



What Kind of Community? An Inquiry into Teaching Practices that Move beyond Exclusion

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Democracy, to be fully realized as inclusive and participatory, requires public spaces in which different views are able to be spoken and heard, and where opinions are formed and informed through interactions among people with diverse interests. This article considers how a multi-institutional/community collaborative course set out to both teach democratic thinking and model democratic processes. In doing so, we consider how the curriculum, teaching style, and activities in one course, *Reclaiming Democracy*, have been designed to resist the many forms of exclusion that exist both in higher education and community settings. Just as the course has been developed in partnership with six professors, a community organizer, and past students, so too has this article been created, written, edited, and revised by the six faculty members of the teaching team; hence, it is a multi-vocal presentation representing the goals, values, and outcomes of this way of teaching. We focus on what political philosopher Iris Marion Young calls the greeting, rhetoric, and narrative as communicative features that could improve the quality of public discussion and deliberation. Pairing that understanding with Westheimer and Kahne’s three models of citizenship and the curricular models designed to foster them, we specify a number of our own pedagogical choices, offer some examples of student responses, and consider other examples of democratic inclusiveness from the course. Taken together, we argue that these practices make for a rich, democratically engaging and fun experience and may effectively motivate students to seek out and form other democratic communities throughout the course of their lives.

The course, *Reclaiming Democracy*, and this article draw upon Iris Marion Young's *Inclusion and Democracy* as a source for an understanding of the nature of democracy and an approach to teaching democratic thinking within the limitations of an undergraduate course. In this work, Young distinguishes between external exclusion and internal exclusion in decision-making processes. External exclusion happens when people "are kept outside the process of discussion and decision-making" (Young, 2002, p. 55); this happens, for example, when decisions are made by a small group of people who have excluded many of the stakeholders of an issue from having a chance to be part of the decision-making about that issue. The proverbial "back room decision" is its exemplar, with all of its images of powerful people making choices for those who have no say in a matter. The more subtle way people are often effectively excluded from decision-making, however, is through what Young calls "internal exclusion," that is, "ways that people lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to fora and procedures of decision-making" (Young, 2002, p. 55). In this article, we focus on the implications of Young's work and of our co-taught course for the nature and approaches to teaching democratic thinking. We ultimately argue that democratic thinking is, at best, a cooperative form of thinking done with others; when practiced alone, democratic thinking requires an approximation of the multi-vocal thinking, the "practical wisdom," that exists within the public deliberative process.

Reclaiming Democracy is a multi-institutional/community partnership and has been intentionally designed in content and structure not merely to recognize the problem of exclusion, but to act in ways that resist—and teach others to resist—both forms of exclusion. Though the class is not, by itself, a decision-making body, what Young says of decision-making contexts is at the very least analogous to educational settings, where students are often tracked and excluded from certain types of learning and learning experiences, both through external and internal exclusions. We have turned to Young specifically to make sense of these challenges to educational inclusion because she was one of the most important political philosophers of the second half of the 20th Century, because she was both an activist and a theorist, and because her work is motivated by the actions and theorizing of "group-based social movements" of the 1960's and 1970's and emerges from the unjust treatment of the members of these groups and their struggles to overcome domination and oppression (Young, 1990, p. 3). We therefore find her work uniquely suited to make sense of a class that also addresses the domination and oppression of social groups and the democratic ways we can overcome these injustices.

Following Young, we begin by differentiating two ideal types of democracy, aggregative and deliberative democracy. While both have strengths in addressing external exclusions, our work is located within the sphere of deliberative democracy because it has certain advantages in resisting internal exclusion that aggregative democracy lacks. After articulating the problem of external exclusion, we describe the *Reclaiming Democracy* course to consider its founding and the way in which its structure moves beyond many typical forms of external exclusions in

school settings.¹ Still, deliberative democracy and the *Reclaiming Democracy* course could easily fall prey to internal exclusions. Guided thus by Young's threefold distinction of "greeting," "narrative," and "rhetoric," we consider how the curriculum, the teaching style, and the activities comprising the course are designed to resist internal exclusions that might otherwise hamper real partnerships that develop and deep learning in the course. Here several ways the course addresses the more subtle problem of internal exclusion (again, understood as an analogue to the political notion articulated by Young) are examined as are challenges we face in addressing each of these in the classroom. First, we discuss the greeting, also described by Young as "public acknowledgement" (2002, p. 61).² Then, we examine the "affirmative uses of rhetoric" which allow all participants and stakeholders involved in a specific discussion to "fashion claims and arguments in ways appropriate to a particular public in a particular situation" (Young, 2002, p. 67). Next, we consider the importance of "narrative and situated knowledge" (Young, 2002, p. 70) that engages people in authentic sharing and listening. Finally, we conclude by exploring the implications of Westheimer and Kahne's article, "What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy" (2004) in which the authors argue that teachers and courses often teach for different types of citizenship. Additionally, we make the case for another analogy: that different types of learning communities prepare students for different types of extra-curricular communities. Using their work in conjunction with Young's—particularly her argument that the deliberative form of democracy she advocates itself constitutes "a form of practical reason" (Young, 2002, p. 22)—we envision the type of community that we are trying to create and that we are trying to habituate our students for.

Methodological Caesura

Throughout this article, the diversity of the teaching faculty/co-authors, the very different institutions in which each individual teaches, and the different voices with which each speaks is clearly and explicitly represented. We have consciously chosen to write in this multi-vocal way to best represent the goals and values of the course we teach and our research.³ While we believe the argument, outlined above, holds together as a traditional article would, we recognize that the different voices pose a both challenge and an opportunity to the reader. We invite the reader to keep an open mind about our unusual writing process and style. This multi-vocal presentation also reflects the way class sessions for the course are organized. When planning a class session a subset of the faculty, usually two or three of us, assume

¹ To be sure, no one denies that significant exclusion still exists in education even within the *Reclaiming Democracy* course: it is only available to a select number of people having time, resources, and skills to engage in high level academic work. Instead, we are making the more modest claim that this course is designed to deal with inclusions *better* than might otherwise be the case, and that it is designed such that others can gain insight from how the class *better* meets this goal.

² Young quotes Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence* (1981, p. 117).

³ While the primary author of each section is identified, each section has also been reviewed, edited, and revised by the co-authors.

leadership for outlining and facilitating particular class meeting. Then, others are asked, invited, and encouraged to edit, comment, and make adjustments to the presented outline and to participate in making the class a lively and engaging learning experience for everyone involved. In writing this article, we have followed a similar group process with Stephen Bloch-Schulman assuming leadership for developing an outline while others have edited, commented on, and modified the outline to make sure it meets our goals (as Audrey Campbell, Hollyce “Sherry” Giles, J. F. Humphrey, Spoma Jovanovic, and Daniel Malotky have done here). Then, all of the faculty wrote various parts of this piece and, at the beginning of each section, a brief footnote introduces the original author of that section and her or his school. Finally, each section and the article as a whole has been edited by many of the co-author, meaning that while each section had an original author, they can no longer be attributed fully to any one person. While the process is always a bit messy, the outcome in class—and we hope here—speaks in a way that having an individual faculty member lead the class alone or by offering an article with a single voice (regardless of how many people co-authored the article) cannot. Embracing this process, we believe, enacts many of the lessons Young wants us to take from her work, as will be made clear throughout our discussion.

