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Advancing the Next Generation of Higher Education Scholars: An Examination of One Doctoral Classroom

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Course content in graduate school is especially important in terms of helping students make progress toward a doctorate. However, content is merely one aspect of developing successful students. This article highlights the value of creating an affirming learning environment by discussing one graduate class on Qualitative Policy Research. The majority of student participants were graduate students of color. The authors discuss the pedagogical approaches guiding this course and outline ways in which the instructor served to create safe spaces that invited as well as validated diverse perspectives and made the research process transparent. These efforts resulted in the production of high quality research used as pilot studies for successful dissertation defenses, accepted presentations at scholarly conferences, and published articles in peer-reviewed journals. Throughout this article, suggestions for replicating a similar course environment are discussed.

> The university has always taught values, in one way or another . . . Intentional or not, teaching values occurs in the classroom every day – In the material I ask students to read, in the dialogue that ensues . . . [v]alues are implicit in everything I say, write, and do. And so it should be. We teach values by having them . . . [she argues that the university must] take seriously and rigorously its role as guardian of wider civic freedoms, as interrogator of more and more complex ethical problems, as servant and preserver of deeper democratic practices. (Morrison, 2001, p. 274)

> A democratic society is one where everybody believes that they can contribute to discourse; the same applies in a classroom setting. (Elenes, 2001, p. 700)

Toni Morrison's (2001) and C. Alejandra Elenes's (2001) quotes provide a backdrop for the values embodied in the class, Qualitative Case Study Approaches for Educational Policy Research (hereafter referred to as Qualitative Policy Research). This course, taught in the spring of 2009, was an advanced qualitative research course taught at a Research 1 university in the Southwestern United States. The course is discussed here from the perspective of the professor and the students (all of whom were students of color). All authors contributed their individual voices to the creation of this paper and together all created the supportive learning community in this classroom. Articulating the intricacies of this supportive environment is the focus of this paper. In particular, we provide a review of relevant literature on mentoring doctoral students of color. We then discuss the pedagogical approaches guiding this course and outline ways in which the instructor served to create safe spaces that invited as well as validated diverse perspectives and made the research process transparent. These efforts resulted in the production of high quality research used as pilot studies for successful dissertation defenses, accepted presentations at scholarly conferences, and published articles in peer-reviewed journals.

Review of the Literature

Literature on doctoral students of color suggests that they are less likely to experience scholarly socialization and mentorship than majority students (González, Marin, Figueroa, Moreno, & Navia, 2002; Turner & Thompson, 1993). The lack of mentorship received by these students is disconcerting as research indicates that doctoral students who receive mentorship are more likely to be prepared for their chosen discipline (Lyons & Scroggins, 1990). To further complicate the matter, numerous definitions of mentoring exist within the literature and there is a lack of clarity regarding necessary components for effectively mentoring doctoral students of color (Brown, Davis & McClendon, 1999; Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001; Hodge, 1997). In addition, most literature on doctoral student mentorship focuses on a didactic apprenticeship role between professors and their students in a research setting (Reybold, 2003).

Mentoring programs exist to provide structured interactions between graduate students and faculty/administrators that are geared toward increasing the probability of degree completion and career success (Brown et al., 1999). Socialization and acculturation

have also been identified as critical for students of color to succeed in completing graduate school or earning a Ph.D. (Busch, 1985; Dorsey & Jackson, 1995; Gardner, 2008; Shultz, Colton, & Colton, 2001; Turner & Thompson, 1993). Van Stone, Nelson, & Niemann (1994) reported that graduate students of color typically attribute their success to three aspects: personal ambition, supportive family and supportive faculty.

