SUPPORTING LIBERATORY LITERATE PRAXIS ACROSS DISCIPLINES AND INSTITUTIONS

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation examines what undergraduate students in liberation-focused programs find meaningful to their holistic literate development across two social justice education programs: the University of Colorado Boulder's INVST Community Leadership Studies Program and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign's Social Justice Educators Paraprofessionals Program. As each of these programs aims to empower students to cocreate a more just world, they are ideal for studying students' experiences of literate learning that lead not only to their academic advancement, but to their personal development and their growth as social actors – aspects of students' becoming often missed by education research too narrowly focused on classroom learning. In this ethnographic project, I employ discourse-based interviews with students, teachers, and administrators across these sites. Each case study details the history and aims of one focal program, how those aims are embodied in teachers' and administrators' praxis, and how students experience and practice them through their meaningful learning and literate activity. Ultimately my comparative case study approach enables the creation of a working heuristic for designing and sustaining robust liberatory learning environments, one that disavows blanket "best practices" and instead invites educators to match their curricular design and praxis to their own values in situ.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

When Maria moved to Boulder in 2014, she was entirely alone. With her whole family remaining in Mexico, she struggled to make her new CU dorm in the shadow of Boulder's red clay mountains feel like home. She struggled to find community and a sense of belonging while learning to "live in English 24/7." In her second year she began to feel herself settling in and finding mentors in her coursework in sociology and gender and women's studies. These connections, in turn, opened a floodgate to community as her life was changed immensely by the suggestion of a trusted advisor to apply for INVST Community Studies' leadership training program. When Maria and I met to discuss her writing and her involvement in INVST Community Studies in April 2018, she sipped chamomile tea as she spoke passionately about the communities she'd found in INVST. She described the ways her INVST peers and mentors had supported not just her personal development, but the breadth of literate activities she'd since undertaken to support her communities across borders—from interpreting for the Mexico Solidarity Network in Chicago, to working with her cohort and Boulder County's immigrant community to expand voting rights, completing a year-long internship teaching English to immigrants, and, the cap at least on this snapshot of a list, writing her honors thesis on her participatory action research with Mexican women in Boulder. Maria hadn't just found a community; she'd actively helped to build and sustain multiple communities across borders. One prominent figure in the stories she told of her cherished social networks was Sabrina Sideris.

Twenty years prior, in 1998, Sabrina, INVST's current director, had also been fortuitously introduced to INVST through a trusted mentor. And, like Maria, the program has unquestionably altered her life path. Sabrina joined because she thought it would be useful preparation for the Peace Corps, which at that time was her only known route to focusing on

peace, global issues, and helping others. But what she learned in INVST opened up a whole world of options. Sabrina said she learned,

> what it means to focus our activism and our change making on the *root causes* of ^problems. Um, I learned about the difference between treating the symptoms and looking at the ^roots. Um, I learned about things like all the different *kinds of oppression there are. I thought it was just like [gentle mocking voice] "some people are mean [we laugh]. Some people are bad and they don't recycle." And I, like many of our students who join us, you know, I had an opportunity to go *much much ^deeper into an ^exploration of people and places and topics and understand how they all confused me and how they all helped me make sense of the world.[1]

Sabrina's route from INVST, which I'll discuss further in Chapter Three, has led many places, including back to INVST—first as a volunteer, then a staff member, then a teacher, and years after that she was invited back to direct. At the time of our meeting, she had been directing for eleven years. Sabrina's care in tending to the continued evolution of the program is evident not just in her long history with it, but in the many ways she practices and models the values of the program—bolstering the INVST community's shared power by intentionally decentering her own title and diffusing power by facilitating consensus-based community decision-making through INVST's Directors' Committee—its major governing body which Sabrina told me includes all current students, staff, and instructors, and even interested alumni.

INVST's approach to shared governance through consensus was built into the program when it was designed in 1990, but that certainly doesn't mean it has been practiced the same way over the program's life. The program's official history, in fact, explains how an early director, Dr. Lowe-Steffen was quite politically ousted from the program—tendering her resignation after a recommendation for her removal was made up the university chain of command by an ad hoc

[1] See transcription conventions in Appendix A

committee which she assembled but which had not yet been voted on by the Directors' Committee. Despite Dr. Lowe-Steffen's shrouded departure, Sabrina paid homage to the impact this previous director had on the program and on her personally.

> I:: *owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to one of my predecessors. Um, her name was Dr. Shonna Lowe-Steffen. She recently passed away tragically and suddenly in a car accident in Colorado. But she was the INVST director for thirteen and a half years. And so many many many many many many aspects of the directors' committee structure and the- *our approach to teaching and the balance between the root causes and the symptoms, because we have to treat all of those, um many of these aspects um, while they weren't created by her, because INVST is 28 years old and it existed for a few years before she came along, um she really did [tapping table] *perfect them, she really did *hone them, she really did *cement them into being in a beautiful way and she was *my teacher and mentor, and my boss for many years, so I owe um, a lot of what I know about service learning to *her.

Sabrina's gratitude for her predecessor was paralleled elsewhere in our discussion by her gratitude for an alumnus, Wilder Therese, whose passion and dedication for social justice and to INVST had recently led to an important community process of learning and revision (also discussed in detail in Chapter Three). She made it a point in our conversation to name Wilder and to thank them for their dedication to making [the people of] INVST better.

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I begin with this woven vignette from one of my three focal programs to help illustrate the study's exigence as well as the rationale for my approach. Like the more detailed case studies in the coming chapters, this small narrative slice is rooted in the accounts of my participants and enables a look at the complex entanglements (Barad, 2007) within and around: (1) students' literate practice (Prior, 1998), (2) teachers' praxis (Freire, 1970), (3) program design and administration, and (4) institutional and local histories. I center what could be considered four

distinct “levels” throughout this dissertation as practical points of focus to guide readers’ intentional action in their own work. I do so with the recognition of, and in fact motivated by the knowledge that, while they provide a useful frame, these levels are *not* actually discrete or separable; as we are continuously learning across fields, nothing that *matters* really is. Karen Barad’s theory of agential realism sheds light on how objects, both material and discursive, emerge through their intra-actions. She writes, “To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. Existence is not an individual affair. Individuals do not preexist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating” (ix). Here, Maria as student, Sabrina as mentor, and INVST as institutional program each emerge as part of their entangled intra-relating. In the sections that follow, I move through the levels framed in the above vignette and then a discussion of their complex entanglement to illuminate some of the key theoretical bases for this study and what I believe to be its major contributions to writing studies scholarship particularly in the areas of student learning, teacher development, and program administration. My case studies of CU Boulder’s INVST and UIUC’s Social Justice Educator Paraprofessionals (SJEP) program, each set out in a series of two chapters, will reverse the order of these levels to ground students’ work in their programmatic context, but here I begin with students because the core concern of my scholarship is supporting their development; I consider training teachers and administrating programs to be in service of that goal.

Students' Liberatory Literate Practice

Maria's Literate Practice

This brief look at Maria's uses of writing as a tool for coming into community hints at the lifeworld becoming perspective (Prior & Hengst, 2010; Prior & Shipka, 2003; Roozen, 2009; Shipka, 2011; Roozen & Erickson, 2017; Durst, 2019) that I take to understanding how students' literate activity (Prior, 1998) can support *learning that leads to development* (the core of Lev Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory). Further, it indexes what I believe to be the potential of *liberatory* curricula in programs like INVST to support development like Maria's that is transformative for both individual and society. Below, I flesh out the sociocultural perspective I take to understanding college students' literate development and define what I mean by *liberatory* curricula.

A Sociocultural Perspective on College Students' Literate Development as Becoming

Following Lev Vygotsky, sociocultural researchers see learning not as an end in itself, but as leading to development; as humans use tools and signs to participate in various social activities, culture in fact affects the development of what then seem to be *individual* capacities. A crucial mechanism by which we share in and contribute to cultural activities is via shared *practices*, which Ron Scollon (2001) incisively defines as "actions with a history" (p. 73). Anthropological studies of participation in social practice like Barbara Rogoff's further flesh out the links between individual and social, showing how individuals create, and are created by, social worlds which are sustained and continually recreated over time. In her study of children's development across cultures, Rogoff (2003) makes clear how "as people develop through their shared use of tools and practices inherited from previous generations, they simultaneously

contribute to the transformation of cultural tools, practices and institutions" (p. 52). Lois Holzman (2007) extends this line of thought to challenge the ways our culture overinvests in notions of thinking and knowing. Instead of learning or knowing, she focuses on *performance* as key to development, and posits identity not as a construct, but as a "socially completive activity" (p. 72).

Following from this history of scholarship that recognizes the interrelation of individual and society, sociocultural views of learning as becoming (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991; Beach, 1989) foreground development to argue that school is a place for making people—not just for teaching and learning content, but for being and becoming (Packer, 2001). Meaningful learning, then, is inextricably bound to the continual reformation of learners' situated and fluctuating identities—identities that inhere in actions, not in people, that shift and recombine to meet new circumstances, as opposed to being unitary and enduring psychological states or social categories (Bucholtz & Hall, 2003).

My approach to understanding college students' literate development is most directly an extension of a line of writing studies research that works to counter dominant discourse community narratives by locating academic and workplace writing in people's *lifeworlds* (Prior & Hengst, 2010; Prior & Shipka, 2003; Roozen 2009, Shipka 2011). Roozen and Erickson (2017) and Durst (2019) attend to histories of persons and practices that lie beyond assumed disciplinary borders, urging us to value the paths people trace across lifeworlds that flow into and emanate from disciplinary sites. Durst's lifeworld perspective of disciplinary becoming foregrounds notions of disciplinarity, lived experience, and literate practices as constantly mobile and in flux. She paints this complex movement in vivid, human detail that is inherent in human

experience but so often ignored or mishandled in its researched representation and in the creation of education policy.

My work contributes to these salient critiques of flattened representations and false barriers constructed between classroom and world, by adding that writing teachers, researchers, and administrators have a responsibility to better understand and represent human development, and what's more, to intentionally craft robust pathways to consequential, transformative learning—to support students in developing sociocritical literacies (Tejeda & Gutierrez, 2005; Gutierrez, 2008; McLaren & Gutierrez, 2018; Winn, 2015). Kris Gutierrez (2008) coined the term "sociocritical literacy," defining it as a tool that "historicizes everyday and institutional practices and texts and reframes them as powerful tools oriented toward critical social thought" (p. 148). Framing sociocritical literacies as a "tool" rather than a "skill," reminds sociocultural educational researchers to attend to the shared histories of engagement with specific cultural activities, to focus on groups' experiences in activities rather than their traits (Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). In choosing sites for this study, then, I was interested in looking at a range of institutionally-based communities where members engaged together in activities aimed at historicizing and changing oppressive social structures.

Liberatory Curricula

Though each of the programs and courses in this study name and define their aims differently, they were selected because of their shared concern for boosting students' agency as contributors to a more just world beyond the classroom. Across U.S. higher education, this kind of work can go by many names and trace back multiple lineages. In recent years there has been an explosion of "social justice education" initiatives across American universities (of much

concern to conservative education reformers like the National Association of Scholars, like Randall [2019] who's taken to watch-listing such programs). Though the term social justice education is currently in vogue, pedagogy and curricula united under that banner may have widely divergent, even incommensurable (Tuck & Yang, 2018) visions of social change (not to mention differing local culture, needs, and access to resources) leading to a variety of approaches. While the term "social justice education" is legible in our cultural moment as indexing current identity-based and intersectional movements for cultural and legal recognition and rights, and many of these discussions are present in the programs and courses I study, it does not (cannot) encompass, and may in fact obscure, the myriad worldviews and histories of thought and activity laminated in the work done there.

So, in deference to that multiplicity, I try to frame the work of each participant and program in their own words. To signal the overarching view of potential approaches to pedagogy and curricula I gather from my study of these sites, I opt to use the term "liberatory." As we learn from Mikhail Bakhtin, this word, of course, is not my own. In fact, it was once popular in composition to reference the aims of critical pedagogues following Freire, but has since been critiqued as becoming meaningless due to overuse. Jeffrey Ringer (2005) mused that U.S. history's romanticized visions of liberty as rugged, bootstrapping individuality may potentially cause students to lose sight of critical pedagogy's emphasis on the collective (p. 762). Still, I choose it because of the way I feel it resonates with a range of traditions—particularly Buddhism (see Tsunesaburo Makiguchi's value-creating education rooted in Buddhist humanism in Ikeda, 2001), Black and intersectional feminism (hooks, 2014; Lorde, 1984; Crenshaw, 1989), decolonialism (Tuck & Yang, 2018), and abolitionism (Kaba, 2020; Spade, 2015; Davis, 2016)—that I value for their concern with the full spectrum of individual-to-collective care and

struggle. While I construct my model of liberatory literate education in part from the accounts of my research participants, my own values and assumptions—which color what I attend to as a researcher—are indebted to these traditions. I agree with Carmen Kynard (2013) that discourses of social justice and literacy in the field of composition today (p. 9) are indebted to the Black Arts Movement and to legacies of Black Power and Black Studies (p. 111), and I intend my continued use and definition of the term to foreground that recognition.

That Maria felt supported in her community change work was partly enabled by the structure of INVST, but more immediately, she was invited to- and supported in- her work by the human connections she made there, including that with her mentor Sabrina, whose praxis I turn to next.

Teachers' Praxis

Sabrina's Praxis

The opening vignette's glimpse at INVST Director (and teacher) Sabrina's values and practices offers insight into both how she models those values and practices for students and what kinds of supports have been crucial for enabling her work as a mentor. Apparent even in this snippet, Sabrina's mentorship practices emerge not just from easily identifiable, official spaces of professional development, but from her own rich and varied history of experiences (as both a teacher and student) doing community change work. In other words, she has long engaged in the cultural activities into which she invites students. For this reason, rather than focusing solely on teachers' pedagogical practices in this study, I find framing what teachers do through the terminology of *praxis* better fit to the task at hand—that of seeing and supporting teachers' development.

Praxis in Marxist Thought and Critical Pedagogy

The term "praxis" as currently taken up in writing studies is most frequently attributed to its use by critical pedagogue Paulo Freire. While I have reservations about some of the ways Freire's very situated work with Brazil's oppressed has been uncritically imported into U.S. college classrooms, I choose to take up this terminology because of its potential to index human agency. I attribute this potential to the term's roots in the Marxist revolutionary thought in which Freire's work was grounded. Isaac Gottesman (2016) explains well Freire's extension of that tradition:

> Freire's conceptualization of what it means to be critical emerged out of the ontological position that there is an objective reality that is created and can thus be transformed by humans: Dehumanization [Freire's term for what was visited upon oppressed people as a product of historical oppression and an unfair social order] is not a historical fact" (p. 13).

It is with this foundation that Freire (1970) defined praxis as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 36).

Taken up in this sense, it certainly also applies to the work students in this study do. I use it in relationship to teachers here specifically to signal how teachers' pedagogy is informed not just by official spaces of professional development, but by their own lifeworld trajectories, shifting identities, and concurrent engagements in multiple communities. This is particularly apparent with the teachers in this study because of the community-engaged nature of their work but is equally true of teachers across disciplines. This view has implications for scholarship and practice; it asks researchers, teachers, and teacher trainers all to attend to the broad-ranging and historical nature of teachers' engagements to better understand and guide their approaches to teaching.

Seeing and Supporting Teachers' Praxis Institutionally—A Sociocultural Approach to Professional Development

I intend for my look at teachers' praxis in this study to be of use to the study and practice of teachers' professional development in higher education. My approach to teacher training is built on the above conception of praxis, a sociocultural understanding of the role(s) teachers play in students' learning, and my experience training teachers across disciplines to teach with writing. Seeing learning not as the accumulation of bits of knowledge, but rather the process of contributing more and more centrally to one's aspirational communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991), it follows from sociocultural views of learning that students can potentially be best served by teachers involved in those communities. I have seen this borne out in the sociocultural studies of participation in social practice sketched earlier in this chapter and briefly revisited briefly below, as well as in my experience as a Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) scholar-practitioner. Writing in their disciplinary courses, students are learning not just about the knowledge that has been produced in their field, but about the ways knowledge *can be* produced, disseminated, legitimized, and put to action. I'm invested in seeing students socialized into their professions in ways that bolster their agency to change the socio-material structures under- and for- which they labor, so WAC spaces offer opportunity for liberatory praxis.

In my WAC practice, I've worked with teachers across disciplines in multiple capacities. I've trained them (short-term) and mentored them (long-term) on how to teach with writing in their content classes. I've co-taught and collaboratively designed curricula with them. I've even designed and taught genre-based disciplinary (business) writing courses myself. All together these experiences have reinforced for me the conviction that disciplinary faculty, as active members of professional communities, play a crucial and inevitable role in modeling ways of

knowing, doing and writing in their disciplines (Carter, 2007). This idea is indeed central to the rationale for WAC's existence (see Cox et al., 2014) and underlies much of WAC scholarship and practice pairing disciplinary experts with writing specialists rather than placing the onus for teaching writing only in general education courses.

Regarding its support in sociocultural studies of participation in social practice, once again I find Barbara Rogoff's work particularly illuminating. In *Sociocultural Studies of Mind* (Wertsch, Del Rio, & Alvarez, 1995), Rogoff discusses three planes within which cultural values and practices become part of individual functioning: apprenticeship, guided participation, and participatory appropriation, providing a model for understanding how seemingly individual behavior (in this case, selling Girl Scout cookies) actually involves the coordination of individual mental activity, with local group practices and concerns, and larger community conventions and expectations. Rogoff's architecture here is a bit too neatly scalar (nesting micro-, meso-, and macro-social accounts, rather than recognizing flat, entangled ontologies) and too focused on the human (to the exclusion of artifacts and ecology), but it does illuminate an important social aspect of learning. In this view, what is of consequence to students' development is not simply teachers' imparting of knowledge or even the way they facilitate students' practice of relevant skills, but how they model and guide participation in social practices in community with students. Sociocultural approaches to teacher training and professional development enable a more complex understanding of what it means to teach, learn, and become; my approach to understanding teachers' praxis in the coming chapters will help fill in some of this picture. I turn now to consider my focal level of institutional programs.

Building and Sustaining Programs

INVST's Design and Administration

The small bit of INVST's program history and structure revealed in the opening vignette give some sense of how it came to be that the program, with structural supports built over generations, now supports Sabrina's and Maria's important work. It also suggests how Maria's and Sabrina's work, which takes up and reworks the program's structure through activity, in turn, creates the program. The vignette hints at how interpersonal relationships over time have reshaped the program in ways big and small (including here who joins and who leaves). At the same time, it also cracks a window into the many ways INVST, though it is engaged with communities beyond the institution, is still of course beholden to the flows of power traversing the larger institution of which it is a part. So again, while we might consider the program a discrete "level," it is in fact always already entangled. Given the longevity of introductory writing and WAC programs across U.S. institutions of higher education and the likelihood that writing studies professionals will administer a writing program at some point in their career, I hope the approach to understanding programs I sketch here and develop in the coming chapters can give writing program administrators concerned with students' liberatory literate development some useful tools for understanding how their work mediates (and possibly mitigates) the power of institutions to support teachers' and students' community praxis.

Institutions. This perspective requires an expansive and connective definition of institutions. Once again, I build mine from the work of sociocultural scholars concerned with how our social world is structured by and structures individuals in communities. Martin Packer (2001) explains how institutions, including schools, transform the people who participate in them by creating not just places to learn, but communities, "establishing a tone to daily life,

delineating space and time, defining positions and relations" (p. 84). This is as true, if not as readily apparent, of the communities fostered by the higher education programs and courses in this study as of the elementary school Packer was researching. In working to understand the programs in this study in relation to their institutions, I come up against questions like Sara Ahmed's (2012) of "how it is that institutions become an *object* of diversity and antiracist practice in the sense that recognizing the institutional nature of diversity and racism becomes a goal for practitioners" (p. 19). As I begin to answer such questions, I find it necessary to heed Maisha Winn's (Fisher, 2009) call "to rethink fixed notions of institutions and consider them as ideologies, values, and beliefs that can exist without a formal building" (p. 5).

Writing Program Administration

Writing studies professionals administer a range of writing programs, from first year writing programs, to Writing Across the Curriculum programs, to writing centers. This work, paired with the field's long engagement with questions of pedagogy, sometimes leads to a view of writing studies as a service field. That view can support faculty across disciplines' erroneous belief that writing courses and centers on campus can and should be solely responsible for students' literate development. Writing studies' expertise, though, directly challenges that view, understanding, for instance, that learning to write is a lifelong process (Smith & Prior, 2020), that writing is always social (Street, 2014) and situated (Barton et al., 2000), and so there can be no such thing as general, transferrable writing skills. So, while writing resources on campus can support students as they learn to write for their disciplines and other communities of practice, writing studies *scholarship* and its dissemination is crucial to support students' literate learning across colleges. I agree, then, with the Council of Writing Program Administrators' argument in

their (2019) statement "Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration," that writing program administration is not just management activity, but scholarly work that contributes new knowledge to the field (CWPA, 2019). I would add, however, that the field's knowledge is of broader-reaching import than just re-theorizing our own administrative practices. Because programs influence teachers' and students' development, writing studies needs a theoretically rich understanding of each and their entanglement.

It is with some hesitance that I cite this CWPA statement, but it brings me to an important point. In light of Asao Inoue's recent scathing critique of the CWPA Executive Board's bureaucratically veiled mistreatment of the anti-racism task force assembled to revise the outcomes statement (Inoue, 2021), and the WPA listserv's near-infamy as a hotbed for racist dialogue, I think it's important to consider how the professional forums in which we collaboratively build theory and practice are also entangled with our own, our colleagues', and our students' becoming. The work of WPAs is necessarily highly situated to the needs and potentials of their students, teachers, and institutions. It also affects and is affected by disciplinary norms and practices. Reconceptualizing every aspect of WPA work as a matter of building liberatory institutions in higher education has similar stakes locally as it does professionally—opening trajectories of becoming. It requires the intentional cultivation of open, equitable, and collaborative environments where community members (whether our students, or our peers) are empowered to develop and express their individual and collective capacities as learners, teachers, and historical change agents.

Entanglement and Boundaries

Maria-Sabrina-INVST Entangled

In the opening vignette, we see the longevity of relationships built over time in INVST: Maria's and Sabrina's relationships with their mentors and peers, with multiple communities of practice and mutual care, and with histories of thought and action that enable them to understand and affect issues they're passionate about. The ways these relationships sustain collaborative action toward shared objects over time really highlights mechanisms of cultural reproduction and renewal that (though they may not be as readily apparent across all the case studies in the chapters to come) I believe should be central to administrators', researchers', and teachers' understanding of how to create and sustain robust environments for becoming. If we want to understand how to support students' becoming, I believe writing studies researchers need to do this connective work. At the same time, attending to constructed boundaries can be illuminating, as they offer pressure points to release unexamined holds on the separate worlds they construct. Interdisciplinary theory and practice can help us do this.

Interdisciplinarity

Though I think my research may be of use in the administration and teaching of writing across the curriculum and squarely in composition and rhetoric, I chose to study literate activity in interdisciplinary programs because I agree with Julie Thompson Klein (1996) that, "All interdisciplinary work is critical in that it exposes the inadequacies of the existing organization of knowledge to accomplish given tasks" (p. 14). Klein argues, and I see in the work of my study participants, that not only do standard constructions of disciplinarity look much more like interdisciplinarity than they're advertised as, but that boundary crossing between typically

recognized disciplines stimulates the formation of trading zones of interaction, interlanguages, hybrid communities and professional roles, new institutional structures, and new categories of knowledge (p. 2). Further, Klein reenforces Gieryn's (1983) notion of *boundary-work,* which re-envisions boundaries as matters of ongoing work rather than as settled matters. Klein argues that interdisciplinary activities do not escape the boundary-work of defining and legitimating claims (p. 2). All of this strikes me as crucial for work intended to support community change. As put by the contributors to the (2010) *Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinary Research* (Frodeman ed.):

> the solution to our social, political, intellectual, and economic problems does not simply lie in the accumulation of more and more knowledge. What is needed today is a better understanding of the relations between fields of knowledge, a better grasp of the ways knowledge produced in the academy moves into society, and a better sense of the dangers as well as the opportunities of continued knowledge production. (p. xxx)

The authors here raise questions about what constitutes pertinent knowledge, and "of whether, in a given situation, knowledge is pertinent at all" (p. xxx). Following the ways my participants navigate the apparent boundaries both between disciplines and between academia and community, I hope to show how their praxis illuminates the cracks in the walls and builds tunnels to connect.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter Two, I detail my methodology and methods. I discuss my rationale for the original and iterative (re)design(s) of the study and the ongoing process of continuous, iterative analysis of a growing data set as consonant with ethnography's overarching goal of developing robust understandings of a community's meaning-making processes (well described in Miller et

al., 2003). I make a methodological intervention by arguing for the design and refinement of ethnographic methods aimed at tracing, accounting for, and triangulating accounts of *perezhivanie* (roughly translated from Russian as "lived experience") and affect. I contend that sound methodological attention to *perezhivanie* and affect are critical to understanding and designing for literate learning and development.

Chapters Three through Six are case studies of two focal programs and the practices of the participants in them. I've split the case studies into two chapters each mainly for ease of reading, but they are intended to be considered together as one case. In Chapters Three and Four, I dive deeper into the community-engaged scholarship enacted by students in CU Boulder's INVST Community Leadership Studies program, introduced here. Where Chapter Three looks at INVST's location, history, and objectives, Chapter Four, looks at my student participants' writing and stories of becoming.

In Chapters Five and Six, I look at the ways students in UIUC's Social Justice Educator Paraprofessionals three-course sequence learn to facilitate intergroup dialogue on campus. Again, Chapter Five sets the institutional and historical scene, and Chapter Six looks more closely at SJEP's people and praxis. Both of these case studies illuminate the complex entanglements between institutions, programs, teachers' praxis, students' practices, and, ultimately, potentialities for social justice education spaces to contribute to individuals' and communities' becoming.

My final chapter synthesizes the previous chapters, returning to my guiding questions to more directly compare and contrast the two focal programs' approaches and what can be learned from each. Here I suggest implications for future research and begin to build out a heuristic for

the thoughtful design and sustenance of locally situated, robust, liberatory learning environments.

Chapter 2: Methods

My central orientation as a researcher is that of an ethnographer. Following Theresa Lillis' (2008) distinctions, I view and practice ethnography not just as a method but as both a methodology and a form of "deep theorizing." Of ethnographic approaches to the study of academic writing, Lillis writes:

> At a minimal level, *ethnography as method* (talk around text) usefully directs the researcher's attention beyond the written text towards a consideration of some elements of writers' perspectives about texts. At a second level, *ethnography as methodology*, involving multiple data sources and sustained involvement in contexts of production, enables the researcher to explore and track the dynamic and complex situated meanings and practices that are constituted in and by academic writing. At a third, and the most radical level, *ethnography as "deep theorizing"* (Blommaert, 2007) fundamentally challenges the ways in which text and context in writing research are often conceptualized as separate phenomena and signals the need to develop analytic tools that narrow the gap between them. (Lillis, 2008, p. 355)

Talking to my participants about texts is certainly a touchpoint of this study. More broadly though, I work from multiple data sources to triangulate situated meanings and practices of those involved in my focal programs. These include not just programmatic or institutional documents, but texts illuminating the local histories that infuse current practices and relationships. I do so in an effort to understand how people and their institutions are embedded in and transformed by larger societal contexts including historical events and societal ideologies. So, while a portion of each of the case studies featured here is historiographic, I consider that research to be in service to my overarching ethnographic approach. I am not a trained historian, and my writing of histories here aims to select and synthesize details, largely from publicly available or participant-

provided local accounts and published scholarship, into a narrative that sheds further light on issues apparent in other ethnographic data from each case.

While the traditional ethnographies of cultural anthropologists dropped a (typically white, male, Western) anthropologist into a new (to them) cultural setting to take detailed notes on a foreign (to them) group's practices, ethnographic approaches have been rethought and retooled to suit emerging purposes and values. Among the changes is a recognition that ethnographers working near to home (i.e., in social practices they have long experienced) have already been "in the field" far more than the traditional year, a rule-of-thumb for global ethnographic work in new cultures and languages. In my case, my long life-long experience in the US, my extensive experiences in higher education settings, my work in social justice education programs, and my years on campus at one of my sites (Illinois) all contribute to the ethnographic grounding of this dissertation. Historically, and across fields, ethnographers have tended to employ a number of recognizable methods, including participant observation, interviews, and text/artifact collection and analysis. I do each of these to varying degrees in this study, but not evenly across each case. In my understanding of ethnography, this is not a flaw in design or execution, but a feature of the necessary nimbleness of ethnographic research. As Miller, Hengst, and Wang (2003) phrase it (citing Gaskins et al., 1992) "ethnographic inquiry is a dynamic process marked by generative and self-corrective methodologies" (p. 66). "Successful researchers," they write, "need to be flexible from the beginning, prepared to revise or discard initial research questions and adjust data collection procedures as they position themselves physically and socially in the research site" (p. 67). As you'll read at the start of the next chapter, negotiating access to research sites required just this kind of flexibility and patience from the start of this project.

What may be less visible in my narration of each case is the way the need for such flexibility infused every aspect of my positioning throughout. The questions I asked and storylines I followed in each interview were intricately connected to the relationships my participants and I formed in those moments. The physical positioning of my body and recording equipment were a response, often, to my intent, as an outsider, to create a welcoming shared space or to not intrude on my participants' established shared spaces. The institutional and local histories I chose to trace were outgrowths from my own perspectives on the practices and values I noted in my participants' words and work. Which, brings me to the second of four points Miller, Hengst, and Wang make about the important characteristics of ethnographic inquiry I'd like to explore here in relation to my work—that ethnographic methods have "an *implicit multicultural perspective*" (p. 224).

While the word multicultural may carry a different valence today, by this they mean, "In attempting to apprehend local meanings, ethnographers try not to mistake their own deeply taken-for-granted, culturally saturated understandings for those of the study participants" (p. 224). As an educational researcher studying contexts very near to and intersecting with my own, I've found it crucial to mark my *double vision*—my participants' interpretive frameworks and my own—throughout my research and writing processes. In the case studies to follow, for instance, I am careful to mark where my own values and assumptions align and diverge from those of my participants or their programmatic documents. This is important to me because, though I try to represent faithfully the spirit of my participants' words, I'm aware that my positionality influences where I find meaning, what threads I choose to follow, and the story I eventually weave. In my view of researchers' responsibility to make clear their positionality, it is not enough to highlight my marked identities at the outset and call it a day. I am a heterosexual,

white, cis-gendered, American woman, and my life experience being socially marked in these ways certainly affect my perception, but I also have personal and professional alignments that are more intricately related to my sense-making processes in this research, and I call attention to those in my narration of each case. As Miller, Hengst, and Wang write, "Each ethnographer will come to an understanding that is inevitably partial. The rigor of this approach lies partly in delineating that partiality, which itself contains clues as to how local meanings are constructed" (p. 226).

