitation, or fulfilling Pedagogical Goal 1. These meetings generally consisted of identifying discussion texts, outlining a lesson plan of supporting scaffolds for the whole group discussion, providing strategic facilitation advice, and debriefing previous iterations. The online classroom itself was the lab in which Cassandra put new strategies into practice, realized how FPCD played out in an authentic instructional space, and acquired new facilitation skills; the online classroom was therefore also the place to test the intervention with students and work toward Pedagogical Goal 2.

In the course of implementing the nine iterations of the intervention, Cassandra and I engaged in what I came to see as 11 especially significant conversations or *excursi*. These dialogues provided important insights into factors that enhanced or impeded the instructor's

understanding of FPCD (Pedagogical Goal 1) and my ability to communicate its meaning and purpose. I chose the word “excursus” from the Latin meaning “a running out” because in these conversations, Cassandra and I ran forward in unpacking our own assumptions concerning what FPCD was built on and the details of facilitating it. Although these excursi were unplanned and unanticipated, they represented significant moments of exchange in trying to understand one another and come to a shared understanding. As such, they formed an important part of the data that enabled me to identify factors that impeded or enhanced more effective engagement in classroom dialogue. In other words, I began to see our successive discussions over the meaning and facilitation of dialogue, which I decided to capture in the form of excursi, as our shared interpretive attempts to understand one another and how Cassandra would apply dialogue in practice.

Step 1: A Highly-Structured Lesson Plan (Iterations 1, 2, and 3)

Prior to Step 1, I had sought to understand Cassandra’s practices and the classroom context in order to identify potential impeding factors present before the iterations began. This was described in Chapter 3. This pre-intervention analysis helped establish scaffolds that would be needed for Step 1 (Iterations 1, 2, and 3) of the intervention. I thought of this as “setting the stage” for Cassandra’s development of skill acquisition analogous to that of assisting another in learning to ride a bicycle: finding the bike, setting up the training wheels, finding a safe practice surface, actively holding and guiding the bike, and carefully letting go as the rider acquires balance and control. In other words, I foresaw a gradual release of responsibility. Now in Step 1, Cassandra was beginning to ride the bike.

Setting The Context of Step 1

The first step of our collaboration involved three iterations of highly structured lesson plans. In this case, highly structured meant adhering to a prescriptive multi-staged plan that utilized an entire class period. The stages included, first, the use of short texts that aligned with CORI principles (engaging text, relevant to student interests, aligned with student development, and students offered choice). For the first three iterations, we selected texts for student choice and provided a brief summary of each. These texts were developmentally appropriate for beginning dialogue: they were short, contained no difficult vocabulary, and addressed contemporary relevant social justice issues in schools today. While the texts were not part of Cassandra's original curriculum, they did cover educational social justice issues that she had regularly taught in the past. The first three iterations focused on two texts from *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education* (Gorski & Pothini, 2018); the two texts were titled *Case 5.1: Protesting the Pledge* and *Case 6.1: Black Lives Matter*. The texts were read aloud by student volunteers during class, and not assigned for homework, to ensure that everyone had equal access to the subject of discussion during class.

A second part of the lesson plans in Step 1 included the use of individual and small group work, followed by whole class discussion. This scaffolded approach to whole group dialogue was used to support participants and the facilitator in gradually developing the comfort, trust, and skills needed for sustained student-centered discussion. Individual work allowed time for reflection on the subject, while small groups gave students more intimacy and a smaller stage to try out their ideas. The third part of the lesson was set aside for whole class discussion, and a fourth was focused time for metacognitive debriefing over what occurred during each iteration. Components of these lessons just fit into the 75-minute class period.

We decided that each iteration of the first step would adhere closely to this lesson plan structure in order to support the development of FPCD and guide Cassandra's initial attempts to change her role from teacher-centered instruction to that of a student-centered dialogue facilitator. The lesson design provided both instructor and students with intentionally short and focused opportunities for dialogic skill acquisition. This seemed important to us because dialogue is a complex activity (Lefstein, 2010) that occurs at the intersection of cognitive, affective, and social factors; consequently, these needed to be navigated simultaneously, which required concentration, patience, and reflection.

All in all, the utilization of such highly structured iterations served two functions: first as training wheels to develop conditions in which dialogue could occur, and second, to gradually build participant awareness of individual and group factors that impeded and enhanced dialogue. Data collected and analyzed during Step 1 was derived from planning and debriefing meetings, three classroom iterations of the intervention, my research field notes, and students' responses to the *Touchstones Discussion Evaluation* rubrics.

Implementing Step 1

During the first step of the intervention, my priority was to alleviate the classroom pressure that Cassandra was experiencing at the beginning of the semester. By September 23rd, we had spent nearly ten hours in our planning sessions discussing classroom dialogue, how to implement the intervention, what adjustments to her curriculum might be needed, how best to utilize technology in an online classroom, how to address the challenges of teaching during a pandemic, and how to navigate the topic of social justice in a highly charged cultural and political climate. With all of these overlapping considerations, providing Cassandra with the highly-structured initial models of FPCD felt helpful and appropriate. I also hoped that the

student-centered elements of Iterations 1, 2, and 3 would provide focused time for student-led activities that could gradually de-center Cassandra's authority and student engagement. The short times designated for each part of these iterations assured time for student-led metacognitive debriefing. Through this debriefing, it was hoped that students would have the opportunity to identify and overcome their own affective barriers and anxieties about participating in class dialogue, and thus enact their own individual and group development.

Iteration 1 - September 23

Toward the end of Planning Session 6, and because we were running short on time before the first iteration, I told Cassandra that I would send a lesson plan with three short texts from *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education* (Gorski & Pothini, 2018) for her to consider offering to students. I also volunteered to build a Zoom poll for students to examine and then vote on the most difficult *Touchstones* (2010) discussion guideline to follow (see Appendix D for the *Touchstones* discussion guidelines). Because reflecting on ground rules and identifying potential barriers to discussion is an early *Touchstones* (Zeiderman, 2012, pp. 15-20) lesson, I suggested that after looking at the polling results together with students, Cassandra could facilitate student reflection on the guidelines. Instant polling features provided students immediate feedback designed to elicit metacognitive reflection and discussion. This activity involving students' reactions to established discussion guidelines was designed to be one of the many 15-minute reflection activities they would engage in over the semester.

Likewise, I created a Google survey of the *Touchstones* discussion evaluation rubric for shared reflection after their discussion. The rubric asked participants to assess discussion dynamics such as: *dominance, cooperation, silence, interrupting, respect, listening, and interest*. Like the polling at the beginning of class, the Google survey would provide instant shareable

data for analysis and reflection about their own behavior during discussion. These pre- and post-discussion reflection activities served to address three student-related factors described in Chapter 3 that might potentially impede success of the FPCD intervention; these included affective barriers associated with taking risks with peers, anxiety about transgressing social boundaries, and feelings of not being appreciated or heard.

In sum then, Iteration 1 started with 10-15 minutes for class reflection and conversation on the discussion guidelines, and then allotted 15 minutes for students to choose a text and read it aloud. This would be followed by 10 minutes to work in small group breakout rooms, a 15-minute whole class discussion, and then, toward the end of class, 15 minutes for students to have a debrief about the discussion. This 70-minute lesson plan designated time for all three essential elements of the FPCD intervention (i.e., student selection of a developmentally appropriate text, strategies for facilitation, and time for student-centered dialogue), and two opportunities for student reflection and debriefing—reflection on the *Touchstones* guidelines for discussion and also on their group dynamics after their discussion.

Iteration 2 - September 30

Following Iteration 1 and our debriefings, Cassandra and I developed a plan for Iteration 2 that was structured in the same way, but with a new text. We agreed that it would be best not to change the structure of the intervention too soon, so Cassandra chose to facilitate another case study for Iteration 2. She suggested that the intervention structure we had co-constructed thus far “would give them [students] the foundation to build off of” (Planning Meeting 8, September 24). Since we ran out of time in this debrief meeting, I offered to put together a very similar lesson plan for Iteration 2, scheduled for Wednesday, September 30.

After reviewing the impeding factors identified in Iteration 1 as well as the recording of the class implementation, the Touchstones discussion evaluations, and my notes from our meetings, I shared with Cassandra plans for Iteration 2. I had devised a lesson plan that included: a) student-centered analysis and discussion of their own Touchstones evaluation from the previous iteration - first in breakout rooms (10 minutes) and then as a whole group (10 minutes); b) student selection of a second case study followed by the read aloud (5 minutes); c) breakout room discussion of the case text (10 minutes); d) whole class discussion of the student-selected case (20 minutes); and e) completion of the student and instructor essential elements survey (5 minutes). Iteration 2 was designed to once again set conditions so that the students themselves were leading all of the activities: analyzing and discussing their last discussion, selecting a new text, examining it together in small group break out rooms, and finally participating in a whole class dialogue about it.

Iteration 3 - October 5

Because Cassandra's implementation of Iteration 2 left only nine minutes for whole class discussion and no time for distribution of the Essential Elements survey, when planning for Iteration 3, I collected some of the pertinent questions that students had started to raise and disagreements that were expressed during the brief discussion of Iteration 2. Cassandra and I decided to use these student comments as a starting point to continue the conversation about the Black Lives Matter protest that had only just begun. I offered little additional direction as it seemed enough to allow Cassandra to facilitate based on strategies reviewed thus far and provide additional time for students to proceed with the discussion they had started in Iteration 2.

Table 4.1 presents an overview of descriptive information about the nature of discussion exchanges in Step 1: the date and topical focus of Iterations 1, 2, and 3, the duration of each class

discussion, the number of times the instructor contributed to the discussion, the number of students who contributed to each discussion, and the number of discrete talk exchanges that occurred between students. Student responses to the Touchstones Discussion Rubric (see Appendix D) were collected at the end of Iteration 1. Due to time constraints, however, there was little time for student debriefing during Iteration 1 and no rubric responses were collected for Iteration 2 or Iteration 3. For example, in Iteration 1, teaching students to complete the digital Touchstones rubric took more time than we imagined. In Iteration 2, Cassandra spent the first 17 minutes of class talking about the pandemic, students' experiences with life on campus, and the current American political climate. In Iteration 3, she made the decision to allow students to dialogue for a full 60 minutes of class.

Table 4.1

Overview Of Discussion Exchanges In Step 1

Iteration # (Date) and Topical Focus	Duration of discussion	Number of Instructor Contributions to the discussion	Number of student speakers	Number of discrete exchanges
Iteration 1 (September 3) <i>Protesting the Pledge</i>	15 minutes	9	10	30
Iteration 2 (September 30) <i>Black Lives Matter I</i>	9 minutes	5	6	17
Iteration 3 (October 5) <i>Black Lives Matter II</i>	60 minutes	28	15	87

Factors Enhancing and Impeding Cassandra's Understanding of FPCD (Goal 1) in Step 1

This next section outlines findings from iterative cycles of data collection and analysis while implementing Iterations 1, 2, and 3. Our planning meetings during Step 1 centered on the initial development of classroom dialogue at the beginning of a course term with a new group of students; we collaborated on understanding the need to select an appropriate text, the need to exchange teacher authority for student agency, the importance of encouraging and nurturing student leadership, and the tensions involved in too quickly scaffolding student thinking with academic concepts while also pushing back on students' own horizons of understanding.

These initial planning sessions focused on building Cassandra's understanding of discussion facilitation, but being able to translate that understanding into the corresponding classroom skills would take time and practice during the four steps and nine iterations of the intervention. These early planning meetings also yielded essential data about Cassandra's specific beliefs, attitudes and dispositions about classroom pedagogy and student learning. Figure 4.2 provides an overview of the factors observed to play a role in enhancing and impeding Cassandra's understanding of FPCD in Step 1.

Figure 4.2

Enhancing and Impeding Factors for Pedagogical Goal 1 in Step 1

Goal 1: Build Teacher Understanding of FPCD	
Enhancing Factors in Step 1	Impeding Factors in Step 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Understanding dialogue as developmental● Learning to start from students' horizons● Problematizing "pushing back" on student responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Difficulty relinquishing responsibility and transferring agency to students● Dialogic deficit thinking

Overall, with regard to building Cassandra's understanding of FPCD (Pedagogical Goal 1), the intervention was enhanced by Cassandra's growing awareness of the developmental nature of dialogue. Data suggested she was also learning to foster discussions starting from students' own horizons of understanding, and she was also becoming more reflective about how she confronted and evaluated the ideas that they risked sharing. On the other hand, Cassandra's understanding of FPCD was impeded by difficulty relinquishing responsibility and dialogic deficit thinking. With regard to maximizing student engagement in FPCD (Pedagogical Goal 2), students' participation was enhanced by starting dialogue with their own thoughts, connecting topics to their own horizons of understanding, and providing unstructured time in class for them to speak to one another. Impeding factors included the classroom press, students' own feelings that they lacked preparation for classroom dialogue, and anxiety about risking participation. Data supporting each of these factors are provided next.

Factors Enhancing Cassandra's Understanding of FPCD in Step 1

Our conversations in Planning Meetings 6 through 10 (corresponding to Step 1) resulted in the emergence of three significant factors enhancing Pedagogical Goal 1: understanding facets of dialogue as developmental; learning to start from students' horizons; and problematizing "pushing back" on student responses.

Understanding Facets of Dialogue as Developmental. I began Planning Meeting 6 by asking Cassandra how she perceived her attempts to facilitate discussion with students before the first iteration was implemented. Because this was the beginning of the semester, Cassandra believed that her students were just getting to know each other. She commented that they were in the "listening stage" of sharing, particularly around significant "identity work." When describing her students' discussions, Cassandra expressed satisfaction that students "were active enough for

her,” and she was happy that “almost everybody was online,” and “a couple more people talked.” She felt that students were engaged because nearly everyone had their cameras on, and they were “in the conversation a little and were using their reflection journals.” In terms of supporting student dialogic development, Cassandra was satisfied that early in the semester her students were present and engaged in class. On the other hand, as seen in the pre-iteration observations (Chapter 3), Cassandra did not actively try to break habits of passivity by immediately transferring agency to the students. She talked about dialogue rather than providing opportunities for them to do it. These perspectives revealed an outlook that involved simultaneously enhancing factors (i.e., seeing dialogue as developmental) but also potentially impeding factors (i.e., assuming a limited perspective on what students might be capable of doing). But there were other ways that Cassandra was realizing that fostering classroom dialogue was developmental.

“Sharing Out” is Developmental. In terms of developmentally supporting dialogue in the classroom, Cassandra believed that “sharing out” provided a reasonably quick procedure for each student to participate briefly in classes early in the semester when they were “still getting to know each other” and building relationships; this practice also gave students an opportunity to share their own identities and social concerns. For the time being at least, she considered sharing out as a better alternative than dialogue because she believed that student-centered discussion was time consuming. In her words, there had been no back and forth conversation because, “one, [it was] time consuming” (a potentially impeding factor) and, “two, I think it [sharing out] is just to get some voices heard” (a potentially enhancing factor). She hoped that in the future, there would be more opportunity for students to engage in back-and-forth conversation that was more dialogic. However, she also wondered whether the practice of simply “sharing out” adequately

laid the foundation for working toward dialogue in the classroom. This important topic would come up again several times in our future planning sessions and will be examined further.

Student Leadership Is Developmental. Cassandra also understood that FPCD, as a developmental process, encouraged the gradual development of student leadership and was excited to realize this in her practice. Her uncertainty about whether or not sharing out could in fact lead to dialogue provided me the opportunity to share a description of the phases of dialogic development from the *Touchstones Discussion Project*. This project introduced discussion facilitation as a non-linear process that developed over time through carefully scaffolded facilitation. The process focused participants' attention on specific texts and various positive and negative group dynamics (for example: dominance, silence, active listening, asking one another questions, building on one another's comments, interruption) that might arise during discussion; it then helped them overcome obstacles to dialogue.

Touchstones described four stages of group development: “*maximizing participation, listening, collaboration, and participant leadership*” (Zeiderman, 2007, p. 4). I explained that although these stages were interrelated and the progression through them was not simply linear, the first Touchstones goal aligned with our own formative goal of maximizing student participation. In this way, dialogue would be characterized as a *developmental goal* that Cassandra would address with her students over time together; through her facilitation, they would work out how to improve discussions through group reflection on their own emergent dynamics. Cassandra was enthusiastic about developing student leadership and wanted to clarify that this meant “shared leadership” of the discussions (a potentially enhancing factor). She appreciated these four stages of group development and thought of them as describing the

“building blocks” that started with maximizing participation and ended with students exercising their own agency and acting as co-leaders in dialogue together.

Dialogic Facilitation Strategies are Developmental. In our sixth planning meeting, I was keenly aware that integrating student-centered dialogue into Cassandra’s curriculum and practice would entail addressing many factors while allowing her to acquire skills over time (see Dreyfus, 2004). I feared that trying to implement too much at once might be *developmentally* challenging, onerous, and end in frustration. The second Essential Element, “Strategic Student-Centered Facilitation,” was a complex skill-based activity that required practice and patience. In looking to support Cassandra *developmentally*, we discussed three beginning strategies for her to practice in supporting students in dialogue. All three were familiar to her from her own past practice.

The first strategy was to practice *crafting open-ended questions* (Nystrand et al., 1997) designed to provoke genuine student response and collaboration born out of a respect for students’ own competence and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Cassandra expressed familiarity with this strategy and felt comfortable using it.

A second strategy for generating interest and participation was to connect these questions to students’ own experiences to promote motivation and engagement. For instance, in Iteration 1, we collaborated on connecting the discussion guidelines and the selected case study to students’ past experiences in school. We discussed ways in which she could connect students’ previous experiences in school and how these made it difficult to follow a particular discussion guideline. The purpose of this connection would be to introduce questions that maximized participation by providing topics about which all students would have had experiences. She readily accepted and understood what this meant and how to do it (potentially enhancing factor).

Third, I suggested that Cassandra consider increasing her “wait time” after asking questions or making comments. She believed that she had good wait time after asking a question and stated, “I’m pretty good at it. I actually hold my lips closed. I do this to remind myself not to open my mouth” (Planning Meeting #6: September 17th). While Cassandra probably did have a longer wait time than many instructors, a dialogic pedagogy might require even more wait time to entice students who have been made passive by previous I-R-E discourses. Additionally, Cassandra’s perceptions of her own “wait time” were developing, such that understanding when and how long to use wait time was part of ongoing skill acquisition in live contexts (potentially impeding factor). Therefore, we discussed increasing her wait time so students might better understand that she was not going to ask a question and then reappropriate leadership and responsibility by keeping the dialogue moving forward or stepping in to correct their responses. We decided that if there was too much silence, instead of reasserting responsibility, she might openly engage in a conversation with students about why they were not participating and what they might do to take on more of a leadership role in interpreting and discussing the text.

Texts are Developmentally Linked to Learner Needs and Discussion Dynamics. Before the first iteration was introduced, the intervention had become a pedagogy in search of an appropriate developmental and course-focused curriculum. We had spent hours discussing the significance of dialogue and the rudiments of facilitation and student reflection. In Planning Meeting 6, we turned our attention to selecting a text for the first class discussion. In looking over her syllabus, Cassandra wondered what social justice topic to read about and discuss. She suggested an article on the shooting of Ahmaud Arbery, explaining that it aligned with her own commitment to teaching systemic racism and implicit bias. This prompted our shared reflection on the nature of selecting a text and how that choice might relate to the goals of facilitating

dialogue, particularly toward maximizing student participation. We considered that many students, new to the class, and possibly unaccustomed to publicly discussing controversial issues such as racial violence, might not yet have the confidence or the skills to participate in such a discussion. Therefore, choosing a text meant considering what topics might best developmentally support students in feeling willing and able to participate in dialogue.

We discussed whether current hot button topics (racial violence, abortion, gun control) might be too risky for a class just getting to know one another and the instructor. We decided that lowering the risks associated with a controversial text might give students more time to find their own autonomy, build trust, and feel comfortable about sharing their thoughts in the first intervention sessions (potentially enhancing factors). With these considerations in mind, I suggested that Cassandra find three short texts for discussion that were linked to the course curriculum for the week.

In my private field notes later that day, I wondered, “How often do teachers select what they perceive as an important topic for discussion and are then disappointed that students do not participate?” I also wondered, “How often might such disappointments lead to frustration or despair that dialogue is ineffective or impossible in the classroom?” Finally, might this frustration “lead to teachers taking responsibility and leadership of discussions through more centrally managed modes of classroom interaction, such as I-R-E?” (Field Notes, September 17)

Learning to Start from Students’ Horizons (Excursus #1). The first lengthy shared deliberation on FPCD occurred 33 minutes into the sixth planning session and lasted over 30 minutes. Here, Cassandra and I considered whether it was the teacher’s or the students’ role to lead inquiry into a subject matter. Was it the facilitator’s role to announce a topic and lead

students to a conclusion about it? Or was the facilitator's role to ask a question and encourage students to explore it from their own horizons of understanding?

Our conversation began when Cassandra discussed the need to scaffold the first formal discussion by providing certain academic social justice concepts (i.e., implicit bias and privilege) in order to direct student thinking and guide talk down fruitful avenues. This discussion arose from her suggestion that one of the students' choice texts could be an article from *The Atlantic* magazine on the murder of Ahmaud Arbery:

One thing I was thinking [is] where are we going, we've got some identity work, we're going to start thinking about how education has impacted the way we interact with each other. What's the socio-cultural conditioning we've been through? And they are taking the implicit bias test this weekend....I had another systemic racism article that talks about Ahmaud Arbery, who was shot and killed...But I think that might be a little bit risky, because the way I want to go about that is to look at it from both perspectives....How do we understand what their [the shooters] thinking was? But I wonder if before we get there, we do an implicit bias reading, you know what I mean? Because that would then strengthen the conversation around an article. Maybe, we need to actually understand what the word implicit bias means. (Planning Meeting 6, September 17)

Furthermore, looking back at her syllabus, she shared the way she envisioned topics of conversation unfolding over the coming weeks:

The way I started thinking is okay, we need to talk about how our identities are formed and then understand those implicit biases because those go together, right? And then...we need to start talking about systemic racism? What does that mean? Thinking about the history of racism, all of that goes together and that school to prison pipeline might be a part of that. Because I really want them to watch *13th* and I want that to be one of the other texts that we talked about...and then start thinking about education and class and the intersectionality of class and race. (Planning Meeting 6, September 17)

In the case of Ahmaud Arbery, Cassandra considered prescribing individuals to reflect on their own *implicit biases*; next, she envisioned having the class uncover the particular *history of*

racism in a place like Atlanta; this conversation could then lead to students considering the *systems of racism* that led two white men to shoot an unarmed black man walking through their neighborhood. Cassandra believed that such a lesson plan would also allow her to pull into the discussion the important concept of *intersectionality*. She wanted to support students by providing a framework around which their interpretation would run. This conceptual framework had been informed by her own participation in professional workshops on diversity, equity, and inclusion where, “we start with identity...in order to have deeper conversations.” The lesson on Ahmaud Arbery that Cassandra was considering required an instructor’s careful guidance of a kind of classroom discourse toward specific interpretations that aligned with social justice values. This could be important work.

We then discussed how the introduction of such academic concepts and explicit guidance at the beginning of a discussion might affect students’ agency and their perception of their role as participants. We wondered if the use of conceptual scaffolds would lead to more teacher authority over content of the discussion and curtail their own horizons of dialogue, meaning making, and reasoning. Much would depend on how Cassandra used her own authority over knowledge and understanding in the classroom.

The introduction of social justice concepts was essential to the course, but it seemed to potentially interfere with the quality of student-centered discussions. We discussed the possibility of separating instruction that formally presented these concepts from FPCD sessions in which students were simply encouraged to participate in respectful dialogue from their own horizons of understanding. While we agreed that using academic concepts and engaging in student-centered dialogue should not be considered as distinct pedagogical activities, it seemed important to separate the two practices while Cassandra learned how to support the development

of skills needed for dialogue. Thus, at the beginning of the intervention, we decided that Cassandra would use Mondays to introduce course content, academic vocabulary, and directed activities using a more teacher-centered orientation, while on Thursdays, she would focus primarily on ways to maximize student participation and develop student-centered dialogue.

Later in Planning Meeting 6, the subject of conceptual scaffolds arose again. Cassandra thought that providing a general refresher on implicit bias might prompt more student self-reflection when reading and discussing texts. This would help students “tap back into some kind of structure to be thinking through some of these things so that it’s not just ‘I’m going to read it and go at this *opinion only*, right, like *a little bit more informed*” [my emphasis]. I shared with her that at the beginning of a course, and after years of habituated I-R-E classroom discourses, students might interpret the presentation of terms such as “implicit bias” as conceptual guardrails for their thinking and dialogue (a potentially impeding factor). Furthermore, I explained that one’s belief that students “only had opinions” and needed scaffolds to make them “more informed” participants might incline a discussion group toward a more monologic discourse orientation.

Instead, we agreed that Cassandra would not start with a knowledge goal but with the pedagogical goal of maximizing participation by facilitating and modeling dialogue that would encourage students to speak from their own horizons. We hoped that this would support all students in realizing their own self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Such a pedagogical strategy would also align with FPCD Essential Element 2 (component #4) that described the need for the instructor to cede her own (intellectual) authority.

In my private field notes (September 16), I wondered if, at least for the purposes of facilitating dialogue and improving participation, conceptual scaffolds might best be introduced

after students had arrived at them through their own thinking. In other words, key terms could be introduced during a conversation *as a product of students' own thinking* to better promote inquiry and reflection, especially after students felt more assured of their own competence and autonomy.

Confronting The Desire To “Push Back” On Student Responses (Excursus #2).

During our planning session, Cassandra realized that she struggled with the desire to “push back” or evaluate student responses rather than allowing them to do that with each other. She also wondered about her own role in publicly challenging students’ thinking and this led to a second long dialogue between us. Cassandra began this discussion by speculating that if our goal was to maximize participation by showing respect for students’ own horizons of understanding, she might not want to determine ahead of time what or how to think about social justice issues; besides, she explained that she wanted students to share and hear a diversity of perspectives. But then she wondered about the important question of how frequently or vigorously to challenge, or as she called it, “push back” on student thinking and opinion. She posed the pedagogical issue this way:

I guess I want to ensure that what I would be doing, you can correct me if I'm wrong, is being thoughtful and not shutting anybody down. I want them to feel that they can start sharing and then [I'm] adding in—I'm gonna call it “pushback” for lack of better words—attaining deeper thought I guess. Is that [using pushback] gradual? Or do we just start that way so they know what to expect at all times? And usually there's two sides to that too. I don't know. (Planning Meeting #6: September 17th)

We discussed “pushback” (a potentially impeding factor) as an important facet of the teacher’s role in challenging students to think in any classroom discussion. However, we also agreed that in the early stages of supporting the development of student-centered discussion, it might be important to err on the side of stepping back from evaluating students’ comments as

much as possible. This might allow them an opportunity to gain a sense of their own voice and self-determination in the classroom. This would mean, temporarily at least, taking the “Evaluation” out of I-R-E so that students themselves could learn to dialogue and evaluate one another and the merit of their own arguments. This is an essential part of dialogic pedagogy in general. By reducing the locus of power in the classroom, students might switch from knowing “what to think” to understanding “how to think” (Dewey, 1997).

My analysis of the themes described above revealed that Cassandra was beginning to understand the need to “start where the students were.” Nevertheless, it was also a struggle for her to cede some of her own intellectual authority in order to transfer agency to students. Relinquishing some of her own authority would allow her to focus more on supporting group cohesion—FPCD Essential Element 2 (components #4 and #7).

Factors Impeding Cassandra's Understanding of FPCD in Step 1

Two new factors impeding Cassandra’s understanding of how to maximize student-centered discussion were gleaned from data collected and analyzed during the three iterations of Step 1: her difficulty relinquishing responsibility and transferring agency to students; and the possibility of dialogic deficit thinking. I will address each in turn.

Difficulty Relinquishing Responsibility and Transferring Agency to Students. Data analyzed in the first step of three iterations suggested that taking on the new role of dialogue facilitator in an online college classroom had brought on a sense of significant dislocation for Cassandra. During our planning sessions, she spoke of feeling disorientated and uncomfortable. The resulting confusion repeatedly challenged her to reconsider her role and responsibilities, as she had traditionally understood them, with regard to both her students and the curriculum. In particular, analysis revealed Cassandra’s understanding of FPCD was repeatedly challenged as

she grappled with several overlapping feelings: It was disconcerting to facilitate the flow of conversation; it seemed difficult to build trust in an online setting; it was difficult letting go of her perceived role as classroom leader; a tension existed between teaching content and focusing on dialogic pedagogy; she desired to “push back” on troubling student opinions; she took leadership of discussion debriefing; and it was difficult to transfer agency and leadership to students because of ingrained patterns of I-R-E. Overall, Cassandra’s feelings of disorientation appeared to significantly affect her confidence in positioning herself as a facilitator, particularly in areas identified as essential elements of FPCD including ceding authority, using questions, developing group cohesion, and supporting student-led debriefing. Data related to Cassandra’s struggle to relinquish responsibility is provided next.

It Was Disconcerting to Facilitate the Flow of Conversation. Despite (or because of) the hours of training and the intervention’s complexity, Cassandra had difficulty simultaneously negotiating all of these elements in the flow of the discussion while also knowing how to reposition her own responsibility and authority. She opened our debrief after Iteration 1 in this way:

So I'll talk about my experience first. So I think for me, when I get to the discussion piece and tried to keep everything straight in my head of where I was to jump in, and how much to be quiet and how much to facilitate and was a little bit like—and I think I'll get better at that—I was just in that moment, kind of, ahhhhhhh!, and so I'd be interested to hear what your thoughts are . . . ? (Planning Meeting 8: September 24th)

In the first iteration, Cassandra felt bewildered by her experience in the role of discussion facilitator: not knowing when to insert herself, what questions to ask, how insistently to stay quiet, or how to balance the many pieces of the intervention that we had discussed over the previous weeks. This particularly affected her ability to enact skills associated with FPCD

Essential Element 2 of the intervention (Strategic Facilitation) and the associated components #4, *provisional ceding of authority*, and # 8, *development of group cohesion*. While she wished to acquire new dialogic skills, she seemed to be taking on a new role for which she did not feel fully prepared. Acquiring a new pedagogical orientation would take time, as was to be expected in the first stages of the acquisition of a new skill (Dreyfus, 2004).

It Seemed Difficult to Build Trust in an Online Setting. In our debriefing after Iteration 1, Cassandra also reflected that students were not yet building on one another's comments (not "bouncing off each other"). She explained that a little less than half of the students had spoken, and she believed the "white males are not talking." She also wondered if some of the quiet students were quiet because they "had different views than the rest of the class." She was concerned that one white male, in particular, wasn't speaking because he might have different views and he wasn't comfortable, possibly "because of the climate we are in" (Planning Meeting 8, September 24).

Cassandra attributed the slower than usual uptake in student participation to working online, since "the forum (Zoom classroom) is hard, because it's hard to build that trust." She also believed online work resulted in a loss of energy that an instructor would have in a face-to-face room, and an ability to really keep her eye on whether students were staying engaged. In other words, at least in the online environment, she perceived herself as struggling to enact skills associated with FPCD Intervention Essential Element 2, component #8, *development of group cohesion*. However, she hoped that the process of building relationships, trust, and engagement might just be a "slower process" online. Cassandra noticed that "a couple people were disinterested or unengaged during the previous day's discussion" (Iteration 1), but also noted that

when she had shared her own past discomfort with participating in courses, “I saw a lot of eyes lighting up and agreement” (Planning Meeting 8). She was pleased that students were attentive.

It Was Difficult Letting Go of Her Perceived Role as Classroom Leader. Even as early as the debrief after Iteration 1, Cassandra realized that her goals as classroom leader had changed, and along with that, her comfort level in facilitating discussion. She had previously assumed her role was to provide specific content in the form of a lecture, video, or activity and then support students’ understanding of it. These assumptions directly affected her ability to enact FPCD Essential Element 2, component #4, *provisional ceding of authority* as she sought to maintain the direction and outcome of the thinking in class. But after Iteration 1, Cassandra recognized that her role was not only to focus students’ attention on understanding specific content or concepts but also to encourage their responsibility for a dialogue. Take for instance this comment, made when I asked her to reflect on her own discussion facilitation after the first iteration:

If we're thinking about what I might have done differently [before the intervention], it would be to get more into the content lesson . . . so when they were talking about the case study, I probably would have engaged more in a way that would have talked about the actual content of it. And rather than stepping back as much—and what I like about stepping back, which feels uncomfortable, is that power structure—it is getting them to be responsible for the conversation. And this is the beginning stage of it. (Planning Meeting 8: September 24th)

Of course, this level of understanding of her own proclivities, even as she continued to struggle with them, also aligned with enhancing factors described in Step 1.

Cassandra also admitted that she struggled with letting go of the responsibility to deliver that content: “And then with the content, right, so it's hard to know how much to let go with the content or not. I expected to struggle a little bit. But . . . I can't let this go.” (Planning Meeting 8:

September 24th). This struggle was interdependent with the next impeding factor that emerged in Iteration 2.

A Tension Existed Between Teaching Content and Focusing on Dialogic Pedagogy.

After Iteration 2, Cassandra and I noticed a tension between the time needed to cover content and the time needed to focus on practicing dialogic pedagogy. This was a particular concern because building the conditions to support all students' ability and willingness to participate took time, practice, and reflection, both inside and outside of the classroom. This time took away from "instruction." In particular, Cassandra repeatedly expressed feelings of responsibility to convey academic content that was aligned with the assigned course text as well as the standards and outcomes associated with the class. She was distressed at the beginning of Planning Meeting 6 that there was "never enough time," that having discussions was important but "time consuming," and that during her Monday class (during which she presented academic concepts) she "wished we had more time to talk a little bit more about when you take away your identity..." Finally, in the middle of the same meeting, she commented:

I don't know how to structure the class without getting away from some of these "-isms" [sexism, racism, ageism, classism, ableism, ageism]. We're gonna have all these discussions. . . . But when do we bring in the others [-isms] because we are doing an introductory course. And I feel like we need to talk about those things in some way. (Planning Meeting 6, September 17).

The responsibility to effectively transmit mandated and authoritative knowledge potentially conflicted with FPCD Essential Element 2, component #4, *provisional ceding of authority*.

The students also had expectations for how official course content should be covered. Here is an example of an exchange between me and Cassandra as she described an event that took place during Iteration 2 when she unexpectedly dropped into a virtual student breakout

room unannounced. This was an interesting and unique perspective because it arose by surprise as a result of comments she overheard in the breakout room:

Cassandra: I popped into one of the rooms and Jake didn't know I was there. He was saying to his group, "Does it seem to you like we haven't talked about anything yet? That we haven't really done anything in class yet?"

Kevin: Today?

Cassandra: Like at all! . . . so we just had a conversation around, "Tell me what you mean, and why?"

Kevin: What did he say?

Cassandra: Well, he said that we haven't really gone deep into anything. And Luna from his group said that "we're not going deep because people are silent" and so we just had a conversation around how we can be less silent because we want to go deeper....

Kevin: Yeah, what do you think he meant by that?

Cassandra: I think what he was saying is that we're still at a surface level. We haven't really gone into any issues that are happening more deeply.

Kevin: Do you feel that way?

Cassandra: I would agree. Really, because we're focusing on how to have conversations we're spending time on that. So we haven't gone into the concepts as much, right? So I think I would agree with that. I said that we don't want it to be me talking all the time. There's a responsibility on the class to make this happen. So what are some things we can do to get deeper into the issues? (Planning Meeting 8, September 24)

In my journal reflections, I worried that our focus on process (learning *how* to facilitate dialogue and speaking to students about it) might be perceived by Cassandra or her students as impeding the normal teacher-centered transmission of curricular content. This was only the second iteration of FPCD but it was the seventh overall class of the semester. In this case, on the one hand, a student was questioning whether classmates perceived a lack of content transmission and depth; on the other hand, another pointed out that students had been silent, and thus not taking up responsibility for engaging with content and learning. The differences expressed by these two students seemed to represent a fundamental tension present in implementing dialogic pedagogy; namely that working from student horizons depended on their engagement and

willingness to risk sharing their own opinions. I was concerned that focusing on a pedagogical process (i.e., facilitating dialogic engagement) that impeded delivering a curriculum would not be educationally desirable.

The Desire to “Push Back” on Troubling Student Opinions (Excursus #3). As we had discussed in an earlier planning meeting, it was important for a discussion facilitator to carefully refrain from taking a position; rather, a facilitator’s role was to use questions to guide participants in exploring a topic subject through developing dialogue. This was particularly true when just beginning the development of dialogic skills and encouraging all students to participate. Therefore, a facilitator might need to let go of transmitting particular content during a discussion, and also to let go of the need to “fix” (or “push back ” on) students’ opinions. Welcoming students to speak from the limits of their own horizons, or from the finitude of their own prejudices (Gadamer, 2004), would be the first step in expanding those horizons through an encounter with the other.

After Iteration 1, during Planning Meeting 8, Cassandra was troubled by a student’s opinion and felt the need to push back on it. In class, James (pseudonym) had taken a vigorous position on the issue of the right to protest the *Pledge of Allegiance*, stating his opinion that those who insisted that everyone stand during it were “rigid.” Cassandra recalled her own grandmother who served as a sergeant in the army in World War II, and she refused to concede that her grandmother was a rigid or “stubborn” person. She explained to me:

And I am sure that if she saw that [not standing for the pledge], it would hurt her deeply. And she's not at all a stubborn person. That would just be an example of how we need to think about how people's backgrounds inform—not always. So I'm going to go back to implicit bias quite a bit next week, because I think that's part of it. Right? It's part of understanding the culture that we're brought up in is how we develop these ideas and it doesn't necessarily mean bringing up that generalization. (Planning Meeting 8: September 24th)

Prior to the formal introduction to the intervention (in their third class), some students had pointed out that they were wary of taking the risk to speak in class. During the pre-intervention observations in Chapter 3, students perceived that there were “unspoken boundaries as to what counted as an appropriate question” (pp. 46-47). They also felt discomfort transgressing everyday discourse (p. 47) and believed that many people who asked questions weren’t really listening for a genuine response, but already knew what they wanted to hear (pp. 48-49). These perceptions resulted in students providing only terse answers (pp. 48-49) that anticipated the desired response.

Students would continue to articulate such affective factors impeding their dialogue throughout iterations of the intervention (and especially in Iterations 1, 3, and 5). This included several students who expressed anxiety over the course of the semester that the quality of their participation could sometimes affect their grades. The pedagogical practice that Cassandra described as “pushing back” or correcting student opinions perpetuated this same pattern of habituated teacher-regulated discourse, exemplified by the I-R-E pattern. Therefore, in order to support students in breaking out of habitual passivity in the classroom while also supporting their belief that they were being genuinely listened to, we discussed the importance of not “pushing back” too much or too soon at the beginning of individual and group dialogic development. Building trust with students might mean frequently allowing a range of opinions, even those one might find problematic. It entailed respecting that participants have different “horizons,” and modeling a commitment to *listening* rather than speaking or even telling.

In this case, Cassandra cared deeply for her grandmother and held her as an ethical reference point. However, in order to facilitate dialogue, we talked about the possibility that she might need to at least temporarily remain entirely open, listen to others, and curb her own

responses. Subsequently, as she facilitated in ways that maximized participation and fostered a new dialogic dynamic in which students respectfully evaluated each other, Cassandra might then find ways to enter the conversation as an equal participant, rather than as a perceived authority. At such a point, she might openly inquire about, discuss and assess her grandmother's perspective *with the students' help*. This is a good example of a strategy that would align more closely with FPCD Essential Element 2 of the intervention and associated components #4, *provisional ceding of authority*, and #8, *development of group cohesion*. Early on in the formation of the discussion group, however, it was important that students saw Cassandra facilitating their development rather than directing the conversation and monitoring their opinions.

She Took Leadership of Discussion Debriefing. During the three iterations of Step 1, Cassandra also tended to take on responsibility for the student-centered debrief, and effectively interpreted the discussion dynamics for students using their own evaluation rubrics. In our early (pre-iteration) planning meetings we had not had sufficient time to adequately attend to the debriefing component of FPCD. I had hoped that as she developed an understanding of facilitating dialogue, it would carry over into the debriefing sessions. We had planned to review the practices associated with debriefing during the iterations of Step 1. However, we ended up using time planned for student debriefing to instead identify texts for each class and scaffold lessons around that text.

Given these constraints on our time, her more teacher-centered approach to analysis of class discussion was understandable. But it did come at the cost of not prioritizing time for students themselves to build the habit of metacognitive inquiry and reflection on their own discussions. For example, at the end of Iteration 1, and running out of time during class,

Cassandra shared her screen with students and immediately jumped into analyzing and interpreting the results of their self-assessment of the discussion. She pointed out that there were many student comments about silence and the lack of student questions and that these were barriers to going “deeper into the discussion.” She stated that:

Some people are feeling either shy or maybe intimidated...but some people are more comfortable than others is what I'm gleaning...because the conversations we're going to be having feel opinionated or sensitive and can feel uncomfortable...and they are not the conversations that we're used to having.
(Iteration 1, September 23)

During the time set aside for student debriefing, Cassandra also spent several minutes talking about the importance and difficulty of conversations that affect social change, both for oneself and marginalized others. The following are excerpts from her remarks, in order, but not consecutively (Iteration 1, September 23):

- We need to start having these conversations, but we know that it can be uncomfortable and that they're not happening right now. I also feel like we don't know how to do it right as we haven't been taught how to do it. So that's a growing point for all of us together.
- And I think I've said it in the beginning of the class that these discussions need to be had. And we need to take the risk. And that is really difficult.
- I don't feel that shy, but I have a lot of experience behind me, but I still have those points when the conversations are sensitive, and I don't want to offend anyone. So I guess if I do offend anyone, I would want to be able to apologize, own it, and be able to move forward. In that way, I would ask all of you to be like okay, she offended us, that was possibly offensive, and she has apologized and we can move forward. And that you're not going to continue to judge me for saying that and that's going to shut me down forever. Because I guarantee you that I will make mistakes.

From these data, one can see the ways in which Cassandra assumed responsibility for student reflection and the work of interpreting their responses. During this interpretation, she

took the opportunity to persuasively describe dialogue as a type of social justice practice and learning. In the process, she also modeled vulnerability and the importance of honesty.

In my journal (Field Notes, September 26), I wondered how such honesty would affect students; would it encourage more participation or could it also raise the social anxiety around dialogue by expressing how easily an experienced educator could slip into the possibility of offending others? Despite expressing important truths, I wondered if this would turn out to enhance or impede students' level of comfort in speaking from their own horizons? I decided not to share these thoughts immediately; first because I was unsure if this tension was real, and second, because I needed to carefully prioritize which aspects of facilitation for her to consider.

During Iteration 2, Cassandra again found it difficult to relinquish responsibility and transfer agency to students for debriefing. Since the debrief of the *Touchstones* rubric at the end of the first iteration had been short and largely curated by Cassandra, we planned to give students a second opportunity to engage in metacognitive reflection about their discussion. However, in this second iteration, Cassandra again took responsibility for curating the debrief—asking for themes, soliciting feedback, guiding the talk, and transitioning between topics based on limited student input. A few students responded by describing the problems of silence and balanced participation, but they directed their comments back to Cassandra. She generally spoke after each participant—asking for clarification, soliciting additional participants, adding her own input, and inquiring how the class might address each problem so that “the conversation might flow a little bit more” (Iteration 2). Here, for example, is how the debrief began:

I'm going to open it up to you first. What are some of the things that you discussed in your groups about how we can improve? What are some of the suggestions that we can do? Let's start with number one. Let's start with the themes. What are the themes that you found?

This resulted in the first student responses to her question, separated by her own confirmation of those responses. Note in the following excerpts the way in which Cassandra maintained her own position as the epicenter of the student talk, thus making it difficult for students to speak to one another:

Jake: A lot of silence.

Cassandra: Okay so silence seems to be one of the things that is a barrier to our whole group discussions.

Sue: The other one we found out was that people thought that we should be asking more questions to each other.

Cassandra: So we have silence and asking questions. What are some of the suggestions that we can do so that—were there any others that came out before I move on to those two? So we just know what's on the table.

Karen: Balanced participation.

Cassandra: Okay. So how did you interpret balanced participation?

Karen: Well, like everybody participating rather than just like two or three people.

Cassandra: Okay, so what are some suggestions your groups came up with for silence because I'm going to assume that everybody kind of pulled those same themes out. Those are the three themes that we came up with and they are clear. Were there any others that we missed that any group came up with?

No student responses

Cassandra: Okay, so for those three. Let's talk about silence. What are the suggestions to break silence in this group so that we can have productive discussions that flow a little bit more?

In the brief available time, Cassandra had engaged in responsible teacher behavior by guiding students to uncover knowledge about the discussion process; this was a laudable goal, but not quite the same thing as transferring agency to students in order that they might discover how to think together about improving their own behaviors and habits. The difficulty in transferring agency for debriefing (FPCD Essential Element 3), was related to impeding factors associated with strategic facilitation (Essential Element 2)), and associated components #4, *provisional ceding of authority*, and # 8, *development of group cohesion*.

It was Difficult to Transfer Agency and Leadership to Students because of Ingrained Patterns of I-R-E (Excursus #4). Even efforts to transfer agency to students was not always

successful because the students themselves appeared habituated into patterns of I-R-E. About 40 minutes into Planning Meeting 9, Cassandra reflected on her previous class, a non-iteration discussion she had led on Monday, September 28th. This was the class immediately after Iteration 1, during which she wanted to lead a discussion on implicit bias (because Jake saw Cassandra's grandmother's position as "rigid") in order to give students practice reflecting on different sides of an issue. Cassandra explained:

I did have some discussions on Monday, and they were super silent...and then we talked about microaggressions, and they were just really quiet again, and I said, "Does anyone have questions for anyone because we've talked about the fact that we should ask each other questions?" And they didn't. So, um, I think this is a good segue into thinking about how we're having discussions. (Planning Meeting 9, September 30)

Cassandra's remarks prompted me to look back over the recording of her Monday class to assess what occurred. Although Mondays were not an iteration day, but rather the days she presented important course content, it was clear she shared that she had wanted to have a class discussion at that time. I was curious about how she had tried to initiate and facilitate the discussion and whether she had adopted any strategies from our collaboration. I found, in fact, that the talk exchanges had fallen along traditional I-R-E sequences.

