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**ABSTRACT**

The developing body of literature on multicultural concerns in adult education, on feminist theory, and on critical and feminist pedagogies provides insights for adult educators grappling with the complex issues surrounding the creation of inclusive learning environments. Educators must be aware of the politics of knowledge production and dissemination: what counts as knowledge, who is involved in its production, and their relative positions in the power structure are determinants of curricular and instructional decisions. They must also consider the effects of structural privilege and oppression in the learning environment. Studies of a variety of educational settings demonstrate how power dynamics based on the intersections of gender, race, and class determine whose ideas are valued, who speaks, and who remains silent in the adult classroom. The many kinds of feminism have developed numerous theories about power relations and social structures that inform feminist pedagogy. Recurring themes underlying feminist teaching strategies involve how knowledge is constructed, voice, authority, and dealing with difference. A synthesis of the psychologically oriented and liberatory models of feminist pedagogy yields insights for the creation of inclusive adult learning environments. Rather than prescribing approaches, these insights highlight issues and teaching practices that adult educators should consider in the quest to create democratic classrooms in which every voice can be heard. (SK)

# Creating Inclusive Adult Learning Environments:

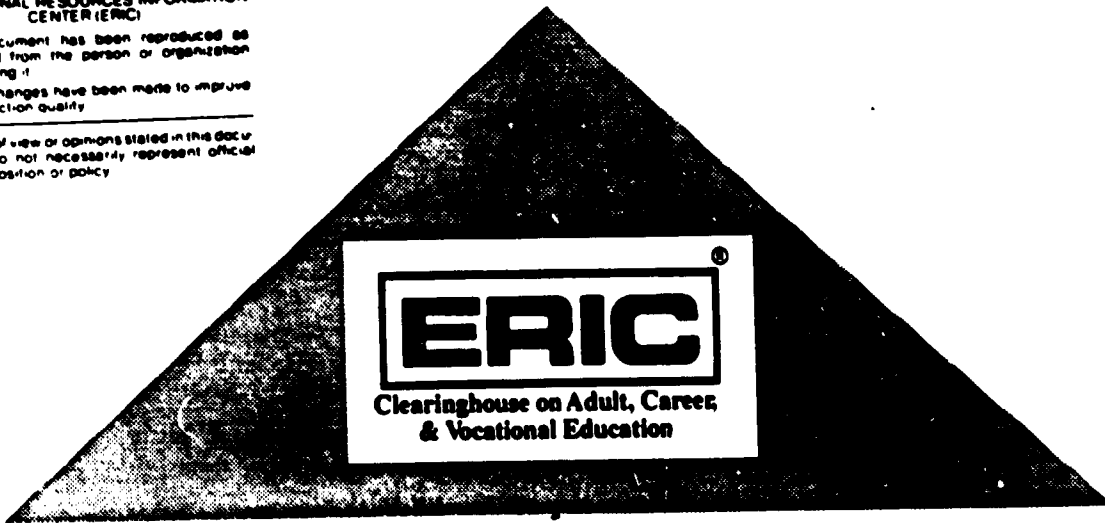
*Insights from  
Multicultural Education  
and Feminist Pedagogy*

Information Series No. 361

Elizabeth J. Tisdell

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# **Creating Inclusive Adult Learning Environments:** *Insights from Multicultural Education and Feminist Pedagogy*

*Information Series No. 361*

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# Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (ERIC/ACVE) is 1 of 16 clearinghouses in a national information system that is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. This paper was developed to fulfill one of the functions of the clearinghouse—interpreting the literature in the ERIC database. This paper should be of interest to career and adult education practitioners and students.

ERIC/ACVE would like to thank Elizabeth Tisdell for her work in the preparation of this paper. Dr. Tisdell is a Core Faculty Member at Antioch University Seattle. Her dissertation, completed at the University of Georgia, was a comparative case study of power relations based on gender, race, and class in higher education classes of nontraditional age adults. At Georgia she served on the faculty of the Georgia Center for Continuing Education, was a women's studies affiliated faculty member, and served on the College of Education's multicultural education committee. As campus minister at Loyola University, she conducted workshops and experiential education activities on gender and social justice issues. Her published articles include "Feminism and Adult Learning: Power, Pedagogy, and Praxis" and "Interlocking Systems of Power, Privilege, and Oppression in Adult Higher Education Classes."

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# Executive Summary

Adult educators are grappling with the complex issues surrounding the creation of inclusive learning environments for diverse participants. The developing body of literature on multicultural concerns in adult education, on feminist theory, and on critical and feminist pedagogies provides insights for curriculum and instructional development.

Educators must be aware of the politics of knowledge production and dissemination: what counts as knowledge, who is involved in its production, and their relative positions in the power structure are determinants of curricular and instructional decisions. Various approaches to multicultural education identified by Sleeter and Grant (1987) and Banks (1993) represent a continuum of educational philosophies that underlie curriculum development at all levels. Curricular decisions flow from one's view of knowledge and one's ability to take into account the contexts of specific learning environments, the institution, and society.

Another set of issues centers on the effects of structural privilege and oppression in the learning environment. Studies of a variety of educational settings, including adult higher, adult basic, and popular education, demonstrate how power dynamics based on the intersections of gender, race, and class determine whose ideas are valued, who speaks, and who remains silent in the adult classroom.

The many kinds of feminism have developed numerous theories about power relations and social structures that inform feminist pedagogy. Recurring themes underlying feminist teaching strategies involve how knowledge is constructed, voice, authority, and dealing with difference. A synthesis of the psychologically oriented and liberatory models of feminist pedagogy yields insights for the creation of inclusive adult learning environments.

Rather than prescribing approaches, these insights highlight issues and teaching practices that adult educators should consider in the quest to create democratic classrooms in which every voice can be heard.

Information on the issues involved in creating inclusive learning environments may be found in the ERIC database using the following descriptors: \*Adult Education, Adult Educators, Constructivism (Learning), Cultural Pluralism, Curriculum Development, \*Educational Environment, Educational Philosophy, Educational Practices, \*Feminism, \*Multicultural Education, \*Politics of Education, \*Power Structure, Racial Differences, Sex Differences, Social Differences. Asterisks indicate descriptors that are particularly relevant.

# Introduction

In this era of changing demographics and of greater technological sophistication, adult educators are increasingly faced with the task of creating and facilitating learning activities for participants from diverse backgrounds. Creating an inclusive adult learning environment that takes into account the needs of both male and female learners, learners of different racial and ethnic groups, and learners from different class backgrounds is no small task. There is already a literature base within the field of adult education that can cast light on how one might attempt to do this. The literature on popular education or education for social transformation (following the work of Freire and Horton) and the more recent literature that deals with race and gender issues in the field both offer some insights in this regard. Yet, it is clear that if adult educators are going to respond to the needs of diverse learners, more work needs to be done. Thus, the purpose of this monograph is twofold: (1) to synthesize some of the work related to inclusivity and diversity that has already been done in the field of adult education; and (2) to examine aspects of the wider literature base on multicultural education and feminist theory and pedagogy that can offer insights specifically for creating inclusive adult learning environments.

In the following discussion, the term "learning environment" refers to the specifically limited context of a given learning activity itself. A particular classroom, including the instructor or facilitator and the learners in a specific learning situation, constitutes the learning environment in this sense. Of course, the specific learning environment is situated within an institutional context of a sponsoring agency that is situated within a still wider societal context, and the relationship between this learning environment and the overarching contexts in which it is located needs to be kept in mind when considering what it means to create an inclusive learning activity.

But what does it mean to be inclusive, particularly in regard to the creation and implementation of an adult learning activity?

Perhaps one can begin to answer this question by asking a series of related questions. Does being inclusive mean simply to recognize the characteristics and group identifiers of the particular learning group members in regard to age, race or ethnicity, gender, economic class, educational level, and so on, along with a consideration of their individual characteristics such as introversion/extroversion or their myriad learning styles? For example, if all the members present in a particular learning activity are working-class women, does inclusivity mean it is necessary only to create a curriculum and make use of an andragogical or pedagogical style that will be relevant primarily to working-class females? If one answers yes, and considers what that curriculum would then entail, what are the other underlying assumptions about those participants in the creation of that curriculum? Is there an assumption that the participants are all white? Married or once married? Raised in the Christian tradition? Or does the curriculum and pedagogical style attempt to account for differences by race, age, sexual orientation, or religion?

An expansion of this example will help illustrate the importance of the consideration of the wider contexts in which a particular learning activity is situated. Let's assume that the participants are working-class, heterosexual mothers, half of whom are Euro-American or white, the other half of whom are either African American or Latina, who work part time and live and work in an urban area. They are similar in significant ways—gender, class, sexual orientation. But they differ in their racial background and probably in other significant ways as well. To be inclusive in this specific learning context would require not only taking into account the ways they are similar, but also the ways they are different. At the same time, it is also important to remember that on another level, the context, although partly defined by the learning environment, is not really limited to the environment of the learning activity itself. Each of these women also lives in a wider context. Those who have partners live with people of a different gender; they may work in an environment with people from a multiplicity of racial and ethnic groups, and they are likely to be accountable to bosses who are from a different class (and probably a different gender as well). They may have family members and co-workers who have a disability or are of a homosexual or bisexual orientation. Although

the specific adult learning context itself might be delimited and defined by some specific similar characteristics of the participants, these same participants interact in a wider array of contexts with people who differ from themselves in significant ways. Thus, creating a curriculum and presenting it in an andragogical or pedagogical style that is relevant to these learners in this particular learning context means taking into account the fact that this learning context is a context within a wider context within a still wider context.

In discussing what it means to create an inclusive adult learning environment then, one must ask "inclusive of whom?" and "in what context(s)?" Of course, in answering these questions, it is also necessary to consider the educator's agenda in creating the learning activity along with the fact that the learning activity takes place within the context of a sponsoring agency that has a particular purpose in offering this educational program. This is indeed a culturally diverse society. Inclusivity does mean attempting to provide curricular course content in a pedagogical style that reflects the gender, racial, and economic class makeup of the participants themselves as well as attention to the wider institutional and societal contexts in which they live and work. Although the word "inclusivity" is not necessarily synonymous with "diversity," the two terms are strongly related. After all, most adult learning activities are in fact made up of both men and women, and they usually include participants from more than one ethnic or racial group. Given this societal reality, "inclusivity" necessarily implies attention to diversity, though greater and lesser attention to specific types of diversity depends in part on the nature of the learning activity and on who the participants and planners in those activities are and what their respective places are in relationship to the institutional sponsoring agency and to society at large.

Due to population growth and the advances in technology during this "information age," the world is getting smaller. In addition, the demographics in the United States are changing and are projected to continue to change in such a way that interaction with those unlike oneself in many of the ways noted earlier is currently, or soon will be, a regular part of most people's daily activities. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census (1991), the Asian population in the United

States more than doubled between 1980 and 1990 and the Latino/Latina population increased by more than 50 percent. Both the African American and Native American populations increased by approximately 30 percent each, while the Euro-American or white population increased by only 6 percent. This trend of increasing racial and ethnic diversity is projected to continue. Both within and across these ethnic boundaries, there are gender and economic class differences. In addition, roughly 10 percent of the total U.S. population is estimated to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Crooks and Bauer 1990), and a significant portion of the population has a physical or mental disability (Heward and Cavanaugh 1993). Given the increasing diversity of society, it is imperative for educators to work at creating inclusive learning environments at all age levels. Considering inclusivity at three different levels, educators should create learning environments that (1) reflect the diversity of those present in the learning activity itself in the curriculum and pedagogical/andragogical style; (2) attend to the wider and immediate institutional contexts in which the participants work and live; and (3) in some way reflect the changing needs of an increasingly diverse society. Obviously, inclusivity at the first level is primary, but people do not live in a vacuum. Thus, attending to the institutional and societal levels in some way is also important.

#### Levels of Inclusivity of Curriculum and Pedagogy

LEVEL ONE	Reflects the diversity of the participants in the learning activity
LEVEL TWO	Attends to the diversity of the institutional context that is sponsoring the activity, as well as the wider and immediate contexts in which the participants live and work
LEVEL THREE	Reflects in some way the changing needs of an increasingly diverse society

The purpose of this monograph is to examine the issues involved in creating inclusive learning environments specifically for adults. There is, in fact, a developing body of literature dealing with multicultural concerns in adult education (see Cassara 1990; Ross-Gordon, Martin, and Briscoe 1990), some research and/or discussion of power relations in program planning and in the classroom (such as Cervero and Wilson 1994a,b; Shor 1992; Tisdell 1993a,b), and some literature addressing race and gender issues in adult education that is relevant to this discussion on inclusivity (Cunningham 1992; Hart 1992; Hayes and Colin 1994). However, there is a paucity of literature that examines the theoretical underpinnings of attempts at multicultural education within the field of adult education itself. Although Ross-Gordon (1991) has discussed the need for developing a multicultural perspective for adult education research and has also briefly examined some literature that can contribute to multicultural theory building (1994) that would inform educational practice in the field, there remains unexamined a wide body of literature and ideas that can contribute to these efforts. Hence, it is the intent of this monograph to examine literature and ideas within the field of adult education and in the wider area of multicultural education, feminist theory, and critical and feminist pedagogy in order to analyze curricular and pedagogical issues that relate to creating an inclusive adult learning environment.

To that end, the following discussion takes place in three major interrelated parts. Part I deals primarily with curricular issues in planning and implementing an inclusive curriculum. Curricular and pedagogical decisions are intensely political decisions; thus Part I begins by grounding this whole discussion with a brief examination of the politics of knowledge production and dissemination, which clearly affects the way the curricula of adult education programs are designed and implemented. In the discussion in Part I, curriculum is defined primarily as what is included in the content of the course or educational program. Part II deals more with pedagogical or andragogical issues in the learning environment itself. Many would argue (and I would agree) that how the learning activity is conducted (pedagogy or andragogy) is an important part of what is getting taught in the curriculum (though in less conscious or overt ways) and is in fact a part of what McCutcheon (1988) and others call "the hidden curriculum." However, for purposes of clarity, issues

**Note: The term "andragogy" coined by Knowles (1980) is often used in adult education to refer to teaching strategies used with adult students. However, the following discussion uses the more widely known term "pedagogy" except when specifically referring to Knowles' (1980) concept of andragogy because the discussion borrows from a wide body of literature that specifically uses the term "pedagogy" (for example, "critical pedagogy," "feminist pedagogy," or "radical pedagogy") when discussing teaching strategies.**

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pertaining to the "hidden curriculum" will be dealt with in Part II. It is important to note that the demarcation lines between curriculum and pedagogy are artificial in this discussion, and this demarcation line is made only to find a way of organizing the discussion. In reality, pedagogy is a part of the curriculum and vice versa; decisions in both realms are mutually influencing and always ongoing. After all, what happens in the learning environment in most cases affects decisions made about how the curriculum will be reconstructed, and what is actually a part of the course content helps determine what teaching strategies will be used. Thus, readers should keep the interconnection of the two terms in mind when reading this monograph. Finally, in the epilogue, curriculum and pedagogy come together in an examination of some specific implications for the development of inclusive learning environments for adults.



# Part I

## Planning and Implementing an Inclusive Curriculum

The creation and implementation of an inclusive educational program requires attending to a variety of issues. The aim of Part I is to deal primarily with issues involved in efforts to create and implement an inclusive curriculum. It is divided into three main subsections. In order to set the stage for the remaining discussion in this monograph, the first part deals with the politics of knowledge production and dissemination, which are central to understanding issues in creating an inclusive curriculum. The second and larger section examines in some detail the current debates and models being discussed in the multicultural education literature. Part I concludes with an examination of some of the decisions real educators have had to make in attempting to design their own curricula for courses or educational activities, or in working on curriculum transformation projects.

### *The Politics of Knowledge Production and Curriculum Design*

Behind any particular body of accepted knowledge are the definitions, the boundaries, established by those who have held power. To disagree with those boundaries and definitions, it has been necessary to recognize them; to refuse them is to be shut out even from debate; to transgress them is to mark oneself as mad, heretical, dangerous. The assumptions and the form of a position mark it as admissible or inadmissible to the discourses of knowledge. So too does the kind of person (a person whose 'kind' has been preestablished by the culture) affect whether what is said or written is listened to as knowledge or not. (Minnich 1990, pp. 151-152)

These words set the stage for providing an understanding of the politics of knowledge production—an understanding that is central to examining how to create an inclusive curriculum. Minnich calls attention to some of the key issues involved in the politics and process of knowledge production and dissemination:

- underlying power relations;
- the boundaries and definitions of what has counted as knowledge;
- the significance of the "kind" of people involved in the dynamic process of knowledge production and dissemination; and
- their relative positions in relationship to the power structure.

**Key issues involved in the politics and process of knowledge production and dissemination: underlying power relations; the boundaries and definitions of what has counted as knowledge; the significance of the "kind" of people involved in the dynamic process of knowledge production and dissemination; and their relative positions in relationship to the power structure.**

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These intertwined factors are always a key to understanding how "knowledge" is produced and disseminated, along with how what has counted as "knowledge" has been determined and by whom, both in the society at large and in more specific local situations. Because Minnich's insights in epistemology and in the politics of knowledge production and dissemination provide a conceptual framework for the remainder of the discussion throughout this monograph, it is important to explore these issues in some detail.

Minnich (1990) notes that the boundaries and definitions of what has traditionally counted as knowledge have been determined by those in power. Those who have held power (who are mostly white, and western, and male) have to a large extent determined the boundaries of knowledge, or what counts as the "official" necessary knowledge base for a particular field of study or at a particular educational level. In considering how this relates to the culture at large, Apple and Beyer (1988), in a similar vein to Minnich, provide an analysis that focuses on the *connections between* the formal educational system and the larger capitalist society. Because educational institutions serve as "the guardians" of what a culture has determined is "knowledge," their analysis, although focused on the formal educational system, is helpful to the discussion here.