Deeply embedded within the literature is the notion of differences between students' cultures and the culture of academia. Mentors who are unfamiliar with the challenges facing students of color in developing competence within the culture of academia may not know how to respond to help such students (Alvarez, Blume, Cervantes, & Thomas, 2009). Furthermore, the mentoring needs of students of color, related to professional education, socialization, and development are unique and should have more direct guidance from faculty (Alvarez, et al., 2009). However, Alvarez et al. (2009) also state that "issues raised in [their] article should serve as broad guidelines, and their applicability to specific students should be assessed by the mentor" (p. 182). Alvarez et al. (2009) list several ways in which the cultural orientation of students of color may differ from others attending graduate school: first, "students of color may have attended schools within their cultural communities, entering graduate school . . . may be their first exposure to being in the minority in a school environment" (p. 183); second, "cultural values of deference to and respect for authority can contribute to being silent when in class or in lab meetings and may prevent students from actively seeking out help and mentoring from faculty" (p. 183); and third, "values regarding family may also conflict with the expectations of higher education" (p. 183). Given these and other concerns, Davidson and Foster-Johnson (2001) suggest an effective faculty mentor is one who cultivates an understanding of the experiences of students from various culturally diverse backgrounds. They conclude that

> [b]ecause a cultural pluralist perspective is not embraced universally, either in the workplace or in educational institutions, students must be guided in nurturing a passion for creating a pluralistic environment while simultaneously learning strategies for dealing with what may be an imperfect and hostile workplace reality. (Davidson & Foster-Johnson, 2001, p. 554)

While the body of research related to doctoral students of color continues to evolve, we seek to illuminate the benefits of scholarly socialization and mentorship as experienced in a graduate course by emphasizing the professor-to-student interactions in advancing doctoral research agendas and dissertations. The process used in this course can be used to advance the scholarly development of doctoral students at other institutions within academia. With respect to mentorship and socialization, it is important that research continue to focus on the needs of doctoral students of color. A key way to meet these needs is by providing an environment that is conducive to learning and in which students feel comfortable and confident to communicate.

Pedagogical Approach Underpinning Course

The professor's pedagogical approach or practice of teaching involving students in decisions/actions with regard to learning served as the ideological guidepost for classroom interactions and discourse. This approach suggests that each class is an emerging learning community, even if the content and the instructor are the same. Who is in the class creates a unique synergy, a life or group environment of its own. In addition, each class is comprised of the current knowledge possessed by all participants and it is upon this collective knowledge that we build new knowledge and understanding. While intellectual growth may happen on an individual basis, it is also developed through open discussions of our collective learning processes as we engage the course material and apply that material toward the completion of a final research project and paper. Small group and large group discussion needs to occur at each and every class.

Part of the introduction to the class includes an acknowledgement of mistakes as an integral part of the learning process. Thus, when students' attempt to apply the research approaches to be learned in class, mistakes will be made. Based upon the professor's experiential knowledge, doctoral students want to demonstrate their academic competence by performing at an exemplary level. As such, students work arduously to illustrate their ability to correctly complete course projects. . This behavior is likely fostered by faculty. For example, success is presented as a final product, a completed paper or a dissertation. However, showing final products does not allow others (e.g., faculty, colleagues) to understand the processes that go into the production of a final product. Learning is an uncomfortable process, full of experimentation and times when current and aspiring researchers stumble in order to learn. In the Qualitative Policy Research course, mistakes are directly acknowledged as part of the learning process and are to be shared so that all classroom participants (e.g., students, faculty) can learn from one another.

Students are also encouraged to critique the very material they are learning to apply by reading and reflecting on scholars who question the assumptions inherent in each methodological approach they are

learning to use (e.g., Smith, 1999). They are also encouraged to share their individual critiques based on the experiences they are having in the field as they implement qualitative research approaches. They have access, either in person, through email or class conferences calls, to some of the scholars whose work they are reading in order to clarify their understanding of the material (e.g., Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Cuádraz, 2006; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Merriam, 1998).