Cassandra had initiated two discussions during this class: one focused on a text about service-learning and then another based on a text about implicit bias. Both discussions were dominated by typical I-R-E sequences in which only a few students (six out of 22) directly interacted with her. In the second discussion, for example, she asked students to watch a video on classroom microaggressions and then reflect in their personal journals about any similar experience. She began the discussion by modeling vulnerability and openly sharing a time when she herself had unconsciously committed such an aggression. Because the class was running out of time, she asked a series of questions to efficiently elicit student responses. Three students

responded repeatedly in a consolidation of responsibility (see Karp & Yoels, 1976). One student, Sue, who spoke 29 times during the class, embarrassedly commented, “I keep talking. If anyone wants to speak up that hasn’t gotten a chance . . .” (Non-iteration class, September 28).

In reviewing this recording, I noted that Cassandra had been unable to break students out of I-R-E sequences despite wanting students to discuss, and hopefully understand, their own implicit biases and different perspectives on microaggressions. Three students took responsibility for filling silences and this emergent “dominance” could be seen either as the cause or result of I-R-E habits of discourse. Few students were willing to share what they thought, and it was unclear what they believed or whether their understanding was growing. The students who did respond directed their comments directly back to Cassandra. This recentered the discussion on the instructor and therefore related directly to FPCD Essential Element 2 of the intervention and the associated components #4, *provisional ceding of authority*, and #8, *development of group cohesion*. Dialogic pedagogies required breaking this dynamic, but in order for this to occur, the facilitator needed to find a way to obviate her own evaluative capacity and gently signal that students speak to one another rather than through her. The pressure of time and content constraints made this task very difficult as it required patience, practice, and time to realign roles and responsibilities.

Cassandra struggled with students’ reluctance to take responsibility for the conversation. She described her struggles this way:

So what I learned from the Flipgrids is that people said they really enjoyed the conversations because it was more student-centered and less of the professor talking—so they like that. I got an email today from someone who can’t come to class and she said she was really going to try not to miss it because this was her favorite class. But they need to be accountable—or they need to be responsible to make that happen. I can’t hand over the conversation if you’re not taking it over, you know what I mean?

Cassandra also learned from student Flipgrids that they were beginning to feel comfortable speaking to one another in the small group breakout rooms. She believed that this was because they were building closer relationships, but “they needed to bring that into the larger discussion as well . . . so hopefully by the end of the semester we will get there” (Planning Meeting 9, September 30).

Dialogic Deficit Thinking. In my private journal notes I reflected on my own past struggles in bringing students to participate in dialogue and the ways that my frustrations sometimes tempted me to blame the student. I therefore wondered about the possibility of describing the significance of a dialogic *deficit thinking* (a phrase used by Valencia, 2012) to describe a phenomenon in which instructors blamed students for their inability or unwillingness to participate in discussion. In the context of my Step 1 analysis, it seemed that it was not only students' recalcitrance that inhibited conversation, students wanted to share and be agents engaged in their own learning and growth. The “deficit” perhaps was not in them, but in the history of focused responsibility for thinking, knowledge, and behavior that has been vested in the teachers that students encountered throughout their schooling.

Factors Enhancing and Impeding Student Participation in FPCD (Goal 2) in Step 1

The use of the highly-structured lesson plan for the first step also resulted in the identification of factors enhancing and impeding efforts to maximize student participation. Starting with students' thoughts and providing them with time to speak without holding them to a lesson agenda enhanced their participation in FPCD. On the other hand, students perceived that their own participation was impeded because they had not been adequately prepared for classroom discussion. This in turn seemed to foster some anxiety about doing it now in Cassandra's class. Figure 4.3 provides an overview of these factors.

Figure 4.3

Enhancing and Impeding Factors for Pedagogical Goal 2 in Step 1

Goal 2: Maximize Student Participation in FPCD	
Enhancing Factors in Step 1	Impeding Factors in Step 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Starting with students' thoughts and connecting to their horizons● Providing time to think and speak without an agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The classroom press● Lack of preparation● The anxiety of "showing up"

Factors Enhancing Student Participation in FPCD (Goal 2) in Step 1

Data revealed two factors that enhanced student participation in FPCD. These factors were associated with starting from students' own horizons of understanding , or more colloquially just "starting where the students are." The two identified and related factors were: a) starting with students' thoughts and connecting to their horizons; b) providing time for students to think and speak without an agenda.

Starting with Students' Thoughts and Connecting to Their Horizons. For Iteration 3, we collected pertinent questions that students had asked during the brief dialogue on the Black Lives Matter protest case study in Iteration 2. In an email, I suggested that students choose which of these topics they would like to continue discussing. I offered little additional direction as it seemed enough to for Cassandra and her students to practice discussion based on skills learned thus far. Up to this point of the intervention (about three weeks into the semester, or seven 75-minute class sessions), the time we had dedicated for real student-centered discussion amounted to a total of 25 minutes.

Students voted to discuss whether or not teachers should facilitate discussions about political subjects at school. From the ensuing conversation, it was clear they were intrigued by

this topic. They had much to say about their past teachers' ability to lead such discussions, and the costs of not providing students with opportunities to do so. From the opening exchange of Iteration 3, 15 of the 21 students spoke *of their own experiences and concerns* in a 60-minute dialogue. They described, for example, their concerns about failing to hear diverse views in school which led them to feel unprepared to make political judgements or to not feel knowledgeable enough to register to vote. More will be mentioned about this in a later section.

At least two students suggested that many teachers didn't have the skills needed to provide students with opportunities to talk about important topics. Seven students were concerned about the consequences of adults not listening to or conversing with others because there were too many people "who are making everything hostile" and "they're not understanding or even trying to listen." As further detailed below in connection with the second enhancing factor (i.e., providing time to think and speak without an agenda), some students extended their thinking about whether teachers should avoid political conversations to recall their memories of events associated with the first text (Colin Kaepernick's protest of the National Anthem) during their time in high school and the impact it had moving forward. The protest event and other social tensions were topics that were relevant and engaged them.

Providing Time for Students to Think and Speak without an Agenda (A felicitous "no-show.") A second enhancing factor uncovered in Iteration 3 was totally unplanned and occurred when a guest speaker failed to appear at the beginning of class. In addition to students' questions that were selected from Iteration 2 to continue the conversation about the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protest, Cassandra had scheduled a guest speaker for the beginning of class to discuss the state school to prison pipeline. It was unclear how much class time the guest speaker would use, but I suspected not less than 30 minutes.

Cassandra's opening comments to students lasted for 10 minutes while she waited for the speaker to appear on the Zoom platform. When the speaker did not appear, she moved directly into the BLM conversation. It began with a poll of the topics I had collected from students' comments; a majority of students voted to discuss the following: "Should teachers avoid political conversations, or should they stick to the academics and not discuss politics while teaching a subject?" After 60 minutes had passed, 15 of 21 students (two-thirds of the class) had engaged in 87 discrete dialogic exchanges over 60 minutes. While Cassandra spoke 28 times, the majority of her participation involved concise questioning, designed to elicit more participation or direct attention to a student's comment.

As a result of the unstructured time to think and speak without an explicit agenda, some students appeared to find their own voices to participate in the subject matter and they understood the ability to engage in dialogue as vital for their own development and society. While recognizing the limitations of their own education, and the barriers that this had erected in their own development, they were nevertheless eager to discuss sensitive or otherwise controversial topics. Notably, the unstructured time eventually led participants to discuss issues of race and equity, topics directly linked to the content of the class.

Reflecting on what had transpired in Iteration 3, it seemed that the abundance of time for discussion occurred because Cassandra was caught unaware. An invited speaker failed to show on a Zoom call, and could have dropped in at any moment. Therefore, Cassandra started the conversation early and let it continue to run because she had not prepared other plans that needed to be squeezed into the period. This realization brought into sharper focus that perhaps a real barrier to dialogue in the classroom could be the instructor's responsibilities: lesson planning, meeting curricular goals and outcomes, a sense of responsibility for successful learning, the press

of classroom demands, and guiding conversations down avenues toward predetermined conceptual understandings.

Cassandra and I found the students' discussion during this session of FPCD remarkable; in fact, we recalled that after the first iteration, Cassandra had remarked,

That [a 60-minute discussion] would be like a huge success, wouldn't it? Just at the end of this semester, I would feel like a huge success. It would be super exciting. If we could have like that, it would be good. Sell that in a bottle!
(Planning Meeting 8)

Notably, after just three iterations, the class had accomplished Cassandra's end-of-semester goal that students would be able to talk to one another for one hour. For me, this discussion at the end of the first step exemplified what was possible and opened opportunities for continued growth and development. In particular, I was thinking of coaching Cassandra on how we might include the missing voices (students still not participating), and use some of our reflection and debriefing tools to help students metacognitively take more responsibility for understanding the dynamics of their group.

Factors Impeding Student Participation in FPCD (Goal 2) in Step 1

Analysis of student contributions during class discussions and data from their Touchstones Discussion Rubric illuminated three new impeding factors related to student participation in Iterations 1, 2, and 3 of the FPCD intervention: the classroom press, students' self-assessment of their own (and their past teachers') inexperience and lack of preparation to have classroom discussions, and anxieties associated with online factors, the teacher, and their classmates. Details associated with each impeding factor are provided next.

The Classroom Press. Competing pressures and varying priorities found at the intersection of working in an online classroom made it difficult to maintain integrity of the structured whole-class lesson plan. Implementation of Iteration 1 went according to schedule,

except that student analysis and reflection using the *Touchstones* evaluation rubric took longer than expected. Giving and receiving instructions and navigating the digital rubric was more time consuming than we imagined. Therefore, students did not have time to debrief on the dynamics of their discussion in Iteration 1.

Iteration 2 provided a very transparent example of the difference between the way we designed an iteration and the way it played out among competing priorities associated with the classroom press. For the first 17 minutes, Cassandra asked about student life during the pandemic, and then shared her thoughts about the coming weeks of class, the presidential debate and the problem of political divisiveness, and the need for students to be politically informed and vote in the coming election. This relatively brief spur of the moment adjustment to our schedule resulted in ten fewer minutes for the whole class discussion, reducing it from the planned twenty minutes to only ten minutes total. This also left no time for the Essential Elements survey at the end of class. Such choices by the instructor reflected the competing pressures and priorities faced in the classroom.

Finally, in Iteration 3, Cassandra had invited a guest speaker and it was unclear just how long she would have taken out of the structured class time; however, it is relatively clear that her appearance would have significantly curtailed the time allowed for students to engage in dialogue. On the other hand, the allowance of unexpected unplanned time did reveal to us that given the time and support, students were perfectly capable of sustained dialogue.

In Step 1, I became aware (field journal notes for October 3) that the time margins for the iterations were quite slim. The combination of supporting essential elements of text, discussion, and student debrief in a 75-minute class period once per week left little room to deviate from the lesson plan schedule. I reflected that maintaining a strict discipline for iteration execution during

a pandemic, in a fully online format, and during a contentious election was really not something that I had anticipated in preparing for this study. I also noted that the issues associated with the classroom press were things about which Cassandra and I felt we had no control. Overall, the press of priorities and concerns affected our focus on and implementation of nearly every component of the FPCD intervention: identifying a text, working through strategies for facilitation, and time for debriefing. My hope during Step 2 was that dropping the highly-structured lesson plan would provide more time and some relief to the competing demands that Cassandra faced. I hoped that if she had more autonomy and freedom to integrate FPCD more naturally into her own practices and curriculum, the class and intervention would run more efficiently.

Lack of Preparation. During Iteration 3 of Step 1, students discussed their past teachers' lack of preparation to have classroom discussion, as well as their own. These reflections came during their conversation on the case study on a Black Lives Matter protest at a school. The discussion on the ways that Black Lives Matter was misunderstood resulted in the students speaking for an hour about the many ways in which they felt unprepared to engage in classroom dialogue on any topics that might be controversial, arouse emotional responses, or initiate political arguments. This in turn had affected their ability to discuss and think through complex social and political issues. Students felt that they, and others in society, were ignorant of important perspectives, unable to engage in the political process, and did not have the skills they needed to dialogue. They did not believe that teachers should use their power or influence or coerce their students, but should instead ask them to ask questions and engage in critical thinking and make their own judgments. I provide here some extended excerpts from the discussion that illustrate students' ability for dialogue, reflection, and leadership, when given a significant block

of time to develop their thinking and experience their own agency. First, students believed that their education had failed to provide them with the skills they needed for dialogue:

Ava: To add on to what you said Jake, um, I agree. I think when people avoid talking about it [political conversations], they're not really helping—especially young kids—learn how to talk about and learn how to be in a conversation where there's opposing views and to learn those skills, to really teach them perspectives. I think that really hurts and takes away a learning opportunity for students.

In fact, one student shared her belief that people more generally don't engage in dialogue because they can't listen and are "closed off," thus making dialogue impossible to even begin.

Luna: So I agree with that. I feel like some people are just showing poor listening skills and they have their own opinion and they're not being very open-minded about learning anything else. And they're very closed off and it's just like those kinds of people you literally — you can't discuss anything with them because it's their way or the highway. I feel like those people are kind of the people who are making everything hostile in the Black Lives Matter movement and . . . they're not understanding or even trying to listen or comprehend anyone else's point of view.

Second, students shared a belief that this denied them opportunities to realize other perspectives or expand their own horizons of understanding. This left them unprepared to navigate important social and political judgements needed as citizens:

Olivia : In addition to the learning opportunity that Ava was talking about, I also feel like not only is it an opportunity to learn to have those conversations, but also to expand from—like when you're in high school, you kind of hear a lot about just your parents' political beliefs, because that's a lot of times where the conversation happens because it doesn't really happen that much when you're younger at school and other places. So it's like a chance to learn about other perspectives and other views that you might not hear from your family members that you know, oftentimes have the same views like all together.

Stephanie: Going off what Mia said, my high school is a little, kind of like some of the same things, but pretty much different. Talking about anything politics was so wrong in my high school. They made it known that if you

said a word about Trump or anything of the sort, you would actually get in so much trouble by a teacher, the principal, it didn't matter, and . . . we didn't know anything that was happening in the country. And so a lot of us didn't want to register to vote when we turned 18 because we had absolutely no idea what we were talking about or what we were doing and didn't want to vote for the wrong person. So I think talking about it is really, really important.

Third, students believed that teachers had a role to play in informing students, encouraging them to ask questions, and supporting them in confronting difficult issues and thinking independently.

Karen: I think children should still be informed, because there's so many people who are voting who just aren't informed of current events and it starts when you're a child—people want to shield you from the outside world. If you just shield them and then you move along in school and get to the point where teachers aren't supposed to talk about it and aren't supposed to give their opinion, then it's just never talked about, and you don't know anything. And also I wanted to go back to Ella's point. Your mom was telling you to think for yourself in terms of people in your family. Well, I think people should also need to learn how to think for themselves in the classroom. I'm not saying that teachers necessarily have to give their opinions, but they definitely should play more of a part in informing students about important current issues and it's also on the students to question everything. You shouldn't necessarily just believe everything your parents are saying and you don't have to believe everything your teachers are saying. You need to just learn how to think for yourself and it starts when you're a child, and I don't think we should shield children from things.

Unfortunately, some students believed that their schooling was not providing them with the skills for such independent thinking. I was particularly troubled by Sophia's underlying belief that teachers were unable to help students develop the “emotional maturity” needed for dialogue.

Sophia: I was just thinking—I do think it's important that those conversations should be had in the classroom. But I was reading the question [from student comments for the last iteration] about emotional maturity amongst high school students and I feel like if you don't have a teacher that knows what they're doing and knows how to have and handle that kind of conversation

in the classroom to deal with 20-30 some odd kids' different opinions. I think the emotional maturity aspect, like a lot of kids in high school is an issue. But even if a teacher does know how to handle that situation, you have to think about how kids are brought up and everyone's brought up differently. And we said, depending on your household, all they know is what your parents tell them and how do you teach someone how to be emotionally mature about this kind of situation? A teacher can't really teach that—they can try to, but at the end of the day, that does kind of come from where you're from.

However, another student hoped that teachers would at least encourage their students to ask questions and engage in critical thinking.

Jake: They can definitely encourage ways to just ask questions like, “Oh, why do you believe that?” Just not like your easy quick response to questions like, “What do you think about this, or are you happy about this?” I would encourage critical thinking.

A bit later, when Cassandra asked students who had not participated in the discussion to reflect on how it had gone, two new students offered their thoughts:

Mary: I think there was like a good balance of people sharing their opinion in seeing both sides of it. And I think we did a good job of listening to each other and if we didn't understand something. We could understand it because the person could help you out by saying why they felt that way. That I think helped it build a better conversation deeper.

James: I thought the discussion went very well. People were asking people to reword what they said, or give examples and all that good stuff. I saw a lot of new faces that I haven't seen speak and I felt like it was a pretty good pickup of pace from Wednesday. I did not think it was going to be that quick that we got back into a deep conversation like that.

Thus, during Iteration 3, students showed a deep awareness of the tensions and complexities associated with classroom dialogue in school when given the time and space to do so. Their comments suggested several students were uncertain about what teachers' roles can and should be and they did not often feel like they had been provided the skills - or often the

opportunity - to dialogue with classmates. Consequently, they did not feel that they were exposed to a diversity of opinions, nor given an opportunity to engage in critical thinking. Several clearly believed that the absence of their own voices and ideas in the classroom was a barrier to their own learning.

In summary, these excerpts suggested students in Cassandra's class believed that previous schooling had resulted in the following: they were unable to hear other perspectives, they did not learn how to have conversations with others, they were not able to free themselves from the narrow set of opinions with which they grew up, they felt unprepared to become fully informed and responsible citizens, they had to interact with others who had no listening skills and were ignorant and not open-minded, and they questioned their own maturity and ability to have classroom discussions. Furthermore, they questioned whether their teachers even had the skills needed to facilitate discussions or were willing to deal with the consequences of allowing such discussions. One student, Sophia, did not think it was even possible for teachers to assist in developing the kind of maturity needed for dialogue; instead she believed it all depended on "how you were brought up." In my own journal notes (October 5th), I reflected on how little these undergraduate college students thought of the capacity of their own education to promote thinking, conversation, respect, and understanding.

The Anxiety of "Showing Up". During reflection on the *Touchstones* discussion guidelines in Iteration 1, students identified several barriers that would continue to be present throughout the semester. These factors related to their own anxiety about being fully present and participating in the classroom, or as one student shared, it was difficult to fully "show up." Their anxiety related to showing up was associated with working in an online environment, speaking openly with classmates, and the authority of the teacher.

Online Factors Impeding Dialogue. Cassandra had started Iteration 1 with reflection on the *Touchstones* discussion guidelines. Students repeatedly commented on barriers that they associated with online learning: the temptations to distraction, technical problems, and difficulties regarding participation. However, they also noted inhibiting factors that could just as well be associated with in-person classroom interactions: the need to be correct, anxiety, the pressure of grades, deferring responsibility to others, and the stress associated with life in a pandemic. At first, only three students felt comfortable sharing and they spoke of the difficulties associated with being present in an online environment and the temptations of distractions:

Drew: For my group, we sort of had a mix between speaking clearly and being present in class. And speaking clearly, it was more of an articulation thing—having trouble saying exactly what you want to and the way you want to. And for being present, it seems that with online classes, it's a lot easier to zone out or not pay as much attention just because we're surrounded by so many more distractions.

Mary: Our group said “speaking clearly” because we think that online you're just speaking fast to get it outward. So you're not really trying to think, and then you have all these other ideas, also in your head. So it comes out not as clear as you want it to be.

Jake: So, my group said that it was a mix between speaking clearly and being present. For speaking clearly, Zoom tends to buffer, and there are internet issues that we can't control and sometimes it sounds like we're talking really slow. And it's hard to hear what we're saying. And then with being present—more of like being in an online classroom with so many other distractions. From there you can easily click on another tab . . . classes are more difficult because we're not in the classroom. (Iteration 1, September 23)

When no further comments were forthcoming, Cassandra followed up, as we had planned, by inviting students to consider the *Touchstones* guidelines in light of their own schooling experiences: “Was there anything in your experiences about school that has made it difficult to

have that kind of conversation compared to other spaces in your life like dorm rooms with friends?” The following are some comments when she asked if anyone wanted to share out.

Mia: In classes I feel like [in person] there's a more strict tendency for professors to say no phones on the desk or anything. So like you have no other option than to interact with other students. So I feel like that makes the class in person less awkward . . . but here online we obviously see your face, but you don't see our hands unless they are on the screen . . . so it just makes it a little bit more awkward for students to talk to each other, especially if you're online it is just such a different atmosphere. So it's harder to focus—it's just that we can get away with stuff much easier. So like you said, it's really more about self-discipline.

Diane: Regardless of how we learn it's difficult for people to get comfortable with learning—like going from in person classes to online and being able to keep themselves organized as well as balancing both school and friend life and kind of just learn to adapt so quickly, under such stressful circumstances with quizzes and exams and the constant need to do well.

James: I was gonna say like we are students and *we do have to try to be right*—and in online classes, you can kind of just defer your answer to someone else—hide behind your screen or something like that.

Cassandra: Okay, so I think these are all interesting. We are in a new time. It is a stressful time and we have transitioned from face to face into an online forum so we'll just keep being thoughtful of these things and how we can move forward and build our community in a way that is productive for your learning and growth is really what we're here for.

Here students offered their own experiences with classroom discussion, some describing learning online during the pandemic. For them, the online format could offer distractions, challenges balancing responsibilities, and temptations to defer responsibility or hide that were not available during in-person classes. I was particularly struck by James' nonchalant comment that “we do have to try to be right” as a motivation not to risk making comments and defer responsibility to others.

Anxiety Associated with Speaking with Classmates. At the end of Iteration 1, Cassandra distributed the *Touchstones Discussion Evaluation* rubric for students to reflect on their own

participation; during Planning Meeting 8 we examined these rubrics. Looking at the results, students identified *silence* and *balanced participation* as the two most important factors to improve their own discussions. Eighteen of 24 students (75%) identified silence as an area that the group needed to work on and seventeen of 24 students (71%) identified balanced participation as needing improvement. The following areas received the next highest rankings but did not elicit comment in the open-response section by students: 16 of 24 students (67%) thought “asking one another questions” should be an area of focus, while “building on one another’s comments” was selected by 11 of 24 students (46%).

Students’ free-response comments on the *Touchstones* rubric pointed toward student awareness of two particular factors impeding their willingness and ability to dialogue with classmates: the first was the presence of a dynamic involving dominance by some students and silence by others. The second, and likely related impeding factor, involved their own awareness of personal negative affective barriers underlying student silence and the lack of balanced participation. In the following free-response comments, students reflected on the presence of dominance and passivity during their discussion:

- I think we should ask more questions of each other to provide more depth in the discussion and understand each other as best as we can.
- Dominance by some individuals because I don't think we get the most out of conversations if there are only opinions from a few people.
- We should work on the silence because oftentimes there was that awkward silence.
- Silence, I think that many of the people in class just listen (which is fine) but I'd also like to know what you're thinking. Maybe it's a point that the other 20 students have not thought of.

Students' reflections also included feelings of discomfort, anxiety about sensitive topics, intimidation, not knowing what others are thinking, trust, fear of the majority, and awkwardness. It seemed that students had a very good grasp of the feelings inhibiting their own participation -

Cassandra just needed to help them talk to one another about how they could collaborate in building trust and establishing safe conditions.

- We need to work on talking about both sides of the conversation, which can help build points and open those up who may feel too scared to talk out against the majority.
- I do think that there was some dominance but I also think that maybe some people feel intimidated and don't want to talk.
- Asking others questions because I feel like since many of the conversations we are having can be very opinionated or sensitive topics for some people. So it can feel uncomfortable to ask questions about what some people are expressing at times.

During Planning Meeting 8, immediately after Iteration 1, Cassandra and I reflected on these results. We noted the way that dominance in a dialogic pedagogy could often serve to marginalize or eliminate divergent views or intimidate variant perspectives. While sometimes silence could be a sign of careful listening and thoughtful retrospection, the presence and passive acceptance of such dominant voices prevented building trust and full participation.

Finally, we found it interesting that on the *Touchstones* rubric, exactly a third of students believed that there was a great deal of cooperation, scoring it a 10 out of 10. This could be viewed as a positive dynamic. However, while the discussion did include ten students who shared their opinions, there was almost no exchange between them until the final minutes. Cassandra and I considered that students might have misunderstood what a cooperative discussion meant – or they might have believed that this discussion was simply better than those they typically experienced in classes. I noted that 14 of the 21 students believed there was a great deal of respect in the conversation but wondered what that might mean when students were not actually responding much to one another. We speculated that respect here would mean simply an absence of conflict.

The Evaluative Authority of the Teacher. A third dimension of students' anxiety emerging in Step 1 related to teachers' power to evaluate student comments and make determinations about grades. During Iteration 2, one student revealed that her anxiety about performance in class and on grade reports affected how she felt about participating. This occurred when Cassandra asked the class if "there was anything in your experiences about school that has made it difficult to have [classroom] conversations compared to other spaces in your life like dorm rooms with friends?" One student spoke about anxieties associated with grades, a factor occasionally heard from students throughout the intervention:

Olivia: When you really have to continuously voice your opinions or thoughts on something, I felt a lot of times—for Socratic seminars or like graded [discussions]—you know, things that would contribute to your overall grade. So a lot of times I feel like there's a lot more pressure on that. Which led me to feel a lot more nervous about talking in class, especially when you have to consistently feel the pressure of knowing that what you're saying will affect your grade, especially in high school, kind of makes it a little bit more nerve wracking. So, yeah.

Lingering Questions after Step 1

By the end of Step 1, Cassandra and I had already learned a great deal about factors that enhanced or impeded FPCD. There were also, however, unexamined issues and lingering questions. This section, and those that follow here after future steps, describes our questions that remained to be examined as we considered modifications to the intervention.

First, I reflected on a dynamic that appeared to be a vicious classroom cycle (Field Notes September 19). Students' self-identified lack of preparation for classroom dialogue and the attendant feelings (such as anxiety) seemed to contribute toward Cassandra more powerfully feeling the need to take up responsibility in the flow of the class and engage in more teacher-centered guidance and leadership. My hope was that by providing high-structured lesson plans during Step 1, we could break this cycle of student passivity and teacher authority. However,

after Iteration 3, I wondered if the planning and structure had paradoxically contributed toward Cassandra sensing her own responsibility and control over the classroom dynamics. In fact, the most student-centered class had occurred after Iteration 3 when she had simply “let go” of her responsibility and encouraged the students to speak on their own.

Also in my reflections of September 19, I recognized that in the *Touchstones* training workshops that I had attended in the past, a group of facilitators would themselves practice participating in discussions and debriefing together. By contrast, in this one-on-one formative research collaboration, I was trying to *explain* these same activities without Cassandra having the opportunity to participate in them experientially. I worried that my attempts to abstractly explain facilitation strategies was simply not as effective in Cassandra’s skill acquisition compared to the situated learning that might occur in a *Touchstones* teacher workshop.

Finally, my most troubling reflection was the limited time during which students had actually led their own student-centered debriefing. While reflective debriefing was an essential element of the intervention, I had decided not to elaborate on strategies for facilitating it during Step 1. There simply had not seemed to be enough time to prioritize another component and I feared overwhelming Cassandra with too much at once. However, in retrospect, it occurred to me that Essential Element 3 (student-centered debriefing) was perhaps the most important element in helping the class overcome affective barriers and habituated forms of discourse that were practiced in the classroom.

Step 2: Gradual Release of Responsibility (Iterations 4 and 5)

After Step 1, particularly the 60-minute session of FPCD in Iteration 3, I was hopeful that we could build on Cassandra’s early success. Given that 15 of 21 students had spoken and engaged in dialogue with one another rather than only responding to the instructor, it made sense

to determine a new focus for Step 2. There were two possible directions for the change of focus and modifications to the intervention. For instance, in my field notes I considered trying to support Cassandra in drawing the remaining students into discussion; I believed that this goal would require more focus on student-centered reflection and debriefing on their own dialogue. This would entail maintaining focus on the highly structured lesson plans we used in the first three iterations and supporting Cassandra in the acquisition of additional skills pertaining to facilitating student debriefing. It seemed to me that student-centered debriefing had been underutilized in the first three iterations; supporting students in this process would encourage them to build honesty and trust by addressing discussion dynamics that appeared to impede a spirit of openness and full participation. Our data had suggested that about one-third of students did not participate in the one-hour discussion of Iteration 3; therefore, there was still significant work to be done to ensure all students felt willing and able to participate in group dialogue.

On the other hand, when offered the opportunity and a lengthy span of time to engage with one another in Iteration 3, Cassandra and her students had successfully engaged in a highly student-centered 60-minute dialogue. This indicated the possibility that less structure and more freedom for the instructor and her students might, at this stage, be a necessary ingredient in the intervention. This would mean relaxing the tightly knit structure and providing more time for everyone to engage in dialogue. I was also keenly aware that Cassandra had put her own course curriculum on hold during the first three iterations in order to practice acquiring a new set of pedagogical skills using specific CORI-aligned texts. Yet, she was teaching a course with university determined standards and outcomes; related to such goals, one student had already asked others in his breakout room group if they felt that not much content had been covered yet (Iteration 2). With these considerations in mind, Cassandra and I opted to pursue a gradual

release of my responsibility for integrating the intervention into her course lesson plan and implementing the next two iterations.

Modifications for Step 2 of the Intervention

Informed by data in Step 1, modifications for Step 2 were designed to provide Cassandra with more autonomy and freedom in making her own curricular choices and designing her own lesson plans. It seemed consistent then that Cassandra deserved the same autonomy to try exercising the skills she had developed thus far. Therefore, we made the decision to give Cassandra an opportunity to integrate her own curricular texts into the intervention, apply her understanding of FPCD, and practice skills she had begun to develop in previous iterations. I hoped that as a result of loosening the lesson plan structure and providing more freedom and time, Cassandra might have more success relinquishing her responsibility and transferring agency to her students (which proved to be a significant impeding factor described in Step 1).

Nevertheless, I did note in my journal (October 3) that this release was not directly addressing all of the identified impeding factors from Step 1 in an immediate way. But like learning to ride a bicycle, I hoped that with more practice, facilitating the flow of dialogue would become more natural to Cassandra and other impeding factors could be more effectively addressed in later steps.

Implementing Step 2

After the successes of Step 1, and particularly Iteration 3, we believed that students were ready to engage in discussion and had shown a propensity to do so with respect and care. Yet, Step 2 occurred during the first three weeks of October and what we didn't fully anticipate were the disruptions caused by the pandemic, the upcoming presidential election, and Cassandra's professional responsibilities.

Iteration 4 - October 7

In Iteration 4, Cassandra chose a documentary film, *13th*, to serve as a discussion text. This film was an advocacy documentary designed to show the systemic racism that has occurred throughout the history of the United States. Students watched the film for homework, and then worked in small groups discussing film clips of their choice before moving into a whole-group discussion. She shared with me, immediately after Iteration 3, that it was important to tackle the history of racism in the United States, and she felt that this film made a powerful indictment of the systemic racism present in American society. In Planning Meeting 10, we discussed selecting several powerful excerpts from the film for students to choose to watch again in small groups. Afterward, they could report their findings to the rest of the class before participating in a whole class dialogue.

When implementation began, it took 50 minutes to make announcements, talk with the class about the pandemic and social issues, introduce the documentary, and have students select and watch selected clips of the film. It then took another 10 minutes to move students into breakout rooms and have a quick discussion of those clips. That left about 15 minutes for a discussion. The resulting discussion returned to an I-R-E or curated version of a facilitated dialogue: students took turns responding to questions offered that were mediated by Cassandra. The students did not speak to one another but, rather, to Cassandra (“ping-pong” as she had previously called it). While she tried to make her questions open-ended, she spoke between each participant’s comments and there were fewer speakers than in Iteration 3.

Iteration 5 - October 19

The following week, Cassandra attended a professional conference and we agreed that I would show students a second documentary, *Precious Knowledge*, for discussion during Iteration

5, upon her return on October 19. It presented the lives and compelling educational experiences of young persons in Tucson, Arizona in a Mexican-American studies program. She designed a lesson plan using many of the components we had worked through over the previous weeks. The intervention lesson plan included: a) watching the last 15 minutes of the documentary not finished during the prior class; b) moving students to breakout rooms to discuss provided question prompts; c) whole class discussion that addressed the question: ‘Who gets to decide what students learn?’ and d) issuing students and the instructor the quick *Essential Elements Survey* that was delayed due to class time constraints in the previous iteration. Both of these iterations will be discussed in more detail below.

Table 4.2 provides an overview of the results of the second step comprised of the fourth and fifth iterations: the duration of each discussion, the number of times the instructor spoke, the number of students who participated in each discussion, the number of discrete exchanges that occurred, the date of each iteration, and any additional data collected in that iteration.

Table 4.2

Overview Of Discussion Exchanges In Step 2

Iteration # (Date) and Topical Focus	Duration of discussion	Number of Instructor Contributions to the Discussion	Number of student speakers	Number of Discrete Exchanges
Iteration 4 (October 7) <i>13th</i> documentary	15 minutes	20	9	42
Iteration 5 (October 19) <i>Precious Knowledge</i> documentary	27 minutes	16	10	54

Factors Enhancing Cassandra's Understanding of FPCD in Step 2

This next section outlines findings from iterative cycles of data collection and analysis while implementing Iterations 4 and 5. Our planning sessions were fewer and shorter during Step 2 and there was a gap week between the iterations due to a professional conference that Cassandra was attending. During Step 2, one new factor that appeared to enhance Cassandra's understanding of FPCD was identified, as were four new impeding factors (see Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4

Enhancing and Impeding Factors for Pedagogical Goal 1 in Step 2

Goal 1: Build Teacher Understanding of FPCD	
Enhancing Factors in Step 2	Impeding Factors in Step 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Through practice, Cassandra was becoming comfortable with several FPCD components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pressures on planning: pandemic, politics, and professional responsibilities• “Closed” texts?• Difficulty relinquishing responsibility and transferring agency to students• Feelings about doing dialogue “right”

An Enhancing Factor Uncovered in Step 2 (Goal 1) was that through Practice, Cassandra was becoming Comfortable with Several FPCD Components. After operating within the highly-structured lesson plans in Step 1, Cassandra began to more freely choose and integrate specific FPCD components into her own curriculum during Step 2. In the modification for this step, the gradual release of responsibility, she was able to take more responsibility over the conduct of the intervention. The freedom, choice, and agency she exercised allowed her to become more comfortable with several components of the intervention.

Components associated with Essential Element 1 of the FPCD intervention, an engaging text, came to Cassandra most naturally: she selected texts that were relevant to students, offered them choice, and aligned with their development. Cassandra also recognized the benefit of carefully preparing and asking questions strategically (Essential Element 2, component 3). She became more aware of the need to have a well-formulated question before class began that really focused on the topic of inquiry for discussion. For instance, she believed that she had lost her way during facilitation of Iteration 4 because she had not adequately thought out ahead of time what would be a good subject for conversation. Reflecting afterward (Planning Meeting 11), she said “I think my takeaway for that is for future classes just to be prepared with that question...obviously the polling is a good thing.... [but] what is the question going to be?” But she also became aware that she was less comfortable asking questions related to social justice compared to ones in elementary science education. Cassandra described elementary education as an area that was in her “wheelhouse.” Nevertheless, she did recognize that asking questions was a “skill that had some transfer” when dealing with familiar topics to those which were less familiar.

Cassandra also had a natural ability to build relationships in class that was more clearly revealed when she was unshackled from highly-structured lesson plans. She understood that modeling her own humanity and humility with students was important in building trust (Planning meetings 1, 2) and demonstrated it regularly. She radiated warmth and care toward her students, repeatedly asking about their lives and the reality of attending college and living in dorms during a pandemic (Iterations 2, 3, 5). She also expressed her own limitations about social justice topics (Planning Meetings 1, 2; Iterations 1, 2), humbly explaining that she was working on her own continued growth (1st and 2nd classes of semester; Iteration 1), that she was bound to make

mistakes (Iteration 1), and she asked students to speak up when she made a mistake (1st and 3rd classes of the semester). She admitted she still had her own questions and looked forward to exploring them with her students (Planning Meeting 1; Iteration 1). She repeatedly explained her belief that sharing perspectives and being open to others was essential for growth (Planning Meetings 1, 2; Iterations 1, 5). But she also recognized and empathized with students trying to talk about social justice topics because they could be emotionally charged and raise difficult feelings (Planning Meetings 1, 2; Iteration 1). All of these qualities of care were characteristics supportive of building group cohesion (Essential Element 2, component 6).

Factors Impeding Cassandra's Understanding of FPCD in Step 2

Amid efforts to gradually release some of my responsibility for the intervention, four new factors (Figure 4.4) impeding Cassandra's understanding of how to maximize student-centered discussion were gleaned from data collected and analyzed during the two iterations of Step 2. They were: pressures on planning times together, the use of closed texts, difficulty relinquishing responsibility and transferring agency to students, and feelings about doing dialogue "right."

Pressures on Planning: Pandemics, Politics, and Professional Responsibilities.

While in Step 1 we experienced pressures that constrained the availability of classroom time to fully implement a highly-structured iteration, in Step 2, we also experienced an abundance of pressures limiting opportunities for planning and reflection. During the weeks associated with Step 2 of the intervention, from approximately September 30 to October 25, a host of pressures impinged on our work together both in and out of the classroom. The alleviation of responsibilities associated with introducing a course and meeting students at the beginning of a semester did not result in simply settling into a routine. Rather, a new set of pressures arose.

For instance, in several of our planning meetings during that period, current social and political topics found their way into our discussions. Living through a pandemic was omnipresent; it affected our personal and professional lives and we took time to discuss its impact on our lives, our work, and her students. But we also talked about presidential debates and the upcoming elections, the state of the nation's politics, and the current cultural divide. While these conversations served to relieve the stress of pandemic isolation and uncertainty over the future direction of the country, we also considered whether such topics should be introduced to the class and what that might look like.

Other pressures curtailed our work, such as Cassandra's need to complete three grant writing obligations, and attend a professional development workshop during the week of October 11th; we decided that I would fill in for her during that time, but it meant breaking the continuity that felt important in developing the classroom community for dialogue. Cassandra also mentioned the stress of thinking about taking her doctoral comprehensive exams sometime in the new year. Such factors contributed to her concern, expressed in Planning Meeting 11, that the dialogue for Iteration 4 was difficult because she had not had as much time to prepare as she would have liked. There were also pressures associated with working in an online course. Some of our planning time was spent discussing the tone of Cassandra's virtual classroom and what could or should be done about it as students joined class from their beds, cars, and even a boat. Among other distractions, one female student was being visibly teased by a friend during class, while a male student was in a house common area interacting with roommates.

Virtual housekeeping items also took up time. This included the consideration and adoption of new online programs that might provide students a better learning experience and rearranging files so that both Cassandra and her students could more easily access what they

needed. All of this was on top of the personal and family exigencies that surprised us during the shutdown of normal life and routines, COVID testing, and the isolation brought on by the pandemic.

In addition, Cassandra wanted to prioritize course content. In the two weeks of Step 2, she wished to cover topics such as the history of hate in the United States, implicit bias, white privilege and white fragility (DiAngelo, 2018), and systemic racism. She worried that by bringing up so many topics, students were only getting “little tidbits of things” because “we have to move on” (Planning Meeting 10). She also wondered whether dialogue promoted or inhibited the ability for students to cover such topics in depth; she expressed concern that the time required for allowing students more discussion opportunities limited content coverage.

Given the multitude of factors competing for our time and attention during Step 2, we tended to focus our limited planning time on the basic task of selecting a discussion “text” and structuring the lesson with time set aside for small group and whole group discussion. We failed to move beyond such considerations. In other words, we focused on components associated with Essential Element 1 (finding a text that was relevant and developmentally appropriate as well as giving students some choice) and spent far less time on Essential Element 2 (facilitation strategies) and Essential Element 3 (student-centered debriefing). For instance, we had only 30 minutes of planning time before Iteration 4. When we met the morning before class on October 7th, Cassandra told me she had asked students to watch the documentary *13th* for homework and come to class prepared for discussion.

On the morning of Iteration 5, we met for just a few minutes before class to discuss the iteration plan. It had now been ten days since the last iteration of FPCD and two full weeks since the successful student-centered dialogue on Black Lives Matter (Iteration 3). Cassandra and I had

not had another opportunity to meet between our debrief of Iteration 4 on October 9 and the execution of Iteration 5 on October 19th. Overall, our selection of two documentary films during a very busy period of the semester was indicative of our need to quickly settle on content that could be easily conveyed while still meeting the intervention demands for engaging, developmentally appropriate discussion texts. All of the competing demands on our time led us to focus on content and the text, and this detracted from the focus on analysis and mentoring of facilitation strategies. Generally, I noted (field notes October 8 & 20) that we both fell back into concern about what should be covered rather than how students might develop new skills required to feel willing and able to participate in a dialogue.

“Closed” texts?

A second impeding factor was the challenge of utilizing texts that were not designed to invite inquiry from a diversity of perspectives. During Iteration 4, we were also reminded that emotionally charged texts made discussion more challenging for a group of students who were just getting to know one another. Thus, it became more apparent that some texts, while extremely important, might not be suitable for early iterations of FPCD.

In Step 1 of the intervention, the two texts provided for student choice were short case studies of contemporary social justice issues that they might well have experienced during their own schooling. While these texts were written with the purpose of asking readers to consider important social justice issues, they were nevertheless “open.” That is, the authors of *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education* (Gorski & Pothini, 2018) asked readers to look at each case from a variety of perspectives, identify challenges and opportunities, and look for different equitable outcomes. I selected these texts and shared them with Cassandra as “thinking

devices” (Lotman, 1988) meant to encourage participant thinking and response, for or against, in order to develop dialogue.

In Iteration 4, however, Cassandra chose *13th*, a powerful contemporary documentary. In my private journal notes after viewing it (October 4), I reflected that it was difficult to imagine students weighing different perspectives after watching such an emotionally powerful film. It didn’t seem likely that participants in the beginning stages of group development would be willing to risk offending others by asking challenging questions about an emotionally charged topic such as the history of systemic racism in America. The goal of this documentary seemed to raise awareness of profound social issues. In other words, it might in one sense be “closed.” This left me to wonder if some texts were more conducive to encouraging openness or “responsivity” (Bakhtin, 2010; Wells, 2007) in which a variety of counterpositions and student voices would flourish. Likewise, I wondered if some texts were likely to operate in a more monologic or authoritative mode, expecting few or no counterarguments, but rather expecting sympathetic acceptance, social awareness, and compassionate understanding?

Nevertheless, a text used in a classroom dialogue does not stand on its own, and its openness could depend on how a facilitator chooses to use it. In my own reflections, I didn’t presume to know how Cassandra intended to utilize the documentary as a text. Furthermore, in Step 2, our goal was to allow Cassandra more freedom in adapting the intervention to her curricular choices. Therefore, I asked Cassandra how she might begin a discussion on *13th* and what questions she might ask. She stated that she wished to ask students, “How do we change it [racism]?” and more specifically, “How do we change it systematically?” From a transformational worldview, this question seemed excellent to me, since it asked about how we might improve social conditions in our nation today. However, as a dialogic question, I feared

that students would not know enough about the subject to feel confident, competent, or entitled to discuss it. In my field journal (October 7), I noted that there was a big difference between asking students if teachers should lead discussions about current political issues (a question guiding Iteration 3 and a topic that they likely had some experience with in high school) and how to change a long history institutional discrimination and system racism in the United States today.

I decided whether the text was indeed “closed” or used in a monologic manner was important data in determining the text’s power in enhancing or impeding the intervention – and one we could discuss in our next planning meeting. Therefore, the use of this text seemed like an important research trial. The session of FPCD for Iteration 4, however, reverted strongly back toward an instructor-dominated mode of classroom discourse as discussed next.

Difficulty Relinquishing Responsibility and Transferring Agency to Students

During Iteration 3 of Step 1, Cassandra allowed a great deal of time for student discussion, and she removed herself from the position of overtly directing the discussion. This allowed students an opportunity to meaningfully speak directly to each other for an extended time about academic subjects that were of interest to them. However, in Step 2, despite her intentions to open up dialogue and encourage student-centered participation, there were times when Cassandra fell back into subsuming responsibility for leading the discussion. Analysis found that this occurred particularly during Iteration 4, when Cassandra spoke often, frequently interjecting questions between student comments to keep discussion moving forward. While this was partly due to the classroom press, a deeper look revealed that this resulted when she tried to rescue students from a cynicism regarding American society.

“I Hijacked the Conversation.” When the fourth iteration began, it took 50 minutes to welcome students and set up the discussion. This left about 15 minutes for student dialogue. After the success of Iteration 3, this iteration returned to an I-R-E or curated version of a facilitated dialogue: students took turns responding to questions that were mediated by Cassandra. The students did not speak to one another but directly to her. While she tried to make her questions open-ended, Cassandra spoke between each participant and there were fewer speakers. These data suggested that she was again having difficulty with the provisional ceding of teacher authority (Component #8 of FPCD Essential Element 2).

When Cassandra and I touched base immediately after class, she opened with, “That was painful.” In preparing for our debrief the following week, I tallied the participant exchanges during Iteration 4. I reported that in 15 minutes, Cassandra had spoken 20 times in 42 total exchanges; in contrast, only nine students spoke. I also provided a list of the questions that she asked during this iteration for our analysis and discussion. Analysis of these questions found that she had inadvertently used questioning (12 questions in 15 minutes) in order to responsibly try to move the conversation forward.

While the first question indicated her willingness to open the conversation to students’ choices and interests (“I’m going to open it up to you. What do you want to talk about?”), her follow up inquiries were more specific and directed. I shared these observations with Cassandra via email to give her time for reflection before our next meeting. This set up our planning meeting on October 9th. Cassandra opened by saying that, “It was terrible...I hijacked the conversation...” She reported that she had felt responsible for moving the conversation forward, but instead she “had moved the conversation back into that ping-pong ball kind of discussion.”

She shared that with more preparation time, she would have been better prepared to facilitate an open discussion.