Apple and Beyer (1988) suggest that there are three major inter-related functions of the formal educational system in relationship to the larger culture in a capitalist society. First, they argue

that the formal educational system creates the conditions necessary for capital accumulation by reproducing a hierarchically organized labor force through sorting people into groups where students on different rungs of the hierarchical ladder are taught different skills, norms of relating, and values. This sorting is often based on the dominance and subordination of cultural groups where those privileged by gender, race, and class are taught the knowledge and skills that will maintain their privileged positions. Second, Apple and Beyer argue that the educational system also serves as an agent of legitimation for the society at large. Even though the conditions are set up (primarily by those who have the most power in the culture) so that the relations of ruling will be reproduced and power disparities based on race, gender, and class will be maintained, educational institutions give the illusory sense that, because they are agents supposedly in the business of providing equal opportunity for all, they are agents of social justice. Citizens (in the United States) are taught early on the tenets of the Declaration of Independence that "all 'men' are created equal" and the illusions of the "American dream" that suggest there is equal opportunity for all. Yet, at the same time those privileged by interlocking systems of gender, race, and class are given an education that will maintain their privileged position. But the educational system attempts to foster "a social belief that the major institutions of our society are equally responsive by race, class, and gender" (Apple and Beyer 1988, pp. 338-339), thus serving as an agent of legitimation for the larger culture.

Apple and Beyer (1988) note that a third major function of the educational system is to produce and disseminate knowledge. But, as Minnich (1990) argues, what has traditionally counted as knowledge has been determined by those who have power; thus "knowledge" has largely been a reflection of what the dominant group has determined is important to and for them, according to the "standards" that have been created by them. Faculty members, particularly at the graduate level at research universities, have had a highly significant role in determining what knowledge is. They produce knowledge in their research pursuits; they also determine what research or new knowledge is "good" and what research and literature base is to be published, disseminated, and included in the curriculum. Snyder and Hoffman (1992) report that in 1987 (the most recent year cited),

91 percent of full-time faculty in public institutions offering doctoral degrees were white, 75 percent were male, and only 1.8 percent were African American. Thus, it appears that these producers and disseminators of knowledge are still overwhelmingly white and largely male. It is no surprise that *required* curricula in the formal educational system at all levels of education to a large extent reflect knowledge and information created by and about the white middle class. Admittedly, this has begun to change in some circles. However, the changes that have come about in specific locations have not been without conflict, power struggles, or efforts to maintain the traditional knowledge production process. Nor has it been without attention to the "kind" of people (women, people of color, working-class people) who have had a large part in trying to change what counts as knowledge. Although some curricula in specific locations in the educational system may include material or whole courses that deal with women, people of color, or working-class people, such material is relegated to the margins, and whole courses devoted to the study of these groups are seldom required. Thus, what is central in most curricula is still what is white and middle class, and still in many cases, what is male as well.

Clearly, both Minnich (1990) and Apple and Beyer (1988) call attention to the significance of power relations and the "kinds" of people who tend to be in power relative to the knowledge production process, but each of them highlights slightly different elements that are the key to the politics of knowledge production. For Apple and Beyer (1988) the unit of analysis is the *connections between* the educational system and the larger culture. The fact that this is a capitalist society is central to their analysis. Taking a neomarxist view of the knowledge production process rooted in the educational system, their focus is on the ways this capitalist society maintains itself through the educational system. Minnich (1990), on the other hand, calls attention not so much to how the system reproduces itself, but rather to what is involved in expanding what counts as knowledge, and to the politics of creating new knowledge and/or challenging what has been viewed as knowledge. She suggests that if one wants to expand the boundaries of knowledge, one needs to know what those boundaries are or have been; otherwise, it is not possible for one even to participate in the debate.

She also suggests that to expand or transgress the boundaries of knowledge "is to mark oneself as mad, heretical, dangerous" (p. 151). Although Minnich may be overstating her case to some degree, clearly those who have attempted to expand what counts as knowledge, particularly people of color and women, have been met with resistance from those who have more power in the system and who are often guardians of "the canon" (Fine 1992). To call for change is (in Minnich's terms) to mark oneself as dangerous, at least dangerous to those whose interests it serves to maintain the status quo. But Minnich also points out that often the "kind" of people (women, people of color, working-class people) trying to expand the knowledge base as well as the definitions of knowledge have not traditionally been viewed as producers of knowledge. She argues that *who* people are that are doing the speaking or writing affect "whether what is said or written is listened to as knowledge or not" (Minnich 1990, p. 152). Thus, the gender, race, or class of the speakers and writers affect the extent to which the content or form of a particular position or document is viewed as "real" knowledge.

What has this to do with creating an inclusive curriculum for adults? For the reasons noted in this discussion, it is clear that the knowledge production and dissemination process is a political process. What counts as knowledge in a particular learning context—and decisions about what gets included in the curriculum for a given learning activity—are decisions made with attention to the politics of this particular educational context and to what is seen as "real" knowledge relevant to this educational context. Curricular decisions are political decisions (Wood 1988), and most educational programs are offered through a sponsoring agency or organization. And as Cervero and Wilson (1994b) note, "whenever people act in an organizational context, they do so within sets of power relations" (p. 249), and these power relations are going to have an impact on how educational programs are planned, how knowledge is defined, and how curricula are designed. For example, a for-credit class offered in a degree program at a university is likely to emphasize cognitive and rational understanding of ideas pertaining to a particular subject, more than experiential activities or activities intended to encourage psychoemotional growth, because that is what higher education has traditionally been about. An educational or training program offered through a human resource department of a Fortune 500 company is probably going to teach skills that will

What counts as knowledge in a particular learning context—and decisions about what gets included in the curriculum for a given learning activity—are decisions made with attention to the politics of this particular educational context and to what is seen as "real" knowledge relevant to this educational context.

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increase worker productivity in order to further the capital interests of that company. In discussing issues of creating an inclusive adult learning environment, it is important to attend to the fact that educational programs are embedded in an organizational context, which is embedded in a larger societal context. One must consider what the relationships are among those who create the educational program, those who participate in it, those who facilitate it, the sponsoring institution, and the larger culture. For this reason, Cervero and Wilson (1994a) suggest that, for educational programs to be successful, it is perhaps wise that the interests of five categories of people are represented when planning educational programs: "the learners, teachers, planners, institutional leadership, and the affected public" (p. 143). And as Minnich (1990) notes, the "kinds" of people involved in various aspects of this process are going to have an effect both on how knowledge is defined and how it is viewed.

The issue here is how might adult educators create inclusive curricula while being mindful of the politics of the knowledge production and dissemination process and the politics inherent in the organizational context. Minnich indicates that the kinds of people who traditionally have had more institutional, economic, and societal power (i.e., those who are white and male) typically are viewed as having more credibility as knowledge producers and disseminators, at least by those in positions of power within organizations that sponsor educational programs. But this does not mean that people of color and women (and some white men as well) are not having a significant impact in producing knowledge and in developing curricula that are inclusive of a wide array of typically marginalized groups of people. But those who do this the most successfully do it by attending to the politics of the situation, by building coalitions, and certainly by having knowledge of and developing new knowledge relevant to marginalized groups. The multicultural education literature that specifically deals with curricular transformation can cast some light on how to create inclusive curricula for adults. This is taken up in the next section.

## ***Multicultural Education: Current Debates and Working Models***

In order to create an inclusive curriculum, every curriculum or program planner, teacher, or facilitator needs to define how inclusive an educational program is going to be. Clearly, there are time limits, institutional constraints, and political issues to be considered. Nevertheless, being attentive to issues of inclusivity in the curriculum requires dealing with at least some of the differences among people based on the factors of race, ethnicity, economic class, gender, age, ability/disability, sexual orientation, and so on. Although there is coming to be a significant body of literature in the field of adult education that deals with one or more of these factors, there has been little discussion regarding what the working models of multicultural adult education are. The more general education and higher education literature discusses current ways multicultural issues are being incorporated into the curriculum in various educational settings and explores some of the working models and approaches to multicultural education. An examination of this literature can give some direction to adult educators who are attempting to create inclusive learning environments in their own educational contexts.

Before reviewing some of these working models from the more general education literature, a few preliminary remarks are in order. First, there is no single definition of "multicultural education." Different authors use the term in different ways to cover everything from single-group studies, such as approaches to dealing with English as a second language students, to the inclusion of gender and disability concerns, to curriculum transformation projects (Banks 1993; Sleeter and Grant 1987). Pagenhart (1994) notes further that some use the term "multiculturalism" merely to promote the colorizing of U.S. history and culture without addressing the nature of power relations between and among groups. Others specifically call attention to issues of marginalization that, Pagenhart argues, thrust power relations into the foreground by examining how and why many groups have been left out in the construction of the "master narrative." Thus, for some authors writing in the area of multicultural education, the discussion seems to center on race or ethnicity issues, whereas others include not only a wide array of groups,

but also an examination of power relations between and among those groups and the dominant culture at large.

A related issue in these debates and discussions about multicultural education is not only the issue of what "multicultural" means, but how best to incorporate multiculturalism into the curriculum, particularly in formal educational settings. This debate centers in part on epistemological questions (Lather 1991; Minnich 1990), though many authors do not discuss these epistemological issues directly. Some of the questions underlying these discussions are as follows: Should one accept the epistemological grounding that has traditionally been operative in education and simply add readings about diverse cultural groups and women? Or should one develop courses based on a different epistemological grounding as many African American studies and women's studies programs have done in higher education settings? Different authors have different answers to these questions, though only a few directly address them. Nevertheless, those who examine the implicit models currently in use or approaches to multicultural education are in fact also, either implicitly or explicitly, examining the underlying epistemological assumptions inherent in these models. Let us turn now to two separate but related discussions of examinations of curricular approaches or models of multicultural education—that of Sleeter and Grant (1987) and that of Banks (1993).

### **Sleeter and Grant's Models**

In the mid-1980s, Sleeter and Grant (1987) noted that several authors had been writing in the area of what they would consider "multicultural education," but were doing so in vastly different ways with seemingly different definitions of what "multicultural" means. In examining more than 200 articles, they created a taxonomy to define how various authors were discussing these issues, and they noted that these issues were basically being discussed according to five different approaches:

- Teaching the Culturally Different
- The Human Relations Approach
- Single-Group Studies Approach
- The "Multicultural Education" Approach
- Education that Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist



In describing these approaches in the mid-1980s (Sleeter and Grant 1987) and discussing them further more recently (Grant and Sleeter 1993), they note that some teachers have an eclectic approach, but suggest that sitting on the fence in regard to these models may confuse students. Nevertheless, many educators may use more than one of these approaches, depending on the context of the educational situation, or a different approach altogether in attempting to develop and implement curriculum. Each of these approaches or models is discussed here with a consideration of what I see as some of the epistemological underpinnings inherent in these approaches, although Sleeter and Grant do not explicitly discuss these underlying assumptions. But making the underlying assumptions more visible highlights the fact that knowledge is always constructed and disseminated from a particular perspective. Thus, it makes the political implications more apparent.

### *Teaching the Culturally Different*

Sleeter and Grant suggest that the "teaching the culturally different" approach emphasizes helping those who are culturally marginalized to fit more successfully into the educational system or the society at large the way that it is currently designed. "The goals of this approach are to equip such students with the cognitive skills, concepts, information, language, and values required by U.S. society, and eventually to enable them to hold a job and function within society's institutions and culture" (Grant and Sleeter 1993, p. 52). One could argue that the focus of this approach is on helping people, such as students of color, women, and immigrants (along with other culturally marginalized groups), to *assimilate* more successfully so they have a greater chance of success in the system. This approach does not focus on changing the structure of the educational system at all, but rather attempts to find ways members of marginalized groups can successfully fit into it. The epistemological assumption underlying this approach is probably the view that knowledge is neutral and that in order to be successful in this culture, one should learn what is typically taught in the mainstream school curriculum. There really is no attention to the question of who it was that determined what should be learned or what counts as true knowledge. Rather, the focus is on helping those

who have not learned what is typically taught in the mainstream educational system to "catch up" so that they can be more successful in the system.

### *The Human Relations Approach*

The "human relations approach" focuses more on helping people of different cultural groups to learn to live together harmoniously, particularly as individuals. The focus of this approach is the development of interpersonal communication skills to reduce prejudice and to create understanding between and among human beings, by promoting positive feelings and attitudes students have about themselves and others as members of various racial, ethnic, gender, or cultural groups. The curriculum in this approach would emphasize the individual similarities and differences among the members of the various cultural groups represented in the class or learning activity. Attempts would probably be made to include accurate information about the various cultural groups represented in the room to promote greater interpersonal communication and the reduction of communication based on prejudice and stereotypes. An assumption underlying this approach is that students learn better in an environment that promotes individual and psychological safety and understanding among its members. There is not much active questioning, however, about the basic design of the traditional curriculum, which is essentially seen as "neutral," nor an examination of the implicit assumptions about the construction and dissemination of knowledge in the traditional curriculum. Given that the focus of this approach is more on the individual and psychological and how individuals from different groups can get along, there is little attention to the social construction of knowledge. Thus the epistemological assumption underlying this approach is probably that knowledge in and of itself is more or less neutral, and students will learn more (in the traditional sense) if they feel more psychologically safe and well understood.

### *Single-Group Studies*

A wide body of literature examines the educational experiences of specific groups, such as African Americans, Native

Americans, Southeast Asian refugees, women, and so on. This literature covers educational experiences from K-12 to adult basic education and literacy programs to graduate programs in higher education. The basic purpose of much of this literature and this particular approach to multicultural education is to examine the educational experiences of the target group, usually for the purposes of increasing understanding about that group and to raise the group's social status. Often (but not always) inherent in this approach is the examination of the ways this particular group has been historically oppressed (Grant and Sleeter 1993).

Rather than focusing on several groups at a time, this approach focuses on the detailed historical, social, and cultural experience of one particular group to promote an in-depth understanding of the target group. Usually, the experience of the target group is examined vis-a-vis the dominant culture. In most cases, the epistemological underpinnings of this particular approach are the recognition and belief that most knowledge claims, particularly in regard to school knowledge, are political—that they were created and validated by members of a particular group (usually the dominant one) and thus reflect the values, interests, and knowledge validation process of that dominant group. Knowledge, particularly the way that it has been defined in educational systems, is not seen as neutral, but rather is seen as the reflection of the interests of the dominant group. Very often in this approach to developing curriculum there are attempts both to examine and incorporate the way the target group has defined knowledge in their own communities and to develop curricula according to the standards of the target group.

#### *The "Multicultural Education" Approach*

Unlike the single-group studies approach, this approach to multicultural education attempts to reduce prejudice and to work for equal opportunity and social justice for all oppressed groups. "The multicultural education approach attempts to reform the total schooling process for all . . . , regardless of whether the school is an all-White suburban school or a multiracial urban school" (Grant and Sleeter 1993, p. 55). Thus, one operating from this approach would include information about all groups in the curriculum, no matter what the race, social class, or

gender makeup of the particular class or learning activity is, because all students need information about all of society's groups, regardless of whether they are represented in the class or learning activity. No one cultural group dominates the curriculum in this approach, and attempts are made to represent groups the way members of those groups would like to be represented. The epistemological assumptions underlying this approach are similar to those underlying the single-group studies approach—knowledge is seen as political and as the creation of somebody from a particular race, class, ethnicity, and gender.

*Education that Is Multicultural  
and Social Reconstructionist*

Sleeter and Grant (1987) suggest that this approach is similar to the "multicultural education" approach, but it goes further in that it encourages participants in a given class or learning activity to examine critically their own lives and social circumstances. Not only does it provide information about different groups, but this approach appears to examine more directly some of the power relations between and among groups and it also asks each participant to look at the intersecting systems of oppression and privilege that inform his or her own life. In so doing, this approach "teaches students how to use social action skills to participate in shaping and controlling their destiny" (Grant and Sleeter 1993, p. 56). This approach actively teaches students to analyze their own life circumstances and also presents specific strategies for social change and coalition building. Thus, knowledge about the various groups that make up U.S. society and the world at large is not just seen as something relevant to the society or world "out there," but as extremely relevant to the lives of the participants in the class or learning activity itself. The epistemological underpinning of this approach is not only that knowledge is seen as political, but that the participants themselves can and should take control in examining and changing the way knowledge has been defined, constructed, and disseminated. Of the five approaches discussed by Sleeter and Grant (1987) or Grant and Sleeter (1993), this approach is the most overtly political and challenging to the status quo.

Although Grant and Sleeter (1993) state that one may be eclectic or may use a different approach to multicultural education than any of the five approaches, they also note that to operate out of more than one model may be confusing to students. However, it seems that one could philosophically be aligned with one approach, but for a myriad of practical reasons operate primarily out of another approach when designing and implementing a particular curriculum for a specific situation. For example, one may philosophically and epistemologically be most aligned with education that is multicultural and socially reconstructionist from the standpoint of a personal belief that the process of knowledge production and dissemination is extremely political whether or not one openly discusses it. And one may desire to educate in a way that participants take control over their lives and work to change the system. Yet, one might actually operate more out of the human relations approach when creating a curriculum or conducting a learning activity, because to do more than this at a particular time in a particular context might be too threatening to the participants or to those controlling the hiring and firing mechanisms and might be more than one is willing to risk. Thus, in determining which approach to multicultural education one employs, one must also attend to the politics of knowledge production and dissemination discussed earlier. Sleeter and Grant tend to avoid discussion of these issues in discussing the various approaches to multicultural education. Although Banks does not deal with these issues very directly either, some of the issues surrounding the politics of curriculum design and implementation become a bit more apparent in his discussion of approaches to multicultural education.

In determining which approach to multicultural education one employs, one must also attend to the politics of knowledge production and dissemination.

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### **Banks' Approaches to Multicultural Education**

Banks (1993) takes almost a stage approach to the development of a multicultural curriculum. He suggests that there are levels of integration of multicultural content, and different educational systems or organizations are at different stages of developing and implementing a multicultural curriculum. Banks does not specifically define what he means by "multicultural education," but based on what groups he includes in discussions and examples, it appears that he is talking about differences based

primarily on race and ethnicity. However, he does give passing reference to gender, social class, and ability/disability issues. Banks notes that, although the United States is made up of many cultural groups, most curricula still represent the white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant world view. He attributes this to the fact that many educators rely on textbooks and instructional materials that represent the world primarily from this perspective. Although some textbooks include information about women and various racial and ethnic groups, he notes that information about such groups is still usually presented from a mainstream perspective. Banks, like Sleeter and Grant, focuses primarily on K-12 education; however, his insights can be applied to adult and higher education situations. As has been discussed elsewhere (Bailey, Tisdell, and Cervero 1994; Colin 1994), required courses in graduate programs in adult education usually include works of "eminent" adult educators such as Knowles, Brookfield, Mezirow, and others, mostly white males. Although more and more graduate programs in adult education are offering courses dealing with the intersecting systems of gender and race privilege and oppression, such courses are generally not required and thus are given marginal status in the field. Thus, it seems that Banks' (1993) discussion of what he calls the "mainstream-centric" curriculum would apply to adult education situations as well as to most educational situations in this country.

