

2007

## **In slow motions : the democratic process in critical-liberatory pedagogy**

Michaelia Morgan  
*California State University, Monterey Bay*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps\\_thes](https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Morgan, Michaelia, "In slow motions : the democratic process in critical-liberatory pedagogy" (2007).  
*Capstone Projects and Master's Theses*. 459.  
[https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps\\_thes/459](https://digitalcommons.csumb.edu/caps_thes/459)

This Master's Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ CSUMB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Projects and Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ CSUMB. Unless otherwise indicated, this project was conducted as practicum not subject to IRB review but conducted in keeping with applicable regulatory guidance for training purposes. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@csumb.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@csumb.edu).

*In Slow Motions:*  
*The Democratic Process in Critical-Liberatory Pedagogy*

**Michaelia Morgan**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in Education

California State University Monterey Bay  
College of Professional Studies  
Department of Education  
May, 2007

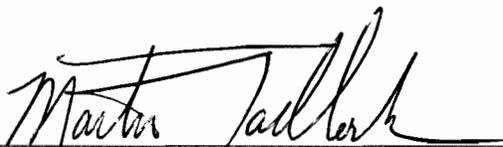
Action Thesis Signature Page

***In Slow Motions:  
The Democratic Process in Critical-Liberatory Pedagogy***

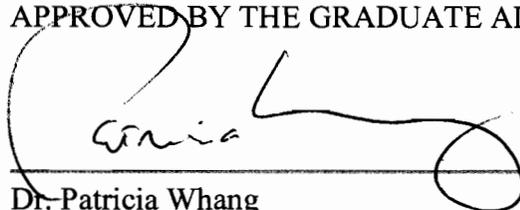
By

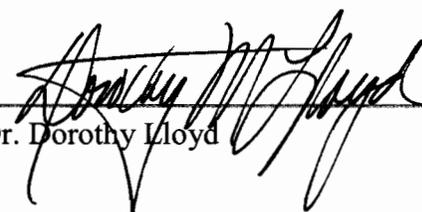
Michaelia Morgan

APPROVED BY THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES:

 5-9-07  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Martin Tadlock DATE

APPROVED BY THE GRADUATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

 5/6/07  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Patricia Whang DATE

 5/4/07  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dr. Dorothy Lloyd DATE

## Acknowledgements

Would it not be a tidy affair if appreciation functioned linearly? I could then list, one by one, chronologically even, all the people, events, places and unseen-but-felt hearts and hands who have guided me to this amazing juncture: the mindful creation of my thesis. Hobbled as I am, however, with an insufficiently capable memory, I am unable to functionally cobble it together. Not only because I cannot remember everything (and I would detest leaving someone or something out), but because the enigmatic Providence often dresses in camouflage, disguising Herself as someone or something else; further, She does not vigorously avail Herself to that matter we call 'time', making it rather difficult to assign credit to any one thing or person existing in this lifetime, or beyond, or before. After all, how far back or forward do I journey in order to apprehend what has allowed me to arrive *here*? I have been supported and/or thwarted by all events and persons entering my wee sphere of this huge life, so I must pay homage to absolutely everyone and everything, not discriminating between the 'helpful' and the 'roadblocks', because to do so would indicate that I can *see* and even *comprehend*, which I most certainly cannot. What we experience as 'obstacles' is generally just a sense of our own expectations falling apart. At best, I am able to accept without division, recognizing that what has crossed the threshold and penetrated my being has shaped me, and that I have had a similar influence on all who affected me. The circle is ceaseless yet ever-changing, as am I.

With particular gratitude to NB, SB, ESC, GM, CS, MJS, PW & RW, this thesis is offered in appreciation of the opportunity to be here, now. May it be of benefit.

## Abstract

*Prior to conducting a required graduate-level proseminar utilizing democratic methods, the instructors perceived that they possessed a quantity of ideas as to how to proceed; during the course of teaching the class, they recognized that they also maintained some arresting lacunae. Thus, I have attempted to convey what Dr. Whang and I encountered, discerned and learned as we left authoritarian measures at the door and unflinchingly attempted to bring democracy into our classroom. It is my hope that educators will endeavor to produce more democracy by placing democratic principles at the helm of their deliberations. It is conceivable that everyone involved in academia – students, teachers, administrators, parents of students, teachers-in-training and even drop-outs – would reap the lagniappe available upon embracing a democratic ideology. This discourse fills a gap in the literature on democratic pedagogical methods by chronicling the events of a graduate level course; however, in no uncertain terms does this indicate that the process is limited to post-graduate venues. Since each person – schooled democratically or not – can attest to having had a remarkable education (Robinson, 2006), it follows that one and all would do well to perpend what education represents and its precipitous significance.*

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter I</b>	
<b>Inexorably Drawn to Democracy in Education: The Quest</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>My Insurmountable Desires</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>University Background</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Personal Background</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Chapter II</b>	
<b>Terms and Their Surfeit of Meanings</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Democracy</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Representative Democracy</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Participatory Democracy</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Democratic Schools</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Democracy in Education</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Critical-Liberatory-Democratic Pedagogy</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Chapter III</b>	
<b>From Fast Autocracy to Slow Democracy</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>The Traditional Model of MAE 600</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>The Democratically-Run Model of MAE 600</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Table 1: Compare and Contrast Heterogeneity of Classes</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Important Turning Points in the Democratically-Run Version</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Orphans</b>	<b>37</b>

<b>No More!</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>More!</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Chapter IV</b>	
<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Weekly Worked Weakly</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Impatiently Developing Patience</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Voting</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Literature: Who Chooses?</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>The “Expert” Laid Bare</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Tic-Toc, Hear Them Talk</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Keeping Track</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Chapter V</b>	
<b>Denouement</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Zenith</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>55</b>

## ***Chapter I***

### ***Inexorably Drawn toward Democracy in Education: The Quest***

*To educate is not to fill a bucket. It is to kindle a fire.  
(Herodotus)*

Could a tenured professor at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) sufficiently unpack the concept of “democratically-run” and still effectively lead a required, graduate-level course with contextual intelligence? What about the fact that she had never utilized democratic methods before? What challenges would be encountered? What sort of surprising perquisites might be enjoyed? Would she be ensconced and experience a proximal connection to democratically-run ideals or would a distal relationship to the incorporation of democracy be formed? Would she be likely to pursue this method in her future classes? After obtaining my Master of Arts in Education, would I feel able to finally commit to teaching college if these practices were in fact in place? As her Teacher’s Assistant – and as someone whose background encompassed democratically-run K-12 schools – these are the issues I set out to discover, and here is why.

While I am not a credentialed teacher, I have been teaching and tutoring for over 25 years. I detected that, in addition to K-12, many college and university classes were also taught autocratically. I simply did not resonate with authoritarianism as the entire set up was anathema to me. I eschewed mainstream education due to its totalitarian structure, with teacher as expert, student as empty vessel (Freire, 2005) and product not process being the goal. Additionally, it is effortless for me to excoriate nearly all schools for cultivating an atmosphere that is devoid of nearly all true, plausible experience and one in which only strenuous mock-ups of real and genuine processes take place (Kozol, 1972).

In 1994, hooks recounted that it was only in Women's Studies classrooms that she found a connection between the ideas learned at university and those learned, experienced and practiced in life. This, too, had been my experience in undergraduate school thirteen years ago. A major reason for this connectivity was due in large part to the way in which Women's Studies classes were conducted: they more resembled a conversation and an exploration than the typical lecture-and-test format I encountered in all other classes. None were democratically-run, as such, but I did not perceive these teachers as dictatorial figures. The seat of power still rested with them in terms of focusing and assigning coursework and issuing a grade, but with that excluded, the classes categorically embodied the Latin definition of "educate" which means "to draw out." I noticed how viscerally uncomfortable I was as a student in classes that were *not* in the Women's Studies program.

Conversely, for the past 20 years, I have had the amazing experience of having worked with and visited democratically-run schools (Bennis & Graves, 2006; Greenberg, 1987; Mintz, 2003; Neill, 1960) for ages 2-18. I found I was relaxed and enjoying myself while in the company of students and staff alike at these establishments. When it comes to democratically-run education and schools, I admit to being tendentious. While I certainly can attest to the fact that my passion for democratic education has been fueled by my understanding of and experience with the way in which children, specifically, are notoriously arranged in society, additionally I observed that most teachers irrespective of grade level tended to reproduce hegemony, including teachers of adults.

While working as a dynamic T.A. in the above-mentioned required Master's class in Spring, 2006, I wondered how I could espouse the potential benefits of creating a

classroom in a more democratic fashion if the students were being instructed in a hierarchical fashion; attempting to do so felt empty at best and hypocritical at worst. By bringing specific readings related to democratic schooling, showing videos reflecting the practice of democracy in action, engaging in spirited discussions with students and observing positive student reactions to the idea and practice of democracy, the professor – who had democratic ideas of her own – and I jointly decided to team-teach in Fall 2006 from a more authentic and aligned place, incorporating democratic principles and practices.