An analysis of data from Iteration 4 revealed that Cassandra was indeed at the center of curating the dialogue. She defaulted to speaking after each student, thus continually subsuming responsibility for the discussion and ensuring that it moved forward. She asked a whole series of disparate questions in order to improve the discussion but that also made it difficult for her to strategically facilitate using FPCD Essential Element 2, components #8, *provisional coding of authority*, and #9, *development of group cohesion*. In the exchanges below one can see Cassandra's efforts to responsibly anticipate ways to conduct the dialogue down what she hoped might be fruitful avenues. Take for instance two minutes into the conversation when Olivia proposed that politicians advocated for private prisons because they were motivated by profit:

Olivia: Even though those people [politicians] are supposed to represent us and do what's supposedly best for the country on the whole, it's more so just about profit . . .

Cassandra: Thoughts about the economy and the economic gains that Olivia is talking about?

No student response.

Cassandra waited ten seconds and students did not respond to this question. Therefore, she invited students to consider their own feelings about whether or not politicians looked after the interests of their constituents. We noted in our debrief that she next asked what amounted to a "yes or no" question after which she acknowledged a student's response and then solicited additional opinions:

Cassandra: How does it make you feel in this light from what I'm hearing you saying that our policymakers-- we're hopeful that they have our best intentions. Do you think policymakers have our best intentions and how does this influence how that feels? Is that clear what I'm asking? Not really? First, let's break that down. So Olivia said that the policymakers that we're

electing should have our best interests in mind. Do you feel that policymakers do have our best interests in mind?

James: Well, no, I think that they don't have our best interests because once you've secured 51%, you don't really need to care.

Cassandra: Okay, so James says no. Anyone else?

Next, two additional students, Olivia and Sue, responded, and as we discovered in our analysis (see below), this was the pivot around which Cassandra felt she had assumed full responsibility for moving the discussion down a specific avenue of inquiry rather than allowing students to lead the discussion.

Olivia: I kind of agree with James. I mean, you would hope that they would. But I think a lot of the time, it's not really quite that way. Or it pertains more directly to what might be in the best interest for what group that—whoever is in government might fall into sometimes.

Sue: I think when it comes down to it, part of the documentary—there was a quote from a, I think it was a conservative politician saying that they don't want everyone to vote. Because they do better when less people vote. So they don't want what's best for the American people. They want what's best for their own politics. And that's sort of the story when it comes to American politics. It's everyone doing everything based on their own agenda. And that's what kind of sucks about the world and being aware of that, because that's just an unfortunate truth to all of life.

Cassandra then intervened and redirected the conversation with a new question:

Cassandra: Okay, so I'm going to—are there any examples of politicians who have had best intentions or have fought for the rights of people?

Drew: What was the question again?

Cassandra: Are there any examples from the other side of this—we sometimes feel hopeless—we watched a documentary that had a lot of examples of that southern strategy and how politicians made decisions on the backs of people of color, and specifically in this documentary, black men. But are there examples—just to put a little bit of light on it—because what I'm thoughtful of is what we can do and what some of the solutions are. So are there examples of politicians that you know of that did fight for or go in with best intentions?

This led one student, Drew, to respond to her request by initiating a discussion about the contemporary politician, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and some of her legislative initiatives. The resultant back and forth focused on Cassandra eliciting from Drew a description of the purpose of Ocasio-Cortez's policies and then trying to connect these comments back to the theme of the documentary, systemic racism.

Drew: Um, I would say, I don't know that personally but I think the best example would be AOC. And what she's done, not only for her district in New York, but nationally with the Green New Deal, and pushing for progressive policies.

Cassandra: Can you give us some examples? Can you give us a little more detail on that?

Drew: On some of the progressive policies or—

Cassandra: What she yeah, give us a little context.

Drew: So one thing one of the few things that she's really big on is pushing for free college education. Because she feels that too many people fall victim to student debt, and it takes years for them to pay it off. Another thing is universal health care. She's been really pushing that and now especially with, with us being in a global pandemic, and obviously the green New Deal with her just pushing the idea that we are running out of time to find renewable solutions before what we have done to the earth is no longer. I'm trying to make sure I explained this the right way.

Cassandra: You know, I just wanted to put up—are we thinking about both sides right. Thinking about this documentary—we have many politicians and we have this organization ALEK, that is passing bills, what are the implications of that on systemic racism?

Moving on from an explanation of AOC's political advocacy, Cassandra redirected students back to the topic of systemic racism, and wanted to open the conversation by considering "both sides." "Both sides" in this case meant considering the film's portrayal of systemically racist policies by politicians on the political right. This type of questioning is important from an emancipatory dialogue (see Chapter 2) perspective and can lead to fruitful

discussion, but it is not the same as inviting students to begin participating from their own horizons of understanding. Nevertheless, Drew and Jake picked up her inquiry and responded:

Drew: I think one thing we do see with a lot of the corporations is that their senior leadership is mostly made up by white people and they can't really relate to the issues that people of color deal with. So they're not even gonna think about that when it comes to creating policies.

Jake: Um, something else that you can also add is these PACs and super PACs they act in favor of like certain politicians. So politicians don't necessarily feel fully responsible for certain laws and policies that get passed in Congress.

Cassandra: So politicians don't feel fully responsible. What are your thoughts about that?

Looking back over these discussion segments during my own journal reflection (October 11), I didn't think that Cassandra was being fair to herself in stating that she had "hijacked" the conversation. She kept it going by responding directly to student comments and attempting to get them to elaborate further. Nevertheless, the effect was that she had unconsciously maintained control in the flow of the dialogue rather than waiting for students to respond to each other.

“Pushing Back”—How Rescuing Students Can Go All Wrong (Excursus #5). During Planning Meeting 11, we considered the difference between Iterations 3 and 4. First, we discussed that in Iteration 3, Cassandra had been able to remove herself long enough for the students to take leadership and speak to one another. In Iteration 4, however, she seemed to feel more responsibility and kept asking questions and taking charge. She shared that she was having difficulty discerning why it was so difficult to relinquish her own responsibility for content and allow more student-centered dialogue. As Cassandra attempted to find words of explanation, she contemplated that during this last iteration she was, “leading it down the wrong paths...not saying what I wished... backtracking... shutting it down somehow...and then I was trying to open it back up again.”

She also thought that her facilitation “had not taken the conversation where it needs to be.” She suggested that, “I was [thinking] more about implicit bias and the messages sent and how that impacts us all and I didn’t get there with the discussion.” I listened carefully to Cassandra’s feelings about the muddle she found herself in during Iteration 4. I imagined that it would be dissatisfying in at least two ways. On the one hand, she had not effectively sparked a dialogue between students, but on the other hand, students had not really tackled the topic of systemic racism the way she would have in a lecture and I-R-E discourses. Therefore, I asked her if she remembered when and why she felt like she had unintentionally “shut down the discussion.” She replied that it was when Sue described conservatives, and American politics in general, as driven by self-interest and agendas that were just an “unfortunate truth in life.”

Cassandra: I think after Sue was talking about this is the world we live in? And I thought—Oh, no, I don't want you to leave this class feeling hopeless!

Kevin: Can you remind me a little bit of that particular . . .

Cassandra: Sue had said, I can't remember the exact question right away that she was responding to—but she responded in a way that is, you know, this is politics. So this is the world we unfortunately live in, right? And then I was trying to get to the point where there's the problem, right? Trying to get to the point, okay, yes, this is the world we live in. But are there other sides to that? . . . I felt like I was inarticulate, and that shut it down in a way because nobody knew what the hell I was talking about. Because it was an idea in my own head, right?

Looking back over the transcript, this did seem to be the early pivot when Cassandra assumed control of the discussion. As she admitted, her visceral reaction to student cynicism and despair led her to want to rescue the student and the dialogue from such a bleak view of the possibility of politics and social change. Needing to respond in the hope of changing Sue’s mind, but unwilling to prescribe exactly how she should think, Cassandra asked if there were any examples of politicians with a social conscience. It is unclear where she imagined she would go

with this in relation to the broader themes in 13th about the history of systemic racism in America.

Moving forward from there, Cassandra exercised considerable control in order to guide the conversation. In my own journal notes (October 11) I reflected that this is what Cassandra meant when she interpreted her own facilitation moves as “hijacking” the discussion; it was from that point on that she floundered over the control she had assumed. She felt “inarticulate” and that the conversation had been “shut down” because “nobody knew what the hell I was talking about. Because it was an idea in my own head, right?” The discussion, which proceeded with students talking about “AOC and the Green New Deal” prompted Cassandra to make additional interventions as they were now far from questions of implicit bias and its ties to systemic racism.

A more student-centered approach might have been to wait to see how other students responded to Sue’s cynicism and hopelessness about the American political process – or if anyone was truly interested in this subject. In a student-centered dialogic approach, it would be up to students to navigate significant issues and learn to reason with one another in interpreting meaning. This would have allowed her more room in developing skills associated with FPCD Essential Element 2, components #4, *ceding of authority*, and #9, *developing group cohesion*. The desire to rescue a student from cynicism is an admirable and understandable goal; and yet a facilitator must consider when to initiate and how much time to spend on a “rescue mission” correcting such cynicism. The need to balance pushing back on student cynicism and welcoming student perspectives is another judgment that facilitators must make; facilitation is an art rather than a method, and requires judgment rather than only a formal procedure (Burbules, 1993; Gadamer, 2004; Taylor, 2002; Wells, 2007).

To support Cassandra, we focused on what might have been an opening question that was broad and interesting enough to start a conversation. We considered something like, “How did the video show that our country is still racist?” or even “What does structural racism in the United States mean?” It was unclear whether such questions would sustain the to-and-fro of sustained reasoning in a developing dialogic college classroom. We agreed, however, that in the future it would be essential to focus on an open question to effectively welcome dialogue.

“Pushing Back” - On Correcting Student Opinions (Excursus #6). Another instance of “pushing back” occurred in Iteration 5. While Cassandra was “happy” with the participation in this iteration, her thoughts returned a few times to one student’s comments. Jack had described an immigrant Chinese classmate from his high school who had worked hard, achieved well on the SAT, and had been admitted to MIT. This demonstrated, he believed, something he had learned in one of his psychology classes: that there was some correlation between the SAT and college success, and that standardized tests can in some way reflect academic merit.

For Cassandra, Jack’s opinions reflected his privilege as a white middle-class male; she believed that he was showing his ignorance of the obstacles that many underprivileged students faced in preparing for standardized tests and therefore earning the “merit” associated with them (Planning Meeting 12). She believed that such a limited horizon of understanding should be challenged. Another student, Sue, had made at least some of those arguments, and therefore Cassandra had not pursued challenging Jack. Nevertheless, Cassandra worried that the conversation between Jack and Sue had not moved further forward in having Jack reflect on his own privilege. Therefore, she felt the need to go back to this topic in the next week and examine social inequities, privilege, and implicit bias, to ensure that students were understanding these important concepts: “And it [the concepts] gives us some shared language of earned and

unearned advantages and disadvantages. Because I think we need to kind of go back to that a little bit after that comment.”

This 20-minute excursus continued as Cassandra and I agreed that challenging students’ opinions is an important part of promoting thinking. However, deciding whether and how to do so is one of the tradeoffs that a facilitator must carefully self-monitor while trying to support all students’ participation. Fully encouraging participation obligates the facilitator to start FPCD wherever each students’ understanding currently is (from their own horizon) and to model the kind of listening and openness expected from all participants as they pursue an inquiry around a subject matter. We also discussed whether a facilitator of dialogue must at times relinquish her own concern with content delivery and might even include taking up ideas with which she didn’t necessarily agree. In trying to support Cassandra in ceding her own authority (component 4) and focusing on group cohesion (component 8), we considered how she might have redirected the conversation and de-centered her own authority by means of an open question. Cassandra suggested asking, “Can any student work hard and get what they want?”

This was also the fourth time that Cassandra, educating according to a social justice worldview, or the emancipatory dialogue genre, had expressed a desire to challenge a students’ perspective. The first time we considered the value of “pushing back” was before the first iteration when we discussed the tension between encouraging student participation and the need to challenge students without “shutting them down.” The second time (also Iteration 1) she wanted to push back on a student’s view regarding patriotism. The third time (Iteration 4) she needed to rescue a student from a cynical view of politics for the sake of a belief in social change. This last time (Iteration 5) addressed a wish to help a student realize the significance of earned and unearned privilege, their own and that of others.

These four excursions on “pushing back” brought me to wonder, in my field journal (October 24), about the tensions that I had begun to associate between different dialogical genres (described in Chapter 2). A hermeneutically-oriented facilitator, focused on developing the conditions for dialogue and modeling openness toward others, would ask questions and defer to allowing students the time to think through the merits of their opinions. A facilitator of emancipatory dialogue might be most interested in freeing student thinking around particular issues related to contemporary social justice problems and transforming systems of oppression and inequality in society. A persistent endorsement of a particular kind of discourse could signal to students a particularly valued perspective and I wondered how this might constrain student participation. At the same time, I noted that, because I was sympathetic both to the transformational worldview, the need for social justice work, and the need to cover course content, I was very reluctant to exert a more student-centered dialogical approach. This brought to mind Matusov’s (2015) argument that a facilitator of dialogue cannot overtly teach values but only foster critical reflection of self and world. In such a case, the instructor is teaching what to think, rather than how to think (Dewey, 1997). This topic required further reflection and will be addressed more fully in Chapter 5.

Feelings about “Doing Dialogue Right.”

Another factor impeding Cassandra’s understanding of FPCD, and her strategic facilitation of it, was the feeling that she might not be “doing it right,” and thus perhaps also not producing the researcher’s desired outcomes for the intervention. Cassandra had several times mentioned feelings of discomfort in leading classroom dialogue (Planning Meetings 4, 8, and 11). She recognized a potential for her own voice to inhibit student dialogue, and described how she “held my lips a couple times, because I do that as a tool for myself to make their voices more

important.” In her first *Essential Elements Quick Reflection* at the end of class during Iteration 5, Cassandra wrote that it was difficult to relax her own authority when there was silence in the class; she also mentioned that she struggled at times to refrain from making comments that she felt were important points. With regard to her reflection on difficulties with her leadership using questions, she commented (Planning Meeting 12) that she sometimes felt she used too many words in asking questions or trying to make a point. Another recurring issue (Planning Meetings 8, 11) in our collaboration had been Cassandra’s concern about whether her facilitation was aligned with dialogic pedagogy or produced the “desired outcomes.”

Therefore, in our twelfth planning meeting, on October 12, I felt it was important to begin by addressing Cassandra’s concerns about the effectiveness of her own facilitation. Aligned with the modification for Step 2 (giving Cassandra more freedom in integrating and executing the intervention), I wanted to be sure that Cassandra didn’t see facilitation as a set of static methodological procedures around which she might negatively measure her own performance. Instead, I hoped to free her to facilitate more naturally in the genuinely student-centered and relational way that seemed natural for her. She often spoke of classroom dialogue as an art that was first and foremost grounded in building the bonds of trust and relationship. This seemed right to me and I thought that same trust and respect needed to exist between Cassandra and me. In order to be free and open with her students, she needed to feel the same with me.

In my personal journal reflections (October 17), I noted that in our next planning meeting, I wanted to alleviate some of the pressure that Cassandra was feeling by asserting that there was no “right way” to facilitate dialogue; rather, we might think of dialogue as a series of trade-offs in which a facilitator navigated competing goods (eg. depth vs. breadth of content coverage, challenging student opinions vs. encouraging diverse ideas, delivering concepts vs.

opening inquiry, explaining ideas vs. encouraging student reflection, opening the curriculum vs. adhering to it). Therefore, I shared with her Lefstein and Snell's (2013) idea that it was more helpful to imagine dialogue as a problem to be worked through in the living context of the classroom and not an ideal pedagogical form simply waiting to be unfolded correctly. Cassandra and I talked then about the "problem" of dialogue as making difficult choices in a highly complex learning environment in which the needs of things such as individual and group development, content, and student agency would all be considered.

Discomfort And Disorientation Facilitating Under Observation (Excursus #7).

Following our discussions on the nature of dialogic pedagogy (Planning Meeting 12), I asked about Cassandra's perceptions of the intervention thus far. I wondered if she thought the class had become more dialogical, what had improved it, and what had been a barrier. Cassandra believed that her facilitation had become more focused on dialogue. However, she also admitted that she found my presence a barrier to her own classroom discussion leadership. My presence as an observer made her "overthink" her role and what she was "supposed" to be doing. This made her uneasy with her own facilitation because while she was in the flow under observation it was "not natural and doesn't feel natural."

On top of the anxiety caused by observation and the watchful eye of a researcher with presumed expert knowledge, she offered a specific example of how my presence caused additional disorientation. In Iteration 5, I tried to privately share questions, using the Zoom chat tool, that she might use to improve students' dialogue. I thought this might support Cassandra with strategic questions to promote student participation. However, Cassandra found the questions disorienting because, while in the midst of an online conversation, she was listening to the students, thinking about her own strategic role, and now additionally trying to read and

understand the context and goals of my questions. This tore her from full presence in the student discussion and made it difficult for her to build group cohesion (FPCD Essential Element 2, component #8). She recalled attempts to understand my goal in posing particular questions and commented that using them would be “forced” as they represented artificially adopting a train of thought that did not arise from her own perspective. Cassandra suggested that instead, she would prefer that I simply participate with the class or model facilitation so that she could follow and observe more naturally. During Iteration 6, therefore, I modeled facilitation for her observation and critique.

Factors Enhancing and Impeding Student Participation in FPCD (Goal 2) in Step 2

My own efforts to gradually release responsibility in Iterations 4 and 5 intersected with a variety of factors that had enhanced or impeded Cassandra’s understanding of FPCD and her attempts to integrate her own priorities with elements of the intervention. However, shedding the highly-structured lesson plan and gradually releasing my responsibility also resulted in the identification of additional factors relating to maximizing student participation (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4. 5

Enhancing and Impeding Student Participation in FPCD (Goal 2) in Step 2

Goal 2: Maximize Student Participation in FPCD	
Enhancing Factors in Step 2	Impeding Factors in Step 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students collaborated on identifying what makes classroom discussion difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diminished allocation of time provided for dialogue and debriefing

An Enhancing Factor Uncovered in Step 2 (Goal 2): Students Collaborated on Identifying What Makes Classroom Discussion Difficult

While Iteration 4 was dominated by patterns of teacher-centered I-R-E classroom discourse, Iteration 5 (with nearly 30 minutes for student discussion) returned to a more student-centered dialogue in which Cassandra exercised far less control. She primarily asked concise open-ended questions and students began responding directly to one another. Cassandra launched the discussion by asking, “Who gets to decide what students learn?” It is worth noting that here Cassandra did not ask a broad, complex, and emotionally charged issue, such as the historic and contemporary causes of systemic racism, but rather, one that related directly to her students’ lives. The ensuing conversation had 10 speakers plus Cassandra. Of the 10 student participants, seven spoke five or more times. Thirteen students didn’t participate at all.

The conversation stayed generally focused on who should decide what is taught in schools, with considerable time given to the importance of teachers in the lives of students, the role of the Common Core Standards, and the role that social conditioning plays on equity and merit in students’ education. Cassandra spoke sixteen times in the 30 minutes, frequently summing up, asking for additional comments, and occasionally redirecting the discussion. Students directly addressed her questions but broke away from I-R-E patterns and extended the discussions by asking and responding to each other. Cassandra provided the dialogic space for students to speak from their own horizons of understanding, and they shared observations of how school had functioned, affected their lives, and improved or limited their education. Most students believed that they should have at least some control over what they learned; they spoke of the need to think for themselves and to prepare to be future citizens and leaders.

Students described feeling undervalued because of demands of the Common Core, the opinions of teachers, and the fear of conflict in the classroom. This led one student, James, to posit that while the state had standards for mathematics and ELA, there was an absence of

standards for learning to talk to one another about the “hard stuff” that related to student’s own lives and current social issues. Their conversation attempted to make meaning of their own educational experiences and tried to make sense of its purposes and perceived shortcomings. In this regard, the content of the discussion provided additional data supporting students’ feelings that they, and their teachers, were not prepared with the skills needed for dialogue (see Step 1, Pedagogical Goal 2, Impeding Factors). However, in this case, I use the data to illustrate how the act of reflecting on a text motivated students to participate (an enhancing factor) by providing them with a chance to interpret their own lives and world.

In a first passage, Stephanie spoke from her experience that in school, students were not allowed to speak of political (or social) issues, and therefore were unprepared for adulthood and citizenship. She particularly focused on the need to confront and challenge authority, in the form of the teacher, in order to think and develop a voice for oneself.

Stephanie: I also think it's important for students' learning. Sorry, I'm saying something again. But because in my high school it was forbidden to talk about politics and that's our generation and like that's who's going to be running the world when we have jobs and families. So I think it's really important that students even speak up to teachers and say that they would want to talk about that stuff because that's a huge thing in life. And if you can't talk about that because a teacher just doesn't agree with who you would want to vote for or what you have to say, then that's obviously an issue.

Likewise, in a second passage, Drew, bemoaned what he believed was the attitude of educators and those in authority toward young persons - they simply don’t know enough.

Drew: It's also a shame that this—and I think a lot of the reason why students don't have the freedom to decide what they want to learn is because of the idea that young people don't know anything. And they don't know what they should know—and just the idea that young people don't have any power when in reality we do. And I think once we get rid of that, I think that will definitely help our education system. Wait, one more thing. We also say that

young people are the future. So I think that we should give the future the tools to succeed in the future.

Several students talked about problems with their schools' curriculum. For instance, Sue pointed out that social and political disagreements had developed a classroom climate in which basic facts were contested and therefore became controversial and were difficult to teach. This linked directly to student comments in Iteration 3 about educators' anxieties in confronting difficult discussions:

Sue: When we're talking about something as vague and broad as climate change or even racism, I think that the issue is that some people can say they're wrong. They can say that it's not real. And that brings in the issue of trying to find unbiased information because when you can just say climate change isn't real, we don't have to teach it—that makes it difficult to have a curriculum that you can teach because you have incorrect views on what's actually happening in the world, and therefore you want those used to be reflected in the education system.

But several students also complained about the Common Core, and felt that it constrained teachers and students in the kinds of subject matter and conversations. These constraints included the pressure to be correct, an emphasis on academic standards (such as English and mathematics), and a lack of standards or emphasis on discussing social issues or matters affecting their lives - or from a hermeneutic perspective, a lack of opportunity to engage in the world in which they find themselves from their own horizon of understanding.

Emily: I also think that it's hard—someone brought the Common Core kind of topic—that if a kid is struggling on a topic and immediately is shut down or his words blocked out, it's really hard for that student to want to talk about it again. And it also makes it harder for them to want to learn about it—not only do they struggle with it because they don't understand, but if they want to learn about it, it's harder because they're just getting shut down all the time. Which is really not a good thing to do when it comes to learning about a topic, and it's just not good for someone's mental health.

Drew: [Reporting on his search results] On the website it says that Common Core Standards are only for math and ELA. So there's no standards—and a lot of this stuff we're talking about has to do with social issues and stuff that we

care about like history class. So there's no national standard of how to talk about these issues. So that might be where the problem is.

James: That's a good point because one plus one is always going to equal two and the comma is always going to have to go after the "but." And that's not really what we're arguing about, that's like the easy stuff right. We're trying to get a Common Core for the hard stuff.

Emily focused more on the pressures put on teachers and students to adhere to mandated academic standards and prescribed knowledge. On the one hand, she experienced it as demoralizing struggling students and making them passive recipients, and on the other as diminishing the agency of educators to best support students. She also questioned the relevancy of these academic standards in helping students better understand themselves and their world.

Emily: When I think of Common Core, I think of math and I'm gonna be honest, I suck at math. When we look at students who struggle with math if they're not doing well, and they're not seeing progress with it, it's really hard for them to want to be like, all right, you know what? This is OK—we can figure it out. We're going to keep going and Step forward. Instead they [students] kind of just backtrack and I feel that with the Common Core teachers say there's nothing we can do. We're not the ones who make the rules, we're not the ones who can pull this out of the class. We can teach you this, but not that. It kind of makes it even harder for a kid because now they have to sit there and do it because it's forced as a curriculum. So when they say we're going to pull out politics, but we're going to keep math—you're sitting there going, what's more important, learning about what's going on today or learning about math problems you're never going to use? I feel a strong dislike towards the idea of how we're using our education and how we're teaching kids about certain topics over others.

When Cassandra concisely refocused the dialogue on the text, Erin, Stephanie, and Ava discussed the way educators in Tucson (from the documentary *Precious Knowledge*) empowered students by connecting learning to their lives and experiences.

Cassandra: So let's talk about that [Mexican-American studies program] community. How did their education, the Mexican-American Studies, help?

Erin: They didn't only focus on the history part, they focused on things like social interaction and other things and made sure that they weren't feeling low

about themselves. They always made sure to reassure them that they're going to be something one day, not to listen to what the social construct was.

Stephanie: I think taking action and going against whatever, is what empowered them to start changing their mindset and to know that they're more than what they think they are.

Ava: I feel like also it was kind of like a resource for them to feel represented in school. Because the best way students learn, no matter what grade level they are, is when they can personally connect to the content they're learning. So having at least one class where they can do that I think that's what benefited them the most.

In this discussion, students seemed motivated to talk about the ways that schooling demotivated them. They provided insightful comments about what counted as education, their classroom experiences, and their own needs and interests as students and future citizens. I was particularly struck by several students' comments.

First there was Drew's perception that in his educational experience, "young people don't know anything" and "don't have any power" despite his awareness of the educational rhetoric about students "being the future." Other students were concerned about forbidden discussion topics, the influence of political ideology, and the lack of access to unbiased information. Emily expressed a concern that students who don't understand things get "shut down" and this has a powerful effect on their motivation and mental health. Finally, James believed that while students learn plenty in their schooling, there was "no Common Core of the hard stuff." This signified an awareness that while education strove to fulfill standards of what students should know, it failed to capture the more tenuous and complex experiences that students lived and how to think and talk about their own lives.

Students' perceptions of the role of authority in curtailing their speech and thought in the classroom was apparent: in Drew's comments that students were perceived to know nothing and

have no power, in Stephanie's belief that students *might even* speak up to teachers, in Sue's concern that power and manipulation in the media made it difficult to have a curriculum, in several students' concerns about the alienation correlated with mandated curricula, and in Emily's experience that students' voices were shut down and also in the disempowerment of teachers to direct learning in a ways that support all students. Nevertheless, this opportunity to share their thoughts and feels contributed to their own self-determination and motivation as competent learners and thinkers.

Impeding Factors Uncovered in Step 2 (Goal 2): Relatively Shorter Durations of Time Given for Dialogue and Affective Barriers to Participating in a Group and Online

An obvious factor contributing to the decline of participation in this step was the diminished allocation of time provided for dialogue and absence of time for student debriefing. While it was true that in Iteration 3 participation expanded and students themselves had sustained a lengthy and significant conversation, it was also true that they had 60 minutes of time, unstructured by the instructor, to do so. On the other hand, in Iterations 4 and 5, students were allocated only 15 minutes and 27 minutes respectively for dialogue and reflection. These were significantly shorter times in which to allow students to take up responsibility and develop a conversation themselves, which then resulted in fewer students who participated in each conversation.

The rush of factors that arose in the planning and execution of Iteration 4 made it impossible to issue the *Touchstones* student debrief as the class ran out of time. By Iteration 5, we still had not once issued the Essential Elements Survey, so that had to take precedent. As a result, Essential Element 3 pertaining to student debriefing was not present in Step 2, which became a significant obstacle in helping students develop their own self-determination as

participants in dialogue. In sum, during the time available for our planning sessions, developing a lesson plan and integrating course content into Step 2 of the intervention took precedent.

During class, the confluence of factors associated with the classroom press caused us to juggle issuing surveys and providing students time for reflective debriefing - and sometimes there was no time for either.

Students once again also expressed affective impediments to their own full participation. On their Essential Elements Quick Reflection at the end of Iteration 5, students provided open-ended responses to the question: “What seems to be your class’s current greatest obstacle to helping all students feel willing and able to contribute?” Ten of 22 respondents or 45% attributed affective obstacles to class participation - those associated with anxiety, being judged, or not feeling comfortable participating online. Figure 4.6 is a list of student responses.

Figure 4.6

Student Responses to Essential Elements Reflection Describing Affective Barriers

- I'm not sure about other people, but I just don't like talking in large groups.
- I think just being scared to participate in front of the class.
- Being judged
- I feel willing to contribute, however sometimes I often have things I want to share but do not feel like what I say will be agreed with.
- I'm not sure. Maybe talking in smaller groups
- Still not feeling comfortable
- I believe the greatest obstacle in this class is learning that someone in this class cares about the words coming out of your mouth
- I think it could be being uncomfortable with the online platform.
- I think it might be easier for some people to have these conversations if they were in-person.
- Not being in person, but there is nothing we can do about that!
- Feel like there are too many online distractions.

Of particular note was what I perceived as the bitterness associated with the comment of one student who believed that no one cared about what came out of his or her mouth. This was a sign of a potentially disaffected participant(s) from the discussions for some unidentified reasons.

Lingering Questions

By the end of Step 2, Cassandra and I had faced more challenges associated with teaching online during a pandemic, and amidst the sorts of professional responsibilities that arise in a semester course. This led me to reflect on how one can help a facilitator focus on the process of supporting FPCD (including debriefing) rather than the content of the lesson plan? I also wondered how one should advise a facilitator on when or how to “push back” on student opinions? Certainly, there were appropriate times for an instructor to evaluate or correct student responses, but what specific guidance might I provide in the early planning stages of FPCD?

Step 3: Modeling the Intervention (Iterations 6 and 7)

After Step 1, I was hopeful that Cassandra and I would build on our early success. We had learned that students, given the freedom, time, and opportunity to engage in dialogue, could sustain a 60-minute engaging and expansive conversation about issues related to education and social justice. In Step 2, the highly structured lesson plans had been dropped to provide Cassandra with the freedom to practice new facilitation skills on her standard course content. Amidst the press of many competing social, academic, and professional demands, she had implemented FPCD using two documentary films that served as texts. The fourth iteration resulted in a return to an I-R-E pattern of classroom discourse despite Cassandra’s best efforts to invite students to dialogue. The fifth iteration resulted in a more student-centered discussion, but only 10 students had participated in it.

My journal notes at this time (October 3 to October 27) clearly described a mid-semester rush and feelings of being adrift in the implementation of the intervention. Plans had changed, the intervention had been adapted to fit circumstances, and Cassandra had attended a week-long professional conference. After a strong start to our collaboration, it felt to me that the intervention had wandered off track. The social, political, and academic circumstances in which we were collaborating were more complex than I imagined and time always felt short. We had used the *Touchstones* discussion evaluation rubric only twice and the essential elements survey only once. Overall, there had also been far less time than planned for student-centered debriefing. Furthermore, we had not yet had time to gather a group of focal students. The use of student-centered debriefing and a group of focal students allowed participants to develop agency and reflection; I worried that without the metacognitive awareness of their roles and responsibilities in dialogue, students would not develop the skills needed to build relationships and encourage full-group participation. This might result in a vicious pedagogical circle: if students lacked such skills, Cassandra might feel the need to continue exercising her own authority in managing the discussions.

Cassandra felt similarly overwhelmed, but the feelings of mid-semester pressure pointed her toward a focus on mandated course requirements. After returning from the conference, she expressed the need to spend a few classes doing housekeeping: minor adjustments to the syllabus, evaluating what content remained to be covered, and getting students properly started on their service projects due at the end of the semester. Therefore, there was an interruption of eight full days between Iteration 5 (October 19th) and Iteration 6 (October 28th). This hiatus, atop the two hurried weeks of Step 2, furthered my own feelings of waywardness. In the space between these iterations, Cassandra focused on her regular course content. For the class on

October 21st, she conducted a class on White privilege, asking students to reflect on their own unearned and unrecognized advantages. This was a share-out activity during which she had curated the discourse. On October 26th, she went over changes to the syllabus and broke students up into their preferred service projects, giving them class time to begin planning this activity.

As a result of these transitions and pressures, it seemed that a natural break had occurred in late October and we needed to refocus the intervention. Therefore, after Iteration 5, I decided to remove an iteration from Step 2 in order to refocus our attention on maximizing student participation during Step 3. During the second step we had spent our limited planning time focused on identifying content for class and less time on the second and third Essential Elements (facilitation strategies and student-centered debriefing). In particular I was coming to see intervention components #4, *provisional ceding of authority* and #8, *development of group cohesion*, as the most difficult for Cassandra to develop and implement during class times. These components had become recalcitrant dispositional factors associated with classroom practice, and failing to adequately develop them pointed toward the difficulty of supporting an instructor in changing her accustomed stance in the classroom.

For all of these reasons, I prioritized *modeling* FPCD during Step 3. This included directly modeling FPCD during one class iteration. It also included collaborating on more latent discussion leadership skills during our planning meetings: I modeled how to generate guiding questions and how to imagine potential arguments related to the play of dialogue around an area of shared inquiry. Modeling seemed worthwhile for three reasons. First, I was deeply uncertain about the possibility (or my ability) to abstractly *explain* how to cede authority or develop group cohesion (components #4 and #8). We had made several efforts to address these components in Steps 1 and 2, in the highly-structured lesson plan, and then again by gradually releasing my

responsibility. Second, Cassandra had recently (Iteration 5) mentioned her own discomfort under observation and the difficulty of trying to implement my suggestions during the flow of classroom dialogue. Therefore, I hoped that through my modeling, Cassandra might be able to step back and observe someone else facilitating FPCD. Third, from this modeling, our discussion and analysis during debriefing might also identify additional factors that enhanced and impeded an open dialogic encounter between participants.

Modifications for Step 3 of the Intervention

During Step 2, data showed that Cassandra continued to struggle with a number of impeding factors associated with understanding and facilitating student-centered dialogue. This included time constraints associated with the classroom press and the resultant focus on identifying course content rather than pedagogical practice. She was also stymied by unknowingly selecting a text that was not easily “opened” for varying perspectives in the give and take of dialogue in a developing group. Finally, she experienced difficulty relinquishing responsibility and transferring agency to students.

In a previous planning meeting (Planning Meeting 12, October 21), Cassandra had described my role in the intervention as that of a mentor, assisting her in developing discussion facilitation skills; she suggested that in the future it would be helpful for me to actively participate in or lead a class discussion rather than only preparing lessons with her and then observing. These comments had challenged my perception of the role of a formative researcher as one who relied on the mechanics of an intervention to do the work of improving practice toward a pedagogical goal. Yet, to Cassandra, the discrete components of the intervention alone did not seem to address the complexity of factors that she confronted in the flow of facilitation.

In my own educational experiences, I had learned about participating in and leading class discussions as a form of situated learning – in other words my own training had occurred through practice. This practice had occurred in seminars in a discussion-based college, and then leading discussions as a teacher in secondary education classrooms. What formal training I had had occurred with the Touchstones Discussion Project and that also occurred as a form of situated practice. Groups of individuals, interested in learning how to facilitate discussions, met in workshops and participated in discussions under the guidance of an experienced guide. On the other hand, this research intervention had been intentionally built to attempt to professionally support a single instructor without the benefit of a workshop that included other educators who collaborated in practicing and reflecting on shared dialogue. From the outset, then, the scope of this research was focused on trying to prepare, explain, and reflect with a single instructor rather than through shared social practice. The potential to show the instructor through modeling was also always a possibility - one that I had eschewed, as I had assumed it was important for Cassandra to build a rapport with her students and practice riding the bike of facilitation on her own first. In my notes (October 25), however, I began to second guess myself. Perhaps starting the intervention with modeling the intervention might have been a more fruitful avenue for supporting Cassandra.

During Planning Meeting 12, we concluded that it also seemed opposed to a dialogic and formative framework of research to withhold whatever support I might provide by modeling facilitation; modeling the intervention could provide Cassandra with enough critical distance to observe and modify her own understanding and practice. It allowed her to see facilitation choices from the outside, rather than trying to develop a meta-awareness of her own facilitation while absorbed in work with students. Therefore, we agreed that I would model facilitation during

Iteration 6. During our planning meetings, I also decided to take a more active role in modeling for Cassandra a hermeneutical openness toward others (Gadamer, 1983; Taylor, 2017) and dialogic stance (Wells, 2007). This seemed essential in modeling how to generate open questions and welcome inquiries that resulted in a variety of perspectives that showed the possibility for the give-and-take of dialogue on a given subject. This included modeling openness to entertaining perspectives that did not reflect my own values or those aligned with the social justice orientation of the class; I believed this was needed for the sake of opening a space for all students to feel comfortable expressing their horizons and developing their own understanding.

Implementing Step 3

If in Step 2 we focused on the release of my own responsibility, in Step 3 we decided that I would take some of it back up through modeling components of the intervention. I did this by focusing my own modeling on choosing texts, generating questions, and maintaining the openness needed to develop the back-and-forth of arguments.

Iteration 6 - October 28

During the collaboration of our fourteenth planning meeting (October 26th), we decided to concentrate on addressing the goal of maximizing student participation. We started by trying to identify a text for discussion and, after some difficulty, we settled on another short case study text (Gorski & Pothini, 2013) called, *The Trouble with Grit*. The text would be read aloud by a student, and then students would go into breakout rooms in order to generate a short, clear, and interesting question to begin a whole-class discussion. While this was occurring, we would prepare five student observers whom we had selected at the beginning of class; two would evaluate the discussion using the Touchstones rubric and three would draw discussion maps. These observers would sit outside of the discussion circle in a “fishbowl” arrangement. When the

other students returned from their breakout rooms, they would report on their questions and I would begin the whole class discussion with the question, “Do you need grit to be successful in life?” After the whole group discussion, our student-observers would report to the class their findings from the *Touchstones* rubric and the discussion map.

Over the past several iterations, we noticed that small but not insignificant amounts of class time had been used to make announcements, address student questions, and share our thoughts and feelings about living through the pandemic and the upcoming presidential election. Therefore, in order to stay focused during this iteration and not cut short time dedicated to student discussion, I decided to reserve announcements and questions for the end of class. Finally, after class, we arranged to meet with our first group of focal students for 15 minutes. Since I was going to try to model this iteration, Cassandra could observe me and then follow up with questions or comments after our meeting with the focal students.

Iteration 7 - November 4

While in Iteration 6, I modeled facilitating FPCD during class with students, in the planning of Iteration 7 with Cassandra, I tried to model generating open questions and a variety of diverse perspectives that might accompany them in a dialogue. This seemed especially important because we decided to use students’ interest in a very controversial issue about the relationship of religious faith and tradition to questions of social justice in schools. In preparing for such a discussion, it seemed essential to find a text, questions, and a variety of reasonable perspectives from which to facilitate. Otherwise, a discussion on religion and social justice might degenerate into one-sided arguments about which participants felt very passionately. I believed that if Cassandra and I did not “scout out” reasonable avenues for inquiry and reasoning, classroom listening and dialogue in this iteration might not even get started.

The second half of our sixteenth meeting (November 3) focused on planning for Iteration 7. Since election voting and our iteration occurred the next day, Cassandra wondered about how she would even manage to conduct class if the election “went poorly;” she wondered how the students might be feeling and what would be an appropriate subject for dialogue. We discussed asking students if they wanted to talk about the election, if they were ready for such an activity, and if they felt it would be productive. We also recalled that a member of our focal student group, Jake, had suggested that the class would probably like to talk about the appointment of Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court. The other focal students agreed.

For this iteration, Cassandra didn’t want a class that ended in small groups just “sharing out their ideas” without dialogue between students about the subject. Therefore, she decided that she would ask students to volunteer to read aloud the article, come up with their own questions for group discussion in breakout rooms, and then she would begin the discussion with one of their questions or her own. In order to support student reflection about dialogue before initiating it, we decided that when students returned from their breakout rooms, one student would recap the discussion maps drawn by three students in Iteration 6. Cassandra would also review the discussion goals (Appendix O) that I had developed for Intervention 6, encouraging students to take leadership and responsibility for the discussion.

The following table provides an overview of the results of Step 3 comprised of Iterations 6 and 7: the duration of each, the number of times the instructor spoke, the number of students who participated in each discussion, the number of discrete exchanges that occurred, the date of each iteration, and any additional data collected.

Table 4.3

Overview Of Discussion Exchanges In Step 3

Iteration # (Date) and Topical Focus	Duration of discussion	Number of Instructor Contributions to the discussion	Number of student speakers	Number of discrete exchanges
Iteration 6 (October 28) <i>The Trouble with Grit</i>	20 minutes	8	10	32
Iteration 7 (November 4) Amy Coney Barrett	27 minutes	13	12	58

Factors Enhancing and Impeding Cassandra’s Understanding of FPCD in Step 3

Step 3, which focused on my modeling of the intervention components, resulted in the identification of additional factors that either enhanced or impeded the practice of FPCD. Figure 4.7 provides an overview of these two iterations and the newly identified factors.

Figure 4.7

Enhancing and Impeding Factors for Pedagogical Goal 1 in Step 3

Goal 1: Build Teacher Understanding of FPCD	
Enhancing Factors in Step 3	Step 1 Impeding Factors in Step 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A realization about the difficulty of giving up power ● New tools for setting up and debriefing FPCD ● Modeling reveals the nuances of texts, questions, and arguments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The challenge of finding a discussable text ● The challenge of generating a discussable question ● The challenge of maintaining openness in the back and forth of dialogue

Factors Enhancing Cassandra’s Understanding of FPCD (Goal 1) in Step 3

As shown in Figure 4.7, several factors enhancing Cassandra’s understanding emerged during the third step of the intervention. First, by observing my dialogue facilitation, Cassandra came to the realization that she did not give up as much control in the classroom as she had

thought. This realization included a deeper awareness of just how difficult it could be to give up power and control. Second, we developed new tools for setting up FPCD. Third, the modeling focus of Step 3 revealed the nuances of texts, questions, and arguments.

A Realization about the Difficulty of Giving Up Power (Excursus #8). Since the start of our work together, Cassandra had spoken frequently about her responsibility to transmit mandated course content to her students. Concomitant with that responsibility came a feeling that it was difficult for her to give up power in the classroom. In Step 3 this became an explicit awareness and she recognized it as a challenge to be navigated in facilitating student-centered dialogue.

Our debrief immediately after Iteration 6 (Planning Meeting 16) lasted one hour and 47 minutes. It was the day of the 2020 presidential election and we spent the first 20 minutes discussing political issues and the pandemic. I invited Cassandra to lead our meeting. This led to an in-depth talk about what she had observed when I modeled dialogue facilitation on *The Trouble with Grit*, followed by 45 minutes spent deciding on the topic and planning for Iteration 7. Cassandra's reflection on my modeled facilitation resulted in significant discussion of dialogic pedagogy. She spoke at length about her own realization that she struggled to give up control in the classroom. As this topic had become central to this research, I quoted it at length here:

Cassandra: I think just reflecting on your teaching . . . What I found really interesting is I always felt like I can easily *give up power*. I've felt like I've always been that person to get kids to be part of the conversation and have it student-centered. But it was a super interesting experience. I think what I've been feeling is that giving up the power is hard—are they going to learn what you need them to learn? When you're not as *involved* [she really struggled with this word] . . . not that you're [Kevin] not involved—that might be the wrong word. But you know what I mean? So I just was reflecting on that as an interesting piece for me personally, as a teacher. Now it helps me understand actually some other teachers too, who struggle to give that up. And it's not about being *power hungry*. It's more about the

responsibility of teaching content. What you're giving up is having a little bit of confidence that the students *are going to get there* without as much interaction from the facilitator or teacher. Does that make sense?

Cassandra's reflections showed a growing awareness that there was a significant tension between trusting students to learn through the horizons of their own inquiry and initiative and the educator's responsibility to effectively guide them to externally valued knowledge. She interpreted this tension as related to the need for an educator to give up *power* in the classroom. Cassandra recognized that while she had seen herself as typically able to do so, my own modeling revealed to her that she was much more "involved" in their learning than she had recognized.

While I preferred thinking in terms of educators' "responsibilities" rather than their need for "power," I wondered (Journal Reflection, November 7) whether Cassandra's expression of the need for power wasn't a better expression for how many students might feel in forms of I-R-E classroom discourse: the teacher-maintained hegemony in the classroom and they felt relatively disempowered and passive. Cassandra herself understood that her own disposition as an educator was not as hungry for power over her students, but feeling responsible for ensuring that they reached the knowledge goals that she had in mind and were prescribed by the course content. She continued:

Cassandra: So I think for me, I'm much more reflective of my own practice and I love what happened in class. And I think the students will get there. *I think trusting that students will get there is the hard part.* I was more reflective on the feeling behind it—why is it hard to give that up? I was trying to think of it—what is it that you're struggling with? And is there a balance here somewhere? Specifically, of letting them take control of the conversation and continue to move through that conversation. And there are pieces that you let go—there's always going to be pieces you let go to keep the flow of the conversation. But I was reflecting, you [Kevin] really did very little "content integration"—I'm making up words at this point [laughter]. I think

you get what I mean, right? It was more, “okay, tell us more—who else wants to be part of this?” You [students] can use your own questions, right? That was your facilitation. And I think that they had good conversations and good discussions and are learning from each other. So I was just reflective on that. And for me, working with teachers as well, and pre-service teachers, it's good to have those experiences where you're like, “Oh, I am uncomfortable giving up some of that power” without realizing it, for the reason that you feel a responsibility that you have to teach [content], and kids have to get this content.

Cassandra also realized that “trusting” the students was essential in allowing the conditions for dialogue to occur and that she needed to actively reflect, even as an experienced educator of many years, why it might be difficult to give up “control.” She recognized that “control over the conversation” meant control over the direction of knowledge and control over the process of learning; she linked this to the control or responsibility that mandated course requirements held over herself as the instructor. All of these realizations were potentially enhancing factors of the FPCD intervention, bringing her to consider what a balance between teacher authority, course standards, and student-centered dialogue might be.

New Tools for Setting Up and Debriefing FPCD. As part of my modeling during Step 3, Cassandra and I also introduced a few new tools for beginning classroom dialogue and effectively setting up student-centered debriefing. This included a new set of discussion guidelines, a classroom “fishbowl” arrangement, and discussion maps.