Banks analyzes efforts to establish multicultural curricula in this country and notes that many educators or educational organizations use one of four approaches in their attempts to include multicultural content. He conceptualizes these four approaches as follows:

- Contributions Approach
- Additive Approach
- Transformative Approach
- Social Action Approach

In some ways these approaches parallel Sleeter and Grant's approaches, but Banks suggests that very often educators use more than one method in actual teaching situations and further suggests that one might use one approach in order to move to another, for as he says:

It is unrealistic to expect a teacher to move directly from a highly mainstream-centric curriculum to one that focuses on decision making and social action. Rather, the move from the first to higher levels of multicultural content integration is likely to be gradual and cumulative. (Banks 1993, p. 207)

Recognizing that one may use one approach to move to another or use more than one approach depending on the situation, these four approaches are now considered in further detail. (A comparison of Banks' and Sleeter and Grant's approaches is depicted in Table 1).

**TABLE 1  
A COMPARISON OF APPROACHES TO  
MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION**

<b>BANKS' APPROACHES</b>	<b>SLEETER &amp; GRANT'S APPROACHES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributions Approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching the Culturally Different</li> <li>• Human Relations Approach</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additive Approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching the Culturally Different</li> <li>• Human Relations Approach</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformative Approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-Group Studies</li> <li>• "Multicultural Education" Approach</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Action Approach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single-Group Studies</li> <li>• Education that Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist</li> </ul>

*Note: Some of Sleeter and Grant's approaches are listed as parallel to Banks' approaches in more than one place. A clearer demarcation would depend on the specific instructor's actual approach.*

### *The Contributions Approach*

The contributions approach is often used by educators in the first attempts to begin to create an inclusive curriculum. In this approach, attempts are made to include information about the heroes and artifacts of different cultural groups. The

epistemological underpinnings of this approach are the same as they are in the mainstream-centric curricular approach, because essentially the goals, structure, and important characteristics of the curriculum remain unchanged. Educators using this approach do tend to include information about some cultural heroes such as Booker T. Washington, Sacajawea, and Cesar Chávez. Banks (1993) notes that individuals who advocated radical social change are often not included, and he posits that this is why Booker T. Washington is more likely to be included than is W.E.B. Du Bois in using this approach. Ordinarily, "the criteria used to select ethnic heroes for study and to judge them for success are derived from the mainstream society and not from the ethnic community" (p. 198). But including some heroes from various cultural groups on some holiday celebrations, such as on or around Martin Luther King's birthday or even including a week or month (as in "Black History Month" or "Women's History Month") is often a way that educators quickly incorporate some limited information about various cultural groups in the curriculum. Often in this approach, discussion of the contributions of these individuals is limited to special occasions in the curriculum, rather than integrated throughout the curriculum. It is clear that this approach is still epistemologically grounded in a mainstream-centric curriculum, but it does represent a step for most educators at any educational level to begin to create an inclusive curriculum.

### *The Additive Approach*

In this approach, an educator or curriculum developer might add a substantial unit dealing with a group typically underrepresented or not represented in the curriculum. Like the contributions approach, the epistemological grounding is still the same as in the mainstream-centric curriculum, and the goals, structure, and purposes of the curriculum are typically what they have always been. Banks (1993) gives as examples of this approach the addition of the book *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker to a literature class or the addition of the study of the internment of Japanese Americans to the unit dealing with World War II.



The additive approach is often used at all levels of education in attempts to create multicultural curricula. With the current emphasis on creating inclusive curricula at all levels, it is easier to add information about different groups to presently existing curricula than it is to redesign the curriculum totally, asking different kinds of questions. Thus, this approach is widely used in many educational settings. Although it represents an important step in attempts to create an inclusive curriculum, its disadvantages are similar to those of the contributions approach. As Banks notes, the additive approach "usually results in the viewing of ethnic content from the perspectives of mainstream historians, writers, artists, and scientists because it does not involve a restructuring of the curriculum" (p. 201). Banks (1993) gives the example of adding a history unit about the Oglala Sioux Indians to a discussion of "The Westward Movement." If the name of the unit is "The Westward Movement," there is an assumption that this is a movement about European Americans moving west, whereas if the unit were from the perspective of the Oglala Sioux, it might be called "The Invasion from the East." Although this is a particularly obvious example of the underlying Eurocentric epistemological assumptions, these assumptions pervade almost all additive approaches to creating inclusive curricula. However, this approach may represent an important step in eventually transforming the curriculum.

### *The Transformative Approach*

Banks argues that the transformative approach differs fundamentally from either the contributions or the additive approaches. "The transformation approach changes the basic assumptions of the curriculum and enables students to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view" (Banks 1993, p. 203). In the transformation approach, the epistemological underpinnings are quite different. As in Sleeter and Grant's latter three approaches (single-group studies, multicultural education, and education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist), the knowledge construction, validation, and dissemination process in Banks' transformative approach is not seen as neutral, but rather is seen from some group's perspective and is therefore inherently political. Thus when one is operating from the transformative approach, one attempts to make apparent the perspectives of

various groups. When studying some event in U.S. history using the transformative approach, one would attempt to make apparent the various perspectives of the various players in that historical event. If there is no available information about the perspective of members of a particular group, the possible reasons it was left out or made unavailable are explored. According to this approach, the point is not so much to add a long list of groups to be included in the curriculum, but rather to help students view an historical event, piece of literature, or educational construct from more than one cultural perspective. This approach is somewhat parallel to Sleeter and Grant's single-group studies or multicultural education approach.

### *The Social Action Approach*

This approach is most parallel to Sleeter and Grant's (1987) education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist approach. The social action approach includes all the elements of the transformation approach, but requires students to take an active role in analyzing social systems and structures and educates for social criticism and social change. Banks, along with many other curriculum theorists (such as Apple and Beyer 1988; Wood 1988), suggests that the traditional approach to education has been one that has essentially reproduced the social systems of race, class, and gender privilege and oppression, because it has asked students to be passive recipients of the knowledge, values, institutions, and practices of the society at large. Banks' social action approach requires students to be active participants in the democratic process, and it tries to teach the knowledge and skills that will give students the tools for social change. Like Sleeter and Grant's fifth approach, Banks' social action approach is the most overtly political of the four approaches he discusses, in that it teaches the skills for social change and has social change as part of its agenda. This is NOT to say that the other approaches are not also political. None of the approaches are politically neutral. Although the contributions and additive approaches are more accepting of the status quo, it is important to note that acceptance of the status quo is also a political position.

In these discussions of Banks' and Sleeter and Grant's examinations of approaches to multicultural education, I have tried to point out the similarities and differences in the way each of these authors discuss the various approaches. There is considerable overlap in the way each of them discuss the approaches, but there are some differences in the two as well. Banks is more overt in examining the epistemological underpinnings than are Sleeter and Grant, who really do not explicitly discuss these underlying assumptions. In this discussion I have chosen to make these underlying assumptions more visible, because I believe it makes it easier to grasp the fact that there are political considerations to be reckoned with in attempting to implement and design an inclusive curriculum, as well as to define for oneself what an inclusive curriculum is. Some of these political considerations as discussed by those in higher and adult education are addressed in the next section.

### ***Curriculum Design and Curricular Transformation in Higher and Adult Education: Politics Revisited***

Curriculum decisions are political decisions (Wood 1988). Decisions made about what should or should not be included in the content of the curriculum as well as the manner in which classes should be conducted are decisions influenced by one's philosophical view of the world and the political realities that inform one's life or position relative to the educational institution or context in which one is working. This is why I felt it important to examine the epistemological underpinnings of the approaches to multicultural education as discussed by both Banks and Sleeter and Grant. What one chooses to include or not include in terms of multicultural course content, and how one chooses to do it, flows from an individual's educational philosophy along with a sense of what the political stakes might be in incorporating such an approach. Of course, some educators have not consciously examined their underlying educational philosophy. To be unaware of one's position often indicates that one has probably internalized the educational values of the dominant culture and so is typically operating out of what Banks would define as a "mainstream-centric" approach to curriculum development.

In discussing the approaches to multicultural education, Banks and Sleeter and Grant are primarily referring to K-12 education. Yet, the approaches they discuss are also prevalent among higher and adult educators. Many of the debates within higher education—about whether to decenter "the canon" or how to include multicultural course content—are based in part on clashing philosophies of education and sometimes clashing philosophies of multicultural education in particular. There is disagreement not only about definitions of the term "multicultural education," but also about what groups should be included in discussions of multicultural issues. In the midst of these debates in higher education, some faculty members who value multicultural education (however they define it) are quietly altering their courses. In so doing, many are using additive approaches. Other faculty members are involved in various types of curriculum transformation projects within their own program areas or departments and in the university at large, taking a transformation or social reconstructionist approach. These faculty members, often with experience in women's studies or ethnic studies programs, mostly focus their discussion on how to alter the curriculum in regard to dealing with forms of oppression based on the intersections of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, and ability/disability issues. (See Butler 1993; Fiol-Matta and Chamberlain 1994; hooks 1994; Minnich 1990; Schmitz 1985; Tetreault 1993; and Watkins 1993 for detailed examples.)

Although only a few adult educators are discussing multicultural education specifically using this term, there are debates going on within the field of adult education parallel to the ones in higher education. The terms of the discourse in the field of adult education tend to be "power relations" between dominant and oppressed groups, rather than the term "multicultural education," although some more recent writers are using this term as well. In any case, the discussion of the role that education should play in changing both educational systems and society is a large debate in the field. Cunningham (1988) argues that the ethical role of adult educators is to create environments where people can come to an understanding of how the reality of their lives was socially constructed in a society in which unequal power relationships based on gender, race, and class abound. Mezirow (1985), on the other hand, is more cautious about the role educators should play in social action. He argues that educators

"cannot assume the roles of leaders or organizers of social action, but we have a function which involves helping learners become aware of the cultural contradictions which oppress them" (p. 149). But Cassara (1990) notes that social consciousness has been "a hallmark of the adult education movement" (p. 1), or at least of part of the adult education movement.

The field of adult education has its well-known social activists, Paulo Freire and Miles Horton among them, who are typically represented in the adult education curriculum. Many more current authors (Cassara 1990; Colin 1994; Colin and Preciph 1991; Collard and Stalker 1991; Flannery 1994; Hart 1992; Hayes 1994; Sheared 1994, to name a few) featured in the various recently published works or anthologies dealing more directly with aspects of multicultural adult education (edited by Cassara 1990; Hayes and Colin 1994; Ross-Gordon, Martin, and Briscoe 1990) call for curricular reform in the field and for the recognition of educators and activists who are not primarily white and male. Many call for complete curricular revision so that what is included in required courses is not so "mainstream centric," to use Banks' terminology. Most of these adult educators who are calling for curricular reform seem to be operating out of Banks' transformation or social action approach to multicultural education. Based on my discussions with adult education colleagues, others are attempting to include multicultural issues in their courses on some level, primarily using additive approaches. As Banks suggests, additive approaches can eventually lead to complete curricular revision.

As in the broader areas of education, there is no agreement in the field of adult education about what a definition of multicultural education is, and different authors deal with different aspects of inclusivity. Some deal primarily with single groups around issues of race, ethnicity, or gender, whereas others discuss the importance of the intersections of all systems of structural privilege or oppression and mention intersections based on one or more of the factors of race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, or ability/disability. The field of adult education has been surprisingly and noticeably silent on dealing specifically with oppression based on sexual orientation, though Hill (1995) recently did a critique of heterosexist discourse in adult education, and Tisdell and Taylor (1995) recently

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completed a study examining how gay and lesbian faculty members deal with sexual orientation issues in the higher education classroom. In any case, how one defines "inclusive" or what one chooses to include or not include regarding representation of different groups and different issues in a curriculum is a decision that the educator makes in light of his or her educational philosophy and the political realities informing his or her life in this particular context. What are some of the issues that adult educators face in attempting to create inclusive curricula, and how are they defining inclusive? Specific examples are provided in the remainder of the discussion in Part I, and for clarity, the discussion is divided into two parts: (1) examples from adult basic education and popular education and (2) examples based on a study of adult educators in a higher education context.

### **Inclusive Curricula in Adult Basic Education and Popular Education**

Without a doubt, many who work in the area of literacy, adult basic education, English as a second language (ESL), popular education, or community-based education do so because they want to bring about social change and work toward more equity between dominant and oppressed groups. Clearly, participants in these types of programs are often marginalized in this culture because of their educational level, their social class, race or ethnicity, national origin, gender, or a combination of these factors. On the one hand, most adult educators plan educational programs based on their perceptions of the needs of a particular constituency, which take into account some of the factors of marginalization of the participants. But on the other hand, Ross-Gordon (1990) notes there are disproportionately lower participation rates in adult education activities among racial and ethnic minorities. This seems to suggest that, on some level, adult education programs are not meeting the needs of racial and ethnic minorities (or groups otherwise marginalized in the culture) as well as they might. Some authors suggest ways in which educators can better take into account the learning needs of specific groups in designing their curricula. Most of these authors do not specifically refer to a particular curricular orientation per se; however, many discuss the needs of particular groups and thus seem to be operating from Sleeter and

Grant's (1987) single-group studies approach or Banks' transformative or socially reconstructionist approaches. A few examples are discussed here.

Sheared (1995) recently did a study of African Americans who persist in adult basic education programs in California. She found that those who persisted did so primarily for the following reasons:

- because they value education and what they were learning was directly relevant to their lives;
- they had mechanisms of support both from within and outside the institution;
- the cultural realities that inform their lives were acknowledged by the teachers, other students, and the staff; and
- "their lived experiences are acknowledged within the program goals and the curriculum" (Sheared 1995, p. 311).

Fitzsimmons' (1991) study of 10 African American women who persist in literacy programs had similar findings, though there was more emphasis on the significance of relationships with teachers and tutors in the program and less direct discussion of the actual curriculum. Although neither Sheared nor Fitzsimmons gives details about exactly what was included in the curriculum of these programs, there is some evidence to suggest that the curricula accurately reflected the African American experience from the participants' perspectives, particularly in the Sheared study.

Sheared and Fitzsimmons concentrate on the specifics of the African American experience in literacy. Carmack (1992) and Bhola (1994) focus on the literacy needs of women as a group. Carmack (1992) notes "worldwide, there are 130 million more women who are illiterate than men" (p. 181) and examines the social factors that contribute to women's greater illiteracy. She argues for gender-specific literacy programming that better addresses the needs of women. She notes, however, there has been little research done that examines the ways women approach literacy, but nevertheless makes suggestions for what should be included in the curriculum for women's literacy education. She suggests that it should have both a practical focus that meets short-term needs and a strategic or emancipatory focus that addresses larger issues such as the sexual division of labor, domestic violence, and control over childbearing. Further, Carmack argues that the women themselves should be involved both in the planning and learning process so that they

can have some control not only in regard to what they want to learn, but also so they can take active roles in the construction of their lives.

Like Carmack (1992), Bhola (1994) discusses the literacy needs of women, but from an international perspective, and he specifically discusses a curriculum of transformation for women's literacy programs. In discussing women's literacy, he suggests that it is important to consider not only the specific learning situation, but the larger structural considerations that inform women's lives. On educational objectives he comments:

Educational objectives have to be dealt with at both the structural and superstructural levels: as a structural strategy, the educational system must be opened up for women; and as a superstructural strategy, educational values that keep women in the ghettos of domestic science and the so-called nurturing professions must be questioned, renovated and restructured. (Bhola 1994, p. 44)

In discussing how this relates to the development of a transformational literacy curriculum, he argues that a two-pronged approach to the literacy curriculum is necessary and that the curriculum needs to be one of accommodation as well as one of assertion and resistance. A curriculum of accommodation meets women's immediate needs; it might include such components as health and nutrition, sustainable agriculture, family planning, and child care—issues that are an immediate need in women's lives. But he suggests for the curriculum also to be emancipatory, or to be a curriculum of assertion and resistance, it should also cover such issues as "redefining self-perceptions and self-images; learning to systematize thoughts, to articulate and defend positions in dialogue and discussion; acquiring gender consciousness; understanding patriarchy as a cultural construction" (Bhola 1994, p. 46). Bhola also notes that it is important to take into account the local context of the literacy program—what works in Brazil might not work in Saudi Arabia, and he suggests that literacy educators use "powerful metaphors from the traditions of people with whom they work" (p. 46). The curricular approaches of both Carmack (1992) and Bhola (1994) look at the literacy needs of women as a single or unitary group



(Sleeter and Grant 1987), but both of their approaches deal with the need to create an emancipatory curriculum or a curriculum of assertion and resistance over the long term. Thus, they both are clearly operating from a transformative or social reconstructionist (Banks 1993) approach in their long-term curricular considerations.

Many authors writing in the area of adult basic education or popular education do so from the perspective of a particular group such as women or African Americans. Other authors discuss issues related to more than one marginalized group and thus appear to have a more expansive definition of inclusivity. In discussing how to facilitate cultural diversity in adult literacy programs, Martin (1990) warns of the dangers of assuming that "minorities" represent a single monolithic category. Following Ogbu (1990), Martin (1990) distinguishes between voluntary minorities and involuntary minorities. Voluntary minorities, such as some Asians or South American Latinos/Latinas, are those who have chosen to come to the United States for either greater economic mobility or greater political freedom. Involuntary minorities, such as African Americans, Native Americans, or Mexican Americans, are those who were either brought here for purposes of slavery or were colonized through conquest against their will. Voluntary and involuntary minorities have a different relationship to the educational system, which affects the way they approach adult basic education programs (Martin 1990; Ogbu 1990). Voluntary minorities, who perceive their social identity as different from, but not opposed to, white Americans, look at education as the means to advancement and thus tend to pursue ESL and adult literacy programs as a means of adapting to and being successful in mainstream culture. Involuntary minorities, however, see their social identity in opposition to white Americans, who have historically enslaved or colonized them. They often see educational institutions or programs as "embodiments of the society that oppresses them" (Martin 1990, p. 18), and thus they are often much more difficult to recruit and retain in adult basic education programs. Martin (following Ogbu 1990) discusses the fact that involuntary minorities resist education or cultural assimilation by practicing cultural inversion—that is, "forms of behavior, events, symbols, and meanings that inform a social identity opposed to the social identity of white Americans" (Martin 1990, p. 23). He considers ways adult basic educators might deal with issues related to

cultural inversion that affect involuntary minorities' educational involvement and discusses what he sees as a model program. Like Carmack (1992) in her discussion of the literacy needs of women, Martin (1990) argues that "literacy programs should seek to involve involuntary minorities in projects of socio-historical transformation" (p. 26). Thus, it appears that Martin's curricular approach to literacy is a transformative or social reconstructionist one.