Aside from being clear with myself and my readers about my location in the research, practicing this double vision necessitates grounding my interpretation of a case in "an accumulation of specific details from the events of everyday life and from the participants' reflections on those events" (Miller, Hengst, & Wang, 2003, p. 224). Miller, Hengst and Wang, following Gaskins et al. (1992) call this, "data collection and analyses [that] are both *microscopic and holistic* and that engage in Geertz's (1973) 'thick description'" (p. 224). On this front, though my methods help me work toward such microscopic and holistic analyses in many ways, I do feel my ability to speak to my participants' everyday lives is limited by my inability to do more frequent and consistent participant observation. However, the way Miller, Hengst, and Wang describe the last of their characteristics of ethnographic methods I'll discuss here, the "*sustained and engaged nature* of data collection," reminds me that my proximity to my research settings is not merely a liability to be worked through. Researching contexts close to and intersecting with my own also enables me to draw more heavily on my own experiences and communicative practices in customizing data collection and deciphering local practices in relation to broader institutional/cultural practices. For instance, Sabrina's assertion, in Chapter

Three, that INVST pushes back on institutional power, references institutional mechanisms I am intimately aware of and engaged with in my own context and other professional conversations.

Institutional Ethnography

Because my study aims to understand how people within/as programs and institutions become together, I also employ the particular ethnographic lens of institutional ethnography—a field indebted to a lifetime of work by Canadian Sociologist Dorothy Smith, who drew on feminist cultural materialism and advocated for "a mode of inquiry that starts in people's everyday lives, examining the relations, organizations and forms of power that intersect with and organize the everyday world and relate us to others in ways we do not easily see or appreciate" (Smith, 2003). Smith's work to understand the social construction of documentary reality (Smith, 1974) and how institutional life was capable of coordinating individual's everyday practices are particularly pertinent to my project but also more broadly to writing studies. Michelle LaFrance's (2019) expansion and adaptation of Smith's institutional ethnography for writing studies researchers begins with the following epitaph from Smith's (2005) *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*:

> Institutional ethnography explores the organizing *institutions* as people participate in them and from their perspectives. People are the expert practitioners of their own lives, and the ethnographer's work is to learn from them, to assemble what is learned from different perspectives, and to investigate how their activities are coordinated. It aims to go beyond what people know to find out how what they are doing is connected with other's doings in ways they cannot see. The idea is to *map* the institutional aspects of the *ruling relations* so that people can expand their own knowledge of their everyday worlds by being able to see how what they are doing is coordinated with other's doings elsewhere and elsewhen. (Smith, 2005, quoted in LaFrance, 2019)

Smith's words here very much reflect my understanding of my own work as an ethnographer. So too, it reflects my own appreciation for research that traces how people's shared labor both creates- and is structured by- the institutions they constitute.

I refer frequently in the coming chapters to students' and teachers'/administrators' "work," which I mean in three simultaneous senses. The first is of course the sense that writing, whether for *schoolwork,* professional endeavors, or other purposes, is labor. The second is in relationship to its use in institutional ethnography. According to LaFrance, in institutional ethnography, "'work'" denotes a series of coordinated practices within a local setting into which an individual routinely puts time and energy. It is through our work that institutions coordinate the experiences and practices of individuals…" (2019, p. 4). Lastly, given the world-changing aims of my participants, I also mean it in the activism-minded sense of "doing the work." In this last sense, Carmen Kynard (2020) differentiates between "the work" and "the job." Where, "the job" compels us to learn to navigate arbitrary neoliberal structures of academia, "the work" references continuous, shared struggle for solidarity, liberation, and freedom from state violence (p. 18). Certainly not every one of my participants' products, texts, or activities are working directly toward liberatory aims, but they certainly aspire to help create a more just world, and their literate activities contribute to their being and becoming people who do *the work*.

Multiple Case Study Analysis

Case studies are a regular facet of ethnographic research. In this project, to look at the activity of each site as its own functional unit and to look across each site while maintaining the situated complexity of each, I took the approach of multiple case study analysis. Robert Stake (2005) names the set of case studies a "quintain," and provides some guidance for how to

approach one. I wasn't familiar with Stake when I designed this project, but some aspects of his approach resonate well with my own.

Regarding the dual lens I mention above, Stake, citing Geertz (1973) and Simons (1980), writes: "It is important to examine the common characteristics of these phenomena, but it is also important to examine situational uniqueness, especially complexity and interaction with background conditions" (Stake, 2005, p. ix). Regarding the selection of cases, he writes, "…it's often better to pick the cases that most enhance our understanding than to pick the most typical cases. In fact, highly atypical cases can sometimes give the best insights into the quintain" (p. vii). I've found this to be true in my study, where the particularities of each program really shed light on how and why these programs and individuals' experiences as part of them in many ways do not, and cannot, resemble one another. In my set of cases, the San Francisco State University service-learning composition course was in many ways the outlier, as a single required course rather than an elective program with a series of courses. Though I chose to focus on the other two sites in this dissertation, my understanding of the SFSU case helped me further define the boundaries of possibility for how liberatory learning spaces might articulate with existing university structures.

Lastly, regarding approaches to representing multiple cases, Stake writes:

> We use ordinary language and narratives to describe the quintain. We seek to portray its cases comprehensively, using ample but nontechnical description and narrative. Each case report may read something like a story. Our observations cannot help being interpretive, and our descriptive sections are laced with and followed by interpretation. We offer readers the opportunity to generate their own interpretations of the quintain, but we offer ours too. (p. vii)

As I will describe in more detail below, this approach to representing multiple cases comprehensively but clearly, from my particular vantage point but responsibly to my participants, is one I value dearly.

Narrative Inquiry and Documented Narrative

To represent my participants' reflections on their literate activity and engagements with their programs and communities, and also to make my own analytic practices more visible, I present the results of my analysis throughout the coming chapters as documented narratives (Prior 1994a & b) rather than as a structural analysis. Documented narratives aim for integrative analysis over data reduction, foreground narrative rather than coding and counting, and present key documentation (exhibits, artifacts, inscriptions, etc.) that gives readers a chance to interact with samples of the data and make their own judgments about the researcher's interpretations. The use of documented narratives enables me to retain in my re-presentation some of the richness, complexity, and dynamics of my participants' evolving practices (Roozen & Erickson, 2017) and stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

This approach to presenting my data was in part inspired by the beautiful and accessible writing of Mike Rose, whose vivid images of American classrooms were (and still are) sorely needed in conversations around public schooling, and Kate Viera, whose personal relationship to her research feels like it jumps the page directly to my bodymind. More immediately, it was prompted by my own relationship to the stories I've now held over a number of years. As I worked over and through my data, sharing glimpses of my participants' work and their working over of their experiences, in data workshops, presentations, and conversations, I knew I needed to tell their stories as robustly as I could. As I followed the trails that connected my participants

to one another to their various institutions and communities, places, and histories, I knew that cleaving each case to present themes or arguments spanning the cases would leave them all flat, lifeless, and disconnected. This decision, then, was not just a matter of interest or accessibility (though those were also forefront on my mind) but of responsibility. I want my research, like the rest of my life, to contribute meaningfully to our shared social world. What better way to do that than through story? As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) write in their exposition of narrative inquiry in educational research, "humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (p. 2).

Like Leigh Patel, I, too "am drawn to stories and even more fascinated by the structural impacts that relate to how we narrate ourselves and the worlds around us" (Patel, 2019, p. 271). And, like Patel, I am increasingly skeptical of approaches to qualitative research that center the coding of "emergent" categories. Patel writes:

> …in the world of euro-descendant social science, objectivity and systematicity must be created and used for the "data" to be more—or perhaps less—than mere stories. This, to me, is anathema. Stories are what link us to ourselves, to each other, to the lands we've come from, go to, and return to. They take on lives of their own: we often create the version that we want rather than the version that took place. The nuanced, emergent, and roving nature of how we talk about ourselves presents a delible challenge to research which, stemming from categorical logics (Wynter, 2003), imagines not only that the response to a research question is a static statement, but even more so, that it can be deciphered, coded, and categorized by a researcher. (Patel, 2019, p. 271)

In her urging to return to story, Patel makes clear how the foregrounding of context and relationship in stories is capable of combatting colonial conceptions of the researcher as the supposedly singular source of knowledge production.

Of course, the stories a researcher tells are no longer entirely the ones shared or experienced by their participants; they're shaped and colored by the researcher's own lenses.

This is both an ethical quandary and a strength. As Martin Packer writes, "Juxtaposing the partial viewpoints of the participants with larger forces not clearly visible at the time is narrative's special potency. The same twofold approach—partial understanding of actor; larger social/historical system—that a sociocultural analysis of human development seeks" (2001, p. 8). A narrator's descriptive and explanatory account, their semi-omniscient hindsight, Packer explains, enable "a sense of the whole, informed by an understanding, achieved in retrospect, of the larger social and historical contexts in which people acted but knew little about" (p. 8). This kind of account prioritizes details over big generalizations, which "may appear more powerful, [but] details are more informative, especially in the long run" (p. 9). In working through and weaving together the stories my participants entrusted me with, as well as the story of my research itself, I've sought to maintain a focus on vivid details as I represent both our partial understandings, and larger social/historical systems. This focus is undergirded by my grounding in sociocultural theoretical frameworks. Below, I outline the notion of *perezhivanie* and what it has afforded my methodological stance.

Perezhivanie

I came to the concept of *perezhivanie* well after I'd designed this study and collected much of the data represented in this dissertation but have been exploring it in community for some time now. Given the iterative approach I took to data analysis, detailed elsewhere in this chapter, and my longstanding investments in cocreating educational spaces capable of supporting becoming, *perezhivanie* has become a central methodological lens for my interpretation and representation of data, as well as for the ways I imagine designing future research projects.

In recent years, researchers working with Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) have taken up the notion of *perezhivanie* that Lev Vygotsky began to explore in his late work. While the translation of the Russian word *perezhivanie* in popular use approximates something like 'lived through', Clemson (2015) traces the word's first forays beyond everyday use to the work of early twentieth-century Russian theater director Konstantin Stanislavski. Stanislavski considered *perezhivanie* a tool that enabled theater actors to create and embody characters from their own already-lived and worked-through experiences. Clemson explores how psychologist Lev Vygotsky (Stanislavski's contemporary and a lover of cultural and literary activities including theater) and Stanislavski both explored and developed the notion. She writes,

> Both held thought and motivation at the core of their understanding of human behaviour; internal processes that manifested themselves externally and physically in the world. This influenced their concurrent investigations into the work of the actor and the learner, which both responded to and challenged the ideology of the society they were in. (Clemson, 2015, p. 40)

That Vygotsky adopted and developed this notion from the world of theater into that of psychology reflects his revolutionary and paradigm-shifting approach to the psychological study of development which has continued to ripple through CHAT.

Vygotsky's description of *perezhivanie,* breaking through psychology's tight focus on cognition, argues for the dynamic interrelationship between cognition and emotion as an important methodological focus in the study of children's development. He writes:

> The emotional experience [perezhivanie] arising from any situation or from any aspect of his environment, determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child. Therefore, it is not any of the factors themselves (if taken without reference of the child) which determines how they will influence the future course of his development, but the same factors refracted through the prism of the child's emotional experience [perezhivanie]. (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 338)

One of the issues with this translation of Vygotsky and its uptake is the way it seems to limit *perezhivanie* to emotional experience. As CHAT has been taken up within and beyond psychology, recent uptakes of Vygotsky's (1994) notion of *perezhivanie* (e.g., Fleer, González Rey, & Versov, 2017; González Rey, 2017; Roth & Jornet, 2016; Ferholt & Nilsson, 2016) have been framed around varied notions of experience, subjectivity, sense, and affect. González Rey's work to recover and extend the topic of subjectivity (1999, 2011a, 2011b, 2019), mirroring Vygotsky's early challenges to psychology, has continually challenged the dominant frameworks of CHAT. Many dominant CHAT frameworks have stayed firmly rooted in psychology's traditional foci on the development of specific psychological systems (e.g., memory, classification, problem-solving) or social practices (e.g., mathematical reasoning and literacies), while others have shifted away from persons almost entirely to analyze instead larger activity systems and their objects.

In response, González Rey's work urges attention to the development of the whole person. Not only does his call resonate with my longstanding investments in liberatory education as a teacher, the tool of *perezhivanie* offers a methodological toehold to practice and define those values in my research. The conception of *perezhivanie* I have been building with Prior, Hengst, Mazuchelli, Kovanen, and Ware (Prior et. al., article in preparation) considers the ways *perezhivanie* emerges in and across moments, is inherent to holistic becoming, and characterizes a host of intensities but is not reducible to affect. We see it as a useful lens for understanding becoming, and so have been experimenting with ways to keep the notion whole and dynamic rather than freezing it. My approach to data analysis and the construction of my cases is indebted to our collaborative working-through of *perezhivanie* as a methodological lens in ways I discuss further in the data analysis section below.

My Study

Research Questions

Given the iterative and long-term nature of posing new questions throughout the life of an ethnographic project, some of the central questions that have guided my inquiry over the course of this study include, but, as will be evident in the coming case studies, are certainly not limited to the following:

- How, where, why, and with whom, do students in my focal programs enact literate activity in ways they find meaningful?
- How do students perceive that this activity contributes to their understanding of themselves, particularly/possibly as agentive, historical actors, and their understanding of social structures and their co-constructedness?
- In what ways do the teachers and administrators model this kind of understanding, and in what ways does the curriculum support and extend it?
- In what ways do students perceive their literate activity in—and encouraged by—these spaces to differ from, affect, or influence their literate activity in other academic and extracurricular spaces and vice versa?
- What can studying literate activity in the lifeworlds of these students and teachers tell teachers and scholars of writing in composition and disciplinary courses and workplaces?
- How are liberatory and social justice programs built, sustained, and changed?

Research Design, Recruitment, and Retooling

Interested in understanding how social justice pedagogy was practiced across differing institutional contexts, I initially designed this study as a longitudinal, cross-institutional,

comparative case study of students' and teachers' literate activity and becoming in the Metro College Success Program, and those in the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign's Social Justice Educators Paraprofessionals (SJEP) program. The Metro College Success Program is a comprehensive extra/curricular support system for traditionally underserved students that spans both San Francisco State University and City College of San Fracisco. It was a community I was involved with as a teacher at SFSU before moving to Illinois to pursue my PhD. My involvement with that program has been formative for my trajectory in a number of ways. Metro prepared and supported teachers by holding a two-day, intensive workshop on taking up the work of social justice in our teaching and by organizing multiple spaces for our ongoing co-development. These ongoing learning community spaces included supportive cohorts for teachers of the same subjects and teachers of linked courses as well as topical program-wide events with teachers and students to spur and continue conversations happening throughout the program. Having designated space to work through situated questions of *teaching about* social justice and about *teaching justly* with teachers who held similar values and came at shared questions from their diverse experiences felt, to me, like the often-unfulfilled promise of academia. As a new teacher grappling with a dawning understanding of the many ways educational spaces reify and support oppressive social structures, my experience teaching and learning with Metro didn't just shape how I approach teaching. It offered a model of education justice work that intervenes in structures by building relationships, and it set me on a path to find, understand, and create more spaces for such work.

Despite my personally-felt connection to the program, and a Dissertation Research Grant set to cover the travel for this study, I was unable to negotiate access to Metro as a site for a number of reasons including but not limited to a bomb threat being called in on campus the day I

had an appointment to speak with the program's overseeing committee in person. So, as a nimble ethnographer, I retooled. On that initial trip in Spring 2017, I still carried out an interview with an old friend and colleague who had since begun teaching with Metro and had long been considering social justice in her teaching, because, as she said, "it's in the water here." The following Fall back in Illinois, I carried out interviews with another friend and colleague (Audre) doing social justice teaching in a very different context—a required undergraduate course for (mostly white, suburban) preservice teachers. I also began in earnest my research with the SJEP program, which I'd done a pilot study with the previous Fall (more on this in Chapter Five).

Each of these steps and missteps led me over time to clarify the aspects of the Metro Program that made it stand out as a rich site of study. My early interviews with Linda and Audre gave me glimmering insights into the lifetimes of becoming saturating social justice teachers' deeply held values and everyday practices—perspectives I carried into my later interviews with teachers—but they couldn't scratch the growing itch I had for understanding how those practices were supported by institutional and programmatic life. So, upon my introduction to the INVST Community Leadership Studies program and SFSU's co-designed second-year writing course at the Conference on Community Writing in Fall 2017, I abandoned my ongoing attempts at recruiting individual teachers at the schools I had IRB access to and focused instead, at first, on three programs and amending my IRB to include CU Boulder. In Spring 2020 I was in the process of adding two new sites to my IRB and beginning recruitment of participants, but that work was disrupted by the pandemic.

(Initial) Sites, Participants, Methods

The programmatic focus of my study, then, initially centered three programs:

- a second-year writing course at San Francisco State University where students are invited (but not required) to complete a community service-learning project;
- a three-course sequence here at UIUC where students learn to facilitate campus-mandated intergroup dialogue sessions on social justice issues; and
- CU Boulder's INVST Community Leadership Studies program, a two-year intensive leadership training program with a focus on community engaged scholarship and activism around social and environmental justice

At each of these sites I conducted stimulated elicitation interviews (Prior, 2004) with—and collected documents from—as many students, teachers, and administrators as I could recruit: three teachers / course designers and one student at SFSU, one teacher/administrator and three students and UIUC, and one teacher/administrator and three students at CU Boulder. Appendix B gives a snapshot of my participants, by program, as well as the documents they provided.[2] In total I conducted 15 text-centered interviews (and collected over 70 associated texts). I conducted another two interviews without a central text under discussion—one of which was a joint interview with two teachers at SFSU and the other was with Ross, the previous director of UIUC's DiversityEd long after my initial study with students. Both of these led to discussion and collection of more texts, but we didn't have them on the table during discussion. At UIUC and SFSU I also conducted classroom observations—three and two respectively.

Defining my quintain. Though my research at SFSU, like my early standalone interviews, certainly influenced my understanding of the possibilities and practices of liberatory education curricula, ultimately, I chose to focus on two cases in this dissertation to define my

[2] Appendices D, E, and F offer samples of the informed consent documents used in this research.

quintain: my UIUC and CU Boulder sites. While this was largely a matter of logistics—choosing, with the time I had, to focus on two cases without losing the depth, breadth, and detail important to understanding each case—SFSU was also an outlier in a few key ways that made it less interesting to explore in relationship to INVST, the program I found most interesting and began my analysis in earnest with. Rather than a series of elective courses with interdisciplinary content taken by a cohort of students, the class I studied at SFSU was a standalone, required writing course. Its co-design by a group of instructors and the ways they worked within the constraints of their institution and curricular placement were fascinating, but a bit far afield of the kinds of programmatic coordination necessitated by the other two programs and their longer arches of learning and relationship-building. As my research at UIUC and CU Boulder proceeded, it also became clear that these two social justice programs were conceptualized, practiced, and situated in their institutions and communities quite differently, giving me as an ethnographer a quintain that would support comparative analysis and theorizing.

Stimulated Elicitation Interviews. In advance of our interviews, I asked participants to provide me with texts they'd composed. I stipulated that these did not need to be purely alphabetic or academic texts, nor did they need to be direct products of their work in their program, but that they should be related somehow to the ways their work in the program has helped them grow. From teachers, I also requested relevant pedagogical materials like syllabi and assignments. I came into each interview with a loose script, modified with notes on the writing that participant had provided and particulars relevant to their program. Appendix C includes the base scripts for interviews with students and teachers respectively. Actual interviews were intended to be conversational and attempted to follow the threads my participants seemed

interested or excited about and probe new themes as they came up iteratively across other interviews and data analysis.

Classroom observations. I conducted three classroom observations of the SJEP course sequence—one near the end of the semester for each course in the sequence. (At SFSU, I conducted two classroom observations of Amy Latham's class—one in the middle and one at the end of the Spring 2018 semester.) These enabled a glimpse of classroom relations and atmosphere as well as pedagogical approaches and students' uptake, supporting, extending, and giving life and color to the way those things were discussed in interviews.

Data Analysis

Over the years during and since collecting interview data and documents, I've done a range of conference presentations, brownbag talks, and data workshops with slices of this data. In these spaces, I've alternately zoomed in on individual cases (interviews, observations and materials from a single participant) to develop themes of interest recognizable across cases, and zoomed out looking across cases by juxtaposing participants' words and texts to compare and contrast the activity at the differently situated sites. As just a couple examples of this kind of zooming: I've workshopped a snippet of video from an interview with my participant Maria with visiting scholars and peers, eliciting their responses to what I perceived as a moment of marked affect, and I've given a conference presentation that visualizes the multimodal streams of literate activity as each was employed by three teachers in the study.

This process of continuous, iterative analysis of a growing data set is consonant with ethnography's overarching goal of developing robust understandings of a community's meaning-making processes. It has led me to new connections with current and potential programs and

participants, as well as refined questions and lenses with which to approach old and new data. For instance, questions like the one I pose at the start of Chapter Four, "How did the intra-action of INVST's actors enable their world-building activity?" materialized in my thinking about that case after I'd begun to note the particular ways relationships mattered to my INVST participants and the particular ways their joint activity sustained and renewed their program over time. That question also cites Karen Barad's (2007) argument for *intra-action* rather than *interaction* as a way to signal that everything is in constant flux and becoming. Likewise, continuous, iterative analysis has granted time and space to take up the methodological lens of *perezhivanie* in my analysis.

My understanding of *perezhivanie* impresses on me a number of obligations as a researcher: to attend to what my participants attend to (including but not limited to their embodied and affective engagements), to include my own emotional responses to my data in my representations of it, and to seek out methods to both understand and construct my participants' experiences in ways that illuminate how such experiences are distributed and continually, cooperatively reconstructed and worked through. This last is a reminder, too, that through my research, my participants' stories are opened up to further shared reconstruction including together in our interviews and with future audiences of my work. The details I draw out and threads I pull create the foundation for how my participants will be understood. Integrating my own emotional responses highlights that their speech is not a direct window into their inner experience. So too, re-constructing my participants' experiences not just through their verbal reflections but as integrated with their artifacts, institutional documents, and broader social documents more accurately reflects the ways individual development is always already shot through with the social, the ways our being and becoming are entangled with others'.

In Chapters Three and Four, then, I return to and fill out the slice of INVST's entangled becoming glimpsed in the introduction. In Chapters Five and Six, I introduce and turn to analyses of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign's Social Justice Educators Paraprofessionals (SJEP) program. Methodologically, I take similar approaches to the two cases in my quintain; however, the specifics of the programs, of my access to them, and of my developing understanding of them also lead to different narratives.

Chapter 3:

CU Boulder's INVST Community Leadership Program

This chapter and the next are a case study of the co-development of students and CU Boulder's INVST Community Leadership Studies program. My major aim in this (and the following) case study is to provide a rich and nuanced narrative of the complex entanglements within and around students' meaningful literate practice, teachers' praxis, and the socio-material institutions framing and supporting that work. To that end, and because my own positionality as an ethnographer shapes my research, I begin this chapter by narrating my own introduction to the program and its fit in the study. Then, working from local self-representations and published scholarship, in service to my overarching ethnographic approach, I select and synthesize historical details that situate the program and its parent institutions in time and space. Next, using INVST's published documents like their website and its attached documents like their handbook, flyers, and history, I sketch the program's history and its stated values and mission. This approach enables me to consider in some detail the ways that might typically be considered *macro-scale* historical events are in fact more flatly connected to programmatic, pedagogical, and individual literacy practices. Then, drawing from her account and documents discussed in our interview, I animate INVST Director Sabrina's structuring and mentoring work in the program. All of this is intended to lay the groundwork for understanding the literate activity and becoming of INVST students, discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

My Introduction to INVST

I was first introduced to the INVST Community Leadership Studies program, a 2-year intensive leadership training program with a focus on social and environmental justice, at a panel

at the October 2017 Conference on Community Writing, titled: "Developing Critical, Reflexive Teacher-Scholar Stances That Resist Power in Past, Present, and Future Community Work." In her presentation, INVST's director Sabrina Sideris gave an overview of the program's curriculum and governance before introducing Starhawk's (1987) tripartite conception of power: power over (linked to domination and control), power from within (linked to individual potential), and power-with (social power, the influence we wield among equals). She articulated how INVST practiced power-with in the midst of institutional life, positing that it *is* possible to have a program that actually resists the power of the institution of which it is a part. Inviting us to think about changing our own practices, she asked the community writing teachers and practitioners in the room to consider how, if at all, our service learning or community engagement programs transform or maintain existing institutional values. Then she asked us to locate the spaces in our community writing courses where students' identities, voices and desires could move to the center, or to imagine what that *would* look like.

I was (and remain) awestruck at the depth, breadth, and complexity of experience structured by INVST, as well as Sabrina's dedication to the work of inviting and supporting community efforts for change. I was also, at that moment (and for many to follow), very much in need of Starhawk's alternative framing of power-with and a clear articulation of that stance as practiced with students in higher education. At that point in my research trajectory I was both working to understand the operation of power and oppression in my reading about social justice in/and/beyond education in preparation for my fields exam and planned dissertation research, *and* reeling from being bureaucratically denied access to a major site for which my study was designed. While *power-over* fit many of the classic and contemporary views of oppression through dominance, and *power-from-within*, though personally important to me in some ways

seemed often to be coopted by neoliberal agendas that tout personal responsibility while ignoring structural inequity, *power-with* gave me a constructive frame for the breadth of communal action that had the potential to make structural change—a realization akin to the way Maisha Fisher's *Black Literate Lives* (2009) would soon help me reframe my fixed, negative, notion of "institutions." Starhawk argues against falling back on appeals to authority that relieve us of individual responsibility, and instead for resistance / empowered action as our new response. My post-conference email to Sabrina began:

> It was so great meeting and learning from you at CCW. Thank you so much for sharing Starhawk's work—there is nothing quite like having exactly what you're seeking handed to you. I'm eagerly awaiting my copy in the mail and am so grateful to have a base like Starhawk's three types of power from which to build ways out of understanding power only in terms of oppression—some words to hang my felt sense on (personal communication, October 26, 2017).

As a sweet gesture, when I met each of my CU Boulder participants individually on a sunny but brisk April day on the back patio of a cozy Boulder book-café, Sabrina brought me an old overhead transparency describing Starhawk's three types of power.

Much like my original intended site, Metro, and the site I'd already begun researching here at UIUC, Social Justice Educators Paraprofessionals (SJEP), INVST offered students a series of linked curricula within a cohort that joined academic with activist work. Unlike either of those sites, INVST focused on service learning. In stark contrast to the months of unreturned emails and cancelled meetings awaiting committee approval to discuss their approach to outside research at Metro, and incredible difficulty sitting down for an interview with the busy SJEP teachers, though still messy (as email recruiting tends to be), Sabrina was willing and excited to set me up with student participants and to sit down with me herself to talk about the program, her role in it, and her own writing. I say this not to vent frustration, but because I do think it belies a

different orientation to administration—one I suspect is enabled by the relative stability of INVST and longevity of its members. This stability sits in stark contrast to Metro, growing more quickly than it could sustain and needing to guard its image to continue to garner support, and to SJEP, headed by an overextended teacher working toward a more prestigious administrative role (which Ross, featured in chapter four, was appointed to in spring 2020). In a moment, drawing from Sabrina's description, I'll sketch the contours of the INVST program—its values and goals, and the administrative and curricular structures designed to enact them. First, I'd like to take a step back here to locate the program in time and space through an institutional ethnography approach (Smith 2005, LaFrance 2019). While INVST's program is more community-focused than most others in this study, as I explain in my methods chapter, I situate each program in its sociopolitical and geographical history this way not just for "context," but because each program is born of, enabled and limited by, its local culture and history. As I work toward conclusions in this cross-institutional comparison, I believe it is imperative to keep the situatedness of each program in the forefront to avoid coming to misleading, blanket "best practices."

Locating INVST Community Leadership Studies Program

As will be explained shortly, INVST CSL students do their work and learning quite dispersed across time and space. Their physical home for the school year, though, is located on the northwest side of the CU Boulder campus, tucked away in a cozy shared workspace they call the INVST Peace Room.

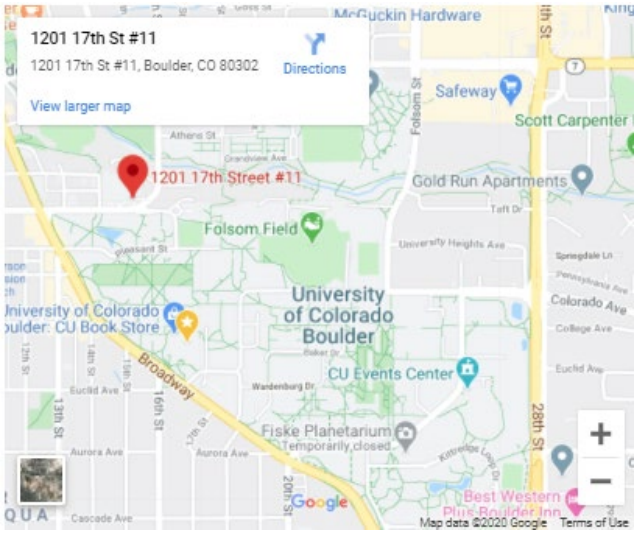

Figure 3.1. Google Map of INVST's location at University of Colorado Boulder

Created by the INVST CSL Program class of 1997-1999, the Peace Room is open to students and the community and features postings on community events and calls for participants as well as their library on human rights, non-violence, service learning, and teaching social justice.

Figure 3.2. Exterior view of campus buildings housing INVST's Peace Room ("INVST Peace Room," n.d.)

Figure 3.3 Interior view of Peace Room from two angles ("INVST Peace Room," n.d.)

Zooming out a bit further, Boulder, CO itself is nestled in the Flatiron foothills of the Rocky Mountains to the west and quite intentionally enveloped in a ring of preserved green space to the east. In her study of race and the natural landscape in Boulder, Abby Hickcox (2007) uses "both ideological and discursive analyses of landscape to sketch a view of the natural landscape as an agent of history and ideology in Boulder" (p. 238). She traces the historical relations of race and class that have resulted in Boulder being perceived as so green (geographically) and so white (racially).

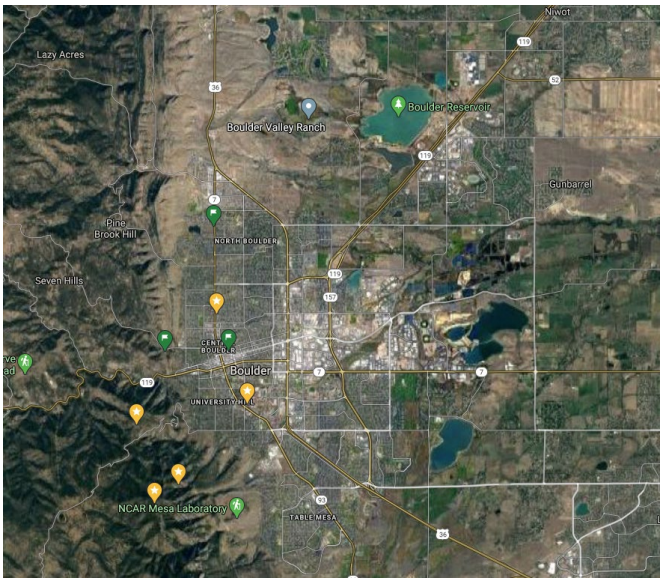

Figure 3.4. Google Maps satellite view of Boulder

Scoping back in time, Boulder and its university are of course wrapped up in our shared history of colonization, capitalism, and institutionalization. I'll try not to linger here long, but I do want to draw some threads from this history I believe are relevant to the eventual formation and culture of INVST; because INVST's work is embedded in the university and concerned with environmental and social justice issues, its institutional alignments and local histories of injustice and privilege all affect INVST's values and work. I see exploring these entanglements as critical to the deep theorizing work of ethnography that researchers must undertake if they want to narrow the gaps between text and context and to contribute to more holistic, *just* research practices.