New Discussion Guidelines. As part of the modification for Step 3, I created a new set of goals and expectations for the class. This seemed a needed addition to the Touchstones guidelines adopted at the beginning of the study, particularly because in the online space, there were students who were not regularly participating or sometimes seemed not present. The purpose of these guidelines was to encourage students’ sense of their responsibility for learning and participating in dialogue. For the instructor, it also brought into focus the roles and

responsibilities that should remain the prerogative of the students. Overall, the hope was to use this new discussion tool to focus attention on empowering student agency in leading and debriefing classroom dialogue, and tempering Cassandra’s focus on transmitting course content. She continued to use this list of discussion guidelines after the sixth iteration:

Figure 4.8

New Discussion Guidelines for FPCD

1. Today the class and discussion are yours.
2. The instructor will ask an opening question but you are welcome to raise your own questions or other concerns that have been addressed in this class.
3. This isn’t a test and you aren’t being evaluated. We would like you to try to discuss this topic as best you can.
4. PLEASE—it is okay to take a risk, or make a mistake, or say something you fear might be unpopular. This is how we grow individually and together!
5. We do ask you to be engaged and participate. If the discussion lags, you are going to have to rescue it and make this your classes’ discussion.

Using a Classroom “Fishbowl” of Student Observers to Lead Debriefing. We also discussed having student observers track and analyze this iteration in a “fishbowl” type of online classroom setup. In the fishbowl, six students would serve as observers of the discussion, “peering in” at their classmates who were participating in a discussion. Thus, the use of a fishbowl design gave a few students specific roles in taking responsibility for observing, evaluating, and leading a debriefing with the other students. Sitting outside of the fishbowl in Iteration 6, our student observers would track and assess the discussion on grit using two reflection tools. Three students would use the *Touchstones* rubric to evaluate and report on class dynamics, and three others would draw a discussion map. In the week prior to Iteration 6, I developed an online discussion map that students could use in describing the patterns of classroom discourse interactions. On this map, I arranged all of the discussion participants’ names around a circular virtual table. The three observations would draw directional lines with a

terminal arrow from the student speaking to the center of the circle if someone was addressing the class as a whole; or the line would extend from one student to another if a participant was addressing a specific classmate.

In Planning Meeting 14, we selected six observers to represent a range of student participation levels - some who spoke frequently and others who were typically quiet. We hoped that reducing the class size by six would also provide opportunities for other students to enter the whole class dialogue. After the discussion, the observers would each exhibit their maps or provide an assessment of the discussion using the *Touchstones* rubric. Then they would open a more general debrief on these findings with the other students, soliciting their classmates' input and discussion. Cassandra and I also decided that the observers would review the discussion maps and *Touchstones* rubrics from Iteration 6, *before* we began the whole group dialogue in Iteration 7. We thought trying a debrief of the dynamics that had occurred in the last discussion might prepare students to think metacognitively about breaking their own habits of participation in anticipation of their dialogue on the sensitive topic of Amy Coney Barrett.

Modeling Reveals Nuances of Texts, Questions, and Arguments. Overall, the modeling that occurred during Step 3, and our discussions reflecting on this modeling, revealed to Cassandra and me the nuances of understanding how to select and use texts, questions, and arguments. While I had described the use of texts and questions as essential elements of the intervention, I was not fully aware of the difficulty involved in supporting Cassandra in finding ones that best supported the development of dialogue among an inexperienced group of participants. Furthermore, the importance of imagining arguments from a variety of perspectives was also underdeveloped as an important part of facilitating FPCD.

Yet together, through our planning and reflection during Step 3, it was clear that Cassandra began to appreciate the developmental role that texts, questions, and arguments played in building the conditions needed for classroom dialogue. For instance, in Planning Meeting 12, she realized that it took real skill to generate a short and open question with which to guide a discussion. She also recognized that it was easier to develop “thought provoking questions” when the subject area was in her own “wheelhouse” (in this case, science education) because she “knew the stuff inside and out” and felt more comfortable because she “could predict what’s coming next.” In Planning Meeting 13, Cassandra recognized the importance of texts and pointed out that those taken from news organizations often had political slants and could be “shallow.” In Planning Meeting 14, she recognized that for the forthcoming discussion on “grit,” we had to find a question that would “call students back” into the controversy over equity and merit. In Planning Meeting 15, she “just needed to see” the value of a question about grit that didn’t lead to “thinking there’s a right answer.” In Planning Meeting 16 she recognized, through my modeling during Iteration 6, that my questions and facilitation made it clear that she had difficulty “giving up power” and that students were still able to “get there.” Cassandra also pointed out, at the end of Planning Meeting 16, that our conversations about these topics were “very helpful” and were part of an “ideal educational world” that she didn’t often have the time to experience but found valuable.

Cassandra: I feel like we really only have a couple more weeks. Because we have presentations, too. I was also thinking in the ideal education world, this is so helpful for me to talk through this class with you. And this is what we do at [our teacher training sessions]. Often we talk through things because we have the time and space to do so . . . It's just so useful.

Factors Impeding Cassandra’s Understanding of FPCD (Goal 1) in Step 3

Three factors (Figure 4.7) impeding student-centered dialogue emerged from analysis of data collected during Step 3. They were: the challenge of finding a discussable text, the challenge of generating a discussable question, and the challenge of maintaining openness in the back and forth of dialogue.

The Challenge of Finding a Discussable Text. After the first step, we moved away from selecting from among the dozens of social justice case studies texts (Gorski & Pothini, 2018) that effectively fulfilled CORI principles. As a result, and also due to the many competing pressures on our planning and class time during Step 2, we ended up choosing two familiar documentary films to serve as texts. These texts, in Iterations 4 and 5, yielded mixed results; one film in particular, *13th*, was difficult to open for dialogue.

In Step 3, we explicitly considered the role of texts and found it difficult to find ones that were focused on social justice issues and were also short, engaging, and developmentally appropriate. On the one hand, we had assumed that nearly anything could potentially serve as a text: a news story, an editorial, a journal article, a film, or a Youtube video. But in fact, in the planning sessions for both of the iterations of Step 3, we had significant difficulty identifying texts that tackled significant social justice issues aligned with Cassandra's curriculum that were sufficiently *open* to inviting a variety of perspectives in a dialogue.

This became a drain on our already limited time. We typically began our planning by considering the topics that Cassandra felt were important to cover in each class, but then had additional conversations about where to find a supporting text. We spent valuable time meeting over the Zoom platform, separately searching digital newspapers, journals, and websites. In this process, we considered how to identify the kind of text that would encourage students to be open and feel that it was safe to share their ideas, values, and beliefs. We thought that optimally, the

best sort of text would encourage the possibility of seeing a topic from more than one angle and not present information in an authoritative tone or monological manner.

Prior to the sixth iteration, we decided to meet briefly on a Sunday afternoon (Planning Meeting 13, October 25). It was near the 2020 presidential election day, and already several times during the semester we had discussed the importance of integrating the election and contemporary social and political issues into the course. Cassandra suggested a discussion about voter rights or voter suppression. After seeking a text on this topic using Google searches, we turned to the site, *All Sides Media*.

However, we were unable to find juxtaposed articles for students to discuss. We found that the articles focused on current news stories such as mail-in voting seemed too narrow for the limited time available in the course. The texts were also written from partisan positions, explicitly labeled as ideologically left or right; thus, they were paired but “closed” or monological texts (Bakhtin, 2010; Wells, 2007). We felt uncertain whether students, just beginning to learn to be open through dialogue with others, would benefit from such texts. Rather than promoting inquiry and dialogue, we feared that these texts might result in the same hackneyed arguments that were prevalent on the news and appeared in students’ daily social media feeds. Powerful political and social issues might trigger emotions that students were not yet prepared to regulate in themselves or handle sensitively with others.

Abandoning the idea of covering voting rights, and after nearly 15 minutes of searching and discussion, Cassandra’s thoughts turned back to the disagreement between Jack and Sue on the meaning of merit and privilege in Iteration 5. I suggested that at this point it might be quickest to return to a text from the case studies book that problematized the educational concept of “grit.” I believed that the simplicity and familiarity of the case study texts might save us

planning time and allow more opportunity to focus on other essential elements of the intervention.

In Planning Meeting 16, we collaborated on Iteration 7. It was near election day, and we recalled that a member of our focal student group, Jake, had suggested that the class would probably like to talk about the appointment of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court; the other focal students agreed this would be a good topic. In order to engage student interest and foster student self-determination, we decided to take their advice. However, once again, finding something appropriate to read – short, engaging, relevant, and encouraging an opening for dialogue, took time. We used Google searches and once again visited All Sides Media in hope of finding something appropriate. We found that there were many editorials and stories challenging her nomination, but we were again left unable to easily identify texts that would foster a respectful exchange of perspectives.

We settled on an article from the Associated Press titled “*Amy Coney Barrett was a trustee at a private school with anti-LGBTQ policies.*” The article described Amy Coney Barrett’s long-time association, as a board member, with a religious community called *The People of Praise*, and the schools they ran, called *Trinity Schools*. The community and schools reportedly advocated anti-LGBTQ policies and practices that made LGBTQ students feel unwelcome and immoral. This topic connected education to Cassandra’s concern to cover LGBTQ social issues in the coming weeks. We believed that this text might prompt a reasonable and open discussion about whether or not privately run institutions had a right to promote traditional religious moral teachings. Once again, however, searching for, identifying, and discussing the potential of this text took about 40 minutes, which was a significant amount of our limited time and required collaboration related to the topic and goals of a text. I noted in my

journal (November 1) that the need to identify texts that specifically had a quality that I began to conceptualize as “openness” was not a characteristic that I had captured in the Essential Elements of the intervention or their corresponding components.

The Challenge of Generating a Discussable Question (Excursus #9). Another factor impeding Cassandra’s understanding of FPCD that came more sharply into focus in both iterations of Step 3 was the skill needed to generate appropriate questions to start and maintain a dialogue. In both iterations, this seemed to follow naturally after finding and identifying a text. In the text, we were looking for content that reflected a contemporary social justice issue that would engage students. When identifying a question, we sought a way into that text that would welcome the horizons of all students and invite their participation in dialogue. We recognized the need to avoid leading questions that guided students to think along avenues that we preferred, thus marginalizing their autonomy as thinkers and participants. Our exchanges in Step 3 indicated to me that developing an open question was something that needed to be modeled and discussed, especially when an educator felt a particular responsibility to convey course content.

For Iteration 6, we decided to use the case study text called, *The Problem with Grit*, that arose out of Cassandra’s desire to challenge Jack’s horizon when he asserted that the SAT was a measure of merit during Iteration 5. In the text, the argument ran as follows: a teacher criticizes a bright student for not completing her homework. The teacher doesn’t realize that the student is the oldest daughter of a single working mother and that this daughter spends her evenings caring for siblings. The teacher, however, interprets the student’s behavior as not sufficiently exhibiting the grit needed to be successful. The article, written in a book about social justice issues, was narrated in a way to highlight the inequities the student experiences at school and the insensitivity of the teacher.

During Planning Meeting 14, my modeling focused on showing how to open an inquiry that didn't merely lead to the forgone conclusion toward which the text was directed. Likewise, we discussed how to open the topic of grit and privilege in a way that might facilitate inviting different student horizons and perspective taking rather than leading the dialogue toward the instructor's own view of the matter. I shared a new pedagogical tool with her, a *Touchstones* question rubric (see Appendix D), that I had found helpful in the past. It identified different categories of questions and the role each would play in facilitating the specific goals we established for discussion (Figure 4.9). More textual and abstract questions tended to prompt more academically focused students to participate and slowed down a dialogue allowing more time for thinking - at least in the early stages of group development. More concrete and experiential questions tended to increase participation as students were able to draw on experiences from their own lives. They also tended to encourage broader participation. The following is a copy of the chart we constructed and paradigmatic questions that we considered:

Figure 4.9

Question Generation Table for Iteration 6 - borrowed from Touchstones Discussion Project

	Concrete	Abstract
Textual	Why is Samantha struggling in school?	What does the author think is the problem with grit?
Experiential	What are some obstacles to success that you have faced in school?	Is grit necessary to have success in life?

I explained that I would begin the dialogue with the question, “Do you need grit to be successful in life?” This question did not align perfectly with the slant of the text. It did, however, open an inquiry and dialogue about a topic that would allow students to draw on their

own experiences and opinions and link it to a question of social justice. I hoped that it would also increase the number of participants. About 10 minutes after I posed this as an opening question, Cassandra wanted to circle back to it. There was something puzzling to her about it:

Cassandra: So go back for one minute—I'm still grappling with one thing . . . when I think about how I would answer this question, and there's something about it—and I think that you've done it purposely. So I want to know what it is. “Is grit necessary to have success in life?” So, you could say, “Yes,” right? Grit is necessary . . . whereas just because you have grit doesn't mean you can be successful. So that there's a little bit of a nuance there, right? ...Those are two different things. So phrasing it in this way, allows for bringing in opinions without thinking there's a right answer. Is that true? Is that what you did there? Okay, got it. I just needed to see that.

Cassandra, interpreting the intention of the text from the social justice perspective, was caught by surprise that the question I generated was open to a variety of perspectives and not directing students to focus on considering social and economic inequities that were potentially preventing a student from completing her homework. This was the interpretation that the text intended and the reasons provided in the text supported such an interpretation. We discussed again that my goal in framing a question was not to lead students toward what to think and how to think about it, but rather to invite all of them, from their current horizon of understanding, to participate in interpreting it. By the end of Planning Meeting 14, we had generated possible other possible questions as exhibited in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10

Questions Generated for Iteration 6

- What responsibility do students in inequitable social conditions have in school?
- Is the value of grit always subordinated to social or cultural conditions?
- Does “grit” have any value at all?
- Does one need grit to be successful in life?

Although I had settled on the last question to guide the discussion that I would model, the exercise of together generating questions and reasoning them deepened our shared awareness of the subtleties associated with using texts and questions in developing the conditions needed for dialogue.

In Iteration 7, Cassandra and I agreed that, from a social justice perspective, concern about the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court raised reasonable concerns. However, in Planning Meeting 16, I asked that we consider our priority for the iteration to be supporting all students in developing the skills, motivation, and trust to participate in a dialogue about such a contentious issue.

Cassandra decided that students would read the article aloud and come up with their own questions before beginning the discussion. She began thinking about her own question and what she referred to as the “meat and potatoes” of the topic. She put it this way:

Cassandra: We talked a little bit about what you want to get to at the end [what ideas we might want to come out of the discussion]. And one of my immediate thoughts, without thinking too much about this, is, “What are the implications for the future of our country?” Right, like policies in the future? So what does it mean to have a Supreme Court Justice who has this background? What could the implications be?

Similar to what I observed in an earlier planning meeting, Cassandra’s comments again pointed in the direction she thought such a discussion should take. For a social justice class, focused on the rights of historically marginalized groups, the appointment of a purportedly socially conservative justice on an evenly divided Supreme Court could have momentous consequences. As Cassandra pointed out, from a social justice lens, Coney Barrett was guilty of associating with a school that reportedly discriminated against LGBTQ students and families.

Her follow up questions supported this: “Does Amy Coney Barrett’s background matter? Why do we care?”

In Iteration 6, I had started modeling *how to generate a question* about the value of grit and then Cassandra and I had a conversation about how that question would open a space to welcome *different perspectives and arguments*. Here in Iteration 7, we reversed that order; I started by modeling *different perspectives and arguments* on a controversial issue in order to *generate a question* that might open a space to welcome a variety of horizons (see “*The Challenge of Maintaining Openness in the Back-and-Forth of Dialogue*” immediately below). We then turned to generating questions (Figure 4.11) that might be common in our society (and her classroom).

Figure 4.11

Questions Generated for Iteration 7

Do religious organizations have the right to teach discriminatory beliefs and values?
Do you think Trinity School believes they're being discriminatory?
What makes us nervous about having conversations like this?
Does the federal government have the right to tell communities how to educate their children?
What makes us nervous about having Amy Coney Barrett on the Supreme Court?
How do religious private schools affect American culture?

The Challenge of Maintaining Openness in Back and Forth of Dialogue (Excursus #10). A third factor identified as impeding dialogue, related to the selection of texts and the generation of questions, was the struggle for Cassandra to listen to, facilitate, and remain open to a variety of perspectives while students engaged in reasoning and arguments. This included the possibility of welcoming or modeling arguments that might not represent her own. During our planning meetings in Step 3, Cassandra and I began to see clearly how the ability to imagine and

model *arguments* (perspectives that one was open to explaining and examining respectfully with others) was absolutely necessary to welcome *all* students into a dialogue.

The significance of modeling openness to a variety of arguments that might be shared in a dialogue became a theme in both iterations of Step 3. In Step 6, I identified a question that problematized the concept “grit” and then modeled a range of arguments about it. In the planning meeting before Iteration 7, we first had to imagine and play out possibilities for reasoning about a very sensitive social justice topic in order to generate a question that might develop the conditions for students to dialogue from a variety of perspectives.

During Planning Meeting 14, I began modeling for Cassandra possibilities for the play of dialogue by introducing a question (“Does one need grit to be successful in life?”). Looking at the text, we discussed the possibility that the class might be too easily swayed by the tone and rhetorical presentation of the narrative. This could lead to a foregone and reasonable conclusion: the student in the narrative, the daughter of a single hard-working mother, suffered under the burden of social and economic inequities. Participants, at least those reading and interpreting carefully, might quickly be persuaded to sympathetically agree with this assumed “correct” conclusion; but in that case, they might then wonder what they were supposed to discuss. A reading and interpretation along these lines operated at the level of an I-R-E exchange. The text suggests an inequity, the students interpret this inequity, and the instructor evaluates and approves their interpretation. This would not encourage students to speak from their own horizons, but to find the presupposed correct response to the meaning of a text.

Realizing that we needed to explore together other arguments about the meaning and value of grit in order to feel prepared to encourage a variety of perspectives, we considered the ways in which social praise was afforded to athletes, doctors, scientists, and entrepreneurs for

their practice and persistence. In modeling together the many different perspectives that could be taken up about a concept such as grit, we entered the complexity of arguments around which the play of critical thinking and respectful discussion might revolve. Together, we realized that we could problematize privileged assumptions about grit from a social justice worldview, but we could also present it as a dialogical problem around which students shared important social inquiry. Clearly, there was much to consider when exploring how questions and related arguments can be used to encourage a variety of perspectives.

In planning for Iteration 7 (Planning Meeting 16), I understood from Cassandra's originally proposed questions that she was thinking of a conversation that explained how the appointment of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court would threaten the rights and protections that were due to historically marginalized groups, especially members of the LGBTQ community. This was the ninth week of a course on education and social justice and it seemed to me that its focus would be apparent to her students. Cassandra had shared some of her own social and political views with students on several occasions. Furthermore, a core of six to eight students had become active participants in class, with another four to six who participated more occasionally. That meant that nearly half the class was still not participating in the discussions depending on the week; many of these students were consistently quiet. It was also apparent that the active participants had a strong interest in social justice issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Furthermore, we knew from student survey comments that some students were afraid to speak and didn't think their opinions would be welcome. This all spoke to the possibility of a dominant discourse that might marginalize other perspectives.

Since the second pedagogical goal of the intervention was to increase student participation in dialogue, and we had been unsuccessful thus far in bringing into the discussion

many of the quieter and passive students, it seemed appropriate at this stage to make every effort to make them feel welcome. A question about an undeniably controversial Supreme Court nominee in a course on social justice might not prompt openness to a variety of horizons. Instead, students might see it as a leading question and the teacher already had in mind where she wanted to go. In such a situation, students might not risk revealing their own thoughts and feelings; rather as Olivia had remarked during the first week of class, students might simply give short responses in alignment with what the teacher expected. We understood, from students' comments, that some of our students had been raised in strong religious backgrounds and had attended parochial secondary schools. In fact, we had noted during our Zoom meetings that some students had religious symbols in their rooms.

Therefore, I thought that together Cassandra and I might practice an open conversation on a controversial Supreme Court candidate. I suggested that we consider "the other," or welcoming students who might hold opinions divergent from the main thrust of the course. Therefore, I modeled diverse perspectives, particularly about the rights of religious communities to live and pass on their values. We discussed whether communities had a right to teach children according to their traditions, e.g. indigenous peoples, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, or Christian and whether we were more sympathetic to some communities passing on traditional values and not others. I posed as a possible model question, "Do religious institutions (of the sort for which Amy Coney Barrett was a board member) have the right to run schools that reflect their own values? This question seemed to set up a subject of inquiry that invited different points of view and respected students' horizons. It spoke to powerful contemporary social tensions in American society. Our wide-ranging conversation on this topic lasted 40 minutes.

Cassandra believed that discussion on the value of cultural transmission would be very fruitful because “we’re going to get two sides in that.” She followed up with, “I’m going to go back to the question, ‘Do religious organizations have the right to teach discriminatory beliefs and values?’ We’re labeling that as discriminatory.” In other words, she recognized individuals with religious values did not think of themselves as acting in a discriminatory manner, but rather as living out their shared moral commitments. She also believed that students might still oppose the nomination of a Supreme Court justice. However, dialogically, it was important to challenge them to have a deeper understanding of these subjects, weigh different responses, and learn to respect and work with others with whom they might disagree. Cassandra and I considered that getting students to a deep understanding of complex issues was not likely to be accomplished in a 40-minute discussion or even necessarily in a semester-long course. It was possible, however, to help them develop habits of inquiry, listening, and openness toward others. Together, in our planning sessions, we came to the realization that developing *arguments* that welcomed all students, particularly “the other” was essential in establishing the conditions needed for all students to respect themselves and others through dialogue.

Factors Enhancing and Impeding Student Participation in FPCD (Goal 2) in Step 3

During the first five iterations of the intervention, we had met with mixed results. In Step 1, the number of participants had increased as the instructor provided more time and exercised less control over discussion. This culminated in Iteration 3, when the lesson plan fell apart as a guest speaker failed to appear, which ironically provided students with *more* time and opportunity to lead the discussion. Step 2 was more complicated, as Cassandra recognized that she “hijacked” the conversation of Iteration 4 before repositioning her authority in Iteration 5 and allowing students more leadership. In Step 3, my modeling and our discussions focused on

finding ways of relinquishing instructor authority and leadership by grounding FPCD iterations in conditions of “openness.” We also provided students with more time for debriefing through assessment rubrics, student observers, the *Touchstones* rubric, a discussion map, and focal students. In Step 3, data suggested that both the number of students participating, and the proportion of student participation (relative to that of the instructor) increased. Figure 4.12 provides an overview of new factors associated with pedagogical goal 2.

Figure 4.12

Enhancing and Impeding Factors for Pedagogical Goal 2 in Step 3

Goal 2: Maximize Student Participation in FPCD	
Enhancing Factors in Step 3	Impeding Factors in Step 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students were willing to engage in the back-and-forth” of dialogue without deferring to the teacher ● Using student suggested topics for discussion ● Through debriefing, students took more responsibility for their own discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Using the Touchstones Discussion rubric, students believed their dialogue was negatively impacted by silence, a lack of balanced participation, and relatively little asking questions of one another.

Factors Enhancing Student Participation in FPCD (Goal 2) in Step 3

Three new factors enhancing student participation were identified in Step 3: first, students were willing to engage in the back-and-forth” of dialogue without deferring to the teacher; second, these conversations arose out of student suggested topics for discussion; and third, through debriefing, students took more responsibility for their own discussions

Students Willing to Engage in Back-And-Forth of Dialogue Without Deferring to the Teacher. In both iterations of Step 3, there was a notable increase in students’ speaking and responding directly to one another without looking for guidance or approval from the instructor.

In Iteration 6, students spoke directly to the question of the importance of “grit” in being successful in personal endeavors. The openness of the question appeared to invite them to draw on their own experiences in responding, and students were able to compare their own horizons with those of their classmates.

In this first dialogic segment, the question, “Do you need grit to be successful in life?” was posed and students accepted the invitation to participate. Emily saw grit as part of a competitive process in which one acted out a role for the sake of a job. Sue, ever aware of social issues, questioned the fairness of the way the concept of grit was typically applied. Mason agreed with Sue’s perspective.

Kevin: Do you need grit to be successful in life? No right answer . . .

Emily: I think for certain things you do. Like if you want to have a job you have to have a little bit of grit and put yourself out there and be a little bit more out of your comfort zone in order to appeal to someone. But I think having grit all the time takes away who you are as a person . . . because if you're constantly having a lot of grit, you're really not who people would see you as, and if someone was to see you as the person you are later on—they'd say, how did you get this far? If you were one part—but now you're not, it can be confusing if you go back and forth between grit and yourself.

Sue: I take it [grit] as sort of the ability to overcome adversity and in the question of “do you need grit to be successful in life?” I think that certain people who don't have—everyone obviously experiences some form of adversity at some point—but they're going to be people who will face much less and those people need less grit to get by. The people who have a lot more of a disadvantage in life need a lot more grit in order to be successful because they have to overcome more adversity.

Mason: I agree with Sue, I think that I've seen plenty of people “fail their way to the top” and I think the average person does need grit to succeed—but like Sue said there's varying levels of how much is required to get where you need to go.

Jake next argued the importance of persistence in personal development and navigating one’s own life. Sue again interjected, pointing out that development related to grit should not be

interpreted univocally, but “maybe” grit could manifest differently according to social circumstances. Emily, in response to Sue, suggested that the student in the case (Samantha) might nevertheless bear some responsibility in recognizing her own situation, explaining it to the teacher, and negotiating something equitable.

Jake: I feel like grit is an essential factor in terms of personal development that everybody needs to go through in order to develop and grow through life experiences. Because if you've never been through a situation where you've had to use grit and determination to get by, you're not going to know how to cope with certain life changing situations and grit is essential to develop and grow as a person.

Sue: I think to bring it back to the article that we read, we also need to look at what Samantha, the student, was sort of using her grit for. Like the teacher didn't think that she had any grit, but maybe she's just spending it differently. Maybe she's using it more for her little siblings and taking care of the house than she is at school because she's already acing her tests and she doesn't think that that's something that she needs to put as much energy towards because she's already doing okay.

Emily: So I feel like I agree with that. But if Samantha knew that she was supposed to hand in her homework or her grade would be zero—I think that maybe she should have come forward herself to try to speak with the teacher to see if there was anything that she could do to - either make up for it or just explain her situation and see what they could have come up with together.

Next, Molly responded to Emily’s assertion that the student had some responsibility, and raised the question of how that student might have felt about her own circumstances and taking the risk of sharing it with someone. Mason, also putting himself in the student’s shoes, elaborated on Molly’s point by sharing that he might feel embarrassed about showing vulnerability and making such an admission to a teacher. Drew added that the teacher didn’t seem to show the kind of compassion and understanding that would make it possible to take the risk of embarrassment. Finally, Ava drew on her own experience and pointed out relationships with her own teachers were built on trust and openness rather than judgmentalism.

Molly: Yeah, I see your point about how she could have come forward. So then that raises the question of, like, why didn't she? Because I feel like a lot of people in that position, they're just scared to come forward or talk about it because there's so much stigma around poverty and people think it's your fault.

Mason: I think it can be embarrassing to have to go up to your teacher and say the reason I'm not doing my homework is because my mother works three jobs and I have to take care of my little siblings all day. It's not an easy thing to go up to someone who's your supervisor or mentor or teacher and tell them that you're in a position of weakness. It can be hard for a lot of people to swallow their pride and do that.

Drew: Especially if the student doesn't trust their teacher, because of the teacher just assuming that about her mother, who knows what she assumes about the student. So even if as a student she was able to go up—the teacher could be really closed-minded and kind of be off-putting. So that could be a factor of that too.

Ava: Definitely. Um, I could speak from experience. There were teachers I feel like I could confide in teachers that others I couldn't. So, I think it depends on the student-teacher relationship if they build a foundation to be able to trust and especially if the teacher is, you know, just open minded and willing to get to know their students and not be judgmental, because that could be another factor, too.

From the social justice perspective related to this course, important arguments were laid out and elaborated from a variety of perspectives. However, what is important for this research, and particularly Pedagogical Goal 2, is that the students were providing and considering reasons, attempting to interpret a narrative based on very real social problems, all without the guidance and evaluative capacity of the instructor. This enhanced their own autonomy, perceived competence, and allowed them to build relationships with classmates, rather than interacting in a way that anticipated the evaluative gaze of the instructor.

In Iteration 7 on Amy Coney Barrett, Cassandra started the discussion by asking, “Do religious organizations have the right to teach discriminatory beliefs and values?” Once again, students spoke directly with one another rather than through the instructor. First, Jake proposed

that religious schools should be supported in teaching their own beliefs, but that they also had a responsibility to help students think for themselves. In response, Jack expressed his own opinion that it was dangerous for religious schools to teach discriminatory values, but he also recognized the problematic nature of denying them the right to free speech. He also raised the question of whether or not words and actions are different things, but no one picked up on this important topic. Sue responded to Jack by asking whether the freedom of expression of religious groups should be curtailed:

Jake: I feel like those types of schools should give people the resources to think for themselves. Like obviously give them support for their religious ideology or beliefs, but they should also give people the platform to assess information and be able to think for themselves.

Jack: I think it's dangerous when they do [teach values], but I don't really know how you stop it. Because if you tell them they can't teach that then you're limiting freedom of speech. Because they're only talking. They're not really acting necessarily.

Sue: Right and if it's a religious organization it's freedom of speech and freedom of religion and that is starting to infringe on some rights, but also so is aggressive discrimination against all groups of people. So it does kind of call into question to what degree are they protected, and at what point do they need to stop with their discrimination.

In this next section, students considered the transmission of values in schools. First, Drew redirected the conversation, asking about whether or not religious schools understood themselves as being discriminatory in their beliefs. Jake responds to Drew by suggesting that religious schools are acting on principle (we're "supposed" to teach values). Luna denied that it was appropriate for schools to teach or "push" values on its students. Dan called into question whether *any* schools really taught students to "think differently" or for themselves, implying that schools imbued social conformity and social reproduction. Finally, Sue built on Dan's ideas,

reflecting that critical thinking, while not taught in all of her high school courses, was essential for not becoming duped into joining things that are not in an individual's best interests.

Drew: My question is, do you guys think that they know that they're teaching discriminatory rhetoric.

Jake: I kind of feel like private schools have like the mentality of we're supposed to teach values to our students because we don't know if they're getting it at home and stuff like that. But I can see how it's flipped—some families try their hardest to teach good values and what you're supposed to do and what you're not supposed to do. And then you have the schools who try to teach it.

Luna: So I feel everyone is entitled to their own values but I don't think that it's right for people to push their values onto other people in school systems. I don't think it's right, if they feel one type of way, that they're forcing other students to either try to feel that way or they're pushing their values on to them.

Dan: For me personally, ideally school should be teaching people how to think for yourselves and how to think differently, but unfortunately in most cases, that's not the case; you'll mostly learn about one specific way. One way or another, you won't get the full perspective.

Sue: I think that the biggest thing that we should be taught as teenagers and through high school should be critical thinking. And some classes do—like some higher-level history classes that I had—encourage you to think about things in a critical way but also a lot of them—especially math or science classes—wanted you to think here's the way to do things – and don't stray from this, don't find a better way. This is how it is. And I think that critical thinking is something that we as a society should prioritize because that's what allows us to not be misled—not be tricked and not be not join a pyramid scheme and all of that. That's something that everyone should be taught, to think in a critical manner.

In my own journal reflections (November 7), I noted that students had inquired about and discussed important subjects: teaching values, the freedom of speech, critical thinking, and the rights of individuals and communities. Guided by an “open question,” students shared in laying out arguments, analyzed diverse claims, and identified differences. They did all of this

respectfully while practicing the kind of critical thinking that a few of them were espousing as essential to the educational process.

Using Student Suggested Topics for Discussions. In both iterations of Step 7, the subject matter identified for dialogue arose out of students' interests. The subject matter for inquiry and discussion in Iteration 6 arose from a disagreement between students in Iteration 5. As described above, two students, Jack and Sue, took opposing sides regarding the value of the SAT as a measure of merit in college admissions. Seven students became very actively involved in weighing differing perspectives and offering opinions for about 10 minutes just before the class ended. Therefore, Cassandra took up this topic again, in Iteration 6 as a way to re-engage students and address what she perceived as a profound social justice topic.

Student interest was more overtly expressed in developing the topic and text for Iteration 7. Here the focal group shared that they believed the class would enjoy a discussion about the nomination of Amy Coney Barrett to the United States Supreme Court. The meeting with our four focal students occurred on November 16, amidst the 2020 presidential election, and differences in American culture and politics seemed to be everywhere.

Kevin: Can you all think of something controversial that you think we should be talking about as a social justice issue?

Drew: I think one thing that comes to mind is the appointment of Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett. A lot of people are worried about her appointment and what would that would mean for things like LGBTQ rights and abortion in the future.

Ella: I just agree with that. I feel like that's a really hot topic as of right now. I mean it's something that's going on in the election as a whole and is probably something that we should be talking about.

The introduction of a dialogue on the nomination of Coney Barrett fulfilled a number of priorities. It brought contemporary relevance to the course of social justice, it met Cassandra's desire to bring the current American social divide into the course, and it allowed us to fulfill

these priorities while also finding a topic that evolved out of students' own interests and choices. The use of texts, topics, and questions that were generated out of students' interests, proved to engage students in active conversations that had no gaps of silence during the dialogic session. Students spoke directly to one another rather than through the teacher. We hypothesized that starting from student interests, rather than only looking at mandated curriculum, had supported an increase in student-centered participation that diminished the involvement of the instructor.

Through Debriefing, Students Took More Responsibility for Their Own

Discussions. Step 3 represented our most concentrated attempt, during the whole intervention, to provide debriefing opportunities to students. In the space of two iterations, students reflected using two Touchstones rubrics, a discussion map, and sat in a fishbowl design. They debriefed on their discussions *after* Iteration 6 and before Iteration 7. A group of four focal students also met online after class (November 16) to reflect on the progress of the group and share those reflections with the instructor and researcher.

During Step 3, we noted that when given the time and opportunity to participate in debriefing, students effectively identified and shared important discussion dynamics that they needed to address together (discussed below in Impeding Factors for Pedagogical Goal 2).

For example, during the debrief of Iteration 6 using the Touchstones Evaluation rubric, the four observers identified dynamics that needed to be improved in order to increase overall participation in discussion. All reported that there was a great deal of respect during the discussion, active listening, almost no interruption, and some building on one another's comments. Reporting on the free response section of the rubric, Dan thought that there was a problem with dominance by a few individuals, but he attributed it to "some students simply having a great deal to say." Dan and Mary both shared that silences during the conversation were

the factor that their classmates most needed to collaboratively improve. Dan thought that there was too much silence during “transitions” and particularly interpreted these as times when students didn’t know how to switch from one topic to another. Mary believed that some students had “preconceived ideas in their minds” that shut the conversation down and caused the silences; she encouraged her classmates to work on this. Sue suggested that for more controversial issues, students should be given reflection time and “not have to think on the spot.” One of the three observers, anonymously left the following comment on their *Touchstones* rubric regarding the factor or dynamic that students most needed to work on.

This may be a little long but bear with me. I think it is very noticeable that the class does not discuss much. Even a student once [in a previous iteration] said “not all at.” I feel like the same few people talk. I think Zoom could be a problem but I could be wrong. I feel like as people we are also missing out on emotion. I feel people leave things very open-ended and then don't build off it. I do not know how much we can work with each other since we are in a safe space. A conversation is built off other things and I feel our conversations just stop. The respect aspect is there but at the same time we need to work harder at it.

Since this was an anonymous comment, I was unable to follow up on it. But the author seemed to me to be saying that her or his classmates did not get deeply into discussion because they were not willing to show emotion, and therefore participants left things open-ended rather than getting into issues that might be emotionally charged. Furthermore, I interpreted this comment to be arguing that anything emotion-laden would not be appropriate in what seemed like safe space (i.e. devoid of conflict). As a result, the conversations just stopped amidst important issues. The students respected each other, but at a superficial and unchallenged level. As a result, they needed to work harder at the meaning of respect in the discussions. This struck me as a very keen analysis and interpretation of what might be impeding class discussions.

All three observers who drew the discussion map noted that the conversation started as participants simply sharing their opinions. However, as the conversation moved on, students began asking one another questions and building on each other's comments. Two students attributed this to asking questions that prompted participants to exchange ideas:

Stephanie: I noticed at the start of the conversation everyone was kind of directing everything just to the group and there weren't really questions going back and forth. There wasn't really flow. And then as soon as the professor started putting questions out there – I think that's when everybody started going back and forth with each other. And it was then it started to get a nice flow and a lot of people were like really bouncing off each other and going back and forth. So, I think it was a good flow.

Jake: So yeah, basically, a lot of the same of what Stephanie said. At first there were a lot of people just throwing out their thoughts in front of the group. And then as the conversation went on, there was a lot more back and forth between the people who were in the discussion.

Students disagreed about the impact of having discussions online. Stephanie thought that Zoom created a classroom space that was more comfortable:

Stephanie: I would argue that for me over zoom it's easier to talk because everyone's sitting on a computer; no one cares what you're wearing or what you're doing. There's so many less judgments on a computer than there is in person.

But Jake thought it was a barrier to building relationships:

Jake: It is something very significant in terms of people not being able to speak up in a setting like this is. We're having these conversations on a computer, on a Zoom call, instead of having them in a classroom. And I would particularly say that if we were all in a classroom, we'd have the time to build relationships with the people in class and would be more comfortable with the people we're talking to.

In the debrief after Iteration 7, Cassandra was pleased with the students' discussion. She believed that, "they brought up most of what we were thinking about." She also thought that students had taken the opportunity toward the end of the discussion to talk about election day

(the day prior to this class) and the ramifications of a Supreme Court nominee on the country. This was something that both Jake, in our focal student group, and Cassandra had hoped when they proposed discussing Coney-Barrett's nomination. Cassandra and I both agreed that students seemed more comfortable with one another and that students had talked about politics, education, religion, individual rights, and freedom without conflict or disruption. We also agreed that even students who clearly had convictions or a particular political orientation were open, had listened, and had responded respectfully. As to her own position as facilitator, she stated:

Cassandra: I was comfortable (laughing) I had to hold my lips shut. They were doing it [dialogue]. I feel like it's easier when they're picking up on it --there were a couple quiet moments. And I was like, okay, and I was just kind of waiting for them to bring up what I was thinking. And I feel like they did most of the time. And there are a couple things I could have jumped in on it [this discussion] but . . . I'm pretty good with wait time (laughing).

And of the students she offered,

Cassandra: Yeah, they're respectful right? They're thoughtful of the words that they're choosing. And I feel like they do listen to one another when they are responding back to each other. I liked that there were some questions that they came up with too.

Factors Impeding Student Participation in FPCD (Goal 2) in Step 3

Our decision to concentrate on student-centered debriefing in both iterations of Step 3 resulted in students identifying their own impeding factors related to discussion. Using the *Touchstones Discussion* rubric, students believed their dialogue was negatively impacted by silence, a lack of balanced participation, and relatively little asking questions of one another. After the seventh iteration, we were able to distribute a second *Touchstones Discussion Evaluation* rubric for Step 3. After collecting and analyzing this data, we found three factors that students believed the class most needed to improve on. These were silence (76% thought it needed improvement), balanced participation (76%), and asking one another questions (52%). The data also showed that students

were evenly split on whether their class should improve on active listening, cooperation, and dominance by some of the participants. The areas students were least in need of improvement were interrupting (0%), lack of interest (15%), and many people talking at once (10%). In my own field notes (November 4), I reflected that the picture students were painting was of a discussion that held student interest and was respectful in tone, but was still not drawing all students into participation and shared exchange.

The free responses section of the rubric reported the discussion dynamics that students thought they should improve on and why. Six students wrote about the need for balanced participation and two specified that “the same people participate;” one thought that dominance curtailed conversations and therefore “the directions in which it could go.” Another stated something similar in asserting that because the same people contribute there needed to be more diverse opinions. Five students indicated that silence was a significant barrier to their discussion, one took responsibility and admitted that they needed to participate more. One believed some students “just never speak” and another stated that quieter students should be “called out” in order to have “a debate.” Three students indicated that they needed to ask more questions of one another to get everyone thinking and contributing. Finally, one thought that if the participants could learn to build on each other’s comments, the conversations wouldn’t abruptly stop and there would be “more flow.”

Lingering Questions After Step 3

By the end of Step 3, several unresolved problems had come to my attention such that I felt additional time for reflection was needed. These questions, derived from my journal notes taken during Step 3, included: a) When should modeling FPCD occur such that it best supports the instructor – after the instructor practices it on their own – as was the case in this research, or at

the beginning of an intervention? b) Are clearer guidelines for students needed at the beginning of FPCD to help them understand their responsibility for participation and leadership in discussions?

Step 4: Navigating a Variety of Demands to Effectively Wrap Up the Semester (Iterations 8 and 9)

If Step 2 was a period of relative busyness of mid-semester demands and professional responsibilities, Step 4, at the end of the semester, was doubly so. It was the end of the term and Cassandra and I were pulled in varying directions as we sought to bring the semester to a satisfactory conclusion. After the apparent success of modeling, both in planning meetings and during one FPCD session, I saw this last step as a time to collaboratively refine at least three final iterations and see if we could draw all of the students into dialogue. I also planned to distribute a variety of data collection tools. Cassandra, on the other hand, was feeling more squeezed by the demands to cover the remaining course content, as well as provide students with more opportunity to collaborate on their service learning projects and presentations.

Modifications for Step 4 of the Intervention

In Step 1, the more rigid *structure of the intervention* provided scaffolds on the basis of which Cassandra could begin facilitating FPCD. In Step 2, I *gradually released responsibility* and loosened the lesson plan structure in order to provide Cassandra a greater range of opportunity to practice her own leadership. In Step 3, we agreed that I would *model* elements of the intervention so that through observation, reflection, and discussion, she could refine her own facilitation practices. In the weeks leading up to and including Step 4, a storm of competing demands constrained the time available for planning and iterations. Therefore I saw this fourth iteration differently. Rather than modifying the intervention for Iteration 4 with a great deal of

intentionality, *circumstances modified us* – from deliberate and reflective educators collaborating to improve a pedagogical practice to two individuals trying to *navigate competing demands*.

Implementing Step 4

After Step 3, the Veteran’s Day holiday and course demands interrupted our collaboration for over a week. Iteration 7 had occurred on Wednesday November 4th and the following Wednesday was Veterans Day. That meant that our next iteration did not occur until November 18th. The two iterations for Step 4 evolved in very different ways. Iteration 8, occurring before the Thanksgiving break, was a response to engage students in dialogue about toxic masculinity after a difficult non-iteration session. Cassandra squeezed in Iteration 9 amid holidays, wrapping up course content, student service projects, and final project presentations.

Iteration 8 - November 18

We decided that on Monday, November 16, I would observe Cassandra’s class and afterwards meet with a group of focal students. For this class, Cassandra was trying to cover the social justice topics of sexism and toxic masculinity. In order to maintain a student-centered ethos, she had asked students to email her texts on the topic of sexism ahead of time; she began class by showing three students’ selections: one from the online magazine, *MadameNoire*, called, “Are we experiencing a crisis of toxic masculinity?” and advertisements by Gillette (*We Believe: The Best Men Can Be*) and Always (*What Does It Mean to “Do Something Like a Girl?”*). She then attempted to facilitate a discussion that began with the question, “Are we having a crisis of toxic masculinity in the U.S. today?” The conversation was halting, with only a few students offering opinions and the male students in the class were largely silent. In the debrief after class with our four focal students, they explained that the topic was very difficult to discuss, and that this was the reason the dialogue was very “polite,” “halting,” and “unengaged.” The

students perceived the discussion to be “flat” with low participation and little depth of inquiry. The students also suggested that the men in the class were not comfortable talking about male sexist behaviors and the women did not feel it was their place to discuss male attitudes.

As a result, and because of the busyness of semester’s end, I offered to support Cassandra’s efforts on this topic by developing a lesson plan for Wednesday, November 18 in the hope that it might encourage discussion on the topic of toxic masculinity. It seemed an opportunity to help students recognize affective barriers and move forward as a group. This second attempt to discuss sexism would constitute Iteration 8. My lesson plan focused on developing some individual and small group work that would serve to scaffold students’ approach to the topic.

Therefore, in the two days before our planning meeting on November 18th, I created two worksheets listing sexist behaviors (see Appendix P): one was a list of 12 potentially toxic masculine behaviors for the class to evaluate. This included items such as: refusing to admit someone hurt your feelings; talking to male friends about a sexual exploit; teasing a classmate about being gay; and arm wrestling a classmate to establish dominance. The second list included 12 perceived sexist behaviors for the class to evaluate, such as: receiving unsolicited comments about your body, being paid 20% less for the same job as a man, being complimented for being able to throw a ball well; being called darling, sweetie, or babe, and being called assertive or bitchy when you voiced your opinion.

I suggested to Cassandra that students could first individually rank the items in each list from most to least offensive, and then break into small groups to discuss and try to reach consensus on the three most offensive items from each list. Their small group work was to focus on deciding how a ranking might be determined and to give reasons why some items might be

categorized as more or less offensive. My hope was that while students would still draw on their own attitudes and experiences in making evaluations, the more abstract nature of ranking a variety of different behaviors might provide students with some emotional distance and make a whole-group discussion easier. In giving and receiving reasons on these topics, students might begin to collaborate on understanding one another's views and reasoning about the subject together (rather than, for instance, testifying about personal experiences). Cassandra and I discussed our hope that this might support all students in becoming present and engaged.

Iteration 9 - December 2

Iteration 9 was devised entirely by Cassandra over the Thanksgiving holiday. She had recently finished listening to a podcast entitled *The Stories that Empower Us* and had found it personally meaningful. This was a 45-minute discussion between meditation teacher and psychologist Tara Brach, and author Elizabeth Lessing. The two discussed Lessing's new book, *Cassandra Speaks: When Women Are the Storytellers, the Human Story Changes*, about the fact that women's voices were missing in Western history. Cassandra thought it would tie together many elements of the course and hoped to use it for her final discussion. In my notes I wrote that it seemed that the semester was at an end, everyone was tired, and Cassandra wanted to close things out with an inspirational talk and discussion. Our Planning Meeting 19, on November 24th, lasted only 22 minutes; it was two days before Thanksgiving, and Cassandra wanted to design this final iteration on her own.