### *My Insuperable Desires*

*The hopeful challenging the actual in the name of the possible.*  
*(Ira Shor)*

By bringing a democratic process into a graduate-level class where critical pedagogy was in the forefront, we hoped to kindle a fire (not fill a bucket) and examine our nascent skills as democratic teachers. We wished to expose the students in the class to the idea that education does not have to be a commodity they get, but a process we can co-create. We taught as a team, and while we may have been authorities on certain *subjects*, we were not authoritarian. This distinction was important to Freire (1987). In a conversation with Shor, he stated, “But, look, Ira, for me the question is not for the teacher to have less and less authority. The issue is that the democratic teacher never, never transforms authority into authoritarianism” (p. 91). We felt that retaining the authoritarian role would be tantamount to an anti-democratic approach. Giving up the controlling part, listening to students’ voices and responding to their interests is paramount in a democratic atmosphere (Kohl, 1998).

Team-teaching in MAE 600 with Professor Whang afforded us the opportunity to attempt to bring consonance to our teaching practice by internally addressing the question of how to bring fidelity to our teaching process with respect to our political choice? We could not announce, talk about nor teach the liberating dream of democracy while being authoritarian with students (Freire, 1987). We had to walk the talk. By practicing shared authority, we hoped to demonstrate to all concerned in the process that students are capable of fully participating in and taking responsibility for the edification of their education. In this type of scenario, we are really all simply traveling together – sometimes leading, sometimes following, sometimes watching and listening, sometimes guiding and coaching – and always with a willingness or proclivity toward change and changing. We were actively working to change the classroom from a place of inequitable power to a place where power is shared. Instead of the characteristic “power over” found in mainstream classrooms of all ages and grades, we sought to utilize power with, of and for all members (Ayers, 2002). We were changed in the process as well.

Dr. Whang and I were hopeful as we challenged the actual and perceived notions of ‘education’ and what it means to ‘get an education’ in anticipation of creating viable future possibilities through democratic ethics and practices.

### *University Background*

*The college was not founded to give society what it wants.  
Quite the contrary.  
(May Sarton)*

*California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB):* CSUMB serves a diverse population, with a concentration on working class, historically undereducated and

low-income populations. There is an emphasis on multilingual, multicultural and gender-equitable learning. CSUMB embraces innovative, progressive, creative and leading-edge pedagogies. The serious study and application of teaching and learning is a chief concern. CSUMB is additionally committed to building and maintaining collaborative connections with the proximate and ethnically-diverse community. A critical-liberatory-democratic pedagogy seems to be in accordance with the tenets set forth above. From my understanding and experience, the Vision Statement indicates that the University will be student and society centered. Its Mission includes the commitment to social justice and social responsibility.

*Master of Arts in Education (MAE)*: The Master of Arts in Education program is designed to generate exceptionally capable educators who do or will serve the diverse population of our area, the Monterey Peninsula and beyond. MAE 600: Proseminar in Multicultural/Bilingual Education is a required introductory seminar that examines the cultural and political context of learning. Students contrast differing perspectives and ways of knowing regarding the school experiences of students from diverse sociocultural groups. These perspectives are connected with various research traditions. In this course, students practice some simple action research strategies and develop library skills for graduate work. Coursework is framed within a social justice and pluralism paradigm.

The Core Program Learning outcomes of the MAE program are as follows:

- ***Critical Questioner***. Students will express a critical, questioning perspective (i.e., identify, describe, and analyze) about diverse theoretical paradigms about teaching, learning and school reform, including those generated by marginalized groups, which situate schooling in a larger historic and political context.

- **Scholar**: Students will search, navigate, and critically consume (read, analyze, and use) educational research.
- **Action Researcher**: Students will use, apply, design, and implement research to bring about change and make improvements in their own professional environment.
- **Educator**: Students will demonstrate their knowledge of and ability to use the most appropriate culturally responsive practices that support complex and challenging learning.
- **Bilingual Communicator**: Students will communicate with native speakers of a language other than English. To complete the program, you need to be proficient in a language other than English through fourth university semester proficiency level; many students enter the program at or exceeding that level.
- **Technological Navigator**: Students will use technology critically to access information, to communicate, and as a means of curricular and pedagogical support for higher level thinking.
- **Communicator**: Students will communicate clearly and effectively both orally and in writing, in a manner that commands professional attention.
- **Social Justice Collaborator**: Students will work with communities of practice on behalf of social justice.  
(<http://csumb.edu/academic/graduate/education/academic.html>)

## *Personal Background*

*The first and simplest emotion  
which we discover in the human mind is curiosity.  
(Edmund Burke)*

What has led me to possess the view about education that I offer here? Is it because my schooling was sporadic and incomplete, or perhaps it is because I was kicked out of kindergarten for non-sequaciousness, or is it because my mother was a radical social activist, or maybe it is because I was on my own at 13, or is it because I do not watch T.V., or perhaps it was my early involvement in civil rights and later participation with women's rights, or is it because I am an autodidact possessed by a fierce sense of wonder and curiosity or...is it all of these factors and more that have led me to these opinions? The answer is undoubtedly and unreservedly, "Yes!"

As a White, physically disabled, single mother whose background in democratically-run schools and classes was heretofore limited to K-12, I returned to university after a 12-year hiatus as a graduate student at CSUMB in the MAE program. My views on traditional school are less than savory ones. I repudiate the flagrant infringement imposed upon the recipients of this form of education; it marshals my fury and squelches all rhetoric. Schooling has always seemed disjointed, inconsequential and/or actually treacherous to me; I feel students lack obligatory scaffolding needed for the regnant information they are force-fed, and fittingly they have little or no interest in the distributed nimety of ‘facts.’ Shor (1992) emphasized that “Students are *oversaturated* with fragmented academic information, not underexposed to content. They are underexposed to the passion of knowing themselves and their society...Schooling teaches many students that education is a pointless ritual wrapped in meaningless words” (p. 82). Being inundated with incoherent and ultimately dreary material that does not apply to one’s life can have a deadening impact on the inherent joys of learning. Since I have been self-taught for a good part of my life, I am still enlivened by the potential of learning; I just do not care for being taught.

Further, it is my experience and opinion that students are not consulted about or even instructed in matters of substance and significance to and in their lives and are therefore unable to assume responsibility for their own formation (Freire, 1987). In the treatment of controversial issues, virtually no meaningful debate takes place. Students are left as either indistinct from the opinions expressed by their teacher(s) or are formed against the image of the teacher (Knight & Pearl, 2000). When teachers do not engage fully with students, the replication of expert/amateur continues unabated. Both are sort of

in the dark, uncomprehending of the other's reality, experience in the world and point(s) of view. The education, or at least the material presented, appears to be situated moderately in the ethers – a pointless ritual wrapped in meaningless words.

It seems that the fear of democracy is deeply entrenched (Chomsky, 2000); I therefore recognized the validity of Shor's (1996) assertion that:

We develop in a society with a democratic story about itself that is so enveloping and sentimental that it is hard to notice how authoritarian and oligarchic power actually is, at work, in school, in government, in business, in the media, etc. Power in society is like power in schools, colleges and classrooms: unilateral, unelected, top-down, hierarchical, patriarchal, not democratic. (p. 23)

I wanted to effect change, to unveil this story, while working with adults in a democratic, non-hierarchical manner in an educative setting.

Traditionally run schools and classrooms represent a zero-sum relationship unmistakably not in favor of students. However, being able to ground education in student experience, coupled with building upon that foundation via a critical, liberatory pedagogy that focuses on social justice which could then be imbedded in a democratic process heartily appealed to me.

I nevertheless adduce that the majority of traditional schools, regardless of size, location, racial composition, funding and curriculum would nonetheless claim that their ultimate objective is to shape the lives of students so that each graduate becomes a functioning citizen of a democratic society. It appears, however, that many conventional schools run by sententious or benevolent dictators actually more resemble prisons, and yet, the only crime committed by the prisoner was that of being a child. Why have compulsory education when curiosity is inborn in children? I must impugn their attitude toward children and mark spurious their claim that children need to be inculcated in order

to become productive citizens. I consider that the horrific effect of this long-term incarceration coupled with its hegemonic structure results in a populace who are either disaffected or apathetic, neither type being able to think critically, constructively question authority and rules, argue effectively or positively influence public affairs (Gatto, 1997). I was unquestionably not interested in participating – as either student or teacher – in this egregious arrangement.

As for the professor, Dr. Patricia Whang, she is a tenured Asian American female working in the Liberal Studies department. She has taught MAE 600 seven times before and is actively pursuing pedagogical practices that inspire future teachers to see, question, and act in ways that contribute to greater social, economic and environmental justice. Her interest in democratically-run classrooms was spawned when we team-taught in Spring, 2006. Furthermore, she attended a conference on education where she participated in a round-table discussion led by Kevin Graziano, an assistant professor at Nevada State College. He had conducted his college-level course for pre-service teachers democratically. In addition Dr. Whang indicated she was not interested in the customary expert/initiate relationship. She held that together we could build a democratic alliance that might resist the reproduction of patriarchal models. She wanted to create pedagogical possibilities that allowed for collaborative teaching (Browder & Ellerby, 1997). Furthermore, by team-teaching the course, Dr. Whang established that she valued the cause of working collaboratively and encouraging students to do the same (Pearl & Knight, 1999).

## *Chapter II*

### *Terms and Their Surfeit of Meanings*

*“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather scornful tone,  
“it means just what I choose it to mean -- neither more nor less.”  
(Lewis Carroll)*

Theoretically, the purposes and practices that framed this study are drawn from an understanding of democracy, democratically-run schools and critical-liberatory pedagogy. Therefore, these are the terms defined in this section.

