This Moment is the Curriculum: Equity, Inclusion, and Collectivist Critical Curriculum Mapping for Study Abroad Programs in the COVID-19 Era

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Abstract

Background: This article explores critical curriculum mapping in experiential education through immersive travel or Study Abroad Programs (SAPs). **Purpose:** The tetrad of authors theorizes then models the practice of criticality in curriculum mapping for SAPs. **Methodology/Approach:** Using Black feminist thought as a theoretical moor and dialogue and reflexive narrative as methods, authors present a curriculum mapping framework that is berthed to collective knowledge of how Black women in the African diaspora make meaning of lived experience to survive a perpetually precarious world. **Findings/Conclusions:** The framework exemplifies an epistemological alternative to dominant individualistic Euro/American approaches to curriculum mapping. Such approaches privilege predictability and linearity, contributing to the low participation of collectivist-oriented Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students in SAPs. **Implications:** A collectivist critical orientation to curriculum mapping may, therefore, be useful for (a) epistemologically diversifying curricular responsiveness (with implications for teaching and learning in the unpredictable chaos of the current COVID-19 moment) and (b) addressing enduring issues of equity and inclusion in SAPs.

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> Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. Our minds are still racing back and forth, longing for a return to "normality," trying to stitch our future to our past and refusing to acknowledge the rupture. But the rupture exists. And in the midst of this terrible despair, it offers us a chance to rethink . . .

—Roy (2020, para. 48)

This article explores critical curriculum mapping in experiential education through immersive travel or Study Abroad Programs (SAPs). To illustrate, we recount our experience developing a diasporic Black feminist framework for curriculum mapping then demonstrate our use of that tool to scaffold the process of *rethinking* (Roy, 2020) an existing curriculum map for a university-based SAP upended by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Using a diasporic Black feminist lens, we illustrate the affordances of curricular criticality for both theory and practice in SAPs. We contribute to theory by rooting our framework in our knowledge of how Black women in the African diaspora make meaning of lived experience to survive a world that is perpetually precarious for us. We add to knowledge of practice in SAPs by presenting our design and application of a collectivist critical curriculum mapping tool. Our collaboratively constructed framework exemplifies an epistemological alternative to individualistic Euro/American curriculum mapping approaches.

We begin by contextualizing this article within the current COVID-19 pandemic and then outline our theoretical and conceptual frameworks and our mode and methods of study. A review of relevant literature follows. Next, we present a quadripartite polyvocal reflexive narrative (Christian, 1988; Johns, 2020; Morrison, 1993) that irradiates how aspects of our lived experience informed the four themes underpinning our framework: memory, necropolitics, spirituality, and geography. We then demonstrate how this collectivist-oriented tool helped us improve our curricular responsiveness by shaping our (re)construction of a SAP curriculum map that veered away from "the prism of individualism, which usually renders unheard the international experiences and voices of people in the global South" (Tieku, 2012, p. 36) and towards humanizing collectivism.

Contextualizing Our Disappointment in this Moment

We had been planning this SAP to Ghana for nearly four years by the time the COVID-19 pandemic struck the United States (U.S.). We aimed to immerse U.S.-based educators in Ghanaian culture through experiential activities, including

school-based exchanges with Ghanaian teachers. Thus, the project's success depended on engagement with that (overseas) place as a curricular text. The group traveling would consist of the four of us—Black women pedagogues and daughters of the African diaspora—plus 14 Black women participants. We had fantasized about July 2020, dreamed of attiring ourselves in custom-tailored tie and dye clothing made from Ghanaian fabrics, and imagined eating culinary delicacies such as jollof rice, kelewele, and fried tilapia. For seemingly countless months, we pored over instructional materials and teaching resources while developing a curriculum map detailing how we would use a combination of texts and place-based learning techniques and pedagogies to achieve our objectives. In March 2020, however, as news of the deadly virus proliferated the airwaves, it dawned on us that our carefully constructed curriculum map was unlikely to materialize.

By March 2020, the preliminary predeparture part of the three-phase project was already underway, and we had successfully hosted our first of three scheduled webinars. Daunted by the prospect of a delay to the project's next (overseas) phase, which was scheduled for July, we converged between March and May to rethink and reconstruct our planned curriculum. Our conversations crystallized the gloomy reality that COVID-19 was intensifying the currents of the perilous waters of oppression in which Black people had long been drowning (Scheurich, 2017). Nevertheless, because we exist in community, we also remembered that these are familiar waters for diasporic Black people. We recalled that just recently, Black people faced the floods of Hurricane Katrina in the southern United States and felt the wrath of the Ebola virus ravaging West Africa. Our collective knowledge affirmed that as Black people, we have waded in these troubled oceans and survived annihilation, albeit scathed, in the neoteric past (e.g., Allen, 2007).