The place now known as Colorado was first inhabited by humans about 13,000 years ago in the aftermath of the Ice Age Summer. The Southern Arapaho were key actors in the development of Boulder, and many other Native American tribes weathered winters there, including the Utes, Cheyennes, Comanches, and Sioux (Romero, 2020b). Gold-seeking colonizers established the first non-native settlement in 1858 and organized the Boulder City Town Company less than a year later ("History of Boulder," n.d.). In 1861 Boulder City became part of the Territory of Colorado, established by the U.S. Congress as a supply base for miners, and the economy of the city grew to support that mission.

The University of Colorado Boulder, an R1, is the flagship University of Colorado. It was founded five months before Colorado became a state in 1876 when the Colorado territorial legislature made an amendment to the constitution that provided money for three universities: CU Boulder, the Colorado School of Mines in Golden, and the Colorado Agricultural College in Fort Collins. Boulder was in competition for the new university with Cañon City, winning the bid because the state also planned to build a new prison; since Cañon City already held a prison,

the decision was made to place the second where there was already existing infrastructure (Romero, 2020a). Cañon City now holds thirteen prisons, Boulder, none. In their 2010 interactive web documentary "Prison Valley," David Dufresne and Phillipe Brault illustrate how Cañon City's booming prison industry has made the city's economy recession-proof.

In the 1890s, in part to attract visiting scholars, Boulder offered to supply land, facilities, and public utilities for the Texas Board of Regents to establish a Chautauqua, thereby creating the Western outpost of a national adult education movement specifically created to combine culture and the great outdoors, as well as a longstanding community space for cultural and intellectual activity.

Tourism continued to dominate the city's economy, and when it declined during World War II, the location of the Navy's Japanese language school at CU helped extend the city's popularity as, following the war, many trainees returned to the city they'd become acquainted with then ("History of Boulder," n.d.). In 1949, President Truman's cold war declustering of major buildings in DC led to the dispersal of US research labs and nuclear weapons manufacturing facilities, leading to the secret establishment of Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant in 1952 (Gerde, 2015).

In 1959, residents voted not to provide water or sewer services past a certain mountain elevation and to limit housing—both of these intended to protect the pristine surrounding nature views (Helm, 2013). In the 1960's hippie movement, Boulder saw an influx of migration (Helm, 2013). In 1967, Boulder became the first American city to acquire and maintain open space through tax funds and has since spent more than two hundred million dollars to purchase more than forty-five thousand acres (Hickcox, 2007). Along with strict limits on the growth of commercial businesses, this resulted in Boulder becoming something of an incubator for the

health food industry (Helm, 2013). In the early 1970's, Boulder became the epicenter of U.S. secular Buddhist practice, as Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche settled there with the objective of bringing Buddhist practices to all (Inclan, 2015). The convergence of these historical forces made Boulder a ripe site for anti-nuclear weapon protests at the Rocky Flats plant in the late 1970s, when local community groups suspected environmental contamination, and its closure in 1989, after which the plant's operator plead guilty to charges of illegally storing and disposing of radioactive and toxic waste (Gerde, 2015). Although debates around nuclear weapons and energy do not emerge organically in the accounts and perspectives of my participants, these rich activist histories comprise a backdrop against which INVST community members learned and labored in their program of study.

INVST's History and Institutional Location

It was in this culture that CU Boulder's INVST was born. In 1989, an interdisciplinary group of faculty and students inspired by the idea of creating a community on campus that combined intergenerational activism with academics raised $60,000 to get the program off the ground and began offering INVST's first classes in 1990. (INVST "Our History," n.d.). Community governance, shared responsibility for fundraising, and a commitment to promoting from within have been core to INVST's operation throughout its history. Methodologically speaking, I'd argue that we cannot understand the praxis of INVST students and staff without zooming in on its programmatic origins. The reasons for this will likely become even more apparent when I do the same for UIUC's SJEP program in Chapters Five and Six, as the contrast between the two programs' origins and the historical trajectories of their participants' actions take shape.

Originally called the "International and National Voluntary Service Training (INVST) Program," the leadership training opportunity has grown over time as staff, students and community members worked to secure funding and broaden the program's reach. Garnering support from the Compton Foundation in 2002, INVST Community Studies was established as a multidisciplinary unit while also adding Community Studies Electives and the Youth Council for Public Policy to their two-year program, which they then renamed the INVST Community Leadership Program (CLP). In 2004 they developed the Fundraising and Advisory Board to support INVST staff in raising funds for the two yearly Justice Summers—the program's central, month-long service-learning experiences. In 2009, the College of Arts and Sciences decided to stabilize funding for INVST, committing $100,000 per year, nearly half their annual budget. Staff, students, and board members continue to fundraise the remainder. In 2013, INVST's academic programs were moved to the School of Education, grouping it with other leadership training and service-learning programs for undergraduates.

They are currently part of the School of Education's CU Engage: Center for Community-Based Learning and Research. On their current website, CU Engage represents itself this way: "CU Engage collaborates with communities, schools, and organizations to address complex public challenges. We facilitate the development of equity-oriented partnerships that sustain engaged learning and mutually beneficial community-based research" (CU Engage "Welcome," n.d.). In their launch announcement in February 2015, the Center touches on that mission, but frames its value quite differently:

> Why CU Engage?
> CU Engage offers one response to current challenges in higher education. In today's workforce, employers are increasingly demanding that college graduates are prepared for the kinds of skills that can't be measured on a traditional test: Can you work in teams?

> Do you persist after failure? Are you capable of participating in diverse cultural practices and groups?
>
> Universities also play a central role in preparing students to become active participants in society who generate solutions to major public challenges, ranging from racial inequality to climate change. Learning how to participate in practices of a democracy, such as dialogue and group decision-making, and to engage in deliberation about evidence-based public policy are critical for human development and civic renewal.
>
> To meet these demands, CU Engage aims to build a community of students, staff and faculty who integrate CU's academic mission with community engagement, consistent with CU-Boulder's Flagship 2030 Strategic Plan.
>
> The initiatives described above offer a starting point for the center's work in forming equity-oriented partnerships, organizing opportunities for students to learn alongside community members, and supporting faculty and students in developing ethical and rigorous participatory research methods. To learn more, please visit colorado.edu/cuengage (CU Engage "Launches," 2015).

An announcement regarding CU Engage's first change of leadership in 2020, while still professional, sets out its values a bit more directly when it distinguishes itself from other community engagement offices in higher education, saying:

> Although community engagement offices are ubiquitous in colleges and universities, they vary considerably in how they approach their work. CU Engage has been recognized for two unique elements. First, CU Engage decided not to separate undergraduate service learning from faculty involvement in community research partnerships early on. This integrated approach enhances student access to research experiences and ensures that program design is guided by cutting edge research and theory. A second distinguishing feature is CU Engage's commitment to mutualism and reciprocity in its partnerships. Drawing on the community organizing and critical service literatures, the Center has tried to take a patient and sustainable approach that seeks shared decision-making and jointly defined goals (CU Engage "Announces," 2020).

Framed this way, CE Engage's definitions and values seem more closely aligned with INVST's.

INVST's Values and Mission:

"We believe in the possibility of a just and sustainable world. We develop community leaders who engage in compassionate action as a lifetime commitment"

INVST's (current) website gives this brief synopsis:

> This intensive two-year training program develops community leaders who engage in compassionate action as a lifetime commitment. Through a combination of theory, skills and community-based action for positive change, young people learn to be effective and responsible community leaders (INVST "About," 2019).

Over three decades, the program has largely maintained its structure and focus but evolves through the participation of new members and by ensuring they always teach timely topics. The INVST mission statement, re-evaluated and changed through a community-wide process in 2000 is: "We believe in the possibility of a just and sustainable world. We develop community leaders who engage in compassionate action as a lifetime commitment" (INVST "About-History" 2019).

INVST's 2017-2018 handbook (INVST Handbook, 2017) unpacks their two central teaching methods: service-learning and participatory education. Here they define "service-learning," which they recognize as a newly adopted term in higher education, and not one with which INVST began its mission, as "a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities." They link the new term to comparable ones being taken up: "a scholarship of engagement," "civic engagement," and "social entrepreneurship." In INVST, service-learning includes: experimental immersion, reciprocity, and critical reflexivity (values that seem to be shared by CU Engage). Regarding participatory education, INVST's handbook says:

> In our participatory model, students and staff work together to co-construct meaningful learning experiences and to build and constantly improve upon a functioning

> organization. As a result of our model, participants expand their critical consciousness, and **recognize that their actions and inactions define social reality and that they have the power to positively alter the quality of their lives and the lives of others, and actively support the health of the natural world, including human, social communities.** (INVST Handbook, 2017, p. 5, emphasis mine)

The handbook further defines INVST's organizational culture, and the vision and assumptions that undergird it.

> INVST Community Studies believes in the possibility of a just and sustainable world. We develop engaged citizens and leaders who work for the benefit of humanity and the environment. This vision is based on a number of assumptions which include the beliefs that: one person can make a difference; a positive difference can be made; a critical mass can create a global shift; and **social reality is socially constructed, and therefore, can be changed by human actors.** (INVST Handbook, 2017, p. 6, emphasis mine)

Given my own worldview and overarching intent of my work through and beyond this project, the ways INVST represents its central beliefs and aims are of particular interest to me. Below, and in each case study chapter to follow, I hope to trace how the program's stated values are taken up and practiced by mentors and students, but I think it's important here to point out how much INVST resonates with the lens I bring as a researcher. In particular, the two bolded phrases above align well with my view of human agency, a core reason for my approach to education.

Sitting down with INVST Director Sabrina Sideris helped me put a finer point on INVST's goals and better understand how these values and premises manifest in INVST's curriculum and community practice. Before jumping into what I learned from Sabrina, let me briefly sketch INVST's 2-year curriculum from the much more detailed description Sabrina relayed to me. As previously noted in my methods chapter, the histories that I draw from in this

study are provided by participants and/or are regional in nature. Honoring these accounts is critical for situating local knowledge in institutional ethnography work.

According to Sabrina, each year, INVST accepts an interdisciplinary cohort of about 16 students, who will learn and enact a consensus decision-making process to co-direct the program itself as part of the Directors' Committee, which includes current students, alumni, administrative and teaching staff. INVST's curriculum begins with a one month climate justice summer where students bond in nature and then do a range of projects with community partners across multiple states where diverse stakeholders including coal miners, farmers, small business owners, permaculturists, water coalitions, and politicians at the state capital, are variously affected by and tackling their local climate-justice related issues. Upon return to campus, first year courses include facilitating peaceful community change and a skills class where students learn to facilitate meetings, work through interpersonal conflict, plan events, and more. Outside of coursework, in the first year, students also intern six hours a week with a Boulder nonprofit or activist organization of their choice. The second year begins with a similarly complex and hands-on economic justice summer where students visit multiple US cities that attract immigration through the meat-packing industry, they work with the Mexico Solidarity Network in Chicago, and the Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership in Detroit to learn about how particularly communities of color are re-weaving the economic and social fabric of community from the bottom up since the abandonment of the auto industry, and then back to Denver where they have multiple experiences focused on understanding the possibilities that some new immigrants come for, which are realized and which are dashed. Then students take courses on the practice and tactic of nonviolent social movements and another skills class focusing on leadership, conflict resolution and more. In their second year, in teams, they also design and

implement their own participatory action research project collaboratively with community partners, carrying out four months of research and collaboration before designing and implementing a targeted solution. Students referred to this as the SOL project, and INVST's website clarifies that SOL is an acronym for "Serving—Organizing—Leading" (INVST "Community SOL Projects," n.d.). With this sketch of INVST's curriculum in mind, I move now to narrate some of what I learned from Sabrina about how she sees, practices, and models the values of INVST.

Sabrina

"So I carry the role and the title "program director," that's what it says on my business card. Um, however, when we're at directors' committee everyone sitting around the table is co-directing INVST together using the consensus process."

When asked for writing related to the program, Sabrina initially provided me three texts central to the curriculum in INVST. Upon explaining that I meant writing done by and for INVST, on the spot she pivoted to INVST's Inclusion Commitment and Commitment to Anti-Oppressive Education. She explained to me that though her title is "program director," INVST is in fact run by the Directors' Committee, which includes all current students, professors and administrative staff, and even occasionally alumni who wish to return—any of whom can bring a topic of concern or suggestion to the Directors' Committee, from very small to very significant changes to the structure of the program itself and its governance. INVST teaches and uses the consensus decision-making process.

According to Sabrina, "this is exactly the way that INVST has been evolving throughout the past 28 years, is directed by our own participants and lead through a thoughtful process of all

of us bringing our wisdom together and sitting and deliberating using the consensus process."

And, in fact, it is how these two statements were written.

Inclusion Commitment:
We actively seek and support the participation of individuals and communities that reflect diversity of ability status, age, color, documentation status, ethnicity, gender, gender variance, life experience, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and veteran status.

Commitment to Anti-oppressive Education:
INVST Community Studies is committed to anti-oppressive education. We acknowledge the importance of **examining** not only how groups are oppressed but also how groups are privileged and how these two processes maintain social structures. We are dedicated to **challenging** dominant ideologies and systems, **centering** traditionally underrepresented voices, **questioning** the assumption that information is unbiased, and **critiquing** what is thought of as normal.

Figure 3.5. INVST's Inclusion Commitment and Commitment to Anti-oppressive Education, visible on their website (INVST "Programs," n.d.) (bolding in original)

The Inclusion statement, Sabrina pointed out, is much like one you might read as a governing text of many academic program,

> …although the statement has been in place for a very long time in INVST, it keeps evolving. It keeps changing and that's because we the members of INVST keep becoming conscious of new groups of people in society who need to be included in that statement, and u::m *through that, *actively and consciously, and thoughtfully included in our programming, and in our outreach, and in our, pedagogy. So::, this first statement keeps evolving and most recently it evolved in a really significant way, we *added documentation status. We specifically spelled out documentation status. We did that back in 2015. And so::, when we did that, we also had a community-wide conversation about how, *just making a list* of the people we intend to include in our organization is *never going to be sufficient. It's a human endeavor that means well, but it really always fails.

Here, and throughout our conversation, Sabrina sits with the tension between writing's power as a structuring force for communal thought and action and its inadequacy on its own without other supporting action.

In the next breath, she explains how the statement was for many years called the "multicultural pluralism statement," until an alumnus brought it to the Directors' Committee's attention that the word "multicultural" was outdated and problematic. This spurred a deeper look into the history of the terms "multiculturalism," "diversity," and "inclusion." Sabrina narrated the process initiated: "We read some things. We talked about them. We had multiple meetings. We kept deliberating. And we let it sit. And we let it percolate and we let it kind of move through us." Then, they did three things.

First, they shifted the *words* in the first statement in an effort to shift the *work* the statement was doing. Then, they collaboratively authored the second statement, which "grew out of the imperfections and the flaws and the persistent limitations of the first," and, notably, emphasizes in bold text the active work involved in their commitment. Last, they built a structure for continued discourse. Sabrina explained it in relationship to Sarah Ahmed's *On Being Included*, read in this process of exploration, which details the history of that verbiage and argues that, in Sabrina's words,

> … doing diversity work is not as simple as just *having somebody at your university whose name *is "chief diversity officer". We similarly *feel like doing diversity work is not just as simple as having two statements on our website [we laugh]. Um, or having agreed to two statements and having that in the minutes for our past directors' committee meetings. And so, we really wanted to make sure that we created structures for integrating these two commitments into our very actions, and we wanted, since we're academics, we wanted to create an academic rhythm to that and sort of create accountability and sort of place it in a couple of places so that we could be sure it would

> get in front of our students and *keep being part of the conversation that would thread its way through the INVST experience for all INVST students and so, we created a series, it's called “The Anti-oppression Community Conversation, Series” and it's *six conversations that take place throughout the academic year.

Sabrina further explained how these serve not only to put the statement into action, but to expand and support the community discourse built elsewhere in the curriculum.

> … they focus on a particular way that the different groups that are named in the ^above statement, um, we not only focus our *attention on them and our learning on them, but we think about intersectionality, we think about the way that an individual can be a part of multiple groups and we think about the way that society has a tendency to oppress some of the named people in the first statement, um in a systemic and persistent way. We think about the historical contexts of that, and then we also think about the interpersonal dynamics, and we think about the *personal responsibility. So we think, about the question, you know “what can I learn about my own words, behaviors, language choices, actions in the world, both micro and macro, that can allow me to see that, you know that *I'm part* of a system of oppression being perpetuated over time?” Um, and so we try to bring in speakers or bring in learning...uh artifacts, my colleague likes to call them. Um, that might be a short film clip, it might be a segment from the news, it might be something that was said in the news media::, it might be a *flyer or a poster on campus that someone else posted and created, it might be:: an issue or a pattern or a theme that keeps showing itself in our own learning community, *or, it might be something that was said earlier in the 2-year curriculum by another educator or another community partner that kind of raised people's hackles or left people confused and sort of needs more attention.

This kind of bolstering through thoughtful repetition, it’s worth mentioning, Sabrina also practices in her communication to students; less and less confident that students are thoroughly reading long emails about the best ways to participate in INVST, she has begun to get creative with sharing information in multiple ways and places and then figuring out ways to get students

to find it. More importantly, the opportunity, especially, to come back to sticky or uncomfortable themes over time as a community supports the experiential learning curricula that, according to Sabrina, quite purposefully asks students to sit in discomfort and uncertainty as they listen to multiple conflicting views both from their community partners and one another.

INVST students also have many opportunities to do this slow, reflective processing individually. Sabrina highlighted journaling as an important part of reflective service learning, and a practice smattered throughout the curriculum. Journaling is also a practice that has stuck with Sabrina from her own time as a student in INVST and that she is able to deploy in her work as Director when needed:

> I have to admit to you that I myself don't journal very ^often anymore^. Um more often I journal when I'm having a problem- a personal problem that I am *sad about or need to think through. O::r... I *will write letters, um [exhales audibly]...I sometimes write long letters on email where I- I'm reflecting on a problem we had at work or an issue or a conversation we ha:d where, [tapping] I meant to say something a certain way and it came out a different way and so I sit and reflect and then write a long letter to everybody who was [laughing] at the meeting and say, you know "I've been ^thinking about it and this is another way of looking at it" or "I've been thinking about it and I *shouldn't have said that [tapping] I was [laughs] I was an idiot and what I- what I was trying to say was blah blah blah."

This ability to repurpose practices learned in a school setting in useful and situation-specific ways across a lifespan is certainly the kind of rhetorical savvy students will need if they are to make lifetime commitments to difficult and everchanging work.

Another telling example of the way Sabrina and INVST use textual products within the institution to support—but not stand in for—meaningful action are the three following theory of change diagrams in the INVST handbook. In response to my question about how much

autonomy INVST teachers have, and whether and when the INVST curriculum changes, Sabrina described these "maps" to me as "these three…frankly, they're pieces of paper."

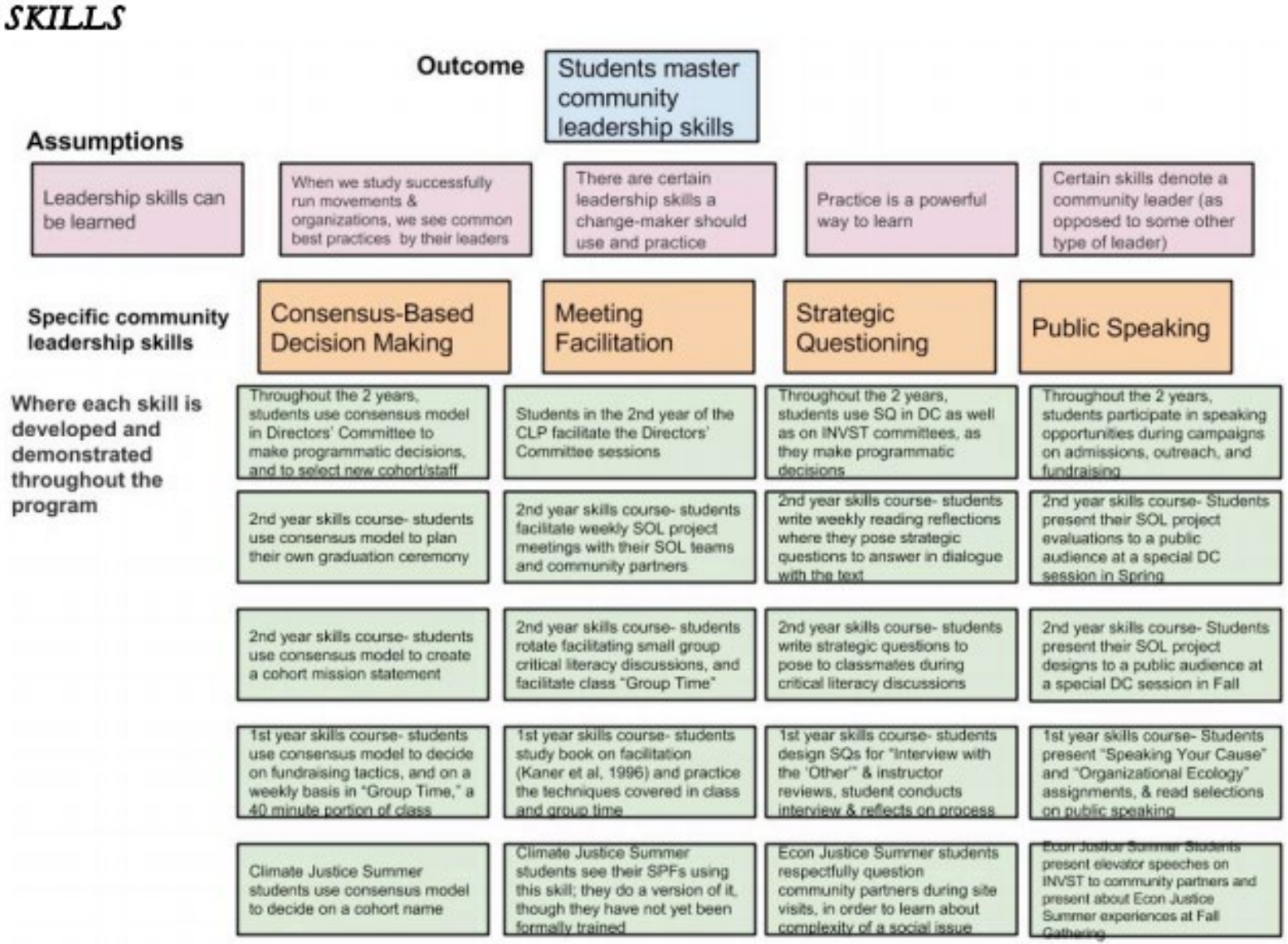

Figure 3.6. INVST's Theory of Change Diagram of "Skills" (INVST Handbook, 2017)

Figure 3.7. INVST's Theory of Change Diagram of "Knowledge" (INVST Handbook, 2017)

DISPOSITIONS

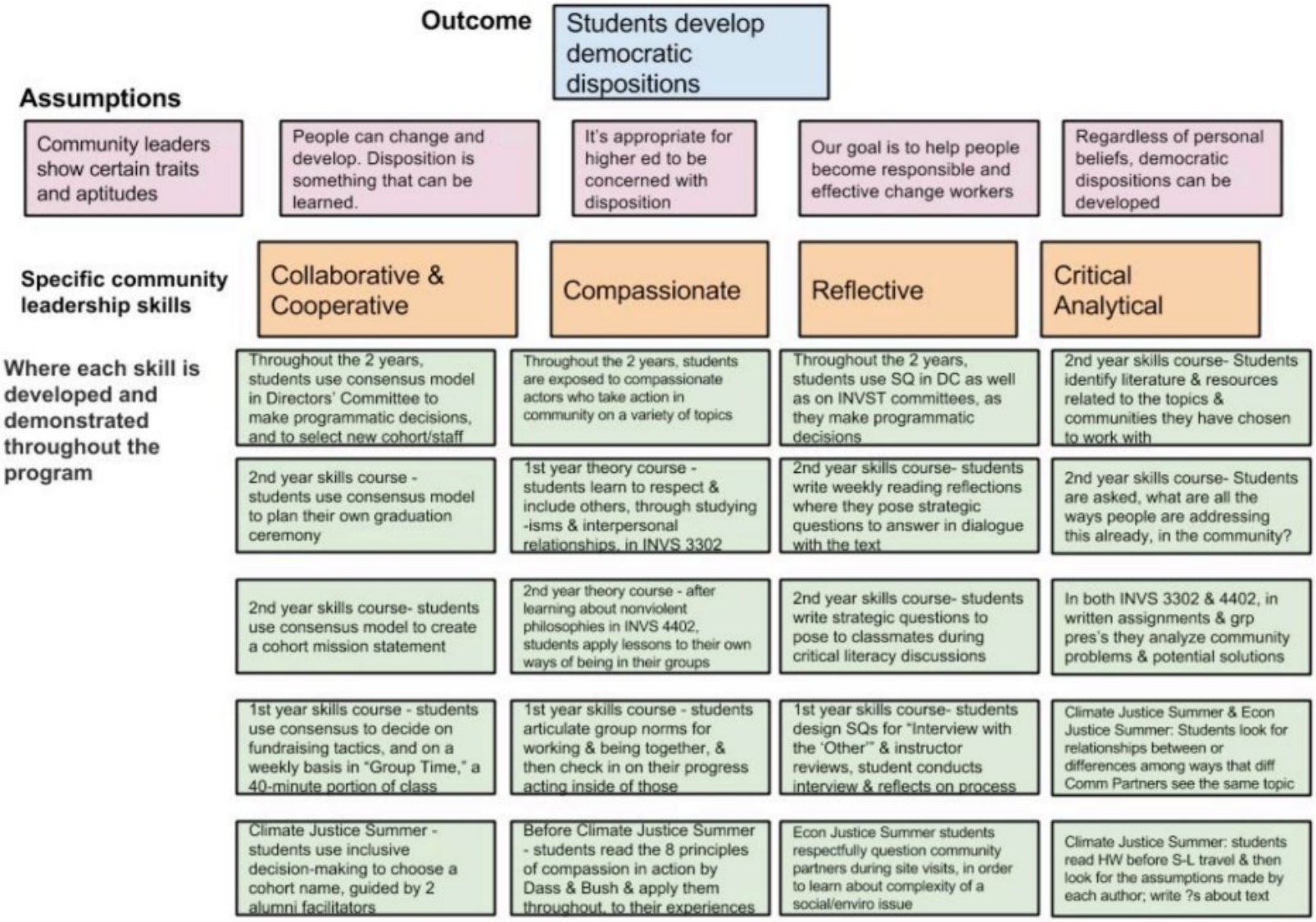

Figure 3.8. INVST's Theory of Change Diagram of "Dispositions" (INVST Handbook, 2017)

Sabrina mentioned these to illustrate how the two-year curriculum is designed to cohere. Together, the three diagrams draw out three major intended outcomes regarding students' skills, knowledge, and dispositions. Not unlike the kind of theory of change models that might be required in a grant application, or curricular mapping of student learning outcomes often required for program assessment, these diagrams have all the institutional trappings of higher education, which may be what elicited Sabrina's tongue-in-cheek description. However, they are also clearly of some use in articulating INVST's goals and the INVST community's shared responsibility for them over time and across their curriculum.

Sabrina presents the intended outcome of the foci on these skills, knowledge, and dispositions as very flexible and individual-specific:

> we have a set of those that we hope students will master or, at least develop comfort with. Um, and that will become sort of a part of their ^identities. However they characterize it and however they articulate it and however they choose to take it on or not take it on, but, we do consciously come from this list of democratic dispositions that we're attempting to impart.

Conclusion

This chapter has situated INVST institutionally, historically, and geographically in accordance with the holistic methodologies that have guided my inquiry. It has also illuminated the values and mechanisms of the program as they are communicated and co-created by its members in text and in action. In the next chapter, I consider how INVST's aims are taken up (or not) by students. As we'll explore there, though they each provided very different examples of their meaningful writing, the three INVST students I spoke to (Maria, L., and Nicole) each certainly seemed to embody in their work the listed democratic dispositions (collaborative and cooperative, compassionate, reflective, critical analytical).

Chapter 4:

INVST Students' Literate Activity and Becoming

Following Chapter Three's geographical, historical, and institutional look at INVST, this chapter focuses on INVST students. This is the heart of my project: illuminating my student participants' accounts of what they found meaningful about the text(s) they've chosen to share and their growth in relation to their program. I wrap with a brief discussion of how I see the students' literate development being enabled or constrained by the learning environment of their program, which I address most comprehensively in my concluding chapter. Consistent with my documented narrative approach, I aim here for integrative analysis over data reduction, foregrounding narrative and presenting key documentation to gives readers a chance to interact with samples of the data and make their own judgments about my interpretations as a researcher. The use of documented narratives enables me to retain in my re-presentation some of the richness, complexity, and dynamics of my participants' evolving practices.

The three INVST students I spoke with (Maria, L., and Nicole) provided very different types of writing for our interviews, but each spoke to the ways their experiences in INVST supported them doing their important work. It was quite clear in speaking to each student that they valued and prioritized the often personally introspective, interpersonally complex, and intellectually and affectively demanding processes of community-engaged scholarship. They didn't just engage in this work as a requirement of the program; through it and beyond it they sought out and created opportunities to make both academia and their own communities a space for such work. As I analyzed data from INVST and considered Barad's arguments for activity as constant becoming, I came to focus on the following question "How did the intra-action of INVST's actors enable their world-building activity?" In this chapter then, I seek a partial

answer to this question. In particular here, I've become interested in how INVST, over generations, succeeded in carving out a community space largely antithetical to the workings of its parent institution.

In the student narratives to follow, I will introduce each student and how the meaningful writing they chose to discuss ties into their trajectories of becoming community-engaged scholars. In doing so, I trace how Maria, L., and Nicole make their academic writing work for their communities, craft experiences for themselves that will serve them beyond their study in INVST, and learn to be in community with others. Not only does this approach aim to honor the layered, emic perspectives of each participant, but it also advances my methodological argument for synthesizing deep theorizing, institutional ethnography, and documented narratives to chart the complex interplay between institutions, texts, and practices.

Maria

"If I'm not doing work there, at least I can help my people here."

At the time of our meeting, Maria (a pseudonym) was a soon-to-graduate senior at CU Boulder and putting the final touches on her honors thesis, which she had defended the week prior. Not only was Maria finishing up her coursework double majoring in Sociology and Gender and Women's Studies, but she was also finishing her two years in INVST Community Studies. Before our meeting, in response to my request for writing she found meaningful and related to her development in INVST, she had provided me the penultimate draft of her honors thesis, as well as three in-process drafts of the paper and a draft of her defense presentation. These documents provided a touchstone for our conversation as we discussed her experiences writing in, through, and beyond INVST.

The writing Maria provided me was not assigned in INVST. The honors thesis is a campus-wide option at CU Boulder—a rigorous process by which about four to seven percent of each graduating class earn Latin honors. Students who choose to pursue these honors may do so within their home department or interdisciplinarily. They choose a committee of faculty members to advise them through the process—whether by asking faculty they've already built relationships with, or cold-calling faculty with expertise in the area they want to explore who they've located through the online repository designed for that purpose. Maria chose to work with professors she knew and trusted from both of her majors. As Maria did, students typically begin work on their project in their junior year and defend in their senior year.