For Iteration 9, the class had listened to the podcast together on Monday, November 30th and two days later, on December 2nd, Cassandra facilitated the final iteration of FPCD. The class began with one of the student service learning groups enlisting their classmates' help for the first 15 minutes. After that, Cassandra briefly reminded students to consider their personal

participation goals. Next, two students volunteered to summarize the podcast in a few sentences. Cassandra again showed and briefly discussed the new set of goals and expectations for discussion (from Iteration 6). This was followed by individual reflection work and breakout room collaboration to decide on what parts of the podcast should discuss. Each group also posted a discussion question on a shared Jamboard. Next Cassandra asked for a student who had spoken less frequently to choose a question and begin the discussion. The ensuing discussion lasted for 30 minutes (until due to technical difficulties, Cassandra lost her connection). During that time, 14 students participated in a discussion that focused primarily on power, gender, and whether the privileges of wealth, power, and status provided for a happy life. Table 4.4 provides an overview of Step 4 results comprised of Iterations 8 and 9:

Table 4.4

Overview Of Discussion Exchanges In Step 4

Iteration # (Date) and Topical Focus	Duration	Instructor spoke	Number of student speakers	Number of exchanges
Iteration 8 (November 18) Toxic Masculinity	7 minutes	2	5	17
Iteration 9 (December 2) Elizabeth Lesser Podcast	30 minutes	11	14	52

Factors Enhancing and Impeding Cassandra’s Understanding of FPCD (Goal 1) in Step 4

In our final step, Cassandra and I uncovered some new and some returning factors that enhanced or impeded the success of Pedagogical Goal 1. Figure 4.13 provides an overview.

Figure 4.13

Enhancing and Impeding Factors for Pedagogical Goal 1 in Step 4

Goal 1: Build Teacher Understanding of FPCD	
Enhancing Factors in Step 4	Step 1 Impeding Factors in Step 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Recognizing the importance of group dynamics for dialogue.● Recognizing the need to maintain a difficult balance between classroom leadership and FPCD.● Cassandra and her students agreed that she was effectively implementing the Essential Elements of the intervention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The continuation of the classroom press - end of semester pressures.● “I’m losing myself” - Dialogic facilitation as privation.● Serial Testimonies - Avenue or Barrier to Dialogue?

Factors Enhancing Cassandra’s Understanding of FPCD in Step 4

By the fourth step of the intervention, it was apparent that Cassandra was thinking more about the students’ needs and group dynamics - rather than about primarily about course content. She also discussed with me the need to maintain a difficult balance between her own classroom leadership and FPCD. Finally, Cassandra and her students agreed that she was effectively implementing the Essential Elements of the intervention. These factors, and supporting data, are discussed next.

Recognizing the Importance of Group Dynamics for Dialogue. By Step 4, there were many indications that Cassandra had a better understanding of how interpersonal dynamics could affect participation. For instance, in Planning Meeting 17, she shared that, “I think that best practices in education - giving individual and small group work before the large group discussion - are really important...to get the juices flowing.” In other words, she understood that it was important to take time to gradually acclimate students to participating. There were a number of ways, during Planning Meeting 18, that Cassandra demonstrated her concern for affective

supports and group dynamics. First, she recognized that students were feeling more comfortable with each other by staying familiar groups focused around their service learning projects:

Okay, so I like these supports for their [whole group] conversation and their small groups. I can make their small groups with the [same] groups . . . as their service learning projects, which they're grouping together a lot. And so they are building relationships in that way. Which might be the way to go for the rest of the semester, because they are saying that those small groups are easier [for participation] when they know each other.

Cassandra also wanted to consider with me what steps we might take in supporting a change in the classroom discussion dynamic. She thought it might be helpful to spark students' metacognitive awareness *before* she started a discussion:

So now, what are your suggestions . . . for how we get those who are talking a lot to step back? And those who are not talking at all to step forward? . . . How about doing the reflection sheet at the beginning of class? I mean we could—as they're coming in we could ask them to get started on a reflection sheet. And then when we're going into small groups, I can ask someone who's not typically sharing to be the reporter for your group.

Additionally, during Planning Meeting 18, she recognized the need to break up the habitual discussion pattern in which a few students provided all of the interactions with the instructor:

The people who do step up and talk are uncomfortable with the silence, right? Because they have something to say. And they're trying to wait for others, but then those who others [quiet students] get into the cycle of, "well, we know somebody will step up before me so . . ."

In an attempt to address and dissolve this pattern, she wanted to try a "whip around" in which each student was asked to make a small contribution in response to a brief question. She hoped this would also "get the juices flowing."

We're going to have a whip around [everyone takes a quick 20 turn describing the most sexist behavior] for sure. Just to get everybody talking—we're going to invite

people to participate a little bit more. If you are someone who talks a lot, it's a good time to step back.

During the same planning meeting, Cassandra shared her own understanding that it was important not to embarrass students about their opinions as this could reduce their participation:

When we are having these discussions, it's really important not to dichotomize as good or bad. We shouldn't be individualizing...like this is your problem. We should go at it as a societal issue that we all are enculturated into right? . . . So I might start off like, "Okay, we're going to give you some tools to be really reflective, and I'm going to invite you to be part of this conversation in a way that is impactful. Because I think maybe that's part of what's been missing, or where I haven't had a lot of conversations where "This is okay. No one is judging you for having these things [opinions].

Finally, Cassandra was reflecting more about what types of activities were likely to foster the conditions for dialogue. In Planning Meeting 18, she actively reflected on whether or not to lead a serial testimony, an activity that she had used earlier in the semester. While she believed it promoted sharing individual experiences of marginalization and oppression, she wondered again about whether or not it would lead to a discussion that included everyone.

And it's hard because for this class, we have both of these goals [sharing experiences and having discussions]. One [sharing experiences] is to be able to hear and see other voices, right? One of the goals for the service-learning portion of the class is that I want to listen and have it help you change your perspective. What does it mean to be homeless? With no teeth and I can't chew carrots? That's listening. And then the other [goal] is we don't make change or social change without discussion. And we can't have discussions unless we learn how to discuss. So what do we want for tomorrow?

Recognizing the Need to Maintain a Difficult Balance Between Classroom

Leadership and FPCD. As part of her natural pedagogical practice, Cassandra believed in the importance of "putting myself out there" (Planning Meeting 18). She believed she did this by "providing personal anecdotes," and modeling a humble approach to social justice issues. By

leading discussions honestly and with humility, she hoped it helped students understand that “we are all people” and that there was no way “to be politically correct at all times.” She shared that, “In the past, it’s an important part of the feedback that I get that students [say they] get to know me.” Cassandra recognized that the need to remove herself from leadership would displace her own instincts, “the things I’ve done in the past.” Amidst the flow of conversation, therefore, she found herself wondering “how does this all [i.e. “putting herself out there,” expressing herself honestly and humbly, and offering anecdotes] fit in and how does it look?” This new metacognitive awareness of her own possible roles in the classroom allowed her to express some of the discomfort she was feeling in trying to facilitate dialogue. As a result, we agreed, it was important that she was able to be herself. To which she responded, “All right, I’m gonna be myself again...there should be a balance somewhere.”

Cassandra and Her Students Agreed that She was Effectively Implementing Essential Elements of the Intervention. The Essential Elements Quick Reflection issued to students and the instructor during Step 4 provided evidence of alignment in implementing the Essential Elements of FPCD. There were high levels of correlation between the students’ and the instructor’s perception of her facilitation. For instance, 100% agreed she had relaxed control enough to allow them to exchange their own thoughts (91% strongly agreed), 100% agreed with her that she asked open-ended questions (74% strongly agreed), 100% agreed that she was effectively using the discussion evaluation form (65% strongly agreed), 100% agreed she had effectively used individual and small group work (83% strongly agreed), 100 percent agreed that students were seated in a way the promoted respect for all, and 87% agreed that the instructor had provided a choice of interesting texts.

Factors Impeding Cassandra’s Understanding of FPCD in Step 4

A variety of impeding factors also appeared during Step 4; some, like elements associated with the Classroom Press, were familiar. Others brought implicit issues, previously encountered, more sharply into focus.

Continuation of the Classroom Rush - End of Semester Pressures. During our last Planning Meeting of Step 3, on November 3, it seemed that there were still several weeks ahead in which to analyze iterations of the intervention and fine tune upcoming discussions. It came as a shock as we realized at the beginning of the second week of November that time was running out and we needed to discuss winding down our collaboration. This only became apparent when Cassandra pointed out that our next iteration of FPCD would be canceled because it fell on Veterans Day (November 11). Looking at the calendar we saw that the week after that, Wednesday the 18th, was the last opportunity to have class discussion in November. The following Wednesday, the 25th, was the day before Thanksgiving and there would be an asynchronous assignment. This was also the time immediately after the 2020 election day on November 3; political events that unfolded were topics of conversation both in class and during our planning meetings. On top of all of this, both Cassandra and I believed that the burden of the pandemic was truly beginning to take a toll on ourselves and the students.

Cassandra shared that she was feeling the tug of responsibility to make sure content was covered, including several social justice “-isms.” During Planning Meeting 19, she also stated that she wanted to give students time during class (15 or 20 minutes) to “reflect back on the text that...[they] learned the most from and shifted their perspective.” Looking forward to the next time she taught this class, she felt it was important to give an “essay reflection type of final exam” in order to “see the growth . . . if they’ve engaged or not engaged.”

Now at the end of the semester, there was also a need for more time and guidance on the service-learning project that was a major component of requirements for the class. Cassandra needed to schedule more time for students to work together on these projects. Then we would enter December, preparation for finals, and student presentations of their projects. All of this meant that we could manage to squeeze in only two more iterations, the eighth on November 18, and the ninth on December 2nd. The overwhelming concern during Step 4 quickly became trying to balance the competing demands of course content and the end of semester press with wrapping up the intervention in a meaningful way.

The confluence of stressors and responsibilities played out most pointedly in Iteration 8. Here, a variety of competing priorities resulted in students only engaging in a whole class dialogue at the very end of class. It lasted only seven minutes and included only five student speakers. During the iteration, steps included: welcoming students, resolving some technical issues and completing a Touchstones evaluation rubric reflecting on how their discussions had gone this semester (15 minutes); Cassandra's remarks to encourage students to be honest and take risks in conversation (10 minutes); a TED talk on "Everyday sexism" by Laura Bates that had been submitted by a student (20 minutes); individual reflection ranking sexist behaviors (15 minutes); small group discussion and consensus on most sexist behaviors (15 minutes) followed by individual rapid share out on the most sexist behaviors (due to time constraints, Cassandra had one person from each group share their findings (for a total of 5 minutes); and the whole group discussion (7 minutes).

My overall impression of this iteration was that Cassandra had been forced to maintain the locus of control throughout the period, efficiently explaining and directing many transitions in order to get through her lesson plan. The insertion of the 20-minute TED talk on sexism was a

surprise to me and significantly reduced the time available for whole-class discussion. The array of priorities and scaffolds had taken up most of the class and left little time for students to talk to one another. I imagined that Cassandra felt she was missing the opportunity to do more work from the perspective of oppressed or marginalized groups. The insertion of the TED talk on sexism seemed to me an effort to ensure that students witnessed the experiences of women who were sometimes daily subjected to offensive behaviors.

“I’m Losing Myself.” Dialogic Facilitation as Privation (Excursus #11). For Planning Meeting 18, on the morning of Iteration 8, we discussed the facilitation strategy of modeling “not knowing” or epistemic humility as a way to show students that it was okay to take risks, make mistakes, or admit ignorance. We considered that by admitting that the instructor needed help to understand something, the classroom could become a place where participants became leaders of shared inquiry seeking the truth. It also made way for students’ own autonomy, competence, and relationship building (Ryan & Deci, 1991, 2001). Cassandra admitted that she felt comfortable with this and had occasionally used such a strategy in the past.

At the same time, Cassandra also realized that she had experienced facilitating student-centered discussion as utterly disconcerting. On the one hand, she enjoyed discussing with students many of her own significant unanswered questions, i.e. she appreciated learning from her students as well. But on the other hand, she still experienced letting go of her own authority as a difficult dance for which she didn’t feel she quite knew the moves - or at least they were not coming naturally yet. She explained it this way:

Anytime that I do the things where I take myself out of it [discussion] a little bit, I overthink things. I’m thinking, “what are you doing? You’re, you’re losing something there—as far as myself.” You know what I mean? I’m overthinking how to facilitate, and I think that’s part of the learning process. So I’m okay with it. But sometimes when I overthink, I don’t do things that I would naturally do. So

the comfort level of—I would naturally be doing these things, but I haven't been doing them. In a way, because I'm trying to add to that [my natural teaching habits]. I think where my learning is, and what I'm trying to improve upon, is giving more power and control over to the students. So that would be—if I were to pinpoint what I'm learning from this experience—it would be that. And so in order to do that, I have to do this balancing act of when do I do what I would naturally do? And when do I step back? Does that make sense?

Like someone learning a new dance, Cassandra had moments where she felt the disconcerting sensation that her new role and overthinking mind were inhibiting her practiced steps and the natural grace of her movements as a teacher. Her efforts to add to her repertoire of dance moves left her feeling temporarily at a loss, unable to even manage the natural flow of her habitual pedagogy. She experienced “giving more power to the students” as simultaneously a “loss of self” and the habits of authority, knowledge, and practice formed over years in the classroom. Perhaps more importantly for Cassandra, she also experienced it as a change in the kinds of interactions through which she built relationships with her students. In my personal reflections on November 21, I noted that the power of this factor inhibiting facilitation couldn't be overstated, especially amidst the already complex demands of the classroom press, the requirements of teaching content, and her desire, from a transformational worldview, to enlighten hearts and minds and redress social injustices. In my journal, I focused on this passage as paradigmatic of the struggles of a teacher trying to move to a more discussion-based pedagogy.

Cassandra was able to admit her own vulnerability and share her own struggle between seeing herself as a real person, fully human and in dialogue with her students about complex issues about which she still had questions. On the other hand, she also saw herself as an expert conveyor of knowledge and struggled to remove herself from the formal role of teacher. She repeatedly identified finding this balance as her learning curve from this research experience.

However, she simultaneously saw removing herself as a form of privation - the loss of her familiar social identity in the classroom.

Serial Testimonies - Avenue or Barrier to Dialogue? During Planning Meeting 17, after discussing the lesson on toxic masculinity, Cassandra considered conducting a serial testimony. She saw it as a “great way to get all voices heard” and to connect to the experiences of male and female students. She believed that inviting every student to share their experiences would:

Give more of a perspective because it’s an experience...and we’re not giving any feedback...which is a little bit opposite of the discussion idea, right? But it gets voices heard so that you can hear different perspectives. So there are definitely different goals for it....and I had a racial justice workshop this summer that we did do that.”

Cassandra believed that sharing experiences without allowing feedback would provide an uncritical way of getting a difficult conversation started. Since her Monday conversation had been “too polite,” she hoped that in sharing their experiences, the women “would not be confronting the boys in the room.” But she also worried about the time it would take to do such a sharing activity. If each student was given one minute (a brief time, she admitted, to share a potentially difficult personal experience), it would still consume at least 25 minutes of potential discussion time - generally the amount of time available during a given class.

Cassandra also wondered, as did I, whether “sharing out” as a serial testimony was potentially “the opposite of a discussion.” This had been an issue that we considered briefly in the early weeks of the intervention. She wondered whether sharing an experience actually prompted conversation or inhibited it:

With experiences, you can say, I'm just going to give voice to an experience without feedback just to get the conversation started. And then it's more of — okay, we've had these experiences—it [the discussion] can possibly open up. I

don't know if doing it that way allows others to hear perspectives and think. I don't know if it starts conversations or ends conversations. So I guess . . . it depends what our goal is.

Sharing personal experiences was a potentially powerful way of engaging and encouraging student voices and connecting to their lives; it also opened a space for understanding the experiences of others. As an alternative, we discussed the possibility that every student would simply share what behavior they believed to be most toxic. This would give everyone an opportunity to speak, and the opinions would be matters of interpretation and reason-giving rather than personal and possibly difficult experiences. In terms of maximizing participation, everyone might feel safe expressing a rationale for toxic behavior, but not everyone would have had, or might wish to express, a noxious experience.

In my own journal reflections, November 19, I noted my own hesitancy, based on past experiences, in expecting that “sharing out activities” would lead to dialogic exchanges. Even the choice of the word, *testimony*, as a mode of sharing out, connoted something formal, legal, religious, or highly personal. Testimonies were part of the make-up of the experience of an individual, and as such, were to be respected and heard. A dialogue, on the other hand, occurred through the discussion of reasons that are open to inquiry, public deliberation, and shared evaluation for the sake of collaborative meaning-making. Therefore, if participants were valuing others’ personal experiences, it might be inappropriate to engage in the to-and-fro of dialogue about them - unless perhaps it was an empathetic conversation supporting the speaker. The sharing of experiences, without feedback, would take considerable time and still leave the facilitator to identify a subject and a question that would encourage the play of dialogue. At the end of our meeting, Cassandra saw the same tension:

And it's hard because for this class, we have both of those goals. One is to be able to hear and see other voices, right? One of the goals for the service-learning

portion for me is that I want you to listen here and have that help you change your perspective. What does it mean to be homeless? With no teeth, and I can't chew carrots, so I have to choose the Oreos, like that's listening. And then the other point is we don't make change or social change without discussion. And we can't have a discussion unless we learn how to discuss.

The question of the value or appropriateness of conducting a serial testimony was directly related to the needs of group members to tell their own story or to listen to the needs of others. This required that participants in the dialogue be aware of and open to their own needs and those of others and have the skills necessary to accommodate them. This however would require students to discuss these needs in learning to accommodate others.

In the end, Cassandra and I agreed that starting or ending a conversation with testimonials of personal social justice experiences might enhance or inhibit dialogue in the class depending, among other things, on students' capacity to share and consider the needs of others. Therefore, we thought it was worth considering and I left it to Cassandra to decide whether or not to try facilitating another serial testimony so that we could observe the results. Running out of time, we decided to touch base briefly to discuss any questions she might have about the iteration I had designed. Nevertheless, the question of the place of such testimonies remained a factor that we did not fully comprehend.

Factors Enhancing and Impeding Student Participation in FPCD (Goal 2) in Step 4

There were also a few new factors that enhanced or impeded the maximization of student participation in the final step of the intervention. These are presented in Figure 4.14.

Figure 4.14

Enhancing and Impeding Factors for Pedagogical Goal 2 in Step 4

Goal 2: Maximize Student Participation in FPCD

Enhancing Factors in Step 4	Impeding Factors in Step 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A reduction in the proportion of instructor participation. ● Students focusing on reasons and not personal experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students identify barriers to discussion ● The toll of the pandemic and learning online ● Dialogue as foreign to student experience

Factors Enhancing Student Participation in FPCD in Step 4

During Step 4, students exhibited no hesitancy in taking up the discussion and they spoke directly to each other rather than to the instructor. There were two notable factors that could be associated with this. First, the instructor was speaking proportionately less during these iterations, and second, students were giving and receiving reasons rather than primarily sharing their experiences.

A Reduction in the Proportion of Instructor Participation. During Step 4, there was a relatively low rate of instructor participation in relation to students (only 12% of the exchanges in both iterations). In Iteration 8, Cassandra asked an opening question but then stepped back in order to allow students the opportunity to discuss toxic masculinity with the few minutes remaining in the class. In Iteration 9, Cassandra asked a student to ask an opening question for the class. It was at this stage of our collaboration that I first noticed that there had been a consistent downward trend in the proportion of Cassandra’s participation in class dialogues. This will be discussed further in my retrospective analysis in Chapter 5.

Students Focusing on Reasons and Not Personal Experiences. The other factor, related to the reduction in instructor participation, was that students were speaking directly to each other rather than to their teacher. For instance, in Iteration 8, discussion was scaffolded for students to think about behaviors (rather than primarily personal experiences) and a rationale for

assessing their harmfulness. They compared their responses and considered different accounts of what toxic or sexist behavior meant. In the following exchange, three students, Mason, Stephanie, and Jake discussed what male behavior contributed most to toxic masculinity. Mason and Stephanie saw nothing particularly noxious in male competitive behavior, such as arm wrestling or bragging about bench pressing. In fact, Stephanie dismissed it as “boys will be boys.” These two had agreed, moments earlier, that teasing a classmate for being gay was far worse behavior.

Mason: I thought one of the least toxic masculine ones was boasting about how much you can bench. Just because I feel like boasting and things like that aren't so bad. I could boast about the fact that I'm better at a certain video game than my roommate. It doesn't seem like a really toxic thing. It's just something people do. I could be wrong. Maybe that's just, I grew up competing with my friends a lot, but it doesn't really seem like that bad of a thing. I don't know what anyone else thinks about that.

Stephanie: I agree with that. I think it's the same as arm wrestling with the classmate to establish your dominance. I think that it's just boys being boys and being competitive. I've literally arm wrestled with my girlfriends before and with guys and I think it's funny and it's fun. Like, I don't think it establishes any kind of dominance whatsoever.

On the other hand, Jake, sharing his own experiences as a man, described having to hide his feelings through competition, strength, and toughness, as having a harmful impact personally.

The students then respectfully exchanged and considered these perspectives and recognized the differences in their experiences without criticizing the others.

Jake: I'm just speaking from my perspective. A lot of my answers and what I chose reflected being male. So, I had “refusing to admit someone hurt your feelings” because men are supposed to be tough and not supposed to show their emotions and arm wrestling in class shows that men are supposed to be strong and the same thing with bench pressing. I can understand teasing a classmate about being gay—I can understand how that could be considered toxic or sexist. But speaking for myself when I was looking at this—I was

thinking about it from a male perspective and how from experience that would contribute to toxic masculinity.

Mason: I don't disagree with what you're saying, I think it might just come down to different experiences. Like for me arm wrestling in class wasn't something to establish dominance but was just something we did when we were bored.

These students recognized that the relative value of forms of sexism or masculinity appeared differently to people. Some implied that men saw things in specific ways and believed that men and women might experience the world differently. But Stephanie didn't even believe that arm wrestling was a particularly masculine behavior. Beyond simply sharing experiences, these students were giving reasons. They respectfully recognized that this was part of gender roles but also their cultural experiences in school and the world. These participants were not trying to change anyone's heart or mind, but simply interpreting their world and airing their differences. They had no trouble navigating these differences.

Likewise, in Iteration 9, the final iteration, Cassandra opened by asking a student to take leadership and initiate the discussion by asking the rest of the group a question. This was a clear instance of handing over leadership and promoting student self-determination. Sophia began by asking about the relationship between power and gender, "Does the word power categorize gender?" Students struggled over the connotations associated with power, wondering if power was a positive or negative attribute. They provided reasons for the negative ramifications when power was used as an expression of dominance over the marginalized in sexist and racist acts. But they also discussed the significance of power for those same marginalized groups in attaining autonomy, equity, and freedom. Jake, bringing the discussion back to comments from the podcast, linked powerlessness and suffering to life in general. But he pivoted the focus of the discussion and asked more broadly just how much class and wealth played a part in the power of

some and the suffering of others. Students then explored whether the wealthy had reasons for oppressing the poor.

Factors Impeding Student Participation in FPCD in Step 4

Analysis of the data from the focal student meetings, Touchstones forms, and class observations found three other factors inhibiting Pedagogical Goal 2: affective barriers, the toll of the pandemic and learning online, and the foreignness of dialogue as an educational task.

Students Identify Barriers to Discussion. At the beginning of Iteration 8, Cassandra distributed a Touchstones Discussion Evaluation form. Before the discussion began, students identified six factors they needed to improve on together as a group: 72% believed that they had to improve “Building on One Another’s Comments,” 68% believed that they needed to improve their own “Balanced Participation,” 67% chose “Active Listening,” or “Asking One Another Questions,” or “Cooperation.” Finally, 61% percent felt there was a problem with “Dominance” that needed to be improved.

In the open-ended responses supporting this data, six students specifically identified the desire for more balanced participation. Two of those students took responsibility for this dynamic by indicating that “*we* need to work on balanced participation because....”. Three others asserted that, “it is usually the same students contributing,” or there was “dominance by certain individuals.” Six students identified silence as a problem, asserting that it was still abundant at times, and that some students needed “to be more active responders” so “class would be more interesting.” Finally, one student wrote, “It’s really awkward when you say something and then no one responds - then you don’t say anything again because you feel like, ”Did I say something wrong?”

The Toll of the Pandemic and Learning Online. Cassandra believed that learning online during the pandemic was also beginning to take a toll on her students. In Planning Meeting 17, she reported that during her last class, one student had “literally crawled into bed and pulled up the covers and was lying on her pillow.” Then when she went into the breakout rooms, she found two more students lying in bed. She wondered aloud to me if “everyone’s just a mess.” Cassandra also reported emailing a student, generally attentive and on task, who was distracted during the whole previous class. This student apologetically reported that the best place for internet connection was in the kitchen of her rental house and that during class her roommate's family had been present. Cassandra also expressed concern that a few students turned off their cameras and would disappear, not responding to her inquiries, breakout room selection, or recall from the breakout rooms.

Some problems associated with learning online during the pandemic had not been resolved over the 13 week semester. For instance, one focal group student, Dan, believed that it was still difficult to help support students in feeling more comfortable participating in an online class because talking on a computer screen was awkward. Sue added that online participation felt “disconnected” because “you couldn’t tell when someone wanted to speak,” there was less access to body language, and it was harder to have “momentum.”

Dialogue as Foreign to Student Educational Experiences. Finally, when we asked focal students if they had experienced other classes during their time in school where students talked to each other rather than just the teacher, Sue explained that this was the only class she had that encouraged discussion:

Sue: Sometimes in other classes, it'll be to go to your smaller groups, talk about this question or a couple of questions, and then come back and report. One class in particular is full of energetic people who are willing to step up and

answer the questions. But it's more what's the correct answer and not what's your take on it. . . . So there's no parallel for this in my other classes.

Molly described one of her college courses as a discussion class. It was a history seminar, but it had only ten students and the teacher “targeted” students by calling on them. This teacher also typically was “looking for the correct answer.”

Lingering Questions After Step 4

Two big questions that had recurred throughout this study, remained for me at the end of the nine iterations. First, why had it been so difficult to motivate the approximately five students who rarely if ever chose to participate? What steps could we have taken to include them? Second, even after 13 weeks, how could we have alleviated the sense of privation or discomfort that Cassandra felt in facilitating student-centered dialogue?

Chapter Summary

This chapter described results of implementing the FPCD intervention as an embedded, single-case study (Yin, 2009). Data was collected over nine iterations and later organized in four steps. Cassandra and I engaged in shared reflection during planning meetings of each step to make modifications based on enhancing and impeding factors we encountered in previous iterations. In Chapter 5, I describe four pedagogical assertions about these results based on my retrospective analysis of these data.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS OF RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

Chapter 5 reports the results of a final retrospective analysis (Gravemiejler & Cobb, 2006) of the corpus of data collected in this formative design experiment. These results are presented as four final assertions that were derived from and justified by the systematic review of results presented in Chapter 4. Each assertion takes into consideration factors that appeared to enhance and impede the effectiveness of the FPCD intervention for reaching the two pedagogical goals, which were building teacher understanding of the intervention (Goal 1) and maximizing student participation in FPCD (Goal 2).

Assertions Resulting from Retrospective Analysis of Intervention

Gravemiejler and Cobb (2006) describe the overall analysis of the entire data set of a design experiment as a retrospective analysis, which is designed to understand the relationship between the authentic classroom environment and instruction, while also looking for unanticipated conditions or causes. As Reinking and Bradley (2008) point out, in one sense, this approach to research is about looking for and documenting the unexpected. It is an approach that tries to define the critical and complexly interacting factors that impinge on the effectiveness of an intervention and explores how to manage those factors in ways that cannot be readily predicted and that may produce unanticipated results (p. 55). It is for these reasons that a pragmatic approach to knowledge development is often described as the appropriate lens through which to view formative research. Identifying “what works” moves research and practice closer to achieving pedagogical goals in the complex world of the classroom (Cherryholmes, 1992).

To that end, constant comparative analytical methods (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) were retrospectively applied to the entire data set and overall patterns were used

to help generate four assertions about the FPCD intervention in Cassandra's college level online social justice course:

- a) Many factors associated with the "classroom press" were significant barriers to the development of classroom dialogue.
- b) A tension between authority and expertise and inquiry and openness inhibited the effective implementation of FPCD.
- c) Despite supports built into the FPCD intervention, affective factors continued to challenge the instructor's leadership and powerfully inhibit student participation.
- d) Modeling a spirit of openness that welcomes student perspectives is essential to facilitating FPCD.

Assertion 1: Many Factors Associated with the "Classroom Press" were Significant Barriers to the Development of Classroom Dialogue

One of the most immediately identifiable barriers to facilitating classroom discussion (and research into its practice) was the existence of the "classroom press" (Fullan, 2007; Hubberman, 1983). The use of the term "classroom press," borrowed from Fullan, came to mind early on in my analysis, as it seemed to capture, even in the early weeks of the course, the array of pressures that Cassandra felt in her classroom. However, my reflections on this "press" quickly evolved and expanded to capture how these pressures, especially during the complex and turbulent time of Fall 2020, affected not just classroom practice, but all phases of planning and reflection inside and outside of Cassandra's online classroom.

The "press" as Fullan (2007) suggested, represented the daily reality for educators; one in which a complex array of factors impinged on their classroom practices and crowded out planning, effective execution of instruction, and time for reflection and collaboration with other

professional educators. The daily lived experience of educators working in the hurly-burly of the fall of 2020 was one of alienation and “weirdness.” On the one hand, many educators had chosen to live in worlds of relative isolation, cut off from accustomed forms of social interaction and a fulfilling sense of presence in the world. On the other hand, a more contentious world, one of political and social upheaval and the disruption of social norms, inundated the digital airways with a constant stream of news describing political tensions and even social violence. This collective stress and exhaustion, paired with learning to teach in new ways in an online environment, led us to feel pressed from many directions and constantly feeling the pinch of time constraints, diminishing opportunity, unfulfilled plans, and subsiding energy. During this research project, there were five powerful and constant sources of the classroom press that created barriers to developing classroom dialogue. 1) the difficulties of teaching during a pandemic, 2) the impact of online learning on class discussions, 3) teaching social justice during the time of Donald Trump, 4) challenges associated with the adjunct teaching press, and 5) challenges associated with the complexity of the intervention and integration into course content. Each is described next.

The Difficulties of Teaching During a Pandemic. The pandemic was an omnipresent feature of our work together and never far from Cassandra’s mind. The fall of 2020 was the first time she had taught this course fully online. This resulted in a number of unanticipated consequences and required additional planning and ongoing adjustments that consumed time and energy.

One significant source of realignment was the service-learning capstone originally required for the course. Such an in-person and experiential class capstone constituted a significant portion of students’ grades; yet, it needed to be completely reimaged in the midst of

a pandemic. Students, for example, were not able to assemble as a group, plan a service project based on a social justice issue of their own choosing, go out and serve the community, and come together with the rest of the class in person to present their experiences and findings. This multi-phase project needed to look completely different during the pandemic and little institutional guidance was provided during the exigencies that the university faced.

The pandemic also profoundly affected students' lives and restricted their freedom. Most of their classes were moved online, and students were required to sit through these classes in relative isolation. Even at the start of the semester, a few students reported that they were confused about Cassandra's course being virtual, which caused them to miss the first class. In one of the introductory class activities, many students reported feeling anxious, tired, or "stressed out." They described classes and life during the pandemic as "emotionally exhausting" and a "change that took time to process." Some of the students went through stints of quarantine, during which they were moved to a nearby hotel dedicated to those who may have become infected with the virus. One of our students turned out to be truly infected and was moved to a second building for those who actually contracted COVID 19. Just before Iteration 1, Cassandra expressed a wish to do a recurring check-in with students about how they were coping with life during the pandemic, even if it was just a "one word response." Unfortunately, as the semester evolved, the press of time constraints even limited opportunities for such heartfelt efforts.

Providing students with the scaffolds and supports they needed in this new reality also contributed to the classroom press. For Cassandra, this included trying to find new ways of building the relationships and trust that were so important to her as an educator. She felt the need to be "patient with her students and patient with herself" – a theme that recurred throughout the semester. Often at the beginning of class, Cassandra tried to check in with students to see how

they were feeling. Such efforts were important to her because as she put it, “things are simply different.” Nevertheless, it took time and energy to break students out of normalized routines and expectations and establish new ways of organizing shared time, work, and relationships.

Cassandra’s desire to rebuild supportive relationships led to a number of attempts to break down the barriers of isolation that came with online learning during the pandemic. This included a “Zoom Around” activity and breakout room assignments dedicated simply to relationship building. She reported (Planning Meeting 4) that attempts to design fun activities and use humor were important to “take a little time to take a breath” and that, “I just prefer to laugh rather than cry.”

There was also the problem of identifying and discussing how to deal with students who were online but “checked-out” and continually turning off their cameras. At times, we noted students who were attending class while driving in a car with their friends or on their way to an appointment – one student even called into the Zoom classroom from a sailboat. All of these factors contributed to Cassandra occasionally expressing that there just was not as much engagement as she hoped (Planning Meetings 1, 11, 17). Similarly, when she dropped into online breakout rooms, she sometimes found what seemed like little participation or engagement. She also expressed concerns about apathy among students toward learning online during the pandemic. This reality ate into our time, energy, and planning as we weighed the benefits and challenges of addressing such concerns when so many of us were experiencing such extraordinary circumstances. As Cassandra wondered in week eight,

Is this just COVID? One student who's active in our class hasn't done any of the assignments, and I've had to reach out to people quite a bit for that type of thing. And I wonder if this is also a factor of the times we're living in?

Finally, more than once, Cassandra and I found the need to connect about personal and professional matters due to the pandemic, the breakdown of our typical work routines, and the isolation that resulted. During our planning sessions, we talked about how the pandemic was affecting the course, the students, our work lives, the research project, our families, and the state of the country and the world. These much-needed interpersonal connections added to what, at times, became constricted planning and debriefing times.

The Impact of Online Learning on Class Discussions. Intimately tied to life in the pandemic was the effective use of technology. Technology provided the opportunity to conduct courses and class discussions during trying times, but also added another layer of complexity. Cassandra had experience with a number of online learning applications, and she worked and researched in spaces that gave her access to new software. This meant that at times, there were opportunities to find and utilize new applications that might simulate elements of in-person classroom practice. However, the opportunities that new technologies afforded us interacted with the complexity of making it work efficiently and effectively in an online environment. This entailed trial and error during our limited available time, both in planning sessions and in the classroom. During the pandemic, it also often felt that we were conducting these technological trials in relative isolation from any type of institutional support.

Cassandra was very concerned that her students had the opportunity to feel seen and heard, especially in virtual classes that took place during a pandemic. In Planning Meeting 1, she remarked that there had been strong participation during her online summer course in which there was a smaller number of participants. She shared that sometimes she had held optional classes in which only 12-14 participants were present online. In such cases there was “a noticeable difference in who participated in a conversation.” This led her to conclude, as we

were in the early planning stages of our collaboration, that smaller groups of students led to potentially better participation and deeper discussions. Therefore, during our early meetings, Cassandra wondered aloud about how to effectively use online breakout rooms to generate discussions or even split the class into two sections for discussion meetings. She even considered the option of dividing the class into two equal parts of approximately 12-15 students. In this way, one group would work asynchronously via online discussion boards while the other participated in a class discussion. Ultimately, Cassandra decided not to split the class as it would significantly reduce the time available to work through the curriculum.

At various points during our research, I listed factors that arose during online teaching that added to the classroom press. Most of these will sound familiar to anyone who has taught online: frozen video screens and/or audio break up, moving to different locations for better Wi-Fi reception or to access power outlets, timeout waiting, interacting with university technology support staff, waiting for applications to load, intrusive background noise, sending emails and trying to reach distant students, building and editing slideshows, repeatedly sending students important links in the text feature of Zoom, fussing over making or effectively filling breakout rooms, getting students back into breakout rooms when they had fallen out of the meeting, locating and organizing files, difficulties for instructor and students related to accessing and using online applications, adjusting file permission parameters, learning to use the new learning management system, generating online surveys, noting and reminding students to keep their cameras on and in gallery view, dress rehearsals of new technology and application effectiveness to prevent hiccups in real time, guidance or tutorials of applications during instructional time, discussions of behavior and expectations in the online classroom, using class time to set up

virtual backgrounds, or even something as fundamental as addressing student concerns about how connectivity issues would affect their grades.

Over the course of the semester, all of these problems occurred. Such unanticipated occurrences required Cassandra to make adjustments on the fly and only further precipitated the sense of rush and urgency to try to make class run smoothly. During the very first class, for instance, when a problem unexpectedly arose, Cassandra had worried that “My first class is not even going to run because of technology.”

Students also expressed concerns about their own ability to stay attentive and engaged during online class. They often shared their own problems with distraction: text messages, emails, and internet surfing were harder to resist because of the nature of a “distance” classroom and the fact that many distractions could appear unsolicited on their screens. Students also confessed that teachers had less control over their behavior. Early in the intervention, Cassandra and I discussed the problems associated with distance learning and the relative lack of control that an instructor had over her students. But we considered this as an opportunity for her to share her faith in students to manage distraction and self-regulate their own usage of social media, thus modeling her belief that they were adults and co-equal members of the discussion class. We believed that this modeling aligned well with the theory of student self-determination upon which the intervention was built. We also hoped that this would gradually contribute to student motivation to participate in dialogue together.

Even before the course began, Cassandra identified the online platform as a huge personal barrier to engagement and conversation. She believed that the physical presence of being together in a room allowed her to interact consistently with students, engage them in discussion, and build trust through these encounters. In her admittedly limited experience

teaching online, she had found that students had a harder time building relationships with her and one another. In fact, she reported, many turned their cameras off and muted themselves, and generally seemed less willing to speak up. She also struggled with how to enforce camera guidelines when students were in a dorm room, or at home; she reflected that this was something important to think about as there “might be four brothers or sisters running around in their underwear.” Finally, we discussed that if students were not fully present or participants were talking to a blank screen, the subtleties of communication through body language and expression could not be interpreted, leading to additional uncertainty and perhaps an increased sense of risk when deciding whether to share one’s ideas.

Certainly, some of these factors were worked out over the course of the semester, and others could be worked out with time, setting policies, negotiation, and practice. Nevertheless, the novelty of teaching online during a pandemic presented unique challenges to conducting class and facilitating discussion. It consumed our thoughts, time, and energy.

Teaching Social Justice During the Time of Donald Trump: Politics, Polarization, and Black Lives Matter. This study was conducted in a course on education and social justice, and this course was being held during a time of growing public awareness and response to a series of police shootings of African Americans across the United States. For example, high profile trials against individuals purported to have shot unarmed black men and the murders of Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia, Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, and George Floyd in Minneapolis, were all current events. During the summer in which our planning occurred, the Black Lives Matter movement gained increased public support and there were protests for racial justice across the United States. At the same time, it was the final year of the presidency of Donald J. Trump and the course was conducted during a highly contested election, enormous political

advertising and media coverage, and extreme social polarization. The students and Cassandra herself described broken friendships, tense relationships, and families at odds over political and cultural issues. During our collaboration, these social and political topics arose in preparation for the next class and were sometimes integrated into an intervention.

This lived social context frequently and forcefully pressed in upon our collaboration, teaching, and research. During our planning meetings, Cassandra and I frequently discussed the upcoming election, our feelings about the president, political polarization, and the future of the country. Cassandra frequently wondered in dismay about what another term of President Trump would say about the country and how she could speak about the mandate to promote social justice in education. She also regularly shared with me the ways that she experienced the polarization in her own life, and the profound impact it had had on her relationships. She spoke of her own perceived failure to dialogue, sometimes feeling complicit for not directly confronting prejudices, and at other times bringing about unconstructive strife when she made unwelcome challenges to others. Some friends and family even enjoyed “baiting” or “getting a rise” out of Cassandra because they knew she was an advocate for social justice, equity, and inclusion. All of these factors contributed to her own desire to better facilitate dialogue.

Therefore, during the fall of 2020, politics, polarization, and conflict were simply everywhere; social tension seemed to be in the air that we breathed together. This resulted in Cassandra and I spending additional time reflecting on whether and how open and honest dialogue during this time would even be possible. Cassandra believed it was difficult to participate in, much less facilitate, a dialogue in the current political climate. She was aware that such conversations often “triggered” anger, affront, and indignation in herself and others.

Students also had many of the same experiences and expressed the same anxiety about the potential for listening and dialogue in their own education.

On a more personal level, I think we both felt the need at various times to process what was occurring and what might occur in our nation's future – and how to prepare for it. We had many conversations during our planning and debriefing times about the state of the country. However, we also both felt it was a great opportunity and responsibility to integrate this highly pertinent real-world content into our busy lives, curricula, and research. The need to find ways to promote social justice and address political polarism through difficult dialogues all pressed in upon our time. Here is just one example of the sort of pressure Cassandra experienced as she wondered:

Tomorrow is the day after the election—what do I want to do tomorrow? I want to cancel class if it doesn't go well. I literally haven't thought about it. One of my thoughts was just to ask the question, “How's everybody feeling about the election? Are you tuned in or tuned out?” Is that a good question for both [results]? I don't know.

These concerns added another layer of complexity to the difficulties of living through a pandemic and working in a new online classroom with all of the associated adversities.

Challenges Associated with the Adjunct Teaching Press. Cassandra herself balanced an enormous load of work and family responsibilities. She was a full-time doctoral student in an education program even while working as an adjunct instructor because she couldn't resist the opportunity to teach “a course that she loves.” At the same time, however, she had a full-time job that included conducting research, team meetings, writing grant proposals, and attending conferences. As she mentioned during week two, “I work four jobs and it is ridiculous. I spend the weekends planning just to keep my head in the game.” Later, in Planning Meeting 7, she explained, “It's really silly when I talk about the things that I do because I do way too many things, but I love them all.”

Although she had now taught this course five times, Cassandra also mentioned that she never taught it the same way; she believed that “we learn as we go.” The class was constantly evolving, both in terms of what she had learned from previous semesters, but also based on contemporary social, political, and cultural events. However, she was not comfortable with the textbook that came with the class (discussed further below) and this also required additional thought and planning to find more suitable replacements for a 100-level course. The book structured course content in terms of what Cassandra described as a series of “-isms” (racism, classism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, sexism/genderism, colonialism, religious oppression) that needed to be covered in a 15-week semester. This required careful consideration of how to balance breadth versus depth for many pressing contemporary issues. In the polarized contemporary political climate, there was an increased sense of urgency about tackling significant material, but also the feeling of responsibility not to privilege some social justice topics while marginalizing others.

Challenges Associated with the Complexity of the Intervention and Integration into Course Content. Finally, over the course of the semester, I came to see the ways that the complexity of the FPCD intervention itself contributed to the classroom press. In attempting to break down the skill of student-centered dialogue facilitation into constituent parts, I had arrived at three Essential Elements and 11 components for the intervention. This was a great many moving parts. It was not feasible to implement all of these elements and components at once, and I always had the suspicion that the whole of skillful facilitation was greater than the sum of any parts I could hope to assemble.

Nor was acquiring skillful dialogue facilitation a linear process; there were ebbs and flows of development for Cassandra and for the students in her class, as well as reversals in

development as old habits of instruction and student response reappeared. According to the intervention that I had developed, acquiring the ability to facilitate skillful dialogue also required adjustments to Cassandra's curriculum as well as to established and comfortable pedagogical practice. I recognized that this required a great deal of generosity from an instructor in terms of patience, discussion, planning, reflection – and above all *time*.

The sheer weight of the intervention and research components included: an introduction to the intervention during summer, finding appropriate texts, coaching on facilitation strategies (e.g. generating questions, considering a variety of possible arguments), attending weekly planning and debriefing sessions, planning individual small group work, pre-post assessments, surveys, focal students, completing student and instructor reflection rubrics, co-constructing discussion guidelines, distributing and collecting consent forms, and allocating significant blocks of time for class discussion. However, Cassandra already had a packed semester of course content to review, such as: reflection journals, self-assessment assignments, a service-learning project with a student-led multimedia presentation, an educational autobiography, social justice activities for the sake of personal reflection and transformation, guest speakers, documentary films, and analyses of current events - to name a few.

While using the case study text (Gorski & Pothini, 2013) was an effective means of structuring these lessons in order to effectively include all of the essential elements, it too was a significant imposition on the perceived curricular demands of the course. Each case provided a contemporary subject matter that could be dialogically oriented, but the repeated use of the text and a highly-structured framework was a lot to ask even of a sympathetic and generous practitioner. In sum, the classroom press had a significant impact on the time for planning and the conduct of classroom discussion.

***Assertion 2: The Tension Between Authority and Expertise and Inquiry and Openness
Inhibited the Effective Implementation of FPCD***

In the midst of our formative experiment, I became very cognizant of the tension in Cassandra's virtual classroom between forms and authority and expertise on the one hand, and inquiry and openness on the other. Thinking back to my review of the literature, Wells (1999, 2006) posited there were "two languages of education" (1999, p. 135). One language he labeled "institutional." It is developed from the needs of educational planning and administration in terms of prescribed curriculum and its delivery, standards, assessments, outcomes, and accountability. Such institutional language specifies and assesses "the knowledge and skills for which students should be held accountable" (Wells, 2006, p. 170). According to Wells, while this institutional knowledge is "continually revised and extended, and so cannot be taken to be true in any absolute sense, it does represent the current consensual basis for bureaucratic decisions in the public spheres in which it applies" (p. 171). Therefore, since these institutional discourses convey officially sanctioned knowledge as identified by professional organizations and experts, they tend toward a more authoritative and monologic orientation from which there is typically one interpretation and one voice (that of the teacher's).

Wells (2006) described the other language of education as "pedagogical;" it "is concerned with developing students' cognitive and metacognitive abilities in making sense of the world in which they live" (p. 170). Wells wrote that the pedagogical discourse is focused on "students' growing understanding...on their active knowing as they bring their current experience-based understanding to bear on problems in the disciplines" (p. 170). Therefore, it is student-centered, focused on developing their understanding, and is rooted in inquiry and

openness, as well as collaboration and discussion. Such discourses and approaches to knowledge acquisition are, therefore, more dialogical in nature.