Theoretical and Conceptual Framing

Black Feminist Thought as Critical Social Theory

Essential to Black feminist study are Black women's experiences at the emplaced and embodied intersections of oppressions such as racism, classism, and hetero/sexism (Hill Collins, 2015, 2019). A commitment to bringing forth social change that improves Black women's lives and living conditions underpins this school of critical social thought. This commitment is enacted through practices that deepen meaning-making, such as politicized dialogue—dialogue that scrutinizes racialized, classed, sexed, gendered, and otherwise marked imbalances in power distribution. Hill Collins (2015) explains that "[d]ialogues associated with ethical, principled, coalition building create possibilities for new versions of truth" (p. 38). Dialoguing about the politics of truth/s engenders the deconstruction of dualisms. By embracing a *both/and* approach, Black feminists "explore new ways to dissolve pervasive dualisms like self/other" and engage in "breaking down barriers and exploring relationships, advocating for multiplicity while resisting relativism" (Arner & Falmagne, 2007, p. 357).
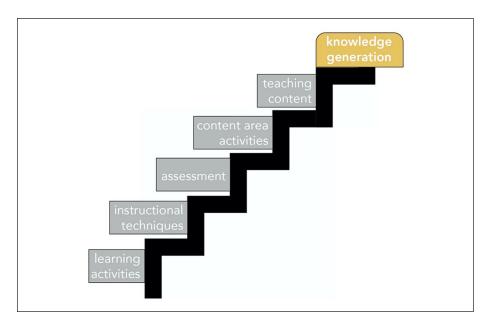
Figure 1. A standard Western Euro/American orientation to curriculum mapping.
In this linear approach, learning activities, instructional techniques, assessments, content area objectives, and teaching content are steps towards knowledge generation, albeit not necessarily in the order illustrated.

The Concept of Curriculum

Curriculum has long been conceptualized as "all planned learning outcomes for which the school is responsible" and "the desired consequences of instruction" (Popham & Baker, 1970, p. 48). This notion of curriculum as that which is planned—although not school-based—reflects our initial orientation to developing a map detailing content to be covered in all phases of our project. This content reflected what we deemed necessary for participants to learn based on parameters set forth by our funders and our knowledge of Ghana's social, political, and cultural contexts.

Planned curriculum is developed through curriculum mapping processes. Broadly, standard approaches to curriculum mapping position knowledge generation (about a specific content area, for example, literacy) as an expected outcome of *aligning* teaching content to content area objectives, assessments, instructional techniques, and learning activities.

Alignment constitutes and is constitutive of linearity (Figure 1). Linearity is emblematic of Euro/American worldviews (Sue et al., 1998; Tieku, 2012). Affixed to W/western epistemologies, these worldviews place value on individualism (e.g., Hampton & Varnum, 2017), which can foster "an affinity for logical analysis and for decontextualizing information, as well as for categorizing and subcategorizing subjects and topics" (Hain-Jamall, 2013, p. 14). Individualistic orientations to curriculum mapping, then, can yield rigid, unadaptable curricula (Pinar, 2020). Inflexible

curricula cannot sufficiently prompt equitable responses to the heterogeneous teaching and learning needs of individuals with collectivist worldviews, particularly within SAPs, where students need to learn how to engage "foreign" ideas on foreign lands.

Literature on Curriculum in SAPs

For our purposes, curriculum describes the totality of learners' experiences with in/formal activities in places and moments of teaching and learning. There is, by design, a static quality to planned curricula in SAPs given the finite focus on a specific country for a specific reason and a set period. This fixedness means that curriculum factors into the "problematic trends in study abroad programs that reproduce hierarchies of power and colonialism, perpetuate views of an exotic cultural 'other', and privilege tourism over education" (Pipitone, 2018, p. 55). Hence, curriculum mapping is an in/equity issue.

Curriculum, Euro/American Worldviews, and Equity

Literature indicates that SAPs generally employ dominant Western curricula (Harper, 2018). This, inferentially, explains why SAPs tend to overwhelmingly attract White students (Schmelzer, 2015). It would not be unusual for a Black student to be the sole non-White participant in a given SAP (Malewski & Phillion, 2009). Scholars have found that although only one-tenth of U.S. college students study abroad, that population is majority white (Schmelzer, 2015). Further, as empirical and anecdotal evidence show, these students tend to approach study abroad as neocolonialist voyeurs, flattening the richness of interpersonal, intercultural interactions with non-Euro/American "others" on foreign lands to fun-tastic, sensorially pleasurable, (com)modified tourist experiences (e.g., Pipitone, 2018). Such demeaning perspectives are aggravated by the proliferation of social media, which has led to the emergence of affective states such as "Instagram envy" (Williams, 2013). Faculty in SAPs are also largely white-identified. Therefore, the tools utilized for curriculum mapping in SAPs are consequential for the in/adequacy of the preparation that both students and faculty receive before traveling overseas.