Also directly acknowledged and talked about is that, at times, it is natural for anyone to feel anxious and question one's ability to successfully complete all the course requirements. Students are assured that, while this will likely occur, all who have taken this class before have felt similarly at one point in their process but all have completed the course. The goal is to strategize together, as a team, and help each other find solutions to potential individual barriers. Furthermore, many students go on to present their papers at professional conferences and submit their papers for publication. There is no reason why students cannot present and publish prior to their graduation, so these activities are encouraged. This is what has occurred in the case of all the authors listed on this paper. What makes this endeavor unique is its collective nature.

Critical to the effectiveness of the Qualitative Policy Research course was a model of mentoring that encompassed the following: (1) a faculty member who encouraged the individual understanding gained from the various cultural experiences shared among the classroom; (2) continued opportunities to engage with faculty; (3) mentor-protégé interactions within a classroom setting; (4) a professional socialization of students that included networking; (5) a holistic approach to learning that de-emphasized competition and encouraged collective learning among peers; (6) diversity within disciplines and students' ethnic background; (7) professional research and writing guidance; and (8) discussions of personal experiences as they related to academia. In the following sections these eight points are woven into a discourse on safe space, diversity, research, strategies for incorporating intersectionality in the classroom; and communicating research findings. First, we will discuss how this course created a "safe space" for classroom interactions and discussions.

Safe Space

Components of a successful support system for graduate students of color generally consist of, but are not limited to: ongoing monitoring of student work and progress, building personal support networks, building relationships with faculty and other professionals, consistent feedback, and a non-competitive environment. These components were evident in the Qualitative Policy Research course. This combination of elements created the conditions for a safe classroom space that give way for all students to feel they were legitimate stakeholders in the learning environment. A non-competitive environment is important because cooperative conditions in the classroom often alleviate tensions and produce an atmosphere comfortable to most.

When students feel comfortable, they experience lower levels of anxiety and often perform better. As a result, the 'safe space' created in this course served to lower students' anxiety and, we believe, led to better performance. This approach created a positive faculty-student experience which led to favorable views of the classroom environment (e.g., Endo & Harpel, 1982; Haines & McKeachie, 1967; Tinto, 1987), which positively affected student gains and overall classroom satisfaction. Tinto (1987) stated that student-faculty interactions, which include both formal classroom experiences and informal interactions outside of class, are crucial to the academic continuation and intellectual development of students. Likewise, when discussions were structured cooperatively, students felt less tense, displayed more task-oriented behavior, worked more effectively, and enjoyed the classroom discourse (e.g., Haines & McKeachie, 1967).

Existing research suggests that student-faculty interactions are important to a student's college experience (e.g., Woodside, Wong, & Wiest, 1999). In general, the more contact between students and faculty both inside and outside the classroom, the greater the student development and satisfaction (Astin, 1993). It is without question that as contact between faculty and students increases, learning outcomes and student satisfaction increase. Informed by this research, the professor worked to ensure that continual in-and-out of class interactions took place. In particular, the focus of classroom interactions between faculty and students served to facilitate the development of a safe space by: (1) providing continual encouragement to students; (2) giving constructive criticism on course progress; and (3) providing timely and in-depth feedback on assignments.

When working with students, the course faculty member made sure to explain the need for improving qualitative research related skills and competencies (Kuh & Hu, 2001). In doing so, the faculty member addressed her own personal development as a scholar. This included noting mis-steps and successes on her pathway to becoming a senior scholar. In addition, the faculty member attempted to model behavior that demonstrated openness in the classroom. The purpose of this behavior was to establish an existential posture, which served to create an affirming environment. In

particular, faculty sought to model a worldview that was inclusive and respectful of difference while avoiding ethnocentric power dynamics. As noted by Alvarez et al. (2009), this approach communicates acceptance of difference.