Given the way our nation’s leaders bandy about the word “democracy,” I found myself unsure of what democracy meant, exactly. Because I had visited many democratic schools, I had fairly thoroughly investigated the term with regard to schools and schooling. I discovered a substantial deviation from the “original” Iroquois, or the Haudenosaunee’s (People of the Longhouse) notion of a participatory democracy, upon which our nation’s representative democracy is founded, where governance is truly based on the consent of the governed (Grinde & Johansen, 1990).

*Representative democracy* can be defined as the free and equal right of *every person* to participate in a system of government, practiced by electing representatives of the people by the people. It is ostensibly the type of government operating in the United States. Who is “every person?” For one-and-one-half centuries, the right to vote, own property and even earn a wage, along with many other basic human “rights,” were restricted to white adult males; to suggest that it is the “right of every person” ignores the fact that a large number of people, including *all* women, *all* children, *all* “savages” (i.e. Native Americans) and *all* Blacks for some time, were effectively excluded. We can still see abundant evidence today that women have never been and still are not acknowledged

as full and equal members and citizens in any country known as a democracy (Pateman, 1983). To ever afford full human rights to children seems not to be on the horizon, either – unless we are prepared to look to and abide by the measures embedded in the principles of a participatory democracy.

*Participatory democracy* hails from the people of the Six Nations, also known by the French term, Iroquois Confederacy, or as noted above, the Haudenosaunee. The Six Nations included the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, Senecas and Tuscaroras. Together, these people comprised the oldest living participatory democracy on earth. The original United States' representative democracy (which was shaped in large part by Benjamin Franklin, whose formal schooling ended early but his overall education never did, and Thomas Jefferson, who was under private tutelage until he entered college at the age of 16) drew much inspiration from this confederacy of nations. The Six Nations practiced participatory democracy for over eight hundred years. *All* members of *all* Six Nations collectively participated in making decisions (Grinde & Johansen, 1990).

*Democratic Schools:* Democratic schools generally share most or all of the following characteristics, although there is no exact definition or requirement for a democratic school:

- shared decision-making among the students and staff
- a learner-centered approach in which students choose their daily activities
- equality among staff and students
- the community as an extension of the classroom
- structured classes may or may not be offered

- students are free to skip or attend lessons (Galley, 2004; Mintz, 2006).

While CSUMB is not by definition or in practice a democratic school, I felt it important to provide a contextual *mise en scène* for the way in which a *classroom* can be governed, even if the institution is consuetudinary.

*Democracy in Education*: “Democracy-in-action” is almost redundant since education is above all the giving of examples through actions, and yet what is learned about democracy may be the most important knowledge students can get from school. In order to meaningfully learn about democracy, students must do it; democracy cannot just be talked about (Freire, 1987; Knight & Pearl, 2000). Democracy in the classroom alone will not topple or overhaul society, and social conditions certainly facilitate our understanding of the way students react in a classroom (Freire, 1987). Clearly, social conditions are in need of an overhaul, yet one place to begin that process is by the unshakable utilization of democracy in the classroom. It is possible to make some localized changes by practicing a democratic education in the classroom since immediate changes can become factors in a larger transformation. Having positive feelings toward intellectual life can undergird the requisite demands of being a change-agent in society-at-large (Freire, 1987; Shor, 1992). Illuminated thusly, participatory democracy is the definition to keep in mind when the term democracy or democratically-run is used in this study.

The idea of participatory democracy and community practiced in schools who specifically label themselves as democratically-run differs from the social democratic vision of schools that have democratic values. The latter would support using power to promote, for instance, equality, social justice, and civil rights; the former would not

support the use of coercion regardless of the “rightness” of the outcome. No held ideals can possibly justify indoctrinating students, despite the familiarity of this practice. The student’s right of rejection must be equal to the teacher’s right of presentation. That is what it means for authority to be democratic and shared instead of dictatorial and one-sided (Shor, 1992). We can today see a perfect illustration of the use of power to (allegedly) endorse equality, promote social justice and uphold human rights: the war in Iraq. President Bush stated that he wanted *democracy* for Iraq; whether we believe his declaration and/or motives is irrelevant for the point of this illustration. He felt duty-bound to *coerce* others into a way of living that would seemingly promote equality, social justice and civil/human rights. He professed to possess a social democratic vision. He did not seem to be averse to using the most compelling form of force – murder – to carry out his vision. Any form of force would be a *bête noire* to anyone involved in participatory democracy.

Further, the aim of a democracy is *not* elimination (of say racism or sexism) but the transformation of all the members who, by participating in a democratic process, grow in understanding of the issues involved (Knight & Pearl, 2000). In order to achieve these goals of transformation, dialogue is required. This sort of dialogue requires responsibility, directiveness, determination, discipline and objectives (Freire, 1987). It appears evident to me that for an alteration of consciousness to occur, the environment most suitable is one where volitional acts evolve; a democratically-run milieu provides no locus for coercion. This is not to imply that a blissful state of harmony exists within a democratically-run classroom; au contraire. In the last analysis, conflict is the midwife of consciousness (Freire, 1987).

In a democratic classroom, knowledge and rights are revealed, not prescribed, and there is no place for an authoritarian figure. Rights and knowledge – like all dimensions of democracy – are literally created by students in interaction with one another with the help of a convincing and flexible authority/guide (Pearl & Knight, 2000). A democratic curriculum invites students to discard the inactive role of knowledge consumers and assume the dynamic role of “meaning makers.” Students can become producers rather than just consumers of prepackaged and parceled knowledge (Apple & Beane, 1995; Pearl & Knight, 1999).

Participatory democracy is the form of education with which I resonate. Although there are indeed many forms of division and segregation that unmistakably need to be addressed by democratic education, it occurs to me that its primary thrust is to offer a credible alternative to the hierarchical education that has been powerfully reinforced and predominantly uncontested over the past century (Knight & Pearl, 2000). Dr. Whang and I unquestionably endeavored to create and offer a plausible – albeit little-known – alternative: democracy.

*Critical-Liberatory-Democratic Pedagogy.* As teachers effecting a critical-liberatory-democratic pedagogy (Freire, 2005; hooks, 1994; Shor, 1992; Shor, 1996), we recognized that we must continually attempt to help students question and contest domination, and the beliefs and practices that dominate. Despite the appearance that colleges and universities may give of being a neutral territory of enlightened aspiration, a microcosm of unbiased, non-political and value-free discussions and decisions, we contend that there is no such beast. How can you have a neutral education or a neutral curriculum or even a neutral teacher? We do not see a separation between politics and

education because educators either enable or inhibit the inquiring habits of students, thus increasing or rendering inoperative their vital relationship to knowledge, schooling and society (Kozol, 1975; Shor, 1987; Shor, 1992). Kinigstein (2007) echoed this sentiment quite clearly in her article entitled *Democratic Education is Not Neutral*. Here is what she had to say:

In education, a crucial decision is made: whether one wants to perpetuate the current system of relationships that we live under or to encourage the forging of new ones, without their foundations in domination. There is no neutrality because not addressing other structures of domination is to collude with them. (p. 20)

Those educators working in support of a critical pedagogy persistently work to offer students the opportunity to question ideologies and practices considered oppressive (including those at school), and encourage liberatory (Freire, 2005) collective and individual responses. A liberatory pedagogy contradicts the notion of the sage on the stage because the teacher veritably starts from where the students are, permitting the students to learn to see and respect themselves as authorities (Takacs, 2002).

However, *critical* pedagogy alone can feel defeating to students. If we continually analyze and illuminate all things wrong with the current system, we can seem (and become) cynical if we offer no alternatives, no anticipation for affairs to be better than we know them. Some critics attribute speciousness to critical pedagogy, suggesting that the idea of student empowerment and dialogue act as smokescreens and merely give the illusion of equality while in reality they abet and serve the authoritarian nature of the teacher/student relationship. Lacking also in critical pedagogy is an understanding of democracy and democratic practices – in addition to it being inapplicable to the actuality of classroom experiences. Indeed, there are teachers who embrace the tenets of critical pedagogy and yet conduct their classrooms in repressive ways that actually reinforce the

patriarchal, hierarchical, unilateral narrative that pervades our supposedly democratic society (Ellsworth, 1989; hooks, 1994; Knight & Pearl, 2000; Shor, 1996). Sutphin (2000) realized that even though she was operating an interactive classroom, without including student choice (with respect to textbooks), she was still bound by and consequently replicating outdated, domesticating versions of politesse. So instead of a truly liberating classroom, there continue to be the confining, claustrophobic and authoritarian style in practice which, to me, could not possibly lead to the open discussions and democratic deliberations to which I am inexorably drawn.

Even with the liberatory aspect – where students are able to respect themselves as authorities – without hope for a better and different possibility, without true equality, the future can still appear bleak. And at the heart of democracy, hope, dialogue and equality *must* be present. This is a difficult proposition to fulfill, and the practice of democracy is not always convenient. But in the interest of creating a more egalitarian vision of society, teaching democratically – which involves dialogue – is foremost. The dialogue in a democratic situation is a form of communication that at once disproves ascendancy while concurrently asserting the freedom of the participants to re-make their culture (Freire, 1987; Meier, 1995). I can attest to the experience of inconvenience, and yet the art of dialogue and exploration are perhaps just unfamiliar, which may explain the feeling of vexation.