Curriculum maps framed within Euro/American worldviews reinforce White hegemony and during program pre-departure phases, undercut SAP faculty and students' "ability to gain a comprehensive understanding of global life" (Tieku, 2012, p. 36). The neglect of nondominant (i.e., non-Western) onto-epistemologies in SAP curriculum mapping means that (White) faculty and students may arrive overseas ill-prepared for decolonial teaching and learning.

The dominance of Euro/American teaching and learning orientations in SAPs is another problem in the COVID-19 era. Euro/American worldviews tend to presuppose permanence and predictability (e.g., Ani, 1994), which are challenging concepts for curriculum mappers designing experiential learning in the midst of pandemic-borne pandemonium. In addition, Euro/American or White-washed approaches to curriculum planning in SAPs may deter Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, who tend to uphold collectivism (e.g., Mocombe, 2020; Swaidan et al.,

2008). These students may find SAPs' curricular privileging of White students' cultural and social teaching and learning norms exclusionary.

Curriculum, African Diasporic Worldviews, and Inclusion

Increasingly, SAPs at predominantly White colleges and universities are addressing Black students' decolonial (Dei, 2019; Stanek, 2019) and collectivist worldviews (Lee & Green, 2016; Swaidan et al., 2008). Black women faculty are often the creators and facilitators of these programs (Dillard, 2020; Dillard et al., 2017; Green et al., 2017). Lee and Green (2016) highlight the positive impacts on academic and professional aspirations and identity formation for Black students who study abroad in the African diaspora alongside Black faculty. Black faculty-led programs can undo the historical erasure of African-centered thought and cultural practices common in SAPs (Dillard, 2012).

Black women faculty have found SAPs to be generative spaces for theorizing experiential learning curriculum (Dillard, 2020). By engaging collectivist worldviews, Black women faculty curate curriculum that shift attention away from the Euro/American center of the global North and towards the diverse experiences and voices of "other" people in and of the global South (Dillard et al., 2017). Thus, BIPOC students marginalized in the global North due to their racialized social identities may experience SAPs led by Black women faculty as inclusive spaces.

Implications for Curriculum Mapping

Our literature review illustrates that Euro/American-centered approaches to curriculum planning prevalent in SAPs are one reason why, for Black faculty and students specifically, "experiential learning . . . remains a pedagogical and structural challenge" (Roberts, 2018, p. 4). This article addresses that challenge, offering a curriculum mapping tool explicitly implanted in Black feminist epistemologies, oriented toward collectivism, and flexible enough to engender robust engagement with *both* relational, dynamic, and predictably unpredictable aspects of experiential learning *and* disruptive world events, such as the COVID-19 outbreak.

Mode and Methods of Study

We start this section by highlighting our Black feminist narrative *study* of curriculum (Patterson et al., 2016); that is, we first emphasize that we undertook this study by "talking and walking around with other people, working, dancing, suffering, some irreducible convergence of all three," because "[t]o do these things is to be involved in a kind of common intellectual practice" (Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 110). Our practice of theorizing through narrative began organically with our curriculum planning conversations and then evolved into a formalized process. Soon after COVID-19 struck, we noticed curricular implications for meaning-making as we collectively processed the resulting mayhem. We recorded and transcribed four 60 to 90 minute dialogues

conducted via videoconferencing over eight weeks in spring 2020. Upon coding transcripts (Nowell et al., 2017), four themes emerged: memory, necropolitics, spirituality, and geography. We also discovered that each theme was substantiated by "expert" knowledge (hooks, 1991) gleaned from the lived experience that each of us brought to the discussion table. For Black women,

> our theorizing (and I intentionally use the verb rather than the noun) is often in narrative forms, in the stories we create, in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language, since dynamic rather than fixed ideas seem more to our liking. How else have we managed to survive with such spiritedness the assault on our bodies, social institutions, countries, our very humanity? (Christian, 1988, p. 68)

Heeding Toni Morrison's (1993) appeal to "[s]top thinking about saving your face. Think of our lives and tell us your particularized world" (para. 30), we wove our dialogues' thematic threads into a polyvocal reflexive narrative: "Narrative is radical, creating us at the very moment it is being created" (para. 30). Our narrative foregrounds our diasporic Black feminist subjectivities, which are interlaced with the autobiographical stories containing our theorizing.