Maria's honors thesis is an ethnographic look at how Mexican migrant women in Boulder developed and sustained social networks that facilitate access to resources both in their local community and across borders. For her study, she interviewed seventeen women residing in Boulder or nearby Lafayette. This included ten Mexican migrant women who'd lived in the U.S. for at least a year and, "as a way of understanding what may be unique to Mexican migrant women's experiences," a comparison group of seven U.S.-born white women. She used a snowballing recruitment method as an opportunity to "further understand the structure of social networks, how they are formed, and how they involve both weak and strong ties" (p. 12). In her thesis, Maria comes to, and thoroughly unpacks, three main findings: "the importance of family ties for Mexican women, the ways community and social networks develop, and how different intersections of identity (in this case, gender and national origin) create both benefits and constraints for women when seeking resources through their networks" (p. 14). She concludes with continued recognition of the variation and complexity of Mexican migrant women's lived experience and relationship to social networks and reiterates the import of studies like hers:

> Overall, understanding how women perceive social support and their access to resources can help to better position the resources that they need in the community. Since social support is a big factor in the overall well-being of my participants, understanding how those interpersonal networks develop can speak to what works and what doesn't for building strong, supportive communities. (p. 39)

Given her ongoing work with and beyond INVST, this conclusion strikes me as a clear articulation of her personal investments and purpose not just in crafting this thesis, but in what she is working to make her education do for her and her communities. Though this project was completed outside of the official curriculum of INVST, Maria certainly saw this meaningful work as not only related to her development through INVST but also directly supported (materially, affectively, and discursively) by her INVST community. Below, I explore from Maria's account some of the practices and values seeded and supported in INVST that come to bear on her honors thesis.

When I asked Maria how she got involved in INVST, she immediately made the connection back to her thesis, and rewound to four years prior, when she had moved alone from Mexico to Boulder to study. She recalled the emotional difficulty of her first year on her own in a new place, "figuring out how to live in English 24/7," and how in her second year, though she was more comfortable, she said "I was still, you know, missing that sense of community. And I do feel it was like that. I just needed to, you know belong, and be part of- feel- I wanted to feel that I was part of something." She found that something through a stroke of social network serendipity when she was introduced to INVST by her advisor, who happened to also have advised the director of INVST, Sabrina, when she was an undergraduate at CUB.

The community Maria joined and cocreated in INVST Community Studies buoyed her through the two years to follow and the difficult but rewarding processes of becoming an agent of change (her words, though she also questions at a point whether "activist/change-maker"

applies to her) in service of her expanding rings of communities. She referenced her peers and mentors in the program frequently and emphatically as “my humans!” and noted the many ways they challenged and supported her. During the most stressful points of the thesis-writing period, her INVST community provided emotional support (“These humans kept me alive! and emotionally: stable”), recognizing and accepting when she couldn’t be as present in INVST. Materially, and Maria again links this to the importance of social networks, her peers and mentors in INVST even helped her find many of her study participants. The other resources Maria pointed to beyond INVST were also members of her social network; she met regularly with her thesis advisor during the final push and she was able to get some assistance with transcription through a friend of her mother. She pointed out that there is a good writing center on campus, but that she didn’t use it.

Though it certainly wasn’t the direct intent of the INVST curriculum, her prior experience interpreting for INVST’s community partner Mexico Solidarity Network (MSN)—an impromptu opportunity that arose during the economic justice summer trip—also prepared her for the work she would do translating all of her Spanish-speaking thesis research participants’ accounts. She credited the feedback she received from other bilingual people at MSN for buoying her confidence in her ability to maintain speakers’ meaning. Because her thesis advisor also spoke Spanish, Maria was able to work with her transcript data in Spanish throughout the analysis and structuring processes and, on her advisor’s recommendation, save translating for the last moments of the writing process when she was sure of which quotes would remain in the text. She was also able to explain her thinking about the research and particular moments in interviews to her advisor in Spanish. Both of which helped with her goal of faithfully representing her participants’ meaning for her English-reading audience. A bit of this process is

evident in a draft of her thesis oral defense notes she provided me, titled “Charla Presentacion” (presentation talk). One section reads:

> EMPOWERMENT: SEEKING ACTIVITIES WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS. ESTAR EL PENDIENTE DE LS HIJOS, DE SUS ACTIVIDADES, Y PLANES DE VIDA FUTUROS. AL PENDIENTE DEL FUTURO DE SUS HIJOS Y AWARE OF THE RESOURCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE (THIS IS FACILITATED BY THEIR AGENCY).
> AWARENESS OF HER KIDS NEEDS AND ISSUES

In the final form of her written thesis, Maria quite purposefully punctuated participants’ words with the Spanish expressions they used, like a quote from her participant Margarita that begins with “*Uuh mija,*” before switching to English. She also includes and explains culturally-specific Spanish phrases to illuminate the spirit of her participants' words and actions. For instance, she writes:

> In the case of my Mexican participants in particular, I found that they reported higher levels of participation in programs and classes for parents after moving to Colorado. They have found different educational opportunities and resources at their kid’s schools both in Boulder and Lafayette. Involvement in these programs—which range from coffee talks, to classes on children development, to volunteer opportunities—represent the importance they place in their children’s growth and educational outcomes. In Mexico, the popular idiom “*estar al pendiente de los hijos*” denotes this particular involvement in their development. (p. 26)

She told me she wished she could have written the whole thing in Spanish, but that she didn’t think she had the academic language to do it in Spanish now that she’d been writing in English throughout her college career.

Maria saw her thesis as an extension of interests and passions she had built in both her major coursework and her experiences in INVST. When she began her thesis process she had previously taken sociology courses on immigration issues with one of her chosen advisors, and,

through INVST, had done a year internship with Intercambio, a Boulder nonprofit that teaches English to immigrants. In hopes that some of her enthusiasm and frustration is legible, I'd like to share a hefty chunk of the transcript here where Maria explained how she came to her thesis topic:

> … when it came to it- time of writing the thesis I was like "*ok. [abrupt stop and then singsongy voice:] how am I going to combine everything I love into like this one year project? um, and *how? Because, I was doing it through sociology but I also wanted to do something with gender studies and then with INVST and I'm like "ok, how can I do like research that goes *beyo::nd the academia?" [pauses and looks at N] [N: yea] Because I- I'm very kind of like critical of that [hand gestures] But that's like a *contradiction because I'm- doing very we::ll in the academia::, [N laughs] so how like- balancing that^. And so. I would have loved to do some sort of like participatory research or something that wasn't like necessarily too in like the how to do qualitative research or something that's also meaningful^. [N: yea] Um, and so I was like "ok, let's combine these 3 things, I'm sure I can [we laugh] somehow." And I was like "ok! Community" was very important for me [taps table rhythmically] right since the very beginning. That's why I joined INVST because- that was one of the promises, truly it's like it's a community- community leadership *studies program. Um, so I wanted to combine you know like the importance of community with um my passion on immigration issues and um with a perspective on gender. So that's how it came, to be. [we laugh] Yea.

I was so struck by the fervor with which Maria endeavored to combine her passions in this research project. Not only did she very intentionally design a meaningful capstone on years of work across multiple spaces throughout her undergraduate career, but she essentially made space to do the community work she valued within the institutional constraints in which she found herself. Though frustrated with academia's tendency to research without acting for change, she still found a way to use that space and its resources to do work she found important and impactful.

It was clear that Maria's honors thesis was an important achievement for her. Though she didn't choose to share any of her writing from INVST, our conversation about writing in INVST helped me get a sense of what she valued in the writing there as well. Though students in INVST certainly do longitudinal, participatory action research through their SOL projects—and in fact Maria was still involved in an ongoing research project with her cohort gathering input from Boulder's immigrant community on how best to expand voting rights—Maria characterized the writing in INVST as much more reflective, creative, and free. To explain the range of situated ways that might look, she explained the major assignments for two of the INVST courses open to non-INVST students: Facilitating Peaceful Community Change, and History of Nonviolent U.S. Social Movements.

For the first class, Facilitating Peaceful Community Change, the midterm and final were reflection papers asking students to connect what they had learned in class to their visions of peaceful community change. Her description of those assignments sounded to me rather joyful and generative—the kind of writing where one gets to take their time, explore, and make connections:

> that was like writing a journal you know [N: yea] for me like you could take your time because it was just like "oh! let's remember what I loved about this reading and kind of like *play with it a little bit more and work with it and um, and maybe connect it to other readings and to other things that we've learned in INVST" or mo:re- definitely like more creative in the sense that it was like *no right or wrong way [N:mhm] of going on- like writing this- these papers.

For the second course, History of Nonviolent U.S. Social Movements, Maria explained how the level of choice freed up some creativity. For the midterm, students were given an open prompt: how race influences social relations on a topic of their own choosing. In their final, then, students

could either take up the same prompt with a new topic, or expand their midterm writing into a longer final paper. For INVST's core courses, not open to other students, Maria described the writing as "more personal reflection, personal evaluation um, even like personal feedback that you give to yourself after like a big fundraiser or your internship or um our SOL project- that's what we're working on right now. But even in that class it's definitely more hands on than assignments every week." Sometimes this kind of hands-on writing was designed by students themselves. Maria's SOL project team, for instance, decided to design quantitative and qualitative feedback forms to bolster the feedback they would get by running focus groups with community members, and feedback forms for use within the team to consider how they are working together and reflect on their own contributions and needs. Maria explained how they flexibly designed various kinds of feedback mechanisms in response to the group's changing needs over time. She also described how INVST curriculum supported their ability to flexibly invent them. She attributed the know-how to three things: (1) learning INVST's intensive facilitation style; (2) seeing useful models of the genre in a text read for her skills class (*Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown, 2017); and (3) the communal working relationship of her team. Having spent enough time working with her cohort to really understand their working relationship made Maria confident that together they could come up with what they needed.

This particular aspect of community support was described sort of off-handedly by Maria—it was just a fact of her INVST world. When I consider it in relation to the ways Maria valued co-creating community and in contrast to the kind of group work more commonly practiced in undergraduate coursework—work confined to the structure of the semester in a single course—that kind of extended project with equally invested peers strikes me as something

really special. As we'll continue to see, each INVST participant I interviewed mentioned the difficulty and utility of facilitating discussions using INVST's consensus decision-making practices. Maria's small aside about how her cohort's familiarity over time was a contributing factor to their group efficacy reminds me that the "skills" INVST hopes to impart cannot be separated from the relationships the program's structure enables. Though, for the sake of making sure it is threaded through the curriculum, "collaborative and cooperative" as "skills" can be graphically separated from "compassionate" and "reflective," in reality, it's the whole of the social world of the program that makes those dispositions practice-able.

Creating a space where students feel responsible to and for one another, and where they can practice together consequential ways of being in community seems to me one of INVST's great strengths. Aside from the time spent together and their shared passion for the work, I believe the real, and very shared, power INVST students have in deciding the direction of the program plays an important role here. I am led to that insight by many things my INVST participants said, but I want to share here one really striking example from my talk with Maria.

INVST students have a say in the many consequential decisions of the program, including who to hire, how to fundraise, and even which applicants to admit. Reflecting on an admissions committee meeting she'd been in just the day before our interview, Maria mentioned that she'd been thinking, after reading applicants' personal statements and reviewing the notes from their interviews, about her own growth over the previous two years. Without in any way denigrating the new applicants, Maria mused on how it might feel to return to her own application materials now that she was wrapping up her time in INVST. She pictured it as a potentially "cringy" experience—a recognition, I think, of just how much she didn't know she

didn't know coming in. This strikes me as such an important realization for someone essentially with shared gate-keeping power.

In a sense, INVST's very intentional approaches to shared power along with self-reflection seem a strong base for a kind of empathy-based respect so central to collaborative world building. Another aspect of INVST that seems key to this is the structuring of both shared and individually varied experiences. This structuring should be apparent in the coming narratives. I move next to L., whose experiences and investments differ in many ways from Maria's. Despite their unique paths to and through the program, their accounts have some clear common threads, among them how each leverages what they learn in the program for community-oriented ends that necessarily extend beyond the university.

L.

"I think research can like, change the world."

L. (her real name, as she prefers it, with the dot) was a senior when we met. She had finished her two years in INVST the previous year and was finishing up a degree in Environmental Studies. Like Maria, L. had opted to complete an honors thesis. Hers was a review of literature examining how discourse around nuclear waste on Yukka Mountain excluded the voices of Native Americans, including those of her own tribe. L.'s mom had grown up on a Native American reservation in Nevada and she cited her visits to her grandmother's as sowing some of the early seeds of her understanding of racial and environmental injustice. Though she had prohibitive difficulty reaching out to the sovereign nations affected by the issue in the time allotted for the thesis, she used her secondary source research to argue that participatory science research could help bridge gaps and create a bond of trust between

government and the people. Like Maria, L. focused her research on an issue affecting her own community and tried to fit the community research investments she'd grown in INVST into the structure of the academic thesis. While the latter wasn't feasible in method, she still brought this lens to her reading and argument.

Also like Maria, L. voiced frustration with what she saw as academia's failings, particularly in her own academic field of environmental studies. She had been very involved in extracurricular environmental organizations on campus, but of her coursework she lamented:

> I'm very angry with Environmental Studies. Because it's very theoretical and they don't give you any skills to deal with the things that they're talking about and it just *frustrates me*! [N: yea] because [we laugh] I'm like "why are you gonna tell me there's problems and then don't like give me tools to do something about it?" So and then you're like making me focus on this instea- like writing a *paper instead of like *real issues that are going on in the world.

In contrast, she valued the rigorous "active participation component" of INVST, which provided her hands-on tools like learning to facilitate meetings and required students to intern and complete their own projects. It was certainly not academic research itself that she took issue with, in fact it was clear in our conversation that she'd quite enjoyed her thesis research. Rather, she took issue with research detached from meaningful action in the world, *as well as* interventive action taken without situated research. Detailing the difference, she said of INVST, "We learn to do a lot of our own research and so that was like always the first step of INVST is like, research the problem, don't just be like "there's a problem, let me do something about it." It's like, let me look at what's already being done. And so that's like a huge component that I don't think environmental studies does necessarily."

We talked a bit about her thesis as it came up across our chat. It was a product she was quite proud of, and the process, it seems, like Maria's, was also supported by understanding

peers in INVST. But the writing L. actually provided for the study, and that focused much of our discussion, was two drafts of a children's story book she and her INVST cohort team co-composed and published for their SOL project in collaboration with the Boulder Latino History Project.

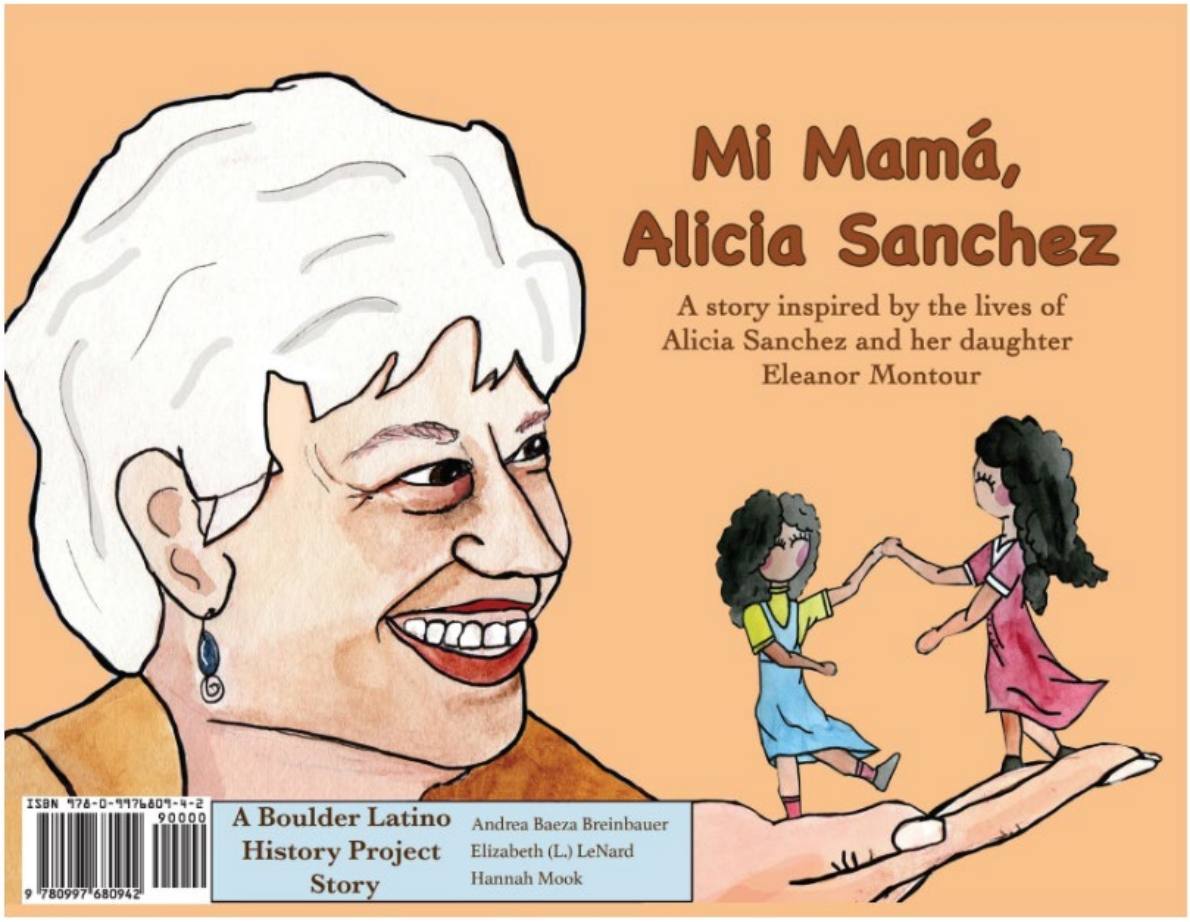

Figure 4.1. Book Cover (English side) of "Mi Mamá, Alicia Sanchez" (Baeza Breinbauer, LaNard, & Mook, 2017)

Figure 4.1. is an image from the cover of the English side of the published book. When flipped over, the book can be read in Spanish instead. The book memorializes the life of now deceased Boulder Latina activist Alicia Sanchez through the somewhat fictionalized story of a childhood event of her daughter Eleanor Montour. It centers themes of dreams, heroes, and the strength of community.

The drafts she provided are composed of alphabetic text only—describing the scene and text on each page, as well as notes, questions, and ideas-in-progress. The images included in this section are from the published book, which I purchased following our interview. I wanted to support her meaningful work and to experience the visual descriptions L. provided. Seeing its final form also enabled me to trace L.'s team's process across their given drafts to the final product. Take, for example, the following chunk of draft 1 (Figure 4.2) considering the second planned page, which in draft 2 (shown in Figure 4.3), was both expanded and refined.

Page 2-x:
(will probably be split up into more than just one page depending)
[Still walking]
"Mama is my hero. She makes us dinner every night and she drives our neighbors to the hospital almost daily. Mama has always worked hard, even when she was young she worked on the fields. She battled lupus when she was about my age, and even though it's left it's scars on her, still she is strong. She is amazing because even after all that she still has la energia para bailar."
(ASK ELEANOR ABOUT LUPUS)

(We got feedback here to insert the describing of the town/the visualization of it, and mentioning her family that lives here with her.)
(We were also told to possibly mention Alicia's battle of lupus as a child if we end up drawing Alicia with the scars that were left on her. (we are going to ask Eleanor in the next meeting we have with her what she would prefer best)).
(We will also add more specific character development like their beautiful looks and things like that).

Figure 4.2. Excerpt of L. and team's "draft 1" outlining plans for page "2-x"

Page 2
(will probably be split up into more than just one page depending)
[Still walking]
"Mamá is my hero. Mamá has always worked hard, when she was young she worked on the fields.
and expanded to:

Page 3
She drives our neighbors to the hospital almost daily.

Page 4
She makes us dinner every night and she is amazing because even after all that she still has la energia para bailar."

Figure 4.3. Excerpt of L. and team's "draft 1" outlining plans for pages 2-4

In its final form (Figure 4.4) it became four illustrated pages that more coherently wrap together the central themes they began to sketch out in the earlier drafts and purposefully incorporates more specific details from Eleanor's stories and illustrations of specific places in Eleanor's old neighborhood. To pull out two of those moves here: one, they picture her church, which L. was particularly proud of having drawn herself because of the way Eleanor responded to it with joyful tears. And two, they animated the sensory experiences of music (through color) and food (through the tamales' emanating heat/scent waves), all tied together in Alicia's gesture and expression. Capturing Eleanor and her mothers' love of music was important to the authors from the start. As L. describes of their early process:

> She [Eleanor] was very much about music. And at the beginning of the project we had originally thought that it ^wasn't going to get published [N: m] and it was just going to be a PDF ^version and we wanted to put like *actual music ^incorporated into the PDF^ [N: Oh interesting, yea] so like when- because they dance a few times in the story [N: oh

nice] Yea, and we would have loved to put her- her and her mom's favorite song or something like that.

Though I would not take this to be unequivocal proof of its absence, I do note with interest that consideration of multimodal affordances of potential media is not something I heard in the other INVST students' considerations of their writing in INVST coursework. L. saw this very situated learning experience as an unplanned benefit of INVST. She said "once you're like doing that project it's like "oh my gosh!" You end up getting skills that are necessary for that project. For example the book, like, I definitely learned a bunch of skills that INVST probably wouldn't have taught me otherwise."

Figure 4.4. Pages 2-5 (pictured from top left to bottom right) of the published text "Mi Mamá, Alicia Sanchez." (Baeza Breinbauer, LaNard, & Mook, 2017)

The impetus for this project was born of a shared cultural moment in which many Americans felt powerless in the face of oppressive social and governmental structures. When I asked how L.'s cohort came to this project, she responded:

> Ah, so we got the uh [sarcastic laugh/tone] the lucky year of, being uh creating projects when Trump was elected so um we were like all very enraged and we all- so we focused on uh, we didn't like the way that Trump was speaking about immigrant communities. We thought the rhetoric was really hateful [tapping table] and disgusting and disturbing, and we wanted to do something about it but we didn't know what so we went on this like research adventure and we were like "what are people doing?" and but we really wanted to like, uh...create- like do environmental justice through like art. Like um so, what we ended up doing was we just looked around and we got really lucky because we found the Boulder Latino History Project and they've been wanting a children's book made for like years.

When I speculated that it must have been helpful to have something hands-on to do with all that anger, L. responded emphatically, laughing "I know! It was great!" Anger and frustration following Trump's election was palpable in many of my interviews around this time, and so the immense joy and connection L. described as a result of this process really drew me in. Not only did the book elicit tears of joy and an impromptu dance lesson from Eleanor, but the finished book was honored in a special assembly of the students at Alicia Sanchez International Elementary School. L. described the scene as the students

> *all came into the gym and there was like *parents just like *crowded around and like Alicia's family was there *and it was really beautiful* [N laughs] and like, the kids were hosting the whole thing [N: wow] and they were like- they brought us on stage and asked us questions and they were like [kid voice] "what was your biggest struggle?" And I was like [deadpan] "everything." [we laugh] No but um, it was very inspiring and then they

> like sang this song about changing the world I was like [emotional] "^look at these *little future change makers!" [N: Aahhh!] Like at that- that was when I cried [N: Ohhh wow].

But as L. alludes to here, the process certainly wasn't easy.

Throughout the process, L. explained, she and her coauthors struggled productively with questions of how to represent others' stories: "we just didn't want to step on anybody's foot and like, you know, privilege explain or like um you know- I'm trying to think of like a mansplain…equivalent. We didn't want to be like telling people's stories, when they can tell it themselves." Part of their careful approach, L. explained, was group and self-reflection on the value of the project and why they were doing it. She said, "so we looked into our own selves um just as much as we looked into the problems of the community and we- it was- it was really good stuff." The other big aspect of their approach was making research and artistic choices that to some extent let Eleanor tell her own story. L.'s group met with Eleanor to interview her before beginning and twice during the process to present drafts of the book as it came to fruition. According to L., "…she was about it the whole way and I think that's why our- our project is so successful as it is. If she was not about it, then I feel like we would be overstepping our- our um position as allies, or, whatever it is. [laughs] Um, but she was so about it! She offered us so many stories…" Though they of course curated and framed the story, the authors made the artistic choice to tell the story directly from Eleanor's point of view. In the book, the figure of adult Eleanor as narrator appears at the end of the story from her childhood and then walks the audience through her mother's achievements. They chose to demarcate present-day Eleanor from her narrated story-world by illustrating narrator Eleanor with lifelike detail and the story-world characters in a more cartoon-like style with minimal facial features (as exemplified in the cover image shown above).

Her team also struggled interpersonally at a few points during the process. During our conversation, L. took responsibility for an argument that ensued when, after stepping back a bit to focus on her thesis during the last phases of drafting, her peers sent the final draft to the publisher without a final editing check on the Spanish prose. She recognized that her hurried email response directly to the publisher (instead of reaching out to her team) was born of fear and "completely not ok." She described the way they worked through the tension as coming together over coffee and using "I" statements, and then sharing their excitement over the book once it was published. In some ways, L. painted a much more contentious image of community work in INVST than Maria had. I think together they capture the complex spectrum of collaborative work. Working with others is undoubtably challenging. INVST's students wield tools to work productively with that difficulty and the mindset to value that productive struggle.

Case in point, L.'s author's note reads:

> In writing this children's story, I found in myself a passion for finding truth, and with that, a longing to hear more stories that are often painted with invisible ink by our popular culture. Stories of local Sheroes and heroes, of diversity, of resilience, of a people who are present and rooted in their communities. Of a people who will not give up. In the writing of this book I fell in love with the story of a powerful and inspiring woman, Alicia Sanchez and her daughter Eleanor Montour. I came to appreciate the simplicity of listening. There were countless hours devoted to the re-telling of this story, and there was endless learning; given the chance, I would do it all over again in a heartbeat. (Baeza Breinbauer, LaNard, & Mook, 2017)

Having heard her retelling of her experience co-producing the book, the last line "I would do it all over again in a heartbeat," read to me as recognition that the difficulty of the process was worth it to L. The level of struggle was conducive to her learning and development, something

that was also present in the accounts provided by Nicole, whose confidence in her learning I was able to witness unfold over time.

Nicole

"The group should be the ones mainly making the decision and then the leader steps in from time to time to just guide them but not like force them into a decision."

When we met, Nicole was a junior studying environmental studies. Just finishing her first year in the program, Nicole was in the cohort behind Maria and L.'s. She was still very much in the process of defining which interests she would follow, and very clearly grappling with how to enact and speak about the consensus and leadership skills she was beginning to practice. After our initial meeting, Nicole and I continued to correspond over email throughout her second year in the program. Near the end of each semester, she would update me on what she'd been working on and was becoming interested in. She would include a couple texts that were central to her work that semester and briefly write through ideas and writing processes she was finding interesting in each. Our correspondence helped me get a broader view of the kinds of writing students in INVST do, as she included a mix of reflective writing assignments and more traditionally academic/researched ones. Our correspondence also helped me get a more longitudinal view of becoming in progress, rather than in retrospect, as I was able to see her interests and confidence develop over time.

When we met for our interview in Spring 2018, Nicole was just beginning the process of settling on a topic for her senior thesis. I realize I should mention here, the fact that all three of the students I met with were engaged in the optional senior thesis is not a coincidence, it's a function of my ethnographic approach to recruitment and Sabrina's mentorship practices. When

Sabrina agreed to put me in contact with INVST students, she chose students she thought might benefit from the experience of being interviewed, students who were interested in and engaged in research themselves and might relish the opportunity to ask me some questions about my experiences and my trajectory as an academic. Sabrina, herself was engaged in her own PhD research, and came into our interview with a similar stance—that she might learn something for her own research process from the experience. Nicole did in fact pick my brain about my research process and trajectory, and through our correspondence, I got to see a slice of hers.

Nicole decided to get involved in INVST after seeing her friend L.'s presentation on her SOL project which had to do with immigration. While immigration wasn't a particular interest of Nicole's, she was hooked by the potential opportunity to make community change. When we spoke, she was still in the process of gaining and sifting through a variety of interests and working up the courage to commit to a thesis topic, which was then tentatively food insecurity. She said this commitment felt scary, presumably because of the unknowability of the journey that weighty decision would set off. I'm reminded here of Maria's reflection on wrapping together her interests in her thesis and the ways those interests clearly defined part of her identity she was proud of. L.'s reflection, too, on the ways her thesis couldn't encompass all she'd hoped it would, really highlight some of the ways this decision might weigh so heavily. It's fascinating to get to look back at Nicole's hesitance here from my vantage point at the "end" of Nicole's thesis process. In Spring 2019 she sent me her finished thesis, titled "Analysis of Food Insecurity Solutions and Evaluation Methods on Colorado Campuses," which employed qualitative research to analyze the barriers to food security faced by students at ten Colorado institutions of higher education as well as "how colleges chose to address these barriers, whether these barriers were addressed, and how colleges evaluated their solutions" (Cheng, 2019, p. iii). Our interview

and emails highlight some standout points across Nicole's journey, which, I would argue, was not just from invention to finished product, but from moment to moment and beyond to life.

When we spoke, she traced her budding interest through early life and educational experiences and through more recent social connections. She said she had a longstanding interest in wildlife protection which morphed into an interest in environmental justice for humans too upon taking an AP environmental class in high school where she learned of Native Americans' struggles for water rights. Learning of Nicole's friendship with L., upon my later analysis of our interview, Nicole's emphasis in the way she described her early interests as being "*really* into animals" and said "it was very strange" rang in a familiar way, as her friend L. had earlier described her young obsession with cleaning up neighborhood trash with a similar kind of zeal.

The social connections Nicole referred to explicitly regarding her turn toward this topic included two figures. The first she mentioned was a food activist in Grand Junction named Robin she'd met through INVST's programming. Robin's passion for community gardens led her to activism around food access. Robin's work piqued interests Nicole had begun to explore on alternative spring break trips to Chicago where she volunteered with advocates for urban agriculture. The other figure mentioned was the thesis advisor she'd chosen through the campus database. This professor had a body of research exploring students' food insecurity at CU Boulder and Nicole was in the process of thinking through how she could build out from that research herself. She said

> I'm not sure where to branch off from there. I think I want to look into like the programs that she recommended and see whether or not that ^has helped anyone, but then again it's

only been like a year since sh- those programs were implemented so like I have to talk to some people and be like "help me."

Presumably, at least some of the programs Nicole explores in her final thesis were among those suggested by her advisor at this point. Following preliminary research into which schools across the state had programs to address food insecurity (it seems, to expand the initially suggested set), Nicole certainly did "talk to some people," conducting semi-structured interviews with staff and/or university administrators at her focal schools. To create community change, one of course needs to be in and with their communities, and like other activities INVST students had the freedom to design, this project seems to have enabled and pushed Nicole to do that work of creating social connections to others with shared visions of social change. The written product, while useful in many ways, is perhaps most importantly a culminating representation of the activity that made it possible. I saw this sentiment reflected in Nicole's admission via email, "If I am honest, I definitely enjoyed the interviewing portion more than the writing portion of my thesis."

Though she took the scary plunge and followed the path of her thesis topic to a deeper engagement with issues of food insecurity, the work she shared with me from this leg of the journey was not a continual process of narrowing down to one area of expertise as disciplinary becoming is sometimes narrated. Rather, it's clear that she utilized her work along the way to both home in on this area and to explore within and around it. The bit of more academic writing Nicole provided for our first meeting was a literature review on the classification of coral reef threats, and as our correspondence continued, the academic texts she shared extended *out* to the

topic of infant mortality and explored *around* to questions of how food sovereignty movements in Ecuador connected to gender and politics.

