

Meeting the Challenge: Teaching Sensitive Subject Matter

Dorian B. Crosby¹
Spelman College, Atlanta, GA 30314

Abstract

When teaching diversity courses that discuss sensitive issues, such as racial, gender, sexuality, religious, and ethnic discrimination, it is possible to encounter student resistance, which can subsequently prevent students from comprehending the content. While teaching an introductory course on African American history in a Black Studies Department² at a predominantly white institution of higher education in Middle America, I experienced such resistance. This article discusses how I initially taught the course, evaluated and then restructured my active learning approach to include reflective learning and Black Studies techniques to address that resistance.

Keywords: Sensitive topics, active learning, reflective learning, Black Studies.

In the late 1960's, many African American communities, scholars, activists, and professionals demanded African American experiences be included in the American higher educational system. This led to the establishment of Black Studies programs and departments (Conyers, 1997; Karenga, 1993; McClendon, 1974, Rojas, 2007; Rooks, 2006). These additions to college and university curricular offerings demonstrated institutional commitment to the inclusion of non-European histories and perspectives. This commitment was often implemented as a social science, ethnic studies, general education, or diversity requirement. Now, most higher education institutions offer multicultural or diversity courses in their curriculums (Onyekwuluje in Vargas, 2002, p. 46). Many of these courses are embedded into the required core curriculum options.

Black Studies departments or programs are epistemologically rooted in Afrocentricity (Asante, 1998; Mazama, 2001). That is, making African culture the starting point for seeking, acknowledging, comprehending and analyzing knowledge, as well as the world. As a result, the teaching learning environment centers the curriculum within a historical and cultural framework that includes African American students' experiences instead of excluding them.

¹ Corresponding author's email: dcrosby1@spelman.edu

² The discipline of Black Studies emerged out of the 1960's U.S. Civil Rights Movement. Dr. Nathan Hare is considered by most to be the "founder" of Black Studies. The core elements of any program or department should include the political, social, economic and cultural experiences of African Americans (Anderson, 1990).

Active and Reflective Learning

Active learning is a common theme in many classrooms of higher education (Brockbank & McGill, 2007; Meyers & Jones, 1993). Because it focuses on the teacher serving more as a guide to students on their educational quests, it places students at the forefront of their own education. As a result, students are more engaged in the content and more participatory in class (Petress, 2008). In fact, research has shown since Bonwell and Eison's early piece popularizing the concept that students retain more information when active learning strategies, such as class discussions and visual aids are used (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). Engaging students is one way of facilitating their learning. Getting them to reflect upon their educational process, as well as what they learned is another reflective learning practice (Moon, 2004).

Reflective learning involves students pausing from their learning process to ponder what and how they are learning. The introspection can lead to self discovery, solutions to problems and critical thinking (LaBoskey, 1993). John Dewey, Paulo Freire, David Kolb, Graham Gibbs and other experiential theorists advocate for transformative learning, which is a salient component of my teaching philosophy and pedagogy. Reflective learning models illustrate how the learner reflects upon an experience and then continuously utilizes those learned outcomes in future situations, thereby creating a constant cycle of learning. In essence, active learning was the space in which I taught the first class, and reflective learning was an integral component of the restructured one.

The Initial Course: Introduction to Black Studies

My first year teaching at Midwestern University³ began in the fall of 2002 as the political scientist in the Black Studies department. I was also a member of the political science (the only African American) and women's studies faculty. Although I taught courses on black women in America and the Introduction to Political Science course, my primary class was the Introduction to Black Studies class, of which I taught two sections during the fall and spring semesters, and one in the summer. In any section, there were usually fifty white students, no more than eight black⁴ students and two international students (usually representing countries in Africa and the Middle East) in a class of approximately sixty.

Geographically, the majority of undergraduate and graduate students attending the university were Caucasian from Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and surrounding mid United States areas, often referred to as the Heartland. The remaining students were African American, international students, Latino, Asian American, and Native American in that descending order. All these groups combined only totaled approximately fifteen per cent (15%) of the entire enrollment.