Additionally, we hope that many other voices are also adequately represented in this paper. These are the voices of the students. We have listened to them and considered their comments, criticisms, and suggestions, employing both formal and informal assessment techniques to learn more about how the class is working and how it could improve. Generally qualitative in nature, these have ranged from simply listening to individual student concerns both in and out of class, asking students to write quick comments on Post-it notes about an activity or section of the course, or using survey instruments administered at the end of the semester. Whatever their form, the assessments are reviewed by all participating faculty to get a sense of what worked and what did not. Many of these student insights have informed our class and some have been incorporated directly into this paper. We have also gained essential insights from six individuals in particular who have returned to serve as teaching assistants after participating as students.⁴ Their ability to present the student perspective during planning meetings has further shaped our understanding of what is actually happening in the class and what we can hope to accomplish; indeed, their contribution has been invaluable to the success of the course.⁵

⁴ These were: Andrew Busam (UNCG), Wendy Poteat and Eric Ginsburg (Guilford College), Maggie Castor (Elon University), Matt Troy (Greensboro College) and Vincent Russell (UNCG alum and community member).

⁵ For more on the impact and value when students play crucial roles in course design and revision, see Werder and Otis, 2010.

External Exclusions⁶

Iris Marion Young notes that while democracy has certain joys, the democratic process is not without its problems for making decisions and public policy, among which she numbers: "defeat, co-optation, and ambiguous results" (Young, 2002, p. 16). In democratic politics, Young maintains, "nearly everything is revisable"; public opinion is fickle. Still, Young insists, there are powerful reasons for embracing democracy. Checks and balance in a democratic system allow citizens to address abuses of power. In theory, at least, members of any given democratic society may endeavor to propose changes to, formulate or reformulate, effect, or sway public opinion and "public policy" (Young, 2002, p. 17). We agree with Young that the "democratic process is the best means for changing conditions of injustice and promoting justice" (Young, 2000, p. 17); indeed, there is the expectation that democratic communities will address injustices in productive ways.

Not all democratic systems, however, are the same. Young distinguishes two ideal types of democracy: aggregative democracy and deliberative democracy (Young, 2002, p. 18). The aggregative model, "what some have called pluralist or interest group pluralist," assumes that democratic deliberation is "a competitive process in which political parties and candidates offer their platforms and attempt to satisfy the largest number of people's preferences" (Young 2002, p. 19). Presupposing a marketplace of competing ideas, interests, and values, this model presumes that decision-making is simply "a process of aggregating the preferences of citizens in choosing public officials and policies" (Young, 2002, p. 19).

While the aggregative model does include certain features of democracy, Young argues instead for a specific form of deliberative democracy that she refers to as the communicative model. In general, the deliberative model emphasizes "open discussion and the exchange of views leading to agreed-upon policies"; indeed, this model is itself "a form of practical reason" (Young, 2002, p. 22). "Democratic process," Young writes,

is primarily a discussion of problems, conflicts, and claims of need or interest. Through dialogue others test and challenge these proposals and arguments.... Participants arrive at a decision not by determining what preferences have greatest numerical support, but by determining which proposals the collective agrees are supported by the best reasons. (2002, pp. 22-23)

⁶ This section was initially written by J. F. Humphrey who was trained as a philosopher and is an Associate Professor of Liberal Studies at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, a large land-grant historically Black doctoral granting university which is part of the North Carolina state system. The school is best known for graduating the largest number of Black engineers in the country and for its historical political engagement, exemplified by alumni Jessie Jackson, Ronald McNair, and the A & T Four (Jibreel Khazan, Franklin McCain, Sr., Joseph A. McNeil, and David L. Richmond) who initiated the sit-ins at the segregated lunch counter in the Greensboro Woolworth department store, just a few blocks from where the *Reclaiming Democracy* course meets.

To advance her vision of deliberative democracy, Young identifies four “normative ideals for the relationships and dispositions of the deliberating parties,” including “inclusion, equality, reasonableness, and publicity” (2002, p. 23). By inclusion Young means that democracy is only legitimate if all those affected by a problem are included in the process of discussing and reaching a solution to the problem. Political equality, for Young, refers to freedom from coercion and domination. Reasonableness, she says, suggests that participants are willing to listen to one another and join the deliberative process to address and solve political problems. Publicity signifies that those engaging in deliberation in public fora and decision-making processes hold one another accountable (Young, 2002).

Though the aggregative model and the deliberative model of democracy share some common features, namely, to protect “against tyranny” and offer “the ability of individuals and groups to promote and protect their interests in politics and policy,” the deliberative model also embraces “promoting cooperation, solving collective problems, and furthering justice”; indeed, “proponents ... emphasize that this model conceptualizes the process of democratic discussion as not merely expressing and registering, but as *transforming* the preferences, interests, beliefs, and judgments of participants” (Young, 2002, p. 26). Although the aggregative model of democracy may delineate and sort out citizens’ preferences, Young questions whether it can truly achieve social justice because of its lack of attention to these four norms: inclusion, equality, reasonableness, and publicity. Indeed, she insists that there is “an ideal relation between democracy and justice” (Young, 2002, p. 27). If democracy endorses and advocates justice, she argues, then “it must already be just” (Young, 2002, p. 35) and it is, in Young’s view, the deliberative model of democracy, embracing the four norms she highlights, that is structured to promote social justice. By “social justice” here, Young means “the institutional conditions for promoting self-development and self-determination of a society’s members” (2002, p. 33). Still, while proponents of deliberative democracy all assume the importance of these four norms, Young maintains that the first norm, inclusion, requires further examination because it “is a powerful means for criticizing the legitimacy of nominally democratic processes and decisions” (2002, p. 52). Thus, it is our focus.

In fact, as Young argues, deliberative democracy demands inclusion “as a criterion of the political legitimacy of outcomes,” and yet, existing democracies often exclude citizens “from political discussion and decision-making” in two ways: external exclusion and internal exclusion (2002, p. 52). Internal exclusion will be considered in the next section. External exclusion occurs when those with power influence and distort the political process and exclude others’ full participation in “the process of discussion and decision-making” (Young, 2002, p. 55). Although existing democracies do not do enough to address this type of exclusion, most at least provide some level of protection to address the most extreme abuses of power, such as “campaign finance regulation, lobbying regulations, corruption investigation, mandates for hearings, procedures for public comment, commission membership, voting procedures, and so on”; hence, they endeavor—however imperfectly— “to promote the presence of potentially marginalized constituencies” by regulating “decision-making processes” (Young, 2002, p. 55).