Of course, what Nicole was learning along the way was not just how to approach this topic or that research method, but how to practice her values in her work and in community. Her grappling with such questions was visible in the reflective writing she provided. In one reflective text titled *The Continuous Evolution of My Leadership and Analysis of My Relationship to Money* written for one of the first-year praxis courses, she wrote, "To be an effective leader, there is a necessity to recognize that everyone 'co-creates the world' (Palmer, 1998). Thus, we need a leadership style that is not controlling." During our conversation, Nicole was clearly working through the related aspects of how to practice this and how to language it. She said:

> one of the examples I was talking about in the praxis paper um, kind of like the leader is the one that, is the- like the one at the front, the one that demands the group to follow them kind of thing and everyone looks up to him and they don't necessarily like um *question him as much [N: m]. The alternative paradigm would be for- to just like kind of stand back and kind of just [parallel wave hands] influence the group a little, but um the followers are the ones that make- o:r I shouldn't call them followers. The *group should be the ones [hand chop and wave] mainly making the decision and then the leader steps in from time to time to just *guide them but not like *force them into a decision. I don't know, I've been struggling with that.

Unpacking this struggle, Nicole told me of her work facilitating the organization of a fundraiser for INVST's justice summer. She narrated how complex and chaotic it felt trying to get a large group to choose one tactic out of a possible fifteen: "…it was just, everyone was like shouting ideas and then it was like hard to [chopping] contro:l and we only had a little bit amount of ti:me." With the urge to control the situation and find an expedient way forward, Nicole decided to pose two proposals to the group and have them choose one. Conferring with her teacher, though, she saw how that would limit the group's agency as decision-makers, and instead took

the harder, messier route of holding an open discussion. This is yet another example of an INVST student taking on a wicked problem with intention, courage, and mentorship support that makes the difference between impossible and rewarding.

Discussion: INVST Students' Literate Development

To wrap up this chapter, I want to begin a discussion to which I will return in the conclusion of this dissertation, that of how I see students' liberatory literate development being enabled or constrained by the learning environment of their program. My discussion here is a bit more descriptive than analytical because I want to legibly characterize each program without flattening it too much and because the themes I pull out here come up across each of the programs in the study in different ways, shedding light on how each program approaches its goals and its particular vision of social change. As I move through the case of SJEP in the following chapters, I highlight overlapping and outgrowing themes. My concluding chapter will more directly compare and theorize the different approaches taken by each program and root my analysis of those approaches in my theory- and practice- based understandings of their value and utility. I am quite intentionally working to reserve my outsider's view of contrast and my personal critique for the concluding chapter, attempting in the discussion here and through most of Chapter Six to faithfully represent my student participants' emic understandings of their programs' benefits to their development. I begin to shift to a more critical stance at the end of Chapter Six and on into my synthesis in Chapter Seven.

Maria, L., and Nicole each provided very different types of writing for our interviews, but all of this writing had in common the overarching purpose of furthering the students' personal and communal valuing of community-engaged scholarship. While they refer to some of the same

programmatic features in their accounts, each student spoke very personally to the ways their experiences in INVST supported them doing their meaningful work. Each student spoke to their own processes of working through introspective, interpersonally complex, and intellectually and affectively demanding processes of community-change work they engaged in with their home and chosen communities.

The INVST students very much spoke of their meaningful work as their own. Though some of it was completed as a requirement of INVST's curriculum, students also sought out and created opportunities to make both academia and their own communities a space for such work. Maria and L. *chose* to complete honors theses through the university, and each worked to bring the lenses and practices learned in INVST to those projects. Likewise, Maria chose to stay involved with her cohort's ongoing project to expand voting access to Boulder immigrants beyond her tenure in INVST and at the university. When I look at these choices in relation to Sabrina's own lifetime engagement with community work and her discussion of alumnus Wilder Therese's impact on the program, the INVST website's highlighting of the many ways their alumni have continued to make a difference in their communities, and Maria's offhanded suggestion that I should speak to some of the program's amazing alumni, I am quite convinced that INVST is indeed capable of the goal framed in their mission statement—developing "community leaders who engage in compassionate action as a lifetime commitment."

Considering that their mission statement, like every other aspect of the program's governance, was the result of community consensus decision-making processes, it makes sense that those involved in deciding that goal might hold it *themselves* and hold themselves *to* it. In this regard, we can fundamentally understand Maria, L., and Nicole's experiences in INVST in relation to these foundational, programmatic texts. Of course, well-rooted intentions still need

continual support. Continued participation in social activities as students move on from the program requires that they are able to take up and craft new practices with their new communities. INVST's nimbleness in supporting students as they take up myriad projects, I think, supports their continued ability to build such practices with others. Participating in INVST's established practices, like facilitating meetings using INVST's consensus model, was clearly formative for the students I spoke to. Beyond the situated complexities of those interactions over time, though, students also crafted practices suited to their specific projects' wicked problems. Take, for example, Maria's group cocreating a range of feedback mechanisms and L.'s group working through the unfamiliar genre of historically-grounded children's book. INVST's ability to support the unforeseeable student learning bound to happen in the varied paths they take to community work seems to be enabled by a few key features. It requires the intentional building of a supportive community, governance and curricula that support pedagogical flexibility, and some trust from everyone involved that together groups are capable of working through the overwhelming and ill-defined problems that crop up unexpectedly in our shared social world. These are the kinds of problems students already do and will continue to encounter throughout their lives, and the experiences Maria, L., and Nicole have had finding productive ways to work through them with others will likely fortify their future agency and action.

Each of these preceding examples also index the complexity of the interpersonal work INVST students engage in over their time in the program. That the longevity and structure of those interactions clearly made space for each of these students to build comfort in their relationships, to work productively through disagreements, and to have and ask for compassion for and from their peers, really speaks to how INVST defines and sustains communities. So too

does the breadth and depth of these interactions necessitate a multifaceted and holistic methodological approach, as I previously articulated. In their accounts, each INVST participant tied their orientation to working with others to their personal growth as well—understanding how to work with others required scoping back in- to their self-understanding and out- to their understanding of larger systems. (Remember L.'s "so we looked into our own selves um just as much as we looked into the problems of the community.") As will become apparent in the coming chapters, reflective writing and dialogue on structural oppression was practiced in each program, but the nature of relationships built between peers is starkly contrasting.

Chapter 5:

UIUC's Social Justice Education Paraprofessionals (SJEP) Program

This chapter and the next present a case study of students' co-development through and with the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign's Social Justice Educators Paraprofessionals (SJEP) program. Briefly, the SJEP program is a three-semester sequence where a small cohort of students learns to facilitate elective peer-to-peer dialogues on social justice topics called I-Journey workshops. As with the preceding case study of INVST, my aim here is to provide a rich and nuanced narrative of the complex entanglements within and around students' meaningful literate practice, teachers' and administrators' praxis, and the social structures and institutions framing and supporting that work. Again, I do so over this chapter and the next. That endeavor in relationship to the various nodes of *this* case study, at *my own* university, is complicated in various ways that will bubble up throughout these two chapters, but I briefly want to set out how I'm approaching this case study through the lens of double vision here.

At the level of the institution, my perception of the administration's support for student programming is certainly colored by my own experience as a graduate student here, particularly at a time (like others in the university's past) where graduate students felt compelled, after sustained bad-faith bargaining, to strike for a fair contract. I certainly understand the university is a large and multifaceted organization, comprised of groups and individuals with radically different ideas about its aims, and I want to make clear that I see my participants in this case as well-meaning agents. However, I think it's important to say outright that I also see them as embroiled in a machine that, to the extent that it can be said to have agency of its own, is motivated by economic growth, not by care. This is a particularly important aspect of my positionality to forefront here as I want to make clear why I go to such lengths to unpack SJEP's

nested institutional location and broader arches of the university's approaches to supporting and selling diversity and inclusion. That history and location underly SJEP's reason for being and possibilities for students' development there—a major question I will return to in my conclusion. They also, perhaps unsurprisingly, have occluding effects on the institutional ethnography aspects of this case in that the local self-representations of the program in question are far more sparse and less comprehensive than those made publicly available by INVST. So again here, I weave my way through these intra-acting levels, attempting to understand the program's view of social change and how students' liberatory literate development is enabled or constrained by the learning environment created by their program, situated as it is.

To these ends, I first contextualize how I came to study SJEP some five years ago. As I did in Chapter Three, I then sketch the historical origins and institutional positioning of the program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Doing so aids me in parsing the entanglements between the university, programmatic constraints, and individuals' literate activity. Finally, I conclude this chapter by speaking to the complicated relationships between institutional Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) programming, like SJEP, and student activist efforts. From my positionality, documenting these ties and tensions—namely how the university co-opts the language and aims of student-led, social justice organizations—is a complicated endeavor. I use institutional ethnography here for two aims that may seem to be at cross purposes. The first is to lay a foundation upon which I can reconstruct my SJEP participants' accounts in the following chapter in ways that highlight what they find meaningful. The second is to tell a coherent story of the overall case with enough detail to support the critique I leverage in my concluding chapter. While this separation may strike some as contrived, I have no trouble holding compliment and critique simultaneously, and would like to encourage my readers to take

a complex and holistic view of the program into consideration. While overall this chapter and the next follow the funnel-shaped analytical structure of Chapters Three and Four, taking up a nimble, ethnographic approach, I handle the various levels with detail necessary to tell a robust story of *this* case; thus, the headings and time spent do not align exactly with those of the previous case.

My Introduction to SJEP

I began my relationship with SJEP in Fall 2016, when I conducted a preliminary study of the class. I was particularly interested in this site in large part because the program, which focuses on social justice topics, is typically run as a three-course sequence. This was similar to my original intended site in those ways (addressing issues of social justice directly in class and grouping students in a cohort over a few semesters) as well as in its focus on training social justice educators, though here those educators were undergraduate students themselves rather than college instructors. Longitudinal, cohort-based sequences like this appealed to me, from my own experience in SFSU's Metro program, as spaces students might make community connections supportive of their growth. Despite their potential benefits, sequences like this are often difficult curricula to schedule at large universities. The first semester I made contact with the class, though, was actually a single-semester version of the class.

I met with the program director, Ross Wantland (who has consented to the use of his name) before observing the class. Ross likened SJEP to the Safe Zone Project—whose stickers you may have seen around campus or other organizations. The Safe Zone Project has no central origin story and has spread and taken on myriad iterations over the years, particularly in institutions of higher education. In fact, UIUC's Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations offers a number of trainings they call "In the Zone Allies and Advocates Trainings," including

one called “LGBT Ally Network” (“In the Zone,” n.d.). According to Meg Bolger and Sam Killermann’s web resource, “Safe Zone trainings are opportunities to learn about LGBTQ+ identities, gender and sexuality, and examine prejudice, assumptions, and privilege” (“What is Safe Zone,” n.d.). They provide their recognizable stickers to participants with the intent that, “Displaying Safe Zone stickers and demonstrating you went to a training can communicate to others the commitment you’re making to creating LGBTQ-inclusive environments” (“What is Safe Zone,” n.d.). While they both examine prejudice, assumptions, and privilege, where the Safe Zone project is specific to creating welcoming spaces for LGBTQ+ folks, the dialogues students in SJEP learn to facilitate address a broader range of social justice issues.

In that preliminary study, I was interested in the discoursal construction of students’ identities as social justice educators. I observed a class session near the end of the semester where students were considering their final projects. I was particularly interested in instances/indications of: modeling and mentoring; students indexing or centering their multiple identities; students trying on language by seeming to take up the words, orientations, or viewpoints of the instructor or other models (facilitators of I-Journey workshops they’d attended); and how they negotiated definitions and language usage with peers. Thus, I transcribed sections of the observed class period where I thought these things were happening and marked the transcript, as well as ancillary documents (syllabus, handout, textbook), with these themes in mind. While some of these methods are consistent with the larger study, three themes that stood out to me in this preliminary study also ran through the larger study and I think helped me better define the scope I wanted to attend to across each case. First, at the node of students’ learning, I was very interested in the various ways they tried on new language practices. Next, regarding mentoring, I was quite struck by Ross’s purposeful modeling of

facilitator strategies in dialogue and the way some students even caught on to those moves and mused on their utility for facilitation. Last, and I think now that this began to point me toward the need to understand the underlying vision of social change, though I wasn't oriented to it in these terms at the time, I certainly noted that the final project ideas students discussed all worked to leverage some aspect of their personal identity. Each of these themes remained present throughout the full study and took on new resonances as my own lens on the project focused.

Locating the Social Justice Educators Paraprofessionals (SJEP) program

To draw a quick map of its institutional location, the Social Justice Educators Paraprofessionals (SJEP) program I studied here at UIUC is a program designed and run by staff of the Diversity and Social Justice Education (DiversityEd). DiversityEd is an arm of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (OIIR), which is housed in Student Affairs. In this section, I unpack this nested location. First, though, I'll briefly sketch the program's physical location as it also reflects SJEP's relationship to other student-facing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programming on campus.

SJEP's Physical and Relational Location

Across the four semesters I researched SJEP, the class met in four different physical locations on campus. One semester class was held in the basement of the Psychology building, another in a small room in the YMCA building, the next in the Native American House, and the last in Gregory Hall (which is across the street from the YMCA building). While the program may not have a recurring meeting space, the preceding list of spaces it inhabited during my study are in fact connected to the confluence of resources with which the program is affiliated.

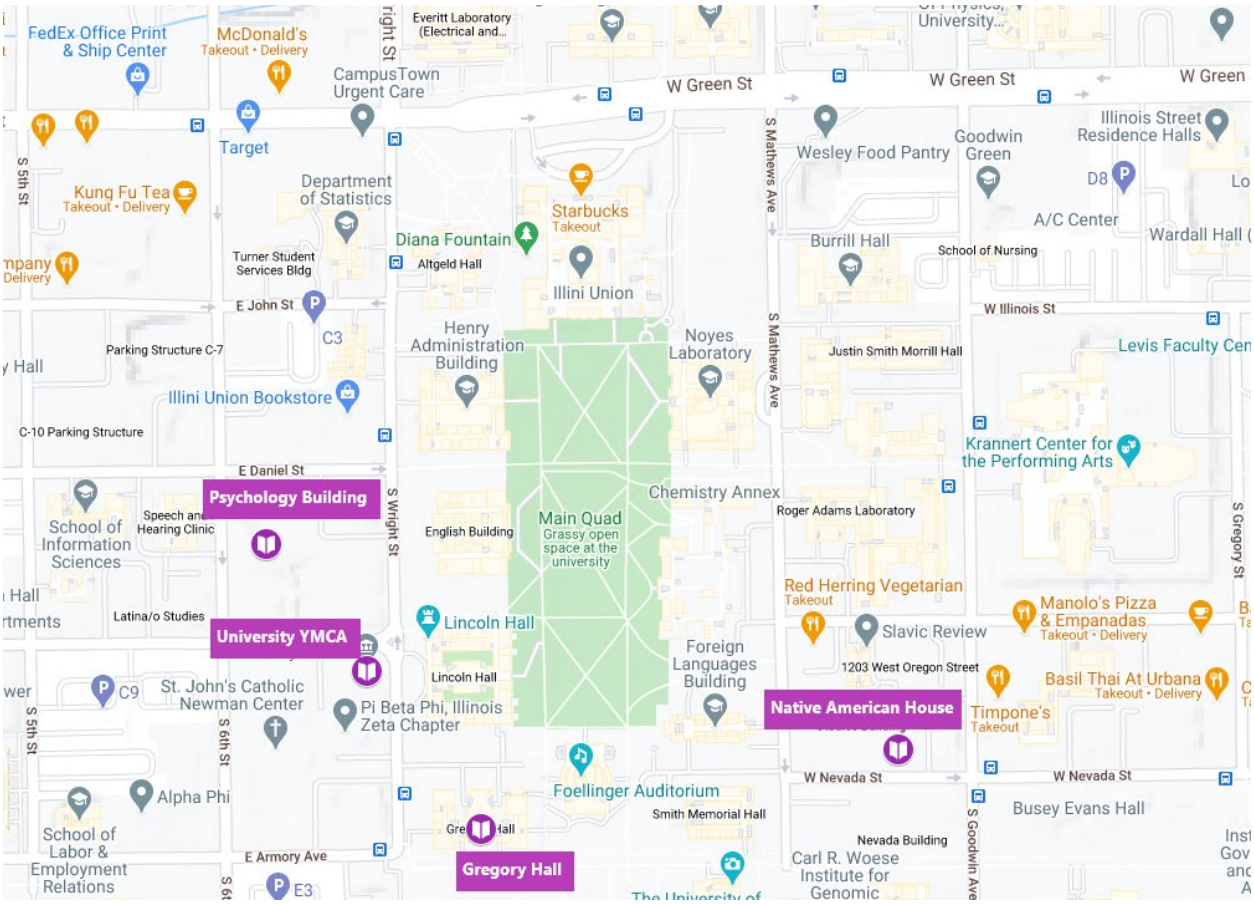

Figure 5.1. Google Map of SJEP classrooms over 4 semesters

SJEP is offered as a Psychology course but taught and run by the staff of Diversity and Social Justice Education (DiversityEd). When I reached out to both of the instructors listed for the standalone course (PSYC 496), the psychology professor explained that the DiversityEd director would be “the one to talk with as he is "on the ground" with this course.” The DiversityEd program falls under the umbrella of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (OIIR). The campus’ cultural and resource centers are all institutionally located under OIIR and seem to share some resources and networks between them. For instance, and germane to their brief residency there, DiversityEd and the Native American House share an office support specialist. Likewise, the students in this study were involved in the activities of multiple

OIIR campus centers. I introduce OIIR in more detail in the next section, but here you can see the proximity of the SJEP classrooms to OIIR's centers and the YMCA.

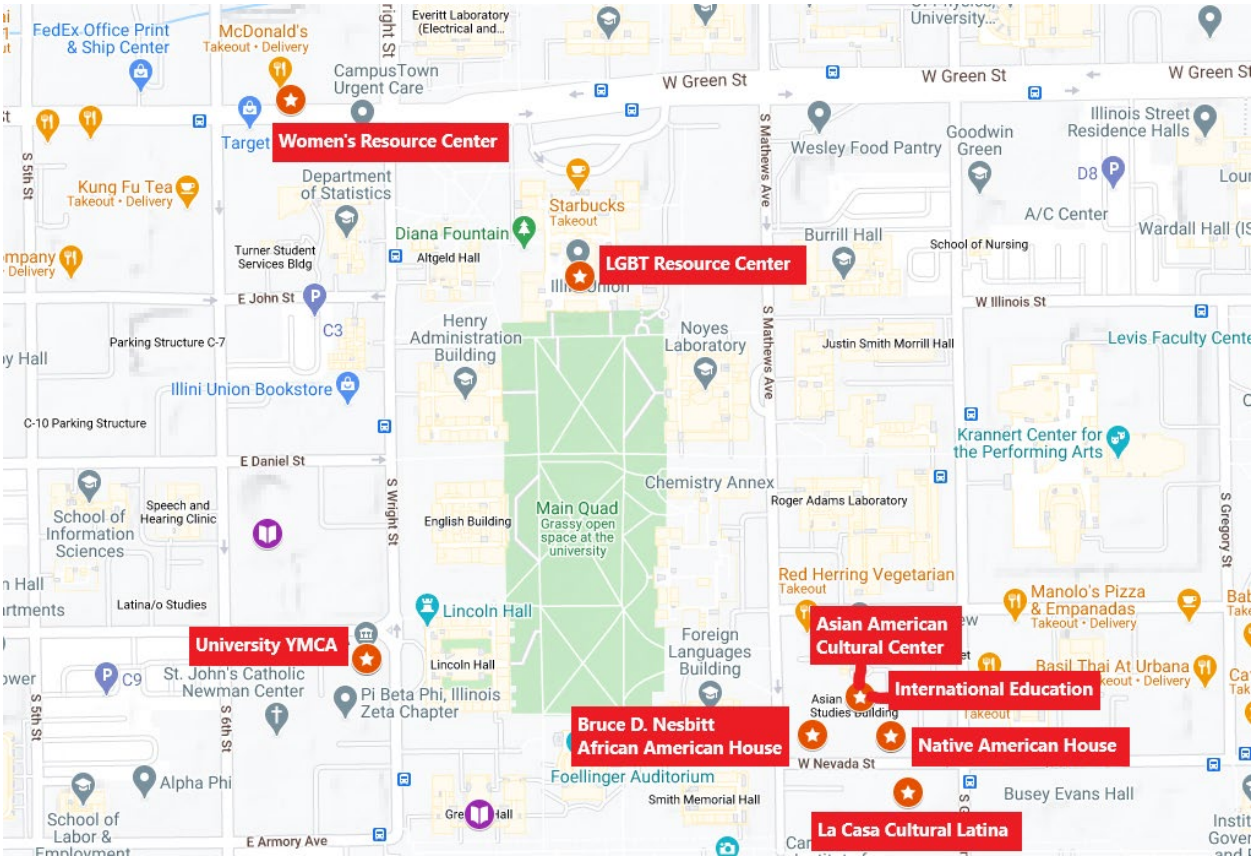

Figure 5.2. Google Map of OIIR programs and University YMCA

Though it is not officially connected to the University YMCA, and the YMCA is not connected to OIIR, DiversityEd staff hold offices in the YMCA building. Ross explained to me that DiversityEd's residency in the YMCA building was due to the campus-provided offices' locations in separate buildings not being particularly conducive to collaborative work. He also mentioned DiversityEd won't likely stay there much longer as the rent is a bit too high. The YMCA, DiversityEd, and a few other of the building's tenants provide community-oriented, social justice focused programming and networks. Others include the Education Justice Project—a college in prison program that creates educational programming for students

incarcerated at nearby Danville Correctional Center, and the Uniting Pride (UP) Center—an organization that advocates for the equality, wellness, advocacy, and visibility of LGBTQ+ communities in Champaign County. Unlike OIIR's institutional bundling of centers and programs, these programs have elected to take up residence in proximity to one another. I imagine this may benefit students seeking multiple ways to get involved with social justice on campus. While they didn't name this physical proximity as a catalyst, as you'll see in their narratives, the students in this study were involved in multiple programs around campus and certainly heard of one through another on multiple occasions.

Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (OIIR)

The Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations (OIIR) is located institutionally in Student Affairs and so has a physical office in the Swanlund Administration Building. It is directed by its own Associate Vice Chancellor and oversees eight units. Aside from DiversityEd, these include: the Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center (BNAACC), the Asian American Cultural Center (AAC), La Casa Cultural Latina (La Casa), the LGBT Resource Center, the Native American House (NAH), the Women's Resource Center (WRC), and International Education.

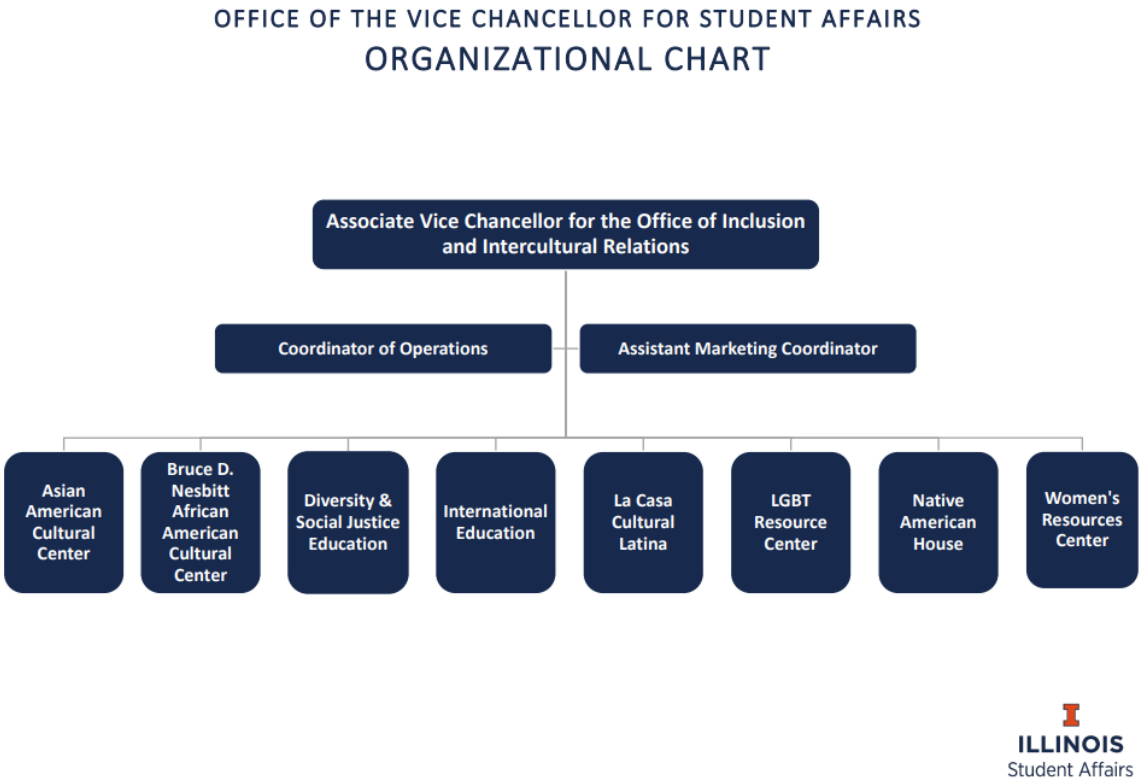

Figure 5.3. Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Organizational Chart retrieved from (Illinois Student Affairs, n.d.)

Through these centers and programs, OIIR

> seeks to improve campus climate by providing transformative learning experiences to the Illinois community that result in an appreciation for diversity and cross-cultural engagement. We offer a variety of programs, interactive classes, and workshops that provide tools that will allow students to develop the life skills needed to thrive in a diverse society. ("Providing Transformative Learning Experiences," n.d.)

Their missions and goals page highlights three aims:

- first—"In an increasingly pluralistic and complex global society, OIIR empowers students to be active and responsible participants and leaders within the campus and beyond;"
- second—"As part of a university-wide effort, OIIR works to increase the numbers of diverse and underrepresented students at the University of Illinois.;" and

- third,—"One of the primary goals of OIIR is to reduce the graduation rate gap that exists between racially underrepresented and white students" ("Our Mission and Goals," n.d.)

Perhaps more broadly than the recruitment-and-retention-focused goals above, OIIR's 2016-2017 annual report, the second of two annual reports available on its website, explains,

> The work of our units fits broadly within three objectives:
>
> • OIIR develops the whole student with programs aimed at career, leadership, academic, civic engagement, and identity development, providing students with the core skills necessary to live and work in a diverse world.
> • OIIR works to enhance campus life and climate by advocating for the needs of underrepresented students, improving campus policies and practices, and creating programs designed to meet the social, personal, and academic developmental needs of students.
> • OIIR helps our students change the world by equipping them with practical experience and skills designed to meet the grand challenges of society, such as food insecurity, homelessness, and discrimination (Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, 2017, p. 4)

As evidence of its success in meeting these objectives, the colorful and photo-filled document reports on the year's progress. Grouped in sections with titles tied to goals like "Foster collaboration, discovery, and innovation," the report presents OIIR's perceived strengths and activities from the year that support that goal along with available metrics of success like numbers of courses offered, or students involved or waitlisted.

OIIR was established in 2008. The annual report describes OIIR's history this way:

> Established in 2008 in the wake of student protests that called for a more engaged administrative response to pressing campus climate issues, OIIR united the efforts of several established programs and cultural centers to increase the visibility and support for of (sic) ongoing diversity initiatives, demonstrate our campus commitment to actively

> promote a climate of respect, and strengthen collaborations across our units (Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, 2017, p. 2).

As an example of an established cultural center mentioned above, La Casa Cultural Latina was founded in 1974 ("About La Casa," n.d.) but wrapped into OIIR much later. The Women's Resource Center (WRC), on the other hand, was established in 2009 ("Our Story," n.d.), a year after OIIR, but its programming and networks existed long before the center was officially established. In fact, the WRC's First Year Campus Acquaintance Rape Education (FYCARE) workshop (discussed in more detail below) has been mandatory on campus since 1996 and running informally even longer. It seems FYCARE was one of the first college-mandated sexual assault prevention programs in the U.S., and its establishment as mandatory followed shortly after the occurrence of a sexual assault and murder in a campus building (Shapiro, 2016). Interestingly, FYCARE's origin is described similarly to that of OIIR's on its website: "The program became mandatory in the fall of 1996, in large part due to a grassroots effort from students in response to campus events" ("FYCARE," n.d.). That the origins of both OIIR and FYCARE are described as arising from student advocacy is central to the social and institutional history of this case and will be explored shortly. First, though, FYCARE itself is integrally related to the I-Journey workshops my student participants were learning to facilitate and a web of other peer-to-peer workshops offered as a university response to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus. While the I-Journey workshops that were the object of the SJEP course sequence are offered to campus groups upon request, there are a number of workshops first year and transfer students are required to take as they enter the campus community. Some of which were precursors to- or designed in direct relationship to- I-Journey. Some of these were also entry points into SJEP for the students I spoke with, and Ross confirmed

that it's not uncommon for students to be involved in facilitating multiple of these workshops, like Lori was. These are the subject of the next section.

Mandatory New Student Programs*

The Women's Resource Center's First Year Campus Acquaintance Rape Education (FYCARE) workshop is now one of a handful of workshops all first year and transfer students are required to take (typically in person, barring a pandemic). The others include ACE IT (Alcohol Culture Explored Interactive Theatre) and the I-Connect Diversity and Inclusion Workshop. ACE IT is run by the university's counseling center. It is typically run as an hour-long workshop followed by a short quiz which students must pass with at least ninety percent ("ACE IT," n.d.). Currently it is offered as a virtual complete-at-your-own-pace set of modules similar to other mandatory campus trainings students and faculty both complete each semester. The I-Connect Diversity and Inclusion Workshop is described on its website as "an experiential training designed to help incoming students embrace differences and recognize shared experiences in order to build a welcoming and engaged campus community" ("I-Connect Diversity and Inclusion Workshop," n.d.).

Normally run as an hour-long workshop, I-Connect has also adapted to the pandemic. Currently it is offered as two virtual components: the first "a self-paced online e-Text workbook," and the second "a peer-led, virtual interactive workshop" ("I-Connect Diversity and Inclusion Workshop," n.d.). I-Connect workshops are intended to provide students with opportunities to begin important conversations about their similarities and difference in order to work with one another ("I-Connect Diversity and Inclusion Workshop," n.d.), and so are focused broadly on embracing difference and recognizing shared experiences. Each of these workshops

(FYCARE, ACE IT, and I-Connect) works on the peer educator model. So, every workshop is facilitated by undergraduate students who have taken the prerequisite course designed to help them learn practical facilitation strategies and relevant content.

While each of these workshops are presented to students as mandatory, ACE IT is the only one that denotes any punishment tied to noncompliance. According to the ACE IT website, "Failure to complete ACE IT by the deadline may result in a registration delay" (ACE IT, n.d.). FYCARE and I-Connect make no mention of punishment. On the university's Reddit subpage, questioning and often hostile posts from students parsing the programs' mandatory designation abound. Take, for instance, the following thread (Figure 5.4), where students assert that I-Connect is a student organization and therefore holds no power over other students' registration status ([CIRCUMSIZEDTHROWAWAY], 2017).