Infusing the democratic element in critical pedagogy allows for optimism and transformation; it invokes respect for a student's expertise and knowledge, promotes the dialectic; commands participants to engage in extensive class discussion and deliberation, realizes a shift in the seat of power, induces the making and partaking of motions,

provokes responsible voting and evokes a sense of empowerment where effecting change on a local, personal level is now possible; all of this occurs in place of a predetermined, remote, elite “education” being meted out to the students.

## ***Chapter III***

### ***From Fast Autocracy to Slow Democracy***

*Democracy is the worst form of government  
except for all those others that have been tried.  
(Winston Churchill)*

While we may not consider a dictatorship to be optimal, it is indisputably efficient, and swift. The democratic process, on the other hand, is cumbersome as it lumbers along in slow motions. A comparison of the two different versions of the class is given as a way of highlighting the impact on classroom policies and practices that infusing democratic principles rendered.

#### ***The Traditional Model of MAE 600***

When Dr. Whang and I team-taught the MAE 600 class in Spring, 2006, we were the ones who held the irrevocable voice, certainly in matters such as grading. However, it is difficult to assert that this class was *ever* “traditionally” run. It is challenging to adequately illustrate Dr. Whang’s ineluctable appeal; it is indubitably “Zen-like.” She is at all times interested in what the student thinks and knows; her genius always rested in her phenomenal ability to introduce a concept, allow the notion to percolate with the students for some time, and then she would delicately gather the threads of our wandering discourse, distill the diverse and sundry reflections, then masterfully weave and blend them together and generate a faultlessly firm and grounded fabric – not a one-size-fits-all version – but a quilt that sheltered all and like a magic carpet, transported us safely home, back to the topic she had originally introduced in her inimitable manner.

## *Overview*

We began the semester with community-building, getting-to-know you exercises. We established the context of this class, of our work. We assembled and reviewed the syllabus, with students noting which books they needed to buy and when each assignment was due. Rubrics were distributed enabling students to understand what was expected of them for each assignment. Followed closely, they could garner a good grade. Following loosely or not at all could result in a very poor mark. Attendance and participation contributed to a student's grade as well. (See Table 1)

We showed clips from videos we had selected or brought in current articles of interest to us and asked students to talk and write about their responses/reflections. The discussions were quite energetic, and students were, in the main, comprehensively engaged. We discussed next week's assignment, and either provided the needed reading or informed the students as to where or how it could be obtained. They were expected to read the assignment and write in their journals about what they had read. At subsequent classes, journal partners would be assigned (and Dr. Whang and I could change journal partners as we saw fit) and journals were exchanged. Readings were discussed at length.

We also had a sign-up sheet for community meal nights (pot lucks). There were events that we expected students to attend, on and off campus throughout the semester. In addition, viewing of selected videos outside the classroom was part of the curriculum. A trip to the library to learn about research and technological tools was also scheduled.

Projects and papers were assigned and due according to our design. Dr. Whang was quick to give choices, however, concerning *which* project a student might do and/or join, and the possibilities for the final position paper's topic were nearly boundless.

## *The Democratically-run Model of MAE 600*

*The world of knowledge takes a crazy turn  
When teachers themselves are taught to learn.  
(Bertolt Brecht)*

As a Teacher's Assistant in MAE 600 during Spring 2006, I introduced a number of democratic concepts that were pleasing and intriguing to Dr. Whang. The two of us talked about the possibility of teaching a semester employing these methods. We worked together over the summer of 2006 brainstorming ideas for teaching utilizing critical-liberatory-democratic pedagogy. As Kohl (1998) described, we wanted our class to be "both free and structured, spontaneous and disciplined, innovative and classical, fun and very difficult" (p. 10). We aspired to teach the class utilizing democratically-held values and practices. Dr. Whang and I sought to build, and recognize as such, an openly non-neutral, democratic, political curriculum based upon the actual interest of the students that was enhanced by our ability to guide via critical thinking and analyses.

The literature on teaching graduate-level courses in this style was sparse save for a few prolific authors, notably Ira Shor, who was relied upon quite heavily, and Art Pearl, who broadened my perspective perceptibly. Both of these educators were willing to dialogue with me via email, for which I am indebted to them. It was marvelous that their viewpoints and practices varied from one another. This permitted a broad-ranging dialogue to occur in my head. Kevin Graziano graciously shared his unpublished manuscript with me entitled *Using Critical Pedagogy to Establish a Shared Responsibility of Teaching and Learning Among Pre-Service Teachers*. Unflinchingly, he patiently answered all of my questions and was a fount of inspiration.

Aside from the limited literature with respect to college-level democratically-run courses, a superfluity of books, conferences, lectures, papers and web sites were found where a democratic process in a K-12 environment was thriving. This is quite thrilling, and these sources did inspire and inform my research and practice.

With the literature and practitioners in my mind, and by recognizing the objectives of CSUMB, goals of the MAE program and Learning Outcomes specific to MAE 600, Dr. Whang, the students and I generated and negotiated a curriculum through these lenses while working together collaboratively to create an educational plan that served both the individual student and the community of students within the classroom. This is what it looked like:

### *Overview*

I acted as participant-observer, taking copious notes and working in concert with the professor. The idea was to have the entire class co-create the syllabus; we thought this process would require two-three class sessions to complete. During the first class, we introduced some getting-to-know you exercises as ice-breakers. This was Dr. Whang's idea; my idea was to ask a plethora of questions regarding what did each student want to learn and how did they want to learn about a multicultural/bilingual education; I felt this would allow us to frontload our deliberations in hopes of uncovering and generating themes. I also considered this as a distinctive way to begin a class: asking what is it you already know and what is it you want to learn? Dr. Whang underscored that my questions seemed too prescriptive, and she felt it was more important at that juncture to build community; I respected her acumen. Building community permits a sense of safety to arise, which is a crucial element in a democratically-run classroom. Furthermore, by

establishing without delay an open, non-intimidating environment, we were able to share the ownership of meaningful rapport, and within the field of relationships between the participants, all real learning can occur unimpeded (Mercogliano 1998; Sorensen, 1996). After approximately one hour of getting to know one another, we gave students a schedule for the semester. Students were also given a sheet of paper that described MAE 600 and the Learning Outcomes for the class and the MAE Program.

Except for specified dates the class meets, the schedule was bare, and no assignments were given. I was eager to see the reactions. Considering that none of the students had ever encountered a blank syllabus before; for many, this was risible. It was refreshing to see enthusiasm, and I also was not surprised to note bewilderment and/or resistance. After discussing this anomalous start-up, we actually plunged into planning mode and consideration of what it is we wanted to learn, how we wanted to learn it, and how we would exhibit or demonstrate that we had, in fact, learned it. I was genuinely elated with the course of events. Naturally, many questions arose from students, specifically around what books would be used? What were the assignments? What was expected with respect to the MLO's? We suggested that the answers would be fleshed out as the semester unfolded.

After we concluded with the initiation, Dr. Whang suggested everyone do a brain dump regarding what it was each student wanted to learn, keeping the Learning Outcomes and the course description in mind. We discussed and then actually voted on topics related to social justice, critical pedagogy and multicultural/bilingual education, in keeping with the description of MAE 600. I thought her suggestion was nothing short of brilliant. Here we were, in our first class that was to be democratically-run, and the

students conducted themselves as if it were not even mildly outside their ken to be voting in a classroom! A number of issues gained prominence. These included: Politics/Policies in Education; Bilingual Education; Effective Communication with Respect to Cultural Differences; Cooperation/Motivation; Pedagogical Practices; Classroom Transformation; Technology, and Thesis. It was an excellent idea that I take notes, for I could spill my thrill on the pages. We decided as a class on how our course would be managed. 1) Take responsibility for topics, readings and presenting information; 2) Vote on topics; 3) Each class would have a theme based upon one of the topics, and 4) Materials used in class would be posted electronically on our interactive campus-specific Blackboard web site and/or copied and given to all participants. At our *first* meeting affairs were already proceeding at a rapid and progressive pace. From the questions and topics spawned, we were able to recognize generative themes around which to base the ensuing discussions and class meetings.

During the next three classes, in addition to participating in an e-discussion that was topic-based, we had consensus around the idea of keeping reflective/responsive journals. Dr. Whang and I supplied prompts for each week's journal entry, but their use was voluntary. This allowed for some fascinating tangential writing. The journals were shared with classmate(s) at the commencement of each class and allowed us, as teachers/authorities, to take a back seat as possessors/suppliers of knowledge. As hooks (1994) recognized, it was crucial that she (as teacher) and each and every student be a fully active participant; no one could simply be a passive consumer. The students were exceedingly engaged in participation. Again, I was discreetly pleased and confined my glee to the notes I kept.

Dr. Whang and I did not read the journals in class; I collected them three times during the course of the semester and provided feedback – comments that would hopefully promote deeper thinking or reflection of an issue.

I also kept the Minutes of and for each class, and they were read at the next meeting where modifications could be made, if necessary, prior to voting to approve the Minutes. The Minutes helped us keep track of what had transpired, the agreements we had reached and business that was still pending and in need of attention.