It is this tension, between “institutional” and “pedagogical” discourses (or between monologic and dialogic approaches to knowledge) that I believe played out in the classroom context of this formative experiment. More specifically, in trying to promote the development of classroom dialogue, we were confronted with a more authoritative and monologic orientation toward knowledge in three ways: through the institutionally mandated curriculum, through texts, and through conceptual lenses.

A Monologic Orientation of an Institutionally Mandated Curriculum. Many educators, while supportive of student inquiry and understanding (Well’s “pedagogical” language), feel the pressure to conform to administrative professional responsibilities that are the conditions of their employment (Wells, 2001). Wells saw this as a product of the massive increase in expectations demanded of education in terms of literacies, workplace readiness, competitive advantage in the market, and accountability to taxpayers. These conceptions of education, derived from interests in management and control, position knowledge as something that can be transferred to students, “as if it were the intellectual equivalent of a bag of groceries to be delivered” (Wells, 2001, p. 5). This is done so that students are able to acquire cultural capital “which can subsequently be exchanged for privileged further educational opportunities or for prestigious and financially rewarding occupations” (Wells, 2004, p. 5).

There were several indicators that an institutional language and orientation affected Cassandra’s approach to student learning in this study. She was provided with a course syllabus and a textbook along with research-based standards and predetermined course outcomes. The course and the syllabus were described in terms of fulfilling three general education outcomes:

“Develop information literacy to independently research complex issues;” “Develop and exercise diversity and inclusion responsibilities;” and “Grand Challenge - Exploration of multiple perspectives of areas of contemporary significance, including their ethical implications.” The 10 objectives for the course described what scholars (students) would “be able to do” at the end of 14 weeks. The objectives included: the instructor’s responsibility for the presentation and explanation of several specific academic theories; the instructor’s responsibility to identify and fairly treat a variety of marginalized groups for students (there were eight broad categories or groups and various sub-groups in the course textbook), helping students compare their own identities and privileges to those of historically marginalized groups, and the completion of a group “grand challenge” service-learning learning project in the community related to social justice action. The objectives also included supporting students in developing a variety of skills such as developing research strategies, finding and retrieving information, critically evaluating sources, analyzing and communicating social justice topics, making a multimedia presentation for the grand challenge project, and using APA format.

During our research collaboration, Cassandra emphasized the need for building trust and relationships with students and also between students. She also enthusiastically advocated student-centered reflection, dialogue, and personal transformation. Yet, I couldn’t help but notice how, even on top of the classroom press, her attempts to promote these priorities were occurring within a prescribed framework of institutional mandated outcomes and predetermined course expectations. This included specific academic knowledge goals – theories used to guide student thinking along certain channels of interpretation.

In a course that strived to promote an understanding of education through a social justice lens, the goals described by the language of educational planning and administration were

important and admirable. However, data from this study suggested that the professional responsibility to fulfill institutional prerogatives can also force an instructor to make difficult choices between taking more time for authentic questions, open-ended dialogue, or a focus on students' affective development, and the institutional expectations associated with a course. It can refocus learning away from the horizons of students' understanding, and position it in institutional mandates and the authoritative knowledge of the instructor. Further, the challenges associated with the classroom press and the pervasiveness of institutional responsibilities intersected in ways that tended toward the marginalization of student-centered dialogue.

During our collaboration for this research, the curriculum and course requirements were ever-present factors, squeezing the time we felt comfortable allocating for dialogue and debriefing. There were always more -isms to cover, there were always more social justice theories to be introduced (i.e. identity, implicit bias, white privilege, intersectionality, systemic racism and systems of oppression, patriarchy, toxic masculinity, and the school to prison pipeline), and there was always the service-learning project that we felt might be getting short shrift.

Finally, Wells (2006) cited Olson (2003) in arguing that schooling at institutions was, “organized and sustained through rights, responsibilities, and controls, which are enshrined in legally binding documents that are decidedly monologic in form and intent” (p. 173). During my own retrospective analysis, I reflected that it seemed possible *in theory* that many of the student skills, course objectives, expert knowledge, and academic theories *could* be shared with students in a way that developed the conditions for building trusting relationships, asking authentic questions, and participating in dialogue. However, *in practice*, the classroom press and the profusion of institutional objectives became formal mandates that threatened to overwhelm the

time available for students to think and speak from their own horizons. As Wells argued, Cassandra and I experienced an ongoing struggle, in the classroom and during our planning, between the monologic language of administrative planning and that of inquiry and dialogue.

A Monologic Orientation of Texts and How They were Used by the Instructor. The first Essential Element of the FPCD intervention focused on text as a tool to motivate students to participate in discussion. The intervention adopted CORI (Concept Oriented Reading Instruction) principles to engage students in reading and inquiry. These principles (relevance, choice, collaboration, success, relationship, mastery goals) did guide our search for appropriate texts and did, at times, make selection a lengthy process. However, looking retrospectively over the data, I believe that an important principle was missing: openness. By openness I mean two things. First, a text itself can present ideas as if it is more or less open for inquiry and discussion. Second, an educator can present and interpret the text as more or less open.

Wells (2006) pointed out that a text can be used to function in either a monologic or dialogic mode. When used in a monologic way, it is authoritative and “preserves continuity and stability of beliefs and values” (p. 169); therefore, it is not open to inquiry, alternative perspectives, and resists dialogue. In my pre-iteration observations, one student (Luna) described this monologic mode perfectly when she poignantly noted that she could tell when they are not really being listened to because “the other person already knows what they are going to say.” In such cases, she felt it was appropriate to only provide short responses. On the other hand, a text treated dialogically can openly welcome a diversity of perspectives and invites interpretation.

In the context of the present study, the ongoing search for and appropriate use of texts that used inquiry and openness to invite student discussion was an absolutely central focus of this research collaboration. Week in and week out, we spent valuable planning time identifying and

discussing the merit of a variety of texts. In several iterations (1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8), the text was discussed as a factor that could enhance or impede FPCD. There were a variety of texts discussed or used for FPCD in this research: the course textbook, case studies in social justice texts, documentary films, news articles, YouTube videos, a podcast, and discussion rubrics. Over the course of the semester, we found some texts were more open (conducive to dialogue) than others.

However, we also found that how the instructor treated texts during class discussion was an important factor. For example, the course text, *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice* (Adams et al., 2000), was a compilation of selections from contemporary scholarship on social justice issues. While the book did capture, in dozens of articles, some of the latest academic thought on social justice issues, Cassandra (and I) believed that this text was more appropriate for graduate students and not for undergraduates taking a 100-level general education course who were being asked to participate in FPCD. The use of these texts, written by experts and conveyed in academic concepts, was difficult for students to approach from their own horizons of understanding. For instance, early on in our meetings, Cassandra explained that students in previous courses expressed about these readings that they “didn’t get it.” Such scholarly work can be intimidating for students and we especially feared that it might impede student participation, elevating the risk of misinterpretation or feeling foolish.

In contrast, the three texts we ended up using from *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education* (Gorski & Pothini, 2018) were designed as short and easy to comprehend and they encouraged readers to consider topics from a variety of perspectives - even while written with an orientation toward social justice concerns. We found these cases conducive to dialogue and easy to implement in a 75-minute class. They could be read aloud and we still had time for a

variety of small group work and a whole class session of FPCD. However, the ongoing use of this text was too big of a departure from the standard course curriculum, so it was used only as an occasional scaffold to build skills needed for classroom dialogue. As a result, in Step 2 of the intervention, Cassandra turned back to her own course materials and attempted to integrate dialogue with them.

Thus, there were costs and benefits associated with what texts we chose and how we used them. The case studies texts clearly aligned with the components of an engaging text (Essential Element 1) and were a backbone that allowed us to focus more time on other elements of the intervention. On the other hand, our decision to move away from these texts seemed to allow Cassandra more freedom and autonomy in practicing FPCD, while revealing other challenges that might confront practitioners. For instance, watching and analyzing documentary films was time consuming and took time from discussion and debriefing. News stories were hard to select; they tended to be factual and dry and not particularly inviting to interpretation and dialogue. Cassandra and I also feared that current news reporting engaged students at the mainstream level of public discourse where emotion and debate, rather than inquiry and dialogue, were predominant. Overall, the decision to steer away from ready-made texts opened the door to working with other kinds of texts. The selection of more monologically leaning, emotionally charged, or factual texts provided us opportunities to experience how central and complex the use of texts could be.

A Monologic Orientation Toward a Conceptual Lens of Social Justice. At several points in our collaboration, Cassandra referred to professional workshops she had completed on diversity, equity, and inclusion. These workshops and her own studies had informed her conceptual framework for thinking about and teaching social justice. This included concepts

such as identity, implicit bias, racism, white privilege, intersectionality, and institutionalized “isms” of racism, discrimination, and oppression. These contemporary theoretical anchors informed the design of the course and the goals of student personal transformation toward more critical, socially conscious, and anti-racist perspectives. Put together, they formed a conceptual lens rooted in critical theory. Cassandra believed this conceptual lens could provide an avenue to help critically excavate social inequities and deepen student conversation and understanding. When she expressed a feeling of responsibility for teaching course content, she frequently referred to one or more of these concepts.

Looking retrospectively across the data, Cassandra, at times, appeared to approach social justice concepts from a more monologic stance in both the planning sessions and classroom iterations of FPCD. For instance, in Iteration 1, Cassandra wished to scaffold student discussion so that it was not guided by “opinion only” but was rather “more informed.” After Iteration 2, she worried that there was never enough time, that dialogue was important but time consuming, and that all of the social justice concepts needed to be introduced (in this case, specifically the “-isms”). She worried that by bringing up so many topics and then spending time in dialogue, students were only getting “little tidbits of things” because “we have to move on” to cover more course concepts. In Iteration 4, Cassandra decided to show, and try to discuss, a powerful documentary that framed a narrative on the history of systemic racism in the United States. In planning for Iteration 5, she again felt the need to prioritize course content: implicit bias, white privilege, white fragility, and systemic racism. During Iteration 5, a student spoke from their own horizon about a high school classmate's merit in achieving admission to MIT, but Cassandra felt the need to push back and reinterpret his horizon in the light of social inequities and white

privilege. In Iteration 8, a TED Talk testimonial on sexism replaced the time set aside for student-centered discussion.

Some of these concepts were also just difficult for students to discuss, resulting in halting dialogue that made Cassandra feel that not much had been accomplished. For instance, the discussion during Iteration 5 on the documentary *13th* seemed to eschew direct talk of racism, and instead, wandered down avenues she had not anticipated. Rather than discussing the history of racism in the U.S., she ended up trying to save a student from their cynical view of American society and political activism. In planning for Iteration 6, Cassandra and I spent time discussing whether the concept of academic “grit” was in opposition to a social justice conceptual framework. Finally, in Iteration 8, students seemed unable or unwilling to discuss the concept of toxic masculinity from their own horizons. Overall, Cassandra wondered whether the time allocated for dialogue was helping students see social justice concepts more deeply or providing them “only little tidbits of things.”

These examples revealed ways in which Cassandra prioritized the transmission and application of social justice concepts. She used her leadership in the classroom to ask them to interpret their own ideas and experiences through these lenses, which appropriately served the function of emancipatory dialogue as described in Chapter 2. Yet, it was during planning and classroom moments like these that I felt a certain tension between the goals of emancipatory dialogue and hermeneutic dialogue. While the goals of each are related, they are also different in emphasis. Both seek to expand the horizons of student understanding. However, it seemed like the priority in emancipatory dialogue was to guide participants to personal and societal transformation through dialogue using social justice concepts and a critical theoretical lens. In FPCD, I was attempting to support all students in feeling willing and able to participate from

their own current horizons of understanding; this included helping them attend to their own personal and social needs so that together as a group we could learn to be open to the thoughts and needs of each other.

Assertion 3: Despite Supports Built into the FPCD Intervention, Affective Factors Continued to Challenge the Instructor's Leadership and Inhibit Student Participation

Perusing results of data from our intervention left little room to doubt the persisting power of affect, or the way emotional factors were intertwined with cognition and learning to dialogue. At many points across the intervention, affective factors were identified as a barrier to enhancing dialogue both for Cassandra and her students.

The Instructor Continued to Face Affective Challenges to Leading FPCD Throughout the Intervention. Cassandra frequently (for example in Planning Meetings 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9) discussed a divisive contemporary social and political climate in the United States that was not amenable to dialogue. In her experience, the politicization of so many areas of social concern led to challenging conversations, an absence of real listening to others, and feeling triggered or complicit in not confronting racist perspectives. She emphasized the need for respect, mutual support, and a non-judgmental attitude. She was also keenly aware that even well-meaning comments could offend others and that apologies might be needed for inadvertent offense or misunderstanding. Cassandra believed that building trust and relationships was difficult online, but hoped that it would just proceed more slowly than working in person.

While facilitating dialogue, Cassandra felt confused and uncertain about strategies and priorities, as well as her own position as the authority responsible for student learning. A few times she expressed discomfort while facilitating and said that it didn't "feel natural." She feared letting go of "control" and felt a strong responsibility to cover content. She feared that students

“wouldn’t get there” – to important social justice concepts and knowledge. As early as Iteration 1, she felt overwhelmed while trying to facilitate in the flow of conversation. In Iteration 2, she was anxious about allowing students to participate in dialogue “by opinion only” or without instructional scaffolding. After Iteration 4, she feared that one student (Sue) would leave the class with a sense of hopelessness about American politics and social change. This resulted in Cassandra's recognition that she had inadvertently “hijacked” the student conversation.

After Iteration 5, Cassandra admitted that my presence was discomfiting as she found herself overthinking about how she “was supposed” to be facilitating. After observing my facilitation in Iteration 6, she became aware of her own fear about giving up power and responsibility; she also recognized her own anxiety that using dialogue might not result in students reaching certain conclusions about important content. After this iteration, she became aware of feeling the need to better trust her students, who did end up reaching important topics without her authority and direction. She also felt that when we used discussion topics that students helped identify, the conversations went much better. After Iteration 7, she felt acutely responsible for covering more social justice “-isms” and worried about time for content versus time for discussions. Finally, immediately before Iteration 8, Cassandra recognized that the changes in her role were disconcerting and that while she believed in “giving more power to the students,” she was feeling it as a “loss of a sense of herself.” Overall, for Cassandra, the transition to a more dialogic classroom pedagogy resulted in significant affective dislocation as she moved from her “natural” instructional practices to acquire new skills.

The Affective Dimension and Students. On a positive note, there were many students who felt willing and able to participate in discussions over the course of the semester. Students appreciated the opportunity to share ideas and think aloud with classmates. They valued the

opportunity to ask questions and believed in the importance of critical thinking. These experiences, shared nearly universally (especially in Iterations 3, 5, 6, and 7), were not ones they had been exposed to previously in high school or in college. They felt that the opportunity to engage in dialogue in school with others allowed participants to “expand from...your parents’ beliefs” (Iteration 3). Many students described their own class’s participation during the intervention as cooperative and respectful, even though they simultaneously believed the conversations should go more deeply into subjects, more students should be involved, and the share of participation with their classmates should be more balanced.

However, there were also plenty of affective barriers to FPCD. Students’ current lived experiences, during a pandemic and adjusting to online schooling, resulted in feelings of stress and alienation. Online, the temptations to distraction were numerous, and students had difficulty adjusting to feelings of disconnection while trying to also understand the dynamics of interacting with others online during class.

Even before the formal introduction of the intervention, students were concerned about their own affective needs and those of their classmates. When discussing guidelines for dialogue in their second class of the semester (before our first formal iteration), students focused on the idea of respect: they mentioned the importance of not “intimidating” classmates or “shutting others down,” and “being a good listener” so that “you can see where they [classmates] are coming from.” Three students commented that they felt anxiety about what kinds of questions were appropriate, both in class and more generally in all social situations.

Over the course of the intervention, many students expressed a general anxiety about speaking in class. For instance, early in the intervention, seven students described a general fear of speaking in front of the whole group, or the “need to be right.” (Touchstones Rubrics 1 and 3

from Iterations 1 and 5). Similarly, three students described the pressure related to how comments would affect their grades, their fear of “speaking out against the majority” and/or their fear of being judged or giving offense (Touchstones Rubrics 2 & 3). At least five students (on anonymous surveys) simply expressed a lack of confidence in their own ability to verbally articulate their own ideas. Emily pointed out that, in general, when students are “shut down” or their words “blocked out” (Iteration 5) by classmates or a teacher, they lost interest in speaking. Emily also shared that if they chose not to speak (i.e. by asking questions and articulating how they are understanding a subject matter), they would lose motivation and struggle to learn deeply. In one of the Essential Element surveys, one student simply commented, “I believe the greatest obstacle in this class is learning that someone in this class cares about the words coming out of your mouth” (Essential Element Survey #1).

Four students shared that they felt that in many of their interactions, including in school, those who spoke to them “had poor listening skills” and were interested only in particular responses; friends and teachers often had specific prerogatives and “already knew what they were going to say” (Iteration 3). This resulted in feelings of disillusionment about engaging in real dialogue in which their own views would be appreciated and engaged. They feared that expressing their own opinions might result in public correction or consequences for their grade. Two students anonymously shared that there was a “dominant view” during discussions (Touchstones Rubric #1, student Essential Elements Survey #1) or that the class needed to work on “both sides” of a subject (Iteration 3). This made at least some feel unwelcome and “too scared to talk out against the majority” (Touchstones Rubric #1). Even as late as November 4, students’ responses on the Touchstones Evaluation indicated that half of the class (exactly 50%)

still believed there was dominance by some individuals during discussion. This was despite the fact that only 15% of the students thought that a lack of interest was an issue.

In Iterations 3 and 5, seven students expressed the belief that their past teachers had been particularly unprepared to facilitate dialogue; two students stated that the cause was that these teachers avoided taking risks in discussing anything that might result in negative feelings or conflict. Four students expressed concern that feelings were inhibiting their ability to engage in significant conversations and two feared that the lack of dialogue in classrooms would leave them unprepared for their future lives as citizens. Two students believed that past experiences, in or out of the classroom, had taught them that attempts to have conversations with “closed-minded people” could result in hostility (Iterations 3, 6). One student even doubted that young people had the “emotional maturity to engage in reasonable conversations and *doubted it could even be taught in school*” (Iteration 5). She also shared her belief that the ability to dialogue was simply the result of how young people were raised. Drew felt disempowered and marginalized because many educators and authority figures simply “didn’t believe that young people knew anything” (Iteration 5). James, in the same discussion, believed that students might be able to overcome feelings inhibiting dialogue, but schools didn’t prioritize it - there was “no common core of the hard stuff.”

Over the course of the intervention (for example, in Iterations 2, 3, 4, 8), students also perceived a number of risks associated with asking about and discussing contemporary social issues. For instance, the first group of four focal students that met immediately after a non-iteration class (Monday November 16, in Step 3) felt that, during the discussions, the male students had been reluctant to talk about toxic masculinity and female students didn’t feel it was entirely their place. They believed that, as a result, the conversation had been polite and halting.

The class was also sensitive and reserved in discussions related to racism in the United States. They were able to discuss racism “objectively” (such as its history or the prejudices of distant others in Iteration 4), but they were less willing to discuss personal experiences or feelings about racism in these same class sessions. It was unclear whether Cassandra’s attempts to directly confront the problems associated with having such conversations (by pointing out difficulties, tensions, and the possibility of making mistakes), alleviated or increased students’ anxiety associated with having them.

Assertion 4: Modeling a Spirit of Openness that Welcomes Student Perspectives is Essential to Facilitating FPCD

In retrospect, the inclusion in my data set of eleven dialogic excursi was an unplanned result of my collaboration with Cassandra. They occurred spontaneously during our planning meetings, took considerable time, and went to significant depth in trying to build a shared understanding of the nature and development of dialogue in a classroom. Arising within the framework of a formative experiment, these excursi were the result of intensively working on the fine-grained details of improving student-centered dialogue. That this growth in the shared understanding of the intervention occurred *through dialogue* and the fusion of our horizons reflected the hermeneutic orientation of this research.

After completing the retrospective analysis of these eleven excursi, I observed a set of integrated themes that constituted practicing FPCD in a spirit of openness. First the facilitator was the *fulcrum* for the possibility of dialogue in the classroom. Second, in order to effectively develop it, the practitioner needed to take up a *dialogical stance*. Finally, practicing from this dialogical stance, she needed to assume a *disposition to openness*, and more specifically, *dialogical openness*.

Instructor as Fulcrum for the Possibility of Dialogue. Intensive work with the practitioner revealed that the possibility for the development of dialogue in a classroom *hinges* on the instructor who is the *fulcrum* on which it rises or falls. Judith Langer (1994) wrote that the I-R-E pattern of classroom talk and control is so deeply ingrained that it is “in our bones” and that changing classroom talk is like growing a whole new skeleton. She described teachers’ desire to motivate and engage students in thoughtful discussion, but also their lack of preparation in facilitating it.

The design of this formative experiment was based in the hope that the careful implementation of an intervention could overcome deeply ingrained patterns of I-R-E instruction and begin the process of “building a new set of bones.” My hope was that by helping the discussion leader build those bones, she would then act as the more knowledgeable other and hinge that would guide others in their own growth.

The mechanism for this growth was the FPCD intervention. I had hoped that facilitation could be scaffolded through the use of the three intervention elements and associated components. Reading through previous research, I thought that student motivation and self-determination in dialogue could be fostered through the strategic use of “engaging texts” (Essential Element 1) and student-centered reflection through debriefing (Essential Element 3). On the other hand, I believed that the components of Essential Element 2 (strategic questions; seating; rules; ceding authority; focus on group cohesion), along with ad hoc personal mentoring (coaching; extending wait time; setting goals; linking to student experience) during our planning and debriefing sessions, would scaffold the instructor’s leadership in facilitating dialogue.

However, over the course of the intervention, I realized how difficult it was to take a formal mechanistic approach to modifying ingrained patterns of human interaction. An instructor

might follow these components and still not allow enough time for discussion (as observed in Iterations 5, 8), scaffold instruction in ways that directed student thinking (Excursus 1), evaluate and push back on students' attempts to think for themselves (Excursi 2, 3, 4, 6), frame questions in a way that expected certain responses (Excursus 9), overtly favor certain arguments (Excursus 10), or experience too much discomfort in changing their pedagogical orientation (4, 8, 11).

Results of this study indicated that the intervention components were helpful guides to facilitating classroom discussion, but they were not transformative of classroom practice such that all students felt willing and able to participate after 13 weeks/class sessions.

Developing a Dialogic Stance. After retrospective analysis, dialogic facilitation appeared to be more than the sum of any set of component parts. The instructor could still either open windows to allow dialogue to occur or close windows (consciously or not) in a variety of ways to maintain authority over knowledge as well as the orientation of classroom discourse. Aside from the mechanisms for setting conditions and strategically facilitating discussion, the instructor-oriented participation and dialogue in particular ways by *assuming a stance* with regard to the way classroom discussion should occur. Looking back retrospectively, I found that the excursi between me and Cassandra focused on what constituted a *dialogic stance*. For Wells (2007), a dialogic stance occurs when educators recognize and model that knowledge is born out of an activity in which student thought and speech is taken seriously and explored; this includes encouraging inquiry in order that everyone collaborates on grasping concepts or the basic principles of a discipline. Dialogue is not simply, for example, a matter of a teacher speaking less frequently or encouraging student participation only to evaluate and correct it. The instructor, as fulcrum, has the power to encourage student dialogue by adopting a particular pedagogical stance.

Retrospective analysis of the excursi outlined in the findings revealed some of the specific principles that occurred in developing this dialogic stance and acquiring the skills, attitudes, and actions needed to facilitate student-centered thought and speech around shared inquiry. In my findings, a dialogic stance was informed and guided by an overarching pedagogical disposition characterized by *dialogical openness*. Two key factors identified as constituting such dialogical openness were, first, treating texts, questions, and arguments interdependently in a spirit of openness, and second, refraining from evaluating, correcting, or rescuing students as they developed their own voices in classroom discussion.

Treating Texts, Questions, and Arguments Interdependently in a Spirit of Openness. In Step 3, our modification focused on modeling and reflecting on components of the intervention. It was specifically in this phase of our collaboration that we found that approaching texts, questions, and arguments with an open disposition was vital to facilitation. Next, I outline what it meant to treat each text, question, and set of arguments with an open disposition. Then, I describe the importance of seeing these three elements as an interdependent whole when trying to facilitate FPCD.

The Text. The text was the center of our planning each week and it had been a focus of our concern since the earliest phases of the intervention. Finding texts that were relevant and engaging to students, that were developmentally appropriate, and offering choices of those texts to them, was always a challenge for us. However, over the course of the semester, we also discovered the subtle difficulty of finding texts that did not speak in monological tones but rather were open and inviting to a variety of interpretations. This understanding seemed crucial to supporting Cassandra and her students in learning to dialogue. During our planning sessions, Cassandra and I frequently discussed whether we could find ways to open particular texts for

students to engage in discussions they would find interesting and meaningful. However, the text also needed to treat topics in ways that supported individuals trying to overcome a variety of affective impediments to their full participation, particularly in the early stages of student dialogic development. For instance, hot button topics or texts written in ways designed to incite powerful responses provided additional barriers to student participation and shared inquiry.

In this study, data suggested it was optimal if the text itself spoke dialogically, or reflected thinking through more than one perspective on a topic. We recognized, particularly in Iterations 4 and 8, that texts written in a monologic voice, and as source of authoritative knowledge, required additional effort by the instructor to *open* it, by treating the text as a thinking device (Lottman, 1988). In sum, the text and the facilitator's treatment of it were interdependent in developing the conditions for dialogue.

The Question. Throughout this study, Cassandra generated questions about subjects that she believed were worthy of student attention; together we then frequently considered whether or not the question was sufficiently open to genuinely invite a variety of student perspectives. We discussed, particularly in Iterations 1, 3, 5, and 8, the need to ask questions in a way that did not lead to predetermined or desired conclusions but instead, opened the play of dialogue and thinking. Particularly during Excursus 7, Cassandra observed that when I modeled a discussion on grit, the question I used “brought in questions without thinking there’s a right answer.”

The questions that a facilitator asks must be authentic and not part of a game for students to “guess what is in the teacher’s head” (Nystrand & Gamoran, 1991). In fact, the more a genuine and open question intersects with the concerns, interests, and experiences of students, the better. For instance, in this study, Cassandra and I found that students frequently turned to making sense of their own experiences in school when trying to interpret matters related to

education and social justice. But in any subject area, inquiry can and (insofar as dialogue is truly desired) probably should connect to students' horizons and interests.

The Arguments. An argument is taking up a perspective and being prepared to provide an account or reasons why the perspective might be true (Gadamer, 1991, 2004; Kerdeman, 1998, Taylor, 2017). Modeling reasonable arguments (perspectives that one is open to explaining and examining respectfully with others) played an essential role in facilitating the development of FPCD, as shown most transparently in Excursi 8 & 10. Being prepared to model and entertain a variety of arguments entailed showing that a subject was worthy of serious thought and attention, and that simple solutions were often too easy, one-sided, and incomplete – the product of one's limited horizon of understanding.

At times, openly facilitating arguments requires taking up a variety of perspectives on a topic, speaking up for voices that might not be present or comfortable in a dialogue (Burbules, 1993; Noddings, 2002; Wells, 2007). This might also necessitate occasionally adopting positions that are not one's own in order to help students see what is at stake in a particular discussion. Scholars have argued that openly providing diverse perspectives can elicit original responses, provoke student thinking and develop their evaluative capacity, broaden their horizons by helping them see the reasonableness of others, and even help them determine their own deepest ethical commitments (Gadamer, 1991; Kerdeman, 1998; Noddings, 2002). Developing an argument, therefore, cannot mean insisting on one's own interpretation as the correct one, or as authoritative and thus monologic.

In this intervention, identifying texts for each iteration consumed considerable time, while focusing on authentic questions gradually came into focus over the course of the first three steps. However, recognizing and collaborating on diverse arguments only unfolded after

Cassandra had worked through other skills. Specifically, it was addressed directly only in the modeling that occurred in Step 3.

The significance of encouraging a variety of arguments or perspectives was always implicit in our implementation of FPCD, even if it was neither one of the components of the intervention nor part of our early planning. For instance, in response to student comments in Iteration 1 and during the debriefing, Cassandra and I had discussed reasons why protesting the National Anthem might reasonably be interpreted as offensive to some. After Iterations 2 and 3 (on Black Lives Matter), we discussed whether secondary school teachers were prepared to engage students in difficult political dialogues. However, for Iterations 4 and 5, when I released responsibility for the iterations, there was far less planning time together and little discussion of arguments that might evolve out of the texts.

In Steps 3 and 4, I finally recognized the importance of directly addressing arguments with Cassandra in order to help her develop the sort of open disposition that would help her decenter her own knowledge and facilitate FPCD. In Iteration 6 we considered whether notions of “grit” were socially valuable; and in Iteration 7 we discussed whether or not religious communities and their schools had a right to educate children according to their own values. Retrospectively, I recognized that my goal in these discussions had been to show that students could (and likely did) have a range of reasonable positions that should be welcomed into dialogue. In this study, recognizing and inviting these horizons of understanding was essential in encouraging the participation of *all* students, and promoting the growth of understanding that occurs through dialogue between them. Seeing a variety of rational positions also seemed essential in breaking down the monologic approach to what texts were chosen, what questions were asked, what responses should be accepted, and what counted as knowledge.

Openness and the Interdependence of Text, Question, and Argument. In my retrospective analysis, I noted how interdependent the text, question, and arguments were in an open dialogic disposition. All three elements of an iteration needed to be treated as invitations to students' thinking and dialogue from their own horizons, and not treated as avenues to authoritative knowledge that filled their minds.

In order to provide diverse avenues for dialogue, in Iteration 6, I modeled how to generate an open question about grit and then facilitated a discussion with Cassandra about how that question could invite different interpretations and arguments. By asking a question that problematized the value of grit while also inviting perspectives both for and against grit, we opened a space for discussion from multiple perspectives. Cassandra realized that unpacking the guiding question in this manner was not leading to a particular argument against grit; instead phrasing a question in a specific way “allows for...bringing in opinions without thinking there's a right answer” (Iteration 6). On the other hand, the order of posing a question and articulating an argument was reversed in Iteration 7. I started by modeling diverse reasonable arguments on a controversial social justice issue in order to *generate a question* that invited students with a religious background or orientation into the discussion.

Finally, in my retrospective analysis, I recognized that I had made the analysis of arguments an explicit topic of our inquiry and collaboration only *after* other components of the intervention had been introduced and practiced. I realized that facilitating dialogue by modeling reasonable arguments – or taking up perspectives that one is open to explaining and examining respectfully with others – was not adequately addressed as a component of the intervention. This was a significant finding from this research - thinking about how to model arguments in FPCD needed to be part of the intervention design. I reflected that in order to make time for addressing

their significance, the topics and texts of the curriculum might need to be established before the iterations begin.

The Need to Refrain from Evaluating, Correcting, or Rescuing Students as They Developed Their Own Voices. A second factor identified as constituting dialogical openness was the ability to refrain from evaluating, correcting, or rescuing behaviors. During the FPCD intervention, we recognized that pushing-back manifested in several forms and impeded opportunities for dialogue. Even at the very beginning of our collaboration, in Excursus 1, Cassandra asked about pushing-back in theory, or its value as a general pedagogical practice in FPCD. She recognized that it asserted her own authority in the classroom and worried that it might inhibit students risking their own thinking and thus the free exchange of ideas. While we agreed, at least in theory, that pushing-back should be limited, it came up repeatedly in planning and practice.

In Excursus 3, Cassandra was troubled by a student's interpretation of those who criticized protestors of the national anthem as "rigid." It struck a personal chord and memories of her own grandmother's patriotism and integrity. This awoke in her a desire to challenge opinions that were condescending and limited. In Excursus 5, Cassandra was dismayed by a student's cynicism about the possibility of political action in the current cultural climate. She felt compelled to "rescue" the student from such cynicism. In Excursus 7, Cassandra felt the need to challenge an opinion that she perceived as rooted in white male privilege. This was for the sake of expanding that student's horizon on the topic of social inequities.

Of course, any of these urges or attempts to push-back can be valuable and typical of the evaluative purview of an educator. However, for the sake of openness, in each case it was important to assess whether or not pushing back served the goals of encouraging all students to

feel willing and able to participate. If the primary goal was to help students speak and think on their own, it would be important to refrain from *evaluating, correcting, and rescuing* them – even from their own worst opinions. In this study, it appeared that Cassandra’s efforts to occasionally take on the role of evaluating responses replaced others’ evaluative capacity with her own. In order to invite student discussion with an open disposition, it is essential to remember that these opinions are the result of students’ upbringing - or Gadamer’s (2004) historically-effected consciousness – and therefore the horizons from which they are able to grow.

A Retrospective Analysis of Teacher Versus Student Participation Over Time

In addition to the four assertions, one trend in the retrospective analysis that did look promising was found in a simple tabulation of the percentage of discrete contributions made by Cassandra relative to students’ participation. These data do not consider the duration of the relative contributions, but only the number of times that the instructor chose to enter the conversation relative to the number of comments made by students. As illustrated in Table 5.1, there was a steady and consistent downward trend in Cassandra’s participation over the course of the semester, and therefore a complementary rise in the amount of student participation. The numbers were remarkably consistent in each step (with the exception of Iteration 4), and by the last step, the relative number of Cassandra’s entries into the discussions had decreased by approximately 60%. There was a corresponding rise in student participation by nearly 20%. Overall, this trend suggested that over the course of the intervention, Cassandra gradually reduced her involvement in the class discussions and gave students more opportunity to contribute. The largest decline in her participation occurred during Steps 3 and 4, particularly around the time of my modeling of Iteration 6.

Table 5.1*Percentage of Discussion Contributions by Instructor and Students*

Step	Iteration #	Percentage of Instructor Contributions	Percentage of Student Contributions
1	Iteration 1	30%	70%
	Iteration 2	29%	71%
	Iteration 3	32%	68%
2	Iteration 4	48% ^a	52%
	Iteration 5	29%	71%
3	Iteration 6	25%	75%
	Iteration 7	22%	78%
4	Iteration 8	12%	88%
	Iteration 9	12%	88%

^a in this iteration, Cassandra reflected that “I *hijacked the discussion*”

Summary

My retrospective analysis of data collected during this investigation resulted in four assertions.

The first assertion described the difficulties that Cassandra faced in trying to adopt a more dialogical pedagogical orientation amidst the complex stresses associated with the classroom press. The second assertion described the tensions she experienced between adopting monologic discourses, associated with expert knowledge and institutional demands on the one hand, and on the other, the need for inquiry and openness that underlie successful classroom dialogue.

Assertion 3 described the affective factors that continued to impact Cassandra and her students during the implementation of the FPCD iterations. Finally, the final assertion described the need to model an open disposition in facilitating classroom discussions. In Chapter 6, these assertions will be further discussed while also highlighting implications for instructional practice and directions for further research. Data from Cassandra’s own final self-reflections about the

intervention will be included in the section on whether or not this intervention met its pedagogical goals.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

This chapter begins with an overview of the most significant findings of this study before moving on to discuss the four assertions articulated in Chapter 5 as a result of the retrospective analysis. Recommendations and implications associated with each assertion are also provided. Afterward, I address whether or not this intervention met its pedagogical goals, the limitations of this study, and directions for future research.

Overview of Significant Findings

This study examined factors that appeared to facilitate or impede the success of a researcher-developed intervention (FPCD) designed to improve classroom dialogue. It had two related goals. First, it aimed to improve the instructor's understanding of student-centered dialogue. Second, it aimed to maximize student participation in classroom dialogue.

Over and over, it was apparent how difficult it was for Cassandra, a professional educator, to relinquish her own authority and transfer agency to university-level students as part of a college course so that they could think and speak with each other about topics of social justice and education from their own horizons of understanding. From the beginning of our collaboration, Cassandra understood that building classroom dialogue was developmental for her students and herself. In our planning meetings, she was patient and reflective about problems that students faced and about changes she would need to make to her own pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, it was a real challenge for her to change her own disposition and practice, much less the classroom attitude and behavior of her students over the course of one semester. Overall, data suggested it appeared to be a significant shift in disposition and pedagogy to move away from planning and guiding lessons that conveyed specific knowledge, and toward discussions guided by inquiry in which students shared perspectives on issues involving social justice in

education and then collaboratively evaluated them. These efforts precipitated significant discomfort and disorientation. This reminded me of early studies in classroom discourse by Edward and Furlong (1978). They found that maintaining authority in the classroom was a coping strategy to keep order in complex and potentially overwhelming environments.

In Step 1 (Iterations 1, 2, 3), Cassandra and I were confronted with the complexity of the FPCD intervention and the many components that needed to be implemented in order to acquire new dialogic facilitation skills. We understood, as Dreyfus (2004) pointed out in other studies of development, that this would necessarily take place over time. We began with highly-structured lesson plans in the first step to scaffold the transfer of some agency and responsibility to students. Still, Cassandra felt disoriented when trying to set aside her leadership (“stepping back...feels uncomfortable”) and accustomed ways of leading in the classroom (for instance, in not “pushing back” or scaffolding student learning).

Additionally, students’ own lack of preparation during their own schooling and passive conditioning in I-R-E discourse modes made even concrete attempts to hand over agency very difficult. Their own feelings of anxiety, being judged, and giving offense were significant barriers. Cassandra also struggled to let go of responsibility for leadership of the debriefing session so that students could reflect on their individual and group dynamics. Even as early as in Step 1, we noted the power that multiple issues associated with the classroom press had in compounding difficulties Cassandra faced in transferring agency and relinquishing responsibility to her college-aged students.

In Step 2 (Iterations 4 and 5), we released some of the prescriptive intervention structure, and Cassandra took more agency over the intervention. Nevertheless, she continued to have difficulty relinquishing responsibility and transferring agency to students. In Iteration 4, she

inadvertently selected a text (the documentary film *13th*) that was difficult to open for dialogue, leading her to subsequently take back agency and return to old habits of I-R-E. During Planning Meeting 11, Cassandra realized that she “hijacked” the discussion and had “pushed back” on student opinions again - this time to rescue a student from cynicism. After Iteration 5, during Planning Meeting 12, I also noted that she felt compelled to push back and correct Jack’s interpretation of a former classmates’ merit in gaining admission to a prestigious university. These reflections also led Cassandra to share that under observation, she struggled to confidently take on a new role, as my observation made her “overthink” and consider “what she was supposed to be doing.” Her sense of her own competency as a professional appeared to be undermined by this significant demand for pedagogical change.

In Step 3 (Iterations 6 and 7), I modeled elements of the intervention. Through Cassandra’s observation of my facilitation, after Iteration 6, she noticed just how little “power” I exercised during class in my efforts to transfer agency to students and support their autonomy as thinkers and participants. She realized, once again, how much responsibility she felt for teaching content and didn’t quite have enough trust that “the students *are going to get there*” (to the desired content or outcome). As a result, Cassandra reported that she was “uncomfortable giving up power” in the classroom. She also wondered aloud if there was a proper balance between keeping and ceding this power and authority over knowledge and discussion “for the reason that you feel a responsibility that you have to teach [content] - and kids have to get this content.” Finally, in Step 3, our collaboration revealed that three of the central elements of classroom pedagogy - text, question, and arguments/opinions - were interdependent and had to be realigned in an open disposition toward student-centered learning. This created significant disorientation for Cassandra in her role in classroom pedagogy.

In Step 4 (Iterations 8 and 9), as we wrapped up our collaboration in the final three weeks of the intervention, Cassandra focused on integrating FPCD and the skills she had learned over the semester into her classroom practice. As late as Planning Meeting 18, immediately before Iteration 8, she was still struggling with balancing her own voice with efforts to make room for her students' voices. In the past, she believed, she had valued actively building relationships with her students as a way of building trust and a sense of community. Cassandra did this by "putting herself out there," and modeling intellectual humility. She recognized that before our collaboration, she spoke more frequently, provided personal anecdotes, and took a more active role in leading conversations. Now, after 11 weeks of working together, she wondered how she could balance making room for students' agency while maintaining her own preferred practices, allowing students to get to know her. In making room for students' thought and speech, she wondered how "this all fit" and what it would look like. Our discussion before Iteration 9 culminated in Cassandra reflecting that in some way, she was "losing herself" in the practice of FPCD – "Sometimes when I overthink, I don't do things that I would naturally do... because I'm trying to add to that [my natural teaching habits]. I think where my learning is, and ... I have to do this balancing act of when do I do what I would naturally do?"

Giving over more "power and control to the students" was experienced over the course of the intervention as discomfort, lack of confidence, feelings of incompetence, and even a loss of oneself in the role of teacher. This sense of privation was associated to a large degree with trying to adopt a disposition that was open and making room for the autonomy and competence of others: surrendering the full weight of authority and responsibility, the loss of knowing one's role during student-centered discussions, feeling unable to fall back on one's own knowledge to guide the discussion, feeling not being sufficiently skilled at facilitation, and lack of a clearly

identifiable endpoint, goal, or outcome. Not feeling fully competent or certain in exploring things with students may initially be a source of disorientation in dialogic pedagogy - but ultimately it may be just the kind of openness and humility needed to allow students their own self-determination and motivation.

As a result of our collaboration toward meeting Pedagogical Goals 1 and 2, retrospective analysis revealed significant barriers to student-centered dialogue and resulted in four assertions about implementing FPCD in an online college-level course. Next, I discuss each of these assertions in the context of contemporary research.

Discussion of Assertion 1: Challenge of the Classroom Press

Fullan (2007) described the classroom press as the daily subjective experience of many teachers in the following way. Teachers must deal with constant disruptions and unexpected events, changes to their planning, and administrative and bureaucratic expectations. They feel uncertainty about how to influence their students and manage noncognitive (here I read *affective*) goals. They interact with specific sets of students under specific circumstances that make pedagogical and curricular generalizations difficult, and the press of stressors in this context makes time for reflection difficult. As a result, he wrote:

It draws their focus to day-to-day effects or a short-term perspective; it isolates them from other adults, especially meaningful interaction with colleagues; it exhausts their energy . . . it limits their opportunities for sustained reflection about what they do. . . . Further, it tends to increase the dependence of teachers on the experiential knowledge necessary for day-to-day coping, to the exclusion of sources of knowledge beyond their own classroom experience. (p. 33)

This passage expresses the challenges of the classroom press that many educators may experience during ordinary times. How much more pressing, one might ask, would it be to for an instructor trying to learn a new pedagogical skill by overcoming established and comfortable practices – while trying to lead in a new online environment and deal with the disjointed personal and professional challenges of working and living during a pandemic, frequent glitches in technology, and the political and social upheaval of the fall of 2020?

For Cassandra and I, our early comprehensive semester planning for the intervention (before classes began) gradually gave way to week-by-week planning and debriefing, short-term goals, and modifications based on the needs of the moment. Cassandra frequently expressed the paramount value of our talks and collaboration as professionally enriching and frequently missing from the lives of educators. She expressed that such conversations provided her a sounding board for her own ideas, opened her to new professional learning, and created opportunities to hear other perspectives and engage in reflection. Nevertheless, we both felt frequently exhausted; by the end of the semester, our energy had diminished, modifications tended to be built on what we had already reviewed, and our planning times shortened as we coped with the cumulative effects of difficult times.

Steps of the intervention were designed to gradually *increase* the amount of time dedicated to whole group discussion as we dropped instructional scaffolding, and as students gained the self-determination, motivation, and skills needed to exercise the leadership and reflection needed for dialogue. This entailed a complementary goal for the instructor to gradually release her own responsibility to make room for this student growth. Increasing the amount of time for student talk with the necessary support for student motivation and engagement, along

with the gradual release of responsibility were two factors designed to gradually develop student participation over time.

However, it did not play out this way over the course of the semester in Cassandra's online class. Busy schedules, technical demands, and the breadth of material that needed to be covered affected the regular development of classroom discussion. Across the semester, there was a tension between the need to address significant content material and the focus on developing student discussion. Since student-led debrief time was generally conducted at the end of class, it was often abbreviated for other priorities.

Our planning meetings lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to nearly three hours. This included finding an appropriate discussion text that was short, relevant, and developmentally appropriate. This text needed to cover a significant social justice topic in a way that met the conditions of the intervention. And as we found over the course of the semester, it needed to be "discussable," meaning that it had to furnish a subject matter that would open an avenue for student shared inquiry and the to-and-fro of dialogue. In the context of a polarized society, we found this was not always easy to attain. The identification and insertion of specific texts supporting the conditions of dialogic pedagogy felt, at times, like an intrusion into an already tightly packed curriculum of social justice "-isms." Navigating all these tensions required time and planning, negotiation and trade-offs. The pressure to engage students in activities that resulted in personal transformation on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion was also in tension with time consuming and open student-centered dialogic exchanges from a variety of perspectives.

Implications of the Classroom Press

The significance of factors associated with the classroom press resulted in two conclusions pertaining to efforts to improve dialogic practice in the classroom. First, I realized that in a single semester of an online class that met only two times a week for 75 minutes, Cassandra and I had only brief windows of opportunity to change the pedagogical orientation of both students and instructor that had likely been entrenched through years of habit and practice (Cazden, 1988; Howe & Abedin, 2013; Nystrand, 1997). In the present study, these windows of opportunity generally amounted to an hour or two each week, amid intense professional and personal pressures; the time constraints we felt in finding a text and developing a lesson plan often caused us to end up focusing on the content rather than fine-grained facilitation strategies adapted to the specific needs of teacher and students.

Second, I often found myself wondering if perhaps the many stresses that Cassandra and I experienced pointed to the reality that supporting student-centered thought and dialogue was not properly the role of the faculty in higher education; I wondered if perhaps such foundational skills were more properly the responsibility of primary and secondary educators. This remains an open question. However, my own experiences have also made me somewhat pessimistic about opportunities to emphasize student-centered dialogue there. In my experience in middle and high school classrooms, the large numbers of students in each classroom, the number of students seen each day, the relative absence of student freedom, leisure, and autonomy, and the reality of the classroom press seemed even more pronounced than in higher education. This was the case before even taking into account the pressures that many secondary educators felt in focusing on content standards and related outcomes on standardized assessments. While participating in this study, I occasionally found myself wondering where in the educational pipeline there could be the time and opportunity to focus on developing the skills needed for dialogue? Where are

educators deliberately making room for their students' thoughts and voices? Where were we supporting students in developing a sense of their own autonomy, competence, and relatedness? Certainly, these are important questions to explore further.