Reclaiming Democracy: The Class⁷

Reclaiming Democracy is a multi-institutional/community collaborative course that, in its conception, set out to address the massive challenges of external exclusion as they effect higher education and in particular as they effect its liberating potential. The course grew from the relationships between faculty and their collaborations with community members to address local social justice issues. Specifically, in the summer of 2007, Spoma Jovanovic (The University of North Carolina at Greensboro) discussed courses examining democracy taught by Cornell West at Princeton University and Tim Tyson at Duke University with Hollyce "Sherry" Giles (Guilford College). Tyson's course, *The South in Black and White*, brings together students from several campuses and the broader community in the Durham-Chapel Hill area to study race in the South. Giles suggested that they do something similar to Tyson's project in the Greensboro area, drawing on their relationships with colleagues at local campuses and community organizations, like the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission in which both had collaborated. Enthusiastic about the idea, Jovanovic suggested that Bloch-Schulman (Elon University) be included in the course, given that the two had recently joined their classes to hold a co-organized, student-led, student-focused conference on the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Jovanovic, 2012, pp. 131-32). A collaborative course, the three reasoned, would be an excellent way to realize one of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's "Final Report" (2006), namely, to educate the community about the importance of broad democratic participation in the public life of the city.

The three set out to build a single course that would bring together as diverse a population as possible. By communicating with school presidents and chancellors about the proposed course, they were offered a space to use and connections to others interested in co-teaching the class. So far, *Reclaiming Democracy* course has been offered four times. The class is co-taught by six faculty at six different institutions of higher learning and a community activist. The students enrolled in the class come from all six institutions and from the community at large. Along with Bloch-Schulman, Giles and Jovanovic, Dan Malotky (Greensboro College) has participated in all of the iterations. The first iteration included Karla McLucas and Gwendolyn Bookman (Bennett College) and Larry Morse (North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University); these three were only available for the first iteration; later, faculty and more students from Bennett College and NC A & T State were added when Audrey Campbell (Bennett College) and J. F. Humphrey (NC A & T) joined the teaching team. In addition to the institutional faculty, social activist, public intellectual, and Co-Director of the non-profit, Fund 4 Democratic Communities, Ed Whitfield, served as the community professor

⁷ This section was originally written by Stephen Bloch-Schulman, an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Elon University, a small- to medium-sized private master's level university. The student population of Elon is predominantly White, Christian, and of the professional class, the school having been, until recently, affiliated with the Church of Christ.

for the first three offerings of the course, as well as recruiting local community activists and residents to be students. Logie Meachum, storyteller, blues singer, scholar, and educator, joined the class as the community professor for the fourth iteration.⁸

The course has focused on the following questions: 1) What is democracy? 2) In what ways is Greensboro democratic/undemocratic? 3) What is the role of education in a democratic society? and, 4) What do these considerations require of us? To explore these questions, the course brings together public and private schools, Historically Black Colleges/Universities (HBCUs) and non-HBCUs, larger institutions and smaller ones, Black and White faculty, and members of the community who are not currently (or who have never been) enrolled in or affiliated with a college or university. Our class typically enrolls 70-85 students. The student population tends to be approximately 30% African American, 60% female, and 20-25% nontraditionally aged. College students at our various institutions tell us that they enrolled in the course either to fulfill a general education or other requirement, to pursue their interest in the course content, or in response to strong word-of-mouth recommendations from former students. Our community members, numbering 5-10 in each class have been male, female, White, and Black ranging in age from 20 to 70. We have been particularly happy to host young people from the community who for financial or other reasons were no longer attending college and wished to continue to advance their education with this course. Like other community members in the course, they often have an interest in advancing activism in the community and many find themselves in the course at the invitation of our original community educator, Ed Whitfield, who remains involved with and connected to many economic and political organizations throughout the city. Given the multiple pathways into *Reclaiming Democracy*, the course is structured to resist external exclusion; participants, for example, range from those unable to afford books or pay for copies of articles to those with ample financial resources from affluent families. Bringing together such a diverse group of people makes it possible to discuss, for example, racial inequality in education among those who have been privileged and those who have been underserved by our current educational institutions and practices in ways that would be largely impossible if taught with only one campus participating in the course. This is made all the more vivid with the inclusion of members of the Greensboro community who have often spoken powerfully about their own experiences with democracy and the challenges to democracy, with segregation and the on-going civil rights struggle, and with current challenges in Greensboro and elsewhere.

The course was, first and foremost, structured to explicitly address the challenges of external exclusion. Yet the need to address other sorts of exclusion (understood by Young as internal exclusions) to enable differences in culture, race, sexual orientation, ways of speaking, etc. to be expressed soon became evident to both faculty and participants in the course. Since we

⁸ We have also had an excellent group of students as teaching assistants for the course. Along with those mentioned above in footnote 4, we have had the following teaching assistants: Isabell Moore, Ellen Bateman and Ellie Richard (UNCG).

wanted — despite the challenges of doing so with such a diverse group of students — to create a space within which we could talk deeply and collaborate together and to make sure that the amazing diversity in the room could be heard and felt, we built the content of the course to thematize and to address issues of internal exclusion. Thus, how we set out to accomplish this goal will be described in the next section where internal exclusion is considered.

Internal Exclusions⁹

While Young recognizes the importance of addressing external exclusions, and while she does not think that one sort of exclusion is more important than the other, she is more concerned with internal exclusions because they have often gone unnoticed. Furthermore, internal exclusions hinder “political equality” (Young, 2002, p. 56). Internal exclusion, Young notes, involves “ways that people lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to fora and procedures of decision-making” (2002, p. 55). This is particularly problematic because, as Young pictures it, democracy “is ... a process in which a large collective discusses problems such as these that they face together, and try to arrive peaceably at solutions in whose implementation everyone will co-operate” (2002, p. 28). Democracy in this sense, then, necessitates political equality; it requires that participants have access to the various mechanisms whereby decisions are made and solutions are achieved. If citizens are to work peacefully together to execute solutions to problems, they must understand themselves as collectively responsible for the solutions to be effected. Still, Young notes, one common problem with theories of deliberative democracy is the single-minded attention to and privileging of dispassionate argument in which premises and conclusions are linked to form tight, orderly chains of reason. Certainly, Young does not deny the importance of rational argument in political communication; when various solutions to a problem are proposed, citizens must have some way to consider, examine, and determine which of the proposed solutions merit their attention and resources. The difficulty is that “arguments require shared premises” that are not always to be had “in a situation of political conflict”; consequently, reduction of discourse to its rational elements tends to “enact internal exclusions of style and idiom” (Young, 2002, p. 56). For Young, this means that

A theory of democratic inclusion requires an expanded conception of political communication, both in order to identify modes of internal inclusion and to provide an account of more inclusive possibilities of attending to one another in order to reach understanding. (2002, p. 56)

Young thus argues for “a more open context of political communication,” which she calls “communicative democracy” (2002, p. 40) To achieve this end, Young advocates three

⁹ This section was also originally written by Humphrey.

practices: "greeting, rhetoric, and narrative as enriching both a descriptive and normative account of public discussion and deliberation" (2002, p. 57).

The Greeting¹⁰

Recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every person is central to democratic practice, and for that matter, to any and all interpersonal connection. The greeting, Young explains, is communicated both verbally and nonverbally. We recognize the greeting in salutations of "hello," "hey," and "nice to see you." We see it operate, nonverbally, as well in hugs and handshakes. The greeting is that and more, says Young, who, drawing from Emmanuel Levinas' ethics, acknowledges the self's unmitigated, asymmetrical responsibility to the other:

Communication would never happen if someone did not make the 'first move', out of responsibility for the other to expose herself without promise of answer or acceptance. Greeting (which is my term, not Levinas's) is this communicative moment of taking the risk of trusting in order to establish and maintain the bond of trust necessary to sustain a discussion about issues that face us together. (2002, p. 58)

Greetings are thus at times simple and tiny expressions of recognition and at other times commanding gestures signaling the desire by one to be with, and even more importantly, *for* the other.