³ Midwestern University is a replacement name and does not denote any specific institution.

⁴ The term "black" is used here to include any students of African ancestry.

Midwestern University's curriculum emphasized students' acknowledgment of the diversity in the world around them. To that end, it required each student to graduate with a social science requirement. That requirement could be met by passing a course on African Americans, Latino Americans, Native Americans, or women. The course carried three academic credits and fulfilled the university's diversity requirement. This meant that most students were in a required course because they had to be, and not in a course they selected based on their interests.

Students were advised to meet their social science requirement in their first year. However, some students decided to complete it after their first year, creating a class mixture ranging from first-year students to seniors from various majors. This mixture of academic levels and extent of college experiences further complicated matters, especially in such large classes of approximately sixty students (Sampaio, 2006, p. 922, reference number 5).

Resistance

After a few weeks of class, I began to notice the uneasiness of students during discussions, videos, and presentations. Most of them were passive, but some were clearly frustrated and defensive. Initially, I thought it was simple student apathy and lack of preparation and seriousness towards the class that students will exhibit. After all, students are more apprehensive about participating in large classes, (Gleason, 1986), as well as speaking in front of their peers (Weaver & Qi, 2005). However, after teaching political science and international relations courses to predominantly white students, at Midwestern and other colleges and universities, I realized the negative responses were not results of student unpreparedness for class, but something more challenging.

In the previous classes, I did not encounter questions and comments on the accuracy and validity of the readings, videos, textbook, or me as the professor. For example, one student actually asked, "Are you really our teacher?" I also did not receive personal attacks on my student evaluations like the ones from the Introduction to Black Studies class. For instance, one student wrote "Dr. Brown [my maiden name] is a bitter black woman, and I would not recommend this class to anyone." Or, "I felt that this class was an excuse for her to rant & rave and mention as many times as she could that African Americans were oppressed and that whites are bad."

Student resistance to classes on race and racism has been chronicled. Tactics range from withdrawing from the course, not participating in class discussions (Whitten, 1993) to physical and verbal assault and harassment (Pope & Joseph in Benjamin, 1997). Students often find it difficult to discuss racial matters (Tatum 2007), due to their lack of a clear understanding of racial inequalities and prejudices in American history. Indeed, those of the dominant culture did seem to harbor resistance because Black Studies addresses privilege and power relations (Hedley & Markowitz, 2001). Discovering unpleasant facts about America's founders such as, George Washington owning slaves, and Thomas Jef-

person owning and fathering slave children⁵ challenged dominate beliefs that formed their understanding of history and what they had been socialized to believe. White students were confronted with viewing the United States from perspectives, structures, and laws that enforced exclusion and inequality, not the democratic values of inclusion and equality they were taught. Thus, they experienced cognitive dissonance, which resulted in resisting the class and me.

Cognitive dissonance is a social psychology theory put forth by Leon Festinger (1957). Its premise rests on the idea that when students encounter new information that is incongruent with their established understandings, they experience psychological distress (McFalls & Cobb-Roberts, 2001). This internal struggle triggers numerous responses, such as negative student evaluations.

In sum, students' preconceived notions about the course and the instructor, coupled with the fact that the course was required and focused on sensitive content, generated student resistance (Perry, Moore, Edwards, Acosta, & Frey, 2009). Even though the class was multi-cultural, white student opposition was prominent, and went beyond regular student lethargy and unpreparedness. The possibility of resistance hindering students' progress troubled me (Tatum, 1992). I knew I had to engage all of the students in order for them to learn, but I had additional obstacles to overcome in order to reach resisting white students. So, I began to analyze my teaching materials and approach.

The New Approach: Engaging Students through Connecting and Reflecting

It was my intent to re-create the course to encourage student engagement. I wanted students to view themselves as active participants in their learning to empower them (Harvey & Knight, 1996). Because Black Studies calls for Afro centered pedagogies, Manning Marable provided the best paradigm for the restructuring. He called it 'living history'. This is a multidisciplinary approach to teaching millennial students⁶ African American history. Oral histories, technology, photography, film and multimedia digital technology are tools used to connect millennial students to the past, present and future (Marable, 2006). But, my approach, Engaging Students through Connecting and Reflecting (ESTCR), is applicable to any course focusing on sensitive topics and will be explained in detail later. For now, I want to describe and explain the restructured Introduction to Black Studies course.