The faculty member believed that it was important to permit students flexibility in their thinking around course topics and that time spent sharing ideas and discussing topics was relevant to qualitative research. While such discussions are likely to elucidate new ideas and improve existing ones, there can also be challenges in dealing with divergent opinions, sensitive topics, and lack of knowledge with regard to individual and group differences. Thus, the professor established a classroom space where multiple ideas, identities, and concerns could be heard and valued. However, embracing a multitude of students and ideas does not always come about on its own; instead, it is important to invite and embrace these differences.

Diversity

The success of the Qualitative Policy Research course in supporting students' progress towards their dissertations was advanced by the diversity in the classroom (e.g., ethnicity, discipline, research abilities). With respect to ethnic backgrounds, the course faculty and students were diverse. For example, the instructor is a woman of color professor, of Filipina and Latina descent. For more than twenty years, her research has focused on using qualitative methodologies to critically examine, deconstruct, and address the condition of diverse individuals, particularly women and people of color, in academe. As a result, she was affirming of students' research interests on issues, which focused largely on diversity in education. Her engagement, support, and excitement for these lines of research imbued a sense of belonging in the academy for course participants. While the students in this course were fortunate to have a professor with years of professional and lived experience related to diversity, it is not a requirement that a professor or student be a person of color in order to value diversity. The authors believe that anyone seeking to support and engage others can be purposeful in seeking out and valuing diversity. This diversity can come in a variety of ways and create a cohesive community despite differences.

Course participants also benefited from the racial/ethnic diversity of students. While students were representative of various groups such as African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans, the interaction among students was cohesive. Students attributed this to many shared socio-cultural experiences, such as: (a) being first-generation college-going students; (b) representing traditionally underserved and marginalized students groups; and (c) possessing a desire to research and improve the condition of their racial/ethnic communities. Further, students' experiences and research focused on diversity. This common tie elevated the classroom discourse to critically-centered dialogues on multicultural and multiethnic issues. As a result, students challenged each other in ensuring that Eurocentric perspectives/values commonly associated with diversity research (e.g., deficit model, exceptionalization of success, over-simplification of in-group similarities, assimilatory practices) were avoided. Altogether, student diversity created an environment which rejected western values of individualism in exchange for an environment of enthusiasm, comfort, and collectivity.

In addition to ethnic diversity, students were representative of various academic disciplines. These diverse backgrounds allowed students to bring multiple perspectives in the conceptualizing, designing, implementing, and critiquing of student research projects. While course participants were representative of various doctoral-level disciplines, this accounted for only a surface-level picture of the academic diversity of students. When one considers students' prior academic degrees (associate, bachelor, master), disciplinary backgrounds illustrate further expertise in a wide range of fields (e.g., biology, black studies, sociology, Chicano studies, history, and organizational management). These theoretical lenses aided students in crafting high-level academic research. The plethora of lenses, expertise, and world views enhanced students' personal and academic contributions.

Research

Well-designed courses, safe spaces, and diverse environments can create an optimum environment for the production of exemplary original research. We detail the ways in which students were shepherded through the research process.

Fear, anxiety, and ambiguity often confront students as they engage in research (Lee & Norton, 2003). The obscure notion or mystification of conducting a study is an important issue to address in training graduate students to become researchers (Cardozo, 2006). Taken as a whole, this Qualitative Policy Research course sought to demystify all the steps in the research process, including conceptualizing a study, designing research instruments, collecting data, coding and analyzing data, explicating findings, and writing a dissertation. This was accomplished through a meta-level discourse which acknowledged mistakes and missteps encountered in the research process. To further facilitate student success, the research process itself was demystified through the use of four steps: (1) breaking down the qualitative research process into doable steps (scaffolding); (2) employing real-life examples of the

final product (the dissertation in this case); (3) discussing the research process, including facilitators and setbacks. This included allowing students to access the author's of course readings through direct contact; and (4) providing a platform for individual graduate students to voice their challenges. This resulted in group problem-solving (this process is referred to by students as collegial sounding boards).