The importance of the greeting can be overlooked when the focus of classroom instruction or public participation is on rational deliberation, rules of order, prepared meeting formats, and information sharing in order to meet the dictates of time. All of those features of public gatherings are necessary, but prior to them, Young argues, is the need to acknowledge the other so that the seeds of trust are planted from the very beginning in ways that signal the emergence of a true partnership (2002). Treating others with this kind of respect—expressed publicly—communicates "discursive equality" and a genuine desire to proceed in conversation and to deliberate in good faith. The greeting is often the first move among people who may occupy different positions, hold opposing views, or consider themselves on unequal footing. The ethical value of the greeting is in acknowledging "the particular perspective of others, their goodwill and contribution to the collective" (Young, 2002, p. 60) that makes discussion and relationship building possible in the first place. In other words, the greeting recognizes that others are necessary to the process of meaningful engagement in a democracy. The greeting seeks to include others by way of extending an open hand of invitation.

¹⁰ This section was originally written by Spoma Jovanovic, a Professor of Communication Studies at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, a public, coeducational, doctoral-granting, residential university with a student population of 18,600. From 1932 to 1963, the institution was known as the Women's College of the University of North Carolina. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro is currently one of the most diverse campuses in the country.

Taking to heart the philosophical and ethical ground that informs the greeting, the *Reclaiming Democracy* teaching team invests considerable time and focus in our instructional planning and practices to appreciate the differences and distinctions represented by the presence of others in our classroom. We deliberate about how to invite students to participate with us as partners in the teaching-learning experience. We consider what might be keeping students from engaging fully. We ask ourselves: What should we do to encourage students to disrupt our existing practices in favor of ones more fitting to their interests and styles? Additionally, faculty members act as advocates for students from their particular institutions to remind others on the teaching team of the concerns, limits, and differences in backgrounds and experiences relevant to creating a classroom populated by people from extremely diverse economic, political, social, and cultural origins.

In our class, we aim to move students forward in their critical discovery that Paulo Freire (2000) espouses is vital for self-efficacy and collective action. For Freire, education is the pathway to liberation that necessarily must be anchored in student-authoring activities and critical reflection. Thus, we intentionally explore, model, and encourage uses of the greeting in various formats to highlight its myriad features and functions in humanizing the classroom space. Most importantly—and infused in all forms of the greeting as Levinas indicates and Young agrees—are those moments of meeting before we even utter a single word where we have the opportunity to express “Here I am [for you]” that reflects our desire to foreground concern for building a communal, democratic life (Jovanovic & Wood, 2004, p. 319).

To mitigate against the many obstacles that can obscure the greeting — an emotionless educational experience, an extreme imbalance of power in teacher-student relations, divergent opportunities for learning that arise from different institutional supports, and cultural differences surrounding race, class, and school-based norms — we infuse non-traditional classroom experiences into traditional academic instruction through music, seating arrangements, food, and feedback mechanisms.

Most class meetings start with live music or a poem, usually presented by and often an original creation by one of the participants in the course, intended to speak to the democratic spirit. We began this practice with our very first class and have continued with it ever since, taking our cue from Tyson’s *The South in Black and White* which features gospel singing by adjunct professor and team member Mary Williams to emphasize the historic role music has played in shaping Southern culture (see <http://southinblackandwhite.wordpress.com/>). Similarly, we rely on singing, drumming, spoken word poetry, or recorded music situated in traditions of storytelling and creative expression to greet the students. For example, Cakalak Thunder, a local volunteer drum corps that has earned an international reputation at protest actions, has been a regular contributor to the class.

For the first few weeks of each semester, we invite guest entertainers to share their craft. After that, students *in* the class begin volunteering to write original lyrics or offer a musical selection to highlight a democratic concern of their own. An astounding range of performances and

sharing of culture emerges from the class, everything from Native American students offering songs and stories from the Lumbee Tribe to African American students and faculty singing spirituals, gospel, blues, and rap to folk songs, poetry, and opera. One student, for instance, performed a traditional rattle song to introduce a discussion of the Idle No More Solidarity Movement that erupted in 2012 in Canada and the United States; another sang from the Jewish liturgy.

We also see the greeting expressed in our seating arrangements. Instead of sitting together in the front of the room, we, the teaching team, disperse ourselves throughout the classroom to sit *with* students to communicate concern for and connection with them; “we are in this together!” We rely on small multi-institutional groups for discussion and class projects as a way to showcase the power of collective action through dialogue and decision-making. In those small groups, of which we are a part, we are presented with opportunities to break down the barriers between teacher and students upon which our titles, their grades, and all of our future plans hinge.

Sharing food and drink each week is yet another way the greeting is enacted in the course. The discussion groups signs up to bring snacks for all on a rotating basis; snacks are usually shared during a break in the middle of the class. We recognize that food is an important socializing medium that encourages informal conversations, sometimes about matters personal and sometimes about ideas offered earlier in the classroom instruction. While both strands of talk are necessary and important, it is crucial to us that conversation be the main activity during the breaks. The unstructured opportunity for speaking in an atmosphere of sustenance allows the students to get to know each other and us as complex, interesting community members rather than “just” students or “only” teachers despite what our classroom roles may suggest (Oldenburg, 1999).

Just as we give feedback to students, we use the notion of the greeting to invite students to express their voices, concerns, and complements about the class and us, as instructors. To this end, we have used a variety of mechanisms to solicit and encourage student comments. One especially popular technique is allotting class time to students to write comments on colorful Post-its that are then placed on the white board at the front of the classroom as they take a mid-class break or leave for the day. The responses are collected and collated, and collectively the teaching team discusses what changes are needed to best accommodate the learning needs and outcomes for the participants in the course. To make their feedback meaningful, we discuss the student responses at the next class. Although we do not always agree with student input (or each other for that matter), we acknowledge that disagreements can allow us to discuss options and settle on a “provisional agreement” based on deeper levels of understanding that this kind of dialogue prompts (Young, 2002, p. 44).

As focused as the teaching team is on using the greeting to make students feel welcomed, comfortable, and in partnership with us in this course, we are not always successful. An exasperated student in one class said he felt a joke by one of the instructors was made at his

expense. In a follow-up email, he revealed, "I was truly having a bad day, and that [joke] fueled my fire when everyone laughed, and at that point I felt really disrespected. However, this is not the first time I've been made fun of or laughed at, and I hold no grudges." Nonetheless, the student's comments in class and in the email prompted the teaching team to take note and take action. This individual's initial complaint about our "confusing" classroom management prompted much discussion in our next faculty team meeting as we formulated a positive and constructive way to respond. We affirm what other teachers have said about fostering constructive relationships with students that extend beyond goals or formalities: "Student voice necessitates a paradigm shift, recasting young people from passive recipients and empty vessels waiting to be filled, to active participants who possess deep stores of understanding and insight" (Borrero, Conner & Mejia, 2012, p. 3). In our next class meeting, this particular student's concerns were shared publicly with all students and a public apology was extended. Since trouble spots are an inevitable feature of classroom instruction if we are doing our jobs correctly (by truly inviting in disparate voices), the greeting is not only an opportunity to set the tone for a course, but it also can be seen as a resource for constructing responses with respect, care, and concern for members of the community. As Young (2002) reminds us, we must remain accountable to respond to the other (the students) as much as they are accountable to us.