Although Martin discusses the fact that minorities cannot be lumped together in a single monolithic category, the focus of his discussion is really on issues related to involuntary minorities in adult literacy programs. In analyzing a popular education summer institute held yearly in Canada for human rights activists, Razack (1993) discusses the issues involved in creating a curriculum that deals with social justice concerns for multiple groups, including women, native people, people with disabilities, disadvantaged minorities, gays and lesbians, and poor people. Given that the curriculum for this summer institute was specifically for social activists, it is clear that Razack (like most popular educators) is operating from the social reconstructionist model of curriculum development. In the curriculum for this summer institute, the focus was on the intersections of multiple systems of oppression and privilege, and Razack discusses the benefits and liabilities of dealing with interlocking systems of privilege and oppression in the curriculum itself. She notes that "education for social change seemed to be a more straightforward endeavor when we thought only in terms of unitary subjects" (p. 43), unitary subjects such as women as a category (or African Americans or poor people). But when examining other systems of privilege and oppression within a particular category, she notes that it becomes necessary to look at the intersections that make the curriculum design and group discussions infinitely more complex.

Although much of Razack's discussion of this institute centers on the pedagogical dilemmas (which is taken up in Part II) that she and the other participants encountered in this educational experience, these dilemmas cannot be seen as separate from the curriculum, because the design and implementation of a curriculum is always ongoing and cannot be entirely separated from what happens in the learning environment itself. And in the learning environment, as well as in the curriculum, one always

needs to ask whose interests will be represented by which people in the ongoing development and design of an educational program (Cervero and Wilson 1994a). This was an issue discussed by all the authors cited here in dealing with issues in literacy and in popular education. As addressed in the next session, this is also a question adult educators in a higher education setting implicitly ask in designing their own courses.

### **Inclusive Curricula in an Adult Higher Education Context**

In a recent study (Tisdell and McLaurin 1994), adult educators who teach in a higher education context and are known to include multicultural course content on some level were interviewed regarding their perceptions of how the inclusion of multicultural course content affects classroom dynamics. In these interviews, most of these faculty members also discussed issues they faced and political considerations to be reckoned with in determining what to include in their courses. Sixteen faculty members, nine white and seven black, were interviewed. Eight of these instructors teach at least some courses in programs such as women's studies or African-American studies that very directly address multicultural issues either from a transformative, social reconstructionist, or social action approach. The entire content of such courses is devoted to the examination of issues of structural privilege or oppression related to one or more historically oppressed groups. Although the other eight faculty members were not teaching classes in which the entire course content was about these issues, these faculty members did make efforts to include multicultural issues in their classes, mostly using additive approaches.

Participants were not asked specifically how they defined such terms as "multicultural," "diversity," or "inclusive." Rather, they were asked how they include gender or multicultural course content in their classes or curriculum. Nevertheless, they had a working definition of what they believed these terms to mean based on the issues they talked about. Virtually all of them talked in some way about the importance of educating in a way that increases students' critical thinking skills and helps them to develop a broader, more inclusive perspective. As one African American female professor of legal studies put it, "the whole

job is try to get them to be more critical thinkers and to be more inclusive and more expansive in their thinking" (Tisdell and McLaurin 1994, p. 361).

Although all of the participants talked in some way or another about the importance of helping students develop a more broadened perspective, there was a difference among faculty in the kind of issues they discussed when asked about gender and/or multicultural course content. Those who deal with these issues very directly who are coming from a transformative, social reconstructionist, or social action approach tended to discuss a multitude of issues, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, class, religion, and disability. Those who do this less directly, using additive approaches, tended to discuss the issue in more limited terms, and they tended to focus primarily on race and to deal with these issues more from the standpoint of the psychological effects on individual students. Thus, there was a difference in how the two groups seemed to be defining the term "multicultural."

All 16 of the participants, some more explicitly than others, indicated an awareness of the fact that curriculum decisions are political decisions when explaining how they included an exploration of multicultural issues in their classes. But there was a marked difference between the two groups of faculty members in how they did or did not discuss the political nature of the university curriculum. Those dealing with these issues very directly from a transformative or social action approach spent more time discussing their personal philosophy of education and epistemological issues related both to the university curriculum in general and to dealing with multicultural concerns. When asked what some primary issues are in dealing with multicultural concerns, one African American male professor said "Are you willing to change the ground? . . . I think the question always becomes whether you are asking a different kind of question than you were before, or whether you just changed the text and asked the same question" (ibid., p. 362). He went on to note that, although there is a political position to everything, positions of the dominant culture are often made to appear apolitical. "The greatest power of the canon is that it makes its political statement in silence," he noted. This instructor was calling attention to the political nature of what appears apolitical, whereas others called attention to the related issue of objectivity.

One female sociology and women's studies professor questioned the notion of an apolitical curriculum or the existence of an "objective" one. "You are talking about a 'value free' objectivity of sociology, but even that is socially constructed, and who are the people who determine what objectivity is?" (ibid.). Virtually all of those dealing very directly with gender or multicultural concerns pointed to the political, epistemological, and theoretical grounding issues as part of designing an inclusive curriculum. Most also alluded to the potential personal dangers of doing this too directly if one wants to survive in the current system. Several made comments similar to the following statement made by an African American female professor: "I would suggest that anyone coming in who's got to earn tenure and promotion would have to be very careful doing this" (ibid.).

Those instructors dealing with these issues less directly, largely using additive approaches, did not directly allude to the politics of the higher education system. Their position seemed essentially to be to accept the system the way it is; that is, not to question the epistemological grounding of the curricular structure of the higher education system, but to try to deal with some multicultural issues by fitting them in to the current system. Even among those instructors who felt strongly about the importance of raising multicultural awareness, the pressure of getting through the content of set syllabi and time factors (particularly in the larger, more basic courses) made them decide to relegate consciousness-raising experiences to side issues or additive approaches. Yet, even in such classes as the pure sciences, efforts to discuss multicultural issues were made, though the instructors in these cases used subtle methods, such as out-of-class reading assignments or discussions stimulated during break times to introduce students to such matters as gender equity, neglected minority figures, and the problem of stereotypes. They focused more on ways of including multicultural issues while also including what is "traditionally" covered in their courses. Rather than ignoring distinctions of race, gender, and so on, instructors in this group tended to think in terms of individual behaviors and differences among their students. The focus of some of them tended to be more on concern for individual students who are marginalized in some way and how these factors were linked to success in learning. From this standpoint, some of these instructors were wedded to Sleeter and Grant's (1987) human

relations approach, which is probably also an example of Banks' additive approaches. In sum, instructors dealing with these issues in this less direct manner tended to find ways they could include some multicultural content without questioning the overall design of university curricula, or at least without discussing the political implications of doing so.

The two groups of faculty members alluded to the issue of the politics of making curricular decisions differently; however, there was at least an implicit recognition of the politics of curricular decision making, even in the group using additive approaches. Those teaching entire courses about issues of privilege and oppression spent time discussing issues that Minnich (1990) addresses, such as who has the power to create knowledge, determine what counts as knowledge, and determine what "objective" is. Among this group, there was a recognition of the need to "be careful" if one needs to earn tenure, which is clearly a reference to university politics. Those using additive approaches did not directly discuss university politics; however, they did mention the pressure, presumably from the university in general, to get through the course content the way it had been defined by others with more authority in the university. Implicitly, there seemed to be a recognition that if one did not cover what some more powerful group had determined should be included in the course, but rather redesigned the course to be more multicultural in its orientation, then there might be personal political consequences. In any case, for all of these instructors, there was at least some attention to the political implications of attempting to create inclusive curricula, which informed their decisions about what to include in their course content.

In sum, Part I of this monograph attempts to show that, in order to create an inclusive environment for adults, each adult educator needs to consider the politics and process of knowledge production and dissemination. The discussion shows that all curriculum decisions are political ones related to this process and they flow from both one's view of knowledge and one's ability to take into account the contexts of (1) the specific learning environment, (2) the institution sponsoring the educational activity, and (3) the society at large, as well as the relationship of these contexts to one another. In order to help readers clarify for

themselves how they might define the extent to which an educational program is or will be inclusive, some of the models and approaches to multicultural education are presented, because this body of literature provides some insights for how one might define the term inclusive, particularly in regard to creating an inclusive curriculum. Finally, this discussion gives examples of how adult educators in adult basic education, in popular education, and in higher education seem to define multicultural education and inclusivity in the specific situations in which they work, as well as to examine how they view some of the politics of curriculum planning and implementation.

# **Part II**

## **Pedagogy: Facilitating Inclusivity in the Learning Environment**

The focus of Part I is on the politics of curriculum planning—on the politics of knowledge production and the decisions the adult educator needs to keep in mind in determining what content to include in creating an inclusive curriculum. Part II focuses on the related issue of how one should actually conduct the learning activity in order to create an inclusive learning environment. This part brings to light issues adult educators might want to think about in making pedagogical decisions. Of particular concern here is how to use a pedagogy that takes into account the experience of people who have been typically marginalized in educational situations and the culture because of their gender, race, social class, or sexual orientation and the intersections of these factors. The following discussion takes place in two parts. The first section focuses primarily on the literature in the field of adult education that deals with effects of structural privilege and oppression on the adult learning environment, particularly in regard to issues related to the intersections of gender, race, and class. The second section examines some of the feminist theory and pedagogy literature that offers insights about how to create an inclusive adult learning environment. There are several bodies of literature, including some of the literature on Afrocentrism (Asante 1987; Watkins 1993), that suggest pedagogical strategies for facilitating the learning of African Americans or specific marginalized groups. However, most of the discussion in this section is confined to the feminist pedagogy literature that deals primarily with issues of how women, and men and women who have been marginalized because of interlocking systems of privilege and oppression, can come to voice in the learning environment.



## ***Effects of Structural Privilege and Oppression on the Adult Learning Environment***

The field of adult education is replete with a vast array of literature and research about how to teach adults in a way that truly facilitates their learning. Much of this literature focuses on how to facilitate the learning of individual adult participants in a way that meets their own needs. Knowles (1980), writing on andragogy, discusses the importance of climate setting and the fact that learners should be involved in planning and designing their own learning and in evaluating the outcomes for learning. In short, there is an emphasis on the idea of the individual learner's self-direction and self-fulfillment. Although it is difficult to be against the idea that learners should have a say in their own learning, the approach of Knowles and others who emphasize either andragogy and/or the self-directedness of adult learning tends to focus on the fulfillment of individual goals. It is based on the ideas of a humanistic learning philosophy and is concerned about the growth of the individual learner; thus, it is not particularly focused on social change or the empowerment of oppressed groups. It does not take into account the structural systems of privilege and oppression based on race, gender, and class that inform learning. The underlying assumption about the needs of this "generic" adult learner seems to be that the learner is white, middle to upper middle class, and often male because, as Flannery (1994) notes, the emphasis on individualism and autonomy in learning reflects the values of what is typically western and white. Andragogy and self-directed learning do not seem to represent the communitarian values of African Americans, Native Americans, or even many women who value connection and relationship in learning. Nor does the emphasis on self-direction within andragogy represent the needs of some international students or adult students who simply respect teacher authority and require teacher direction. As Pratt (1993) notes, "andragogy is saturated with the ideals of individualism and entrepreneurial democracy. Societal change may be a by-product of individual change, but it is not a primary goal of andragogy" (p. 21). Thus, there are limitations to how andragogy would contribute to creating an inclusive learning environment.

As noted in Part I, there is a tradition of educating for social transformation in the field of adult education, and more and more adult educators and writers are calling for curricular reform in the field so that women and minorities are represented in adult education curricula. But few writers actually discuss what happens in the learning environment in regard to power dynamics based on the intersections of gender, race, class—the very issues about which one needs to be concerned in attempting to create an inclusive learning environment. Power dynamics are played out in all situations, and issues regarding who gets called on, whose ideas are valued, who speaks, and who remains silent are indicators of how some of these dynamics are manifested. An understanding of how these dynamics are played out is central to determining how to create an inclusive learning environment. Very often the validation, attentiveness, and forms of deference given to some students over others, by both teachers/facilitators and students or co-participants, happen through extremely unconscious mechanisms, and they are in part the result of the way everyone has been socialized according to race, gender, and class roles. But there is no hope of changing these patterns if they remain totally unconscious. Just how some of these unconscious mechanisms that contribute to maintaining power relations between dominant and oppressed groups are manifested in adult learning environments—and how can they be challenged—are the central questions here.

There are few data-based studies that examine how power dynamics based on the structural factors of gender, race, or social class are manifested in classrooms in either higher or adult education. Given the fact that there is a growing body of multicultural education literature at all levels of education, it is surprising that there is little research or discussion examining what happens in classrooms when these more controversial issues are included in the curriculum. Several educators, however, have written about their own experiences in attempts to deal with power issues in classrooms based on gender, race, class, sexuality, or their intersections (Ellsworth 1989; Gardner, Dean, and McKaig 1989; hooks 1989, 1994; Lewis 1990; Lewis and Simon 1986; Razack 1993; Tatum 1992), which cast some light on these issues. Tatum's (1992) discussion of her experience in teaching undergraduate classes on the psychology of racism is particularly insightful, and she offers clear suggestions about

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how one might go about doing this. But the data-based research that does exist is minimal. Most of the studies on higher education classrooms relating to issues between dominant and oppressed groups tend to focus primarily on communication patterns between men and women in classrooms made up of traditional-age students (Boyer 1987; Gabriel and Smithson 1990; Hall 1982; Sandler and Hall 1986; Statham, Richardson, and Cook 1991; Treichler and Kramarae 1983); these studies suggest that men receive far more attention than women, female professors encourage more classroom interaction, and the curricular materials reflect predominantly the white male experience. In regard to nontraditional-age students, two studies were found that dealt with gender differences in perceptions of the learning environment (Hayes 1990; Beer and Darkenwald 1989). A study that focused on the amount of class participation of men and women in continuing education classes (Roehl and Strickler 1991) found that the women in the study who were in their mid-30s to mid-40s reported being more vocal than the men of the same age. Younger women and older women, however, reported being considerably less vocal than the men of their cohort.

A recent ethnographic study conducted by Maher and Tetreault (1994) examined teaching and learning in the undergraduate women's studies and/or multicultural classes of 17 feminist professors at 6 different universities, one of which was an historically African American women's college. Some of the classrooms were primarily white, some primarily African American, though several of them were made up of a diverse group of students in terms of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Maher and Tetreault discuss the findings of the study from the perspective of how the students began to construct knowledge in light of dealing with images of "other" both in curricular course content and in and through their experiences with students and professor who were both like and unlike themselves in the class. Thus, students began to view knowledge as constructed amidst multiple positions of oppression and privilege—what Maher and Tetreault refer to as "positionality." In short, they explain this by discussing how students began to see that the gender, race, class, and so on of the authors read, their classmates, and themselves have everything to do with how the authors constructed and disseminated knowledge and with how

they themselves apprehended and constructed new knowledge. Classroom dynamics were explained more or less through this lens. Although the findings of Maher and Tetreault's study are based primarily on classrooms made up of traditional-age students, they are probably relevant to the process by which adult students construct knowledge as well.

Because of the lack of data-based literature that examines how the interlocking systems of power, privilege, and oppression are manifested specifically in adult education classes, this has been an area of focus of much of my own research, particularly in regard to adult higher education classes. There are also some studies, although not specifically about group dynamics in the learning environment, but rather about members of marginalized groups' experience of adult education, that can cast light on how structural factors of gender, race, and class affect what goes on in the adult learning context. In the discussion that follows in the remainder of this section, a few of these studies described—first those related to adult higher education and then those related to adult basic and popular education.

### **Privilege and Oppression in Adult Higher Education Settings**

Three studies are discussed in this section. The first two studies (Tisdell 1993b; Tisdell and McLaurin 1994) were the result of my own research examining how systems of privilege and oppression are operative in university classrooms made up of adult students. The third study deals with black reentry women's experience returning to higher education (Bailey 1995).

#### *Power Dynamics in Graduate Classrooms: A Comparative Case Study*

The purpose of this study (Tisdell 1993b) was to examine how power relations predominantly based on gender, but including other factors such as race or ethnicity, class, and age, are manifested in classrooms of nontraditional-age adult students in a higher education setting at a major research university. Because the literature suggested that the gender of the instructor

was a significant factor that had an effect on power relations in the classroom, two master's-level counseling classes differing by gender of the instructor were chosen. The class taught by the female professor focused on rehabilitation counseling, whereas the class taught by the male professor focused on career counseling. Both classes had 15-20 students who ranged in age from 23-54. Most of the students were white; there was an Asian American man in one class, and an African American woman in the other. On one level, the lack of students of color in the classes was a liability to the study. On the other hand, this is fairly typical of the student makeup of classes at major universities.

A more detailed description of the findings can be found elsewhere (Tisdell 1993b); a brief discussion here about four of the major findings of the study related to the manifestation of power relations in classrooms and creating an inclusive learning environment is in order. First, the male professor tended to exert more control than the female professor, manifested in his almost constant standing position during the class, whereas the female professor tended to sit. The students were also more deferential to him than they were to the female professor. They addressed him as "doctor" whereas they addressed her by her first name.