As a class, we conferred on the possible literature and made relatively solid decisions regarding which books and other media we would rely upon. Because it was voted that each person would bring in articles and other media relating to their primary topic of interest, we did not always know beforehand what article/author/media would actually be present in class. We vigorously sought the student voice rather than impose the teacher-talk and inflict further narration sickness (Shor, 1996; Freire, 1993). The active desire to hear the student voice as opposed to exploiting the ‘culture of silence’ is an unfamiliar tack to nearly all students – and can be unsettling at first. Past teaching experience visibly revealed to us that many students simply accept what the curriculum offers, without enthusiasm, without question or protest. Students understand early that as students, their voices are insignificant, so they learn not to say anything contrary, to say okay, and to unceremoniously complete the next brainless assignment because they know that is the way to acquire a good grade, to get ahead and to slip through unnoticed (Freire, 1987; Chomsky, 2003). Building knowledge, hearing out student voices and having discourse was *our* way to enable everyone to “get ahead.”

We sought to practice the democratic side of a critical pedagogy which meant not ignoring, silencing or punishing discontented students; we felt it was crucial to invite and encourage students to make their criticisms public for class consideration (Shor, 1996). We aspired to hear the minority expression, the voice of dissent; because to us, that was where the juicy parts of democracy (and a vital classroom) lived. I articulated that in class, letting the students know we were not seeking consensus but dialogue. I was pleased to note on more than one occasion the minority voice was made vocal. An example that comes to mind was when everyone, except for one, agreed to make photocopies of articles, and/or book chapters so each person in the class could use and reference the material. The dissenting voice pointed out that it was a waste of paper and that the links to the articles and/or books could be posted electronically, thereby saving paper. Ultimately, each person made her/his own choice of how to handle this.

While unobtrusive, Dr. Whang and I were not merely bystanders. We strove to abide by Shor's (1996) poetic offering: "I exercised my right to propose and the students had the right to dispose, which meant I did not impose" (p. 40). We were not imposing figures, but we most assuredly proposed material, ideas and projects, and the students had every right to reject, revise or accept. As stated earlier, our negotiations with the students also involved selecting which books and articles to read; which movies/documentaries to watch, in addition to which guest speakers to have; the creation of timelines and deadlines for all activities and projects; decisions regarding the actual activities and projects and the individual and group presentations; participation in decision-making discussions, and dialogue regarding the final position paper, an individual research paper on one of the issues decided upon in our class. The position paper's purpose echoes a

number of Shor's (2001) tenets with respect to utilizing community sites as subject matter and writing critically about them. Approaching writing in this way, we democratized not only instruction, but literacy; we made pedagogy a force for bottom-up theorizing instead of top down, depersonalized learning (Shor, 2001).

During discussions, motions were made regarding any number of issues. These motions were either easily seconded and passed, or we would enter into extended, revealing non-querulous debates, resulting in the motion being withdrawn or a new motion being suggested, perhaps by another participant. For example, during one class it was suggested by one student that we attend a particular function on campus in place of coming to class. Another student quickly seconded the motion, but then yet another student wondered aloud about what actual learning would take place by attending this function; a grand discussion followed, resulting in the motion being withdrawn completely. Neither the professor nor I said (or had to say) anything.

While grading was in contradiction to a democratically-run schema, it was a requirement at CSUMB. During the fourth class, we negotiated all assignments and attendant grading requirements. Although issues ranged from the trifling to the weighty, and debate and fatigue seem to be endemic, we recognized that democratic processes require a lot of vigor and stamina to handle disagreement; we also acknowledged that sufficient time to come together for dialogue and decision making was a prerequisite (Jackson, 1995). We discussed the attendance and participation requirements and elicited input from the entire class around any extenuating circumstance that may have prevented a student from meeting these expectations. It was decided that students would make up for absences as each individual saw fit, either by bringing in additional articles and/or

information that was topic-related, arranging for a guest speaker or a field trip, etc. This agreement relieved Dr. Whang and me from having to act as police officers; we were able to allow for each student to become responsible for her/his education without us hovering over proverbial heads, waving a grade. For example, to make up for an absence, one student created a comprehensive poem detailing what s/he had learned from each member of the class. The class members' names were not listed next to what had been learned, so we all guessed who was who. Another student gave a presentation on a conference s/he had attended, enlightening all of us around environmental issues and how they are dealt with on other campuses. We decided as a class which items would be subject to grading and how a grade would be assigned. This was an elaborate process, to be sure, and at times, I became moderately weary.

The entire class was deeply involved in a collaborative process, possibly even recognizing and/or endorsing the notion that students not only paid for but now *owned* their education in ways they heretofore had not considered. The students were absorbed in decision-making regarding their education in this class, and they were accountable to and responsible for the choices they made.

Dr. Whang and I recognized the need for meeting one-on-one and/or in groups with students as needed to help guide their inquiry and research related to achieving the learning outcomes. For instance, one student struggled mightily choosing a topic for a position paper. Both Dr. Whang and I met with the student in order to ascertain areas of deep, local interest that were at once personal, urgent and authentic.

We as teachers saw *our* roles change dramatically. We did not miss the didactic portion of the course that we had once attached importance to, despite the fact that I

became impatient with the oft times slow-going forthcoming results inherent in a democratically-run class. During class time, Dr. Whang and I strove to fully participate as teachers *and* as students. It becomes evident that teacher and student easily and clearly reside in the same individual; there is no distinguishing between the elements (Curtis, 2005; Mercogliano, 1998). In any area where we had expertise, we did not shy away from sharing our knowledge or asking probing questions to help uncover students' knowledge, biases and/or lack of information. At times, this proved to be problematic, because we were still viewed as the experts. Consequently, we would sometimes decide to withhold our opinions until students had thoroughly voiced theirs. One case in point I mentioned earlier was with respect to attending an event on campus. Once the decision had been made by the students not to go, both Dr. Whang and I unreservedly expressed our views on the matter.

We shared responsibility for assessing each student's work and gave appropriate and timely feedback. At no point and time were we asked to withhold such critique. Students were also interested in peer review of journals, papers, presentations, etc., and that process was voted in and carried out throughout the semester.

Were an outsider to walk into the democratically-run classroom, the only immediately evident noticeable difference would be if a vote were in progress. One would have to linger for other perceptible distinctions to become apparent.

*Table 1: Compare and Contrast Heterogeneity of Classes*

Components	Spring, 2006 Traditionally run	Fall, 2006 Democratically run
Class Structure	<p>Sitting in a rows or semi-circle. Teacher/T.A. present material. Respect for varying viewpoints. Disagreements. Agreements. Laughter. Frustration. Conversation. Debate. Listening. Speaking. Waiting. Listening again. Thinking. Digesting. Considering. Transforming. The structure of the class was thematic: for the first several weeks it would be “What’s the Problem;”; the middle of the semester would house “Social Justice Tools”, while the last third addressed “Transformative Possibilities.” Due dates for partnered projects/papers and position papers were established and adhered to.</p>	<p>Sitting in a circle. Minutes read and approved. All present material for class. Respect for varying viewpoints. Disagreements. Agreements. Laughter. Frustration. Conversation. Debate. Listening. Speaking. Waiting. Listening again. Thinking. Digesting. Considering. Transforming. Making a motion. Discussion. Voting. Moving on. Repeat.</p>
Readings	<p>Dr. Whang and I decided upon the readings, viewings, guest speakers, etc.</p>	<p>Collaboratively decided based upon required outcomes and student interest. Initially, voted on all readings. Later, Dr. Whang and I assigned readings, at the behest of the students.</p>
Assignments	<p>Dr. Whang and I created all of the assignments. These were created before the semester commenced and were distributed at the first class in the syllabus.</p>	<p>Collaboratively decided upon to meet the individual/group needs of the students. Initially, voted on all assignments. Later, Dr. Whang and I created the assignments as per the students’ request.</p>

Components	Spring, 2006 Traditionally run	Fall, 2006 Democratically run
Grading	Dr. Whang and I were responsible for assigning grades.	Full discussion initiated by the professor around which elements count toward a grade, what percentage each element counts, what does not count, who decides the final grade, peer involvement, voting on all of these issues. Ultimately, professor rescinded her role and gave the decision to each student.
Seat of Power	Dr. Whang and I determined the choices and sat decisively in the seat of power.	Shared authority. Initially, professor and T.A. and students made all decisions jointly. Voting on all decisions. Students later launched the power back in our hands.

### *Important Turning Points in the Democratically-run Version*

*It is important that students bring a certain  
ragamuffin, barefoot, irreverence to their studies;  
they are not here to worship what is known, but to question it.  
(J. Bronowski)*

Those elements, events and occasions in the democratically-run class that caused a shift in consciousness and/or direction are parsed here. The choices are subjective, based purely upon my unpremeditated reactions to what was occurring. It is within the realm of possibility that these were not important, or conversely, that other issues were more critical; however, after careful study, the issue of the students feeling orphaned; the students removing me from what little power I had (but was not aware I possessed), and students themselves adopting democratic principles in their classrooms seemed to elicit the greatest emotional response from me, so I have chosen to report on these three crucial phases.