While the greeting addresses how we approach our students as inclusive partners in the learning experience, the affirmative uses of rhetoric recognize that there are varied ways in which arguments can be framed and ideas expressed. Democratic practice, Young (1990) argues, calls for rhetoric sensitive to our relational partners and appreciative of the modes of address most comfortable to the speakers.

Affirmative Use of Rhetoric¹¹

Traditionally, logical discourse has been distinguished from rhetoric. Certainly, Plato and Aristotle make this distinction, as have a number of scholars and thinkers; even some of those embracing deliberative democracy maintain that democracy and democratic problem solving must be free of rhetoric because rhetorical speech does not strive to achieve an "understanding with others, but only to manipulate their thought and feeling in directions that serve the speaker's own ends" (Young, 2000, p. 63). To acknowledge the affirmative uses of rhetoric, however, demands a departure from "a Platonic distinction between rational speech and mere rhetoric" (Young, 2000, p. 63). Indeed, the distinction between logical argument

¹¹ This section was originally written by Audrey Campbell, an Associate Professor of Psychology and Religion and Director of the Womanist Religious Studies Program at Bennett College, a small, private, women's Historically Black College, affiliated with the United Methodist Church. She also serves as adjunct professor in the Department of Psychology at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

guided by pure reason and rhetoric must be rejected; "[t]he ideal of disembodied and disembedded reason that it presupposes is a fiction" (Young, 2000, p. 63). Furthermore, while those employing logical argument, such as politicians and academicians, may hold that their arguments are objective, unemotional, and free of rhetoric, this can only be achieved by ignoring the fact that their own discourse assumes a standpoint based on social class, communication style, and a host of other factors (Young, 2000). Rather than vilifying and rejecting rhetorical speech, recognizing the importance of the "affirmative uses of rhetoric" allows us to appreciate the importance of "emotion, figurative language, or unusual or playful forms of expression" in political communication and in the classroom, by allowing individuals and groups to express themselves, their diverse backgrounds, and their diverse opinions and positions in their own voices and their own special way (Young, 2000, p. 64).

Understanding rhetoric requires us to recognize the difference between "*what*" is said, and "*how*" something is said (Young, 2000, p. 64). The use of rhetoric in the classroom reminds us that those who are speaking and those who are listening are both different and in partnership, committed to successful and inclusive communication in non-reductive ways. In contradistinction to the Western intellectual tradition that embraces reasoned, logical speech and attempts to purify communicative language by completely eliminating rhetoric all together, or at least by limiting the perceived negative effects of rhetoric, Young advocates the "uniquely positive functions" that rhetoric, in all its emotional impurity, plays (2000, p. 66). She highlights three such positive features of rhetorical strategies: (1) "*Rhetorical moves often help to get an issue on the agenda for deliberation*" (2) "*Rhetoric fashions claims and arguments in ways appropriate to a particular public in a particular situation*"; and, (3) "*Rhetoric motivates the move from reason to judgment*" (Young, 2000, pp. 66- 69).

All three of these affirmative uses of rhetoric can be seen in the formation of, and engagement with, the group projects students undertake in the *Reclaiming Democracy* class. These projects are semester-long opportunities for students to work on democratic issues that matter to them in the community. Starting from the guidelines and requirements that we set out (e.g., that the groups should consist of between five and seven students from at least two campuses, and that the final product will be made public in a forum at the end of the semester), students organize themselves by caucusing around an idea or concept for a project. Initially, a student or a small group of students present an idea for a group project to the entire class. Like the "good rhetorician" Young describes, students use the various aspects of rhetoric, emotion, figurative and symbolic language, style and attitude to "persuade listeners by orientating proposals and arguments towards their collective and plural interests and desires" (Young, 2000, p. 69). After hearing the ideas presented, students join a particular group project that speaks to them.

In proposing an idea for and trying to persuade others to join in a project, students often speak about how the issues affect their own lives, the lives of their family members, and the lives of their neighbors and, in so doing, attempt to interest others in issues that matter deeply. Their appeals connect them to other class members by noting the "shared history or set of

values” a speaker and her audience hold (Young, 2000, p. 68). They speak, for example, about having been homeless or struggling to find appropriate help within the schools for a child with ADD or ADHD. Thus, they employ the first two affirmative uses of rhetoric emphasized by Young. Once the groups form, the projects invariably change because of the various and diverse interests and skills participants bring to the projects and because of the collective research they conduct on the issue. The student who proposed the project (though not always easily or quickly) must listen and respond to others who join the project “acceding to them as the judges, rather than claiming himself or herself to ‘know’” (Young, 2000, p. 69) what the group should do. Together, however, they must make important judgments about the specific project they wish to undertake, with which community organization or organizations they wish to collaborate, how they will accomplish their goals, and how the requisite tasks will be accomplished. Through this interaction, projects are formed, reformed, and transformed. This work connects the students and their interests to one another, to those in the community, and to the issues and challenges that the community faces in establishing itself as a democratic community. Through these projects, we push our students outward beyond the walls of the classroom, encouraging them to act on their concerns, to make inquiries, to direct their passions and their anger, and to establish connections and partnerships with appropriate groups engaged in the larger community. We are striving to move from speaking about (theory) to learning to do (praxis).

Just as political dialogue is limited by some to its rational “core,” so too is classroom dialogue often reduced to its content core. In both cases, the rhetorical is seen as irrelevant, even a hindrance, to the “real” work going on in communication. While Young does not discuss classroom dialogue in this text, we have attempted to apply her critique of the Platonic conception of rhetoric into the classroom. We thus strive for open, heart-felt communication.

Even as we work hard to do so, we sometimes struggle to fully overcome the features of the “banking concept of education” rejected so strongly and clearly by Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to fully share the classroom with students. On the opening evening of the fall 2013 iteration of our course, for example, we very quickly created a warm, inclusive, and engaging environment; after Logie Meachum sang, the faculty began to introduce themselves; however, our students were nearly tripping over one another to introduce themselves, too — speaking to the large group with information, joy, and humor. Should the faculty have allowed our students to continue? We didn’t; it was time set aside for faculty introductions and to begin the “work” of the course — reviewing the policies, the structure, and discussing the formal elements of the course. Though there are ever-present challenges, students tend to respond openly and well to our invitations to share their backgrounds, their traumatic experiences (racism, classicism, sexism), their educational experiences, their political convictions, and their pursuits to which they are passionately committed. We, too, are challenged with so little time to fully live up to our own highest values and standards and continue to work to fully realize our goals.