⁵ Thomas Jefferson is widely thought to have fathered at least one, if not all of the children of Sally Hemings, his slave. Strong debate for and against this union and children has existed for two centuries (Gordon-Reed, 1997). Contradictory interpretations of DNA results and research has only added to the debate. The children remained enslaved due to the Virginia legal doctrine of children inheriting the status of their mother (Kolchin, 1993, p. 17). This meant that children of slave women remained enslaved regardless of the father being a free black or white male. Both Thomas Jefferson's and Sally Hemings' descendants continue to grapple with acceptance of the various reports.

⁶ Howe & Strauss (2000) define Millennial students as young adults born between the years of 1982 and 2000.

The revamped class was first taught in the fall of 2004. Restructuring the class involved augmenting my active learning approach by utilizing Marable's 'living history' concept, along with a reflective learning assignment. The reflective assignment was also an oral history project because it involved personal interviews. To help students connect with the history and current issues of African Americans, historical artifacts were incorporated into class discussions (Gould in Cree, 2000). A new anti-racist text was also an element of the restructuring.

The book *White Privilege: Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism* edited by Paula S. Rothenberg was added as the second required book after teaching the class for two years (Rothenberg, 2005).⁷ It was used to introduce students to white scholars' analyses on, and solutions to white privilege. By reading and discussing white scholars' perspectives on the social advantages of being white and disadvantages of being black, students examined the legal, social and psychological impacts of white privilege on their everyday existence (Jensen, 2005; McIntosh, 1988). But what was most enlightening and encouraging was how it gave white students the freedom to express their feelings of guilt, anger, sorrow, and regret at manipulated or eliminated elements of American history as they had been socialized to understand it (Burrell & Walsh, 2001). The book also allowed discussions on why some white students felt resentment, but not blame for the actions, prejudices, and legislation of previous generations.

It was important for students to first understand African American history in order to comprehend current African American issues. It was also important to encourage them to critically think and act outside their comfort zone when discussing racism and American history. This required the establishment of a supportive classroom environment based on trust, positive feedback and thoughtful handling of the content by me (Gilbert & Eby, 2001; Hyde & Ruth, 2002). To foster a comfortable environment, students were allowed to become acquainted with each other and me on the first day of scheduled classes through an ice breaker.

This first day of class introductions prepared students to become comfortable with encountering, new, different and perhaps unsettling content and class discussions. Since my teaching style is based in Socratic dialogue (Saran & Neisser, 2004), class discussions are intermingled with lecture. Emphasis is placed on the opportunity for every student to express their opinion without physical or extreme verbal responses. Students are encouraged to listen to other opinions, and if they disagree, they must logically and respectfully articulate why they disagree (Birnbacher & Krohn in Saran & Neisser, 2004).

Following introductions, the class was made aware that sensitive issues would be presented and discussed throughout the semester and that those issues may raise certain questions and comments about the world as they knew it. An explanation and description of class content was not included in the first year. But implementation of the new approach in the second year, seemed to diffuse most of the tension and relieve some anxiety

⁷ The first was *African Americans: A Concise History, Combined Volume* because it captured African American history from life in Africa prior to European contact, to life in the United States (Hine, Hine, & Harrold, 2004).

about what the class would entail. I noticed white students were more relaxed and less defensive, while black students became more serious about the class. In an effort to allow students to learn more from their classmates' opinions, and maintain healthy dialogues, an environment of respect had to be created and maintained. Therefore, it was also emphasized that the instructor would moderate the class and its discussions at all times, thereby providing set parameters for dialogues that promoted critical thinking (Birn-bacher & Krohn in Saran & Neisser, 2004).