Recommendations to Address Challenges of the Classroom Press

During the course of our collaboration, the pressures of the classroom press stretched our ability to find time to implement and reflect on all of the intervention components and discuss strategies associated with facilitating discussion. However, in retrospect, I also came to realize at least four practices that could be used to better orient practitioners to the FPCD intervention before implementation even begins.

First, it would be helpful for instructors to select texts for discussion with intentionality. Prior to implementing FPCD with students, the instructor could select specific curricular topics and texts pertaining to subject matter that students would discuss. Ideally, this would also involve efforts to identify how that subject matter would connect to students' concerns and experiences.

Second, in preparation for lesson planning, instructors should understand the difference between open and closed texts. A researcher or mentor could demonstrate for the instructor ways that an open text is more dialogic in nature, which can provide or invite different perspectives about the subject matter that would be discussed. A closed text speaks in a monologic tone and would require the instructor to take on the role of opening the subject matter to inquiry and discussion. This could be done by showing that there are questions that can still be asked or alternate perspectives that can be reasonably taken up in relation to the text's authoritative tone.

Third, instructors should have access to guidelines for asking questions before implementing FPCD in the classroom. After Iteration 6 and in her own reflections after

completing the intervention, Cassandra identified the *Touchstones* question rubric as particularly helpful. This rubric helped her generate the sort of question (textual, experiential, concrete, abstract) she would use to address goals she had identified for the class during a particular iteration. Thus, sharing the question rubric before any class instruction began would introduce a framework for thinking about how questions could be used and what functions they could serve in the dialogic development of a class. Students could also use this rubric to reflect on and practice generating their own questions during discussions.

Finally, establish the dates and duration of each discussion iteration ahead of time. In this formative experiment, Cassandra and I were open and flexible about determining when discussions would occur and for how long. As exploratory research, this made sense to us. However, I now believe that our collaboration would have benefited from establishing the dates and duration of each discussion before the class sessions began. Then, the length of each discussion could be gradually increased to reflect the developmental nature (Dreyfus, 2004) of classroom dialogue. That is, shorter sessions at the beginning of the intervention could give way to longer sessions as students, and their instructor, become more comfortable and confident with their changed classroom roles. The instructor could also share the duration for each discussion on the syllabus. Adding this structure to sessions could help the instructor and students understand that the duration of each iteration was set with the intention to gradually give them time and opportunity to acquire skills needed to sustain a discussion through a whole class period. It might also help instructors and students to understand that it was their responsibility to find ways to explore and sustain a conversation, rather than thinking discussion ends when participants stop speaking.

Discussion of Assertion 2: Authority vs. Openness

Through my retrospective analysis in Chapter 5, it became clear that institutionally mandated curricula, texts, and conceptual lenses could serve either monologic or dialogic functions in the classroom. From a dialogic perspective, many topics covered in Casandra's course presented opportunities for genuine inquiry and authentic dialogue between students. The use of social justice concepts provided many opportunities for students to learn to respectfully present the ideas, opinions, and values with which they had been raised - or from their own horizons of understanding. In turn, these types of dialogic experiences could open the door for both students and the instructor to begin to see the limits of their own horizons, challenge assumptions that formerly seemed obvious, and become more open to seeing new perspectives.

However, expert knowledge, curricula, texts, and conceptual lenses can also be framed as monological discourses (Wells, 1999, 2006) that make dialogue instrumental and directed toward "preset curricular endpoints" (Matusov, 2015, p. E2). In these cases, monologic discourses would likely keep the prerogative for correct thought and speech with the instructor who might feel responsible to convey "one language of truth" and "correct language" to ensure a "certain maximum of understanding" (Bakhtin, 2010, p. 271).

In this study, I realized retrospectively that Cassandra and I were confronted with a tension between teaching a specific set of important social values (a more monologic orientation) and creating the conditions for classroom dialogue in which all students would feel willing and able to participate (a more dialogic orientation). The tension between these two important goals was, for me at least, the most tricky part of our collaboration. It did occasionally seem that we were attempting to implement dialogue in two different modes. Cassandra was, at times at least, more focused on ensuring that students understood course content; at those times she used dialogue to teach specific values, as part of a social justice pedagogy. She hoped to heighten

students' awareness of their own prejudices and privilege, as well as the broader social systems of inequity and oppression. In each and every iteration of FPCD, however, I was more focused on developing the conditions for dialogue and welcoming all students from their own horizons - so that students themselves would learn the skills and dispositions needed to discuss difficult issues.

These insights concerning how we attempted to use dialogue in practice connect back to my framing of the four modes of dialogue described in Chapter 2. That is, Cassandra and I both hoped for classroom dialogue in which all students participated in conversations about social justice issues. We just prioritized using dialogue in different ways, as a means of emancipatory thinking and action (for Cassandra), or as a hermeneutic approach to openly understanding oneself and others (for myself).

As a result of this study, I also came to understand that in an introductory college course on social justice in education, it was appropriate for the instructor to emphasize the importance of identifying oppressive structures, sources of prejudice, discrimination, hate, and violence, and using knowledge to transform inequitable social conditions (Darder, 2017; Freire, 2018; Giroux, 1988; hooks, 2014; Shor, 2012). At the same time, this could be done in such a way that all students are welcomed into a community of inquiry and dialogue in which each understands that every person is a product of their own historically-effected consciousness (Gadamer, 2004). In other words, participants would have the opportunity to see that they themselves and the others with whom they are attempting to dialogue are the products of their own history, language, culture, family, and traditions. Understanding this, there is the opportunity for everyone to be treated with respect and to learn from "the other" through reasonable conversation.

Retrospectively, engaging in this formative experiment has also helped me to clarify and appreciate how monologic and dialogic modes of discourse can exist in the same course. Monologism is used to convey information and knowledge, to assert expert findings, and to maintain order. The challenge for instructors then becomes how to balance efforts to convey information and research-based findings with opportunities for students to engage in more open-ended dialogic practices to more deeply understand this information. Without this balance, findings from this study suggest an emphasis on monologic modes of discourse could inhibit the entry of some participants into discussion, curb perspectives that deviate from the authoritative one, correct students trying to speak from their own horizons in order to contribute and understand, or even silence dissent. Thus, authority and expertise can shut down the openness to difference and exploratory inquiry that is the air that allows dialogue to breathe.

Implications for Educational Professionals

The use of monological discourses and their relationship to student-centered dialogue presented difficult and important questions about how to productively transmit ideas while also supporting students in deeply understanding them. In this study, it was never my intention to suggest that authoritative texts or institutional discourses of standards and accountability should not be shared with learners. It is, however, worth considering whether transmission-based teaching (Freire, 2020; Dewey, 1986; Wells & Arauz, 2006) and the habitual presentation of knowledge in a monologic manner (in a semester course or throughout students' schooling), might result in unintended consequences.

As other scholars have found, the pervasive use of monologic modes of discourse and interpretive conceptual lenses might result in habituated forms of undesirable I-R-E modes of classroom discussion that were neither intended nor desired (Burbules, 1993; Matusov, 2015;

Nystrand, 1997; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 1999, 2006). Long-term exposure to the monologic transmission of academic concepts, without opportunities for dialogue, might also result in students feeling unwilling or unable to speak in class (see also, Burbules, 2001; Nystrand, 1997; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013, Skidmore, 2006).

Moreover, findings from this study suggested it was worth considering that a classroom culture of expertise and authority could also intersect with current cultural and political tensions and the busyness of contemporary life. In such circumstances, the confluence of the classroom press, negative affective factors, monological discourses and habituated patterns of I-R-E, made engaging in dialogue particularly difficult for educators and students. In these conditions, educators (like Cassandra) might feel the weight of institutional discourses and mandated curricula, standards, and outcomes. Likewise, students might feel the anxiety of speaking in front of their peers, the risk and judgment of saying something wrong, or even inciting social tensions by giving offense. They may sense that they are not truly being heard or that their own genuine horizons are not welcome and therefore are not a significant part of the learning process. In these circumstances, a return to I-R-E modes of discourse is likely.

Consequently, findings suggest that an instructor's emphasis on mandated institutional standards and outcomes that emphasize concepts associated with curricula might leave little time for student inquiry and dialogue that builds respect for others and oneself or fosters important affective and relational skills, in addition to a students' sense of their own intellectual autonomy. As observed in the current study, setting the conditions that make student-centered dialogue possible could be perceived as too time consuming and inefficient from the perspective of instructors guided primarily by expectations linked to institutionalized and mandated curricula and outcomes. However, while the presentation of knowledge and mandated curricula is an

important institutional educational prerogative, research suggests that students should also have opportunities and encouragement to openly interpret, genuinely evaluate, and appropriately assimilate the concepts presented (Burbules, 2001; Matusov, 2015; Nystrand, 1997; Reznitskaya & Gregory, 2013; Wells, 1999, 2006).

Findings from this study also raise important questions for college-level instructors. For example, if students do not come to college equipped with skills for engaging in dialogue, and student participation is truly needed and valued inside (and outside of) classrooms, when should time be set aside to support their development? On a larger scale, amidst the ingrained patterns of I-R-E interaction for educators and students, disciplinary specialization, standards and outcomes, and professional preparation, how could college curricula be sequenced at the program level to provide students with regular practice and reflection on the fundamental personal and group skills needed for productive dialogue? Next, I share some preliminary answers to these questions, supported by findings revealed in this study and previous research.

Recommendations for Educational Professionals

Students should be guided in developing the skills and dispositions needed to understand knowledge that is presented as fixed and independent (Wells, 1999, 2007). Not all knowledge can, or should, be treated as though it can be mastered through reading and memorization. Therefore, one fundamental recommendation associated with Assertion 2 is for educators to make time for open inquiry and discussion, even amidst the pressures that everyone is facing and the many bodies of knowledge that students are expected to master.

Expert knowledge and the conceptual frameworks that they are built upon are an essential part of education and institutional expectations. Insofar as educators, working in specific disciplines, seek to engage their students in discussion, some preliminary pedagogical

groundwork may be required. Students, for example, should be encouraged to ask their own questions, express their own (mis)understandings, or collaborate with others in the classroom (all goals of FPCD). However, this may also require that teachers attend to conditions that support these possibilities in the classroom and develop them together with students.

Indeed, some students may come to class with the confidence needed to ask questions about knowledge that is presented as authoritative. They may also come equipped with the skills and dispositions to engage in discussion with an instructor and their classmates about presented knowledge, transforming this knowledge into opportunities for inquiry and open collaboration from their own horizons. On the other hand, if students *do not have* such skills and dispositions, given years of experiencing I-R-E classroom discourses, they are unlikely to believe that it is their role to ask questions, think critically about, and evaluate the texts and knowledge presented. As a result, such students might not have the self-determination needed to confidently engage new knowledge (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, ; 2000; Wells, 2004, 2007) or ask the questions that might allow them to expand beyond their own current horizons of understanding (Gadamer, 2004; Gallagher, 1992; Kerdeman, 1998).

At a systemic level, supporting students in dialogue could occur as part of general education requirements that all students are required to take. Implementing a curriculum that supports dialogic pedagogy, such as that provided by the Touchstones Discussion Project (2023), would allow educators and students to focus on the skills needed for classroom discussion. In this way, all students would likely develop some understanding of and practice in dialogue. They would learn to collaborate with others in developing the conditions needed for everyone to feel safe to participate. Likewise, faculty in higher-level discipline-specific courses could be offered

more support in learning how and when to provide time and space for dialogue insofar as they wished to encourage students' thinking, perspective taking, and discussion.

Following Wells (2001, 2004a, 2004b), even amidst the curricular frameworks of established disciplines, there are a number of recommendations to educators seeking to productively develop dialogue in the classroom; these include: (a) organizing curricular activities around inquiry, (b) treating the classroom as a collaborative community while eschewing a vision of students as independent and competitive consumers, c) appreciating that students are whole persons having affective and cognitive needs, and d) treating learning as situated within a specific set of individuals, with their own particular histories, strengths, and needs, set in a particular place and with particular texts. Each of these recommendations can be used to accommodate a more dialogical approach to classroom talk that engages students in the activity of learning.

Assertion 3: The Challenge of Affective Factors

Findings from the retrospective analyses pointed out ways in which affective factors, present for the instructor and students, impacted the implementation, development, and realization of classroom discussion. Building classroom inquiry and dialogue required what appeared to be uncomfortable changes in pedagogical practice for Cassandra and her students. In addition, building a collaborative classroom community required using interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that students in Cassandra's class hadn't yet fully developed. These findings are in line with scholars who found that, unfortunately, many educators and students do not come to the classroom with the skills and dispositions needed to establish conditions necessary for dialogue (Burbules, 1993; John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Lefstein, 2010; Skidmore, 2006; Wells, 2007). This is because, as Skidmore (2006) argued, current habitual modes of transmission-based

instruction constrain emotions, keeping class interactions within comfortable boundaries for teachers and their students.

For Cassandra, affective tensions manifested due to the divisive social and political times during which we collaborated, and also as a response to changes in her classroom pedagogical orientation and practices. At times, she struggled to let go of her responsibility to cover course content. Affective tensions also directly impeded students' attempts to dialogue in Cassandra's online class sessions. Seeking to help students recognize what they experienced and felt in the classroom, and then supporting their own shared collaboration in building trust and respect with one another, was intended to be a critical part of the FPCD intervention. These principles drew on previous research that higher student participation rates had been linked to increased engagement and motivation (Cohen, 1991; Junn, 1994) and improved critical thinking (Crone, 1997; Garside, 1996).

Nevertheless, research had also shown that students were impeded by feelings of anxiety (Armstrong & Boud, 1983; Fritschner, 2000; Rocca, 2008; Weaver & Qi, (2005) and lack of confidence speaking in front of their peers (Fassinger, 1995a, b; Rocca, 2010; Wade, 1994; Weaver & Qi, 2005). Other studies found that teachers' attitudes toward and treatment of students strongly influenced participation in classroom conversations. For example, appearing to criticize or dismiss students' ideas strongly decreased their willingness to participate (Fritschner, 2000; Karp & Yoels, 1976; Rocca, 2008, 2010; Wade, 1994).

Findings from the retrospective analysis supported these assertions. Students in the present study reported feelings of not truly being heard, feeling frustrated that past teachers were not interested in what they had to say; they also expressed a fear of being judged by classmates, and anxiety about being publicly evaluated or corrected by the teacher. These were just a few

examples. Such impeding factors helped explain more about Karp & Yoel's (1976) findings that in any college classroom, only a few students were willing to regularly interact with the professor. Students' anxieties and their reluctance to participate in Cassandra's class sessions also provided some explanation for Nunn's (1996) description of how classroom learning can become a "spectator sport." When fear and anxiety inhibits open classroom discussion, the educator, without fully comprehending the role of such affective barriers and how to overcome them, takes responsibility for classroom discourse and students remain passive.

Student reflection and shared discussion of their own attitudes, feelings, and behaviors was the third essential element of the FPCD intervention. As outlined in Chapter 2, attending to both student cognition *and* affect was central to the potential success of the intervention. Building students' and the instructor's leadership through metacognitive awareness of affective factors that arose during dialogue, promoting the development of self-regulation skills, and learning to respond to others' needs, were some of the unique elements of FPCD. Reflective debriefing was designed to provide time for shared observation and discussion, so that all participants (including the facilitator) could share the kinds of discomfort and anxiety they were experiencing and begin to address them with others in the class. In this study, for instance, debriefing could have been used for students to express their own anxieties about participating, not being listened to, or feeling judged. The instructor could have admitted her own challenges over responsibility for the curriculum, giving up power, and discomfort in facilitating the flow of discussion. Together the class might have then moved forward supporting one another, building trust, and addressing one another's needs and motivations (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000.)

Instead, a key finding from this study was that despite the intervention's intentional focus on affective conditions accompanying classroom dialogue, Cassandra and I *still* found it difficult to prioritize helping students understand and discuss their own social and emotional needs as a discussion group. Over the course of the semester, I noted that in the ongoing need to assist Cassandra in orienting dialogue around course content, we marginalized student debriefing and reflection on the dynamics of the discussions.

This finding supports Noddings (1995) assertion that curriculum is often positioned at the top of the educator's priority list. While I always anticipated that facilitating student-centered debriefing was something that we would soon address, demands of the curriculum and the classroom press made it very difficult to achieve. It became a pattern, especially over the crucial first two steps of the intervention (Iterations 1 through 5), that we marginalized the importance of affective factors by not focusing on the significance of debriefing or making sufficient time for students to explore and exercise agency in becoming aware of their own needs, as well as the needs of their classmates, during class discussions.

Cassandra and I did speak frequently, during planning sessions, about the many affective obstacles to full student participation. However, she never quite transferred the locus of control for understanding and addressing affective factors over to students. Therefore, in my retrospective analysis, I concluded that the ongoing skillful facilitation of student-centered debriefing (Essential Element 3) was one of the least successful elements of the intervention. This finding is consistent with Hargreaves' (1998) suggestion that amidst educational transformation in the shape of learning and professional standards, new technologies, and assessment reform, the role of affect or emotions is often underplayed or even ignored. Yet, he

argued, emotions are central to teaching – and the development of positive feelings is essential to effective instruction and learning.

In my retrospective analysis, I reflected that it would probably be most important to address affective factors in the earliest phases of discussion group formation so that all students could begin to build relationships and feel more comfortable sharing. This realization revealed support for Noddings (2005) recommendation that educators must find ways to address affective needs that had not yet even been expressed by their students. Doing so would require “critical thinking and dialogue directed to mutual understanding of both expressed and inferred needs” (p. 157). To this point, I would only add – the earlier such dialogue and understanding could occur, the better.

Likewise, upon reflection, it seemed that in my planning and collaboration with Cassandra, I had been drawn into habitual modes of focusing on content and texts, questions and inquiry, cognition, and reasoning. Further, I wondered if this focus was in some way a cover for my own discomfort insisting on the “soft” underpinnings of dialogue (i.e., feelings and needs) over more prized intellectual and academic goals. To focus on affective dimensions of dialogue would have caused me to insist on prioritizing debriefing, which would have taken more classroom time away from transmitting desired intellectual and academic knowledge.

Looking back over our collaboration, I believe that I was unwilling to insist on debriefing because of my own fears that a real full and effective implementation of FPCD, one that developed conditions needed for all students to feel willing and able to participate, was just asking too much or would be rejected as a waste of precious learning time. In retrospect, I can see that this was a risk I was unwilling to take; instead, I made a series of compromises in my work with Cassandra that pushed debriefing down the road, which ultimately made the

intervention less effective. As a result, I have become more cognizant of the need to better prepare for and prioritize debriefing and other ways to invite students and the facilitator to examine and discuss how they felt during discussions.

Implications for Classroom Educators and Theories of Dialogic Pedagogy

Making time and effort to invest in the affective side of classroom dialogue entails being part of a community of learners on a “rollercoaster of self-development” (Skidmore, 2006, p. 513); this process includes inquiry and curiosity, and the uncertainty and confusion of not-knowing that is the result of the absence of clearly marked steps in learning and a clear goal. It also entails a “solidarity of mutual encouragement,” and the “thrill of shared discovery,” all under the guidance of a teacher who cares about personal growth and takes the risks for this to occur in a student-centered manner. These are perhaps not emotions that students are either accustomed to, or comfortable with, in the classroom. Nevertheless, a facilitator of dialogue should approach classroom dialogue, like Socrates, in a spirit of friendship, and focus on building relationships (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and practice an ethic of care (Noddings, 2013, 2015).

Findings from this study revealed more clearly the subtle ways that affective factors can be correlated with patterns of I-R-E in a vicious cycle of student passivity and teacher control. Breaking this cycle has implications for educators and researchers who hope to improve student engagement, participation, and motivation. First, it is essential to attend to the social and emotional needs of students and educators when trying to build classrooms as small learning communities based on genuine relationships, honesty, and trust. Given the challenges, teachers should also be provided with guided and explicit professional learning experiences to support

their efforts to understand SEL and use specific strategies and practices that promote it in their classrooms (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2017).

However, attending to and addressing factors associated with affective barriers imposes an additional burden on educators already struggling to navigate mandated curricula and institutional standards and outcomes. This is yet one more request for their time and attention. Furthermore, attending to affective dimensions of learning requires educators to observe and reflect on their own needs and dispositions in addition to those of their students. However, asking educators to consider their own unexamined affective dispositions and habits might be perplexing, difficult, and time consuming for those unaccustomed to such reflection. This might also be a significant challenge when affective dimensions of learning are not institutionally prioritized or valued as much as cognitive outcomes.

There are also theoretical implications associated with attending to affective factors in FPCD. In Chapter 2, I outlined three hypothetical genres associated with dialogic pedagogy: instrumental dialogue, emancipatory dialogue, and democratic dialogue. Insofar as each of these modes of classroom dialogue depends on student engagement, participation, and motivation, affective dimensions must be given full consideration and support. In line with these three genres, students must feel willing and able to participate in order to improve particular mandated educational learning goals, to develop a more critical awareness of social injustices and systems of oppression, or to engage in shared deliberation and discussion of competing values in a democracy. Therefore, recognizing the importance of affective underpinnings when working in the theory or practice of these genres is essential.

Recommendations for Addressing Affective Factors as Part of FPCD Intervention

As a result of the retrospective analysis, a number of recommendations pertaining to the affective dimension of dialogue can be made. Most entail explicit preparation of facilitators and students before any discussion sessions begin.

Support For FPCD Discussion Leaders. Four recommendations pertain to supporting discussion leaders in understanding and addressing affective factors that might arise while facilitating FPCD. The first involves prioritizing support for the discussion leader in student-centered debriefing before the iterations begin. Ideally, preparation would engage the instructor in seminar discussions with other educators as part of professional learning sessions. This is the practice most frequently used by the Touchstones Discussion Project (Touchstones Discussion Project, 2023). Iterations of dialogue amongst instructors could be followed by debriefing in which future leaders could practice reflecting on their own discussions and the feelings and hurdles that arose. This recommendation is consistent with Lave and Wenger's (1991) suggestion that learning is a situated social activity that should be practiced and assimilated with others.

Second, before the iterations begin, facilitators should have time to understand the affective changes and possible disorientation that they may experience. Preparing educators for facilitating FPCD may involve increasing awareness of why and how they might begin to transition from a monologic to dialogic orientation of discourse. Instructors should also be prepared for understanding the discomfort they may feel in reducing their own authority over knowledge and behavior as a natural part of a developmental process of pedagogical change (Dreyfus, 2004; Richardson, 1990, 1996; Richardson & Placier, 2002). Some stress amidst these changes may be alleviated by knowing there is not one single method of conducting FPCD and

that observation and feedback on their leadership is always relative to the setting and circumstances in which educators strive to make pedagogical changes.

A third recommendation would be to consider modeling or co-leading an iteration of FPCD with students early in the semester. Cassandra came to important realizations during Iteration 6 when I modeled a session of FPCD with her students. She was able to see differences in our leadership styles, which caused her to reflect on her own practices and assumptions. Therefore, it might be helpful for instructors to observe another facilitator trying to lead student-centered dialogue so that they can reflect on the practice as an outside observer. This might relieve some of the tension involved in “flying blind,” or trying to make a significant change in classroom practice without observing what it can look like in practice.

Finally, results of this intervention repeatedly revealed Cassandra’s appreciation for opportunities to discuss her classroom practice with me. Because facilitating dialogue is a complex skill that requires educators “to grow new bones” (Langer, 1994), a fourth recommendation for discussion leaders would be to free up time between iterations to watch and self-reflect on recordings from their own efforts to lead FPCD. If recommendations for managing issues associated with the classroom press (as outlined in Assertion 1) can be implemented, thus improving an instructor’s preparation for leading FPCD, some of the discomfort and disorientation involved in changing their pedagogical practice may be alleviated by ensuring additional time is provided to share in reflection and discussion as part of ongoing professional learning.

Support for Students. In addition to supporting instructors as they strive to understand challenging aspects of FPCD prior to implementing them in their classrooms, two additional practices pertain to supporting students in FPCD. First, it would be helpful to adopt a set of

guidelines focused on empowering student agency and ownership over the FPCD iterations. As part of the modifications for Step 3, I developed guidelines to share with students before beginning each classroom discussion. These guidelines articulated several goals designed to encourage students to take responsibility for leading discussions; these guidelines also reminded the instructor of the importance of allowing students to take ownership of their own learning. Cassandra was pleased with these guidelines and believed they served to increase student agency and motivated students to take more leadership. She continued to use these guidelines after their introduction in Iteration 6.

A second strategy for increasing the success of FPCD would be to engage students in more community building activities at the beginning of the intervention. Building bonds of trust and care are essential in overcoming affective barriers to student participation in dialogue (Frank, 2004; Henton, 1996; Miles & Priest, 1999). Students worried, for instance, about being not heard, misunderstood, judged, or excluded. Investing more time in building positive and mutually supporting relationships at the beginning of a discussion group's formation might facilitate the kind of trust, openness, and inclusivity that allows dialogue to flourish.

Assertion 4: Modeling a Spirit of Openness is Essential

Findings from this study revealed that modeling a spirit of openness, or one that welcomes student perspectives, is essential to facilitating FPCD. During our planning sessions throughout this study, the importance of an open disposition emerged in a myriad of ways. Such a pedagogical disposition is built on actions, attitudes, beliefs, and values that characterize the openness that truly welcomes students into genuine conversation from their own horizons of understanding.

During my retrospective analysis, I reflected on qualities that appeared to constitute an open disposition and would likely be useful in modeling how to support conditions for dialogue between participants. These practices aligned with and confirmed key principles of hermeneutic dialogue as the theoretical basis for this research (see Chapter 2). Over the course of this study, it became clearer to me that Cassandra's attempts to develop dispositional or dialogical openness could be characterized by or rooted in: a) listening and encouraging rather than explaining and managing, b) recognizing our limitedness and the value of others, c) supporting critical thinking, d) identifying and supporting inquiry, and e) modeling ethical judgment.

Listening and Encouraging Rather than Explaining and Managing

Habitual modes of I-R-E classroom talk, institutional mandates associated with standards and outcomes, and the monological orientation toward knowledge, all tend to centralize talk in the classroom around the educator. Developing conditions in which dialogue can flourish, however, requires that a facilitator models genuine listening such that others feel motivated to speak. Noddings (2003) characterized the ability to listen as “a moral obligation....because self-esteem is a basic human good (p. 21). As Noddings saw it, listening is “half of dialogue.” Findings from this study show the importance of prioritizing listening and respecting the horizons of others, rather than immediately correcting or pushing back on student contributions, to increase their motivation to participate in dialogue

These findings also support Deci & Ryan's (2000) call for meeting students' needs for relationships and a sense of their autonomy and competence. By modeling openness and listening, and thereby eschewing judgment and correction, the facilitator models “confirmation” (Noddings, 2013). This component of care sees the best in others and tries to understand the reasons behind their values, opinions, and decisions. In other words, to facilitate dialogue, one

should model patiently listening to the (sometimes disagreeable) opinions expressed by others, trying to understand the reasons they hold them, and persisting in the hope that they are able to find their “better selves.”

Recognizing Our Limitedness and the Value of Others

A hermeneutic mode of dialogue starts from the assumption that human beings are limited - thrown into a particular time and place with its language, history, traditions, values, and beliefs (Gadamer, 2013). Therefore, taking up and maintaining a stance of dialogic openness means modeling a recognition of the limits of one’s own horizon and modeling the need for others in learning. In FPCD, the very different experiences and knowledge of others makes it possible to improve individual understanding through the fusion of horizons (Gill, 2015; Graff, 2008; Taylor, 2017).

Supporting Student Critical Thinking

Relatedly, findings from this study help explain more about what Kuhn (1999) described as the development of an “evaluatist” epistemology. This stance is one in which “all opinions are not equal and knowing is understood as a process that entails judgment, evaluation, and argument” (p. 22). Through this research, I came to identify dialogical openness as built on an evaluatist epistemological orientation. It is an openness that eschews the epistemological cul-de-sacs of absolutism or relativism. Rather, the facilitator encourages respectful evaluation and models a way of reasoning with others that refuses to fall into authoritative assertions of correct knowledge or subjectivist insistence that there is no point in trying to move beyond one’s own set of unique experiences and opinions. It is worth noting that the process of evaluation does occur in the I-R-E sequences so prevalent in schooling. But there is no clearer indication of the limits of this kind of talk exchange for dialogue than to realize that in it, teachers have

appropriated to themselves the capacity and opportunity for thinking rather than sharing it with those they are trying to educate.

Identifying and Supporting Inquiry

Beyond simply identifying a text, a facilitator selects a subject for discussion that students will feel willing and able to discuss. Some topics might not intersect with students' horizons of understanding or their interests while others may simply be too controversial for their current development. It is the facilitator's task to help students navigate inquiry into a subject matter, sometimes helping students clarify the subject with one another, sometimes maintaining their focus on it, sometimes encouraging tangents that lead to important insights, and sometimes allowing new perspectives as avenues of dialogic approach to deeper understanding.

Modeling Ethical Judgment

In the play of open discussion, interpreting around a subject of inquiry, and giving and evaluating reasons, the facilitator encourages the variety of perspectives that arise from the current horizons of participants. In this process, a facilitator does not transmit their own values to students but encourages students to make ethical judgments of their own. Therefore, modeling dialogue entails a practice of open reflection, calling one's own opinions into question in the light of shared thinking and open consideration of the horizons' of others (Gadamer, 2004; Kerdeman, 2003; Taylor, 2017). Findings from this study suggest that dialogue offers opportunities for an ethical practice of applying open and continuous shared inquiry to one's own life with others for the sake of improving intrapersonal and interpersonal understanding.

Implications For Educators and Researchers

If facilitating the development of classroom dialogue does indeed entail building, as Langer (1994) argues, a new set of bones, the process of facilitating FPCD is likely to involve

more than implementing a set of discrete or mechanical pedagogical strategies. One implication for practitioners and researchers is that changing one's classroom orientation to reflect an open disposition would likely take several cycles of practicing facilitation, reflecting on one's own attitudes and beliefs, and engaging in dialogue with other practitioners. This would take time and patience, sometimes in places where such things are commodities due to concerns over more immediate priorities, such as meeting specific learning goals or improving measurable outcomes.

In education today, openness and dialogue may at times be very difficult. As data from this study have shown, students and educators must learn to navigate current social and political tensions. The figure of Socrates serves as a witness that asking questions and openly discussing important ideas can be fraught and challenging for participants and the broader community. However, Taylor (2017) sees "the great challenge of the coming century, both for politics and for social science, is that of understanding the other." He envisions this as the need to move beyond ethnocentrism and relativism by "allowing ourselves to be interrogated by the other" (p. 285). Learning to dialogue with others supports students in learning to think and speak for themselves. It provides them with the skills they will need to participate in a pluralistic democracy and confront injustice as informed and thoughtful citizens.

Did the Intervention Further the Two Pedagogical Goals?

Results of this formative experiment and the subsequent retrospective analysis of these data point to significant growth in Cassandra's understanding of FPCD and the strategies used to promote it (Pedagogical Goal 1). From my perspective as the researcher, throughout the intervention Cassandra showed keen self-awareness and understanding as she attempted to apply FPCD in the classroom. From the first weeks, she understood that dialogue was extremely valuable but difficult for students and herself. Nevertheless, over the semester (with the

occasional hiccups that accompany the learning of any new skill), the proportion of her participation in discussion decreased and her students' participation increased.

Looking back over the Essential Elements informing the FPCD intervention, a few pertinent observations regarding growth toward the two pedagogical goals can be made. As we struggled to find engaging texts (Essential Element 1), Cassandra thought primarily of the students when identifying interesting and developmentally appropriate topics. Through our formative collaboration, we learned to move beyond thinking simply in terms of texts and focused on instead on finding an open and engaging subject matter in those texts. Cassandra also grew in recognizing the significance of open questions (rather than leading ones), and used the Touchstones rubric to formulate them (Essential Element 2). While she struggled to let go of her own authority and responsibility for conveying course content, she recognized the value of supporting more student-centered learning. By the third and fourth steps, she was thinking more about group cohesion and identifying discussion dynamics (Essential Element 2). Finally, together we discussed the importance of modeling and exploring reasonable arguments with students, and I realized that such modeling needed to be added as a component of the FPCD intervention.

In her own final assessment, Cassandra pointed to a number of strategies that she found particularly useful in facilitating FPCD and intended to continue using after the completion of this study. First, regarding the discussion text, she recognized the importance of giving students a choice about what to read and discuss. She also acknowledged a tradeoff between giving students choices about discussion texts and topics (for the sake of engagement and participation) and covering more topics in the curriculum. Cassandra thought that this tradeoff was “challenging” but ultimately successful. Even though not as many topics were covered, she

thought that “we had valuable discussions that can be applied to other social justice issues.” Also regarding the text, Cassandra recognized the importance of allowing students the opportunity to read the text during class time. In her own self-reflection, she specifically pointed out that, “I think this was important for engagement rather than relying on students' out of class work because everyone was on the same page.”

With respect to the strategic use of questions in FPCD, Cassandra “loved” learning about the four types of questions developed by Touchstones. She planned to continue using the Touchstones matrix in future planning and facilitation; she also believed the matrix helped her think about what her goals for any particular discussion might be. Cassandra also recognized important steps that can be taken before engaging the whole class in discussion. This included giving students independent reflection time to get more comfortable with the content. Likewise, she wrote that “with longer texts, intermittent reflection time seemed helpful. This way everyone is thoughtful about the content and their reactions to the text.” Another technique she fully supported was using breakout room small group discussions before starting the whole group discussion to get students engaged. In her own final self-reflection, she wrote:

Small group discussion before the large group discussion gets most of the students to participate. . . . I felt like the questions [developed in breakout rooms] during the final discussion were similar to what I was going to ask and therefore the discussion was student centered, initiated, and sustained.

As a final practice before a whole class discussion, Cassandra recognized the importance of having students develop and regularly review their own goals and guidelines. She believed that regularly going over discussion expectations “helped students take over the responsibility.” Having these co-developed guidelines for reflection was also valuable in that they, “reminded

[her] NOT to rescue the conversation and also reminded students that [she] wasn't going to talk if the discussion went silent.”

There were also a few ways that Cassandra now had a better general understanding of FPCD and her own role in it. First, after final reflections on the intervention, she had a deeper appreciation of how hard it was to “give up control” over classroom learning. By Iteration 2, she was already beginning to reflect that sharing responsibility with students was very difficult. Three times she noted a specific feeling of responsibility for content and worried that students wouldn't “get there,” to important insights about social justice issues. In her final reflection, she wrote, “It was hard to give control of the content over to the class but practice over time was helpful.” Finally, she understood that adopting a dialogic stance required a radical change in her pedagogical orientation. Facilitating student-centered discussion turned out to be a more radical change than she had anticipated, so much so that by Iteration 9 she felt that she was in some way “losing herself.” Data from this intervention revealed the many ways Cassandra grew to understand that learning how to facilitate dialogue can cause discomfort and disorientation and changed her role and self-perception in the classroom.

Relative to Pedagogical Goal 2, which was maximizing student participation, data organized as a simple tabulation of teacher versus student participation over time (Table 5.1) also indicated a promising decrease in the proportion of discrete exchanges that Cassandra initiated compared to that of students. As noted earlier, the proportion of her class comments started at 30% of the exchanges in Iteration 1 and declined consistently and steadily down to 12% in the two iterations of the last step. The one exception was in Iteration 4 (48%), when she recognized and fully acknowledged that she had “hijacked the conversation.” These numerical data aligned with Cassandra's final self-reflection in which she said, “the final discussion was significantly

better than some of our earlier discussions - the students seemed to show agency in the conversation, the content to discuss, and questions to ask.” Thus, as Cassandra decreased her own agency and participation over time, her students' participation increased.

While over time the intervention was correlated with a gradual decrease in the amount of instructor participation, and therefore a proportional increase in the amount of student participation, no such patterns were detectable related to an increase *in the number of individual students* who chose to participate. The greatest number of students (15 of 23 or 65%) participated in the third iteration, and the fewest number of students (5 of 21 or 24%) participated in the eighth iteration. Overall, the greatest number of participants spoke in the FPCD sessions that were allotted the most amount of time. For example, the longest iterations were the third (65% of students spoke over 60 minutes), the seventh (55% of students spoke in 27 minutes), and the ninth (64% of students spoke in 30 minutes). Those larger numbers of participants contrasted with far fewer students choosing to speak in Iteration 2 (26% of students in 10 minutes) and Iteration 8 (24% of students in 7 minutes).

These data would seem to point to the need to provide more time for some students to enter a dialogue. However, it was important to note that even when students were given an entire hour in Iteration 3, still, nearly one-third of them chose not to participate. Thus, while a discussion in which two-thirds of students choose to speak is a vast improvement to the kinds of interactions found in many classrooms laboring under the consolidation of responsibility (Karp & Yoels, 1976), there is still much room for supporting the silent students.

Unintended Outcomes of the Intervention

The third question to answer in this formative design experiment (see Reinking & Bradley, 2005) was: What unanticipated effects does the intervention produce? During

retrospective analysis of data collected in this formative experiment, three unexpected and significant outcomes arose. The first unanticipated outcome was that stresses associated with the classroom press seemed to result in what I started to think of as “co-construction drift.” Rather than focusing solely on the mechanics of the intervention in facilitating dialogue in the classroom, Cassandra and I ended up as collaborators on many facets of the course. This was at least partly because of the complexity of the intervention and the number of ways it intersected with the content and pedagogy of the course.

Intentionally or not, over the course of the semester, and especially in the retrospective analysis, I noticed that we were, in fact, co-constructing the class in the moment: discussing and reviewing the syllabus, talking about technology, discussing students, the pandemic, politics, the state of education, reviewing lesson plans, considering facilitation strategies, and discussing assessments. In my role as researcher, I personally struggled to find time to review with Cassandra the video footage of previous iterations; instead, I prioritized our time by moving forward to collaborate on planning the next iteration and how to integrate it into her curriculum choices. This was not how I imagined our planning sessions would occur. I imagined that Cassandra would simply have an established curriculum and we would strategize how to integrate the FPCD intervention into it. Instead, we became co-collaborators on many facets of our shared professional learning and development as educators. While this course co-construction fit what was needed to collaborate online during a pandemic while using a newly designed intervention, in the future I would provide much more planning and guidance before the iterations began. Once formal implementation did begin, I would focus more intentionally on reviewing video recordings with the practitioner to discuss particular facilitation strategies and the challenges observed in the classroom setting.

Second, I frequently found myself feeling the need to provide justifications for FPCD amid powerful institutional discourses/mandates (see Wells, 1999, 2006) and the classroom press. FPCD was designed to encourage all students to feel willing and able to participate so that, in turn, they could learn to feel prepared to think, speak, and collaborate with others in forms of shared inquiry, collaboration, or disciplinary discussion. However, such attempts to support conditions for student-centered discussions took significant class time in which often Cassandra and her students were learning to openly and honestly speak their minds.

From the perspective of disciplinary knowledge and expertise, inquiry into subject matter through dialogue did not seem a particularly efficient or effective way of moving through predetermined content and outcomes. Amid the many factors associated with the classroom press, I recognized that FPCD could come at a very high relative cost when instructors are pinched for personal, professional, and class time - and especially when a lecture or I-R-E sequence could deliver targeted outcomes in a more concise manner. Even a sympathetic practitioner, such as Cassandra, who wanted to improve classroom dialogue, felt the overarching pressure of course content and limited time. In such a situation, justifications for the cost of dialogue are inevitably needed and this can be difficult to provide within the logic of content and standards. As a result, I frequently found myself trying to provide explanations for why dialogue was significantly different, and in some ways better, for students than less time-consuming monologic practices.

A final unanticipated outcome occurred when students' arguably best session of FPCD occurred early and unexpectedly during Iteration 3. This was contrary to my own belief that students would improve their participation in a more linear fashion as Cassandra practiced leading discussions, became more comfortable using a variety of facilitation strategies, and

gradually released more responsibility to her students. Likewise, I believed that students would gradually develop the skills and comfort to change their roles in the classroom. However, during Iteration 3, two-thirds of the students had an hour-long discussion in which there were 87 discrete exchanges. Furthermore, this occurred during an iteration when a guest speaker unexpectedly failed to appear and Cassandra simply allowed students an unanticipated longer time for discussion, and that time was largely unstructured.

Upon reflection, this raised important questions about how much all of our planning and scaffolding helped students and improved their ability and willingness to participate. It raised the specter that perhaps all of the planning, scaffolding, and organization that was involved in planning and implementing FPCD might actually serve to maintain authority and control in the classroom. This also raised the difficult question about whether or not perhaps less should be done in preparation and lesson planning and students should just be given more unstructured time to talk. I wondered if perhaps students were perfectly capable of participating in dialogue, and their teachers just needed to get out of their way?

On the other hand, these possibilities should be taken with several caveats. First, the most successful dialogue session was in fact the longest iteration of FPCD in the semester. The next longest iterations (5, 7, and 9) were all approximately half as long. While it is not necessarily expected, it seems possible if not likely that longer times will result in participation from more speakers. Second, Iteration 3 was a continued discussion of a text that students had chosen for Iteration 2 (on a Black Lives Matter protest). Cassandra and I also decided during our planning meeting that she would bring a list of students' own questions asked during Iteration 2 as a starting point during Iteration 3. Furthermore, there were other iterations where despite being given freedom and opportunity, dialogue either never really got started (Iteration 8 on toxic

masculinity), or was halting and Cassandra repeatedly inserted herself (Iteration 4 on systemic racism). All of these unanticipated outcomes supported Lefstein's (2010) argument that classroom dialogue is a complex activity operating at the intersection of many factors and choices that have the potential to support its success or impede its development.

Limitations

This formative experiment was an intervention set in a semester-long online university course during a pandemic. Results are limited by the relatively brief duration of the research and the extraordinary circumstances during which it was conducted. Findings and points of discussion await further testing, elucidation, and confirmation. Reinking and Bradley (2008) suggest that larger-scale studies, with a team of researchers, in diverse settings that represent a variety of classroom conditions is a goal of formative design. Collecting data from multiple classrooms would provide more evidence for comparing and contrasting the implementation and effectiveness of FPCD in a broad range of contexts.

Although the scope of this research was narrow and conducted under unique circumstances, the findings may be useful to other researchers and college educators trying to improve classroom discussions. It may also be useful in the further development of theory around dialogic pedagogy and its practice. In order to deepen theory and practice associated with student-centered discussion, it will be necessary to observe and analyze data from many additional sources of data and attend to the possibility of additional enhancing and impeding factors in a variety of contexts.

A general limitation of formative experiments is assessing the impact of the presence of the researcher himself (Reinking & Bradley, 2008). Although I was introduced to students before formal implementation began, I was present online with the class for all of the iterations. Data

collected over the course of the study showed that some students suffered from anxieties associated with classroom participation and it was not clear what additional burdens my presence presented to them. Data also revealed that my presence affected Cassandra, occasionally making her feel disoriented under my observation, and causing her to worry “if she was doing it right.” At the same time, she admitted that my presence and coaching, and our conversations more generally were highly valued and an often missed element in her own professional learning.

Finally, there are limitations associated with the design and scope of this study. First, this was originally designed as mixed methods, but the complexity of the intervention, the pressures associated with the classroom press, and the exigencies of the times made the collection of so much quantitative data infeasible. Second, we did not have the time or opportunity to give preparation in student-centered debriefing the attention it deserved as an essential element of the intervention. However, the retrospective collection of findings and recommendations can provide avenues for remedying these limitations in future research.

Directions for Further Research

Future research opportunities associated with this intervention are plentiful. One particularly important area of focus could be the introduction and evaluation of additional community building activities at the beginning of the intervention to break down affective barriers between students and with their teacher. This might be particularly important in building bonds of trust and strengthening relationships that would make more cognitive dialogic goals attainable. A related area would include developing a better system of preparing practitioners for why and how to implement student-centered debriefing practices before an intervention began.

As this research, conducted under exceptional conditions, became more qualitative and exploratory than originally envisioned, quantitative methods should be used to provide another layer of evidence for the many observations, assertions, and tentative conclusions found here.

Statistical studies of talk frequencies between teachers and students would be very valuable. The pre- and post- assessment of student engagement, originally planned, but dropped due to time constraints, would also provide significant additional data about student attitudes and changes in classroom activity and motivation. Regression analyses of cognitive and affective factors that can be most closely correlated with improvements in student participation would also provide significant additional support for the investigations pursued here and the preliminary conclusions put forth in my discussion.

Since one of the most important findings in this study focused on the role of the practitioner in FPCD, studies with instructors who were less willing or able to change their classroom disposition and practice is another direction for future research. How difficult (or feasible) would it be to change a reluctant educator's disposition to embody and model a spirit of openness, thereby welcoming all students into classroom dialogue? What about studies in courses in STEM fields or those where professional standards and licensure are part of the curriculum and training?

Finally, replication studies of this research would be opportune in order to examine FPCD at a very different time and under very different conditions. Conducting FPCD research both online and in-person would help identify and sort out the specific challenges and opportunities pertinent to these settings. Research conducted after quarantines have ended would provide opportunities to reflect on the power of the pandemic on student dialogue. While political polarism and social conflict are still present in American schools, additional research

might also make more apparent the effects of a highly contentious presidential election on students' willingness to openly discuss tense social justice issues in the classroom.

Takeaways for Educators

One set of ideas I hope other educators can take from my study is the need to reflect on the meaning and purpose of “classroom dialogue” before taking up discussion in a classroom context. Perhaps we, as educators, take discussion for granted, or fail to critically reflect on our prejudices and ingrained habits, expecting too little of ourselves and too much of our students. Perhaps rather than effectively pursuing learning through dialogue, we are captivated by assimilated patterns of discourse that are not meeting our own deepest hopes or those of our students. Therefore, in pursuing classroom dialogue, it is important to be very clear about how we are using discussions and to what ends.

For example, IRE patterns can be useful for maintaining authority, order, and the direction of a lesson. These patterns of dialogue can serve to gain students' attention and check their understanding toward the acquisition of mandated course skills and knowledge. Yet, dialogue can also be useful for building the skills and values needed in a democracy. Student-citizens can be supported in learning to engage in deliberating and negotiating differences that are necessary in pluralistic societies. A third way that dialogue can be used is for the sake of bringing participants to a more critical awareness of the systems of oppression in which they are immersed. They can learn to collaborate toward transforming unjust and inequitable social conditions and participate in building a more just and free society.