Some of the dynamics in the class are due to actual differences in behavior between the two professors, but some are probably also due to the different expectations that students have of male and female professors. The female professor's seated posture and the use of her first name with her students may have contributed to the fact that her class was more interactive. The students were also more willing to challenge and argue with her, whereas at no time when I was present did a student argue with or challenge the male professor. Using a much larger sample, Statham, Richardson, and Cook (1991) found that female professors were less authoritarian and their classes more interactive. This may indicate that, in general, female professors encourage more discussion and have less need to exert control in the classroom. It may also indicate that students see less of a power disparity between themselves and female professors than with male professors, since women as a group have less power in society. It may partially account for students taking more initiative in being interactive in classes with female professors.

A second major finding of the study was that the students who benefited from interlocking systems of privilege tended to have more influence in the class from the perspective of their peers than the students who had less interlocking privilege. This was manifested in some of the following ways. The student who had a very strong influence on the male professor's class was Al, a 23-year-old Asian American male. This became apparent early when in a small-group exercise, Al sat on the table, whereas the four other students (all women) sat in a line in front of Al directing all their remarks to him. His dominant role continued throughout the quarter. Al was cited by two-thirds of the students interviewed as someone who stood out to them, indicating his strong influence on the large group as well. Although Al was the only racial minority, which admittedly may have contributed to why he stood out for students, he was also the only student from an upper-class background and was extremely bright and quick witted, and thus was privileged in many significant ways, despite his minority status. Ogbu (1992) refers to the fact that Asians are sometimes seen as the "model minority" in U.S. society, so Al's Asian American status may have been, in this case, an additional system of privilege. By contrast, the student who had the least influence in the male professor's class was Karen, a 34-year-old woman from a working-class family background. She was neither overly quiet nor overly vocal but she did make several valuable contributions to discussions. However, her remarks, particularly in the small group, were not pursued. Of the 10 students interviewed, Karen was mentioned the least often (only once) as someone who would stand out, and 6 of the 10 students interviewed could not remember who she was when they first looked at the student list.

In the female professor's class, nearly all of the students interviewed saw Elizabeth, who identified her class background as upper class, as the social leader. Some students identified Bill, a 25-year-old white upper middle-class male as the intellectual leader; other students identified Anita, a woman in her mid-40s who had some experience in the rehabilitation field, as the intellectual leader. Interestingly, only one student identified Suzanne, an African-American woman in her late 40s who had the most experience in rehabilitation, including 27 years' experience in nursing, as the intellectual leader. Thus in both classes

the students who had the most influence were students who benefited from more systems of interlocking structural privilege based on gender, race, class, age, and experience.

A third significant finding of the study was that the women in both classes, especially in the male professor's class, were generally more vocal than the men, particularly the women in their 30s and 40s. This is contrary to what is reported in the literature about most classroom interactions being initiated by men in classrooms of traditional-age students (Boyer 1987; Gabriel and Smithson 1990; Treichler and Kramarae 1983), but consistent with the findings reported by Roehl and Strickler (1991).

A fourth significant finding of the study suggests that power relations in classrooms and in society are challenged only to the extent that teachers and students are extremely proactive in challenging them. Both the male and female professor made *passing* comments about gender and race issues that called attention to the nature of the structural privilege of being white or male. Hooks (1989) notes that education can be liberatory or emancipatory only "if it is truly revolutionary because the mechanisms of appropriation within white-supremacist, capitalist patriarchy are able to co-opt with tremendous ease that which merely appears radical or subversive" (p. 51). Although both professors challenged power relations based on gender, race, and class in small ways in their passing remarks, there were no required readings or planned course content that dealt with these issues, and therefore students did not have to engage or grapple with these issues in any significant way. Thus, the professors' remarks that could have subversively challenged the system of structured power relations based on gender, race, and class were probably "co-opted by white-supremacist, capitalist patriarchy" insofar as the students' learning was concerned.

Clearly, the findings of the study need to be interpreted with caution, because these were only two classes and what happened in these classes may not be generalizable to other situations. But the study does point out how some power dynamics based on gender, race, and class are played out in classrooms of adult students that are predominantly, but not exclusively, white and middle class. Although the female professor's class was specifically about the oppressed group of people with disabilities,

**Power relations in classrooms and in society are challenged only to the extent that teachers and students are extremely proactive in challenging them.**

neither of the instructors professed to be doing multicultural education per se. But what are faculty members' perceptions of what happens in classes when multicultural issues are specifically included in the course content? This issue is taken up next.

*Effects of Including Multicultural  
Course Content on Classroom  
Dynamics: Some Faculty Perceptions*

Part I refers to a recent study (Tisdell and McLaurin 1994) that examined 16 adult higher education faculty members' perceptions of how the inclusion of gender and/or multicultural course content affects classroom dynamics. All of the faculty members taught in a predominantly white major research university. Eight of them taught at least some courses in programs such as women's studies or African-American studies that very directly addressed multicultural issues either from a transformative approach, or social reconstructionist or social action approach, whereas the other eight made efforts to include multicultural issues in their classes mostly using additive approaches. Nine of the participants were white, and seven were black, with six of those seven being African American and one being black African.

All instructors talked about issues related to how to deal with the classroom environment when dealing with multicultural concerns. Virtually all of them addressed the fact that it is difficult to create an environment in which students will honestly discuss these issues. Most instructors agreed that students were in fact generally reticent about talking about these issues in classes. Both those who deal very directly using transformative approaches and those dealing less directly using additive approaches reported that, although there was variation in the amount of participation among individual students or student groups, students of color and traditional-age women tended to be quieter in classes, whereas males and nontraditional-age women tended to be more vocal. One even said of his traditional-age women students, "the majority of my students are in favor of sexism," and another reported they have "very little appreciation for the ways in which schools sort girls and boys into professions, occupations, classrooms" (ibid., p. 363). Some thought that participation of students of color may be linked to numbers (those groups fewer in number tended to speak out or question



less than those groups with larger representations). White instructors reported that students tended to be less guarded in discussions about race when there were no students of color in the class.

Clearly, the race, class, gender, age, ability/disability, or sexual orientation of the classroom participants, both of the students and of the instructor, are factors that affect classroom dynamics in all situations. But such demographic factors become even more significant when the entire course is about the nature of structural privilege and oppression. Thus, those instructors who teach whole courses specifically about one or more of these issues brought up additional concerns beyond those discussed thus far. Most of these additional concerns can be discussed within the frame of what one instructor (citing Collins 1991) referred to as "insider/outsider" status issues. Insider/outsider status refers to the fact that at times one's race (or gender or sexual orientation) may give one "insider" status with a group, whereas one may have "outsider" status with the same group in other regards.

Many instructors discussed insider/outsider status issues both in regard to their students and in regard to themselves. It is true that, when classes are identified by title as being primarily or exclusively about gender or multicultural issues, students generally come with a greater awareness of and concern about these issues; however, professors who teach such courses reported that many students still find the experience of being in these classes rather unsettling. One African American female professor noted that most white heterosexual students are not used to having outsider status. She notes:

It is that having to step in someone else's shoes or being even forced to consider the world from a different perspective is so unsettling for these students, though people who are different like people of color, women, people with disabilities, people who are different in any sort of way, are forced to do that daily, but students who have the privilege of being white, male, monied or whatever, find it almost traumatizing to have to see the world from an even slightly different perspective . . . extreme homophobia, extreme. Even in my graduate students. (Tisdell and McLaurin 1994, p. 364)

Both black and white instructors discussed the fact that white students from the South (this university was located in the South) are also not used to having outsider status in regard to their religion, and they went on to discuss how they deal with religious fundamentalism in their classroom. One white male instructor reported explaining to his class "that I didn't expect them to agree with me but that I did expect them to be open minded and that if they had frames that didn't allow them to even consider this, then they should go to Bob Jones University. That worked" (ibid.).

Both black and white professors reported that participation by students of color was minimal at least on the undergraduate level, although many said that African American students at the doctoral level tended to be quite vocal. Black professors were asked how they thought their common racial identity affected the participation of black students. A black African female professor referred to the fact that, although she had insider status with the black community by virtue of her race, she had outsider status by virtue of being African and not African American. An African American male professor in his mid-40s felt that, because of his age, his African American students are not necessarily more participatory than in classes with a white professor. Although he has insider status because of his race, with traditional-age undergraduates he has outsider status because of his age. Some of the black faculty reported (when asked) feeling that they had to work harder than their white colleagues to be taken seriously in the classroom. One woman said: "I think they start from a position of negative. It is like you are guilty until proven innocent. . . . And then when I get to the end they see me at the level of average" (ibid., pp. 364-365). Another female faculty member reported receiving poor evaluations, particularly from her undergraduates. Most of the black faculty acknowledged that this was the first time the majority of students had a class with a black instructor, and they attributed some of their students' attitudes to their own outsider status as black instructors.

Although findings of this study are limited to faculty perceptions and have to be interpreted with caution, some tentative conclusions can be reached regarding how instructors perceive the effects of the inclusion of these issues in the classroom. It

appears that those who deal very directly with these issues in their classes not only encounter greater awareness levels and interest in dealing with this issues, they also encounter more conflict and resistance. This may be due in part to the fact that dominant-culture students are used to having insider status in nearly all situations; they are not used to being in marginalized positions and such an experience is unsettling for some. And as Tatum (1992) notes in her discussion of teaching classes on the psychology of racism, at a certain point in the course, students will very often become resistant and defensive when the content causes them to examine some of the systems of privilege and oppression that have informed their own lives.

*Black Reentry Women's Experience  
of Higher Education*

The two studies just discussed deal with systems of privilege and oppression operative in classrooms in higher education settings at predominantly white universities. In attempting to create inclusive learning environments for adult students, it is important to find out how students who are marginalized because of their race, class, gender, or sexual orientation experience the educational system. To that end, Bailey (1995) examined the educational narratives of eight black reentry women involved in higher education in the South. She was interested both in their early schooling experiences as well as their reentry educational experiences. Bailey (1995) reports that issues of race, gender, class, and color were present in the narratives of all eight of the participants, and she notes "racism was a detectable component of the stories of classroom interactions. Gender was more discernable in the respondents' social and family anecdotes" (p. 196). She found this to be true both in the participants' discussion of their early schooling experiences and in their discussion of their reentry experiences.

The strategies the participants used to survive and/or succeed in the educational system were categorized as silence, negotiation, and resistance. Bailey gives an example of how and why one of the participants used the strategy of silence to deal with what was going on in the classroom in the following quote from one of the participants:

And in Georgia History class there comes a time when we must deal with Civil Rights and prejudices and Black/White relationships . . . I was the only Black in the class. Antiquated and Black in the class. Which meant that I have had the opportunity to not read about the changes but I've lived the changes. . . . There were lots of times that questions were asked that even I did not respond to at all because I did not want to respond honestly or from my true feelings . . . I just suppressed my own answers or reactions. (Bailey 1995, p. 197)

Strategies of negotiation were used most often "to balance competing concerns" (p. 198). Bailey reports this mostly in the context of the women's conflicting demands of personal relationships and family responsibilities and the demands of study time and educational performance. These women used strategies of resistance when others would devalue their educational interests in race-related or other concerns considered "marginal" in the academy. Overall, these women would find ways of resisting obstacles such as financial concerns, family pressures, overt racism in the academy and in society, to "make a way out of no way" (Bailey 1995, p. 197), as one of the participants said, to pursue their education. In spite of the obstacles and the fact that these women generally saw higher education as a hostile place, they believed in the hope that educational attainment would result in a better future, although they recognized that it was in no way a guarantee for success. Perhaps the findings of this study may not be generalizable to other adult students who are marginalized in this culture and in higher education, but they do suggest that in spite of what adult and higher educators might hope, the higher education environment is not seen as very welcoming to students who have been marginalized, particularly to students of color.

### **Privilege and Oppression in Adult Basic Education and Popular Education**

The studies just discussed deal specifically with structures of privilege and oppression that affect what happens in the higher education learning environment or how it is experienced by

those who have been societally marginalized. Many of the mechanisms that silence those who have been marginalized because of gender, race, or class in higher education have been operative at all levels of education. Many students in adult basic education classes have experienced the societal mechanisms of silencing, which have affected not only their educational attainment, but how they view knowledge and themselves as knowers. Having some sense of this is helpful to adult educators who want to make pedagogical decisions that will facilitate an inclusive learning environment.

Luttrell (1989, 1993) has probably published the most work examining how working-class black and white women who have been participants in adult basic education programs view knowledge and themselves as knowers. In one study of working-class black and white women, Luttrell (1989) found that the women of both races resisted placing too much importance on the white middle-class value of knowledge that comes from school authorities. They all distinguished between common sense and intelligence. Common sense, a characteristic they all defined themselves as having, was the ability to negotiate working-class culture and to solve day-to-day problems. Intelligence was not as clearly defined, but overall a distinction was made between school-based intelligence and "real intelligence."

"Real intelligence" was the ability to teach oneself a skill such as how to fix a car or play a musical instrument. In defining who had "real intelligence," the white women gave only male examples. They included the manual labor typical of males (such as the ability to fix mechanical things) in examples of real intelligence, but the skilled labor required of them as women—the ability to sew, quilt, or cook—was never cited as requiring "real intelligence." The black women on the other hand, saw the work that they did as requiring "real intelligence"; many also specifically cited the ability to deal with racism and survive as requiring real intelligence. Although the black women defined themselves as having "real intelligence," they "attribute black men's power to black men's superior knowledge" (Luttrell 1989, p. 43), saying that black men have the ability to convince black women to do just what they said they would never do. Thus, even though the black women saw themselves as having real intelligence, black men's intelligence was seen as superior

to their own. Both the black and white women resisted taking on the white middle-class value of the importance of school-based knowledge. Both groups adopted the gender-oppressive value of male intellectual superiority, although in different ways.

In a second study, Luttrell (1993) examined the educational narratives of 30 working-class women who were participants in adult basic education programs. Half of the participants were white and were raised in urban Philadelphia, and half were black and their childhood school experiences took place in the segregated South in rural North Carolina. Much of the educational narratives focused on the women's memories of their educational experiences as children; however, these experiences have everything to do with how these women see themselves as knowers in the adult basic education classroom. All of the women reported that they had felt considerable discomfort in school; much of this discomfort stemmed from the felt differences between teachers and students and among the students themselves. In most cases the defining difference was social class. Teachers lived in different neighborhoods and wore different clothes. In short, they were from a different class background. Many of the women reported being overlooked academically, as well as for such events as getting parts in school plays, and they felt that it was because they wore homemade clothes and their parents weren't "the right people."

Much of Luttrell's (1993) discussion centers around the women's narratives in regard to the idea of "the teacher's pet." Although some of the white women were chosen as "the teacher's pet" in spite of social class differences, all of the women reported that to be chosen required that one conform to the constraints of "appropriate" femininity—"to be 'pretty,' 'cute,' and 'good'" (p. 518). The black women (who were all dark skinned) reported they were not chosen as the "teacher's pet." Even in segregated schools where their teachers were also black but from a different social class, all of the black women reported that the teachers' greater attention was focused on the lighter-skinned students, who were chosen as "teacher's pets." The reinforcement of class differences, traditional norms of appropriate femininity, and the idea that lighter (and thus "whiter") is better are an indication that "school divides students

against each other and against themselves along the fault lines of gender, race, and class in the struggle for schoolwise knowledge" (Luttrell 1993, p. 522).

Luttrell's study explains why many working-class women have experienced school as a no-win situation. The women in this study left school feeling invalidated and/or unknown, since they were often rendered invisible by being "passed over." They also felt unconnected, since schools tend to divide students against each other by validating some but not others. Why, then, do these women return to adult basic education? Luttrell suggests that it is precisely those things that drove them out of school as girls that propelled them back to school as adults: "their desire to be viewed as legitimate, to connect and be known, and to remake their relationship to self and others through adult basic education" (Luttrell 1993, p. 541). If this is the case, it seems that an important pedagogical consideration would be to find strategies to help these women connect both with the teacher/facilitator and the other participants, as well as to validate them as knowers.

**Systems of privilege and oppression are operative in all situations and affect what happens in any educational environment.**

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It is no surprise that systems of privilege and oppression have affected the lives of participants in adult basic education programs. But systems of privilege and oppression are operative in all situations and affect what happens in any educational environment. Part I refers to Razack's (1993) analysis of her experience with a yearly summer institute held in Canada for social activists, in which the curriculum centered on readings that examined multiple systems of privilege and oppression and their intersections. She discusses the pedagogical dilemmas she and the participants faced that were a result, in part, of the material presented in the curriculum. Some of the participants (all of whom were social activists involved with the popular education movement) were enmeshed in a western liberal paradigm that emphasizes individualism and individual rights, rather than a paradigm that lends itself to a systemic analysis of privilege and oppression. Other dilemmas centered on participants' unwillingness to examine their own privilege, to face their own racism, sexism, heterosexism, or willingness to let go of some of their privilege. Razack observes that when the participants were confronted with situations in which honoring groups' rights meant limiting the privileges of other groups, particularly those who

were represented in the classroom, "very often the personal histories of participants held sway and influenced how far they were willing to go in respecting the group-based claims of others" (Razack 1993, p. 50).

Razack discusses in some depth the benefits and liabilities of using the positionality (the race, class, and gender positions) of the participants to examine the responses to dealing with systems of privilege and oppression. At times in her experience with this program, the discussion of politics became limited to the personal experiences of the participants on an individual level, without attention to a systemic analysis. Sometimes such discussions emphasized similarities to such a degree that they tended to erase the important and significant differences among the participants. Another difficulty in using the positionality of the participants is that very often participants who are in marginalized positions in society because of their race, gender, or sexual orientation are again placed in a situation where they are more vulnerable. For example, women who discuss painful experiences of sexual harassment sometimes face interrogation, or people of color who discuss their experiences of racism face the possibility of being discounted or not being believed. Razack notes that sometimes, in avoiding these difficulties, she and the participants overemphasized a systemic analysis, to the point that the individual stories were lost. She suggests that, pedagogically, a balance is needed between an analysis of the personal and the systemic, and she underscores the importance of connecting the global with the local.

This section examines how systems of privilege and oppression affect the adult learning environment, people's experience of the learning environment, and the way knowledge is constructed and viewed. It examines examples of how this is played out in higher education, adult basic education, and popular education. Although teaching strategies that might facilitate an inclusive learning environment may be implied from this discussion, these strategies have not yet actually been discussed. Because some of the feminist theory and pedagogy literature offers insight about how to do this, an examination of some of this literature is presented in the next section.