During the third year, original artifacts obtained through Ebay from the nineteenth and twentieth century were used. My husband, a former educator, suggested bringing authentic (as possible) historical relics into the classroom for visual support of the texts.⁸ For example, when students were shown freedom medallions, "colored only" signs, and children's marbles with packaging showing the morphing of a black man into a watermelon, they were shocked.

When viewing old fashioned hand held fans depicting a man of dark complexion with enlarged white eyes and protruding red lips advertising everything from "Darkie tooth-paste," to a "Coon-Chicken Inn" to cigarettes and restaurant menus, they were equally as shocked. We also discussed the "Aunt Jemima" relics picturing an overweight black woman in her fifties with a head scarf and very black face to help them understand why some people take issue with the original "Aunt Jemima" pancake box image. They were also shown a metal yard fence sign that read "No dogs, Negros, or Mexicans" to remind them that it was not that long ago in U.S. history that the derogatory relics were acceptable and commonly used in the U.S.

Together, the provocative text written from the perspective of white scholars' analyses of race and racism within society combined with visual aids and peer discussions drew students into the class content. To touch objects that were identical to, or represented the past was invaluable towards their understanding of what they read, saw, or discussed (Dagbovie, 2006).

Personal Interviews: New Reflective Learning Teaching Tool

Exposure to discrimination and prejudice through conversation and follow up class discussions was the focal point of the Personal Interviews assignment. Although this type of pedagogical tool was later outlined by Dagbovie in 2006 as a means for millennial African American students to engage and learn from elders in the African American community, my assignment was used to connect millennial students from various cultures with preferably African Americans in the local community. However, it was a deliberate attempt to engage white students who had previously exhibited resistance (Tatum, 1992). But, in order for them to appreciate the assignment and its outcomes, students were allowed to select and interview any relative, neighbor, or friend who was at least an adoles-

⁸ As a certified former elementary school teacher, my husband recalled how successful visual aids had been in getting his 5th grade class to connect to historical facts. Since my objective was to get students to acknowledge and accept new ideas, particularly those related to African American history, I thought historical relics would be perfect accompaniments to the texts.

cent during the 1950's and 1960's in the United States. They were instructed on interview protocol, as well as provided three questions to which they could add as many as they wished, after my approval. The assignment was due at the end of the semester and included a reflective essay. This portion was particularly revealing in terms of the impact the assignment had on the individual.

Personal Interviews were successful because students were able to hear history. They experienced African American history through their relatives and friends who conveyed real emotions and thoughts about real events about which the students had previously only heard of, or read. The outcome was particularly enlightening and moving for white students interviewing their relatives. Many family stories were revealed, which made the experience and assignment extremely personal. This convergence of awareness and life experience created the bridge between African American history and contemporary African American issues. For instance, after conducting the interviews, some students understood the arguments for Affirmative Action after comprehending the extent of the historical exclusion of African Americans from the educational system.

The critical thinking, and in some instances, the change of mind-set resulting from the out of classroom interviews diffused the class tension and resistance, as well as provided a base for viewing American history from various perspectives. Reflection sections of the Personal Interview assignment revealed how much students acknowledged class content "coming to life" and becoming more real. Students said they "learned something new" about African Americans, racism, and America. Other comments made included, "This interview shed some light on racism," and "As I am absorbing all of this information from this interview and learning new things in class that I never knew before about the history of African Americans, it's very hard to grasp the idea that blacks were treated in such a horrible manner. It makes me feel anger and heartbroken to actually realize that such things did occur."

In the end, acknowledging and accepting new perspectives through the newly structured class stimulated student's critical thinking because they became comfortable with entertaining uncomfortable thoughts. While apparent tensions still existed when discussing various topics and perspectives, it was acknowledged that some tensions are healthy within class discussions. Intense dialogue is a valuable component of the learning process.

Student evaluations reflected the positive responses to the Personal Interviews, as well as the historical relics, and both texts. One evaluation in particular captured the transformations some students experienced. The student writes, "This class was required by my program. I was not really excited to take it because it is a very sore subject. Dr. Crosby did a fabulous job in teaching this subject. She made you think."