*Orphans* Class Five was pivotal in that the students decided they really wanted to be told what to do. They wanted the syllabus filled in, and not by them but by us! This represented the nadir for me. Perhaps it was a requisite to have viscerally realized beforehand that the critical classroom is more demanding of students than the traditional classroom which actually demands a negligible response (Shor, 1992). Some of the students were seeking to have fewer burdens placed on them; others had actually been in dialogue with former students who had attended our traditionally-run class. Through their comparisons, they learned about the rich literature we had assigned, and they did not want to miss out on the opportunity to avail themselves to this. I should not have been,

but I was astonished when this motion was carried; it was clearly not something Dr. Whang or I had predicted. Here is an excerpt from the Minutes for Class Five:

**Motion Carried:** Patty & Michaelia are to assign all readings, assignments, due dates, specifics related to same and assume responsibility for grading/points distribution (Blackboard participation will still remain 30% of grade). Topics previously decided upon will remain the topics used for the balance of the semester. Each student is to volunteer at least once (but there is no upper limit) to bring in material related to a topic. Anyone can bring in anything related to the topic, but it is not in place of when you're supposed to bring something in. This new motion will be in effect after 10/12. Patty & Michaelia will bring in a filled-in syllabus 10/5 of the readings, topics and assignments.

I was quite distraught and nonplussed over this bouleversement because for me, this represented the students' lack of commitment to democracy and freedom. I felt that the fact that they would abdicate responsibility so effortlessly seemed to be an indicator of our *culture*, and I felt disheartened to see the opportunity to practice participatory democracy just tossed aside. I recognize now that my expectations were premature and possibly unreasonable, but in my quixotic and utopian mind, plausibly fueled by the climate of the times (where freedom and rights in The United States *are* being desquamated and decimated), my internal reaction was acute. Dr. Whang, however, responded wisely and unwearyingly: "Yes, I'm not sure what to say or think. Let's not lose hope though; the semester isn't over yet! P"(personal communication, September 29, 2006). I wished that I could be so confident. Instead, tremulously, I reached out to Ira, who responded kindly, as follows:

Hello--sorry to hear about the reversal in the class. I don't know enough about the situation to really suggest remedies but your report immediately made me think of a story that Paulo told about a seminar he was teaching in Switzerland. Like you and your prof, he began the seminar with a low profile of authority and asked the grad students to come up with themes, issues, projects, etc. Paulo joined in the discussions which went on for a while. During a coffee break one night in class, a

male student approached Paulo and said something close to this: "Prof. Paulo, I much admire your work and the seminar but I must tell you that you made fundamental error in this class." Paulo looked up to him and asked curiously, "Yes? What is the mistake?" The student then replied, "When we began the seminar on the first night, you asked us to do the planning and the running of the class. This made us feel like orphans. On that first night, you committed suicide as the teacher of the class. Instead, you should have taught the class and waited for us to assassinate you." To Paulo, the incident meant that he was following his own goals, directions for the seminar rather than knowing what the students wanted, needed, expected, preferred, and were ready for.

Anyhow, seems to me that it's difficult to negotiate shared authority with students who have never been asked to exercise power in classrooms. Reaching adulthood with no practice in the art and science of democratic action, they probably feel vulnerable and defensive when put in charge of a process which has always taken charge of them. For me, this is a common occurrence--students withdrawing from the offer of authority, preferring me to run the class alone, relieving them of roles and responsibilities they haven't tested before. In some times and places, in a political climate of activism and questioning authority, more students will take to such empowerment more quickly, but the current age is a dreadful time of attack on people's needs and on democracy society-wide. I find myself having to own more authority and show more authority at the desire of the students so as to reassure them before I gradually withdraw and try to shift responsibility, which sometimes works. Democratic thought, feeling, actions, and ideals are developmentally gained.

All in all, here's my wish that you can be patient with yourself and with the students and with the situation. Sharing authority is an experimental process, out of sync with the status quo compelling us to live by harsher market discipline, which the students reflect in their fears and lowered expectations....best, ira (personal communication, September 30, 2006).

Dr. Whang's response, combined with Ira's email to me, served to ameliorate the despair I felt. In fact, despite how dispirited I was, I felt compelled to practice the patience of which he shared in our communications. I also recognized the validity of his counsel. We had not let the students assassinate us, and they instead felt like orphans. We were not living in the 1960's anymore when the political climate was more conducive to questioning (and overthrowing) authority. This was undeniably an experimental process, and I had a lot to learn.

Although Dr. Whang and I did, indeed, fill in the heretofore blank syllabus to reflect assignment of the readings, deadlines, grading criteria and coursework, all was *not* ultimately heaved upon our shoulders: the complex debates, the slow motions and the voting continued unabated, while the advancement of the concept of the ownership of education was actually achieved incrementally, albeit unevenly. In many ways, it was straightforward for Dr. Whang and me to assign the whole lot. We just reverted to prior semesters and extracted readings and assignments from there, cobbling together a working syllabus. In choosing to run the class democratically, however, we were not seeking an uncomplicated affair, so while it freed us up in many ways, we felt the burden of being the experts, the authority on knowledge again. The territory was certainly familiar, but we were hoping to pave new roads. Conversely, we had not planned on orphaning the students in the course of action, either. I was much more impatient with the wobbly process than was Dr. Whang.

*No More!* Class Thirteen brought a couple of surprises, but I was out of town, so I did not learn about them until I returned. The first matter that arose during Class Thirteen was that students no longer wanted the Minutes to reflect attendance, tardiness, etc. as they felt it was too authoritarian to note who arrived when. It is of interest to note that this issue arose when the Minute-keeper-cum-Teacher's Assistant was absent! Despite the fact that Dr. Whang and I felt we were sharing power with the students, perhaps their impression of me as Teacher's Assistant conferred a status that I was unaware of but one that they were acutely conscious of in terms of power: power over them. They may have felt more comfortable to challenge authority when the authority

was not in attendance. Looking back, we might have considered having the task of Minute-keeper to be on rotation. As it was, I had all the power.

The second concern was that the position paper was voted to be optional. I was completely distressed by this event and would not be attenuated. I feel certain I would have spoken out had I been present. As it was, I sent the following email to all the students regarding their decision:

Hello all: Since I wasn't at last class when position papers were voted out, I didn't have a chance to share my opinion, and since I, too, am a student and in the MAE program, I think what I have to say is important for you as students in the MAE program. I would have said something like this: "Well, you're free, of course, to vote on this, but what is motivating this vote? Are you perhaps afraid of writing papers? Do you simply dislike it? How about exploring those issues? Perhaps Patty & I will guide and stretch you! How will you learn and/or demonstrate your knowledge of APA, for example, which you will be using throughout the MAE program? What sort of position paper have you written in the recent past that will serve you when it comes time to write your thesis? If after looking at all these things, you still want to consider not doing a position paper, let's take a vote at the end of class. Perhaps it will be an individual decision whether or not to do a paper, but I want to be sure that you are serving your best interests in the MAE program -- regardless of your choice." Yes, that's probably what I would have said, and I still think it is valid to consider all of this.  
Michaelia (personal communication, December 7, 2006)

Astoundingly, almost all students chose to write a position paper anyway. However, that does not alter the stance that Dr. Whang and I would have taken had we been together in the class. I would have spoken up, and she would have supported me, or she would have been silent, or she would have played devil's advocate. Regardless, a more involved discussion would have ensued and underlying reasons would have been revealed. She, being alone and rather shocked at this turn, conceded the point. Her rationale was not all that faulty; she disclosed that she doubted that the students thought she would *let* them vote this out. From her perspective, she was empowering their right to

make a choice; from my vantage point, I felt they did not have enough information on which to base their decision. We attempted to be mindful of moments when it really was indispensable to balance student-based learning, where power is shared and/or negotiated with students, with more traditional approaches to teaching such as direct instruction (Graziano, unpublished manuscript). Rather than recognize Graziano's cautionary edict, our application of a pithy instruction such as this was assuredly asymmetrical.

*More!* Throughout the semester, it appeared that essential shifts occurred in the students' perceptions of democracy as related to education; we too experienced a metamorphosis. As an added fillip, we witnessed the responsiveness of four students who incorporated democratic practices in their workplaces. Naturally, we were modeling this practice, but we adduced sufficient back-up material so that students would know we were not working in a vacuum. In particular, we watched a documentary that chronicles the life of Jefferson County Open School, a democratically-run K – 12 school in Colorado, and I spoke at length about the vast number of schools I had researched, corresponded with and visited, including Summerhill in England and two highly successful inner-city schools in New York (Albany Free School and Brooklyn Free School). Sudbury Valley School was another veteran exemplar.

## *Chapter IV*

### *Lessons Learned*

*No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it.  
We must learn to see the world anew.  
(Albert Einstein)*

In reporting in the previous chapter on the important turning points for our democratically-run class, I wanted to show how the students – as a group and as individuals – affected the course of the course. It would be imprecise to say we learned nothing from those kairotic moments; however, in contradistinction to this, *Lessons Learned* constitutes an illustration of those areas that require recognition and implementation irrespective of student input. A more practiced teacher of democratic methods would most likely have different items in this chapter, but as neophytes, we identified these seven key lessons in particular that we learned; they demand consideration prior to, as opposed to after, offering a democratically-run class.