## ***Feminist Theory, Feminist Pedagogy, and Adult Learning***

There is a wide body of literature coming to be known as the feminist pedagogy literature. There are distinct strands of feminist pedagogy influenced by very different theoretical traditions, but before getting into some of the differences between these strands, it is important to examine what is common to the entire literature base. Hayes (1989) suggests that there are two main assumptions of feminist pedagogy in general: (1) traditional educational models have not met the educational needs of women and (2) models that focus on individual development and social change better meet those needs. This second assumption implies that women should apply the knowledge that they have learned to desired changes in their own lives and to society in general. The various strands of feminist pedagogy have been influenced by different educational models, but all strands share in common a concern with how to teach women more effectively, an emphasis on connection and relationship (rather than separation) with both the knowledge being learned and with the facilitator and the other learners, and on women's emerging sense of personal power. All of the feminist pedagogy literature is "emancipatory" in the broad sense in that it is concerned with women's personal empowerment.

It is important to point out, however, that not all of the feminist pedagogy literature deals with the nature of structured power relations, or women's collective experience as an oppressed group (Tisdell 1993a). The strand of the feminist pedagogy literature that stops short of dealing with structured power relations deals only with women's personal empowerment from a developmental psychological perspective, and it tends to discuss only how to teach "generic" women (who are probably therefore often assumed to be white) more effectively. Often the importance of developing a "safe" learning environment is emphasized in this strand. But other strands of feminist pedagogy deal with how to teach women *and* those marginalized because of the structural factors of race or ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, gender, and all these intersections in a way that facilitates their critique of the social systems of oppression and privilege that inform their lives. These strands of feminist pedagogy emphasize social change, and they examine the similarities and differences among

women and the fact that women (and men) of different races and class backgrounds are situated differently in relationship to systems of power and privilege. These strands have been influenced by critical theory, critical pedagogy, and the work of Freire (1971) and neomarxist educational theorists and activists, as well as the more psychologically oriented strands of feminist pedagogy.

Many wonder what the connection is between feminist pedagogy and critical pedagogy and whether the two are the same. The answer to this question depends in large measure on whom one asks. Many feminist writers (such as Ellsworth 1989; Kenway and Modra 1992; Luke and Gore 1992) have criticized the critical pedagogy literature (particularly by Giroux 1988 and McLaren 1986), arguing that it is too focused on rationality and does not take into account the significance of emotions and their effects on learning. Further, Ellsworth (1989) argues that using a critical pedagogy that is rationally focused and devoid of emotion serves to reproduce the power relations of society that have privileged rationality. On the other hand, in her more recent work hooks (1994) conflates feminist pedagogy and critical pedagogy and uses the term "radical pedagogy" or "engaged pedagogy" to refer to the intermingling of these bodies of literature. Although feminist pedagogy is not exactly the same as critical pedagogy, it is clear that all of these bodies of literature have influenced one another. Because the feminist pedagogy literature is informed by feminist theory, a more in-depth discussion of feminist pedagogy will make more sense following a brief overview of feminist theory.

### **An Overview of Feminist Theory**

There are many feminisms, including liberal, radical, psychoanalytic, Marxist, socialist, black feminist thought, multicultural, and postmodern feminism, to name some of the more typical demarcation lines, and all focus in some way on working to change the status of and opportunities for women both in this country and all over the world. There is considerable overlap among these feminisms, and different authors classify some feminist writers in slightly different ways. To develop an understanding of feminist theory, it is useful to think of its

development from almost an historical perspective. (Table 2 depicts some of the demarcation lines between these feminisms.) The purpose here is not to explain the differences in these frames in any detail, but rather to explain them insofar as they relate to feminist pedagogy. For a more complete discussion of feminist theory, see Collins (1991), Jaggar and Rothenberg (1993), Nicholson (1990), and Tong (1989).

**TABLE 2  
AN OVERVIEW OF FEMINIST THEORY**

INDIVIDUALLY FOCUSED FEMINIST THEORIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberal Feminism</li> <li>• Psychoanalytic Feminism</li> </ul>
STRUCTURAL FEMINIST THEORIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Radical Feminism</li> <li>• Marxist Feminism</li> <li>• Some Forms of Socialist Feminism (emphasizes reproduction of power relations)</li> <li>• Some Forms of Black Feminist Thought or Multicultural Feminism (emphasizes reproduction of power relations)</li> </ul>
POSTSTRUCTURAL/ POSTMODERN FEMINIST THEORIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some Forms of Socialist Feminism (emphasizes people's capacity for agency)</li> <li>• Some Forms of Black Feminist Thought or Multicultural Feminism (emphasizes people's capacity for agency)</li> <li>• Feminisms that Emphasize Positionality</li> <li>• Feminisms that Emphasize Multiple Constructions of "truth"</li> </ul>

*Individually Focused Feminist Theories*

Both liberal feminism and psychoanalytic feminism tend to focus more on women as individuals, though liberal feminism does deal with women collectively as a group. Liberal feminism has primarily been concerned with helping women get access to the institutions and systems of privilege to which men have always had access, on giving women as *individuals* rights and privileges

equal to those of men. The focus is on equal opportunity for women in the current system as it is, particularly in regard to education and job opportunity. Essentially there is no systemic critique of the structure of society in liberal feminism, but rather the focus is more on the rights of women as individuals and helping women fit into the existing education or employment system. Liberal feminism has its roots in the enlightenment philosophy of the 19th century (which emphasizes individualism), and the second wave of the feminist movement in this country of the 1960s and '70s was fueled by liberal feminism working to give women equal opportunity (Tong 1989). Many liberal feminists in the 1990s still work for equal education and job opportunity for women, without asking larger systemic questions. There has been some critique of liberal feminism from women of color that its focus has been historically and primarily on the concerns of white middle-class women, because it tends to discuss women as a unitary category, or the generic "woman" who is implicitly white and middle class.

Psychoanalytic feminism also tends to have an individualistic focus but from a psychological perspective. The concern of psychoanalytic feminism tends to be more on gender socialization and the fact that the system reproduces itself because gender socialization happens through both conscious but largely unconscious mechanisms (Chodorow 1978). Thus, psychoanalytic feminists tend to try to deal with the roots of patriarchy (the domination of women by men) in people's unconscious, arguing that women (or men) cannot change unless they deal with the patriarchy in their unconscious. Although there is a recognition of systemic influences in psychoanalytic feminism, the concern is more on change for woman at the individual level. Psychoanalytic feminism has also been critiqued as dealing primarily with the experience and concerns of the white middle-class woman.

### *Structural Feminist Theories*

Radical feminism, Marxist feminism, and perhaps socialist feminism as well could all be theories that are primarily structural, because they focus on an examination of societal structures that affect women. The concern of radical feminism

has been primarily with patriarchy as a form of structural oppression. (The term "radical" here is being used as a particular theoretical construct and should not be confused with the term "radical feminist" as it is commonly used in the media, connoting a rather unpopular image of women who hate men.) Unlike liberal feminists who simply want women to have access to the system more or less the way it is, radical feminists work to change the system of patriarchy (Tong 1989). There are many types of radical feminisms, but according to this frame patriarchy is seen as the primary system that oppresses.

Marxist feminism, on the other hand, argues that there are two primary systems that oppress women: both patriarchy and capitalism. According to this frame, one system relies on the other; thus, in order to change the oppression of women, one needs to work to change both capitalism and patriarchy (Chafetz 1988; Tong 1989). As one would expect, there is a strong relationship between Marxist feminism and socialist feminism. Socialist feminists would agree that two significant and interrelated systems of oppression to women are capitalism and patriarchy. But most socialist feminists also discuss the importance of examining other systems of oppression such as racial oppression and the intersections of the factors of gender, race, and class related to the material realities of women's lives (Jaggar and Rothenberg 1993; Roman and Apple 1990). In any case, both radical and Marxist feminism and some forms of socialist feminism as well deal primarily with structural systems that affect women's lives. The units of analysis of these frames are structural as opposed to the individual or the psychological, and the structural feminist theories tend to focus on how power relations are *reproduced* by societal structures in the current system.

### *Poststructural/Postmodern Feminist Theories*

A wide body of rather complex literature discusses poststructuralism and postmodernism. (Some authors use the term "post-structuralism" and others use the term "postmodernism"; for the purposes of this paper the terms can be used somewhat interchangeably.) There are two major differences between structural and poststructural theories. First, poststructuralists argue that structural theories do not account for the individual's capacity for agency, or the fact that individuals exert some power and

control over their lives, even though they might experience some forms of structural oppression. Individuals do have some capacity to resist maintaining the system and thus are actors or agents of change in producing their own unique individual meaning and systems of meaning or in working for social change. Second, structural theories deal only with systems of oppression or privilege from the standpoint of whatever structure is their unit of analysis (i.e., patriarchy or capitalism). Structural theories tend not to account for the fact that some groups are more privileged than others within the particular structural unit or units of analysis. Thus, Marxism does not account for the fact that men are more privileged than women; Marxist feminism does not account for the fact that white women have more privilege than women of color. Thus, post-structural and postmodern feminist theories deal with multiple systems of privilege and oppression, including gender, race, class, and sexual orientation. Because poststructural theories tend to account for multiple systems of privilege and oppression and their intersections, along with people's capacity for agency or resistance, some forms of socialist feminism could also perhaps be classified as poststructural versus structural theories.

Most forms of black feminist thought (see Collins 1991; hooks 1989, 1994; Lorde 1984; Omolade 1994; Sheard 1994) and/or multicultural feminism (see Anzaldúa 1990; Fiol-Matta and Chamberlain 1994; Jaggar and Pothenberg 1993) can be classified either as socialist feminist theories or as poststructural feminist theories. These theories tend to be concerned about the experience of women from a particular racial or ethnic group. I would classify many of these feminisms as poststructural feminist theories since many of these writers look at the additional systems of privilege and oppression based on age, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, and social class within the groups. There is also an emphasis on individual women's capacity for agency, particularly in regard to working for change for particular racial or ethnic groups of women, which is also a characteristic of poststructuralism.

There are many forms of poststructural or postmodern feminism. Some forms are more influenced by psychoanalysis and deconstruction (Flax 1990; Irigaray 1981; Nicholson 1990), whereas other postmodern feminists are more influenced by

socialist feminism, black feminist thought, multicultural feminisms, or other forms of poststructuralism (Lather 1991). But poststructural/postmodern feminisms attempt to examine the intersections of many forms of oppression and privilege, particularly in regard to how women construct "Luth." There is no one Truth, but each person's "truth" is relative and contextually dependent on these cultural and social factors.

### **Feminist Pedagogy**

There are many feminisms and many feminist pedagogies. The various feminist pedagogies are related to the various feminist theoretical frames just discussed, and the following discussion of feminist pedagogy analyzes the various models of feminist pedagogy according to some of those frames. But there are themes that recur in the feminist pedagogy literature. These themes center on the following interrelated issues:

- How knowledge is constructed
- Voice
- Authority
- How to deal with differences (particularly based on gender, race, ethnicity, class, physical and mental ability, or sexual orientation)

The overarching theme of relationship also undergirds much of the feminist pedagogy literature. Different models emphasize one or more of these themes more than others, but all of the models give at least passing attention to these themes.

Maier (1987) suggests that the wide body of literature coming to be labeled "feminist pedagogy" can be divided into two major subgroups that have been influenced by two major educational models. She calls these two models the "gender" model, and the "liberatory" model and examines the strengths and weaknesses of each one. What Maier (1987) refers to as the "gender" model are those models of feminist pedagogy that are influenced by liberal feminism and psychoanalytic feminism. What she calls the "liberatory" models are those more influenced by both structural and/or poststructural feminist theories.

(Table 3 depicts how these models of feminist pedagogy relate to the various feminist theories.) Again, the demarcation lines between these models are not as clear as they might seem. There are elements of the liberatory approaches in the models based primarily on a psychological orientation (what Maher refers to as "the gender model") and vice versa. The primary differences between the two models, however, are discussed here, and attention will be given to how the four themes—the construction of knowledge, voice, authority, and dealing with difference—are dealt with in each of the models.

**TABLE 3  
FEMINIST PEDAGOGY IN LIGHT  
OF FEMINIST THEORY**

<b>MODELS OF FEMINIST PEDAGOGY</b>	<b>FEMINIST THEORY INFLUENCES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychologically Oriented Models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individually Focused Feminist Theories</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liberatory Models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structural Feminist Theories</li> <li>• Poststructural Feminist Theories</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positional Pedagogies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poststructural Feminist Theories</li> <li>• Psychoanalytic Feminist Theories</li> </ul>

#### *Models with a Psychological Orientation*

One body of literature focuses specifically on how to create an environment in which women (in the generic sense) can come to know and learn. Much of this literature focuses on women's socialization as nurturers, and as mentioned earlier, on how to create safe learning environments where women can come to voice. This theme of voice is central to much of the feminist psychological literature. Both Gilligan (1982) and Belenky et al. (1986) suggest that the metaphor of finding voice, or "coming to voice" is often used by women when describing the process of learning to distinguish between what they have been told



by educational or other authority figures, and what they themselves truly believe based on their own critical thinking skills in relation to the subject area and their own life experience. The process of coming to voice is developing the ability to verbalize what one truly believes, along with the ability to see oneself as a constructor of knowledge. Models of feminist pedagogy coming from this perspective focus on women's emancipation in the personal psychological sense but are not emancipatory from the standpoint of examining power relations of the larger social structure and their effects on education. Given the individualistic focus, this body of feminist pedagogy literature is strongly influenced by the tenets of liberal feminism and psychoanalytic feminism.

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule's (1986) book *Women's Ways of Knowing* has significantly influenced the more psychologically oriented feminist pedagogy literature. It is referenced more than any other work in discussions of the psychologically oriented models and is thus worth examining in some detail. Although this book centers on the ways women construct knowledge, rather than on pedagogy in and of itself, the construction of knowledge is one of the central themes of the feminist pedagogy literature.

Belenky et al. interviewed 135 women about the ways they best came to know and learn. They depict the women as falling into five categories of knowers. What is germane to this discussion is not so much the categories of knowers, but the fact that many of these women learned best and were more likely to recognize their own ability to construct knowledge in environments that emphasize connected teaching and learning. In such environments, many women began to recognize their own ability to think independently and critically and to come to their own conclusions. It is also in these connected teaching/learning situations that many women came to recognize and hear their own voices.

In connected classroom situations, each student's thoughts and opinions are valued. Uncertainty is recognized as part of the process toward greater certainty; subjective views are valued and sometimes transformed through dialogue and sharing as participants try to come to a greater truth by consensus instead of conflict. The class functions more like a community instead of

a hierarchy wherein the teacher "deposits" knowledge into the heads of the students. Most of the women in Belenky et al.'s (1986) study reported that, in positive learning experiences, belief played a far more significant role than doubt, and connection and relationship were valued in the learning process. When teachers and other students supported and believed in students' thinking ability, they were stimulated to even greater learning. For many of them, doubt had a debilitating effect. The role of the teacher in these models is to function as midwife and to draw the student out. Even in this role, the teacher has responsibility and some authority. Such authority, however, is based on cooperation rather than subordination, and it is shared with the participants in the learning environment.

It is clear that Belenky et al. (1986) are concerned about the personal "empowerment" and individual development of the student as well as how that sense of personal power can be developed through overt and hidden curricular means. Although the relationship between the personal and the collective comes to light in the educational process, Belenky et al. appear to be primarily concerned with the students' emerging sense of personal power, coming to voice, and ability to effect change in their lives. Belenky et al. would probably argue that change in one's personal life ultimately affects social change, but they appear to be only secondarily concerned with structural change and political action.

Three of the four themes of feminist pedagogy—issues of how knowledge is constructed, the development of voice, the authority of the teacher as midwife and authority as shared with participants—are evident in their discussion. But the discussion of these issues tends to have a more individual or psychological focus. Belenky et al. center on how women construct knowledge more as individuals in a small community of support where relationships are valued, rather than focus on the larger social and political mechanisms that affect the knowledge production and dissemination process that Minnich (1990) addresses (which is discussed at the beginning of Part I). Certainly, their discussion of the development of voice is focused more at the individual level as well. Nevertheless, it is important to have an understanding of the development of voice and how (some) women construct knowledge at the psychological level if one wants to facilitate women's learning.

The psychologically oriented models of feminist pedagogy, following Belenky et al. (1986), do not deal adequately with the differences among women. Of the four themes of feminist pedagogy, dealing with difference is mentioned only in passing. Thus, issues for women of color or working-class women tend to remain mostly invisible, since these models tend to focus on the similarities among women. In fact, one of the criticisms of Belenky et al.'s work is that it is "essentialist" (Looser 1993)—that it implicitly assumes that there is a uniquely female way of knowing that is simply based on being female. Belenky has counterargued that her and her co-authors' work is not essentialist based on the argument that they see women's socialization, and not nature or biology, as the primary factor that has affected how women see themselves as knowers (Looser 1993). In any event, I do think that some of the criticisms of these models are valid in that they do tend to want to erase the differences among women. Although Belenky et al. (1986) note that some men are connected knowers and that some women learn very well in a system that was created by men and emphasizes rationality, very often those who rely on their work and many authors who quote it seem to assume that there is in fact a uniquely female way of knowing.

Because these models are based largely on liberal feminist and psychoanalytic feminist theoretical frames, many of the criticisms of these frames also apply to these models of pedagogy; as was discussed earlier, these frames have been criticized as being based on the needs of white, middle-class women. In spite of such criticisms, many teachers use pedagogical strategies based on these psychologically oriented models of feminist pedagogy very successfully. Some of these pedagogical strategies are the sharing of personal stories, creating dyad and small-group activities that promote the development of relationships among the participants relative to the subject area, and role plays that emphasize particular aspects of women's experience. Of course, a lot of this sounds quite similar to Knowles' (1980) discussion of good adult education practices. This is not surprising because underpinning both Knowles' work and these models of feminist pedagogy is humanistic psychology.