These are all worthwhile goals, but during this study, it came more sharply into focus for me that before such forms of dialogue can truly occur, all of the participants must feel willing and able to participate. Therefore, findings from my study suggest that promoting dialogue is

first about modeling and nurturing feelings of respect – for oneself and others. When a classroom becomes a place where respect is shown and palpably felt, students might learn how to risk sharing their opinions and, in turn, become more likely to openly listen to others with care. In these conditions, horizons of understanding are truly shared and participants learn to be open to the essential role that others play in their own development.

However, building respect and openness requires precious time, patience, and careful modeling. When sufficient effort cannot be made, discussion is often used to preserve authority in the classroom. In this case, intellectual conformity is unconsciously maintained and participants can easily become passive receptacles. Perhaps even worse, when discussion slips into a battle or contest of ideas, listening often stops and students move to their corners to defend their perspectives or their identities.

I hope the data-informed assertions found here can help promote a better understanding of how three essential elements work together to support the development of classroom dialogue. First, texts (Essential Element 1) can be used as thinking devices. By positioning a text at the center of shared inquiry and discussion, educators can decenter their own authority and encourage student exploration and interpretation from their own horizons. Thus students have opportunities to collaborate without directly challenging the authority of their teacher.

Second, difficulties that Cassndra had in adopting strategies (Essential Element 2) associated with two components of the intervention (provisional ceding of authority and developing group cohesion) pointed to the need for a particular educational disposition that I identified as dialogical openness. This disposition underlies the focus on essential elements, one's pedagogical orientation in the classroom, and how texts, questions, and arguments are used to facilitate discussion. A new component realized as a result of this study was the facilitator's

role in openly providing a variety of unrecognized perspectives around a topic of inquiry to promote dialogic thinking and conversation. Thus, I would add an instructor's open disposition as another essential element to integrate into future versions of my FPCD intervention.

Third, while in this study, less time was allotted to student-centered debriefing (Essential Element 3), such debriefing experiences can provide students with opportunities to engage in the kind of shared metacognitive reflection that may allow them to identify and address affective social barriers that impede their full participation. By sharing feelings and needs that arise in the classroom, students in classrooms that value open dialogue may develop new skills and the confidence to build bridges of understanding and cooperation with others.

Finally, I hope that this study can serve as a field-guide, of sorts, for educators trying to facilitate dialogue in their classrooms. I sought to present a formative design case study that would reveal the detailed experiences of two educators trying to effectively improve classroom discussion. My hope is that other educators can learn from my efforts to reveal the kinds of obstacles we faced and how we attempted to overcome them in our planning and class instruction. For example, we confronted opportunities to consider how to select texts, ask open questions, scaffold lessons, push back on student opinions, and offer a variety of perspectives around a topic of inquiry. It is my hope that my analysis and interpretation of data provided here can offer other educators a window into the challenges and successes they might encounter as they seek to integrate and modify elements of the FPCD intervention into their own classroom practices.

My Personal Takeaways

When this study began, I had high hopes that working collaboratively with one sympathetic practitioner using the FPCD intervention in a small class of college students might be the best scenario for transforming discussion that fostered the full participation of most, if not

all, students. I believed that working collaboratively with Cassandra on the fine-grained details of facilitating discussion might yield significant data about what worked and what did not when attempting to support a practitioner in making a class more student-centered. In this way, I hoped to reach a better understanding of how to support other educators in improving classroom discussion.

I also hoped to contribute to the literature in two ways. First, I wanted to provide evidence of the value of dialogic pedagogy for helping students own their own learning and develop a sense of their own autonomy as thinkers and contributors in the classroom. I hoped and believed that providing evidence of more active and engaged students might persuade other educators to reflect on their own patterns of classroom discourse and adopt a more dialogically-oriented practice. Second, by providing data and theorizing about what was contributing to the well-documented difficulties in moving students to active classroom discussion, I hoped to help educators develop the tools and understanding to improve their own facilitation and build the kind of skills needed so badly in our democracy today.

Over time, on all of these fronts, I have felt a profound sense of success. Gleaning patterns from this study required time and multiple phases of qualitative analysis, but these patterns revealed significant findings toward these goals. Cassandra was the perfect and generous collaborator, immensely sympathetic but at the same time willing to offer her own perspectives and habits such that real and important obstacles appeared for our discussion, analysis, and reconciliation. Identifying and working through our differences, or “understanding the value of the other” represented the high points of this study for me. However, at moments during the implementation of the study, I was not as optimistic. Working online during a pandemic was daunting and anxiety-ridden. The profound sense of professional responsibility we both felt for

the curriculum and greater social justice awareness was real and powerful. The affective barriers, for both students and instructor, were real and harder to overcome than I imagined. The personal and professional demands on our time and attention were serious impediments to progress toward our goals.

Time and retrospection have given me the space to realize just how trying the circumstances were and how much progress and learning truly occurred. Reflecting back on Dreyfus' (2004) stages of adult skill acquisition, I recognized that Cassandra and I were precisely where we should have been, navigating our way through the novice stage of dialogic facilitation and discussion group development, and moving solidly into the stage of advanced beginners. By the end of the intervention, I thought Cassandra and her students had even reached periods of real competence. That is, Cassandra had been able to reflect on the complex range of her experiences and focus on essential facilitation strategies needed at the moment. As a result, Cassandra and her students were able to relax and more fully enjoy the class discussion. With more time and opportunity (or perhaps in less difficult circumstances), I am confident that even more progress toward competence and expertise would be made.

Overall, my collaboration with Cassandra resulted in significant progress amidst the most extraordinarily trying circumstances: a pandemic, feelings of loneliness and isolation, novel online learning challenges, and political tension and social unrest. Nevertheless, it was remarkable that those students who engaged in our discussions craved the interaction that was available to them, and they were able to express their thoughts and feelings, share their own horizons of understanding, and feel the care that was present between participants.

Closing

This formative study examined the implementation of an intervention (FPCD) designed to improve classroom discussion in an online college course on education and social justice. Aligned with Pedagogical Goal 1, results indicated the instructor made significant progress toward understanding strategies that improved her facilitation, while also understanding dynamics of her instruction and the classroom that impeded its development. With respect to Pedagogical Goal 2, results indicated that as the instructor gradually reduced the proportion of her own participation, students increased their own. Finally, this study helped both Cassandra and I appreciate that dialogic pedagogy cannot be effectively controlled and manipulated simply by the mechanics of an intervention abstracted from the context of practice; nor however, is it the result of simply asking students, in a laissez-faire manner, to participate. Instead, data derived from this study point to the development of dialogue in the classroom as occurring dynamically based on factors such as freedom and guidance, motivation and passivity, planning and surprise.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

The Fusion Of Horizons In Hermeneutic Dialogue

The concept of a “fusion of horizons” is central to recognizing the educator’s goal in facilitating dialogue – the expansion of participants’ understanding, individually and as a group. In shared inquiry and dialogue, students learn to reason from the only place from which they can start, their own horizon. However, in order to actually grow in understanding, one cannot simply *assimilate* new information to preexisting ideas, but rather must *accommodate* their own ideas to the subject matter and ideas of others (Piaget & Cook, 1952; Wadsworth, 2004).

According to Gadamer (2004), in a dialogue, participants share their horizons in an attempt to understand the subject matter at hand and one another. However, in a discussion, when someone is confronted with a new perspective, or is surprised that an understanding is not truly shared, she has at least two options. She can dismiss the claims of the other (person, text, work of art), or she can consider the possibility that this other has something worth her consideration; in this second case, she responds by putting her own horizon at risk (Dawson, 1996; Gadamer 1991; Graaff, 2008; Taylor, 2017). In an attempt to genuinely interpret the expression of another, she allows for the possibility that the other may know better, and therefore has some potential claim over herself.

For this to occur, however, Gadamer (1991) describes a process in which the participants listen to one another in “acts of self abandonment” (p. 39) to the subject at hand. While respecting the limited horizons of oneself and others, she seeks to listen carefully in order to gain an understanding of what is under discussion and up for interpretation. Dialogic interlocutors try to interpret others’ words about a given subject by connecting them to their own horizon, thereby

opening up the possibility to evaluate and revise their own understanding. In other words, those engaged in hermeneutic dialogic try to find shared aspects of their own horizons (language, culture, history, concepts) on the basis of which to proceed in a conversation; at the same time they recognize the limits of what is unique to their own prejudiced horizon (Gadamer, 1991, 2004; Graaff, 2008; Taylor, 2017) and transform it to *accommodate* what they have learned.

The moment of surprise, when one realizes the inadequacy of his own understanding in the words and meanings of the other, has been described in a variety of ways: “we are pulled up short” (Gadamer, 1991; 2004; Graaff, 2008; Kerdeman, 2003), or the other “bites back” (Dawson, 1996; Gadamer, 1991; 2004; Graaff, 2008) or “we allow ourselves to be interrogated by the other” (Taylor, 2002, p. 285). In such moments a conversant is surprised by something unanticipated, novel, contradictory, or outside the horizon of their current understanding. The horizon of another productively clashes with their own, bringing them to realize the limit of their prejudices and current understanding. Taylor believes that, “the road to understanding others passes through the patient identification and undoing of those facets of our implicit understanding which distort the reality of the other” (Taylor, 2017, p. 283). Beginning with the assumption that the other is right in some way, it is therefore necessary to *project* an interpretation of their meaning, perhaps working tangentially or from some part of their horizon and toward a more holistic understanding (Dawson, 1996; Gadamer, 2004; Taylor 2017). From a broader or perhaps deeper vantage point, a participant engaged in hermeneutic dialogue is able to look back at the edge of her own horizon and is able to see that she has moved beyond what now appears as her own limit and prejudice and into a new space of understanding. The focus on the subject matter and the interpretive horizon of the other brings about the possibility of at least some partial communion of meaning and a fusion of one’s own horizon with others. In the

process, the hermeneutic participant finds that she herself has changed. Taylor (2017) describes the consequence of hermeneutic understanding as “no understanding of the other without a changed understanding of self” (p. 287).

It is important to note that in a hermeneutic dialogue, it is insufficient to simply recognize the limits of one’s own horizon. Furthermore, it is not yet hermeneutic and interpretive to insist on one’s own rightness, attempt to simply assimilate other perspectives into one’s horizon, or claim an understanding of others from within one’s own prejudiced horizon (Gadamer, 1991, 2004). One would only be seeing another through one’s own lens, anticipating their perspective and hearing it in terms of one’s own prejudices (Taylor, 2017).

Taylor (2017) sees the broadening of our horizons and increased depth of our understanding as a long and patient commitment over the course of one’s life. Describing a dialogical encounter which precipitates a fusion of horizons with others, he writes:

Our understanding of them will now be improved, through this correction of a previous distortion. But it is unlikely to be perfect. The possible ways in which our background could enframe them distortively cannot be enumerated. We may still have a long way to go. But we will have made a step towards a true understanding, and further progress along this road will consist of such painfully achieved, particular steps. There is no leap to a disengaged standpoint which can spare us this long march. (p. 286)

Seen in the light of this life-long process of growth and self-transformation, this study seeks to establish the conditions in which educators and their students can begin to develop the kind of learning community in which habits of inquiry, openness, and understanding can be developed and practiced. For the facilitator of dialogue, this means modeling openness and sometimes

encouraging divergent points of view, especially attempting to provide opportunities for challenging unexamined but dominant perspectives *in the group itself* in order to promote thinking and expand horizons. Such moments offer opportunities for participants, to be pulled up short, or realize that the certainty of their opinions is not what it seems.

Appendix B

Six CORI Principles of FPCD

Listed below are the six principles of Concept Oriented Reading Instruction [CORI] (Guthrie et al., 2007) and a brief description of my plan for how they would be integrated into the FPCD intervention; these were discussed with the instructor before the intervention began and during the iterative reflection cycles of the research.

1. *Relevance.* The instructor and I would collaborate in selecting texts for discussion that are related to the students' experiences, concerns, and interests.
2. *Choice.* We would strive to provide students with choices regarding texts, partners, discussion rules, the order of activities, goal setting, and questions to pursue. We would also allow students the freedom to pursue and express their own ideas in order to build students' perception of their own autonomy.
3. *Collaboration.* We would use whole class discussions, small group work, and shared reflection on class discussions to build collaboration and positive relationships.
4. *Success.* We would provide students with texts, protocols, guidelines, and supports that were aligned with their developmental needs. Some texts would be read aloud so that home preparation would not be required for discussion. Students would also set their own goals individually and as a group for discussion development. The teacher and the students would provide one another with constant reflective feedback. Standards of performance would be made visible through discussion rules, rubrics, and surveys. It was my hope that participants would be able to see their own individual growth and the development of their group. This should help students build a perception of their own competence.

5. *Teacher relationships.* Recognizing that dialogue requires developing a climate of respect and care, our collaboration was designed to promote the facilitation of a positive climate that respected and cared for students, their participation, and their work.
6. *Mastery goals/thematic reading.* Mastery goals are associated with reading and understanding texts deeply (Pintrich, 2000; Meece et al., 2006). In a CORI framework, this was accomplished through lesson units that are integrated and cumulative so that students “gain higher order understandings, perceive their own progress, and relate the academic content to their knowledge and experience” (Guthrie et al., 2007, p. 241). In the current study, the FPCD intervention intended to offer the structural flexibility for the instructor and researcher to build cumulative social justice units based on content requirements and student interests. It was anticipated this flexibility would enable students to realize their own progress and promote deeper conceptual understanding over the course of the semester.

Appendix C

Touchstones Discussion Project: Student Self-Evaluation

Touchstones develops these crucial skills through the systematic use of individual work, small group work, and full class discussion—all grounded in texts that are carefully chosen to exercise certain skills and to highlight the discussion process itself. In addition, all participants in Touchstones groups engage in self- and group evaluation. The evaluative part of the process helps them to see their strengths and weaknesses more accurately and to set personal goals for continued improvement in the discussion environment...

Student Evaluation. Another component that helps students assume responsibility for their behavior and level of collaboration in Touchstones discussions is self-evaluation. The Touchstones Discussion Evaluation Form is included as part of a number of lessons in this volume and can also be found in Appendix A. This evaluation tool helps your students to identify and reflect on their own areas of strength, specific weakness, and the dynamics that foster or hinder collaborative discussion...

In general, all Touchstones evaluation tools should facilitate a number of gains:

- The realization that each member of the group is responsible for his or her behavior
- Open and respectful setting in which your students identify and discuss issues that hinder collaboration
- Goal-setting driven by your students for improved discussion dynamics in the future
- The recognition that everyone has something to offer each other
- Providing a point of reference by which you and your students may gauge progress in collaboration over the course of the academic year...

Suggestion

Before beginning this class, you may want to remind your students of their discussion evaluation and their recommendations to each other from the last class. If possible, remind them that the Touchstones discussion class is their opportunity to share ideas, consider the validity of their opinions, and to learn from each other through listening and discussion. You are there as the leader to help them get started with the discussion but their evaluation reflects their own ideas and recommendations for how they can improve their work as a group...

From Touchstones® Courage to Care: Building Community through Service, Teacher's Guide

Appendix D

Touchstones Discussion Evaluation Form

Discussion Evaluation Form

The items below are discussion dynamics that may or may not be present in your group. Decide to what extent you think that each dynamic was present in the discussion. Then decide whether you think the group needs to work to improve in this area.

	None	Some	Great deal	Need to Improve?
Dominance by some individuals	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Cooperation	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Silence	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Interrupting	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Respect	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Balanced participation	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Active listening	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of interest	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Asking one other questions	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Building on one other's contributions	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Many people talking at once	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Pick one of the dynamics that you think the group should work to improve, and explain why.

How would you rate this discussion on a scale of 1-10? _____

Appendix E

Teacher Consent Form

THE
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IRB
Consent Form for Research

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Julie Coiro, School of Education, University of Rhode Island
Office 401-874-4872 Email: jcoiro@uri.edu

Page 1 of 6

PHD RESEARCHER

Kevin Topper, PhD student, School of Education, University of Rhode Island
Office: 301-575-6397 Email: kevintopper@uri.edu

A formative experiment to promote dialogic learning in an online college class

STUDY TITLE

A formative experiment to promote dialogic learning in an online college class

KEY INFORMATION

Important information to know about this research study:

- The purpose of the study is to learn more about increasing college student participation in online synchronous class discussions. Research has shown that students who participate in class discussion are more engaged, use higher order thinking, and learn more. Dialogue is also important to promote the skills needed for sharing ideas, respectful listening to diverse perspectives, active collaboration, and student leadership. Your instructor and I would like to carefully assess what obstacles currently inhibit a student's full and active participation in the online classroom; this could include social, emotional, institutional, or academic factors. Likewise we are also seeking to understand how together with students we can overcome these factors so that everyone feels willing and able to share their ideas and participate in their own learning.
- In this course on *Education and Social Justice* you will be participating in weekly online student-centered discussions of the course materials. This will take the form of both small group work and whole class discussion. You will also reflect and analyze, both individually and as a group, your own engagement and participation in the class as well as the dynamics of whole class discussions. You will be active participants in building a community of inquiry and discussion on important social and political issues.
- We will need your consent if you would like to participate in this study. After we explain the study to you, you will have several opportunities to ask questions before making a decision and you will have the right to stop participating at any time. The researcher will email you consent forms. If you agree to participate, please scan and sign the form and return them directly to the researcher. These forms will not be seen by the instructor and she will not know who has agreed to participate in the study.
- If you choose to participate, the researcher will record you and your teacher six times during this class. The researcher will also collect your ongoing reflections and evaluations of the class discussions and how you think they can be improved.
- If you decide to take part in this study, you will be allowing URI researchers (Kevin Topper and Dr. Julie Coiro) to analyze this collected data.
- You may also be invited to take part in a small informal student advisory group. This group of three to five students is voluntary and will meet outside of class three times for approximately 20 minutes each time. The goal of this committee will be for you to share student perceptions of the online discussions and collaborate on how they might be improved. You would be invited regardless of whether or not you have chosen to participate in the study; the instructor will not know whether you have consented to participate or not.

MARCH 2019

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AND LEARNING
DEVELOPMENT

IRB NUMBER: IRB2021-031
IRB APPROVAL DATE: September 1, 2020
IRB EXPIRATION DATE:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

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Page 2 of 6

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- If you choose not to participate in this study you will still complete all of the same course work assigned by the teacher, however your image will not be collected and your data will not be analyzed by the researcher.
- There are no expected risks to you during this study.
- The study will help you understand the dynamics of classroom discussion in virtual contexts, how to better engage in discussions, and what factors impede or encourage student participation in discussions.
- You will be provided a copy of this consent form.
- Taking part in this research project is voluntary. You don't have to participate and you can stop it at any time.

INVITATION

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not to participate. If you have any questions, please ask.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being invited to participate in this study because you are an undergraduate student enrolled in EDC 103 Education and Social Justice, at the University of Rhode Island. You must be 18 years or older to participate.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

This study is being conducted in order to help instructors learn how to facilitate online discussions and help students to build the interest and skills needed to actively participate in their own learning.

What will be done during this research study?

Your instructor will conduct online class discussions each week of the semester. We will record six of these discussions and will then meet with the researcher to analyze the recordings and reflect on how to improve her facilitation and your participation. If you choose to participate in this study, the discussions and your reflections on the discussions will be used as data in our research. You may also be invited to take part in a small informal student advisory group. This group of three to five students is voluntary and will meet outside of class three times for approximately 20 minutes each time. The goal of this committee will be to share student perceptions of the online discussions and collaborate on how they might be improved. Your instructor will not know if you have consented to participate in the research study when she invites students into these advisory roles.

How will my video recording and discussion evaluation forms be used?

The teacher and the researcher will analyze the video of your online classroom and your discussion evaluations to identify strategies that engage or inhibit student voice and discussion. With your

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permission (see below), these clips and artifacts may be shared with educators to help them improve their teaching.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

The expected minimal risk is the typical stress participants may feel about being observed and video recorded as they share what they are learning with others.

What are the possible benefits to you?

You may benefit from this study because it seeks to promote student engagement in class discussions, as well as an understanding of discussion dynamics and obstacles to building dialogue in college classes. We hope that you will learn skills needed to engage in discussions, share ideas, listen respectfully to diverse perspectives, collaborate with others, and become a student leader. You may also benefit from this study because your instructor may learn how to be a more effective online discussion leader.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

The possible benefits of this study are that instructors will improve their teaching practice in the area of discussion facilitation and collaborative thinking. In addition, this study will contribute to emerging work that examines the potential for developing student-centered discussions during online learning. Furthermore, the instructor will be able to evaluate the course curriculum and revise it based on your participation. This information will help the instructor improve the curriculum for future participants in EDC 103.

What are the alternatives to being in this research study?

You will still participate in all classroom activities. If you choose not to participate in the research study, all data including your engagement assessments and your surveys will not be analyzed as part of our research.

What will it cost you to be in this research?

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

Will you be compensated for being in this research study?

You will not be compensated to participate in this study.

What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?

Your welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact one of the people listed at the beginning of this consent form.

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A formative experiment to promote dialogic learning in an online college class

How will information about you be protected?

Reasonable steps will be taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. *All data will be stored electronically through a secure server.* The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific or educational meetings but the data will be reported as group or summarized data and your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

What are your rights as a research subject?

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s) listed at the beginning of this form.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Vice President for Research and Economic Development:

- IRB: (401) 874-4328 / researchintegrity@etal.uri.edu.
- Vice President for Research and Economic Development: at (401) 874-4576

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with the University of Rhode Island. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Documentation of informed consent

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (1) you have read and understood this consent form, (2) you have had the consent form explained to you, (3) you have had your questions answered, (4) you are 18 years or older and (5) you have decided to be in the research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participant Name:

(Name of Participant: Please print)

MARCH 2019

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DIVISION OF RESEARCH
AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

IRB NUMBER: IRB2021-031
IRB APPROVAL DATE: September 1, 2020
IRB EXPIRATION DATE:

Appendix F

EDC 103 G: Social Justice in Education Grand Challenge Course

UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

**EDC 103G: Education and Social Justice Synchronous via Zoom: Monday/Wednesday 2:00 - 3:15 pm
Fall 2020**

Instructor:

Email:

Office Hours: Zoom Meeting By Appointment

Course Description:

We are living through an important moment in history. The Black Lives Matter movement has gained momentum and support after the horrific death of George Floyd. The Black community has fought hard for many years without support. The time for unity is now and the call for action is paramount. Systemic racism is pervasive in American culture and our education system marginalizes various groups. Racial, cultural, and socio-economic factors have impacted our education system in providing an equitable education for all students. Through reading, researching, and participating in discussions about groups who have been marginalized within our education system, students will be introduced to the factors associated with social justice in education. Focusing on race and racism, cultural diversity, socio-economic status, disabilities, and sexual orientation, this course will facilitate students' examination of their own stereotypes and prejudices, and analyze how they may perpetuate inequalities in education. Students will be introduced to the historical factors related to racism, heterosexism, and segregation in education and then learn to apply social justice in an education context in this relevant time.

The course is focused on personal experience, examination of published text and application through service learning, with artifacts created and refined by students. Effective research methods, writing, and collaboration methods are stressed in the context of creating these artifacts.

General Education:

This course will address the following general education outcomes:

B4. Develop information literacy to independently research complex issues

C3. Develop and exercise diversity and inclusion responsibilities

G. Grand Challenge – Exploration of multiple perspectives of areas of contemporary significance, including their ethical implications

Required Texts:

All class readings will be accessible on BrightSpace. Open Educational Resources will be used throughout the course.

Suggested Texts: I highly recommend continuing your own education through readings (or audio books) and Podcasts, etc. I will update this list as we go through the course and questions arise.

White Fragility

DiAngelo, R. (2015). *White fragility: Why it's so hard to talk to White people about racism. The Good Men Project*

How to be an Anti-Racist

Kendi, I. (2019). *How to be an antiracist.*

Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria? And other conversations about race

Tatum, B.(2017). *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race. Hachette Book Group.* New York, New York.

Readings for Diversity and Social Justice, 4th edition

Adams, M. Blumenfeld, D., Catalano, C., DeJong, K., Hackman, H., Hopkins, L., Love, B., Peters, M., Shlasko, D. , & Zuniga, X. (Eds.).(2018). *Readings for diversity and social justice (4th ed.)*. NewYork, NY: Routledge.

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course, scholars will be able to:

1. Describe and identify the social construction of groups who have been marginalized within the U.S.
2. Describe how the theories and ideologies of privilege, inequality, inequity, and oppression influence how U.S. schools and society in general respond to people from groups who have been marginalized.
3. Identify, plan, organize, and implement a service-learning project related to social justice in education.
4. Compare and contrast one's own identities with groups who have been marginalized in the U.S.
5. Analyze and appropriately communicate the importance of diversity, equity, and social justice in delivering high-quality education for all students.
6. Develop an effective research strategy.
7. Use print and online resources to locate and retrieve information.
8. Critically evaluate information sources by using criteria such as currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose.
9. Synthesize the main themes of their research by creating a multimedia representation.
10. Accurately cite information using APA format.

Written Assignments:

1. All assignments must follow the American Psychological Association (7th edition) editorial style:
2. Be sure to paraphrase all authors' thoughts and provide a reference citation for them. APA citation of quotes is permitted. All assignments should cite the article to which it refers with a link to any articles that are not on the syllabus (news articles from Allsides Media etc.)

Late Submission Policy:

1. All submissions should be turned in on or before the established due date unless other arrangements have been made in advance with the instructor.

Other Important Notes:

1. Students are expected to communicate with the instructor frequently, especially when they encounter difficulties completing any of the class assignments.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity.

Accommodations for special needs:

Your access in this course is important. Please send me your Disability Services for Students (DSS) accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to discuss and arrange your approved academic accommodations. If you have not yet established services through DSS, please contact them to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in the classroom. DSS in Kingston is located in room 302 of the Memorial Union, 401-874-2098, web.uri.edu/disability , dss@etal.uri.edu. DSS in Providence is in room 239 of the Shepard Building, 401-277-5221, web.uri.edu/disability/providence/, dss@etal.uri.edu

Respect for health, safety, and the rights of self and others:

The University of Rhode Island expects its students to treat other persons with respect and human dignity. All members of the community share the responsibility for protecting and maintaining community health, safety, and the rights of other persons. (Source: URI Student Handbook)

Course Expectations:

Students are expected to treat faculty and fellow classmates with dignity and respect. Students are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the published "Student Code of Conduct" which can be accessed in the University Student Handbook (<https://web.uri.edu/studentconduct/student-handbook/>). If you must enter the Zoom call late, please do not disrupt the class.

Participation is key! Please be prepared by completing assigned readings and reflections.

Course Requirements

Participation 20%

Attendance

Attending classes significantly impacts your learning. Discussions with peers and colleagues help us all grow and learn. These discussions cannot be replicated as all participants add a unique perspective. Your participation aids in all of our learning and your learning relies on your participation.

Class discussions

Synchronous Class Meetings: We will meet via Zoom on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00 - 3:15. Again, attendance is mandatory for these meetings unless you have made previous arrangements with the instructor.

FlipGrid Assignments

We will use FlipGrid for reflections and sharing thoughts. These are informal posts that will allow us to communicate through video during our on-line course. Please talk to the instructor if you have any concerns about these assignments.

Reflection Assignments 25%

You will be assigned media to reflect upon. Reflections should be one page, single spaced, typed submissions.

Educational Autobiography 20%

Students will write an educational autobiography using the reflection questions provided. Citing at least 3 sources from the course, students will write about their social identities within the educational system.

Service-Learning Project 30%

Students will be asked to work in small groups of 3-5 students to identify a community in which you would like to learn more about; interview an organizational leader in the community in which you are interested; engage in advocacy efforts to support the organizational needs; and or develop a multimedia

project presentation to communicate the needs of the community. Present to class at the end of the summer session.

Self Assessment 5%

Scholars will complete self assessments for the course. You will set your own learning goals, help to develop meaningful learning opportunities, and finally self-assess your participation and work at the end of the semester.

Grading

Participation	20%
Reflections	25%
Educational Autobiography	20%
Service Learning Project	30%
Self Assessment	5%

Weekly Schedule

Note: Readings are subject to change as we move through the course. Students' questions and interests will drive the changes.

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
<i>Week 1: Introduction</i>		

Wednesday, Sept. 9	Introductions & Course Overview Set up Group Participation Guidelines In-Class Reading	Post Introduction on FlipGrid
<i>Week 2: Identity</i>		

<p>Monday, Sept. 14 Zoom 2:00-3:15</p>	<p>Identity</p>	<p>What does social justice mean to you? Bring an image to share.</p> <p>Readings Adams et al. Tatum: "Who Am I?" pp. 7-15 Johnson: The Social construction of Difference: pp. 16 - 21</p> <p>Complete Intro Survey</p>
<p>Wednesday, Sept. 16 Zoom 2:00-3:15</p>	<p>Who Am I? Diving into our Identities</p>	<p>Tatum: "Can We Talk?" pp. 74- 77</p> <p>FlipGrid Response</p>
<p><i>Week 3: Forming Identity and Understanding Implicit Bias</i></p>		
<p>Monday, Sept. 21 Zoom 2:00-3:15</p>	<p>In class: Student Engagement</p> <p>What does Social Justice mean to you? What is Implicit bias?</p>	<p>What does social justice mean to you? Bring an image to share.</p> <p>Choose one of the following podcasts to listen to and reflect on:</p> <p>The Air We Breathe: science behind our implicit biases and how our behaviors are impacted</p> <p>Favoritism</p> <p>Morality: how do we decide who is important? How do we rank moral issues? Who do we help? Those we know</p>

		<p>or a larger community? Why? What is the dilemma?</p> <p>THEN: ALL DO THIS</p> <p>Take the Implicit Bias Test:</p> <p>Project Implicit:</p> <p>Take the Implicit Bias Test: You can choose to take the Featured Test which is a test of your biases when considering Race although you may choose which test you would like to take. You are encouraged to take more than one test.</p> <p>FlipGrid Reflection: What did you take away from your experience with the above texts?</p>
<p>Wednesday, Sept. 23 Zoom 2:00-3:15</p>		<p>Register to Vote</p>
Week 4: Systemic Racism		
<p>Monday, Sept. 28 Yom Kippur Zoom 2:00-3:15</p>	<p>Service Learning Project Introduction</p> <p>Talking to our Legislators</p>	<p>Read: Helping, Fixing, Serving Article</p> <p>Unpacking the Invisible Backpack Privilege for Sale</p> <p>Systemic Racism Article</p> <p>White Fragility</p>
<p>Wednesday, Sept. 30 Zoom 2:00-3:15</p>	<p>Mass Incarceration in America Intersectionality of Class and Race</p>	<p>Identify a community in which you will serve alongside.</p>
Week 5: School to Prison Pipeline		

Monday, Oct. 5 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Guest Speaker Allsides Media Lesson	Watch 13 th . See the attached reflection questions . We will be discussing these in class today. 13th Reflection: Submit to Brightspace Form
Wednesday, Oct. 7 Zoom 2:00-3:15	13th Discussion	
Week 6: Education and Class		
Monday, Oct. 12 Indigenous People's Day: No class meeting: Asynchronous Work	Watch the History of Hate	Submit Reflection about History of Hate
Wednesday, Oct. 14 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Precious Knowledge Documentary Class facilitated by Kevin Topper	White Fragility Excerpts
Week 7: Politics and Informed Voting		
Monday, Oct. 19 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Educational Autobiography Overview -	Readings: NY Times Article Two States. Eight Textbooks. Two American Stories Assignments Due: What are the policies of the candidates? How will those policies affect the community you have chosen to serve alongside?
Wednesday, Oct. 21	Wealth Distribution Activity	

Zoom 2:00-3:15		Readings TBD Draft a Letter to Your Legislators
Week 8: Class		
Monday, Oct. 26 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Social Change Wheel Interviewing and Service Learning Fill out Service Learning POLL Service Learning Documents	These articles can be used for your evidence in your Educational Autobiography Readings for Educational Autobiography
Wednesday, Oct. 28 Zoom 2:00-3:15	FishBowl Discussion	Educational Autobiography Due Sunday: November 1st Develop questions for your interview and set up the interview Readings TBD
Week 9:		
Monday, Nov. 2 Zoom 2:00-3:15 Election Day Tomorrow!		VOTE!!!! Readings TBD
Wednesday, Nov. 4 Zoom 2:00-3:15		
Week 10		
Monday, Nov. 9 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Multimedia Presentation Overview	Readings TBD
Wednesday, Nov. 11	No Class - Veteran's Day	
Week 11: Sexism		
Monday, Nov. 16		

Zoom 2:00-3:15		
Wednesday, Nov. 18 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Class Discussion	Readings TBD
Week 12: Group Work for Multimedia Presentations		

Monday, Nov. 23 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Group Time: Kelly Available to meet with Groups	Interview Reflections Due
Wednesday, Nov. 25	No Class/Asynchronous Class: Transgender Documentary and Reflection	
Week 13: Bringing it All Together		
Monday, Nov. 30 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Cassandra Speaks PodCast https://youtu.be/mziEun7MA7k	Rewatch/listen to this talk to prepare for discussion on Wednesday.
Wednesday, Dec. 2 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Class Discussion and Share Autobiographies	Multimedia Presentations Due Friday, Dec. 4th
Week 14: Conclusions		
Monday, Dec. 7 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Presentations	
Wednesday, Dec. 9 Zoom 2:00-3:15	Last Day of Class: Closing Activities/Reflections	

Appendix G

Tentative Schedule of FPCD Intervention

Schedule of FPCD (Facilitated Participant-Centered Discussion) Intervention

STEP 1	
Week 1	Pre-assessment/Engagement Questionnaire/Co-constructing Discussion Rules
Week 2	Discussion 1 & Touchstones Protocol
Week 3	Discussion 2 & Essential Elements Survey
	Focal Students interview & adjustments to intervention
STEP 2	
Week 4	Discussion 3 & Touchstones Protocol
Week 5	Discussion 4 & Touchstones Protocol
Week 6	Discussion 5 & Essential Elements Survey
	Focal students interviews & adjustments to intervention
STEP 3	
Week 7	Discussion 6 & Touchstones Protocol
Week 8	Discussion 7 & Touchstones Protocol
Week 9	Discussion 8 & Essential Elements Survey
	Adjustments to intervention
STEP 4	
Week 10	Discussion 9 & Touchstones Protocol
Week 11	Discussion 10 & Essential Elements Survey
Week 12	Focal students interview/Post-assessment/Post intervention Engagement Questionnaire

Appendix H

Instructor Pre-intervention Interview Questions

1. Do you think that classroom discussion is important? Explain.
2. What do you believe is the purpose of student discussion in class?
3. Do you encourage students *to talk to each other* in class?
4. What is the most significant obstacle that you face in encouraging classroom discussion?
5. What is *your* role in encouraging student discussion in class?
6. Do you have specific strategies to encourage and support student discussion?
7. Do you see a tension between the demands of your course content and encouraging students to speak in class?

Appendix I

Questionnaire to Measure Student Engagement

This instrument was developed by Reeve and Tseng (2011). For it, they drew on three previously validated student engagement constructs (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive) and integrated a fourth (agentic). Structural equation modeling demonstrated agentic engagement distinct and yet related to each of the other three. The questionnaire will measure each aspect of engagement using a 1–7 Likert scale: strongly agree; agree; more or less agree; agree and disagree equally; more or less disagree; disagree; strongly disagree.

*Items to assess **agentic** engagement*

1. During class, I ask questions
2. I tell the teacher what I like and what I don't like
3. I let my teacher know what I'm interested in
4. During class, I express my preferences and opinions
5. I offer suggestions about how to make the class better

*Items to assess **behavioral** engagement*

1. I listen carefully in class
2. I try very hard in school
3. The first time my teacher talks about a new topic, I listen very carefully
4. I work hard when we start something new in class
5. I pay attention in class

*Items to assess **emotional** engagement*

1. I enjoy learning new things in class
2. When we work on something in class, I feel interested
3. When I am in class, I feel curious about what we are learning
4. Class is fun

*Items to assess **cognitive** engagement*

1. When doing schoolwork, I try to relate what I'm learning to what I already know
2. When I study, I try to connect what I am learning with my own experiences
3. I try to make all the different ideas fit together and make sense when I study
4. I make up my own examples to help me understand the important concepts I study
5. Before I begin to study, I think about what I want to get done
6. When I'm working on my schoolwork, I stop once in a while and go over what I have been doing
7. As I study, I keep track of how much I understand, not just if I am getting the right answers
8. If what I am working on is difficult to understand, I change the way I learn the material

Appendix J

Intervention Components Quick Reflection - Instructor

Thinking about today's class discussion, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. I offered students a choice of relevant and interesting texts to choose from for today's discussion.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
2. I relaxed control of the class enough to allow students to share their thoughts and ideas with each other.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
3. We regularly reflect on the discussion rules to improve our ability to talk as a group.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
4. I asked open-ended questions to promote student thinking and discussion.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
5. I effectively used a combination of individual work and/or small group work to prepare students for a larger class discussion.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
6. I effectively used the discussion protocol to evaluate and potentially improve class dialogue.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
7. Students were seated to promote equity and respect for all participants.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
8. I effectively facilitated the discussion so that all students seemed willing and able to participate.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree

COMMENTS/REFLECTIONS (optional):

Did anything prevent you from relaxing your authority?

Did anything make it difficult for you to lead using questions?

Did you have any concerns facilitating the student-centered reflection?

Today, what seemed to be the class's greatest obstacle to helping all students feel willing and able to contribute?

Other comments?

Appendix K

Intervention Components Quick Reflection - Student

Thinking about today's class discussion, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1. The instructor offered the class a choice of relevant and interesting texts to choose from for today's discussion.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
2. The instructor relaxed control of the class enough to allow students to share their thoughts and ideas with each other.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
3. We regularly reflect on the discussion rules to improve our ability to talk as a group.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
4. The instructor asked open-ended questions to promote student thinking and discussion.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
5. The instructor effectively used a combination of individual work and/or small group work to prepare us for a larger class discussion.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
6. The class effectively used the discussion protocol to evaluate and potentially improve class dialogue.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
7. Students were seated to promote equity and respect for all participants.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree
8. The discussion was effectively facilitated so that all students seemed willing and able to participate.
1 - Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - Disagree 4 - Strongly Disagree

COMMENTS/REFLECTIONS (optional):

Did anything prevent you from sharing your true thoughts in the discussion today?

What seems to be your class's current greatest obstacle to helping all students feel willing and able to contribute?

After today's discussion, what one thing would help all students feel willing and able to contribute?

Other comments?

Appendix L

Guiding Questions for Debriefings After Intervention Iterations

1. Number of students participating in the class discussion today.
2. Was there balanced participation in the discussion today? Or, for instance, were a few students dominant?
3. Students speaking to each other or responding to teacher?
4. Positive discussion dynamics present.
5. Negative discussion dynamics present.
6. Ways in which group discussion seems to have developed.
7. Areas of opportunity for development of discussion. Possible adjustments to intervention?

Appendix M

Focal Students Semi-Structured Questions

1. Thinking broadly, what is the purpose of classroom discussion?
2. What is your role in classroom discussion?
3. Does anything prevent you from fully participating in class?
4. What would help you feel more comfortable sharing your ideas in a discussion?
5. What prevents more full and balanced participation between all students?
6. What can the instructor do to open up and improve participation in discussion?

Appendix N

Coding Examples

Coding Example 1

C. Professionalization of Knowledge and Pedagogy

- a. -isms
- b. Standards, course outcomes (project)
- c. Textbooks - the book assigned to the course was XXX. It is compilation of edited scholarly articles divided into chapters based on what Cassandra called, "the -isms". She believed that this text, written largely by contemporary scholars, was more appropriate for graduate students and not for undergraduates taking a 100 level course that met a variety of university general education requirements. She simply said that her students had expressed that they "didn't get it" and tried to find more engaging and appropriate content for them.
 - i. Technical vocabulary
- d. Culture of expertise and professional knowledge.
- e. Identity workshop;
On the side of the students.
- f. **Students are uncomfortable with uncertainty.**
 - i. **Students want to be told but not think, Rubrics, grade focus**
- g. **Cassandra concerned about letting go of content in order to make room for student dialogue (8:10:51)**

"And I say it all the time when I'm teaching, "what a good question - I have no idea what the answer is but we go down the road trying to answer it...to the point of students saying I'm not even asking you anymore, because you won't tell me. But I actually don't know, like these are all good questions...and I'm okay with not knowing - it's what makes it fun." Related to this is Cassandra's (1:54:12) (and my comments following)

Coding Example 2

I. Technology

At the intersection of technology and pandemic - we would spend our slide deck together.

For all the benefits of technology it did add another layer of complicated amounts of planning and class time. The pandemic also made the full brought new technological demands for relative novices in this kind of consumed additional planning and instruction time. Cassandra sought reproduce elements of regular classroom pedagogy and curriculum. It was consumed with the following activities:

Frozen screens, power drained, moving to better location, loading on Nearpod, Flipgrid spinning. Interacting with IT at the University. Audio breaking up.

Sending emails & those about technology

Especially at the beginning of the semester!

Designing and practicing a discussion map

Fussing over getting breakout rooms made. 9/21

Getting students back into breakout rooms they fell out of

Finding moved files before interventions 9/23

Editing slideshows

Keeping students from slipping out of gallery view or camera off

Generating online surveys

Practice together Nearpod and its online polling how to share reports

Taking our time together to put together polls, slides, etc.

Take class time to discuss online and zoom protocols

Coding Example 3

Affective and Positional Dislocation (not just dis-oriented). It is not just a mindset. She is trying to actually change how she is situated in the classroom - from leading to facilitating - from central to integrated

1. Disconcerting to facilitate in the flow of conversation; **facilitating the flow of conversation was disconcerting**
 - a. Ahhhhhh
2. Difficulty building trust needed to welcome all perspectives in the online classroom (white males not talking); **it felt more difficult to build trust and welcome all perspectives facilitating dialogue in an online setting**
3. Recognition of a change in role and responsibility; **it was difficult letting go of the way she understood her own role and responsibilities as classroom leader**
 - a. Admits it is difficult to let go of content
4. ***She perceived a tension between content and process*** (student comment about depth)
5. ***She felt the need to personally "push back" on student opinions that betrayed the prejudice or limitations of their horizons. (rather than facilitating student dialogue on differences)*** Correcting a students' perspective on pledge (Grandmother) this led sequentially to #4 the non -iterative reflection on
6. Taking leadership/responsibility for success; **(iteration 1)**
students did not always accept agency and leadership even when requested
(in the narrative, here she takes responsibility (also time related) for evaluation rubrics (back to explaining dialogue like pre-iterations) and next she worries over students not speaking up and taking leadership (b/c it needs to be scaffolded and requires patience)

Difficulty transferring leadership and giving students agency; **(evaluation rubric - iteration 2)**
7. ***Even attempts to transfer agency and leadership to students was not always successful as ingrained patterns of I-R-E were difficult to overcome. This led to the potential for what I began to see as "dialogic deficit thinking.***
Excursus 3 - her reflection on her own class not speaking up - habitual IRE - dialogic deficit thinking;

e structure of the intervention could not mitigate the power of Kelly's affective responses or ingrained classroom disposition during facilitation.

order to mediate some of this discomfort and dislocation, in STEP 2 we gave her authority over curriculum and more freedom in lesson structure.

Appendix O

New Discussion Expectations - Developed for Iteration 6

1. Today the class and discussion are yours.
2. The instructor will ask an opening question, but you are welcome to raise your own questions or other concerns that have been addressed in this class.
3. This isn't a test, and you aren't being evaluated. We would like you to try to discuss this topic as best you can.
4. PLEASE - it is okay to take a risk, or make a mistake, or say something you fear might be unpopular. This is how we grow separately and together!
5. We do ask you to be engaged and participate. If the discussion lags, you are going to have to rescue it and make this your classes' discussion.

Appendix P

Sexism and Toxic Men Worksheets

Toxic Masculinity: Individual work

Complete the following: please rank the following from 1 (most) -12 (least) toxic masculine behaviors. These statements are written from the male perspective.

- _____ Refusing to admit someone hurt your feelings
- _____ Talking to male friends about a sexual exploit
- _____ Teasing a classmate about being gay
- _____ Arm wrestling a classmate to establish your dominance
- _____ Insisting you have the right to know where a girlfriend is at all times
- _____ Boasting to your friends that you bench press more than they do.
- _____ Daring a friend to tease a woman about her looks
- _____ Driving 40 mph over the speed limit in a street race
- _____ Telling your girlfriend that you don't cook
- _____ Making jokes about feminists with your friends
- _____ Making new fraternity pledges drink until they vomit
- _____ Making lewd remarks at a woman as she walks past you

- How did you go about deciding what was more or less toxic?
- Can you list one or two experiences that you've had that you think were toxic?

Sexism: Individual Work

Please rank the following from 1 (most) -12 (least) sexist behaviors. These statements are written from the point of view of a woman.

- _____ Receiving unsolicited comments about your body
- _____ Your boss jokes to you, ‘Make sure you wear your low-cut top to meet with that client!’
- _____ In the office, being mistaken for a secretary, and asked to make the coffee
- _____ Being complimented for being able to throw a ball well
- _____ Being called darling, sweetie, or babe
- _____ Being called assertive or bitchy when you voice your opinion
- _____ Being asked about marriage and children
- _____ Being told by a work colleague, ‘We won’t rotate you to that part of the site ... there is too much heavy lifting for a woman.’
- _____ Being told that having a child will damage your career.
- _____ Expecting that you should always smile
- _____ Being paid 20% less for the same job as a man
- _____ Being told that, “You are a good **little** mountain biker.”

- How did you decide what was more less sexist?
- Can you list one or two experiences that you’ve had that were sexist?

Small Group Work: Share your responses on Toxic Masculinity and Sexism. Compare your individual responses on what is most and least toxic and sexist. Then discuss as a group how you should decide on this.

How similar were your responses? Were there differences between the way men vs. women responded? List your group’s top 3 most toxically masculine and most sexist choices. THEN, List the 3 least toxic and sexist choices.

Final Sharing: Would anyone like to share experiences?

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