Curriculum Mapping in Theory and Practice

Curriculum Mapping in Black Feminist Theory

As COVID-19 spread, many around us asked, "What is this moment when the world is grappling with a global pandemic doing to us?" Rather than structure our conversations around that inward-facing, individualistic question, we asked ourselves and each other the following questions: (a) What is this moment asking of us?, (b) What is this moment demanding of us collectively?, (c) What are we gaining—not just losing—at this moment?, and (d) What is this moment gifting to us? This section contains our narrative, through which we elaborate upon the four themes identified in the data collected: memory, necropolitics, spirituality, and geography.

This moment has come to pass in the past: Susan on memory. COVID-19 has triggered or exacerbated our anxieties, fears, and paranoia, leaving a trail of death. It is a storm raging everywhere, touching every person, though not with equal force. The globalness of its onslaught makes it difficult to imagine ourselves back to normality—there is even an informed assumption that we are moving toward a new normal. Our lives may be changing, yet we are beckoned to remember that humans have been *here* before, our memories "part and parcel of who we are and how we are in the world" (Dillard, 2012, p. 11), molding how we make meaning of ourselves.

I was lecturing at the University of Ghana when the Ebola virus struck West Africa. Although I found no mention of Ebola in my journals from then, I recall talking about it with my Ghanaian colleagues and the collective sense that "it" was "over there," expressed out of a sense of acute hope. Greater uneasiness came from family and

friends in New York City as they learned about the outbreak through media that has long gazed on Africa with skewed eyes that Wainaina (2006) described as follows:

> Among your characters you must always include The Starving African, who wanders the refugee camp nearly naked, and waits for the benevolence of the West . . . She can have no past, no history; such. Diversions ruin the dramatic moment. (p. 93)

At the time, I was also anticipating a sister-friend's arrival to Sierra Leone. The outbreak was a crushing blow to our plans for long weekends being on "the continent" together. The thousands of souls that perished from Ebola are extraordinarily sad; nevertheless, for us, the outbreak was also selfishly wrapped up in personal letdown.

I remembered this as our group was accepting that COVID-19 would define the parameters of our SAP engagement. I soon appreciated what initially felt like a familiar letdown as an opportunity: a gift of time to refine our curriculum and bond with participants. As a Ghana-phile who has led numerous SAPs for Black and Latinx youth throughout the Africa diaspora, I am constantly troubled by the strident misrepresentation of Africa in western media. Therefore, I wanted to draw out participants' assumptions about the pandemic's effects and what we could learn from Africa. Our western news outlets kept us updated with images of people living in squalor, their lives worsened by the pandemic, just as poor people everywhere; but where would our participants access news about Africa's and diasporic Africans' history of dealing with viral outbreaks and accrued expertise from which we could learn (e.g., Clarke, 2020; Mogoatlhe, 2020)? As the impacts of COVID-19 unfolded, I thought we might look at the West African Ebola outbreak or Hurricane Katrina closer to home to expand how we understand this moment.

Besides shaking up our participants' assumptions about what their experiences in Ghana would offer, I wanted us to lean into our ideas and fears about the pandemic and our ancestors' forbearance. This is a practice I used when taking youth to the slave fortresses along West Africa's coast to help them reconcile the brutality and complete denial of their people's humanness and step out of the women's dungeon into the quotidian flow of street life still standing upright. I listened to young people's anguish and reminded them that as a people, we have survived and healed, often by using storytelling to locate ourselves and "name our pain, our suffering and to seek healing" (hooks, 1993, p. 17).

When the pandemic hit, I sought to *locate* us—our participants and us as Black women educators, scholars, and ascendant African people (Dillard, 2012) who have experienced trauma in the past. I suggested that the next time we gathered, we should choose an Adinkra symbol that captured our spirit. Adinkra is a symbolic language of the Akan people of Ghana that imparts "parables, aphorisms, proverbs, popular sayings, historical events, traits of animal behavior or shapes of inanimate or [hu]man-made objects" (Willis, 1998, p. 1). Like material culture, Adinkra is "imbued with deep and sacred meanings" (Dillard, 2012, p. 41) through which we might recognize ourselves. Manifesting aspects of our African identities through Adinkra, we moved into remembering West Africa and New Orleans before and after the Ebola outbreak

and Hurricane Katrina, to name our ancestral lineage that has tilled gardens, regardless (Walker, 1983). We widened our gaze across time and place, coalescing COVID-19 stories, including its effects on participants' teaching, while harvesting hope from our kindred. In the pandemic's wreckage (Roy, 2020), we remembered that we simultaneously stand on our ancestors' soil as descendants, survivors, and tillers of our own narratives. The questions I asked of the curriculum planning group were as follows: How do we draw upon our memories of what has come before to help situate us in this moment? How can we engage temporally, shifting back and forth between the present and past to—paraphrasing Morrison (1993)—create radical narratives gathered from our individual stories about what the world has been to us in dark and light moments? How can these new narratives expand what we perceive as the curriculum of our program?