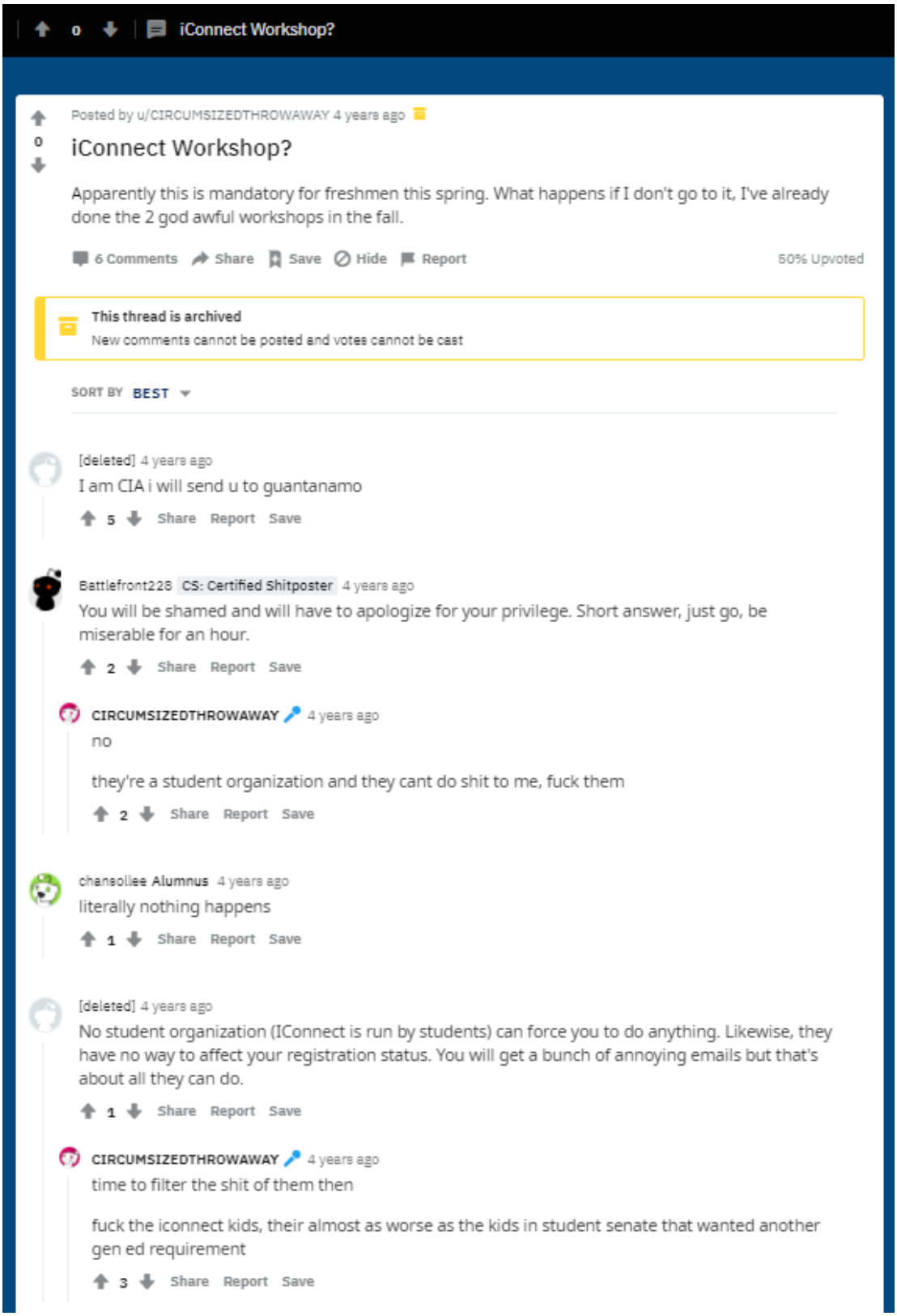

Figure 5.4. UIUC Sub-Reddit Thread "iConnect Workshop?" ([CIRCUMSIZEDTHROWAWAY], 2017)

A 2018 news article in the Daily Illini titled "Students face no consequences for not attending iConnect" quotes a student I-Connect facilitator saying, "It's a graduation requirement, so if you want to graduate, go to I-Connect," and Ross Wantland, then DiversityEd Director, saying "At this moment, the administration does not put a hold on students' accounts. They do not receive any consequences other than missing the opportunity," and "At this point, there is not a consequence for failing to attend, and that is not something that I am happy about" (Scott, 2018). I asked Ross about this when we spoke recently and he mused that an escalating warning and possible fine mechanism like the university employs for students, faculty, and staff who neglect to complete other required online trainings on sexual harassment or ethics might be a useful solution here, but also that forcing students who are resistant to it to take it can pose its own problems. He said, "so hopefully you're at that sweet spot of like, most of the people taking it are taking it begrudgingly but they're not hating the fact that they have to take it."

Such student resistance was also mentioned by multiple of my participants. Though none of them had encountered hostile workshop participants in the elective I-Journey workshops they facilitated for SJEP, they'd heard stories from other facilitators or had experienced it in facilitating or taking the mandatory workshops. More broadly, they were aware of intense opposition to social justice views on campus by conservative students. For instance, Jessica told me about an "affirmative action bake sale" put on by the Illini Republicans. You can read more about this event in local news stories from the time (e.g. Stone, 2017) and see the group's framing and students' responses on the bake sale's Facebook event page (Illini Republicans, 2017). Suffice to say, the event was intended to be *provocative* (its organizers would say; I would say *race-baiting* or *white supremacist*). Perhaps unsurprisingly, but importantly, I think, because of its resonance with the framing of the campus DEI workshops, the Illini Republicans

frame their actions with the language of civil discourse. They write in the event description that the controversy and emotion likely to be stirred up in response to the bake sale are a "side effect" and, "Ultimately, we want to start conversations, and change minds on this issue" (Illini Republicans, 2017). During our interviews and in the texts they provided me, my student participants also made multiple mentions of the ongoing "chief illiniwek" controversy. They tended to frame the continued existence of the unsanctioned racist mascot as a failing of their *peers* to understand or empathize with the Native American students hurt by it.

I mention these issues and students' framing of them because I think they illuminate two important threads of this case study regarding the approach and practice of the peer-to-peer model of diversity workshops UIUC *offers* (in the case of SJEP's I-Journey) or *requires* (in the case of I-Connect, ACE IT, and FYCARE). The first I believe is an underlying assumption of this diversity programming broadly: UIUC students' relationships to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion run the gamut, but many have had little exposure to conversations about difference and feel uncomfortable with- or even hostile to- engaging such topics. The second is the common focus between these programs of locating interpersonal relationships as a locus for change. These will become more apparent in the coming descriptions of the SJEP program and its parent DiversityEd, but first I want to take a step back and consider a few key moments in the university's approach to supporting multiply/marginalized students over time, particularly regarding its responses to student activism. Since both OIIR and FYCARE name grassroots student efforts as integral to their founding, and a central tenet of social justice education is empowering students to change their worlds, and given my own skepticism about universities' standard operating procedures, I find myself asking how the history of the university and the institutional machine these programs are embedded in might be capable of supporting student

work that, if successful, would dismantle the systems of oppression it is built on and benefits from. So, next I weave together what I see as important movements in a long dance between students and their administration, sketching the contours of some of the student activism demanding more thoughtful support from the university that seem to have stoked structural change.

A Brief History of Students' Activism for Support at UIUC

The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign is now and always has been a primarily white institution (PWI). The most recent self-report student demographic information, from fall 2020 is presented in Figure 5.5. Certainly the current demographics are more diverse than they've ever been, but this university, like many others, was built to be a white institution.

African American: 3,003 (5.7%)
Asian American: 8,579 (16.3%)
Hispanic: 5,911 (11.2%)
Multiracial: 1,554 (2.9%)
Native American: 18 (0.03%)
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 25 (0.04%)
White: 21,627 (41.3%)
International: 9,363 (17.8%)
Unknown: 2,251 (4.3%)

Figure 5.5. UIUC Fall 2020 Demographic Breakdown (Demographics, n.d.)

The university was founded in 1867 as the flagship campus of the University of Illinois system. Its initial charter in 1863 specified its intention to enroll only while students, but that language was removed before its opening due to the 13th and 14th amendments (Project 500, n.d.). Further, like many other land-grant institutions, the land the university was granted was

seized from Native Americans by white settlers. In the case of UIUC, the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act of 1862 granted lands that had been ceded by the Kickapoo to the state of Illinois in 1819 (Saunt, n.d.; Kappler, 1904, p. 182). This was just one of two dozen such treaties spanning 1795 to 1833 through which the settler U.S. government "legally" acquired the state of Illinois (Bassett, 2018). The Kickapoo's treaty was the third in a string of treaties regarding the same area, each of which omitted the rights of a number of local native groups. According to UIUC Geography Professor Emeritus Tom Bassett, this was a known divide-and-rule strategy employed by settlers like William Henry Harrison (Then Governor of Indiana Territory, later our shortest-term president) whose "method was to find someone who could claim land ownership and strike a deal with that person without consulting with other, more legitimate land authorities" (Bassett, 2018).

The historical insight Bassett offers on the Geography Department's website was spurred by Chancellor Jones' 2018 issuance of a land acknowledgement statement to be read at campus events. That statement reads:

> As a land-grant institution, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has a responsibility to acknowledge the historical context in which it exists. In order to remind ourselves and our community, we will begin this event with the following statement. We are currently on the lands of the Peoria, Kaskaskia, Peankashaw, Wea, Miami, Mascoutin, Odawa, Sauk, Mesquaki, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Chickasaw Nations. It is necessary for us to acknowledge these Native Nations and for us to work with them as we move forward as an institution. Over the next 150 years, we will be a vibrant community inclusive of all our differences, with Native peoples at the core of our efforts. (Office of the Chancellor, 2018; quoted in Bassett, 2018)

Of course, this statement stops short of actually acknowledging any wrongdoing on the university's part. The Native American House's alternative statement briefly but more directly indexes a history of dispossession, replacing the last two sentences of the Chancellor's statement

with: “These lands were the traditional territory of these Native Nations prior to their forced removal; these lands continue to carry the stories of these Nations and their struggles for survival and identity” (quoted in Bassett, 2018). It’s worth noting here that the release of this statement was followed by the Chancellor’s Commission on Native Imagery whose work began Fall 2018 and has so far produced recommendations and an implementation plan (Jolly & Levenick, 2019).

The statement and commission all took place after the close of my research with SJEP students. So, their references to the issue of “chief Illiniwek,” which I will return to in a moment, are to a long, drawn-out student struggle for an adequate administrative response to the racist campus climate. First, I want to note early influential student activism that pushed the administration to make good on its promises to support students of color.

The university’s first large scale effort to recruit students of color was notoriously botched. The 1968 Special Educational Opportunities Program (SEOP, also known as Project 500) brought 565 Black and Latinx students to campus. After housing the SEOP students in the fairly new and well-maintained Illinois Street Residence Halls for a week, the university forcibly relocated them to unsuitable housing around campus. Add to this that students were recruited with a promise of financial aid but left in the dark regarding the details of their financial aid packages as start of the semester approached. Demanding that the administration respond to their needs, SEOP students rallied at the Illini Union. The administration’s response was to call the police, and 248 students (most of them freshmen in SEOP) were arrested and held in Memorial Stadium as a makeshift jail (Project 500, n.d.). The Black Students Association demanded the University fulfill its promise of financial aid to SEOP students and drop all charges from the Union protest. Further, they demanded the creation of a Black cultural center and a Black studies department. They also amplified demands from members of the Black community regarding

wage increases and increasing the number of Black employees at the university (Project 500, n.d.).

The administration did respond in various ways to these demands. Importantly, and perhaps most immediately, this activism spurred the opening in Fall 1969 of what was then called the Afro-American Cultural Center (since 2004 the Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center). The project was in fact headed by Clarence Shelley, SEOP Director, who, though he was initially hired for two years to recruit Black students, stayed on for the next fifty. (The Daily Illini published an interesting interview with Shelley in 2016 for his take on the "past, present, and future of race at UIUC." See: Corry, 2016).

It took until the summer of 1970 for all charges to be dropped (Project 500, n.d.), and another of their major demands was a much longer time coming. The campus did not officially form a department of African American studies until 2008, but the SEOP students' demands did catalyze the forming of the Faculty Student Commission on Afro-American Life and Culture, whose academic branch existed in multiple forms and campus locations for nearly 40 years until it was finally formalized as a department. A brief look at that winding road:

> In 1970, the Faculty Student Commission was dissolved and replaced by the Afro-American Studies Commission, which included three branches: academic, cultural, and service, that reported directly to the Vice Chancellor. During the 1974-75 academic year, the Afro-American Academic Program was transferred to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences where it received the title Afro-American Studies and Research Program, and later, African American Studies and Research Program (African American Studies). (Department of African American Studies, n.d.)

Aside from these two major demands, according to Joy Ann Williamson, author of *Black Power of Campus: The university of Illinois 1965-75,* "Black students were able to force the University administration into more aggressive action on other issues, such as creating a

commission to hear black student grievances, hiring black faculty, reexamine hiring processes for university staff, and devising outreach programs to the community" (2003, p. 134). She writes:

> The university was not unconcerned with such issues prior to Black student demands, but the nature of the demands and the manner in which Black students pursued them produced very different results. In a matter of a few years, primarily between 1969 and 1971, Black students helped precipitate institutional changes that improved the quality of education and campus life for all students. By 1974, the university administration had firmly entrenched some of the reforms in the university structure. (2003, p. 134)

In short, the Black students' demands, buoyed by the Black Power movement, found some quick successes in cementing reforms into the university's structure, *and* in other cases like the forming of the Department of African American Studies, a long wait for robust institutional support.

Similarly, flashpoints in student organizing around the university's use of Native imagery have pushed administration to implement structural changes, but it is a long and ongoing struggle. "Chief illiniwek" was the university's official mascot from 1926 through 2007. Charlene Teters (Spokane) began protesting against the use of the racist symbol in 1989, and co-organized Native American Students for Progress, who continued protesting at "chief illiniwek" try-outs, sporting events and Homecoming events into the 1990's (Public History, n.d.). Despite these protests, and university support for the Native American Student Organization's series of Annual Circle of Honor Powwows following President Bill Clinton's 1996 declaration of November as "American Indian Heritage Month," the needle didn't move on the mascot until 2007—18 years later (Public History, n.d.).

Students' concern for the racist campus climate supported by continued use of the mascot came to a crucial head following an October 2006 fraternity and sorority party themed around

"Tacos and Tequila," and the administration's response, which was perceived to be too soft on the offending students (Forrest, 2007a). The following February, Students Transforming Oppression and Privilege (the STOP Coalition) sponsored a forum titled "Racism, Power and Privilege at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign," which featured university administrator panelists to discuss "topics that ranged from Chief Illiniwek to campus administration plans for increasing retention rates and graduation rates among minority students and for increasing diversity among faculty and staff members" (Forrest, 2007a). The event drew nearly 2,300 people. It was followed soon after by a report from the 2006-2007 Chancellor's Diversity Initiatives Committee called Project 2012. This 191-page document outlining the university's five-year plan to "re-envision diversity and inclusion" reckoned with STOP's demands, including those to abolish "chief illiniwek" and to better coordinate and resource the campus cultural centers (Herman & Katehi, 2007). The schedule includes a completed February 12, 2007 meeting to "conceptualize the STOP demands within the committee work" (Herman & Katehi, 2007, p. 116).

Presumably growing out of that meeting, the report also included the appendix "Analysis of Preliminary Diversity Recommendations with STOP Demands" (Herman & Katehi, 2007, p. 118), which called out "activities listed on both the interim report and STOP document; STOP activities listed that are consistent with the thrust of the specified recommendation; and information that is on STOP document and not included in the interim report" (Herman & Katehi, 2007, p. 119). One of those points in the first category included: "Abolish the Chief, including ensuring that rights to representations of the Chief are not passed to any other group (Remove all "Chief" iconography from the University of Illinois including items for sale at the

Illini Union Bookstore)" (Herman & Katehi, 2007, p. 119). Further, the full report lists under "Highest Priority Initiatives,":

> • Move forward with planning processes for improvement of racialized/ethnic/women and gender studies, cultural houses, the LGBT and Women Offices, and the Division of Rehabilitation Education Services (DRES) facilities
>
> > • Assess the need for upgraded/renovated Division of Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) facilities
> >
> > • Determine configuration of new and upgraded facilities for cultural centers and racialized/ethnic/women and gender studies
> >
> > • Short term upgrade of LGBT facilities; long range planning for larger facility and "center" status
> >
> > • Identify facilities to convert Office of Women's Programs to a Women's Center (Herman & Katehi, 2007, p. 17)

It is hard to tell to what extent these changes were spurred by student activism or administrative processes already in motion, but "chief illiniwek" was officially retired by a March 13, 2007 consensus resolution and OIIR was established the following year, in 2008.

The decision to remove "chief illiniwek" also removed the U of I from the NCAA's sanction list of universities unable to host postseason events which it had been on since 2005 (Forrest, 2007b), incidentally, a year the Illinois men's basketball team made it to the final four. Regarding students' immediate responses, the decision to remove "chief illiniwek" was met with both hope and resistance. Hock E Aye Edgar Heap of Birds (Cheyenne-Arapaho) art installation "Beyond the Chief" (on view at the Krannert Art Museum through August) was created as "an opportunity for those of us at the University of Illinois to consider the indigenous history of our campus and the state in which we live" (Public History, n.d.). The installation's twelve signs endured "9 "waves" of vandalism between March 2009 and August 2010; this includes having 8 panels vandalized or damaged and having 2 panels stolen, one of which was recovered. The

panel vandalized the most was posted in front of the Native American House" (Public History, n.d.).

Despite the university's *official* removal of the mascot in 2007, the administration's subsequent refusal to adopt a new mascot aside from a giant capital letter "I" has stoked students' continued unofficial use of the mascot. Student activism on both sides of the issue (much of it provoked by the Honor The Chief Society) has continued over the years. For instance, the Daily Illini in October 2017 ran a story titled "'Meeting with The Chief' results in alleged vandalism, assault and police involvement," (Abrol, 2017a) followed three days later by one called "Native American Guardian Association advocates for Chief Illiniwek" (Abrol, 2017b).

Conclusion

This chapter has sketched the social and historical climate in which the students in my study related to the ongoing issue of "chief illiniwek," specifically, along with other struggles for recognition and support of students' diverse and intersecting identities on campus. Both their dawning understanding of the issues of racism on campus, and their participation in a program devised by student-support administrative structures in response to students' demands are particularly salient to this case. As we'll see in Chapter Six, the assumptions and approaches that underlie DiversityEd and the SJEP program are born of and responding to this history in multiple ways.

Chapter 6:

SJEP Students' Literate Activity and Becoming

The three SJEP students I spoke with, Samantha, Jessica, and Lori (a mix of real names and pseudonyms as per their individual preferences), provided quite similar texts for our interviews—the reflective writing and dialogue-structuring kinds of texts central to the SJEP course sequence. Due to the nature of these texts, rather than a deep dive into a large project of each student participant, the narratives here give briefer glimpses into student-provided texts that reinforce a subject that came up in our interview or my class observations. Between the three student narratives, you'll get a view of the handful of major types of writing students spoke of and/or provided: scripts for facilitating dialogue, and weekly or mid-semester reflection papers.

It is clear in these texts, our talk, and their classroom interactions I observed, that these students valued having designated space at school to focus on their personal relationships to issues of diversity and social justice that they found complex and difficult to engage with their peers. What I find most interesting in this case is the program's focus on interpersonal dialogue, how and why that focus is supported by its parent institution, and the effects that focus seems to have (both generative and limiting) on students' potentials for becoming.

Before jumping into students' narratives, I pick up this case with a discussion of DiversityEd (SJEP's parent program) and its then director (and designer of SJEP) Ross. I give a brief overview of the I-Journey workshops students learn to facilitate in SJEP, before detailing the values, mission, and pedagogy of the SJEP course sequence as read through materials and practices. Again, I end with a brief discussion of how I see the students' literate development being enabled and constrained by the learning environment of their program, which I return to in my concluding chapter.

Diversity & Social Justice Education (DiversityEd) and Ross

At the time of the study, Ross Wantland was the director of Diversity & Social Justice Education (DiversityEd). Ross' work with diversity programming on campus spans two decades. Prior to directing DiversityEd, from 2001 to 2009, he worked as a sexual violence prevention educator at the organization that would become (in 2008, when OIIR was founded) the Women's Center. Though he had no formal training in classroom pedagogy, like my other participants, his route there was catalyzed both by available academic trajectories and valued interpersonal relationships.

Ross had gone to the University of Illinois as an undergraduate intending to major in chemical engineering. When a loved one disclosed to him that they had experienced sexual abuse as a child and other forms of relationship violence, Ross needed to find a way to support them and to cope, himself. So, he decided to volunteer at a rape crisis center. What he learned in the 40 hour training, particularly about whiteness and anti-racism, he said, really shook his world. He soon switched his academic trajectory to major in psychology and minor in gender and women's studies. The way he described his decision to do so as a first-generation college student trying to parse where he would be able to do work that helps people ("I was like 'oh I guess I have to go do psychology!'") reminds me of Sabrina's comment about thinking the Peace Corps was the only place to do the kind of work she had in mind. Similar kinds of institutional navigation are also echoed in the student narratives later in this chapter.

Over his time as an undergraduate, Ross continued to volunteer and in time, Ross gathered that the kind of one-on-one counseling the major was preparing students for wouldn't suit him. He said "I already sort of knew that that probably counseling was not going to be my

forte because it was a little bit too direct of a relationship but that the sort of presentation and education I really loved." When a secretarial job at the rape crisis center opened, he applied and was hired. He reminisced that, though he was not a very good secretary, he learned a lot in that position, and not just about how he works in an office. The open structure of the nonprofit and invitations from its educators enabled him to experience multiple approaches to rape prevention education and support. So, when the Women's Center needed more men to facilitate FYCARE workshops, he took that on atop of his full-time secretarial work and course load. A few years later, when his predecessor in the sexual violence education role departed and encouraged him to apply, he didn't at all expect to get the job. He attributes his hiring to his ability to clearly articulate "how is it we should be engaging men, particularly, as solutions for rape prevention."

After his long experience with the Women's Center and FYCARE, coming into his new position as Director of DiversityEd in 2009, Ross maintained some of the core values he'd taken up there. To give you a sense of the values and frames central to DiversityEd, the program's "about" page reads:

> As part of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, Diversity & Social Justice Education (DiversityEd) offers programs to create transformational education spaces. Through classes, workshops and trainings, DiversityEd works to improve the campus climate and promote critical thinking both within our university community and in the greater society.
>
> Students must be prepared to work and live in a diverse society. Our programs challenge students, faculty and staff to apply fair-minded thinking methods in their professional and interpersonal lives. To achieve this, our programs create safe spaces for differing opinions and perspectives to be expressed through the dialogue process. ("About DiversityEd," n.d.)

Though DiversityEd, as a branch of OIIR under Student Affairs is largely student-facing, DiversityEd actually provides programming on diversity and social justice issues for students, faculty, and staff.

The student-facing side of DiversityEd's offerings include things like the I-Connect Diversity and Inclusion Workshop for first year and transfer students discussed in Chapter Five, four credit-bearing courses on dialogue and facilitation including the site of this study, and the LENS Diversity Certificate Program—"a year-long cohort program that helps Illinois students build important skills and practice for engaging diversity on campus and beyond. LENS Diversity Certificate participants take courses, attend workshops and regular cohort meetings, and design their own action project" ("Lens Diversity Certificate," n.d.). More broadly for the campus community they offer elective skill-building and topics-based trainings, like the Racial Justice Allies and Advocates training launched in 2016.

As director, Ross also partnered with campus, community, and student organizations to spearhead the Illinois Interfaith Initiative—a project he continues with in his new position as Director of Curriculum Development and Education in the newly established Office of the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This new office is separate from OIIR and Student Affairs and is intended as a more campus-wide approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. So, Ross' educational work there is similar in some regards but more tightly focused on training faculty and staff in contrast to the work he did with students in DiversityEd.

Peer leadership and facilitation is central to the student-facing workshops offered throughout OIIR. In my interview with Ross, he explained that his previous work with the Women's Resource Center's peer-to-peer FYCARE workshops, particularly in its contrast to other rape-prevention workshops he'd led for fraternities, led him to value peer-educator models.

Citing his workshops on rape prevention with fraternity students, he explained some of the ways he saw conversations with peers as potentially more impactful on students' uptake and subsequent behavior than workshops led by adult outsiders. In contrast to his presence as a workshop leader, which was responded to politely, but distantly, students embedded in the social life of the student body might be able to have more frank conversations and more lasting impressions on one another's choices moving forward. So, when he moved from his role in the Women's Resource Center to direct DiversityEd and was tasked with designing a diversity-focused workshop that could be offered on request, he enlisted the help of undergraduate student leaders he knew were good educators (mainly from FYCARE). With the help of his graduate assistant, he designed a general diversity workshop, and met bi-weekly with the student leaders to reflect on the skills needed to facilitate that kind of discussion—meetings he said turned into a support group of sorts. But "as it turned out," he said, "people aren't super excited to request a general diversity workshop…it really worked better as the kind of program you were forced to go to." So, when Teryl Brewster joined a year later with a proposal to make the workshops more appealing by centering them on deeper dives into particular issues, I-Journey and SJEP were born, and the original design of the general diversity workshop became the template for the mandatory I-Connect workshops

I-Journey Workshops

I-Journey workshops are what the SJEP students learn to facilitate and design over the course of their three semesters together. A brief description on the campus calendar describes them: "IJourney workshops are peer developed, peer led workshops covering a variety of topics. Facilitated by pool of trained student-facilitators, IJourney workshops explore issues of social

identity, exclusion/inclusion, and being an ally" ("Diversity Calendar," n.d.). The following is the full list of I-Journey workshops on offer, with a short description of each:

- ***A Campus Divided: Who, Where, and Why We Segregate*** examines how and why we segregate ourselves and how we can initiate change.
- ***A Nation of Immigrants: Examining Past and Present*** is an introduction to what immigration looks like in the US and examines how immigration impacts our campus.
- ***Belief: Exploring Ways of Making Meaning*** facilitates discussion about different belief systems and other ways in which we make meaning in our lives.
- ***Bystander Intervention: Do You Have a Responsibility?*** explores the benefits and challenges of bystander intervention and specific strategies you can use as a bystander.
- ***Call Me by Your Name: Cultural Significance in Personal Identity*** facilitates discussion about cultural appropriation and why it may be difficult to identify.
- ***Colorism: Bringing Darkness to Light*** explores what colorism means and how it presents itself in pop culture and other aspects of society.
- ***Culture not Costume*** explores the nuances of cultural appropriation vs. appreciation and ways to engage others in this conversation.
- ***Disable the Label: A Dialogue on Ableism*** examines how disability is defined and ways in which we can be better allies for disability justice.
- ***Enhancing Stereotype Awareness*** explores the formation and perpetuation of stereotypes and how stereotypes affect our interactions with others.
- ***Environmental Racism*** explores where it exists in our society and how it influences the health of communities across the country.
- ***I'm Aware: Examining Our Privilege*** explores how privilege impacts our lives and how it relates to our social identities.
- ***Let's Talk about Sex(ism)! Tackling Gender Inequality*** examines what modern day sexism can look like and other issues related to gender identity.

- ***Microaggressions in the Workplace*** sheds light on the subtleties of discrimination in a professional environment and equips participants with a toolkit of solutions.
- ***Mind the Gap: Exploring Opportunity and Achievement of First-Generation College Students*** provides an opportunity to learn about more resources and to feel more equipped to be successful in a higher education environment.
- ***Real Talk: Connecting Communities through Intercultural Communication*** explores how our cultural identities influence how we communicate and how to improve communication with folks from different cultures than our own.
- ***Religious Misrepresentations:*** Examining Religious Oppression in America deepens participants understanding of religious oppression on an institutional level and what it means to be an ally.
- ***Road Trip! Mapping Our Social Identities*** explores how our life experiences have influenced the development of our personal identities.
- ***Sexual Racism: Navigating Interracial Relationships and Intimacy*** explores the challenges of interracial dating, both online and off.
- ***Tense Waters: Navigating Political Correctness*** explores how political correctness affects our lives and interactions with others. ("Request a Workshop," n.d.)

Aside from these predesigned workshops, parties can request unique workshops fitted to their organization's needs. You, might notice, here, a clear thread: regardless of topic, these workshops tend to focus on individual and interpersonal understanding, sometimes framed in the context of society and culture, but rarely in challenging or changing institutions.

SJEP Course Sequence: Values, Mission, Pedagogy

A focus on self-reflection and interpersonal understanding are clearly central to the work of SJEP, not just in the I-Journey workshops students facilitate, but also in their coursework

throughout the three-semester sequence. Here I look at the program's sparse public-facing documents, and refer to a course syllabus and classroom observations, all buoyed by my interviews with students and Ross, to illustrate the program and its underlying values and mission.

As a brief overview of the SJEP program, the website says:

> The Social Justice Educator Paraprofessional Program is a 3-semester peer education program powered by students for students. The Social Justice Education Paraprofessional Program is designed to promote diversity and student leadership by providing intensive training for students in areas of knowledge, awareness, and skills related to issues of diversity and social justice. Through this program, paraprofessionals serve as campus leaders in social justice by developing and facilitating educational programs for the campus. Social Justice Education Paraprofessionals receive 11 advanced credit hours in Psychology. ("Social Justice Educator Paraprofessionals," n.d.)

The first of the three courses in the sequence is PSYC 496 ID3: Facilitating Intergroup Dialogue. PSYC 496 ID3 is offered each Spring as the first course of three for students preparing to facilitate I-Journey workshops and for students preparing to facilitate intergroup dialogue in a particular course who branch off to a separate set of two courses. (As mentioned previously regarding my pilot study, this course is also offered each Fall as a standalone course.) Following the first course, students can apply to become facilitators of one or the other and branch off in either of those two directions. This first course in the sequence "is designed to give students a general overview of the skills and knowledge needed to facilitate culturally diverse group interactions" ("Psyc 496," n.d.).

The following Fall, students who opt for the SJEP branch then go on to take their first practicum course, PSYC 340 SJE: Social Justice Educators, where they build their presentation strategies and begin facilitating requested I-Journey workshops.

> Class time throughout the semester will include reviewing group dialogue techniques, discussing group issues and intervention strategies, exploring related theories/models, and discussing relevant articles pertaining to facilitation. Other topics addressed in the seminars include: group dynamics, theory and practice, in/out-group conflict, intergroup communication and community building, and methods of attending to personal issues when facilitating. ("Psyc 496," n.d.).

In the final course of the sequence, PSYC 341 SJE: Social Justice Educators (Spring semester), the students continue to facilitate workshops on request and develop their own 60 minute workshops which become part of the I-Journey workshop menu of offerings ("Social Justice Educator Paraprofessionals," n.d.)

During my study, Ross taught the first course and Teryl taught the second two. Ross explained that they each retained their own approach to- and style of- teaching, developed through their different disciplinary and experiential routes to the course, but they shared some similarities like assigning reflection journals and peppering practical experience throughout. Likely another cause for distinctions between the classes: Ross' class was larger and meant as a general introduction to the material, where Teryl's were a small cohort branched from Ross' class and focusing more on a practicum specific to I-Journey.

Ross' Fall 2016 syllabus lists the following course objectives:

- To increase students' familiarity with basic concepts related to diversity and social justice education issues.
- To raise students' understanding of the impact of cultural differences upon personal feelings, assumptions, interpersonal and intergroup relations.
- To guide students in defining and understanding their own cultural identity and how it may influence their ability to facilitate diverse groups.
- To provide theoretical information regarding how the concepts of social identity, oppression, privilege and power influence intergroup relations.