*Weekly worked weakly* I suppose one of the first items I recognized to be knotty in terms of running a class democratically was the simple fact of the wretched infrequency with which we met. I think it is excruciatingly difficult to operate in this manner when only meeting once per week for four hours. This was not something Dr. Whang and I had considered when we embarked upon this expedition, yet it became abundantly clear that it was an issue of some magnitude. I attempted to bridge the disparity via frequent email contact with the students, but truly nothing substitutes for eye-to-eye, face-to-face contact. We think it essential to have a class that meets at least twice per week in order to allow for the measured retreat as directors of learning, as the

commanding influence (Shor, 1987). I feel we were unable to adhere to this dictum of gradually withdrawing when meeting only once per week, and that weakened the strength of the democratic process that could be available to students and teachers alike. Given that the democratic process was new to the students, I kept in very close email contact throughout the week in order to provide encouragement and involvement. Additionally, I utilized the Blackboard discussion board as a forum and when in need of a quorum prior to our next in-person meeting. Here is an example of an early email that garnered one-hundred percent participation, and in the affirmative:

Hello all: We didn't discuss this in either of our two classes, and it was something I wanted to bring up on our first meeting. I would like to propose that journals be kept and journal partner(s) be chosen for sharing journals. Class discussion can be very stimulating and provocative, and I feel we also/then need reflective time and an avenue for personal, uninterrupted expression, which can be quite revealing. A journal is a very good way to record thoughts, inspirations, questions and concerns specifically related to class discussion and other issues that may arise as a result of the conversations and readings. One of our learning outcomes involves being/becoming an effective communicator. By keeping journals and having a partner (or two) give feedback on what is written, it can strengthen our abilities as effective communicators.

I would like to know what you think about this idea, so please send an email to me with your thoughts.

Take care.

Michaelia

Dr. Whang and I had one another for support and feedback, and as novices, this proved invaluable. I also stayed in email contact with Ira Shor, who is a veteran of democratically-run college courses.

Were we to offer another class that met only once per week, I believe we would structure it differently in order to compensate for the lack of more frequent contact. The email component could have been utilized more effectively to provide greater support to the students. Students could have met in small groups throughout the week in order to

generate material/questions to bring to the entire class. We could also have created additional gathering times, informally at perhaps a park, a restaurant or in the library on campus.

*Impatiently Developing Patience* The process of dialogue – a truly lengthy discussion – is utterly invaluable as a means of finding themes and motifs (Shor 1987). The pace can be interminably sluggish as topics are raised only to be razed after hours of deliberation. The progression from an oblique idea to a topic for discussion to the making of a proposal *and then back again* is not a feint nor is it for those faint of heart. That odyssey requires patience. A *profusion* of patience, I might add, which is something I must confess I do not possess in abundance but find I am always working to develop. In opposition to my paucity, Dr. Whang boasts a plenitude of this cardinal attribute. Jointly, we steadfastly slogged or alternately strode through the adumbrative slow motions.

It is vital to have patience: patience with oneself, with the process (particularly) and with the students as they negotiate their way through unconventional and radical concepts and practices. It was an eminently gratifying adventure once the students began making motions as opposed to just voting on issues Dr. Whang and I eventuated.

*Voting* Another matter of concern was having allowed the students to vote certain aspects out of operation. There are a couple of camps on this topic. Witnessing the K-12 democratically-run schools as I have, I noted that some indicate that *all* topics and issues are to be put to a vote; others hold out on safety issues or hiring/firing of staff. Dr. Whang expressed that she felt it would not have been a truly democratically-run classroom if parameters had been placed by us around things that the students could or could not have a say about. I understand this perspective, and yet, on my own, I believe I

would have insisted that the students could not vote out the fact that the class as a whole would be deciding upon the readings, assignments, etc. I am not sure which approach is more advisable.

The first example is when they voted out the blank syllabus and voted in that we were to feed them the assignments. Their rationale had merit in that they felt we knew more about the topic at hand and could supply them with great wealth from our vast experiences that they could not begin to bring to the classroom. In the moment, however I was dumbstruck and could not voice my feelings.

With Dr. Whang's encouragement, however, over the course of the semester, I became unperturbed again and actually saw startling development in many students and in myself as well. It is important to recognize that what is comfortable and familiar to the professors can require an inordinate amount of time and practice for students to feel the same reassurance. Again, my expectations overshot the possible reality of the situation. Dr. Whang shared that she actually experienced peace of mind because she *knew* that what she and I were doing was definitively in the best interests of the students.

The additional point that underwent a significant alteration (when I was not present) was having the position paper become elective. This raises the question of individual need/want vs. community good, which is definitely a consideration for any body operating democratically. It is not clear to me yet how we might have demonstrated the necessity of/requirement for community benefit. We could have explained it, but how to do so without seeming coercive with regard to an assignment? Dr. Whang articulated that she had not thought about the need to know how to effectively facilitate decision-making in ways that would encourage students to consider the issue from the vantage

point of pros and cons regarding individual good as well as pros and cons for the wider good. It seems a good idea to broach this topic early on in negotiations in order to generate ideas of how this can be effectively addressed.

*Literature: Who Chooses?* While Dr. Whang and I had definite ideas about which authors, books and films to employ in order to promote critical thinking and the introduction of a democratic possibility in schools, we were concerned with situating the direction of the course based upon the positionality of the students. Additionally, we were curious as to *how* they wanted to gain knowledge of the things that were important to them as viewed through the lens of social justice, pluralism and a multicultural education as a means of building upon their awareness and learning from them as well. Dr. Whang and I recognized that all knowledge is built, or constructed, by individual learners; in other words, it is important when teaching and learning new knowledge to connect it to knowledge already known. Shared participation in the generation of knowledge allows for students to construct their own meanings and questions about complex issues; then, knowledge is created, shared and respected by the entire class, including the teachers (Sorensen, 1996). However, we did not foresee the inevitable event of current students talking with former students comparing notes, coming to conclusions and complaining about the democratically-run model. For instance, as mentioned earlier, this is one of the reasons we were asked to assign the literature.

In the future, I believe we would make it patently obvious that our class is going to be run democratically and that not all classes we have taught have been structured thusly. I might even mention the possibility of conferring with former students and

suggest that comparisons could prove to be controversial and that students are welcome to bring their concerns to the table for deliberation.

*The “Expert” Laid Bare* Further consideration needs to be given to the responsive skills of a teacher. On a few occasions, Dr. Whang and I found ourselves unquestionably *unable* to respond to the situation, a student, or the process. I previously described two of those incidences: one, when the students revoked their power to create the course syllabus, and the other was regarding the position paper becoming optional. Another unanticipated situation occurred when a former student crossly confronted Dr. Whang after learning that in the democratically-run class, the position paper had become optional. The student felt cozened since the position paper had been mandatory in this student’s class. This unforeseen event was quite awkward for Dr. Whang, and she felt her response to the student was inadequate. While this condition may be mollified by having experience in a democratically-run course, (*lots of experience*), Ira Shor’s classes are brought to mind (and he has *years of experience*), and struggles such as these are not unheard of. Not many think of a genuine education being an act of research, yet it is, and all research involves giving up sureness, facing uncertainty, agreeing to venture somewhat unprepared into the mysterious domain of the unfamiliar (Shor, 2001). We may find it effortless to accept this as a reality for the student, but for the teacher as well? Add to this mixture the need to lead and follow the dialogic process at the same time, and it becomes transparent that choosing to teach democratically is analogous to walking the razor’s edge (Shor, 1996). We grappled with this dichotomy throughout the semester, and we speculated that this is a conundrum worthy of rigorous examination.

I feel the autonomy afforded Dr. Whang was due to her tenured status; a garden-fresh teacher might find it untenable (or worse, disingenuous) to adopt a pedagogy that confers the initial appearance to students of “Gee, the teacher doesn’t *seem* to know what to do or say!” Teachers are *supposed* to know! They are *supposed* to lead! They are designed to *lecture*! Further, it does appear that teachers themselves want to feel (if not actually *be*) expert, so the necessity of recreating and reimagining ourselves on the job can be threatening (Shor, 1987). When your behavior is dubious, your expertise is thought questionable, suspect even, and a new teacher wants nothing less than the forlorn prospect of being regarded as ineffectual or worse yet, veritably wonky.

*Tic-Toc, Hear Them Talk* Another issue we tussled with was how to mediate time. How to have all exercise and benefit from freedom while embracing the tenets and importance of reflection? We failed to encourage a ‘watch bird’ mentality, a kind of mindfulness that would permit students to see themselves from the outside, to become participant/observers of their own conduct. It would have altered classroom dynamics considerably had we known how to teach students to become aware of being aware (Watts, 1994). It was not obvious to us how to intercede on behalf of ourselves and/or the other more silent/reflective students if one or two loquacious students were dominating the conversations. We had not enjoined the requisite sensibility with respect to equitable dialogue. On the other hand, we were cognizant of the possibility that some students may feel the need to be formally invited into discussions. We attempted to remedy that by holding Quaker-style meetings that would give each person a space in the discussion to state her/his opinions. An object was held by the person whose turn it was to speak. A person could refrain from sharing by simply passing the object to the next individual, but

the opportunity to speak was made available. This allowed each person to unreservedly express opinions and reactions. We did not respond to or piggyback on comments. After each person had an opportunity to speak, all were invited to react and respond.

Self-regulation is the elegant and multifarious arrangement required for effective democratic discourse. It requires attentiveness, patience, generosity, and cooperation; freedom, not license (Neill, 1960; Shor, 1996). Perhaps a more practiced teacher would have actually liberated the issue by bringing it to the entire class, eliciting input and ideas and ultimately, raising the issue to a vote.