*Use of Narrative*¹²

The third practice to expand democratic communication, according to Young, is the use of narrative. However, she distinguishes “political narrative” from other forms of narrative because it is storytelling “not primarily to entertain or reveal myself, but to make a point—to demonstrate, describe, explain, or justify something to others in an ongoing political discussion” (2002, p. 72). Through considering and analyzing students’ and instructors’ actual educational experiences, we found that integrating narratives into the course assignments, readings, and classroom discussion-lectures provided rich and thought-provoking material for our exploration and fostered internal inclusion in several ways identified by Young (2002). Still, there are some real limitations and challenges to using narratives to accomplish such inclusion. Following an overview of the impact of narratives on our course polity, which draws on Young’s theory of inclusion, both concrete examples and some cautionary notes on the use of narrative to foster internal inclusion in a college course will be offered.

The most powerful consequence of the democratic functions of narratives described by Young (2002) is that, in concert with each other, narratives create alternatives to dominant paradigms that risk excluding or dismissing the experiences of others. The pervasiveness and power of paradigms such as *colorblind racism*, which explain “contemporary racial inequities as the outcome of nonracial dynamics” (Bonilla-Silva, 2010, p. 2), and the notion of the United States as a pure meritocracy, make it challenging for some students to discuss the ways in which race, social class, and sexism negatively affect their educations. Bringing the diverse narratives of students’ and faculty members’ own educations into our discussions gradually helps delineate and infuse alternative paradigms that allow participants to acknowledge and examine the deleterious impact of structural and systemic racism, classism, and sexism on their schooling. More specifically, sharing narratives enables students and faculty to deepen their understanding of the educational experiences of people from extremely different backgrounds (Young, 2002, p. 73); creates opportunities for the mutual recognition of members of diverse social identity groups, “local publics,” and their shared histories, values, and experiences (Young, 2002, p. 73); and offers insight into the “source of values, priorities, or cultural meanings” (Young, 2002, p. 75) of diverse groups. One story at a time, these processes lay the foundation for an alternative to the dominant paradigm of a colorblind meritocracy. Including faculty voices in this exercise also gives students permission to be open and critical in their evaluations of their own educational experiences and, by deemphasizing the differences

¹² This section was originally written by Hollyce “Sherry” Giles, Professor and Chair of the Department of Justice and Policy Studies at Guilford College. Giles’ home discipline is psychology, and she teaches in the interdisciplinary Community and Justice Studies major in this small Quaker-founded liberal arts college. Guilford College’s history as a stop on the Underground Railroad, and its core values inspired by Quaker testimonies and commitments, have attracted and fostered the development of students known for their involvement in social change efforts.

between teacher and student, strengthens the partnership between faculty members and students.

The first appearance of narrative in the course comes through the initial assignment of an autoethnographic essay, in which students are asked to recall and reflect upon memories of their own education, with the goal of portraying their educational experiences in their particular school(s). As part of the assignment, students read three texts framing the interplay of race, social class, power, and education in ways that challenge dominant paradigms.¹³ The initial autoethnography assignment has elicited strikingly diverse stories that have enlarged students' and faculty members' understanding of education and have pointed to divergent paradigms underlying their perspectives on schooling. On the one hand, some students have shared "bootstrap narratives" of success in the face of adversity and accounts of the crucial support from and sacrifices by their parents and families while ignoring the role of race, social class, gender, or other systemic inequities in their educational experiences (despite the assignment guidelines). On the other hand, we have heard stories that contained painful descriptions of biased treatment and substandard facilities in students' schools.

In the final assignment of the course, students return to their autoethnographies to write a short essay considering whether and how their understanding of their own educations have been changed by what they have learned in the course. At least one student did not feel comfortable revealing her experiences of racism in her initial autoethnography, but did in her final reflections at the end of the semester (shared in detail below). Her initial silence about the harmful and biased treatment she experienced in earlier years of schooling suggests that at least for her, and perhaps others, the prompts from the readings were not sufficient to create a climate in which they were comfortable describing experiences of racism; though she did feel differently by the end of the semester. This shift in discourse provides the language, the support, and the opportunity needed for students to rethink the narratives of their educational experiences they wrote at the beginning of the course, this time, however, naming and analyzing some of their schooling experiences as instances of injustice, a process Young calls

¹³ The readings are: Jean Anyon's (1980) classic ethnographic portrayal, "Social class and the hidden curriculum of work," explaining how five fifth grade classrooms in five different New Jersey schools reproduce class by preparing students for jobs in the same social class as their parents; an excerpt from Lisa Delpit's (2006) *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom*, featuring stories of educators' biased treatment of African American students as foundation for her analysis of the influence of race and power in education; and Chapter Two from Paulo Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, contrasting the banking concept of education in which teachers deposit information into students with problem-posing pedagogy, an approach Freire posits as leading to liberation. We ask students to consider their educations through the lenses of the readings, to reflect on the impact of race and social class on their schooling, and to think about the extent to which they experienced a banking or problem solving approach to teaching and learning.

"a response to the 'differend'" (Young, 2002, p. 72).¹⁴ In the context of a discourse more inviting of the free and open telling of a broad range of education narratives, students, and faculty in the course are able to construct "social knowledge that enlarges thought" (Young, 2002, p. 76) and significantly enriches our inquiry.

Another intense dose of narratives that left its mark on one of the iterations of the class occurred when two Black faculty members shared stories about and their analyses of the relationships existing among Jim Crow, the Black Power movement, and the Occupy movement. We heard graphic and disturbing stories of the indignities suffered by Blacks at the hands of Whites, and thought-provoking accounts of the social movement that fought the racist practices and policies of the Jim Crow era. During this storytelling, "a local public" of African Americans briefly became apparent among those present in the class. Young defines "a local public" as a "collective of persons allied within the wider polity with respect to particular interests, opinions, and/or social positions" (2002, p. 73). The presence of this local public became particularly evident when one of the professors mentioned "Uncle Ruckus." A ripple of surprised laughter erupted from Black students, while White students and faculty looked on in puzzled silence. Uncle Ruckus is a character from the "The Boondocks" comic strip and animated television series, apparently known primarily to Blacks. "The Boondocks" represents a satire of white supremacy. One reviewer of the series observed "Especially in the conscientiously colorblind world of television, the animated version of "The Boondocks" is a jolt of shock therapy"; and that "there are very few series for young adults that deal with race as brazenly and defiantly as 'The Boondocks'" (New York Times, 2005).

The stories told by the Black faculty about Jim Crow, the Black Power movement, and Uncle Ruckus have served to "reveal the source of values, priorities and cultural meanings" (Young, 2006, p. 75) particularly significant to Black students and faculty. The emergence of this local public and the revelation of some of the sources of its cultural meanings, through storytelling by authority figures in the course, helped create a class discourse with ample precedent for a critique of racism and white supremacy.