So what makes these models different from Knowles' or others' discussion of good adult education practices? As has been discussed, there is an emphasis in these models on the creation of

the safe learning environment where women come to voice. There is an assumption here that women are "safer" to come to voice in groups in which either (1) their ways of knowing are in the foreground, i.e., the discussion of their experiences specifically *as women* or how they have constructed knowledge *as women* is privileged; or (2) there are no men present. Thus, there are attempts in these models to try to abate the male privilege factor in the creation of the safe environment, which Knowles' or humanistically oriented discussions of good adult education practices do not account for. But these models do not in any way attempt to deal with the effects of white privilege or heterosexual privilege in the creation of the so-called "safe" learning environment for women. Thus, if white women are in the majority or perhaps even present at all, they are probably a lot "safer" than the women of color. However, this is not to say that the teaching strategies advocated by those operating from these models do not apply to women of color as well, for Collins (1991) and Omolade (1994) emphasize the importance of connection, relationship, and analysis of life experience to black women's learning.

So when would one want to employ the pedagogical strategies advocated by those operating from the more psychologically oriented models of feminist pedagogy? One might want to use such strategies in groups made up of all women, or groups in which women's experience *as women* is to be privileged over men's experience. One can successfully use strategies that promote connection and relationship in groups made up of white women and women of color (with or without men present) and activities to help participants bond with each other, but such strategies would emphasize the similarities and downplay the differences among participants. If one is mostly interested in having the participants bond in order to facilitate learning of subject matter, it may be appropriate to deal primarily with the similarities of the group and less with the differences. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the creation of the so-called "safe" environment is more a construction of white privilege, and unless a group is made up of members of the same racially marginalized group, the environment is much "safer" for white women.

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### *Liberatory Models*

The "liberatory" or emancipatory models of feminist pedagogy deal with the nature of structured power relations and interlocking systems of oppression and privilege based on gender, race, class, age, and so on. From that perspective, they are strongly influenced by the socialist feminist and the various feminist poststructural theoretical frames. Given that the liberatory models deal with interlocking systems of privilege and oppression, the differences, as well as the similarities, among women (and all participants) become apparent. From this perspective, the liberatory models emphasize what the psychologically oriented models downplay—the theme of difference and how to deal with it. Although women's experience may be in the foreground, the differences based on race, class, and sexual orientation between women are also highlighted, and systems of privilege, such as white privilege, become visible. In addition to being influenced by socialist feminist and feminist poststructural theorists, educational theorists who write from the perspective of the liberatory models have been heavily influenced by Freire's (1971) work and the work of other critical theorists and writers in the realm of critical pedagogy (Giroux 1992; Giroux and McLaren 1994; Luke and Gore 1992; Weiler 1991). However, feminists have been critical of Freire and of Marxist educational theories because their primary focus has been on class-based oppression, although as hooks (1994) notes Freire has more recently discussed race- and gender-based oppression. Those writing from the perspective of the liberatory models attempt to examine how not only gender, but also gender and the intersections of race and class, affect how one experiences the educational system. Perhaps an example will clarify this point.

Consider education as a sociocultural value. There is likely to be a difference in the value a white middle-class male and an African American working-class woman with two children place on education because of the difference in the material realities that inform each of their lives. Consider the experience of both of them when in an educational situation. In order even to get there to be able to take part in that educational activity, the African American working-class woman is much more likely than the male to need someone to take care of her children. Once that is taken care of and she is present for the educational

experience, she and the white middle-class male are likely to have a very different experience of the educational activity itself. The white middle-class male will probably feel much more validated by the experience. After all, most of the so-called "experts" in any field of study are likely to be white middle-class males, and most of the examples used in the books and curricular materials are probably about people like him who are also white and middle class. The world has been taught to value what people that look, think, and talk like he does have to say, and he is likely to be accorded more value in the classroom. But for the African American woman, neither "the experts" nor most of the examples used in the book are about people that look, think, or talk like her. What is more, she has probably been taught that her speech pattern is "incorrect," and she has to learn to write and speak in a style that some other group has determined is "correct"; therefore, the world is not predisposed to pay that much attention to what she has to say. In addition, because of her working-class status, she also has fewer economic means to spend on education or educational supports such as child care, transportation, tutors, or books. If she succeeds in spite of all these obstacles, it is likely that she will be paid less than her white male counterpart in the workplace for the same job. Thus, it is easy to understand why she might value formal education less than the white middle-class male does. It has different returns for her because of the physical and material realities of her difference—her different gender, her different race, and her different class background.

It is for some of the reasons noted in this example that many feminist emancipatory educational theorists suggest that the oppression of women and people who are from marginalized race or class groups in both the paid work force and in the domestic labor realm is reproduced by what happens in the classroom (Weiler 1988). In light of this emphasis on how systems are reproduced by the educational system, it is clear that some of the liberatory models of feminist pedagogy are informed by structural feminist theories. These liberatory approaches tend to focus more on an analysis of how the system reproduces itself rather than what to do about it (Weiler 1988). Other liberatory approaches emphasize the forms of resistance women and all oppressed groups adopt in order to create meaning in educational systems and in a society that has been designed to help reproduce the existing power relations. These liberatory models

influenced by socialist feminist and poststructural feminist theories emphasize how to teach to reverse these conditions. Thus some feminists (both white feminists and feminists of color) have turned to doing research or studying the works of women, and people of color, and people from working-class backgrounds to examine how these factors affect education.

The liberatory models attempt to account for and deal with why it is that women, all people of color, and people from working-class backgrounds are often silenced, absent, or their contributions overlooked and/or discounted in the public arenas of society, including in government, industry, the classroom at all educational levels, and the knowledge production process. Rather than focusing on how individual women construct knowledge, the liberatory models of feminist pedagogy examine the political and social mechanisms that have controlled the knowledge production process and have marginalized (or left out) the contributions of women and people of color. Those operating from the liberatory models of feminist pedagogy attempt to give voice to women and people of color, validating their forms of knowledge by including the work of women and people of color in their course curricula, as well as by encouraging or requiring their active classroom participation.

Black feminist writer bell hooks' discussion of pedagogy, particularly in her earlier work (1989), is probably quite representative of the liberatory models of feminist pedagogy. She advocates taking a very proactive role in challenging unequal power relations based on gender, race, and class both in the classroom and in society, and she uses the authority of her role as teacher to do that. Hooks' model of feminist pedagogy varies from that described by Belenky et al. (1986) in that her style is more confrontational. She says:

It is a model of pedagogy that is based on the assumption that many students will take courses from me who are afraid to assert themselves as critical thinkers, who are afraid to speak (especially students from oppressed and exploited groups). The revolutionary hope that I bring to the classroom is that it will become a space where they can come to voice. Unlike the stereotypical model that suggests women best come to voice in an atmosphere of

safety (one in which we are all going to be kind and nurturing), I encourage students to work at coming to voice in an atmosphere where they may be afraid or see themselves at risk. (p. 53)

Thus rather than specifically creating a safe and nurturing environment, hooks' emphasis is more overtly to help students examine the social conditions that affect their lives and to work for social change. She wants students to come to voice, and to come to voice in an environment that is not necessarily always safe.

It is clear that the four themes of feminist pedagogy—the construction of knowledge and how to deal with difference, voice and authority—are apparent in the liberatory models. The theme of dealing with and recognizing difference is more apparent in these models, but the theme of voice is also still central. But the liberatory models emphasize how those who are marginalized because of their race or class, as well as their gender, can come to voice. The issue of authority is discussed in these models, but there is more of a recognition that, although authority can be shared, it is impossible to do away completely with the authority or responsibility of the instructor in any educational environment. Rather, the argument is that there is a power disparity between teachers and students in learning environments, and this needs to be dealt with openly. In discussing authority, hooks (1989) argues that teachers need to be proactive in confronting unequal power relations. Thus, the emphasis is more on appropriate uses of authority, rather than on trying to do away with it when attempting to facilitate students' learning and their coming to voice.

The liberatory models emphasize how those who are marginalized because of their race or class, as well as their gender, can come to voice.

A significant difference between the liberatory models and the psychologically oriented models is the conception of the safety of the learning environment. As noted earlier, both models emphasize the importance of women coming to voice in the learning environment and the role of relationship is primary in coming to voice. But the point of this approach to pedagogy is how those who have been marginalized because of any one of these factors or their intersections can come to voice in environments that are not always safe, for, as Lorde (1984) notes, in the long run silence will not necessarily protect those who have



been marginalized. It is not that people who are using liberatory approaches of feminist pedagogy necessarily want to promote an unsafe atmosphere, but the liberatory approaches do place the examination of multiple systems of privilege and oppression in the foreground. This is done in a very overt way in learning environments operating from this perspective, at least at times in the learning context, although there is attention to timing and to how it is done, and it is probably done after there has been some attention to the development of positive relationships among the participants. But dealing with race privilege or oppression, even on a theoretical level, is uncomfortable, particularly in groups with members of more than one race present. In liberatory models of feminist pedagogy, the differences among women are examined as well as the similarities, and dealing with difference can be uncomfortable. But the point is coming to voice in spite of the discomfort. This is also a significant part of the development of relationship.

Many writers of feminist pedagogy writing from the perspective of the liberatory models try to teach *both* women and students marginalized because of any of the structural factors of oppression for their personal empowerment and for their active involvement in social change. The next section examines some of the literature that synthesizes both the psychological and the liberatory models of feminist pedagogy along with its relationship to adult learning.

*Positional Pedagogies and Adult Learning: Synthesizing the Models*

A synthesis of both the psychologically oriented and the liberatory models of feminist pedagogy around the interrelated themes of the construction of knowledge, voice, authority, and how to deal with difference can offer guidance to the adult educator who is interested in trying to create inclusive learning environments. A synthesis of these models would take into account both the intellectual *and* emotional components of learning as well as the psychological and social and political factors that affect learning. It would emphasize the importance of relationship and connection to learning, but also account for the fact that power relations based on a multitude of factors including

gender, race, and class are always present in the learning environment and affect both how knowledge is viewed and how it is constructed. Such a synthesis of pedagogies might be called positional pedagogies; in her recent book, hooks (1994) refers to such a synthesis as radical pedagogy or engaged pedagogy. A synthesis of these models suggests several insights that need to be kept in mind in order to create inclusive adult learning environments.

First, it is clear that the feminist emancipatory education literature suggests that most women and some men may have different learning needs from men who represent the dominant culture. Nearly all educational systems were initially designed for the education of men, with a knowledge base predominantly based on rationality that was socially constructed by white males. Positional pedagogies attempt to deal with how women and those marginalized because of their race, class, or sexual orientation can come to voice. Most writers of feminist pedagogy from both the psychologically oriented and the liberatory models suggest that nearly all women regardless of their race, class, or sexual orientation seem to do best in learning environments and come to voice where affective forms of knowledge that emphasizes connection and relationship are valued, along with knowledge that comes from life experience (Belenky et al. 1986; Gore 1993; Hayes 1989; hooks 1989, 1994; Luke and Gore 1992; Maher and Tetreault 1994; Omolade 1994; Tisdell 1993h). In short, women do best in learning environments and come to voice where there is an effort to relate theoretical concepts to real life experience.

This is not to imply that a synthesis of the feminist pedagogy models suggests that women or people of color are less capable of coming to voice or engaging in discussions that are both critical and theoretical. But the focus, particularly in higher education situations, is oriented toward integrating the content of critical and theoretical material with/in relationship to life experience (hooks 1989, 1994). Maher and Tetreault (1994) cite one of the professor participants in their study of feminist classrooms who described her style of feminist pedagogy as helping students to see with a third eye. "The 'third eye' is a form of theorizing, but rather than reflecting either a universalized mode of thought . . . , or one that is personal or psychological, Philips [the professor participant], gives this way of

knowing a positional cast" (Maher and Tetreault 1994, p. 202). To see with a third eye is to recognize that the self (or the author) constructs knowledge in relation to others, and both the self and others are situated and positioned within social structures in which they are multiply and simultaneously privileged and oppressed. Thus they describe a pedagogy that helps students both to develop competence in a particular knowledge area related to the content of the course and also to examine the social structures in which authors are embedded or positioned that have informed the construction of that knowledge base. Their emphasis is on feminist pedagogies that are what they refer to as "positional pedagogies," which help students examine how they and others' are positioned within social structures that have in part informed their own and others' construction of knowledge. Thus the emphasis in positional pedagogies is both on how individuals construct knowledge and how that process is affected by both social and political forces. This requires students to become familiar with a body of knowledge and to reflect on their own life experience and how they are positioned in relationship to society and to other participants in the classroom. Many feminist teachers and facilitators suggest that students keep journals to explore these issues and positional realities.

**The emphasis in positional pedagogies is both on how individuals construct knowledge and how that process is affected by both social and political forces.**

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Because positional feminist pedagogies suggest that participants need to examine how they are positioned in relationship to the knowledge being acquired and to each other, a related insight feminist positional pedagogies offer adult learning is direct attention to power relations inherent in the knowledge production process, both in the field of study and in the learning environment itself at the individual level. These power relations affect not only how knowledge has been produced and disseminated in the society at large, but also affect how individuals construct knowledge and come to voice, which highlights the connection between the individual and the social context. Sheared (1994) addresses these issues in using a womanist perspective to discuss an inclusive model of instruction. (Sheared suggests that the term "womanist" can be used interchangeably with the term "Africentric feminist.") Rather than using the term "positional pedagogies," Sheared discusses the fact that the "polyrhythmic realities" of instructors and students—the fact that they are simultaneously workers, students, and raced and gendered beings with various responsibilities and

variously positioned—affects the way a learning activity is experienced and therefore the way knowledge is constructed by the participants.

A third insight feminist positional pedagogies offer adult learning is that they underscore not only the importance of connection and relationship, but also the importance of examining power relations and dealing with difference in the learning environment itself. In short, positional pedagogies make apparent that participants are positioned differently in relationship to each other and in relationship to the knowledge being learned. Some examples of how power relations and dynamics are played out are discussed in the first section of Part II; it is an area that has been explored at some length by writers of feminist pedagogy. Feminist positional pedagogies make apparent that the various positionalities—the gender, race, class, sexual orientation—of both the participants and the instructor matter and have an effect on the learning environment. These factors of both the participants and the instructor, along with personality characteristics, affect how students and the instructor view the authors read, how classroom discussion goes, and people's willingness or lack of willingness to speak in regard to particular issues. Some of the studies referenced earlier attest to the fact that the gender and race of both the instructor and the students has an effect on classroom dynamics. Several African American instructors (Delpit 1988; hooks 1989, 1994; Omolade 1994; Tatum 1992) discuss how they think their gender and race affects how they are perceived by students. In a recent study of "out" gay and lesbian faculty members (Tisdell and Taylor 1995), all the participants report that they believe that their sexual orientation clearly affects students' learning, particularly in regard to sexual orientation issues along with other issues of oppression and privilege. Not all the participants in the study actually announce their sexual orientation, though they assume that it is a matter of public knowledge. Some of these gay and lesbian faculty members report some unpleasant experiences of having to deal with what they interpret as students' or faculty members' homophobia; however, they all believe that their "out" presence ultimately has a positive effect on students' learning. But they all agree that their sexual orientation *does* have an effect.

**Positional pedagogies make apparent that participants are positioned differently in relationship to each other and in relationship to the knowledge being learned.**

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A fourth insight feminist positional pedagogies offer adult learning is direct attention to the issue of the authority of the teacher and to the significance of this particular power disparity. One of the most obvious power relations in the learning environment is the power disparity between the teacher or facilitator and students, and many feminist writers have written about how to create an environment that reduces this power disparity. Gore (1993) uses the phrase "institutionalized pedagogy as regulation" (p. 142) to refer to the fact that those who teach in situations where they are employed, such as in higher education, do so amidst institutions that have regulations and expectations requiring them to be in an evaluative role. She suggests that to try to disregard this is naive. Omolade (1994) also discusses this, as well as the fact that, in her experience as an African American woman teaching primarily African American students, her students wanted and expected her to function in some kind of authoritative role. Initially, she felt uncomfortable with this, addressing the fact that, in spite of her similar gender and race, there were differences in class and status levels in the academy that have to be acknowledged.

Gardner, Dean, and McKaig (1989) discuss the reality of trying to deal with power issues in a women's studies class, both from the standpoint of the professor's role and from the standpoint of power issues among the students. Gardner, the professor of the class, discusses trying to make the classroom a "truly feminist" classroom. She relinquished most of her authority and took on a rather passive role in the first part of the class because she did not want to exercise power as dominance in her classroom. She found, however, that as a result of relinquishing her own authority as teacher, the feminist majority, those who considered themselves "the enlightened," dominated the class and those students who either had less of a background in feminism or were less sure of their political position felt silenced. "The students used differences in knowledge to create a distinct hierarchy in the classroom with knowledge being a source of power over others" (Gardner et al. 1989, p. 65). A similar dynamic emerged when discussing topics of class: women from working-class backgrounds felt silenced. These dynamics caused Gardner to rethink her own position on the issue of teacher authority. She reclaimed some of her authority as teacher and encouraged the class members to critique the power dynamics that emerged in

the class. This helped the students grapple with the nature of power relations in a concrete situation. Gardner then concluded that, as an instructor, she can use the power of her role as teacher to facilitate the emancipation of women students. Lewis (1990) comes to a similar conclusion:

The use of institutional power, I believe, should not always be viewed as counter-productive to our politics. Feminism is a politic that is both historical and contingent on existing social relations. I [have] no problem justifying the use of my institutional power to create the possibility for privilege to face itself. . . . Using power to subjugate is quite different than using power to liberate. (p. 480)

As was discussed in the last section on liberatory models of feminist pedagogy, hooks (1989) also suggests that the teacher's or facilitator's role is to facilitate the challenge of structured power relations so that privilege can face itself.

To challenge or critique power relations based on gender, race, and class as they are manifested in adult learning environments is a difficult task. Some of the authors cited here directly address the difficulties and rewards of actually critiquing the classroom power dynamics as they evolve in higher education settings with students of varying ages. Their choice to attempt to deal with such issues in classes affects how they, in collaboration with their students, both design curriculum and conduct their classes. It guides their decisions about what to include in their curriculum, how to explore what has traditionally counted as true knowledge, and the way knowledge has been and is currently socially constructed. These are intensely political questions and political decisions. Their perspective on how to deal with power issues in adult and higher education classrooms while bearing in mind the sociocultural context of the students and the learning situation may illustrate how adult educators may do the same in their own learning environments. The specific implications these pedagogies have for practice are taken up in the final section.