Demystification was also aided by a scaffolding approach in which each respective element of the research process was addressed separately by the collective group of students. These respective elements, akin to building blocks, were then used to construct a larger and more comprehensive framework for understanding the research process. While this approach could have encouraged linear thinking among students on the processes involved in conducting qualitative research, the professor pointed out that, while the steps undertaken may be characterized within static categories, qualitative research processes are not static; rather they are non-linear, multi-dimensional, and dynamic. Also emphasized was the need for researchers to adapt to emerging understandings of the data. Thus, each of the steps listed above may then occur during each stage of the research process, beginning with the conceptualization stage.

Professors can provide examples of their own research process, including dissertation completion, and the barriers as well as facilitators encountered along the way. As noted by Brem (1994), "using examples of one's own research brings the process down to earth for the student, makes it seem more relevant to the student, and gives it an applied context" (p. 243). A professor sharing rejected research questions on the way to her/his dissertation research question when students are conceptualizing their study can provide timely encouragement for students to persist. When accomplished faculty members reveal their challenges, they promote a safe environment in which students can reveal and overcome their own self-doubts. Likewise, in the Qualitative Policy Research course, the professor discussed her dissertation research noting how institutional policy, culture, and politics affected the development of her dissertation and how research questions and study conceptualization shifted from the original design.

Accessibility to the methodologists who authored required course readings is another step that can aid in the demystification of the research process. In this class, text authors were invited to present to students. When possible, authors presented in person; however, when proximity was a barrier to access, presentations were given via virtual technologies (e.g., SKYPE, Adobe Connect). As such, experienced experts were accessible and available to interact with students. These experts provided insights on the implementation of their research approaches (e.g., study conceptualization, design, data collection, analysis, and writing). Author interaction added to an environment which communicated the idea that that "we are all in this together." In this environment, course sessions served to provide active and collegial sounding boards where all students learned and participated. In addition to discussions with text authors, a course panel was conducted by former students. This panel helped current students to better understand the research process and to be patient with the development of their respective projects.

As the students in the Qualitative Policy Research course had varying levels of comfort in speaking in large group settings, class schedules included time for small group discussion encouraging students to: (a) share the progress of their research projects; (b) pilot interview protocols with other group members serving as mock participants; (c) review successive drafts of human subjects applications and research write-ups; and (d) serve as a support group to recognize each other's successes and encourage peers when pitfalls occur. Key to the success of these peer small groups was the participation of students as members of the scholarly collective who work collaboratively throughout the steps of the research process. The intimacies with which colleagues begin to understand each other's research lead to deeper insights and richer discourse. Such dialogue contributed to student confidence and a deeper understanding of their voices as researchers. Thoughts, concerns, and scholarly resources (e.g., journal articles, books) emerged from the small group discussions and were brought to the larger group so all students could learn from the small group discussion. This further allowed students to engage in collective problem-solving process, as needed.

Strategies for Incorporating the Complexity of Intersectionality in Classroom Workgroups

One of the important factors in developing a diverse and effective work group involves respecting and paying attention to the ways in which multiple factors impact one's identity and interactions in a classroom work group. Scholars have discussed the ways in which individuals often experience gender, class, and racial statuses simultaneously (Davis, 1981; King, 1988; Zavella, 1993). While there is no single definition for *intersectionality*, the term has been used to describe the ways in which, for example, race and gender interact to shape the experiences of women of color (Crenshaw, 1989). However, more current research has expanded original depictions of intersectionality to include other factors such as social class, English language proficiency, citizenship, and a

more broad understanding of social, familial, economic, and political intersections (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991; McCall, 2005).

