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Artifact 2: Positionality Statement: Critical Vulnerability as Praxis (Part 2)

My lived experience as first-generation college student and immigrant, woman with a working-class upbringing, and now doctoral candidate informs my approach to Critical Dialogic Pedagogy—and that matters. My lived experience of being a first-generation college student has taught me that we all start learning about differing perspectives at different points of our lives, which impacts my perspective of what equitable education means in the classroom. My lived experiences as an underperforming performing student without support according to academic standards has taught me that cultivating equitable education in the classroom is a commitment to opening new paths for learners which they thought impossible before. My choice of confronting my own biases and assumptions formed by my upbringing has taught me to position myself against creating a normative and authoritative classroom environment. All of my lived experiences have taught me living through critically informed initiatives and dialogic practices is an essential skill to lead a classroom community—one that involves listening, questioning, and continuous learning.

For me, Critical Dialogic Pedagogy means that inclusivity and solidarity matter as I work towards developing a classroom environment that centers all voices through values of support and shared interest. My perspective of the classroom as being a place to learn about and consider new positions is informed by understanding of how meanings are co-created by communicative practices and how we can reshape hurtful meanings together. My perspective of the classroom being a site to be comfortable with the uncomfortable reveals how care and mutual

understanding are important elements of the class. Dialogic Pedagogy is one way I am able to allow students to explore their and others' positions when it comes to providing a true learning environment for students and for all who enter the room. For one, students will be able to express their positions in an environment where their peers listen to them and engage in dialogue rather than creating an environment where students feel that they must get defensive of said positions. Since most students find themselves in a moment of great discovery of who they are and what they believe in as this is many students' first time living away from their families, I find it important to allow for that discovery through dialogic engagement and letting others finish their thoughts without interjecting and hearing one another.

In essence, as the first person in my family to get access to higher education, my lived experience has taught me that academia is a place where we can explore new and unfamiliar paths. In order to continue to expand the vastness of academia, I am speaking about my positionality as a site of reflection and vulnerability to challenge whiteness. It is important to recognize how every part of my identity that I have named, and those that I have not, impact my approach and implementation of Critical Dialogic Pedagogy. Personally, my undergraduate years served as a time for self-discovery of myself and what I believed in, especially in connection to my privileges, my whiteness, but also the experiences that have negatively impacted me. In these spaces, I was able to learn from my peers about their experiences of their identities, which helped me reflect on my own positions and how I see the world now. Especially in 2020, when students of color at my alma mater expressed their negative experiences in the campus community, I was able to reflect on how my actions and the structures benefiting me may have negatively impacted them by actively listening to them. I want to provide students with a similar environment where they can listen to themselves and others as I want to foster an environment where they learn from

these dialogues and the openness they provide. My personal experience of existing in the world of academia and beyond impacts my engagement with dialogue in the classroom in order to create an environment of learning about new and, at times, challenging perspectives, and challenge the anti-queer, ableist, misogynistic, colonial, and white supremacist assumptions of academia. As a critical scholar and educator, I will continue engaging dialogic and anti-racist work in order to support students towards creating a critical toolbox for growth and structural change.