A final vignette exemplifies the emergence of a discourse offering an alternative to the colorblind, meritocratic paradigm that helped students of color voice their experiences of injustice. The vignette exemplifies the function of narrative as "a response to the 'differend,'" that is, to foster internal inclusion when "those who suffer a wrongful harm or oppression lack the terms to express a claim of injustice within the prevailing normative discourse" (Young, 2002, p. 72). It also points to the use of storytelling as "an important bridge...between the mute experience of being wronged and political arguments about justice" (Young, 2002, p. 72). An African American student who attended schools before and during desegregation wrote in her final reflection paper:

¹⁴ Young takes the term 'differend' from Lyotard. See Jean-François Lyotard, 1988, *The differend: Phrases in dispute*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

During my first ethnography reflections I gave an account of my first few years of county schools and the transformation into city schools. Some things I did not reflect in the paper because I felt it would show racism. However, my feelings should have reflected the truth of how those years affected my education.... The school I attended did not have white students. My first few years of school were a joyous time. The thought of learning to read, write and do math gave me joy. ...In 1971 when school was desegregated and white children and white teachers entered into the picture my whole education experience changed. This is the first time I realized that I was black. My fifth grade teacher was a mean white lady who made sure that we knew that she did not want to be there. We were a group of black students who had good grades until the schools became integrated. When the teacher asked a question in class, she refused to allow the blacks to answer the question. She would overlook the black students. I remember my fifth grade class putting on a play; she did not allow any black student to participate in the program. As I look back and reflect on my experience I now know that what she showed was racism. ...After years of disappointment with white teachers and white students I became rebellious and dropped out of school in the ninth grade without my mother's knowledge. I wish I knew the history of black people and their struggle for education and what it meant for me as a black person. I feel it would have made a difference in the way I viewed education back then. My education journey would have been different.¹⁵

The student then writes about how she learned about the school-to-prison-pipeline in our class, and says "I will not allow them to label my grandson in a negative manner or [make him a] victim to the criminal justice system...I will fight for students' rights to ensure that black males especially are not pushed out of school and into the prison system."

Over the course of the semester, this student moved from intentionally hiding the wrongs committed by the White teachers in her childhood elementary school, to a vocal and critical analysis of the impact of racism on her education and to a commitment to fight for a non-racist education for her grandson and other Black males. This shift in her perspective suggests the diminution of the impact of a colorblind ideology, an ideology that, in a strange reversal, brands the identification and discussion of race-based inequities as "racist." This student came to see her former teachers' treatment of her and her fellow Black students as racist, rather than feeling that *she* would be racist to divulge their behavior.

On balance, narratives have functioned quite well to foster internal inclusion in our course; however, our experiences have yielded some lessons that may serve as cautionary notes in the use of narrative in college courses. First, we have found it difficult to devote sufficient time in class to allow students and faculty to work in partnership to digest and to make meaning of the powerful and complex stories shared. At the end of the class session in which stories from

¹⁵ The UNCG Institutional Review Board, which approved earlier research on the course, advised us that the work in this article is not in need of IRB review.

Jim Crow and the Black Power movement were featured, one student said that it felt painful to be so filled up with emotion and to not be able to discuss it. Many students signaled their agreement with her sentiment. It is easy to forget that processing narratives requires space and time; perhaps the temptation to squeeze in more curricular components and content than we had time for may be partly to blame. Yet anxiety by faculty over how to facilitate discussions about such complex and emotion-laden topics may also have resulted, unwittingly, in leaving students to process material on their own. Two possible remedies to this issue are: 1) Greater vigilance about scheduling time for discussion and analysis of shared narratives, and 2) Faculty practicing discussions of taboo and anxiety-provoking topics like race, gender, and class among ourselves so that we are better able to facilitate them with students.

A second cautionary note concerns how to respond to narratives that reinforce dominant discourses likely to lead to internal exclusion. The question becomes: How can faculty create the space for narratives with divergent underlying paradigms, without quashing the thinking or stories of any particular student? Signaling that there is one correct, or moral, or just paradigm to students would hardly promote our democratic goals. One possible resolution for faculty is to create conditions in which our temporary polity can practice having hard conversations about the conflicting assumptions underlying the different narratives and their significance for educational policies and practices that either build upon or undermine democracy. Practicing such difficult political conversations potentially also gives students useful analytical and rhetorical skills which they can take with them into the larger polities of their universities, colleges, and extra-university communities.

What Kind of Community?¹⁶

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that models of citizenship presented through a curriculum have a significant impact on students' grasp of what it means to participate in a democracy. In our efforts to produce a classroom setting that mitigates exclusion, we have discovered, however informally, an extension of their basic claim. Not only can the course content have an effect, but the character of the learning community can sensitize students to issues of inclusion in the broader community. Just as different curricular choices provide students with different understandings of their capacities as citizens, so too can the practice of democratic inclusiveness within the classroom empower students to seek out, or to form, similar communities beyond the classroom.

¹⁶ This section was originally written by Dan Malotky, the Lucy H. Robertson Professor of Religion and Philosophy and Director of Ethics Across the Curriculum at Greensboro College, a liberal arts institution of approximately 1200 students affiliated with the United Methodist Church.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) discuss three models of citizenship and the curricular models designed to foster them. The first, the "Personally Responsible Citizen," matches the conservative inclination to see social problems through the prism of personal. According to this model, our responsibility as instructors is to develop our students as virtuous individuals who are able to function within society. The Personally Responsible Citizen is honest, industrious, and pays her taxes on time. She will donate to the local food drive (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 240).

Despite the current popularity of curricula designed to foster such virtues, Westheimer and Kahne reject this model because the values promoted are not *necessarily* democratic in orientation. Indeed, government leaders in a totalitarian regime would be just as delighted as leaders in a democracy if the young learned the lessons put forward by many of the proponents of personally responsible citizenship: avoid drugs, show up at school, work hard, donate blood, help others during a flood, recycle, pick up litter, clean up a park, treat old people with respect, etc. These are desirable traits for people living in almost any kind of community, but they are not necessarily about democratic citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 244).

The second model, which receives more consideration in Westheimer and Kahne's work is called the "Participatory Citizen." The Participatory Citizen takes a more active role to address problems in society, trying to work through the given social and political structures to make positive change happen. If the Personally Responsible Citizen donates to a food drive, the Participatory Citizen organizes the food drive (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 240). She learns where the levers of power are located and works to move them in ways that are advantageous to her cause. Unlike the Personally Responsible Citizen, the Participatory Citizen sees that we must often work together to address the problems we face, though she does not necessarily stop to ask what has caused the problem in the first place.

This critical attitude is the mark of the "Justice-oriented Citizen," who works to uncover the structural causes of injustice and whose recipes for change tend to be more radical than those of the Participatory Citizen. Rather than dealing with the symptoms of hunger through a food drive, the Justice-oriented Citizen seeks to expose its causes, to change socio-economic patterns that create the conditions in which hunger emerges (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 240). Though the characteristics of the Justice-oriented Citizen do not contradict those of the Participatory Citizen or the Personally Responsible Citizen, Westheimer and Kahne emphasize that there is nothing necessarily inclusive or cumulative about these three models. The Justice-oriented Citizen need not be personally responsible, or she might confine herself to critique, with little effort to actually participate in change.

Westheimer and Kahne found this to be reflected in their empirical research. Curricula had a strong influence on what students understood to be possible in regard to citizenship. Those involved in a curriculum that promoted participatory goals were tracked, at least in their own self-assessment, toward participatory models. Students exposed to social critique, whether in

readings or class exercises, felt empowered to do the same outside of the classroom; but participatory curricula did not tend to produce social critics (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 254), and justice-oriented programs did not, on their own, inculcate or activate “technocratic skills associated with participation” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 262).