This moment makes visible the racialized politics of death: Esther on necropolitics. My blood boiled and veins bulged as I read the headline proclaiming, "2 top French doctors said on live TV that coronavirus vaccines should be tested on poor Africans, leaving viewers horrified" (Kossoff, 2020). Merely days later, a medical reporter for the British Broadcasting Company implied that should vaccine trials fail in the United Kingdom, Kenya would be a viable option for further testing (Samanga, 2020). I fumed as I read these news reports, angered by reminders that in a world dictated by the norms and needs of the West, Africa is a necropolitan cemetery for Black people. On this burial ground, Black African people live in a continual cycle of dying, raging, dying, raging—again and again. We have every right to roar unceasingly with rage because *we can't breathe* in a necropolitical reality that imbues tools of the Western imperialist state with enough power to render us the "*living dead*" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 37).

The concept of the living dead is theorized in Mbembe's (2003) interrelated notions of necropolitics and necropower, which extend Foucault's scholarship on biopower. Whereas Foucault dissects how social and political power are leveraged in the management of the lives of huge swathes of people, Mbembe delves into how these forms of power are used to group and sort bodies, effectively trapping some—those deemed worthless—in the interstice between life and death. In this case, sovereignty does not gesture toward submission to the rule of law as Foucault (1997) suggests, but toward "the capacity to define . . . who is *disposable* and who is not" (Mbembe, 2003, p. 27). A necropolitical analysis of the preceding dialogue between two White French doctors illuminates that through Western eyes, Black people are perceived as inherently deserving of death and extinction.

The knowledge that the West views Black Africans as disposable is not novel to me. I spent my youth in Kenya during the 1980s and 1990s. Then—and now, arguably—my homeland was steeped in the residue of British colonialism. In Kenya, legacies of colonialism shape/d nearly every aspect of social/political life. These legacies were pronounced in my schooling, where for years, I memorized trivia about members of the British monarchy while learning nothing of Gor Mahia, Luanda Magere, and other warriors who walked among my people, the Luos (National Museums of Kenya, n.d.; Ohito, 2016). Observing Western(ers') responses to COVID-19 reminded me that for

Black people, necropolitics—the sociopolitical sorting of people into two categories: those deemed worthy of life (those who may live) and those marked for death (those who must die)—are both woven into and invisibilized in everyday Black life. Recognizing this triggered memory of my educational experience in Kenya, which, overall, validated Wynter's contention that

> [i]f you look at the system of "knowledge," in the [sanctioned] curriculum, it's set up to motivate every white student and to de-motivate every Black student. The system of "knowledge" itself is what functions to motivate and to de-motivate. Notice, it motivates those who are to be at the top and it de-motivates those who are to be at the bottom. (as cited in Thomas, 2006, para. 32)

In other words, I reached the self-realization that my *mis*education in Kenyan schools primed me not only to comprehend but also to use my lived experience as a text for teaching others how curriculum functions as a necropolitical apparatus. "Decolonial education for a pluriversal world is inevitably linked to the politics of knowledge production in modern/colonial times" (Stanek, 2019, p. 4). Thus, the questions that I raised for our curriculum planning team were as follows: How do we *dis*engage from curriculum as a necropolitical knowledge system that reinforces the state's right to hierarchize humans and determine which racialized, classed, sexed, gendered, and otherwise marked bodies *may* live and which *must* die? How do we use our SAP curiculum to meaningfully engage—and visibilize—the politics of life and death playing out in this moment? Moreover, how might we design SAP curriculum that beckons us to attend to the knowledge of the politics of life and death—knowledge that swirls in the depths of the inner currents of our collective cultural memory (Doll, 2017)?