# Epilogue: Implications for Practice, Summary, and Conclusions

So what does all this have to do with creating an inclusive adult learning environment? The feminist pedagogy and feminist theory literature is just beginning to have an impact both on the development of adult learning theory and on the practice of adult education. Though it may be unfortunate on the one hand, feminist positional pedagogies do not offer a specific prescription for how one should teach or facilitate in order to create an inclusive learning environment (Gore 1993). Rather, these pedagogies do bring to light some of the issues about which one needs to be concerned in order to do so, particularly in regard to the four themes addressed in the feminist pedagogy literature—the construction of knowledge, the development of voice, the authority of the teacher/facilitator, and how to deal with difference. On the other hand, however, to offer a specific prescription would be a rather simplistic answer to what is an extremely contextually relevant and complex question. What one "should" do in the learning environment depends on several factors, including who the adult educator is and the intersections of the various systems of privilege and oppression that inform his or her life, on what the educational context is, and on who the participants in the learning activity are.

Creating inclusive learning environments requires that adult educators plan and implement educational programs responsibly. Cervero and Wilson (1994a) suggest that, in order to do this, curriculum and program planners need to attend to the fact that administrators in the institution sponsoring the educational program, teachers, facilitators, and participants are all stakeholders in the educational program. Each of them are in different positions of power relative to the educational program and to the institutional context in which the program is situated, and each of them has his or her own interests in the program. How the program is conducted depends in part on how these various

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stakeholders negotiate power and interest and in large part on the organizational context in which the program is situated. To plan responsibly then, planners and facilitators of educational programs should be political, represent interests democratically, and develop the skills and knowledge to negotiate responsibly (Cervero and Wilson 1994a).

Cervero and Wilson's suggestions are directly applicable to determining how to create an inclusive learning environment. As was discussed in the introduction, creating inclusive learning environments require that the planner, teacher, or facilitator consider the three levels of inclusivity: the diversity of the participants themselves, the diversity of the wider and immediate institutional contexts in which the participants work and live and of the organization sponsoring the educational program, and the diversity of a changing society. In defining the limits of inclusivity and in determining the curriculum and pedagogy, one should also keep in mind the levels of contexts to be considered:

- the actual learning activity—who the participants are and what the educational program is about;
- the institutional context in which it is situated and what its purpose is in developing the program or class; and
- the wider societal context.

Planning responsibly and practically requires attending both to issues of power and interest and to the relationship among these contexts.

Where feminist and positional pedagogies can offer guidance for creating inclusive adult learning environments are in their focus on what some of these issues of inclusivity are. These pedagogies take into account how systems of privilege and oppression are played out in the learning environment. I have specifically relied on feminist pedagogical literature in regard to issues of inclusivity, because, perhaps more than any other literature base, it calls attention to the complexities of the learning environment by addressing such issues as the construction of knowledge, the development of student voice, issues of authority, and how to deal with difference. Although the term "feminist" pedagogy might erroneously imply that this literature is concerned only with the education of women, the liberatory



models and a synthesis of the liberatory and the psychologically oriented models in what I have called positional feminist pedagogies (following Maher and Tetreault 1994) call attention to the complex intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality in the learning environment. In short, positional feminist pedagogies are concerned with all of the participants in a learning activity, but particularly those who have been historically marginalized in the educational system. Even though it is not possible to come up with a prescription or a cookbook approach, nevertheless, at this juncture, it is possible to consider how feminist or positional pedagogies might offer some guidance in planning and implementing educational activities by giving an example.

Suppose Kathy, a white woman who works as a trainer in an organization, is charged with planning and facilitating a basic computer class for employees who have limited or no computer skills in an organization, and she is interested in creating an inclusive learning environment. Suppose most (but not all) of the participants will be working-class women from multiple racial groups, and Kathy is interested in trying to use feminist or positional pedagogies. The purpose of the organization in sponsoring the program (which is to take place in four 2-hour blocks over 4 weeks) is to teach their employees computer skills, with the goal of increased worker productivity. Kathy is charged with planning this activity and teaching this skill. Although she is genuinely interested in facilitating their learning in this regard, she is also personally interested in challenging societal structures of gender, race, and class oppression that have adversely affected the participants' lives. How might she use feminist or positional pedagogies to teach these skills, increase the participants' confidence in their ability to learn, and challenge societal structures? Is it even possible to do so in this situation?

Kathy could make use of several feminist pedagogical strategies that may in part contribute to her being able to accomplish at least some of her goals for this group. Clearly, the purpose of her program is to teach computer skills and not to spend the entire time analyzing structural systems of privilege and oppression. The teaching of these skills must be primary in order for her to satisfy her own obligations to both the students and the

organization. In using a feminist pedagogy that emphasizes the development of connection and relationship, she might begin the first session by pairing participants off and letting them talk for a few minutes about their anxieties and excitements about being in this group, or to talk about the things they hope to learn. She might let them brainstorm about ways that they can learn from each other. She could then introduce a low-level and fun computer activity and allow some time for participants to work both alone and in groups. She might give them a homework assignment that requires that they work together in pairs or small groups. She may covertly encourage cross-racial learning groups, in the hopes that participants learn something beyond computer skills. For personal and/or political reasons this may be the extent to which Kathy feels that she can use a feminist pedagogy approach in light of the constraints of the subject and the organizational context.

Kathy may run all of the four sessions like this, primarily using the more psychologically oriented approaches to feminist pedagogy. Probably most people who are attentive to organizational politics and the needs of participants would not go much further than Kathy did in the first session, even if they wanted to use liberatory approaches. Such approaches can be used only after some relationship is established with participants. But if Kathy wants to make use of more liberatory approaches, she may get a bit more daring as each session passes. She might incorporate more liberatory approaches by creating computer assignments or computer games that incorporate some of the typical experiences these participants face in the workplace or in their lives that implicitly hint at structural inequities, or she may make passing comments about inequities. Clearly, whatever she does, she needs to be sure she is teaching computer skills but she may do that in a variety of ways. What she does and how she does it, even if she wants to make use of the liberatory approaches, is going to depend on time limits, subject matter, and institutional politics. To plan and facilitate responsibly and to create an inclusive learning environment, she does need to attend to all these factors.

The feminist pedagogy literature does not offer a cookbook approach to what any adult educator should do in a given situation; however, it is possible to consider what teaching strategies are implied by this literature that could aid in creating inclusive

learning environments. Examined first are issues about which all adult educators need to be concerned. Because there are additional issues facing those operating from Banks' transformative or social action approaches to multicultural education, the second part discusses specific issues those using these approaches might want to consider.

### ***Inclusive Practices for All Adult Educators***

There are several issues that all adult educators should be concerned about in attempting to create inclusive learning environments for adults, no matter where one situates oneself in regard to Sleeter and Grant's or Banks' approaches to multicultural education. First, adult educators who want to create learning environments that are inclusive for a specific context need to consider carefully how they will define "inclusive" relative to a specific learning activity and the levels of contexts to be considered in determining that definition. All educators need to be concerned both with the specific learning context of the classroom or learning activity and the organizational context in which one is working. Whether or not one wants also to attend to the societal context in defining inclusivity for a specific learning activity—and overtly call attention to the power relations between dominant and oppressed groups in society that affect educational systems and activities—is up to the adult educator. This probably depends on where one situates oneself both philosophically and practically in relation to Banks' (1993) or Sleeter and Grant's (1987) approaches to multicultural education as discussed in the second section of Part I. Of course, this also depends on the specific nature of the particular learning activity, including what the content is to be, the duration of the program, and the organizational context.

Second, in light of one's position in relationship to Sleeter and Grant's or Banks' approaches to multicultural education, it is important to consider carefully how one designs the curriculum for a given learning activity. As Wood (1988) suggests, decisions about what to include in the curriculum are political considerations. One might want to consider how the curricular materials chosen for classes or learning activities implicitly or

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explicitly contribute to challenging the structured power relations based on gender, race, and class. When choosing curricular materials that might appear to address issues related to those who have been marginalized, one might consider if such materials examine these issues from the perspective of unequal power relations or from the standpoint of gender or racial differences only. Because books related to content areas often do not include chapters dealing with women and minority issues, it may be necessary to include additional books or articles that specifically address gender, race, and class issues related to the course content or learning opportunity. Of course, such an approach is, essentially, an additive one.

**Adult education instructors who want to challenge structured power relations based on gender, race, and class need to adopt teaching strategies that contribute to accomplishing such a purpose.**

Third, adult education instructors who want to challenge structured power relations based on gender, race, and class need to adopt teaching strategies that contribute to accomplishing such a purpose. Every instructor has to develop and experiment with teaching strategies based on his or her personality that prove over time to be emancipatory. Teaching strategies that unite theory and practice, value affective forms of knowledge, and require some reflection on how the course content relates to one's life experience seem to have contributed to the ability of women in Belenky et al.'s (1986) study to find voice. Collins (1991) and Omolade (1994) suggest that this is also true for African American women and may be true for most students who have been marginalized by the educational system in this culture.

Related to this issue, a variety of teaching strategies can be used to facilitate inclusive learning, and a number of adult educators have discussed some of these techniques that may facilitate the greater participation of students who have been marginalized (Brookfield 1987; Caffarella 1992; Merriam and Caffarella 1991; Mezirow and Associates 1990; Shor 1992). Some of these include storytelling, critical incident techniques, small-group work, role plays, dyad and triad sharing, activities that promote some self-disclosure, group processing, and problem-solving techniques. What is particularly useful in relating theory to life experience is reflective journal writing analyzing theoretical constructs and its relationship to life experience. Certainly, it is wise to use a variety of approaches to teaching, and it is also wise for those attempting to create inclusive learning environments to vary their teaching techniques.

Fourth, adult educators who are interested in creating inclusive learning environments may want to attempt to become conscious of the ways their own unconscious behavior in the learning environment contributes to challenging or reproducing society's unequal power relations. All people have internalized to some degree the values of the dominant culture in ways of which they are not fully conscious. In attempting to increase their consciousness about power relations in the classroom, educators may want to consider such issues as the gender, race, and class of the majority of characters in their illustrative stories and examples, or which students are affirmed (by both facilitators and students) as leaders of the class and how, with which students they have more eye contact, and upon whom they rely to carry the discussion. They may want to watch themselves on videotape or consider inviting a trusted colleague or friend to observe the way in which they conduct a learning session paying attention to these issues. One cannot change what one is not conscious of, and the reproduction of power relations happens largely through unconscious mechanisms.

### ***Transformative and Social Reconstructionist Approaches: Special Considerations***

All adult educators need to be concerned with the issues discussed here, and it is good teaching and facilitation practice to use a variety of techniques. But there are additional issues that should be kept in mind by those who are using what Banks referred to as transformative or social action approaches and what Sleeter and Grant (1987) referred to as social reconstructionist approaches. The feminist teachers in Maher and Tetreault's (1994) study and those teaching women's studies and multicultural classes in the Tisdell and McLaurin (1994) study were operating primarily out of transformative or social reconstructionist approaches.

The instructors in Maher and Tetreault's study talked not only about the importance of connecting theory and life experience in the way Belenky et al. (1986) do, but also about helping students examine how the intersecting systems of privilege and

oppression that inform their own lives, the lives of their peers, their instructors, and the authors read inform the way each constructs knowledge. The instructors in the Tisdell and McLaurin (1994) study who were operating from transformative and reconstructionist approaches discussed the fact that examining systems of oppression and privilege of various groups is hard work in classrooms, for these issues are likely to evoke emotional responses in students.

Many who write in the area of multicultural education, including Banks (1993) and Sleeter and Grant (1987), do not address the fact that people typically are passionate about issues of power relations between dominant and oppressed groups or issues relating to power, privilege, and oppression. On the one hand, it might be nice to deal with these issues on a strictly intellectual level, but even attempting to do so is still going to invoke a lot of passion or strong feeling. Dealing with these issues is likely to make people angry, sad, exhilarated, guilty, resistant, or hopeful, to name just a few of the reactions typically reported by those who teach from this perspective. Yet, there are only a few authors who discuss the range and depth of emotional responses students have to course content that addresses these issues. In order to create an environment in which all participants can have a voice in discussion of these issues, Tatum (1992) recommends that creating ground rules for discussion with the participants the first time the learning group meets is crucial. Specifically how one deals with these issues in using transformative and social reconstructionist approaches of any type depends again on the context. If this is a community-based action group, one might be more interested in dealing more specifically with the emotional aspects of these issues; if this is a graduate-level higher education context, one might be more interested in helping students understand the content from an intellectual perspective, while keeping their emotional responses in mind.

Hooks (1994) is one author who specifically addresses the fact that these are issues about which participants in any learning activity are likely to have a lot of passion. She does offer some "words of wisdom" to those engaged in what she describes (following Freire 1971) as "education as the practice of freedom." She discussed the fact many of her colleagues in higher education settings have been unsettled by her overt discussion of

political standpoints, reporting that she continually needs to remind people that "no education is politically neutral" (hooks 1994, p. 37). She goes on to discuss the fact that "the unwillingness to approach teaching from a standpoint that includes race, sex, and class is often rooted in the fear that classrooms will be uncontrollable, that emotions and passions will not be contained" (p. 39). This does seem to be the issue for many who are reticent about teaching or facilitating operating from these approaches.

Both hooks (1994) and Shor (1992) suggest that it is possible to create a classroom that is a democratic setting in which everyone does have a voice. Hooks discusses the importance of building a community that is based both on openness and intellectual rigor. "Rather than focusing on issues of safety, I think that a feeling of community creates a sense that there is shared commitment and a common good that binds us" (p. 40). She reports requiring students to read paragraphs that they have written analyzing their own position related to some particular issue, so that those who tend to remain invisible or silent are more visible and their voices heard. Based on her discussion, it seems that she has a tendency to critique why some students are more vocal than others, in light of the systems of privilege and oppression that inform their lives, and asks students to do the same.

Clearly, teaching from this perspective is not easy. Those who do it, including hooks, report that at times students are resistant. As Sleeter (1993) and Roman (1993) note, there can be great resistance on the part of participants who are white and middle class to examining their own privilege, or to use McIntosh's (1989) expression, to unpacking the knapsack of white privilege. For those who are white, the effects and benefits of white privilege have not been made visible, since to be white has been seen as "the norm." Making whiteness visible as a system of privilege can be threatening to those who have never given very much thought to what it means to be white in this culture. Given that at times people are resistant to examining these issues, hooks (1994) notes that instructors who do this are not always among the most popular on campus. For this reason, hooks suggests that those who are teaching from this perspective might want to surrender their need for immediate obvious affirmation from students. But hooks reminds readers that students

often report later how much they learned in these kinds of classes even though it may have been uncomfortable. She does suggest, though, that there are some immediate rewards to teaching in this way. Students are generally engaged in this type of pedagogy and will feel a need to talk and to talk back. This is what can make education as the practice of freedom particularly exciting. Participants will talk, and talk back, and many who have typically been marginalized will come to voice.

Educators operating from this perspective may or may not be pushing their own political agenda when teaching in this manner. All education is political. It seems that those teaching using these approaches make visible the politics of all education, make visible the fact that education and/or the construction of knowledge is from *someone* or *some group's* perspective. What this does is lift the veil of presumed neutrality, and many students, or people in general, want to live with the illusion that neutrality exists. Thus it seems that, rather than pushing their own agenda, those teaching from these perspectives are making the underlying assumptions of all education visible. Clearly, this can be unsettling.

Those teaching using these approaches make visible the politics of all education, make visible the fact that education and/or the construction of knowledge is from *someone* or *some group's* perspective.

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### *Concluding Thoughts*

In this monograph, I try to create a framework whereby adult educators might determine for themselves how they define inclusivity and what they mean by context. Both of these are central to determining what it means to create adult learning environments. Although most of my own experience is specifically in adult higher education situations, I try to keep the discussion broad enough to include adult educators who work in other organizational settings.

Both curricular issues and pedagogical issues are central to considering how one might create an inclusive adult learning environment or activity. Part I discusses issues that are central to the politics of knowledge production and curriculum and planning and explore some of the models and approaches to multicultural education from the wider education literature that might be helpful to adult educators who are trying to create inclusive



curricula. In Part II, the pedagogical issues that arise in most learning environments, along with some of the insights offered by feminist and positional pedagogies, are considered because they implicitly offer some implications for how to manage the learning environment.

In this monograph I do not offer a prescription for how to create an inclusive learning environment. Rather, I present what I see as central issues that one might want to think about in developing a pedagogical style and in designing curricula for specific learning activities. (A "nonprescriptive" summary is provided to bring together some insights from the literature.) To be sure, creating an inclusive adult learning environment is no easy task. It does seem that educators interesting in doing so might want to give themselves permission to try new things and to make mistakes along the way. Although what is provided here is not a prescription or a cookbook, I think it is a map of sorts. But each adult educator herself or himself needs to do the driving, as they say, and provide the flashlight of their own insights and experience to light the way. It is clear that there is a lack of research-based literature in the field of adult education that adequately examines how systems of privilege and oppression are played out in the learning environment, or exactly what pedagogical strategies lead to individual and social transformation. Clearly, more research and discussion is needed in this area. In the meantime, may the shared insights of all and the growing awareness of diversity issues help each to create ever more inclusive learning environments for adults.

### **Creating Inclusive Learning Environments: A Nonprescriptive Summary**

- **Integrate affective and experiential knowledge with theoretical concepts.**
- **Pay attention to the power relations inherent in knowledge production.**
- **Be aware that participants are positioned differently in relationship to each other and to the knowledge being acquired.**
- **Acknowledge the power disparity between the teacher/facilitator and the students.**
- **Identify all stakeholders and their positionality in the educational program.**
- **Consider the levels of inclusivity and the levels of contexts involved in the educational activity.**
- **Consider how curricular choices implicitly or explicitly contribute to challenging structured power relations.**
- **Adopt emancipatory teaching strategies.**
- **Be conscious of the ways in which unconscious behavior contributes to challenging or reproducing unequal power relations.**
- **Build a community based on both openness and intellectual rigor to create a democratic classroom.**

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