Conclusion and Best Practices for Teaching Other Challenging Courses

Literature on teaching controversial issues that provide steps for instructors, follow a similar prescription. Most commonly are the importance of establishing a comfortable and

safe, yet respectful and structured environment for open discussions, or as Cherrin (1993) terms it, “freedom with structure.” Early established ground rules for discussion are suggested (Lampert & Eastman, 2008; Pace, 2003) as are methods to generate discussion (Payne & Gainey, 2003; Welty, 1989). Also, teacher sensitivity to the subject and student responses, diffusing conflict and confronting biased, offensive remarks are mentioned as important when teaching sensitive topics (Cherrin, 1993). Not so common was introspection by the instructor on her/his approach and attitude towards the issue, or communities associated with the issue.

Many of the suggestions on teaching controversial topics are included in my approach, but I wanted to provide conceptual links to the process. Although steps and comments on implementing those steps are provided, there is not necessarily a conceptual link or framework to the steps. Thus, my approach allows instructors to utilize their own delivery, but within a process that is broad, yet defined enough to attain an outcome of addressing student resistance when teaching courses on challenging subjects.

My approach, which I’m entitling, Engaging Students through Connecting and Reflecting (ESTCR), is multidisciplinary. It can be utilized in any course centered on sensitive issues, such as mental health, Native American history, sexual orientation, HIV-AIDS, or creationism. Any course involving emotional topics, that may also be associated with public policies, as well as individual morals and beliefs, will generate passionate discussions. Although these courses tend to be situated within the social sciences, natural science courses that address medical and ethical questions, such as In-vitro Fertilization, stem cell research, euthanasia and gender selection may also benefit from this approach. In addition, ESTCR definitely takes into consideration teaching millennial students in a challenging class by also including technology and social media as an engaging, connecting, or reflecting component.

Engaging Students through Connecting and Reflecting includes the established elements of creating a safe, comfortable environment, but after the instructor has evaluated her or his personal feelings towards the subject. I also include setting ground rules for discussion, careful selection of course materials, considering student backgrounds, as well as responding positively to students, yet redirecting their remarks and behavior if necessary. The additional element that my approach offers is including an active learning assignment that involves an interview, as well as a ‘demonstration’ segment, or activity where students can manipulate items associated with the topic. Artifacts are especially useful in classes where historical evidence of the topic exist, i.e. flyers, buttons, yard signs, etc. My addition of original artifacts and the Personal Interviews are definitely active and reflective learning tools that may motivate students from any discipline in a challenging class to engage in the content. Engaging Students through Connecting and Reflecting works for new teachers, as well as seasoned instructors.

My prescribed process includes, but is not limited to:

Evaluate Yourself and Your Class

This is the first step towards engaging students so they may connect and reflect upon the subject matter. The teacher should begin by examining her/his perspective on the topic. Perhaps a close colleague, mentor or friend can help the teacher to introspectively evaluate her/his position on the subject, as well as a group of people associated with it. If the instructor knows, or discovers prejudice, or other difficulty speaking on the subject from a neutral viewpoint, he/she should take time to address this prior to teaching impressionable and perhaps combative students. At some point, the lecturer should take the opportunity to teach students the significance of using a critical lens on themselves. This helps facilitate moving beyond resistance to acknowledging other perspectives. Ultimately, critical self-examination, as difficult as it may be, can foster the learning process.

The age, classification, cultures, life experiences and backgrounds of students will vary. This variety may impact the composition of the class. However, each class will be different. The teacher must make an early estimate as to the character of his/her class to determine the implementation process of Engaging Students through Connecting and Reflecting.

If the lecturer is a member of, or descendant of the studied group, her/his association may increase student apprehensions that could lead to, or exacerbate resistance. This is a very delicate situation that can only be addressed by the individual instructor's interactions with the class. The teacher must find a way to sympathize, yet teach from a neutral standpoint. This can be extremely difficult if the issue and the communities associated with it have experienced violence, discrimination, and prejudice. Instructors might seek therapeutic conversations and encouragement from trusted colleagues, religious and community leaders, or anyone with which they can share their emotions.