This strongly suggests that a curriculum with intentions of promoting a rich, multivalent model of democratic citizenship should try to include both participatory and justice-oriented elements; however, to these we have added inclusive practices within the classroom.

Reclaiming Democracy, then, models both participation and social criticism by exposing students through course readings and discussions to critical economic, political, and social issues pertaining to democratic citizenship and education, and by providing students with opportunities to become actively engaged in social criticism while participating in the group project assignment, which is a culminating exercise that focuses on issues of justice, great or small, within the Greensboro community.

However, the course also attempts to model democratic processes in the workings of the class itself. For instance, as mentioned above, students are free to choose whichever community project they would like to pursue, or to propose their own, with significant class time allotted for students to explain their ideas to each other and caucus among themselves to form viable project groups. More generally, a concerted effort is made to proceed through dialogue—not to silence the voices of the professors, but to limit their inclinations to dominate discussion. While acknowledging that the professorial voice is important, we try to incorporate that voice into a context of reason-giving in which all can share; hence, we provide students with multiple avenues to bring their own experiences to bear on the topics at hand, as in the autoethnography assignment, opportunities to perform or share music, or various small group interactions. In other words, we try to embody the practical reason about which Young writes in relation to deliberative democracy.

Some of this dialogue is focused explicitly, and self-reflectively, on what we are trying to accomplish in class in this regard. Through consideration of readings by Young (2002) or Westheimer and Kahne (2004), the class is given the opportunity to imagine what might make our own class a more inclusive, democratic space. Even instances of student resistance offer pedagogical opportunities. When some students, for instance, react against Westheimer and Kahne’s negative assessment of the Personally Responsible Citizen, we have a chance to highlight that the authors do not disparage personal responsibility itself, but only the notion that an education promoting personal responsibility alone is an inadequate approach to creating a democratic and just society. Hopefully, this approach also gives students a chance to consider if their defense of the model is a product of their own education, which itself may have been focused on the development of individual character.

Finally, we try to be as transparent as possible about our own limitations. This might involve public discussion, in large or small groups, of a particular class member’s claims of exclusion, whether due to a careless remark by a classmate or a blind spot on the part of the faculty. It

requires some understanding of, and explicit negotiations around, the different academic and social expectations created by the campus cultures of six very different institutions of higher learning. It also calls for a confrontation with the structures inherent to an academic setting: the power afforded to faculty in their capacity to set the class agenda, to assign readings, papers and projects, and finally to evaluate student performance in the form of a grade.

These limitations on democratic processes, these potential threats to inclusiveness, need not be taken to undermine the purposes of the course, for democracy is always practiced in the context of *some* limiting structure. Our students do not face a society devoid of power, or without access to the systemic levers through which power is wielded; indeed, such systemic levers, though worthy of critique and a circumspect attitude (at least), can also serve as the means through which democracy is practiced. Though we do have community members take the class, overall, without the academic context of the course, it would be hard to imagine how there could be the support (financial or otherwise) that would allow the class to run. Additionally, the faculty's power of evaluation is a crucial motivation for many of the student's to do the reading and complete their written assignments in a timely manner, without which the conversation about inclusiveness and democratic processes would be superficial, if it could be generated at all. It is through the limiting structures of the classroom setting that our students have an opportunity to be included (or excluded) in the first place.

Conclusion

In this article, we bring together the diverse voices and perspectives of faculty and students of the multi-campus and community course, *Reclaiming Democracy*, to consider the ways and the extent to which the pedagogy realizes our goal of teaching *and practicing* deliberative democracy. Iris Marion Young's (2002) notions of external and internal exclusion, and the strategies for inclusion she articulates, serve as the primary lenses through which we examine and reflect upon our teaching and students' responses to it. We have also drawn on Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) argument that models of citizenship embedded in a curriculum have a significant impact on students' understanding of what it means to participate in a democracy; we conclude that the practice of democratic inclusiveness within the classroom can motivate students to seek out, and to form similar communities beyond the classroom. Democratic thinking in its richest and fullest form is found primarily (in both the chronological and normative senses) within deliberative, inclusive spaces; this is the "practical reasoning" that Young describes, which takes place within the spaces in which different voices are able to speak and be heard, and where opinions are formed (rather than where previously held opinions are merely contested and put to a vote).

If the paradigm of practical reason, of democratic thinking, occurs through deliberation in public, inclusive spaces, then it needs to retain these same characteristics, to whatever extent possible, even when such a public is not available. That means, at its best, the thinking an individual does can be most democratic to the extent that it includes the same diversity of

voices that are present in deliberative, inclusive spaces.¹⁷ While we cannot always have others literally present with us, we *can* utilize their voices to create a form of thinking that is multi-vocal. And, this has certainly happened for us on the teaching team. Faculty members have been impacted by being part of a democratic community with colleagues with diverse approaches to teaching and learning. For example, when we teach other classes, we take with us the insights and perspectives of others in our teaching group, and this informs our thinking and our teaching practices. Each of us has reported to the others that we have borrowed activities and framing in other situations that we learned, for example, from Giles's attention to group dynamics, Malotky's modeling of self-effacing humor, Campbell's call for diverse authors in assigned readings, Humphrey's attention to disparities and changes in economic and educational spending, Jovanovic's connections to city projects and research, and Bloch-Schulman's creative teaching methods to unpack difficult material.

In sum, as we endeavor to be more democratic and as we seek to reclaim democracy in *Reclaiming Democracy*, we attempt to embody the ideas we discuss within the limits afforded us by the academic settings in which we find ourselves. We try out democratic practices within the classroom so that students might join (or form) democratic communities beyond it, while mitigating the artificial constraints of teacher-student hierarchies, grades, and the time limits of the class period and semester. We work hard to ensure that if students find themselves in a society marked by aggregative democracy, they will have the tools to introduce elements of inclusive deliberation (and democratic thinking) that moves past mutual assertion. We hope that the students will recall and take with them the little things, the small steps that move a group away from external and internal exclusions, because they have already experienced the richness and the benefits of inclusion during the class. If students remember to greet one another, to listen to each other's stories, and even to share music and food to make diverse voices possible (and to make listening to them possible), we will have been successful. And if they remember to think with others—even when those others are not present to them—thereby respecting the different voices and visions the absent others bring to their thought processes, they will have become more democratic in their deliberations. They will know from experience that these little things provide the social context and establish the living community in which deliberative democracy, and democratic thinking, can flourish.

¹⁷ Those familiar with the work of Hannah Arendt will notice some similarities—and some essential differences—between her work and the vision we are offering here. She too holds the importance of the dialogic and the way this can be internalized (see Arendt 1978), and she values seeing things from others' perspectives (Arendt 1994). Where we disagree is in the understanding of diversity of perspective, which we, along with Young, believe emerges from social groups and social positioning (see Young, 1990, 3-5) and the focus, with Young, on issues of social justice (Young, 1990), about which Arendt is deeply skeptical (see Pitkin, 2000).

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