This moment demands presence and gifts stillness: Jamila on spirituality. On April 4, 2020, as reports of COVID-19-related deaths became a continual aspect of the daily U.S. news cycle, I posted the following on my Twitter social media account:

> A lot of ppl want this quarantine to be over to get back to escaping themselves. [We've] been conditioned to use distractions to avoid our inner world, our own thoughts, habits, histories. There's a lot to grieve rn but there is a gift in the stillness & the stripping away the noise. (Lyiscott, 2020)

Undergirding this message is my conviction that within our increasingly digitally mediated and over-medicated society, the aversion to stillness that characterizes our lives in the United States is the by-product of Western ideologies, steeped in capitalism. Within this cultural milieu, success is measured along the lines of mass production, forward movement, competition, and an unending quest to mitigate discomfort quickly. For many, the 2020 pandemic's disruption of business as usual imposed the foreignness of stillness, presence, and uncertainty in ways that rattled how we have been socialized to navigate the western world. School, as we know it, has been stripped away. Social life has been stripped away. Job loss. Gym closures. Too many bodies in the hospitals. Wear masks. You don't need masks. Wear gloves. Stay inside but get out

for some sun. Across social media, the rising anxiety of being quarantined unfolds daily. The moment was forced upon us; our autonomy has been stripped away. Our month-long SAP has been stripped away.

Because incessant production and capital-driven progress measures are essential to the fabric of western thought, I assert stillness as a practice of disruption and resistance. Stillness is not the absence of movement. It is an opportunity to be present in the ever-ness of now. Thus, it is precisely within the space of stillness that we have opportunities to attune to the present moment's power. Normative American schooling (Frankena et al., 2002), having its roots in industrial-era factory practices focused on rigid outcomes, has long been established as a dehumanization and suffering site, particularly for Black youth (e.g., Irizarry & Brown, 2014). Rather than honor the full and present humanity of each student in the power of their individualism and nuanced cultures, industrial "college and career prep" ideologies view students as objects to be measured and primed for long-term capital production. Alongside this, Patel (2016) teaches us that the formal school processes are consistently at odds with what is necessary for true learning, which requires "departing from known automatic practices, venturing into experiences that aren't wholly predictable, and experiencing temporary, productive failure" (p. 397). The 2020 pandemic-related school closures have catapulted us away from the automatic practices of schooling. Stillness as an act of disruption and resistance creates opportunities for us to be present in the moment's debris as its own curriculum. The moment is a teacher.

What moves in the stillness of the moment? If stillness is indeed not the absence of movement, the question becomes, what moves in the stillness of the moment? As a Black woman scholar, I present stillness as a disruption from the normative because it can invite transcendence and spirituality in crucial ways. Stillness is the choice to quiet the noise of our material reality to access transcendence and spirit. Spirituality—attending to the self that exists beyond the physical and material world that is ever before us—has long played a central role in my ability to exist beyond while navigating the uncertainty, violence, and constraints of western institutions. James Cone (1975), the father of Black Liberation Theology, asserts that across both secular and religious Black communities, spirituality is always tethered to our cultural and liberatory practices. To be still is to activate spirituality through a reliance on the intangible and uncertain. It is to walk by faith, not by sight.

Thus, I invited our group to utilize stillness to activate transcendence and spirituality. To do this is to rely on the movement of the moment. I invited the group to join a long history of sustaining access to our spiritual selves in a society where Black folk's souls are constantly under threat. In this way, "as challengers to Eurocentric hegemony in the academy, we . . . come with alternative offerings of 'truth'" (Dillard et al., 2000, p. 447). That is, knowledge practices and ways of knowing become available when western ways of knowing are rejected and decentered. This shows up prominently in the history and present of Black culture, where the extemporaneous is lauded. You must rely on the stillness of this place, space, and time for the rhetorical modes of call and response to move the Spirit in the Black church; you must lean into the uncertainty of the moment for the vocal improvisation of scat to show out in jazz; to engage in the

traditions of extemporaneous calypso, freestyle in hip-hop, and viral social media dances featuring bodily improvisations. What could such spiritual practices mean for curriculum mapping in our SAP?

This moment unfolds in place: Keisha on geography. For many during this global pandemic, notions of home, place, and space are troubled. For Black folks—women, in particular—what does it mean to shelter in place during such a time? Transient and transcendent, ours is a history of fugitivity and marronage, surviving, planting, nurturing, seeding, growing, and sowing even in a *fixed* place. Each of us has always had a relationship to land, movement, migration, and place. As such, Black women scholars attuned to emplacement

> . . . treat geography not only as human and social landscapes, but also as systems of thought that move across, move through, and span space and bodies. These women are rethinking human-spatial dynamics to explore and combat social inequalities [and] to identify practices of liberation from gendered and racially oppressive forces. In so doing, they are re-examining the shifting political and social terrain of gender and race and bringing women's voices, specifically, into national, international, and transnational forums. (Henery, 2011, p. 88)

Sheltering in place means many things for different people. How we have used webinars with Black women participants from across the country has been a sort of critical and cultural pedagogy toward developing a collective kinship and praxis. Although once strangers, there is a knowing in all of us women and all the geographies we carry identifying in and with Blackness at home and abroad. Still, we know enough about the nuance of geography regarding race, space, and place to pause and ask the question: How do we claim a place (or kinship) we do not yet know much about? Our geographies, our relationship to all these questions are racialized, classed, and gendered.