Outlets can provide emotional releases that help the teacher grapple with painful events, while remaining as neutral as possible when teaching. However, personal stories might reveal the actuality of the issues. Of course, disclosure is completely up to the instructor. But, by discussing their own experiences (especially if asked by students), teachers could reassure students that sensitive topics are discussable in her/his class. However, this does not remove the obligation of the teacher to correct, or redirect student comments when they are egregiously damaging and erroneous.

Creating Safe Zones

Instructors must set a friendly, comfortable environment. Ice breakers or games that place students in groups, or have them seek out persons with the same colored paper clip, sticky note, or other identifier encourages conversation. Conversation allows students to get to know their classmates. Once sufficient time has been allotted for the ice breaker, the instructor will need to allow every student to speak about at least one classmate with whom they have spoken. After the entire class has participated, the instructor will need

to acknowledge the differences and similarities brought up in the class, i.e. only child, favorite color, residing in the same residence hall. It is then up to the teacher to expound upon how disclosed differences and similarities open the door for greater acquaintance with their classmates.

By creating a comfortable, intimate setting, the teacher sets the tone for subsequent class discussions that may become tenuous and emotional. These types of responses require student assurance that their verbal participation will not be condemned. A classroom environment that fosters a feeling of camaraderie helps students to participate knowing that their thoughts will be acknowledged and respected. Make students aware early that they will encounter images, readings, texts, discussions and speakers that may upset their view of the world. But, remind them that they are in class to learn and that learning means being open to new ideas and thoughts, even if they disagree.

Establishing discussion ground rules on the first day is essential. Students must feel that the instructor is in charge of the class and will moderate all discussions fairly. It is important to establish an environment of respect for the teacher and all students by acknowledging students' comments without personal interjections. Instructors should only provide opinions when students ask for their specific viewpoints. Otherwise, the discussion should be facilitated by acknowledging all students who wish to participate by respectfully raising their hands.

Some students must be shown and taught to tolerate and respect all opinions. They must be instructed on how to carry out class discussions. If they disagree, they must articulate why they disagree. This helps to inform the class of various opinions. Often, students will see the other perspective and may even change their original thoughts. Ground rules should be revisited as often as necessary. One might even wish to include them in the syllabus, or as a separate handout.

This is also an appropriate time to distribute a pre-survey to assess student knowledge, as well as perspectives on the topic. Questions may be redistributed at the end of the class to determine changes in viewpoints and presence of learning. Pre and post surveys may assist in pedagogical adjustments for subsequent classes. Prior to each implementation, the instructor should inform students that the questionnaire is strictly voluntary. They should also be assured that names are not required. Instead, students should be provided a number or alphabet letter for anonymous identification during analyses. Naturally, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval must be obtained, if necessary.

Reflective Learning Tool

The introduction of an active learning assignment that provides structured encounters with a group connected with the sensitive topic gives students an opportunity to engage persons of the group in conversation. Dialogue fosters discoveries of different perspectives that hopefully lead to a better understanding of the issue, or associated group. Similarly, if a particular community is not associated with the issue, examination of personal narratives linked with the issue is appropriate for encouraging student engagement.

Student engagement is central to making students aware of how certain issues impact a particular group directly. Prior to engagement, students may only be aware of the issues from afar. They rely upon the media, family and peers for perspectives and information. But once students have an opportunity to see and hear how the issues impact members of the specific group on a daily, emotional and physical basis, they may be open up to viewing the group members differently, which could then give them a new perspective on the issue and the related group.

Connecting students to the historical and contemporary events, individuals, groups and discussions surrounding the topic is critical to their understanding and learning. Then, the class becomes a bridge between students feeling detached from the issue and those impacted by it, to consideration and perhaps concern.

Reflecting allows students to think about the engaging exercise and process. They have time to contemplate their feelings prior to, during and after the reflective exercise. Then, they document these thoughts in writing or audio. Having words to reflect upon, gives students time to reflect upon their thoughts at different intervals. Early opinions of “busy work” can give way to thoughts of inspiration, shame, or motivation to work for change.