In the Qualitative Policy Research course, allowing students and members of workgroups to define themselves and their own experiences was invaluable to the success of the course. This allowed course participants to avoid making assumptions and provided a space for mutual understanding of students' multiple identities. As is evidenced in Moraga & Anzaldúa's (1983) edited volume, people who at first glance may appear similar, view the world in a multitude of ways and can have very different lived experiences despite common threads woven throughout their lives. Therefore, in this course, the professor stressed the importance of avoiding the use of stereotypes (e.g., assuming that students of color are first generation college students or are from poor families). Instead, the professor created a safe space designed to allow students to feel comfortable with describing themselves and sharing their own stories. It is important for the professors or group leaders to model this behavior (i.e., the avoidance of stereotypes) and to set classroom expectations at the onset of the course so that all students will be allowed to define themselves. Knowing that multiple factors influence students' identities and relationships with others is important to fostering an environment in which people can express themselves. However, utilizing that knowledge to improve classroom dynamics is only part of the picture. Understanding intersections of race, class, gender, and so on is also important with regard to the classroom structure and logistics.

Anzaldúa (1999) recognizes the ways in which the ability to code-switch, express oneself in multiple languages, formats or forms, and develop a connection between ethnic heritage and scholarship not only enhance, but illuminate the learning experience. Thus, when developing syllabi, course assignments, and criteria, instructors can take these things into consideration. For example, in the Qualitative Policy Research course, students were encouraged to use language that represented their study participants' views even if that language included slang, non-English words, or colloquial pop culture terms. Students were allowed to write their papers in any form that conveyed information, produced knowledge, and spoke to various audiences. Students were able to use narratives, poetry, white paper formats, or academic style research reports. This is imperative to accurately portray participant constructions of their experiences. The authors believe that limiting the style in which people are able to express themselves shuts down the creativity of individuals and groups and may intercept meaning and depth from readers. Therefore, it is important to allow freedom for students to perform.

In recognizing that race, class, gender and other factors influence research, the instructor addressed course diversity through personal and group reflections and asking for clarification or differences of opinion. She also encouraged students to test ideas, interview protocols, and discuss assumptions with others. Group members served as excellent resources for honest yet constructive feedback. Keeping the intersectionality of variables at the forefront of research process helped the students and the instructor to make sense of study participants' socio-cultural realities. In reflecting on this process, the authors identified a non-comprehensive list of ideas for trying to create diverse classrooms that value the intersectionality of the students in those classes.

1. Actively recruit students from previous classes from diverse backgrounds and various disciplines. To do this, send out descriptions of your courses to graduate program administrators and staff in different departments and graduate student list serves and organizations to reach out to individuals and encourage them to enroll in your class.
2. As a professor, allow students to cite reference materials according to their primary discipline's preferred format and open yourself up to reading new literature. Students should feel comfortable taking classes outside of their discipline and should not feel badly if they are not familiar with many of the scholars being referenced in discourse, but should instead use it as an opportunity to learn from a different perspective.
3. Recognize that issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. can spark intense emotions. If the classroom is a safe environment, students and professors can learn to acknowledge others' perspectives, question assumptions, and disagree without chaos ensuing. If people in the class are willing to actively listen and try to understand rather than defend their own position or convert others, people can have an active and engaging dialogue.
4. For many students, family and work responsibilities or other personal constraints will likely impact students' experiences. Being sensitive to and flexible with regard to options for making up work can be extremely important in retaining students. Additionally, communicating with other people in the class can be significant in letting people know what is going on, rather than having people assume there is no longer interest, and will alleviate confusion and resentment.

5. Diversity of people, ideas, strategies, and research areas can be especially productive if people focus on shared goals rather than individual differences. Incorporating diversity does not involve getting everyone to agree and developing a homogenous population, but instead allows for the inclusion of multiple perspectives and challenges to the status quo.

After the course was over and the research papers were written, turned in, and graded, the students were encouraged to communicate their research findings to a broader audience (beyond the course participants).