When we come to a place and space, we bring our lived experiences, storied narratives, familial histories, and (African) diasporic cultures. Our movement across place, space, and land is a mapping of and grappling with how we have come to be and know. We bring these Black spatial identities—our Black geographies—with us here and there. As our project planning phase overlapped with Ghana's campaign to attract African Americans to "return" home (Paquette, 2020), I remember novelist Jacqueline Woodson's (2019) reflection of her journey to Ghana. As a South Carolinian with a heritage line running from the Lowcountry to the West Coast of Africa, the tensions Woodson felt navigating her sense of belonging or connection to a place framed to be her (and our) ancestral home resonate with me. What will it mean to be at "home" for the first time in Ghana? The "welcome back" campaign implies African Americans *belong* in Ghana; however, others view it as a marketing plea. The attraction to the plea is in tension with our awareness that some of us have yet to belong but are seeking a (re)integration of our roots.

McKittrick (2006) writes, "[t]he history of Black subjects in the diaspora is a geographic story that is, at least in part, a story of material and conceptual placements and

displacements, segregations and integrations, margins and centers, and migrations and settlements" (p. 14). If geography seeks to understand where things are, why they are there, and how they develop and change over time, what might know about Ghana by knowing ourselves and our geographies? What might we know and bring from our various respective places of origin? How might we apply the tools we use for knowing ourselves in familiar geographies to our knowledge generation about Ghana and each other? In short, I wondered, as a group of Black women from across the country coming together to return to a place of our cultural and historical past, what did this moment of pause in our program grant us?

Although we now have time to collaborate in our teaching and learning, in so many spaces, we are taught to be individualistic. The more we share and transcend tightly knitted ideas of place as fixed as we shelter in place, the more we are unbound in our spatial identities, and the more we are free to be pedagogical influences on each other as together we create a new geography on a virtual landscape.

Curriculum Mapping in Practice

Each theme in the preceding narrative is a piece of a composite puzzle; ergo, the whole narrative comprises multiple truths, illustrating that with regard to diasporic Black feminist curriculum mapping, "the reflexive narrative is the personal knowing used . . . in pursuit of realizing a vision" (Johns, 2020, p. 19). As we revisioned our SAP by theorizing through narrative, we realized that COVID-19 was not only reshaping our daily reality by irradiating the global dimensions of oppressive forces such as racism and classism but also demanding that we deepen our collectivist critical curricular response to the pandemic and codify how we were "contextualiz[ing] information, seeking connections and patterns between subjects and topics" (Hain-Jamall, 2013, p. 14). Our curricular responsiveness, then, reflected a marriage between our collective lived experience, our collective consciousness, and our expertise as currriculum designers.

The process of collaboratively creating a reflexive narrative attuned us to the fact that we were continually making meaning and generating knowledge. In other words, knowledge generation was *both* an anticipated outcome *and* an aspect of our curriculum mapping process. Our curriculum mapping, then, attended not only to content area subject matter (literacy in our case) but also to *lived experience, consciousness*, and *knowledge generation*, a process depicted in Figure 2 as dynamic, interactive, and interdependent. If *knowledge generation* is both a curriculum planning objective and outcome, then *content* is accordingly ever-shifting, informed by the continual reveal of new knowledge produced from participants' *lived experiences* and *consciousness*. Applying this model to SAPs makes for a malleable curriculum, which then makes space for all participants to know more and feel known within a learning community, thereby rendering the content at once meaning-full for both the individual and the collective.

Our diasporic Black feminist framework exemplifies a collectivist critical approach to mapping "curriculum [that] . . . examines the social, [necro]political, and cultural
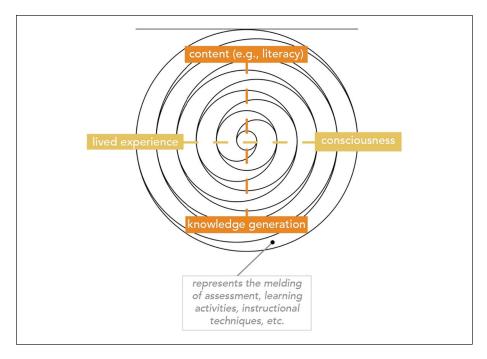
Figure 2. A diasporic Black feminist collectivist critical orientation to curriculum mapping. In this recursive approach, learning activities, instructional techniques, assessments, content area objectives, and teaching content are elements of a "continuous learning spiral" (Johns, 2020, p. 20) anchored to four pillars: content area (e.g., literacy), consciousness, knowledge generation, and lived experience.