- To provide students with strategies and skills for exploring cultural differences and social justice issues in respectful and transformative ways. (Wantland, 2016)

To these ends, students in Ross' class had a substantial reading list grounded in literature on intergroup dialogue and understanding the operation of oppression in relation to social groups from both psychology and social justice education disciplinary perspectives. I'm struck here at the disconnect between Ross' attempts in class to decenter himself as the sole source of knowledge (through his physical positioning, engaging small and large group activities, student choice and more) and the way this syllabus language reflects traditional one-way transmission models of education. In the construction of these objectives, students are *acted upon.*

Though I don't have Teryl's syllabus, I can piece a few things together from my observations and talk with students. The class sessions I observed were each at the end of the semester. Each started with time to share about what was going on in people's lives that week—an activity Teryl referred to as "happy/crappy." Each incorporated food and celebration. Though the final class of the final semester was a bit more formalized in individual presentations, each class incorporated an activity or assignment that asked students to reflect on their personal identity and journey in some way. The first asked students to map, together in class with markers and geometric shapes, moments where they learned about their social identities, and then use those maps to tell their stories aloud. This was clearly a new take on an activity they'd done before in the class, intended to provide a new angle and practice. Teryl explained that she'd spent most of her professional career telling her stories, and that it is a technique that takes practice. The second of this type of activity I witnessed was students' final presentation at the end of the program. There, students were given prompts to reflect on their growth through the program and each had designated time to walk the class through things they felt were important to that story.

The first class period I observed also spent a considerable chunk of class time discussing a student-selected article. There was fairly free-flowing conversation around this article, which was something of a screed against the rural community in which the writer was raised. The group's major critique was of the authors' closedmindedness toward his rural community. They were clearly invested in not pigeon-holing or demonizing individuals or communities and espoused the power of interpersonal dialogue. Responding to the author's assertion that he knew for a fact his prior community would never change, students thought this was a dangerous way of thinking and that "a simple conversation could go a long way."

They were also interested in, instead, connecting the issue to both local and larger social systems. Regarding a peer's question on how they would facilitate a workshop on the kind of white fundamentalism apparent in the article, students considered briefly how the political leanings of central Illinois affect the issue of "chief illiniwek." Scoping out to larger social systems, a student commented that the author didn't discuss the government's impact on why the communities in question were poor, and Ross (who was visiting, not there as the teacher) mused that the author was ascribing more political power to the group in question than they actually have, not thinking beyond cultural power to institutional power. Students brought up multiple current sociopolitical events throughout the course of the conversation, including Trump's recognition of Israeli sovereignty (which one student called "the single most destructive thing he's done in office"), TIME Magazine's omission of the creator of the #MeToo movement on its "Person of the Year 2017: The Silence Breakers" cover, Trump's late-night tweets in support of Roy Moore's character, and the recent resignation of Senator Al Franken due to allegations of sexual misconduct. Weighing the last two, students agreed that it was the right thing to do for Franken to resign (though they saw his offences as less egregious that Moore's), and they were

disgusted but not surprised that republicans would continue to support Moore. One student said of Franken, “I don't think he's an evil person; he just did a bad thing,” and sighed in frustration considering that he had done some good in government and that he’s just “grown up in the same world we all have.”

I have somewhat conflicting understandings of students’ meanings and alignments in this conversation, but what does seem clear is that students were working out their understandings of and feelings about sociopolitical events in ways that largely align with SJEP’s focus on individual and interpersonal change as the heart of broader social change. I say this, recognizing that, though they were engaged and enthusiastic in the chorus of the conversation, the three focal students in this study were relatively quiet. Two other students’ and the two teachers’ voices were really spotlighted throughout the conversation. Still, the conversation did reflect the kind of “support group” atmosphere Ross had described of the early work with students to design the I-Journey workshops. From my brief observations of Teryl’s classes, and certainly from my interviews with Lori, I got the sense that over their time together this cohort gained comfort in sharing their thoughts and feelings. For instance, bringing in an aside about a slew of frustrating current events during the above conversation, one of the particularly vocal students remarked “sorry to bring the mood down, but this is the only place I can talk about these things.” The shared sighs of frustration, laughter, and other such affective responses from their peers as the conversation continued indexed to me a shared ethic of care, if not the same level of comfort discussing current events. As I turn now to discuss those three focal students, let me introduce them more thoroughly.

The three students I spoke with are Samantha (who preferred use of her real name), Jessica, and Lori (both pseudonyms). I interviewed them all in Fall 2017, and interviewed Lori a

second time in Spring 2018. In the following documented narratives of each student participant, I try to illustrate their paths to and through SJEP as told through our interviews and the writing they provided me, with added insight from my class observations. There are a few things across these narratives that strike me as particularly salient to the case at hand. First, perhaps unsurprising given SJEP's nested location in highly structured institutional webs, are the ways these students narrated their involvement in the program as integrally connected to their navigation of the curriculum and extra-curriculum. Each of these students was involved in multiple campus DEI initiatives. All three are women of color—certainly not an accurate reflection of campus demographics writ large but aligned with their overrepresentation in their small class cohort and, I would venture to guess, across OIIR's optional programming. All three were psychology majors and two of those three, like Ross, made mention of entering psychology as a route to "helping people."

Samantha:

"I feel like with social justice there is a- lots of like different intersectionalities with like race, sex, gender and just class and all that, and I feel like they all intermingle."

Samantha was a senior, double majoring in psychology and gender and women's studies. Like her peers I spoke to, Samantha was active in multiple initiatives on campus in the orbit of diversity and inclusion support services / programming. For instance, when we spoke, she was interning at the YWCA and she had previously worked at the Women's Resource Center. She became interested in SJEP as she was also becoming interested in finding routes through psychology that would enable her to help communities rather than just individuals. Taking a community psychology course helped her broaden her initial view of the field. Where she had

initially planned to become a clinical psychologist and aspired to having her own practice, this broader view of the field and impulse to help groups, along with a longstanding interest in the education system, led her to want to pursue a career in school psychology. There, she thought, she could help young people with their important transition into adulthood. She planned to apply to Teach for America after graduation and thought SJEP would prepare her well for teaching.

Samantha's growing interests in social issues and social justice also drew her to the course sequence. She explained that she was interested in the broad social view her gender and women's studies courses afforded. She also came in with a particular interest and involvement in issues around sexual and relationship health. In fact, she was involved in a registered student organization (RSO) on campus that promotes awareness of sexual health. This group, run through the campus health center, offers trainings on campus by request, but Samantha explained that's just one aspect of the work they do. According the university's "We Care" website (which offers resources aligned with Title IX mandates on sexual misconduct support, response, and prevention):

> The Sexual Health Peers are a volunteer peer education group that promotes healthy choices related to sexual health and relationships. Their programs are available to any campus or community group and address areas of sexually transmissible diseases, safer sex, relationships and dating, and birth control. They also take part in events such as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, World AIDS Day, and Safe Spring Break. These trained peer educators are great resources for the Illinois community. They welcome interested students at the beginning of fall and spring semester. The group meets [weekly on campus], and there are no pre-requisites for joining. All members are trained by the Sexual Health Educator. ("Registered Student Organizations," n.d.)

Like SJEP and many of the OIIR programs introduced earlier, this group uses a peer education model and draws students in through the promise of becoming leaders on campus ("Sexual Health," n.d.)

Samantha was able to utilize her expertise on sexual and relationship health in her work in SJEP. The previous semester she had designed her final assignment—a workshop on a topic of the students' choosing—around these issues. She was also beginning to see, through her work in SJEP and in her GWS courses how issues around sexual and relationship health were intertwined with other social issues. In fact, the workshop she had designed the previous semester was about recognizing socialization into racist sexual preferences. She explained that she had learned "way more about how [race, sex, gender, class and more] overlap and how one effects the other so you can't just really focus on one." The concept of intersectionality came up across my interviews with students and the writing they gave me.

Samantha provided two texts for our interview: one of the short, weekly reflection papers and her midterm paper. I discuss Samantha's reflection paper here, as it reflects in many ways the reflection papers provided by her peers. Like her peers', Samantha's looked back at the week's activities and readings. She described these assignments as "a little snippet of that week and what we learned and how it affected us." In the week she writes about, Samantha was the in-class facilitator on the topic of race, so she was getting her first bit of experience leading a long-form facilitation. The texts students read that week were about oppression based on race and class. Samantha's writing here, characteristic of students' general approach to this assignment, described her experiences in the class and aspects of the reading she found interesting while grappling with their import for her individually and as a UIUC student. For instance, it happened to be the week of "Unofficial"—a yearly undergraduate day of reveling to celebrate together

before many local students head back to Chicagoland for spring break. It seems the issue of "chief illiniwek" was explored in class and, mid-description, Samantha mused at the fact that "Unofficial was Friday and although I have been here for three years it was not until this year I realized just how many individuals had chief related shirts." She asserts, "The Chief is an important part of Native American culture and not something that should be paraded around with no regard to what it means for Native Americans," before moving on to consider a few points that stood out to her in the week's readings, like: "The U.S has this myth of 'pulling yourself up by your bootstraps' they however don't recognize that some people based on other intersections are born into higher social classes." Then, to begin the final paragraph, she writes: "After discussion and readings I had a lot of self-reflection to do. I knew that the Chief was problematic, I never understood how exactly though. Now I know that having Indians be mascots dehumanizes Native Americans."

The midterm paper she provided did similar school-style synthesis work—*showing* what she'd learned about course concepts and analyzing the efficiency of observed social justice teaching practices—but with little to no personal connections. There, she describes intergroup dialogue and unpacks an I-Journey workshop she had attended as a requirement for the assignment. Samantha explained to me, "the midterm was just like an overall putting everything that we were learning into practice and like, I guess um, reviewing one of the workshops we had to go to." She said Ross' feedback on the midterm pushed her to think more about how what she observed in the workshop could apply to her own facilitation. When I asked her what she took up from the example workshop, she described an activity where participants were given colored index cards with instructions like "pair up with yellow and stay away from blue" that was meant to mirror how "implicitly stereotypes work so like you always think like this race is a certain

way and so you behave this way even though you don't really realize it." She saw taking mention of race out of the equation as clearing a way to help people actually engage in discussion of race.

Jessica

"That pushed me to get more involved because…I was hearing

people's opinions about diversity and like oh my goodness

…these people want to be educators and that made me really nervous."

Jessica was a senior transfer student, majoring in psychology. When we spoke, she was also interning on campus—facilitating an introductory, 8-week course for new transfer students. She was also in her second year of work tutoring at an elementary school. She was interested in school psychology as a possible career path. During our interview, as well as in the writing she provided and the class sessions I observed, she reflected on how her life experiences in education and her religious upbringing affected her identity.

Her interest in school psychology and reflection on her own schooling was stoked by two courses she took her first semester at UIUC: one of which she referred to as Philosophy of Education, and the other as Race and Ethnicity. She explained how taking those classes simultaneously gave her time to think about how the education system related to her personal development and issues of diversity and inclusion. In fact, it was her experience facilitating a class discussion on diversity that pushed her to get more involved with social justice education on campus.

She considered two things about that discussion that fueled her decision. The first was that she realized how different her educational experiences, as a Latina growing up in a Chicago suburb, had been from those of her majority white peers. Examples of her personal experiences

with education she centered as different from her peers' included learning English as a second language (ESL) and moving between two or three different elementary schools. She didn't recount these as traumatic experiences, merely as ones her white peers didn't share. Though as a child she was the only Latina in her grade, she said she didn't feel singled out by her peers and felt like the one-on-one attention she got from her ESL teacher really helped her.

Over the semester Jessica was also connecting what she was learning in those two classes to what she was seeing at the school where she tutored. In contrast to her own positive educational experiences, she didn't think the kids she tutored got the attention they deserved. She mused on how the myth of meritocracy (a concept she learned in class that semester) fueled biased (her word, mine would be racist) behavior from the otherwise well-meaning teacher she worked under. She recounted patterned instances of the teacher more harshly punishing African American children when their white peers were being more unruly, and placing them last, sitting them alone, or directing Jessica not to work with them despite what Jessica saw as very clear ability and potential that would have been helped by her attention.

The second aspect of leading this class discussion on diversity that fueled her decision to get more involved in social justice education on campus was that her peers' opinions about diversity, as future educators (many of them with particular interest in special education), made her nervous. Telling of her experience trying to facilitate the very first student-led discussion on diversity in the class, she described how uncomfortable her peers seemed with the topic, and the heavy lifting she and the course's graduate teaching assistant had to do to try to get her peers talking. Attempts to stoke conversation by talking about current social issues surrounding the election and pulling up a document with definitions of various terms related to diversity and equity as well as different identities and stereotypes, did little to help things along. In Jessica's

view, her peers had very little understanding of how these issues or terms affected other people. She mused that her life experiences growing up in a more diverse place than her peers and her disciplinary grounding in psychology may have provided her more insight into issues of diversity than her peers would have had occasion to develop. Likewise, compared to the typically large introductory courses she and her peers were taking at the U of I, the small, honors cohort courses Jessica took pre-transfer much more regularly wove in discussion of social issues. Being able to discuss these things with her cohort really helped her gain comfort as well.

These realizations about her own educational trajectory and the lack of familiarity her preservice teacher peers had with discussions of supporting diverse students, she said, influenced her to go into the Social Justice Educators program, which she heard about through La Casa's newsletter. (UIUC's Latinx cultural house.) In turn, SJEP offered a new small, ongoing cohort with whom to continue deepening her understanding.

What Jessica found most gratifying about the writing of the course were the opportunities it provided for introspection and understanding how her life experiences affected her—opportunities that were few and far-between in her other, content-focused coursework. She said she found herself processing things she wouldn't have thought would have affected her. For instance, she mused on her relationship to religion and the ways she was beginning to see some aspects of religious socialization pervade her thinking even though she did not consider herself devoutly religious and her parents didn't push her to take up their religion. Likewise, she narrated coming to understand how her parents' differential treatment of her older brother was not just a family idiosyncrasy, but likely connected to cultural understandings and practices of gender and child-rearing. Feedback from Ross on her weekly journal writing supported continued introspection and deeper probing with comments like "go deeper into this," and "what

influenced this?" She also valued this self-reflection for how it helped her facilitate dialogue, as she could use her own experience coming to understand as an example to help catalyze her peers' self-reflection.

Lori

"It's nice like having a connection with these people because they help me like figure out where I can go like on campus."

Lori was a junior majoring in psychology and minoring in global markets in society—a new minor on campus—focusing on social impact on humanity. Her route to those disciplines and their connected academic communities was winding. Originally intending to major in business, upon her first visit to campus she realized that the business school really wasn't her "type of people." So she switched to major in chemistry but was worn down by the culture there. She said, "I just couldn't get past the not having like discussions with people, not having like small groups, like I just couldn't do the big lecture hall and sit there and not get to know my professor or my peers and just like leave and like, stay up until like 4am writing a lab report every day." At the time she was considering minoring in psychology, so when she "crashed and burned in chemistry," failing a couple courses, she switched to major in psychology. Taking an industrial psychology course led her to realize how she could tie some of her original interests in business back into this path. After finding no minors of interest in business, she settled on the global markets in society minor offered by the Global Studies Office, which she appreciated for the openness of its requirements.

When we met for our first interview, Lori was retaking the industrial and organizational psychology course that had piqued her interest alongside PSYC 340 SJE, the second class in the

Social Justice Educators' 3-course sequence. She was also pursuing a leadership certificate through the Illini Union. She described the leadership certificate as "for people who don't have time to take the leadership minor" and explained the basic requirements to me. One aspect of the leadership certificate—the aspect that brought her into it—requires students to get points through leadership activities like facilitation. Explaining the difficulty of navigating curricular options, she said she added the certificate since she was already involved in campus facilitation activities and realized she "could just get a certificate for doing the things that [she did] on campus anyway." She highlighted her network of friends and mentors at the Women's Resource Center who are always talking about social justice programs, including Ross, who was also her leadership coach, saying "it's nice like having a connection with these people because they help me like figure out like where I can go like on campus."

As a freshman, Lori already had interests in advocacy for sexual assault survivors, though no practical experience in that work. So, when she took and very much enjoyed the FYCARE workshop on rape prevention she decided very quickly that she wanted to get involved in it herself. She took a course at the Women's Resource Center the next semester that would enable her to facilitate FYCARE workshops. Ross came to give a presentation in that class that interested her, so she asked him if he taught any classes, and he explained that he taught the class students need to take to become an I-Connect facilitator (PSYC 496). She took her mandatory I-Connect workshop that spring, like it too, and enrolled in the standalone version of PSYC 496 for the following Fall, 2016. (Interestingly enough, the same class I did my pilot study in.) The following Spring, she continued facilitating FYCARE and began to facilitate I-Connect. She said she got to know Teryl over email then because Teryl kept forgetting that she was in the program because she wasn't in the class with the new cohort of students who had just entered the 3-course

sequence with PSYC 496. Lori decided to finish the sequence and joined that cohort for PSYC 340 SJE the following Fall.

Lori's stop-and-go trajectory through the sequence caused her a bit of whiplash in the ways she related to her peers and her expertise. Most of the students in the standalone PSYC 496 class Lori took were further along in their academic trajectories—they were taking the standalone course because they didn't have time in their degrees to take the sequence—and so Lori often felt behind her peers and reserved about contributing to class discussions. In fact she narrated some major frustrations with the interpersonal dynamics of that class where a couple very strong voices silenced others and made the class feel divided and unsafe. It was clear that she really wanted this class to be a welcoming place to talk through feelings connected to the tumultuous election time and was shocked and hurt by how polarizing the class itself could be.

She was able to use her assigned writing as one place to work out her feelings. She said "I wrote a very thorough journal about why I was just very upset." In a journal entry she shared with me from early on in the semester, she let Ross know that she was already slightly worried about the class, and recounted her experience in the FYCARE facilitator preparation class, which had a similar dynamic to this one:

> there were so many passionate people that would speak out that many of us, myself included, never got the chance to share our thoughts. It quickly became one of those classes where a small handful of students would run the majority of the discussions in class.

She wrote about how that teacher tried to encourage more equitable discussions but ultimately was unsuccessful. It seems Ross and her peers in SPYC 496 also made serious efforts to address the class dynamic. She said "So we actually had a class that like, where like we sat down and we

were like 'ok, we're not going to do class today, we're gonna talk about our feelings. Like we're gonna talk about what's been going on because there's definitely animosity in the room.'"

The intense polarization in the room really threw her for a loop. In the mandatory I-Connect workshops she facilitated, she was used to participants provoking facilitators through their questions or wearing Trump gear to upset people. She was even used to intense interpersonal conversations with her father, who was not only pro-Trump, but anti-immigrant (despite his wife, Lori's mother, being a Japanese immigrant), and didn't believe in mental illness (and so was certainly not supportive of either of his daughters' struggles with depression). As a UIUC alumni, he was also staunchly pro- "chief illiniwek" and highly critical of the social justice learning and work Lori did on campus. So, while this kind of political polarity was ever-present in her world, she expected more from her peers who elected to take this particular course and were ostensibly interested in and passionate about social justice.

When she met up with her cohort in the second class of the sequence, she didn't immediately feel like she fit in to the community they had built over their previous semester together. Her facilitation experience made her feel more advanced than the peers she was joining, even though again they were mostly seniors while she was still a junior. At first this made her feel like she stuck out even more, but as she began to offer that experience up in class discussions and co-facilitations she began to find her place in the cohort. She said, "I felt like I didn't kind of fit in but now that like everyone's like 'oh, like what happens in like real life' like come to me for stuff I feel like I have like my place in the class now. So I like that." Lori explained her initial fears coming into the existing cohort and attributed her ability to find comfort and her voice to her peers being a really accepting group of people. She said "since it's such a small class, I got to know people very quickly. And since it's discussion-based, you don't

have room to *not* talk." Adding to this sense of accountability to the group, Teryl's prompting for Lori to own her previous experience facilitating was clearly a catalyst for her growing confidence.

When we met for our second interview at the end of the three-course sequence, Lori had wrapped that experience into her self-understanding and was very proud to have her final facilitation script as a material representation of what she does and what she is capable of. Where much of the writing of the course sequence was personal journaling or trying on possible facilitation strategies, the final project was tested, polished, and would carry on a life past her time in the class. She was excited that the next cohort of facilitators would take up her workshop and was looking forward to returning to see how a new facilitator approached the workshop she'd designed. She also mused that depending what path she took after graduating, she might be able to facilitate this workshop in an entirely new context. She told me she chose this script as a text to include in a digital portfolio for another campus internship she was starting the next semester. Aside from it being a practical representation of her passions and abilities, she also thought it was a better fit than other things she'd written in SJEP, which were too personal to share that way, and than things she'd written in other classes, which she characterized broadly as having written just to get the assignment done.

Though she was still deciding on her next professional or education direction, her relative disinterest in her other coursework struck her as important to recognize as she made that decision. Beyond her academic trajectory, Lori also considered the ways her facilitation practices were of value to her personal growth.

> I think being a facilitator is actually helping me think through what things I'm going through, and like, "What are the things I'm actually thinking about? What are the things I want to take away from this?" And I think it's actually helped me be a little more level-

> headed a little bit because, like, I know I have problems being, like, emotional in general. But being a facilitator, it doesn't actually allow you to be emotional because you're the kind of person who kind of controls the group. So working on that with other people has helped me figure out what, actually like, figure out what I'm going through.

Lori's words here reflect a central tension I've had in my reading of students' work in SJEP. Personally, and in relationship to long lineages of thought and practice, I've benefitted from quiet contemplation on my emotional state like Lori describes here. I can't help but wonder, though, about the effects of the pressure to be the neutral, motivating force of a conversation with ill-informed or averse peers. I discuss this and more below.

Discussion: SJEP Students' Literate Development

In this brief discussion, again focusing on students' development as my central concern, I begin by highlighting the developmental affordances SJEP offered for my student participants. Then, considering the program in its broader institutional and historical context, I begin to shift to a more critical consideration of how a program born of such contexts may in some ways support institutional flows of power at these students' expense, which I critique more explicitly in Chapter Seven.

The types of writing Jessica, Samantha, and Lori did in SJEP had two major overarching purposes. They were meant to help students work through their personal relationships to social justice issues, and to prepare them for the particular task of facilitating social justice education workshops for their peers. It was clear from their writing, their talk in class, and our conversations, that students were indeed learning to tell their stories, to understand their life experiences as part of a larger tapestry of local and global social issues. They were also, certainly, gaining some comfort facilitating social justice dialogues, and seemed to believe in the

power of those spaces to change minds, or at least to help some of their more willing peers begin their own processes of introspection.

Though these students didn't bring in writing they'd done outside of SJEP, they did recognize at points how their growing comfort discussing social justice topics was a continuing product of their learning in multiple spaces. What's more, each were each involved in various ways with other diversity programming around campus. So, while they tended to discuss their writing in ways writing studies has long heard students discussing classroom genres (as a means to a grade, cobbled together through expedient processes, and authenticated by a teacher's response) their activities did link them with the campus community in ways not typical of classroom writing. Higher education has retained much of its historically cloistered, classroom-centered approach to teaching and certifying students, a sometimes disconnected-feeling set of checkboxes these students were certainly also navigating. However, their direct engagements with the work of the SJEP course sequence itself brought students into the fold of extracurricular activities on campus as they both attended and facilitated workshops offered on campus. Their involvement in the program, too, was both generated by- and generating of- other engagements with extracurricular groups and activities on campus like Jessica's involvement with La Casa, Samantha's with the YWCA and health center, and Lori's with the Women's Resource Center.

Despite the history of student activism that led to the institutional creation and support of OIIR and its cultural houses and programs, the students I spoke with made no critiques of the university's power structures or those of their disciplines' methods or aims. Certainly, that absence in our talk, the writing they shared, or the classroom discussions I observed doesn't rule out that these students may have and may communicate these critiques elsewhere. It does seem likely, at the least though, that students didn't find these appropriate venues for such critique.

More likely, in my estimation, three factors might have contributed to what can be seen as a lack of criticality. I explore these below because students in this case study were clearly learning to be critical of- and communicate their criticism of- larger social structures, but also seemed to feel (understandably) powerless in the face of them at various points in the data. Their writing and speech indicated the ways they bought into the notion that "a simple conversation could go a long way." However, in my view, the structure of one-off, peer-led workshops, while potentially valuable in a number of ways, doesn't / can't / isn't designed to support the kind of ongoing communal action that could change the institution's structures. Since a major tenet of social justice education is to help students see and change those structures, and since, in my view, their work is hailed into white-supremacy-serving structures through the university, I wonder what effect their involvement in this program, sponsored as it is by the university, has on their agency to do so.

The first of these factors, I imagine, is that they felt supported by their SJEP peers and mentors (and by extension, the university's support of OIIR and its programs) and so might not have seen a need to critique those particular institutional structures. Lori's decisions to venture deeper into social justice education on campus and her beginning to see herself as a leader in that role were stoked by learning of social justice programming on campus through her peers at the Women's Resource Center and Ross's ongoing support and encouragement. I have no doubt that Ross and Teryl were responsive to students' needs and ideas. Remember, Ross designed I-Journey with student leaders and cancelled a day's lesson to address classroom tension, and Teryl's contribution to the direction of SJEP proposed the idea to offer a range of topic-specific workshops students would design themselves. However, linked as it is to the university administration's goals of providing and presenting its support of racially diverse students (who,

over time, if the university is to continue growing its enrollment, necessarily make up a larger and larger proportion of tuition-payers), the peer-to-peer workshops SJEP students facilitate clearly serve the university. So, questions remain of how the peer workshops articulate the university's institutional goals with students' educational and human becoming and especially of whether even this social justice-oriented office of the university administration can seriously tackle institutional racism and advocate structural change.

The second factor is that these students were each somewhat tied up in navigating the complex array of opportunities the university offered for their academic trajectories. It can be difficult to get a grasp on the larger architecture from the inside of one of its many mazes. While I certainly don't think it's the intent of any of OIIR's staff or the university's counselors to confound students, I do recognize the ways bureaucratic structures don't just impede access for the uninitiated but make structural criticism and change by disenfranchised users difficult if not impossible.

The third factor is SJEP's practicum's focus on individual introspection and interpersonal dialogue as avenues for social change. Students in SJEP work together to understand their own relationships to social issues of power and oppression and on ways to help their uninitiated peers do the same. They don't work together to make structural, institutional, or material change. Campus workshops work to initiate certain kinds of conversations that students *might* take into their social worlds, but they don't provide space for collaborative work toward change. In short, students in SJEP see themselves as working for social justice. A major question to which I'll return in the conclusion is a riff off the one so helpfully posed by Eve Tuck and K Wayne Yang: "Toward *whose* justice?"

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The two central case studies in this dissertation each offer a situated look at the intra-acting becomings of a social justice higher education program and the people constituting it. In presenting these cases, I have sought to shed light on a number of pedagogical and administrative practices taken up across these programs that might well serve students who wish to use their education in service of world-changing endeavors. The proliferation, in recent years, of social justice education initiatives across U.S. higher education has drawn in teachers and students alike with budding interests in creating a more just world. My own experience teaching with one such program led me to see such work as a promising avenue for work in higher education that supported students' becoming in ways the day-to-day teaching and learning of the university often misses and is in many ways *designed not to* support. But of course, that was my personal (and shared) experience in one particular program, in a particular place, at a particular moment of (social) time and my own disciplinary, professional, and social becoming (a new college writing teacher). Over the years, this project has enabled me to step in and out of my river of social justice education many times, to view the flows of others', and return to my own with fresh senses and more awareness of the ways it, and I, are continually changing. I've tried, in this project, to bring a range of lenses to understanding what social justice education can be and do. With the methodological tool of *perezhivanie* in my belt, over time I've variously: focused in on small, fleeting moments of marked affect in a participant's retelling of meaningful moments in their work; taken sweeping panoramas of cultural, institutional, or programmatic change; and followed time-lapses of relationships to people and practices across generations.

The character of my river at this point reflects in many ways Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's "warm ambivalence about the term 'social justice'." Considering how, why, and by whom it is used as a subset of the broader field of education, Tuck and Yang write:

> Social justice is a way to mark a distinction from the origins and habits of almost all disciplines which emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries and are rooted in colonialism and white supremacy … Social justice education is a self-conscious exception to the otherwise teleological imperatives of what has, up until now, typified the field(s) of education … People who use social justice as a signal for what their work engages with understand that inequities are produced, inequities are structured, and that things have got to change in order to achieve different educational outcomes. Social justice education is a *choice away* from pathology and linearity. (Tuck & Yang, 2018, pp. 4-5)

To the extent that the term can signal some of these values and objectives, it may a useful signifier to help students and teachers alike find their *potential* people. But, as I set out in the introduction to this dissertation, and as has been borne out in the case studies of INVST and SJEP, it can certainly signal approaches to world-making that feel worlds apart from one another or from the values and objectives we hope to achieve with others in social justice spaces. As Leigh Patel argues, the ubiquity of the platform of social justice education makes it liable to "carry sizeable assumptions of goals and approaches," and hold "untenable positions in its wholesale sweep" (Patel, 2016, p. 89).

It is my hope that the detail with which I've situated the practices of each program in the preceding chapters helps illuminate some of the breadth of goals and approaches that can reside under the same banner. I've largely reserved my own critique of these programs for this concluding chapter for a few reasons. First and foremost I aim to represent my participants and their labor in ways they themselves would recognize and value. Second, I think there is plenty to learn from others whose aims and practices diverge from my own. Third, I wanted to practice my documented narrative approach across the dissertation—giving my readers a chance to interact

with samples of the data and make their own judgments not just about my interpretations but about their own. This kind of discernment is crucial for readers hoping to design or assess their own liberatory educational spaces.

Ultimately, I hope to show not *just* INVST and SJEP's polarity, but the *inner angles* between each program's theories of social change, and the "small shifts which can be made and will impact how far apart from one another we find ourselves" (Tuck and Yang, 2018, p. 3). I find this critical and connective view important for the potential of both collaborative and coalitional work—those working together for change need shared understandings of what it is they're working toward, and a reference to any particular term or framework is no substitution for building, defining, and practicing together a group's own vision of social change.

In what follows then, I first synthesize the case studies of INVST and SJEP, focusing on each program's vision of social change, some of its central practices for working toward that vision, and how those affect students' becoming. Bringing my own politics to bear, I critique the liberal bent of SJEP. Then, keeping this comparison in mind, I return to my research questions. Grounded in this research and reflecting my own interests in supporting liberatory education, I then offer a working heuristic for the thoughtful design and sustenance of locally situated, robust, liberatory learning environments. Finally, to conclude, I suggest implications for future research.

INVST and SJEP's Visions of Social Change

INVST's vision of social change and its vision of how to develop students as people who work toward social change are both clearly articulated in the program's materials. Recall how their handbook defines that vision and the assumptions undergirding it:

> INVST Community Studies believes in the possibility of a just and sustainable world. We develop engaged citizens and leaders who work for the benefit of humanity and the

> environment. This vision is based on a number of assumptions which include the beliefs that: one person can make a difference; a positive difference can be made; a critical mass can create a global shift; and social reality is socially constructed, and therefore, can be changed by human actors. (INVST Handbook, 2017, p. 6)

In their participatory model, all INVST members work together to co-construct not only meaningful learning experiences, but a constantly evolving program. As a result of their model, they say "participants expand their critical consciousness, and recognize that their actions and inactions define social reality and that they have the power to positively alter the quality of their lives and the lives of others, and actively support the health of the natural world, including human, social communities" (INVST Handbook, 2017, p. 5). What, exactly, constitutes a just and sustainable world, they inquire about together and with a range of stakeholders, and the change they create together is born of their collaborative practices including those of governance and participatory action research with communities.