*Keeping Track* Over the course of the semester, the Minutes became a centering and central aspect. This was not something I had anticipated as being crucial, but in hindsight, I can see the validity and significance of keeping Minutes, reading Minutes together and then approving or changing the Minutes from the prior class. We referred back to the Minutes on several occasions when questions arose concerning what in fact had been decided, tabled, etc. I do think it essential, however, that this task be rotated in order to avoid power-mongering.

## *Chapter V*

### *Denouement*

*Whatever you do will be insignificant.  
But it is very important that you do it.  
(Gandhi)*

We began with the feeling that it was possible to educate democratically; and despite the fact that the experience was sometimes amusing and at other times intolerably frustrating, we concluded the semester recognizing that it may very well be essential to do so.

Additionally, we recognized that in concert, Dr. Whang and I worked magnificently, and that led me to again apprehend the significance of team-teaching, *especially* when conducting a class democratically. It was important that the professor and I be able to thoroughly ingest and digest this method in order to examine its merits, challenges, joys, shortcomings and possibilities for future and further implementation in graduate-level courses.

A synopsis of MAE 600 as a democratically-run course is this: we structured it to fit the needs of the students while offering our guidance and expertise; it evolved in ways we did not anticipate, and it functioned in a slightly more than semi-democratic fashion. The positive outcomes are numerous as was evinced from the evaluations proffered by students and the projects and/or papers and/or course of action the students chose. But again, the questions I asked at the beginning were not about the students and their experiences; I wanted to know the following:

Could a tenured professor at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) sufficiently unpack the concept of “democratically-run” and still effectively lead a

required, graduate-level course with contextual intelligence? What about the fact that she had never utilized democratic methods before? What challenges would be encountered? What sort of surprising perquisites might be enjoyed? Would she be ensconced and experience a proximal connection to democratically-run ideals or would a distal relationship to the incorporation of democracy be formed? Would she be likely to pursue this method in her future classes? After obtaining my Master of Arts in Education, would I feel able to finally commit to teaching college if these practices were in fact in place?

In answer to those questions, I would state without reservation that Dr. Whang did a superb job of unpacking the term “democratically-run,” despite and including the bumps along the way. The process seemed labyrinthine as well as amaranthine, and yet she led the class impeccably with humility, intelligence and warmth. I feel I have adequately described the challenges we faced and the benefits we enjoyed, although I inadvertently omitted the humor that was present during our deliberations. We experienced great joy and mirth most of the time. From what she has told me (and I have confidence that it is not a canard), she will be pursuing this method in her future classes, at least the ones that meet more frequently than once per week. Working with her has been a complete pleasure.

*Zenith* As for me, I actually feel more able to commit to teaching college, but there is a caveat: I would like to spend a semester with both Ira Shor and Art Pearl to gain a greater depth and breadth to my democratic teaching. I sense that I am perhaps too intense, high-strung, opinionated and emotional to withstand the vicissitudes that are inherent to the position, but this could be a temporary hindrance, and my feelings of discomfiture could be alleviated with supplementary guidance from seasoned professors.

My past experience had been with democratically-run *schools* as opposed to democratically-run classrooms within a traditionally-run school. The adjustment is not an easy one for me, and while it is far simpler to work in an institution that respects, supports and advances democratic ideology, it does not mean that being the only one to offer a democratically-run class is without merit, particularly in the field of education. Further, I have yet to learn of a university or college that is run democratically, and while the momentum may be building toward that, it appears essential to present as many democratically-run scenarios as one is able in one's current situation. While it may be insufficient, contrary to Ghandi's assertion, I do not consider it to be insignificant.

I now grasp that fidelity to a concept can forestall the indispensable birth of a less-than-perfect reality, but one that is fluid yet cogent and innovative nonetheless. I revel again in the sheer joy of learning: that glorious expansive sensation when one's preconceived ideas are lengthened to embrace heretofore unthinkable, out-of-reach, but entirely gratifying realities.

Not wanting to appear obsequious, alternately, I would feel utterly fulfilled being Dr. Whang's T.A., perhaps forever. But that is not in the offing or even on the horizon, not yet anyway (but I do so trust it is not a baseless gambit).

As a final encouraging word, Pearl & Knight offered this morsel:

...social change is not linear. The start may be one classroom at a time...If parents, students, teachers, and others paying attention are impressed by how spectacularly better a democratic classroom is than a classroom informed by democracy's enemies, guardianship and anarchy, the momentum will pick up. (1999, p. 342)

I have this to propose: Rather than immure yourselves and inure your students, Dr. Whang and I submit that the praxis of a democratically-run critical-liberatory

pedagogy adduces an opportunity for authentic learning – as opposed to the verisimilitudinousness of a traditional regurgitative education. Not to confuse, I hope the process infuses us all with hope, suffuses the class with a democratic conviction and refuses to be quelled.

## References

- Apple, M., & Beane, J. (Eds.). (1995). *Democratic schools*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Ashley, H. (2001). Hybrid idioms in writing the community: An interview with Ira Shor [Electronic version]. *Reflections, II, 1*, 8-14.
- Ayers, W. (2002). Creating the teacher and changing the world. In E. Mirochnik & D. Sherman (Eds.), *Passion and pedagogy: Relation, creation and transformation in teaching Lesley College Series in Arts and Education, Vol. 1* (pp 37-51). New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Bennis, D. & Graves, I. (Eds). (2006). *The directory of democratic education: Inaugural edition*. Roslyn Heights, NY: AERO
- Browder, M.A. & Ellerby, J. (1997) Out of control: TA training and liberation pedagogy. In G. Tayko & J.P. Tassoni (Eds.), *Sharing pedagogies: Students and teachers write about dialogic practices* (pp 114-128). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.
- Chomsky, N. (2000). *Chomsky on miseducation*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
- Chomsky, N. (2003). *Chomsky on democracy & education*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Curtis, F. K. (2005). The democratic classroom: A model that works. In A. Pearl & C. Pryor (Eds.), *Democratic practices in education: Implications for teacher education* (pp 97-100). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education.
- Ellsworth, E. (1989). Why doesn't this feel empowering?: Working through repressive myths of critical pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review, 59, 3*, 297-324.
- Freire, P. (2005). *Education for critical consciousness*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc.
- Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc.
- Galley, M. (2004). Free rein. [Electronic version]. *Education Week, 23*, 27-31.
- Gatto, J.T. (1997). The Public School Nightmare retrieved March, 13, 2005 from <http://www.dvschool.org/psngatto.htm>
- Greenberg, D. (1987). *Free at last: The Sudbury valley school*. Framingham, MA: Sudbury Valley School Press.

- Grinde, D.A. & Johansen, B.E. (1990). Exemplar of Liberty: Native America and the Evolution of Democracy retrieved December 05, 2005 from <http://democraciaparticipativa.net/documentos/OldestLiving.htm>
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge
- Jackson, L. (1995). A democratic leader: Eliciting teacher voice and monitoring student equity. In J. Blase, J. Blase, G.L. Anderson, & S. Dungan (Eds.), *Democratic principals in action: Eight pioneers* (pp 19-31). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, Inc.
- Kinigstein, T. (2007). Democratic education is not neutral. *Education Revolution, Volume 18, Number 4*, 20-22.
- Knight, T. & Pearl, A. (2000). Democratic education and critical pedagogy. *The Urban Review*, 32, 3, 197-226.
- Kohl, H. (1998). *The discipline of hope: Learning from a lifetime of teaching*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Kozol, J. (1975). *The night is dark and I am far from home: A bold inquiry into the values and goals of America's schools*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Kozol, J. (1972). *Free schools*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Meier, D. (1995). *The power of their ideas: Lessons for America from a small school in Harlem*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Mercogliano, C. (1998). *Making it up as we go along: The story of the Albany Free School*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Mintz, J. (2003). *No homework and recess all day: How to have freedom and democracy in education*. Roslyn Heights, NY: Bravura Books.
- Mintz, J. Retrieved April 12, 2006 from <http://educationrevolution.org>
- Neill, A.S. (1960). *Summerhill: A radical approach to child rearing*. New York: Hart Publishing Company.
- Pateman, C. (1983). Feminism and democracy. In G. Duncan (Ed.), *Democratic theory and practice* (pp 204-217). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Pearl, A. & Knight, T. (1999). *The democratic classroom: Theory to inform practice*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.

- Robinson, K. (2006). TED talks retrieved April 14, 2006 from [http://www.ted.com/tedtalks/tedtalksplayer.cfm?key=ken\\_robinson](http://www.ted.com/tedtalks/tedtalksplayer.cfm?key=ken_robinson)
- Shor, I. (1996). *When students have power: Negotiating authority in a critical pedagogy*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Shor, I & Freire, P. (1987). *A pedagogy for liberation*. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.
- Sorensen, K. (1996). Creating a democratic classroom: Empowering students within and outside school walls. In L. Beyer (Ed.), *Creating democratic classrooms: The struggle to integrate theory & practice* (pp 87-105). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Sutphin, C. (2000). The Inclusion/exclusion issue: Including students in choosing texts. In I. Shor & C. Pari (Eds.), *Education is politics: critical teaching across differences, postsecondary. A tribute to the life and work of Paulo Freire* (pp 160-166). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.
- Takacs, D. (2002). Positionality, epistemology, and social justice in the classroom. *Social Justice*, 29, 4, 168-181.
- Watts, H. (1994). Only by living them. In J. Novak (Ed.), *Democratic teacher education: Programs, processes, problems, and prospects* (pp 145-161). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.