Engaging Students through Connecting and Reflecting can be very effective. It may be applied in any discipline in a class that teaches sensitive subject matter, or anytime difficult dialogues occur because the approach is transferable to discussions on other challenging concepts, not just diversity.

When students are exposed to new experiences and ideas, they may exhibit resistance, confusion and distance, but if they are given an opportunity to connect with events and individuals associated with the new concept, and then reflect upon the entire process, they are learning because they are engaged. When students are engaged in their learning process, they feel empowered, and empowered learners are potentially in all classrooms.

References

- Anderson, T. (Ed.) (1990). *Black Studies: theory, method, and cultural perspectives*. Washington: Washington State University Press.
- Asante, M. (1998). *The Afrocentric idea, revised and expanded edition*. Pennsylvania: Temple University Press.
- Benjamin, L. (Ed.) (1997). *Black women in the academy: promises and perils*. Florida: University Press of Florida.
- Birnbacher, D. & Krohn, D. (2004). Socratic dialogue and Self-directed learning. Saran, R., Neisser B. (Eds). In *Enquiring minds: Socratic dialogue in education*. Staffordshire, England: Trentham Books.
- Bonwell, C., & Eison, J. (1991). *Active Learning: Creating Excitement in the Classroom AEHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1*. Washington, D.C.: Jossey-Bass.
- Brockbank, A. & McGill, I. (2007). *Facilitating reflective learning in higher education*. London, England: Open University Press, McGraw- Hill Education.

- Burrell, L., & Walsh, R. (2001). Teaching white students black history: The African-American experience in the classroom. *New England Journal of Higher Education and Economic Development*, 16, 31-32.
- Cherrin, S. (1993-94). *Essays of teaching excellence: Toward the best in the academy*. Professional Organizational Development Network in Higher Education. Retrieved from The Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education Web site: <http://www.podnetwork.org/publications/teachingexcellence/92-93/V4,%20N6%20Cherrin.pdf>.
- Conyers, J. L. (1997). *Africana studies: A disciplinary quest for both theory and method*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company.
- Dagbovie, P. G. (2006). Strategies for teaching African American history: Musings from the past, ruminations for the future. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 75(4), 635-648. Retrieved April 22, 2012, from ProQuest database.
- Festinger, L. A. (1957). A theory of cognitive dissonance. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.
- Gilbert, P. R., & Eby, K. K. (2001). Blowing the teachers away: Teaching controversial and sensitive issues to undergraduates. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 12(2), 37-54.
- Gleason, M. (1986). Better communication in large classes. *College Teaching*, 34, 20-24.
- Gordon-Reed, A. (1997). *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: an American controversy*. Virginia: University of Virginia Press.
- Gould, N. (2000). Enquiry and action learning: a model for transferring learning. In V. E. Cree, & C. Macaulay, *Transfer of learning in professional and vocational education*. London: Routledge.
- Harvey, L., & Knight, P. (1996). *Transforming higher education*. Buckingham [England]: Society for Research into Higher Education.
- Hedley, M. & Markowitz, L. (2001). Avoiding moral dichotomies: Teaching controversial topics to resistant students. *Teaching Sociology*, 29(2), 195-208.
- Hine, D. C., Hine, W. C., & Harrold, S. (2004). *African Americans: A concise history, combined volume*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Howe, N., & Strauss, W. (2000). *Millennials rising: The next great generation*. New York, NY: Vintage Press.
- Hyde, C. A., & Ruth, B. J. (2002). Multicultural content and class participation: Do students selfdisclose? *Journal of Social Work Education*, 38, 241_256.
- Jensen, R. (2005). *The heart of whiteness: Confronting race, racism, and white privilege*. San Francisco: City Lights.
- Karenga. (1993). *Introduction to Black studies*. Los Angeles: University of Sankore Press.
- Kolchin, P. (1993). *American Slavery, 1619-1877*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- LaBoskey, V. (1993). A conceptual framework for reflection in preservice teacher education. In J. Calderhead & P. Gates (Eds), *Conceptualising Reflection in Teacher Development*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Lampert, J., & Eastman, D. (2008). *Teaching Controversial Subjects*. Retrieved January 28, 2012, from Yale Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Web site: <http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/teaching/controversial.html>
- Marable, M. (2006). Living Black history: How reimagining the African-American past can remake America's racial future. New York: BasicCivitas.