INVST's materials also detail how they craft the work of the program to develop students as change-makers. They're clear, even as they flatten their values and practices into institutionally recognizable documents like statements or curricular mapping diagrams, that this change for students is not just a matter of content or skills. To develop "effective and responsible community leaders" who "engage in compassionate action as a lifetime commitment" INVST aims to prepare students "through a combination of theory, skills and community-based action for positive change" (INVST "About," 2019).

Clearly, two of the most central practices INVST community members engage in together toward this vision are consensus decision making and participatory action research. The learning and doing activities aimed at those two larger community practices include multiple experiences that break with traditional classroom learning. Together, group members travel,

spend time in nature, learn from and volunteer with community partners. They write into and through these experiences reflectively, collaboratively, academically, and creatively, building malleable tools for the unknowable, complex problems they come across in their work together.

In my conversations with INVST students it seems they felt productively challenged by the agency they were afforded to propose and enact change and buoyed by their connection to a community with whom to do so. They seemed unsure, for the time-being, of whether to define themselves as change agents (likely in relationship to the long life experiences of the mentors and activist they'd learned from throughout the program). However, they certainly had their sights set on multiple avenues for their own long future engagements with change-making work. That they had not only been handed, but themselves crafted, tools they could use or recraft in these future endeavors, I imagine bodes well for their willingness to—and success in—doing so down the line. So too does the exposure they had to mentors and alumni who did just that, themselves, and returned to the community to continue teaching, learning, and practicing together.

SJEP's vision of social change is harder to discern from their publicly available materials. Their parent organization, OIIR, says they "help our students change the world by equipping them with practical experience and skills designed to meet the grand challenges of society, such as food insecurity, homelessness, and discrimination" (Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations, 2017, p. 4). Of course, OIIR's eight units are engaged in their own particular projects and visions. Certainly, DiversityEd and SJEP more specifically offer students practical experience and skill-building opportunities. Recall that SJEP "is designed to promote diversity and student leadership by providing intensive training for students in areas of knowledge, awareness, and skills related to issues of diversity and social justice" ("Social Justice Educator

Paraprofessionals," n.d.). The skills and practical experience SJEP students build both are geared toward the object of designing and facilitating campus diversity workshops. In their cohort experience over three semesters, clearly students are learning more than just the content knowledge and strategies to do so. They're learning, for instance, how to parse current sociopolitical events with likeminded peers, and how to understand their own life experiences as connected to systemic social issues and to tell their own stories. Both might be useful for facilitating the I-Journey workshops, but also beyond that context to the conversations they do and will have with their friends, family, and colleagues.

But what, of their learning, or their teaching, or their conversations, is world-changing? Is it that, "Ultimately, [they] want to start conversations, and change minds on [social issues]" like the Illini Republicans (2017) wanted to with their affirmative action bake sale? The vision of social change inherent in the work of SJEP is that change happens interpersonally. It happens when individuals change their minds and hearts and treat one another with more understanding and kindness in the spaces they share, like school or work. Where there are ignorant or uninitiated people, it happens when leaders step up to educate them, to help them look within and without to understand difference and choose to meet it with kindness.

Ultimately, this is a liberal approach. It's a vision of social change that is certainly rooted in the change agents' understanding of their social surroundings and genuine attempts to meet others where they are. It's open to accepting individual difference, but most interested in helping individuals understand their world and change themselves and maybe, through that personal change, their social worlds. Though it might look favorably on political actions that protect civil liberties and the individual rights of marginalized people, it's not interested, itself, in changing people's material realities. Students here learn to coexist with others who have differing views

and experiences—a stance that, while it *can* be a building block toward empathy and radical care, can *also* be at odds with seeing them as adversaries or even possible allies in the fight for justice. Seeing the individual actions of their peers as loci for change also obscures routes to building coalitions that could challenge those with power over their material livelihoods.

Activist and founder of the Empowermentors Collective, Kẏra defines liberalism as "the egalitarian principle which works to ignore and erase difference rather than to undo oppression" (Kẏra, 2014). She writes that liberalism:

> strives for a post-feminist, post-queer, post-racial or racially colorblind world. Liberalism as an ideology deems equal rights and equal treatment as a higher priority than material justice, or as an effective means towards it. Its presumptions of equality are false, as individualist equality may be written into law and policy while material inequality thrives. It effectively abstracts and obscures power dynamics along lines of race, class, and gender. The difference between material justice and liberalism is the difference between actually making reparations for a long history of racism and countries like Austria, Finland, Hungary, France, and now Sweden removing all mentions of "race" from their legislation. (Kẏra, 2014)

The gulf, to me, between the Black Students' Association in 1968 demanding adequate housing, the financial aid they were promised, a stronger commitment from the university to Black employees, and material support for Black studies facilities and faculty on campus, and SJEP students laboring over DEI workshops on how not to self-segregate as students or how first generation college students can feel more equipped to be successful in a higher education environment—intellectual property the university will continue to benefit from beyond their tenure—contains multitudes.

Echoing through that canyon and beyond are the sentiments of radical approaches to worlding, like those of Angela Davis who says: "I have a hard time accepting *diversity* as a synonym for justice. *Diversity* is a corporate strategy…diversity without structural

transformation simply brings those who were previously excluded into a system as racist, misogynist, as it was before" (Davis, 2015).

I don't think my SJEP student participants would agree with this assessment. Certainly not at this point in their trajectories. Personally, while I certainly see promise in the practices and values SJEP students are building and some valid reasons for taking this approach on this campus, with its particular climate and history, I worry about the ways this approach sets students up to work unquestioningly within institutions that don't love them and with people who are apathetic to – or entirely against – the kind of world they want to see. In short, I've become deeply wary of the ways the terms "diversity, equity, and inclusion" are often employed by institutions. Like Sara Ahmed's (2012) critique of hollow, inactive institutional diversity policies, I believe uptake of these terms often stops far short of transforming the structures that disadvantage multiply-/marginalized people. In my continuing trajectory as a scholar and teacher, I hope to thoughtfully co-create learning spaces that yes, value and support diverse ways of knowing and being, but also, actively and collectively work toward our shared liberation.

In a moment, I will return to the conception of liberatory literate praxis I've begun to flesh out through this project. First, I want to return to the six research questions I set out in Chapter Two and addressed in very situated and narrative ways in each case study, to briefly synthesize them across the cases here.

The first two questions I asked were: "How, where, why, and with whom, do students in my focal programs enact literate activity in ways they find meaningful?" and "How do students perceive that this activity contributes to their understanding of themselves, particularly/possibly as agentive, historical actors, and their understanding of social structures and their co-constructedness?" These questions were intended to attune my vision to the broad array of

literate activities students might be engaged with, and from my vantage point they certainly were multiply engaged. I'll address two broad categories of writing that were practiced across the programs, although toward differently situated aims. It seems that while students in both programs were regularly involved in and valued reflective writing, they were typically more fired up by and proud of writing that was a culminating product of a project they'd engaged with over time, with and for others. While their regular, personal but shared reflective writing was a valued space to build their understanding of themselves and their relationships with others and their worlds, these larger projects enabled them to take action in ways they found fulfilling and left them with material evidence of their investments and actions they could share to communicate their values.

Shifting to consider praxis and curricula, I asked, "In what ways do the teachers and administrators model this kind of understanding, and in what ways does the curriculum support and extend it?" Again, of course, the differences between the two campuses' programs are directly related to the differing visions of social change discussed above and institutional contexts explored in each case. One shared aspect practiced differently across sites though that was clearly important to students is the ways their mentors connected them to expanding opportunities to engage with others invested in similar work. The curricula itself and one-on-one mentorship in both programs worked to invite students into community, and, though in quite different ways, offered students tools with which to approach the communities they came with.

Next I asked, "In what ways do students perceive their literate activity in- and encouraged by- these spaces to differ from, affect, or influence their literate activity in other academic and extracurricular spaces and vice versa?" This connection was most apparent in the work of INVST students, who each very intentionally brought the valued methods, interests, and

aims they'd developed through INVST to their academic work writ large, which they tended to feel was not (whether due to disciplinary or school norms) action/change-oriented enough. In contrast, SJEP students saw some minor connection between topics in their other coursework as well as some overlap in the ways their peers in their classes and in the workshops they ran were not engaged with or aware of social justice issues. Their writing across those spaces was similar in the ways that their assignments were mainly recognizable school-based genres across them.

The final two questions—"What can studying literate activity in the lifeworlds of these students and teachers tell teachers and scholars of writing in composition and disciplinary courses and workplaces?" and "How are liberatory and social justice programs built, sustained, and changed?"—are central to my trajectory as a scholar and the impacts I hope to make on both my peers and my students. Sitting with these questions over time has convinced me that, if we want to sustain institutions that work toward social change, we need 1) a deep understanding of existing approaches we can map onto our own shared visions to create and iteratively revisit and revise our praxis; and 2) a realistic, historical, and highly situated view of how we might be limited or supported by existing institutions we could align with or may need to work within. I'll return to the first assertion momentarily. First, I offer the seeds of a working heuristic I believe may be of use to communities of program designers (whether administrators, teachers, students, other community stakeholders, or some combination thereof).

A Working Heuristic: Key Questions for Program Designers

Program designers, collectively:

- What communities have you been a part of that enabled change making? What were their values and practices? [You may have a wealth of these among you. They may or may not be commensurable.]

- What are your personal theories of how social change does/can/should happen?

Students:

- If you're not asking the below questions directly with students, the first questions to ask yourselves are: How do you know what students want and need? And how will you find out?
- What values, practices, and relationships do you want to support them in building?
- How/will they have a say in their own learning and the direction of the program?
- Regarding their literate activity, what kinds of opportunities will they have for:
    - Low stakes reflection
    - Collaboration
    - Choice
    - Intensive projects with tangible products
- What kinds of physical spaces or embodied experiences might support their learning?
- How will they encounter and productively work through opposing viewpoints and the people who hold them?
- Which aspects of their learning would be fruitful to assess and how?

Institution:

- Where in your institution are the values and practices you hope to center already practiced? Where might they be unwelcome?
- What resources on campus might support this work? What will they expect in return? And do those expectations align with the values you've laid out?
- What self-supportive actions could be taken to sustain the program with some level of autonomy?

If you plan to work with the campus community:

- What types/levels of support and engagement are necessary to provide for participants to engage meaningfully and create change?

If you plan to work with local communities beyond the university:

- How would you decide on the object of collaboration?
- How would you support those relationships long-term?

- What do students need to know and practice to work fruitfully with them?

It is my hope that this heuristic that can guide collaborative work to clarify shared vision and actions. Guides to program design I've seen seem too often to start with matters of institutional support and predefined objectives. Based on my research in this dissertation and my experiences, I am arguing with this heuristic that the most important questions are those centering students, but also that it's important for the group of faculty and staff designing the program to get clear on their own values and assumptions first, so they can be aware of how they color their next actions. I offer this initial heuristic with the modest aim that its shared use over time will invite elaboration and refinement. This still-becoming artifact aims to advance one of the fundamental goals of this dissertation: to better understand and design social justice programs in higher education as part of a broader agenda of supporting liberatory praxis. Below, to close, I consider directions for my own and others' research toward the same.

Directions for Future Research

I believe the notion of *perezhivanie* as a methodological tool can enable research on literate activity that affords windows into both the research questions I posed and the heuristic questions in the previous section. Attention to *perezhivanie* encourages a focus on becoming in entangled, evolving worlds for both research and teaching that might usurp the field's often too-narrow focus on short-term, individual learning. The approach I've taken in this dissertation to explore very individual actions in their highly situated, relational, local, and institutional, settings is not generalizable, nor should it be. The strength of this study is as an invitation to consider the messy co-creation of possible worlds alongside one's own reality to find a way forward, together.

To that end, my own approach to liberatory praxis moving forward centers reflection and action to transform oppressive structures. In my continuing research I aim to ask and act on questions like: “how do our actions here support the most marginalized among us?”, “how are our actions already hailed into oppressive power structures?”, and “how can we leverage our diverse ways of knowing and communal power to resist and persist together?” Moving forward, I aim to do design-based- (Meléndez et. al., 2018; Gutiérrez, 2018) and participatory- action research (Tuck, 2009; Berta-Ávila et. al., 2021). that involves collaboratively designing, implementing, researching, and retooling community-centered, robust learning environments that recognize, value, and engage participants’ cultural ways of knowing and communicating; that encourage deep intra- and interpersonal understanding and meaning-making; and that expand conceptions of teaching, learning, intelligence, and agency.

Broadly, I hope that this invitation is taken up by others to do deep research into how social justice programs and courses develop entangled in particular historical, institutional, and personal trajectories of becoming. Whether situated studies of particular sites or comparative work, my sense is that we need descriptions that connect the organization and practices of the programs to the becoming of students and their praxis across time and space. Longitudinal studies that trace the lifespan developments of individuals like Maria, L., Nicole, Jessica, Samantha, and Lori, would enhance our understanding of the potentials of social justice and liberatory education for promoting social change. Close up, it was clear, for example, that INVST promoted broader engagement with students’ existing and local or aspirational communities to support change while SJEP recruited students into some very specific institutional roles around managing diversity in a historically and primarily white institution with a somewhat hostile culture regarding change, difference, and social justice. However, tracing

people longitudinally through and beyond college programs could alter that view. In any case, seeing the deep needs for liberatory education that promotes a collective work toward change, I hope that this dissertation encourages others to focus on the nature, potential, and challenges of liberatory education in universities.

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Appendix A: Transcription Key

Notation	Meaning
(inaudible)	Inaudible
(inaudible: xyz)	Transcriber's guess
[X: laughs, Y: shuffles papers etc.]	Contextual/nonverbal info (Letter indicates which speaker, as backchanneling is typically included within main speaker's chunk of text.)
[[transcriber's note for context]]	Transcriber's note for context
*word	Hard emphasis on one word
string of words	Emphasis on a string of words
^word	Rising inflection on one word
^string of words^	Rising inflection on a string of words
"reported speech/thought"	Reported speech or thought
Sp1: word word [word Sp2: [word	Overlapping
Wo:rd Wo::rd	Elongated sound Very elongated
So he- they	Self-correction or restart

Appendix B:
Participants by Program with Brief Information and List of Documents Collected

Program	People (* denotes pseudonym. All others have elected to be identified by their name)	About	Documents collected
UCB INVST	(4 interviews April 2018)	2 year intensive group consensus-run program that engages students in theory, skills and community-based action for positive change, in order to become effective, responsible, lifelong community leaders.	(Quick link to program website: https://www.colorado.edu/invst/about)
	Sabrina	Director. Former UCB/INVST student. Currently working on PhD @ UC Denver. MA in Peace Studies.	**Cowritten INVST statements: Inclusion Commitment & Commitment to Anti-oppressive Education**; Video/journal project from her PhD work (also very sweetly gave me a Starhawk overhead projector transparency and, at first misunderstanding the prompt, provided a few key texts read by instructors and students in INVST and central to the program's values) +mentions INVST theory of change which I located online
	Maria*	Senior. Sociology and gender studies double major. Graduated in May 2018. Grew up in MX, moved to US alone in 2014 ('and had to learn how to live in English 24/7' - overwhelming and lonely. Carried	5 docs toward/including senior thesis spring 2018: Final draft of **thesis** + [Working to understand how women access and perceive their access to resources / how interpersonal networks develop in service of understanding what does/n't work to build strong, supportive communities] 1 - Literature Review 2 - Analysis (ideas and themes) 3 - Findings (3 main themes) 4 - Charla presentacion ("this is the document I prepared and used during my thesis defense. It is quite messy but I think it shows how I turned my writing into an oral presentation")

		focus on immigrants' rights and social networks through work in INVST and Soc/Gender Studies senior thesis)	
	Nicole	(interview data missing due to tech meltdown) Junior in environmental studies. Joined INVST junior year. Interested because of friend L's project v	5 INVST-related docs over spring and fall 18 + ongoing email correspondence updating on summer summit & current writing
	L.	Senior in environmental studies. Joined INVST sophomore year. Presents and identifies as white. Mother grew up on Native American Reservation.	2 storybook drafts + I bought the physical book
UIUC SJEP	(+1 classroom observation each semester)	A three-semester course created to prepare students to design and facilitate university-mandated diversity and inclusion workshops for their peers.	(Quick link to program website: https://oiir.illinois.edu/diversityed/courses/facilitation-courses/social-justice-educator-paraprofessionals)
	Ross (interview conducted spring 2021)	Then Director of OIIR's DiversityEd and teacher of the first class in the SJEP sequence.	Syllabus Diversity and Inclusion 2016 annual report & 3 texts of his own on issues of gender and masculinity: -"our brotherhood" on building anti-rape culture in fraternities, -"Sunday at the baths," and -"men and romance"
	Teryl	Then teacher of the two practicum	

	(no interview)	courses in the SJEP sequence	
	Jessica*	Senior psych major, transfer, interning teaching at elem school. Interested in school psych and this class gave her a chance to think about how ed affected her.	12 weekly reflections from spring 2017
	Samantha	Senior, double major in Psych and GWS.	Course midterm and reflection #8 from spring 2017
	Lori* (1st interview w/set above fall 2017. 2nd interview spring 2018)	Junior psych major with minor in global markets in society (new minor on campus) & focus on social relations. Switched from business and chemistry. Facilitated for FYCARE before learning of this course. Half Japanese; speaks of acculturation as young ELL.	I-Journey workshop script Document on script changes after workshop pilot Final project from fall semester Final poster from final presentation (classroom observation this day) 2 journal entries Midterm Process drawing from 2nd interview
SFSU CSL2YC	(all of these lecturers were part of the grant-funded team that helped co-create this course. All interviews and classroom observations conducted Spring 2018)	Community service learning version of their sophomore composition course, where the service learning aspect is (variously) optional.	

	Jerome	His version of the class focuses on environmental justice.	None provided for interview (though some reading suggestions during interview) but does have a related book published he uses with students. Also have his handout from CCW panel on the course.
	Amy Love (interviewed with Jerome)	Comes to SJ from Catholic background.	None of her own, but did send me a "toolkit for preparing students for service learning"
	Amy Latham (2 interviews + 2 classroom observations)	Teacher of my focal class. Long history & continuing engagements with community service.	syllabus, multiple assignment prompts (for journaling, profile assignment, research assignment, and presentation), letter for Glenn (advocating for release from prison - also used as model for class activity)
	Rayline	Criminology and justice studies major. SF native. Transfer student. Caretaker for her mother. Lots of experience with community work outside of school, but actually didn't participate in CSL aspect of the course.	4 pieces of writing 2 from this course: "I Am" poem and profile assignment, and 2 from other courses in major: on the constitution and police harassment
SFSU Metro		(My original, intended site of study. Could not gain access. Busy admin.)	
	Linda (interview Spring 2017)	My friend/colleague from SFSU MA in English Composition. Was teaching in Metro at the time of our interview.	Syllabus, assignments, other course materials (YouTube link to Prentice Powel's "The Talk", letter from friend to her infant about Trump's election and recording of Linda reading it as she did in class the day after the election)
UIUC Ed 201		preservice teachers' course on social justice in schooling and society	
	Audre* (two interviews: Fall 2017	Grad TA for Educ 201: social justice in schooling and society.	Papers written for undergraduate coursework in creative writing and graduate coursework and professional work in curriculum and instruction,

	and Spring 2018)		recording of spoken word poem, prompts from TAing Ed 201 and teaching WAM

Appendix C: Base Interview Scripts

Focal Students

Why did you apply for this program? What is your interest in social justice? What are your career aspirations?

Tell me about the writing assignment you're currently working on for this class. How did you approach it? What was easy/difficult about it?

Where do you go for support when you're writing?

In this piece of writing you've provided me, you mention having difficulty grasping this concept. Why do you think that was so? How do you feel about it now? What strategies or resources did you rely on for help with this?

What kind of feedback have you gotten about this piece? Was it helpful? What did you do with that feedback?

Your instructor marked here that they would use this phrase instead. I would maybe phrase it this way: "____." If you were revising this further, which of those do you think you would choose and why?

How does your work in this class relate to your life outside of school? To your other coursework?

Focal Teachers/Mentors

How did you come to teach/TA this course?

What are the major difficulties or rewards of teaching this course?

Tell me about this writing assignment. What were your major concerns in designing this assignment? What do you hope students will get out of it? How do students tend to approach this assignment?

Tell me about the materials you assign for this course? How did you choose them? Why do you feel they're effective?

How do your classroom assignments relate to writing/speaking/social justice work you do outside of the classroom?

How does this course differ from or reflect others you teach?

Tell me about this text you've provided. What/who was it written for? How does it support or stem from your activism or teaching? Who influenced the writing of this text?

Looking at this text, can you tell me why you used this phrase instead of "_____"? Do you recall why you wrote it this way?

Appendix D: Informed Consent Students*

* Contact information deleted

ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Nicole Turnipseed, PhD student
Department of English and Center for Writing Studies

Informed Consent for
Holistic development: Longitudinal case studies of literate identity construction in social justice education programs

Purpose of the study

You are invited to participate in a study I (Nicole Turnipseed, a Ph.D. student in the Department of English) am conducting. This research is part of my dissertation project, directed by Dr. Paul Prior, the Responsible Project Investigator. I am conducting research to develop case studies of students' holistic development as they write, speak and interact in social justice education programs and courses. I am particularly interested in getting detailed stories and images of how writing and related activities (reading, talking, observing, thinking) in these academic spaces might contribute to the development of identities that reach beyond the classroom. The goal of this research is to enrich our understanding of how literacy education can contribute to development in a way that is meaningful to students, and beneficial for the health of a democratic society.

What the study involves

If you agree to participate, we will negotiate the specific texts and contexts to study. However, I will ask you to consider two kinds of participation. First, I will ask you to provide copies of academic and non-academic texts that you are writing. I may also ask you to periodically provide comments about that writing and to report in at varied times on your writing (by email, phone, or written note). Second, I will ask you to participate in interviews about, be observed in, and possibly be audio- or video-taped as you engage in selected other activities surrounding and supporting your written work, or connected to your sense of your identity construction process (e.g., attending courses, participating in related extracurricular activities). Again, we will decide together on the specific activities to study. Interviews with me will focus on your experiences with writing, specific texts you have shared, the contexts of your writing, and the relationships you see between your academic work and other aspects of your life. I may also ask you to participate in the project further by giving me feedback on my analysis of your interview and text data. Because a key goal of this study is to follow your practices over time, I hope that you will participate periodically over a year or more. (Of course, as is stated below, you have the right to discontinue your participation at any time.)

Publication and identifiability

The results of this research may be published in conference presentations, a dissertation, and other print or academic publications. With your permission, I may quote from or describe recorded activities or interactions, any texts you have written that you have made available for

the research, and any interview comments you have made. You are welcome to denote any materials you've given me as "not cleared to quote," and I will utilize them accordingly. With your permission, I may also use still images from videotapes in written publications or oral presentations and might play excerpts of audio- or video-tapes in publications or presentations. It is likely that you could be recognized by people who know you if they hear or read such reports of the research.

To limit somewhat your identifiability, I can use a pseudonym for your name in all of my drafts and final reports of this research. (However, if some of the texts that you provide for the research are published texts, then I would need to use your real name to quote or refer to those texts in research reports.) In addition, I can transform still images from video recordings into "line drawings" that would limit identifiability, and can play "x-ray" versions of videos that do the same.

Regardless of whether you are referred to by a pseudonym or not, to safeguard your privacy, I will keep any identifying data (audio- and video-tapes, copies of your writing, interview transcripts) in a private office where others will not have access to them and I will not share such raw data with anyone other than Dr. Prior. However, there may be occasions when the University of Illinois may need access to records to ensure that university approved procedures and protocols are being followed.

Your Rights, Benefits, and Concerns

You may benefit from the opportunities this research offers to reflect on your writing and identity. However, the primary benefit of this research is to increase our basic understanding of how academic and nonacademic identity construction functions in the space of social justice education programs. Such understanding may eventually improve ways of teaching and using writing in varied educational settings.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Whether you choose to participate or not has no bearing on your access to or use of any services that I or others might offer in any context. You may withdraw at any time after signing this form by contacting Nicole Turnipseed or Paul Prior should you choose to discontinue participation in this research.

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me or Paul Prior. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study (Yes____ No____).

Please review and check off the following options to ensure that I know how your data may be used. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me.

Use of my name:

As an author, you have the right to claim authorship or request a pseudonym be used. If some of the texts you provide have been published in any form (including public online texts), I would need to use your real name to be able to quote from or refer to them.

I would like to be identified by my real name in relation to any of the data collected. (Yes____ No____)

OR

I would prefer to use a pseudonym. (Yes____ No____)

Written texts I may provide the researcher:
I agree that unless otherwise specified, any texts that I have written and have provided for this research maybe quoted, paraphrased, or represented as images in publications or presentations. (Yes____ No____)

Audio-recordings, video-recordings, or photographs:
I understand that I may be asked to give permission for audio- or video-recording of interviews of other interactions and for specific uses of those recordings (quotation, selective replaying of tapes, excerpting of still images). (Yes____ No____)

Use of my face/image:
The researcher may disseminate images of me in video recordings (Yes____ No____) and/or in still or photographic images (Yes____ No____).

If "yes" to the above:

I give permission for the researcher to disseminate unaltered images of my face. (Yes___ No___)

OR

I give permission for the researcher to disseminate images of my face that have been altered by a video-editing program, such that I am not recognizable. (Yes____ No____)

I have read this informed consent form, am 18 years of age or older, have checked answers to the questions above, and agree voluntarily to participate in this research.

_____ _____
(signature) (date)

_____
(print name)

Appendix E: Informed Consent Teachers/Mentors*

* Contact information deleted

ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Nicole Turnipseed, PhD student
Department of English and Center for Writing Studies

Informed Consent for
Holistic development: Longitudinal case studies of literate identity construction in social justice education programs

Purpose of the study

You are invited to participate in a study I (Nicole Turnipseed, a Ph.D. student in the Department of English) am conducting. This research is part of my dissertation project, directed by Dr. Paul Prior, the Responsible Project Investigator. I am conducting research to develop case studies of students' holistic development as they write, speak and interact in social justice education programs and courses. I am particularly interested in getting detailed stories and images of how writing and related activities (reading, talking, observing, thinking) in these academic spaces might contribute to the development of identities that reach beyond the classroom. The goal of this research is to enrich our understanding of how literacy education can contribute to development in a way that is meaningful to students, and beneficial for the health of a democratic society.

What the study involves

If you agree to participate, we will negotiate the specific texts and contexts to study. However, I will ask you to consider two kinds of participation. First, I will ask you to provide copies of academic and non-academic texts you have written related to your teaching or other social justice work. I may also ask you to periodically provide comments about that writing by email, phone, or written note. Second, I will ask you to participate in interviews about, be observed in, and possibly be audio- or video-taped as you engage in selected other activities surrounding and supporting your teaching, or connected to your sense of your identity as a social justice educator (e.g., facilitating courses, participating in professional or personal development activities). Again, we will decide together on the specific activities to study. Interviews with me will focus on your experiences facilitating writing and related activities in your courses, specific texts you have shared, and the relationships you see between your academic work and other aspects of your life. I may also ask you to participate in the project further by giving me feedback on my analysis of your interview and text data. Because a key goal of this study is to understand development, I hope that you will participate periodically over an extended period. We would determine the longevity of your participation as best suits your situation, and of course, as is stated below, you have the right to discontinue your participation at any time.

Publication and identifiability

The results of this research may be published in conference presentations, a dissertation, and other print or academic publications. With your permission, I may quote from or describe recorded activities or interactions, any texts you have written that you have made available for the research, and any interview comments you have made. You are welcome to denote any materials you've given me as "not cleared to quote," and I will utilize them accordingly. With your permission, I may also use still images from videotapes in written publications or oral presentations and might play excerpts of audio- or video-tapes in publications or presentations. It is likely that you could be recognized by people who know you if they hear or read such reports of the research.

To limit somewhat your identifiability, I can use a pseudonym for your name in all of my drafts and final reports of this research. (However, if some of the texts that you provide for the research are published texts, then I would need to use your real name to quote or refer to those texts in research reports.) In addition, I can transform still images from video recordings into "line drawings" that would limit identifiability, and can play "x-ray" versions of videos that do the same.

Regardless of whether you are referred to by a pseudonym or not, to safeguard your privacy, I will keep any identifying data (audio- and video-tapes, copies of your writing, interview transcripts) in a private office where others will not have access to them and I will not share such raw data with anyone other than Dr. Prior. However, there may be occasions when the University of Illinois may need access to records to ensure that university approved procedures and protocols are being followed.

Your Rights, Benefits, and Concerns

You may benefit from the opportunities this research offers to reflect on your writing and identity. However, the primary benefit of this research is to increase our basic understanding of how academic and nonacademic identity construction functions in the space of social justice education programs. Such understanding may eventually improve ways of teaching and using writing in varied educational settings.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Whether you choose to participate or not has no bearing on your access to or use of any services that I or others might offer in any context. You may withdraw at any time after signing this form by contacting Nicole Turnipseed or Paul Prior should you choose to discontinue participation in this research.

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me or Paul Prior. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

I have read and understand the above consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study (Yes____ No____).

Please review and check off the following options to ensure that I know how your data may be used. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me.

Use of my name:

As an author, you have the right to claim authorship or request a pseudonym be used. If some of the texts you provide have been published in any form (including public online texts), I would need to use your real name to be able to quote from or refer to them.

I would like to be identified by my real name in relation to any of the data collected. (Yes____ No____)

OR

I would prefer to use a pseudonym. (Yes____ No____)

Written texts I may provide the researcher:
I agree that unless otherwise specified, any texts that I have written and have provided for this research maybe quoted, paraphrased, or represented as images in publications or presentations. (Yes____ No____)

Audio-recordings, video-recordings, or photographs:
I understand that I may be asked to give permission for audio- or video-recording of interviews of other interactions and for specific uses of those recordings (quotation, selective replaying of tapes, excerpting of still images). (Yes____ No____)

Use of my face/image:
The researcher may disseminate images of me in video recordings (Yes____ No____) and/or in still or photographic images (Yes____ No____).

If "yes" to the above:

I give permission for the researcher to disseminate unaltered images of my face. (Yes___ No___)

OR

I give permission for the researcher to disseminate images of my face that have been altered by a video-editing program, such that I am not recognizable. (Yes____ No____)

I have read this informed consent form, am 18 years of age or older, have checked answers to the questions above, and agree voluntarily to participate in this research.

_____ _____
(signature) (date)

_____
(print name)

Appendix F: Informed Consent Recording Materials*

* Contact information deleted

Informed Consent for
Holistic development: Longitudinal case studies of literate identity construction in social justice education programs

As part of the longitudinal research I agreed to participate in, I am agreeing to allow the following video and/or audio tapes to be used for the research project. This video and/or audio tape was made on (date)_____ at (give location) _____ _____. It is an interaction where you were (brief description of interaction)_____ _____ _____ _____ .

Specifically, I agree:

- that my verbal comments from this tape may be quoted or paraphrased in publications or oral presentations (Yes_____ No_____).
- that the videotaped record of this tape may be excerpted as still photographs in publications or oral presentations (Yes_____ No_____) and may be selectively replayed in electronic publications or oral presentations (Yes_____ No_____).
- that, having provided the researchers with a text I have published, or in alignment with prior consents, **I may be identified by my real name** in relation to any of data on this tape (Yes_____ No_____).

_____ _____
(signature) (date)

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me, Nicole Turnipseed or Paul Prior. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board.
You will be given a copy of this form to keep.