Communicating Research Findings

Many academic papers that are written are not made available for public or scholarly consumption. This unfortunate reality can be attributed to low acceptance rates in primary journals and at conferences, the heavy use of jargon, lack of new findings, or underdeveloped studies. However, another reason more scholarly work is not made available is because scholars do not follow through on the publication or presentation process. The professor of this particular course consistently encouraged students to continue to work on their projects and go beyond filing them away after the class ended. Therefore, several class members decided to submit a proposal to a refereed international research conference.

After the course, students wrote personal narratives about their scholarly development and progress towards the completion of their dissertations in relationship to the Qualitative Policy Research course. Personal narratives were developed as informed by the emic (insider) tradition of scholarly personal narrative (SPR), akin to personal experience narratives (Fries-Britt & Kelly, 2005). According to Nash (2004), SPRs represent scholarly writings in which authors examine their perspectives and experiences as a catalyst for academic inquiry. In particular, SPR is a framework which enables underserved and alienated communities (e.g., women, people of color) to present counter-narratives that challenge the dominant master-narratives of higher education. Given the demographic makeup of our research collaborative (e.g., women, students of color) and students' individual research interests on women and/or communities of color, this approach seemed a natural fit.

Narratives were used as the text from which themes were elicited via an ideas-grouping approach (e.g., Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Using this approach, recurring phrases, statements, and themes were identified in the narratives. Themes were grouped together into emergent categories and then into theoretical constructs. This interpretive coding process was conducted during two post-class group meeting sessions and resulted in the expansion, reduction, and/or elimination of themes, categories, and constructs. Preliminary findings from the narratives were presented at a roundtable session, entitled "Advancing the Next Generation of Higher Education Scholars: An Examination of One Doctoral Classroom," at the 2009 annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in Vancouver, BC (Turner et al., 2009). The roundtable discussion produced added clarity, understanding, and cohesion between and among emergent theoretical constructs. Additionally, individual class members submitted their own research projects to a variety of conferences within their own disciplines. These projects were accepted for presentation at other research conferences (e.g., American Educational Research Association, International Society for the Exploration of Teaching in Learning, and the American Association of Community Colleges).

As a result of post-class research presentations, the authors suggest that students take the following steps once a course ends: (1) continue working on their research; (2) ask professors or other students to read their papers and offer suggestions regarding which conference(s) to submit the paper; (3) ask classmates, professors, and other students if they are interested in putting together conference panels, roundtables, or posters; (4) solicit feedback from others about potential journal outlets. Once students have ideas, read those journals to get a better idea of what types of studies/formats/projects they accept for publication; (5) submit their work to conferences or journals, or as chapters in edited books; (6) consider writing white papers for a public audience and publishing them on a website; and (7) develop a workshop where they can disseminate their research to a public audience.

Implications for the Future

As evidenced in the course case study referenced above, successful courses take time, planning, and personal and structural support, as well as a common goal, all of which must be carried out throughout the length of the course itself. A combination of factors including outstanding faculty leadership, a diverse group of individuals, respect, various levels of expertise, and a safe environment in which people can ask questions, share successful experiences or obstacles, and reflect on both individual and group dynamics help produce an effective classroom workgroup. Although the environment discussed in this paper is not one that can always be found in the field, facilitating the development of an affirming environment can serve to enhance students' understanding of what is needed to become exemplary

researchers. Scaffolding and supporting the steps in the research process may make a very large goal seem manageable. In this manuscript, the authors have offered several ideas for developing a course and helping students see the research and scholarly process through to completion and beyond. Having met each other in the Qualitative Policy Research course and in the process of writing this paper as a collaborative, the instructor and students remain in touch with one another continuing to support each other as they face challenges as well as applaud each other's accomplishments. Some continue to collaborate on other research and teaching projects. Two have completed their doctorates and others are doctoral candidates, having passed their dissertation proposal defenses. As reflected in their brief biographies, all continue to serve in critical roles in the academy. The authors of this paper hope that faculty members as well as graduate students find the information presented here useful in crafting strategies toward the creation of affirming learning environments that promote the teaching and learning of successful research processes and approaches.

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