- Mazama, A. (2001). The afrocentric paradigm: contours and definitions. *Journal of Black Studies*, 31, 387-405.
- McClendon, & William H. (1974). African-American studies: education for liberation. *The Black Scholar* 6:15-25.
- McFalls, E. L., & Cobb-Roberts, D. (2001). Reducing resistance to diversity through cognitive dissonance instruction: Implications for teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52(2), 164-172. Retrieved May 18, 2012 from ProQuest database.
- McIntosh, P. (1988). Working Paper #189, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley, MA 02181.
- Meyers, C., & Jones, T. (1993). Promoting active learning. Strategies for the college classroom. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Moon, J. A. (2004). *A handbook of reflective and experiential learning: Theory and practice*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Onyekwuluje, A. B. (2002). Guess Who's Coming to Class. In L. Vargas (Ed.), *Women faculty of color in the white classroom: Narratives on the pedagogical implications of teacher diversity*. Higher Ed, v. 7. New York: P. Lang.
- Pace, D. (2003). Controlled fission: teaching supercharges subjects. *College Teaching: CT*, 51(2), 42-45. Retrieved June 25, 2012, from JSTOR database.
- Payne, B., Gainey, R. (2003). Understanding and developing controversial issues in college courses. *College Teaching: CT*, 51(2), 52-58. Retrieved June 25, 2012, from JSTOR database.
- Perry, G., Moore, H., Edwards, C., Acosta, K., & Frey, C. (2009). Maintaining credibility and authority as an instructor of color in diversity-education classrooms: a qualitative inquiry. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 80(1), 80-105.
- Petress, K. (2008). What is meant by active learning? *Education*, 128, 566-569.
- Pope, J., & Joseph, J. (1997). Student Harassment of Female Faculty of African Descent in the Academy. Benjamin, L. (Ed). In *Black women in the academy: promises and perils*. Florida: University Press of Florida.
- Rojas, F. (2007). *From Black power to Black studies: How a radical social movement became an academic discipline*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Rooks, N. M. (2006). *White money/Black power: The surprising history of African American studies and the crisis of race in higher education*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Rothenberg, P. S. (2005). *White privilege: Essential readings on the other side of racism*. New York: Worth.
- Sampaio, A. (2006). Women of color teaching political science: Examining the intersections of race, gender, and course material in the classroom. *Political Science & Politics*, XXXIX (4), 917-922.
- Saran, R., & Neisser, B. (2004). Society for the Furtherance of Critical Philosophy., & Philosophisch-Politische Akademie (Frankfurt am Main, Germany). *Enquiring minds: Socratic dialogue in education*. Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.
- Tatum, B. D. (1992). Talking about race, learning about racism: The application of racial identity development theory in the classroom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62(1), 1-1. Retrieved June 14, 2012, from ProQuest database.
- Tatum, B. D. (2007). *Can we talk about race?: And other conversations in an era of school resegregation*. A Simmons College/Beacon Press race, education, and democracy series book. Boston, Mass: Beacon Press.

- Vargas, L. (Ed.). (2002). *Women Faculty of Color in the White Classroom*. New York: Peter Lang International Publishing.
- Weaver, R. R., & Qi, J. (2005). Classroom organization and participation: College students' perceptions. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 76, 570-601.
- Welty, W. (1989). "Discussion Method Teaching: How to Make it Work. *Change*, 21, 4, 40-49.
- Whitten, L. (1993). Managing student reactions to controversial issues in the college classroom. *Transformations*, 4(1), 30-30. Retrieved from <https://login.ezproxy.auctr.edu:2050/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/220382220?accountid=8422>