dynamics of 'knowledge' and 'learning'" (Hendry, 2011, p. ix), as well as the memory/ial, spiritual, spatiotemporal, and geographic dimensions of teaching. Unlike Western, Euro/American linear approaches to curriculum mapping (see Figure 1), our diasporic Black feminist framework is circular, a visual representation of our belief that when

> working with people, we need to learn to think in circles, rather than in lines. Circles are strong. Circles are steady. Circles hold the space, circles make a place for others. Circles can expand or contract as needed. Circles can be permeable and yet have a strong boundary. Linked arms in a circle can keep things out and show solidarity. Linked energy in a circle can transform the ordinary into sacred space. Hands at each other's backs, facing each other, eye level. Working together in a circle . . ., change is birthed, friendships are strengthened, and love is visible. (Remer, 2018, p. 40)

Within this recursive framework, the present moment becomes visible as *both* a curricular text from which to learn from here and now *and* a prelude to the knowledge generation planned for then and there—that is, for a future time overseas.

Discussion and Significance

> The Covid-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of the intensity, rapidity, and complexity of historical events, but also of the critical need for curriculum [mapping] to become more responsive and proactive.
>
> —Pinar (2020, para. 4)

Historically, SAPs have been White spaces "in which black people are typically absent, not expected, or marginalized when present" (Anderson, 2015, p. 10). However, lately, discourses of equity and inclusion vis-à-vis SAPs have begun to proliferate (e.g., Hacker & Umpstead, 2019). This article demonstrates that curriculum mapping can function as either an obstacle to or an apparatus for equity and inclusion. Collectivist approaches to curriculum mapping can diversify curricular responsiveness and address long-standing issues of equity and inclusion in SAPs.

Epistemologically Diversifying Curricular Responsiveness

Marginalization in SAPs materializes in many forms, including epistemic violence in the form of the erasure and invisibilizing of the knowledge of people who are "othered." Equity cannot be reduced to a code for "diverse" bodies; it must also be engaged as a concept that connotes diverse worldviews. Therefore, to be truly equitable and inclusive spaces, SAPs must engage diverse ways of constructing knowledge. Besides decentering Euro/American worldviews, these ways may offer curriculum mappers useful tools for creating and planning fluid, dynamic, and capacious "curriculum with the capacity to stay proactive and contribute to the prevention (or at least management) of external vulnerabilities [such as COVID-19]" (Pinar, 2020, para. 2). Epistemic diversity in curriculum mapping, then, must be viewed as an integral element of how SAPs demonstrate curricular responsiveness.

Addressing Equity and Inclusion

As Black feminist curriculum mappers, we did not ask, "[w]ho am I as a non-White woman?" (Baszile, 2015, p. 119). Instead, we each wondered, "who am I as a Black daughter of the African diaspora?" In other words, our theorizing was neither predicated upon probing our deficit positionality in relation to whiteness nor dependent upon our understanding of ourselves as "other." Ours was an inquiry that began with recognizing and affirming our Black subjectivities. Turning SAPs into equitable and inclusive spaces requires an approach to curriculum mapping that not only values the intellectual contributions of people's diversity but also displaces whiteness from the center of the curriculum by ensuring that teaching *both* extends from *and* responds to the embodied and emplaced lived experiences of BIPOC faculty and students. A curriculum map emerging from that process can be radical, recursively constructing us and our students at the very moment that it is being (re)constructed (Morrison, 1993).

The future of the overseas phase of our SAP to Ghana is uncertain given COVID-19, yet within the diasporic Black feminist framework mooring our curriculum mapping process, that uncertainty is curricular content to be taught, learned, and studied in relation to the past, present, and future. Through our collective diasporic Black feminist lens, it is clear that curriculum is not only text, place, or activity but also this divine moment that is always here and now. For us, this very moment is the curriculum. For us,

Here and now

This is the place

Where we

Alchemized our hardships into healing

Surrendered to our own uncertainty

Freestyled our way into freedom

Danced

Laughed

Jazzed

And slayed

Our way into the sanctuary

Of our own survival

This is the place

Where the moment became our teacher

And we quieted our vision

To see what was before us

Here, right here

Is where the feet of our elders

Walked us into our own power

To abdicate the audacity of our knowing

To create room for our being

For our healing

For our stillness

For our undoing

Which was all tied up

In the making of our moments all along

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